

Research on Rapid Re-housing

State of Michigan

According to their [Substantial Amendment to the 2011 Consolidated Plan](#), the State of Michigan conducted analyses on their rapid re-housing and prevention programs.

Michigan conducted a follow-up analysis of more than 6,000 clients who received financial assistance through HPRP. **Of clients served at some point over the first 2 years of the program, only 6.5% returned to homelessness. These clients were more likely to be in single households (54%), older, and male.** Family households (46%) most often had young children and a single, female head. Both singles and families who returned to shelter were more likely to have a disabled adult in the household (45%) than households who remained housed (1%). As such, rapid re-housing seems to be very effective, especially, for non-disabled families with children. **Households who returned to shelter were the most vulnerable in the first 3 months after exiting the program** and declined substantially after that point.

Hennepin County, MN

Housing Stability and Repeat Shelter Use of Participants in the Hennepin County Rapid Exit Program (2011) by Maria Hanratty based on [Family Homelessness in Hennepin County: A Mixed Methods Examination of the Rapid Exit Program and Patterns of Shelter Mobility](#) (2011) by Hanratty's students

The University of Minnesota measured the extent to which families who entered the Hennepin County Rapid Exit program are able to secure stable housing and avoid repeat shelter use. This rapid re-housing program, started in the early '90s, provides financial assistance, housing search services, and landlord mediation for 6 months following shelter exit to help families with moderate to serious barriers transition to private housing.

The study defines a shelter exit "when a family leaves shelter and remains out of shelter for 30 days or more." The family is considered to have reentered shelter after returning for at least 1 day. **During the 3-year period of the study, 79.6% of families who entered shelter for the first time and exited under the program never returned. Another 16.5% of families returned to shelter twice, and 3.9% of families returned 3 or more times. Of all families in the program, 9% returned within 1 year of shelter exit, 16.3% within 2 years, and 20.9% within 3 years.** (Data is limited to public county shelters.) Despite the change in the housing market, these numbers are almost identical to a 2001 study on the program.

Families who were identified as chronically homeless were 2.3 times more likely to return to shelter. The following factors affect the chance of reentry:

Risk Factors:

Large family
Black or Native American
Arrest within last 5 years
Chemical dependency in last 5 years
Personal care attendant in last 5 years

Protective Factors:

Older family head
Immigrants

Non-Predictive Factors:

Educational status

According to known addresses, there was high residential mobility before and after families entered shelter. Family mobility is highly correlated with family demographics and prior service use. **During the year prior to entering shelter, 23% of the families changed addresses twice, and 16% changed addresses 3 or more times. In the year following shelter, 18% changed addresses twice, and 15% changed 3 or more times.** Using census tracts, families who lived at addresses in higher poverty neighborhoods before shelter were more likely to live in these neighborhoods after exit.

Research on Prevention

State of Michigan

According to their [Substantial Amendment to the 2011 Consolidated Plan](#), the State of Michigan conducted analyses on their rapid re-housing and prevention programs.

They found that prevention clients look very similar to rapid re-housing clients on all but 4 risk factors. **Rapid re-housing clients had a higher frequency of moves in the last year, experience of domestic violence, being a young household with a young child, and lack of transportation that impacts employment.**

New York, NY

[Effective Targeting of Homelessness Prevention Services for Families \(2011\)](#), [Preventing Family Homelessness: PowerPoint Presentation \(2012\)](#), and [Targeting Homelessness Prevention Services More Effectively: Introducing a Screener for HomeBase \(2012\)](#) by Marybeth Shinn and Andrew Greer

Homebase issued a contract to learn how to better target homeless prevention services among families. Their research found that **12.8% of families who applied for prevention services entered shelter within 3 years of applying, most often within the first few months.** They identified the following factors and an additional screening survey to identify families who were at the highest risk:

Risk Factors:

- Pregnancy
- Child younger than 2
- Currently receiving public assistance
- Eviction threat from landlord or leaseholder
- High mobility in last year
- Involvement with protective services
- High conflict with landlord, with leaseholder, or within household
- Disruptions as a child (e.g., foster care, shelter)
- Shelter history as an adult
- Recent shelter application
- Seeking to reintegrate from an institution

Protective Factors:

- Being older
- Having a high school diploma or GED
- Being employed
- Being a leaseholder

Non-Predictive Factors:

- Race and ethnicity
- Being an English speaker
- Number of children
- Marital status
- Veteran status
- Losing assistance in the last year
- Overcrowding
- Doubled-up
- Extremely cost-burdened
- High rental arrears
- Living in housing that is unsafe or in disrepair
- Subsidy receipt
- Disability or chronic physical health problems
- History of mental health problems
- History of substance abuse
- History of domestic violence
- Any involvement with the legal system
- Giving birth as a teenager

It is not possible to target families based on their prior living arrangements. Researchers found that being doubled-up or being a leaseholder, on its own, is not predictive of shelter entry. The researchers did find, however, that families living doubled up were more likely than families with their own place to enter shelter.

Increased Risk: Having more children was associated with a marginal increase in shelter entry. Involvement with child protective services (being investigated, having an open case, being in preventive care, or having a child in foster care) increased the rate of shelter entry by over a third. Adverse childhood experiences (being abused, being in foster care, being in shelter, moving 4 or more times, and receiving public assistance) were highly predictive, with each additional experience associated with a 15% increase in rates of entry.

Decreased Risk: Older respondents were less likely to enter shelter with each additional year of age. Having a lease, a high school diploma or GED, and a job also reduced risk of shelter entry.

Of those who were eligible for prevention services, but did not get them (e.g., living outside the service area), **only 1% of families with the lowest levels of risk entered shelter over the next 3 years.** Alternatively, 44% of families with the highest levels of risk entered shelter over the next 3 years.

The report concludes that the city should **offer prevention services to the families deemed at highest risk.** Throughout the study, the city offered services to 62.4% of applicants, but only about the top 50% of families, by risk, benefited from those services. **Services were increasingly effective as risk increased.** There is no evidence that the families in the bottom 50% were helped or, significantly, that families or characteristics exist that are too risky to be helped.

New York, NY

[Can Homelessness Be Prevented? Evidence from New York City's HomeBase Program](#) (2011) by Peter Messeri, Brendan O'Flaherty, and Sarena Goodman

Homebase issued a contract to measure community prevention. Researchers also looked at the impact of foreclosures and whether prevention services predicted how long a family would remain in shelter. The quasi-experimental evaluation found that the program reduces shelter entries. Estimates for the number of households deterred from shelter by Homebase range from about 12 to about 70 households per 100 cases. **The authors' best estimate is that the program reduces shelter entries by between 1 and 2 households for each 10 households served.** Each Homebase office became less effective (although not significant) after being open for 2 months, suggesting that there may be some delay in shelter entries rather than deterrence.

The study also used the opportunity to measure pending filings for foreclosure. Foreclosures were correlated with shelter entries; the effect was statistically and economically significant.

The research found that Homebase makes no significant difference to exits. Families who went through the program left slightly faster, but it is not statistically significant.

New York, NY

[Evaluation of the Homebase Community Prevention Program: Year 1 Summary Report](#) (2011) by Abt Associates, Inc.

Homebase issued a contract to conduct an evaluation examining the effects of the Homebase Community Prevention Program on clients' use of homeless shelters and mainstream services. This study uses random assignment research design, which has been controversial, to create a test group who receives Homebase services and a control group who receives other prevention services. During the first year of the study, researchers confirmed that there were no significant differences between the control and treatment groups.

This study seeks to learn whether treatment or control group members apply for or enter shelter differently during the follow-up period. During the first year, significantly more control group members (11.1%) applied for shelter than treatment group members (5.3%) did. More findings will be issued as the evaluation proceeds.