

DISCONNECTED TANF LEAVERS:

UNDERSTANDING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THOSE WITHOUT WELFARE & WITHOUT WORK

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BACKGROUND



- There is a subgroup of families who are without formal employment and without cash welfare.
- In Maryland, the percent of welfare leavers who are “disconnected” from work & welfare ranges from 22.5% one year after exit to 35.0% 10 years after exit.
- The reasons for disconnection are unclear:
 - TANF program could be under-serving the intended population; or
 - Families may be finding resources elsewhere.
- Disconnected welfare leavers will be of interest as we enter a new round of TANF reauthorization.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS



- How many welfare leavers experience spells of being disconnected from cash assistance and formal employment?
- What are the demographic characteristics of disconnected leavers and how do they compare to other leavers?
- How do leavers who spend long periods of time without formal employment and without cash assistance support their families?
- Are there identifiable subpopulations within the long-term disconnected leavers population?

SAMPLE AND DATA SOURCES



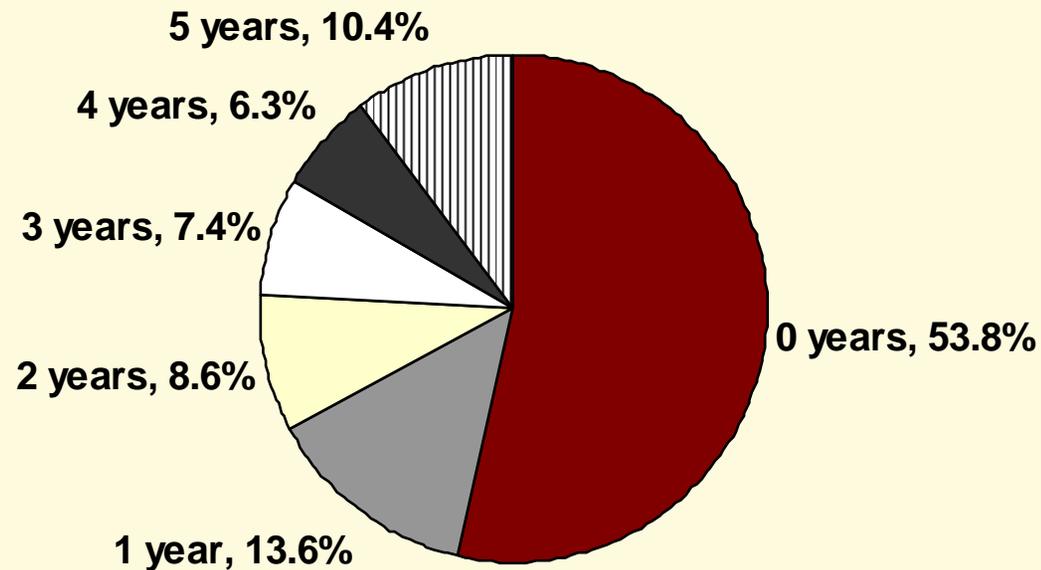
- Subsample from a long-running longitudinal study on welfare leavers in Maryland (*Life After Welfare*)
- Five years of follow-up data for 3,555 leavers that exited between 10/98 & 9/01
 - **Consistently Connected Leavers:** 1,912 cases where the casehead was employed in a UI-covered job and/or the family received TCA in all five follow-up years.
 - **Sometimes Disconnected Leavers:** 1,273 cases that were without casehead UI-covered employment and without TCA during at least one of the follow up years.
 - **Chronically Disconnected Leavers:** 370 cases that were without casehead UI-covered employment and without TCA in all five follow up years.
- Data include Maryland administrative data (participation in TANF, SSI, SNAP, MA, and Child Support) and UI wage data

FINDINGS: # OF DISCONNECTED LEAVERS



- 10.4% of leavers were disconnected for all five follow-up years.
- An additional 35.9% were disconnected in at least one year.

Number of Years without Employment or TCA in First Five Years After Exit



FINDINGS: DEMOGRAPHICS

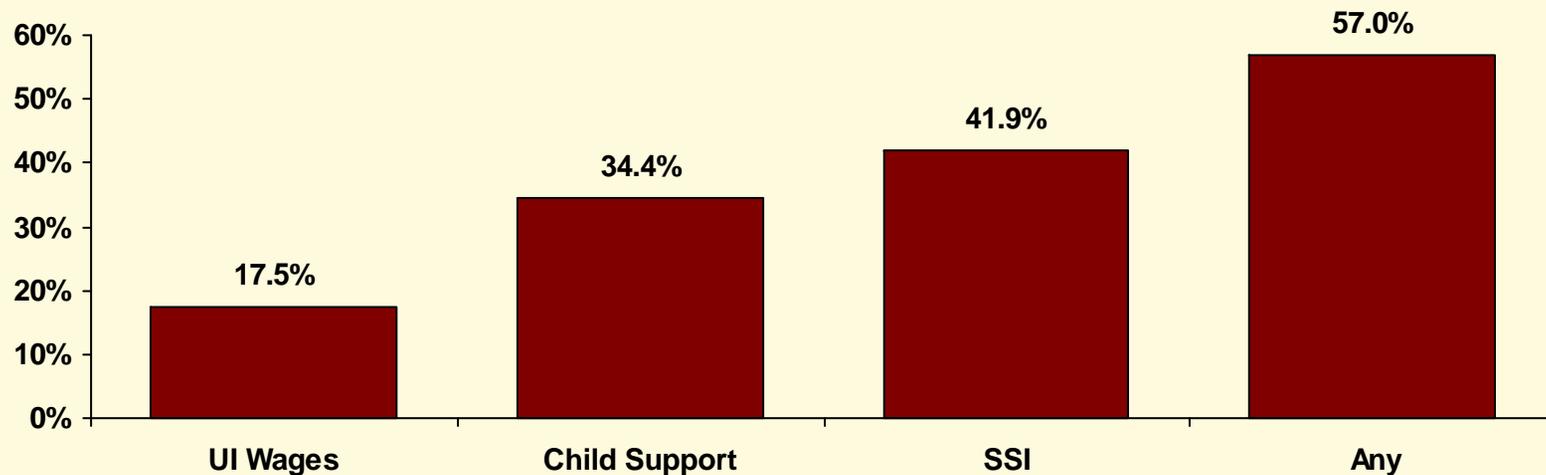


- Chronically disconnected leavers are different from other leavers:
 - Significantly older at time of exit (mean=42.9 yrs)
 - More likely to have been child-only TANF cases at exit (43.0%)
 - Less likely to have a child < 3 yrs old at time of exit (24.2%)
 - More likely to include a youngest child who is 17 or older (4.3%)
 - Longer continuous TANF spell preceding exit (mean=27.4 mths)
 - Less likely to have been employed prior to exit (28.1% with UI wages in preceding 8 quarters)
 - More likely to have experienced case closure due to ineligibility (17.3%)

FINDINGS: OTHER INCOME SUPPORT



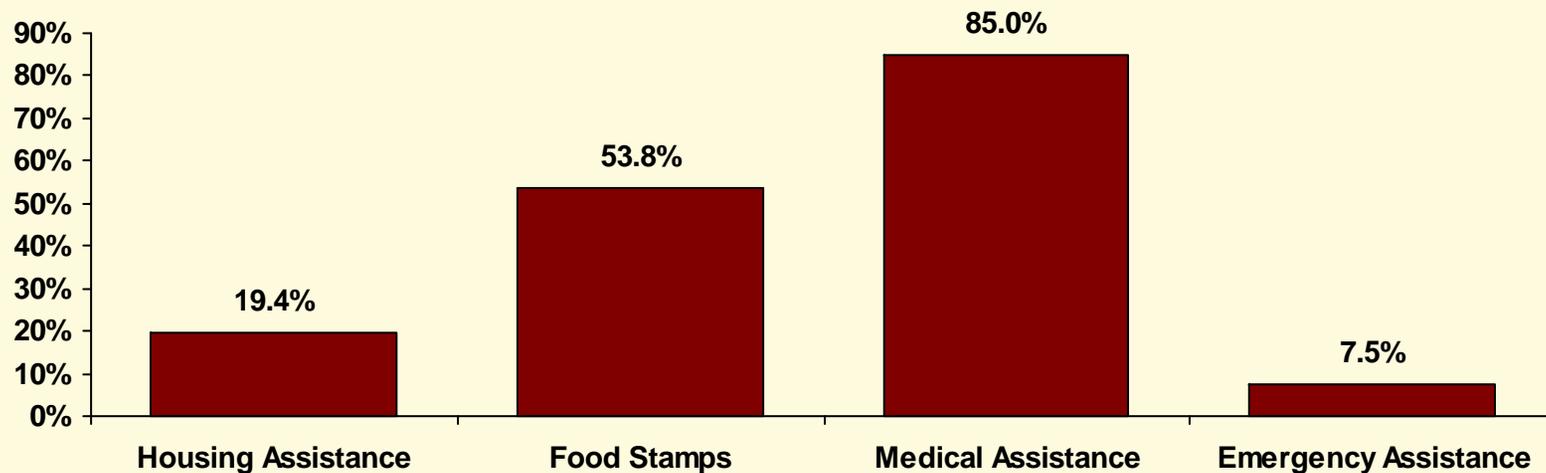
- Almost three out of five (57.0%) chronically disconnected leavers have income from (1) another adults' UI wages, (2) child support, or (3) SSI.



FINDINGS: NON-CASH SUPPORT



- Most chronically disconnected leavers received some type of non-cash support during the follow-up period





FINDINGS: FAMILY CHANGES



- Caseworker narratives indicated that:
 - Approximately 1 in 10 (11.6%) of chronically disconnected leavers had moved out of state.
 - In approximately 1 in 3 (32.2%) cases, the children from the original TANF case moved out of the household.

FINDINGS: SUBPOPULATIONS



- Cluster analysis revealed 6 subpopulations within the “Chronically Disconnected” group (see Handout):
 - Child-only/SSI cases
 - Non-urban/High Earner
 - Child-only/Non-SSI cases
 - Housing Assistance
 - Urban/traditional cases
 - Non-urban/traditional cases

LIMITATIONS



- Broader definition of “disconnection”
 - Does not include disconnection from income sources such as SSI
 - Includes child-only cases
- Data limited to MD & UI wage data from some border states
 - Underestimates # of families that moved out of state & received services or became employed

IMPLICATIONS



- Disconnection typically lasts only a short time for most leavers.
- There are some possible risk factors for chronic disconnection.
- Among those who are disconnected for longer periods of time, most still receive FS and MA/MCHP benefits.

IMPLICATIONS, CONT.



- A significant minority of Maryland's Chronically Disconnected leavers are child-only cases & are likely to become ineligible for TANF over time.
- A minority of Chronically Disconnected leavers appear to be struggling and may benefit from additional support.



THANK YOU!



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The full report is available on our website:
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