Evaluation of the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative: 30-Month Exploratory Evaluation Findings

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This report is part of a larger 10-year evaluation of the Family Homelessness System Initiative. A great many people contributed to the evaluation and the various products that have resulted from it (see Rog et al., 2021). We recognize and are grateful for all of the contributions they have made over the years. Most importantly, we are grateful to the families who participated in our study and shared with us their experiences, struggles, and successes along the way.

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Family Homelessness Systems Initiative was a $60 million comprehensive systems change initiative aimed at reducing family homelessness in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties by improving the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of the family homeless housing and service delivery systems. The Initiative, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, was launched in 2009 in response to the persistent number of families experiencing homelessness in the Puget Sound Area and the difficulty families experience in successfully exiting homelessness.

Westat, a national research organization, conducted an independent evaluation of the Initiative, including an examination of the effects of the systems changes on families' experiences and outcomes. The evaluation included a Family Impact Study, a quasi-experimental examination of the effects of the systems changes on families served in the system over an 18-month period compared to families served prior to the systems reform. Results indicated that after systems reform, more families accessed housing, they accessed it more quickly, and they spent more nights in that housing over an 18-month period than families served prior to systems reform. Families served after reform spent less time in shelter, but more time in unsheltered situations. Returns to homelessness in both cohorts among families who entered housing was about 10 percent in a one-year period, and families in both cohorts moved approximately three times (Rog et al., 2021).

The current report provides a descriptive exploratory 30-month follow-up of a subset of families included in the 18-month study—those families assigned to rapid re-housing and those assigned to shelter for their initial assistance. Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help people experiencing homelessness move quickly from homelessness into permanent housing and to prevent future episodes of homelessness (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness [USICH], 2016).

The study was conducted both to provide an indication of how families fared longer-term and to see if there were differences among families who were assigned to different interventions as their initial assistance. Because it is not a randomized study and families were selected for these interventions, differences in outcomes may be due to individual family differences, despite our efforts to statistically control for those differences. The findings nevertheless offer insights into the experiences families had and the supports that may help foster stability.

Key Outcome Findings

Overall, the study found:

- Approximately 70 percent of families served after systems reform (71% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 67% of shelter assigned families) were in their own

housing at 30 months. The majority (78%) of the rapid re-housing assigned families were living on their own without housing assistance, compared to less than half of shelter assigned families (40%).

- Rapid re-housing assigned families accessed their housing more quickly and spent more time in that housing than shelter assigned families. Differences in housing stability were more evident in the first six months after assignment and dissipated over time.

- In both groups, families who got into their own housing early and remained in housing through 18 months were the most likely (76%) to remain in housing continuously from 18 to 30 months.

- Approximately 20 percent of families in both groups who entered housing returned to homelessness within 18 months, consistent with rates of return documented in the rapid re-housing literature.

- Over the course of the 30 months, families in both groups moved an average of five times; one of those times was in the last 12 months, suggesting the rate of moving slows down after the initial homeless crisis.

- At 30 months, families' median monthly income was approximately $1,200 ($950 for shelter assigned families and $1,580 for rapid re-housing assigned families), and approximately half of families (57% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 43% of shelter assigned families) were working. Both income and employment increased for both groups over time, and increases were predicted more by family characteristics than the intervention to which families were assigned.

Finding and Keeping Housing

The top challenges in finding housing cited by families were finding an affordable place to live and having enough income to meet the demands of the market. Evictions and credit problems (both bad and no credit) were the most common background issues that made it difficult to access a place to live. In tackling those challenges, families commonly cited relying on the help of a specific case manager or agency and their own efforts and tenacity.

Most rapid re-housing assigned families who accessed housing received one or more supports, most often a list of addresses or a referral to an online database to find private landlords, and/or help in finding an apartment. The majority of families received help with a security deposit and monthly rent (for an average of six months) and smaller percentages received help with furnishing the apartment, utilities or utility deposits, moving expenses, or other financial assistance.

Not surprisingly, the single most common challenge cited by families in both groups to keeping housing was the affordability of the housing and being able to pay the rent. Families noted the struggle in making ends meet, given the sheer price of rent and utilities. Closely related to the struggle of paying the rent were families' efforts to ensure that they had the income, and

ideally, employment to continue to pay the rent. Several noted job changes, job losses, and job lapses that challenged their ability to stay in their housing.

By far, having a stable, steady job, was the most commonly identified factor that helped families keep their housing. This was true for both groups but especially among rapid re-housing assigned families. Several additional families, primarily in the rapid re-housing assigned group, spoke of having more than one job, working more hours, or more than one person in the household working to help pay the rent. For those in the shelter assigned group, having a Section 8 voucher or other type of housing assistance was the next most commonly identified factor that helped families keep their housing.

The Quality of Housing at 30 Months

Families in their own housing at 30 months were generally living in an apartment with two to three bedrooms and one to two bathrooms, although there was a considerable range in the size and type of units. Some were sharing their living situations, splitting the rent to make it affordable, although that sometimes resulted in families living in dining rooms or living rooms. Some families moved in with family members, but were paying rent and expenses.

Among both rapid re-housing assigned families and shelter assigned families, more than half of the families living in their own housing generally perceived it as stable, safe, and a good or very good fit. Families reported similar rates of problems with their current housing across groups, with water leaks being the most commonly identified problems, noted by about a third of each group.

Aspects of the housing families often noted as positive were the unit's affordability (in some cases, due to having a Section 8 voucher or other subsidy), the unit size and number of bedrooms available for children, and availability of laundry facilities in the unit or on-site. The negative aspects noted often corresponded to these housing characteristics as well. Many said that their apartment was too small, and some felt it was too costly. The absence of amenities were cited as negatives, especially lack of a dishwasher, storage, or backyard, or not having a washer and dryer in the unit or having on-site laundry facilities but having to pay for them. Families tended to rate their neighborhoods less favorably. Less than half in both groups indicated they liked their neighborhood quite a lot and approximately half (44-52%) perceived their neighborhood as quite safe. Those who noted positive aspects of their neighborhoods noted the convenience of the location (near school, childcare, and/or work, near shopping, having a backyard and/or playground, or having access to transportation, helpful people, and parking). The safety of the neighborhood was often noted as a less desirable aspect, with families in both groups noting crime and violence, drug activity, and individuals loitering. An additional concern raised more commonly by shelter assigned families was the location of the housing and the neighbors, far from where they needed to go for work and other activities. For these reasons, as well as those related to the quality and nature of the housing, many families

viewed their current housing as temporary and nearly half indicated that they planned to move in the next year.

Of those families not living in their own housing at 30 months, 40 percent had not accessed housing throughout the 30-month period. Twenty-eight percent had accessed it early in the time frame, but lost it before 18 months and did not regain it by 30 months. The remaining 32 percent had been relatively stable in their own housing during the initial 18-month period, but experienced challenges that led them to lose their housing after 18 months. Families typically noted one or more barriers, including not having income to pay the rent, having bad credit, and having evictions as reasons they had difficulty finding or keeping housing.

Families' settings ranged from shelter and transitional housing, living with family members or friends, to a mix of doubled up, sheltered, and unsheltered homeless situations. Doubled up situations generally were with families and friends; some were very time limited or sporadic, and others were more long term. Unsheltered homeless situations included living in cars, tents, and in vacant houses or buildings. Some families tried to make these situations more tenable by staying in a mix of shelter, vacant homes, and friends' cars and trailers, as well as staying in hotels or motels when they had funds.

Study Implications

The findings from this follow-up study continue to support two key implications outlined from the 18-month findings. First, communities should emphasize a Housing First orientation in their homeless service delivery systems and help families access housing as quickly as possible. Although equivalent proportions of families in both rapid re-housing and shelter assigned groups ended up in their own housing by 30 months, families in the rapid re-housing assigned group were able to access it more quickly and thus had longer stays in that housing. Although individual differences between families in the different groups may account for some of this difference, it is highly plausible that the rapid re-housing intervention, given the nature of support provided, led to quicker access for the individuals that accepted the option.

Second, findings from the current evaluation show the important role that subsidies play in bolstering housing stability. In both groups, families with relatively lower incomes were living in subsidized housing at 30 months. Those living on their own at this time, primarily families who received rapid re-housing, were making ends meet, frequently by working at one or more jobs and often for as many hours as they could get. For systems in which the number of families needing housing far exceeds the number of available subsidies, we would suggest that having a range of Housing First options is advantageous, with shelter and bridges to subsidies serving as a safety net for those with limited incomes and prospects for working.

Section 1. Introduction and Background

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Family Homelessness Systems Initiative was launched in 2009 as a $60 million comprehensive systems change initiative aimed at reducing family homelessness in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties by improving the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of the family homeless housing and service delivery systems.

Westat has conducted an evaluation of the Initiative, including a Family Impact Study that examined the effects of the systems changes on families served in the system over an 18-month period (Rog et al., 2021). This report provides an exploratory examination of a subset of the families served after systems reform over a 30 -month period. The subset of families includes those who were assigned to either rapid re-housing or shelter for their initial assistance in the system.

The methodology used for the 30-month sample followed the same approach as the methodology used for the 18-month evaluation. In-depth, in-person interviews were conducted with families every six months for 18 months. A final 30-month interview was additionally completed 12 months after the 18-month interview. Interviews, conducted with a family's head of household (HOH), covered a range of domains, including background and demographic characteristics; family composition; homelessness and housing history; employment, income, benefits, and debt; and service needs and receipt. The 30-month interview included additional items, including more extensive information on the timing, duration, and nature of rapid re-housing assistance received and whether it resulted in a move into housing; the nature of other housing assistance received by families assigned to both rapid re-housing and shelter; and questions about the nature and quality of families' experiences with assistance and residential arrangements at 30 months.

Analyses were conducted to examine families' long-term housing access and stability, as well as outcomes related to employment and income. Additional quantitative and qualitative analyses explored families' housing trajectories, the nature and quality of their housing at 30 months, and challenges families faced finding and keeping housing.

The Family Homelessness Systems Initiative was a $60 million comprehensive systems change initiative aimed at reducing family homelessness in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties by improving the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of the family homeless housing and service delivery systems. The Initiative, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, was launched in 2009 in response to the persistent number of families experiencing homelessness

in the Puget Sound Area and the difficulty families experienced in successfully exiting homelessness.

Guided by a Theory of Action based on the best thinking and available research at the time, the Initiative wove together five promising strategies for creating a sustainable systemic response aimed at reducing the length of time families experience homelessness, decreasing returns to homelessness and, in turn, fostering more housing stability (see Exhibit 1-1).

Exhibit1-1. Family Homelessness Systems Initiative Theory of Action
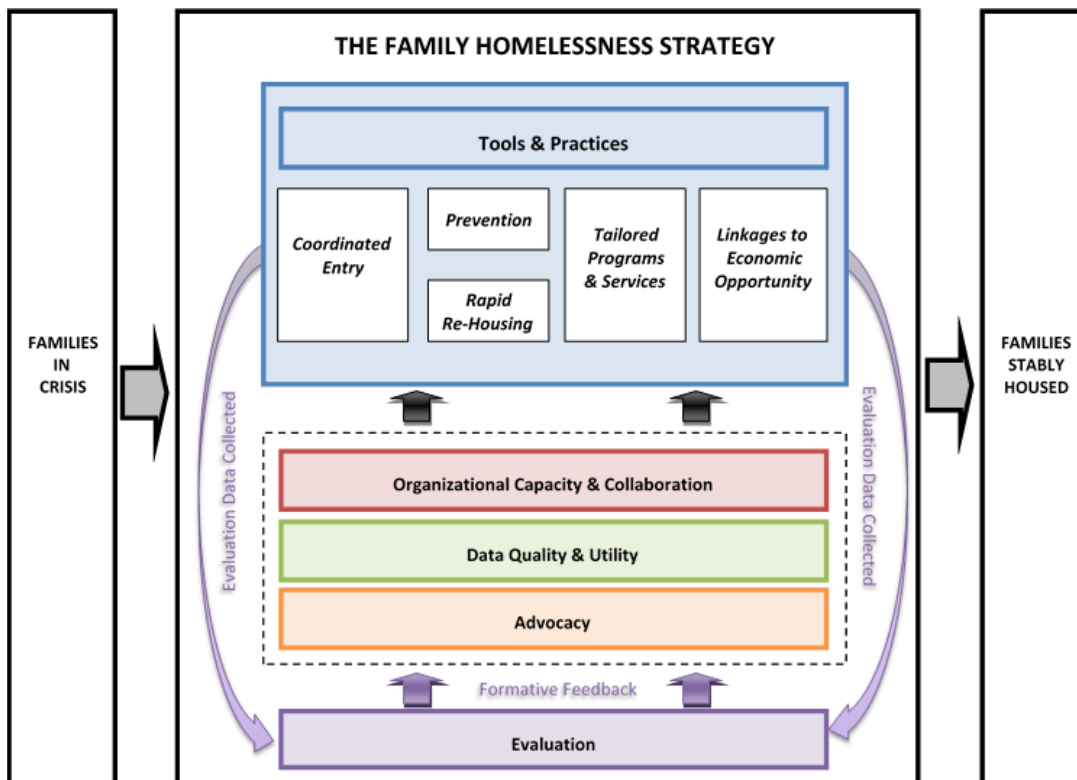
The first strategy included implementing "pillars" of practice, including efforts to: prevent families from entering the homeless system when possible, coordinate housing and services to help those experiencing homelessness access housing assistance and rapidly exit into permanent housing, provide services tailored to families' needs, and offer economic opportunities that support housing access and stability. The four additional strategies in the Theory of Action support systems reform by strengthening organizational capacity and interagency collaboration, improving data quality and use in decision-making, supporting advocacy for funding and policy change, and using evaluation to guide change.

Findings from the systems analysis of the evaluation (described below and detailed in our 18-month report; Rog et al., 2021) indicated that, at the beginning of the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative, the homeless service systems in all three counties largely operated as

uncoordinated continuums of shelter and transitional housing. Providers embraced this model, believing it allowed families an opportunity to become "housing ready" before moving into market rate permanent housing. Limited homelessness prevention services were available. Services were not coordinated across homeless providers, and no systematic protocols existed to guide case management and other services. Few connections existed between homeless and mainstream service providers. Families' access to employment and housing was generally not a priority for providers until a family was ready to exit transitional housing.

Guided by the Theory of Action, each of the counties implemented reforms over the course of the Initiative that led to increased coordination of homeless services and housing assistance across providers, as well as a greater focus on Housing First through interventions that prioritized quicker access to housing than transitional housing. Coordinated entry systems were put into place, and diversion assistance was developed as the first intervention for families system-wide in King and Pierce Counties. The use of rapid re-housing expanded, and transitional housing stock was reduced or converted. Cross-training efforts on services and progressive engagement were implemented, and efforts to link employment with housing were tested. For additional information on the evolution of the systems reforms in each of the three counties within this changing environment, see our Systems Report (forthcoming in 2021).

Westat, a national research organization, conducted an independent evaluation of the Initiative. Initiated in 2009, the evaluation provided a longitudinal examination of the changes the Initiative helped spur in the housing and related service systems that serve families experiencing homelessness, and how these changes, in turn, affected families' experiences and outcomes. Westat's quasi-experimental examination of the effects of the systems changes on families (Rog et al., 2021) compared the experiences and outcomes of families served after the systems were reformed with those of families served prior to the systems reform. The findings demonstrated that more families after systems reform accessed housing, accessed it more quickly, and spent more nights in that housing over an 18-month period than families served prior to systems reform. Families after reform spent less time in shelter, but more time in unsheltered situations. Approximately 10 percent of families who entered housing returned to homelessness in both groups (Rog et al., 2021).

The current report provides an exploratory examination over 30 months of the experiences and outcomes of a subset of the families in the 18-month study—families served after systems reform who were assigned to either rapid re-housing or shelter as their initial assistance.[1] Rapid

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[1] Initial assistance is the first type of assistance that a family receives from the homeless service system. For Cohort 2 families, types of initial assistance include diversion/navigation, shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

re-housing is an intervention designed to help people experiencing homelessness move quickly from homelessness into permanent housing and to prevent future episodes of homelessness (USICH, 2016). Households generally receive assistance in finding their own apartment; financial assistance for temporary rental assistance as well as to cover expenses like the application fees and a security deposit; and case management to help them keep their housing and make connections to employment, mainstream benefits, and other supports. A critical motivator behind the rapid re-housing model is that communities do not have adequate resources to provide permanent rental assistance to all homeless families, so temporary assistance is aimed at assisting as many families as possible to get back into the housing market (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2014).

Descriptive studies of rapid re-housing indicate that at least 70 percent of participants in rapid re-housing programs successfully access permanent housing by program exit (Burt et al., 2016; Byrne et al., 2015; Finkel et al., 2016; Gubits et al., 2016; Gubits et al., 2018). The most rigorous study to date, HUD's Family Options Study, found that at 37 months, 69 percent of families assigned to rapid re-housing were housed, the same rate as among families randomly assigned to shelter. More than a quarter of families in both groups were receiving long-term subsidies or other financial assistance in their housing (Gubits et al., 2016). This study incorporated one of the first models of rapid re-housing through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP). The model of rapid re-housing implemented in the three counties as part of the Initiative evolved beyond HPRP to include additional types of financial and case management assistance. The current study offers an opportunity to build upon the Family Options Study by providing a more detailed understanding of the trajectories into and out of housing that families follow after being assigned rapid re-housing assistance. Additionally, it provides a more thorough examination of the types of financial and case management assistance that families received as well as their assessments of the quality of their housing and the challenges they faced in finding and keeping housing.

Building upon this body of literature and extending our 18-month study, the current effort aims to learn more about the longer-term housing stability and other outcomes of families initially served in the systems after reform, with a focus on those families who received either rapid re-housing or shelter as their initial assistance. In addition to examining families' outcomes, the study explores their housing trajectories and experiences over the 30-month period and provides a rich description of the nature and quality of their housing at 30 months. As this supplemental analysis involves groups receiving services that are not randomly assigned, but rather based upon a number of selection factors, the comparison between the two groups is provided for context rather than an assessment of causality.

Methodology

Research Questions

The 30-month follow-up sought to answer the following questions:

- What were the long-term outcomes (i.e., housing access and stability, returns to homelessness, employment, income) of families who received rapid re-housing and shelter?
- What factors (i.e., family size, family background) related to differences in outcomes between families who received rapid re-housing or shelter?
- What were the trajectories of housing that families experienced?
- What can we learn about how families found and maintained their housing?

Description of 30-Month Cohort

As noted, families included in this analysis are a subset of Cohort 2 of the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative evaluation whose initial assistance type was rapid re-housing or shelter. Cohort 2 families were recruited after reforms were made to the systems in the three counties. We worked directly with providers providing one or more of the types of assistance available—including shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing (or permanent housing with supports), and diversion or navigation services—to identify and recruit Cohort 2 families. In each county, our goal was to recruit at least 150 families. In Pierce and Snohomish Counties, we aimed to recruit as close to a census of families receiving homeless services as possible within the recruitment period. In King County, given the vast number of providers, we worked with county leaders to select the largest providers with shelters and programs across the county with which we could work to recruit a sample.

Families were eligible to be included in the study if (1) they had at least one minor child and/or were pregnant and (2) they were able to complete an interview in English or Spanish. It is important to note that our study is focused only on families who received some type of homelessness assistance. We could not track families who went through coordinated entry in each county but did not receive additional assistance such as a referral for shelter or housing. Cohort 2 families were recruited for participation in the evaluation and conducted their baseline interviews between May 2015 and November 2016 and completed three additional interviews (roughly six months apart) during the initial 18-month follow-up period. They completed the 30-month interview between January 2018 and April 2019. The 18-month report provides additional information about how families were recruited for participation, the response and retention rates for each wave of data collection, the results from an analysis of sample attrition over time, and the results of analyses of the representativeness of families

participating in the evaluation of all families served by the homeless service system in the three counties during the same time periods (Rog et al., 2021).

Data Collection

The 30-month interview methodology followed the same approach described for earlier data collection at baseline, 6, 12, and 18-month interview waves (Rog et al., 2021). Primary data were collected from families through in-person interviews with the HOH[2] in each family. During each interview, we collected detailed information on the HOH's background and demographic characteristics; family homelessness and housing; family composition; family employment, income, benefits, and debt; and HOH's service needs and receipt.

The 30-month interview included many of the same domains as previous waves; however, it also included more in-depth information on the timing, duration, and nature of rapid re-housing assistance received and whether it resulted in a move into housing; the nature of other housing assistance received by families assigned to both rapid re-housing and shelter; and both closed-end and open-ended questions about the nature and quality of the experiences with assistance and the residential arrangements at 30 months.

Families were provided an incentive for each completed interview. Cohort 2 families received $30 for the baseline and six-month interview and $50 for subsequent interviews. Exhibit 1-2 presents the sample sizes of families who were assigned to rapid re-housing or shelter for their initial assistance at each wave of the interview and for those having complete 30-month housing data (i.e., those with housing status known for 95 percent of the follow-up period or at least 865 of the 910 nights).

Exhibit 1-2. 30-Month Sample Sizes

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned	Shelter Assigned	Total
Baseline sample	103	175	278
6-Month sample	77	125	202

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[2] If there was more than one parent or guardian in the family, we selected the person who was most knowledgeable about all family members, typically the mother. For simplicity, we refer to all respondents as the families' HOHs.

% of baseline	*(75%)*	*(71%)*	*(73%)*
12-Month sample	76	122	198
% of baseline	*(74%)*	*(70%)*	*(71%)*
18-Month sample	88	136	224
% of baseline	*(85%)*	*(78%)*	*(81%)*
30-Month sample	85	136	221
% of baseline	*(83%)*	*(78%)*	*(80%)*
Complete 30-Month housing data *% of baseline*	83 *(81%)*	133 *(76%)*	216 *(78%)*

Analyses

We followed an intent-to-treat approach in our analyses. Therefore, we include in the rapid re-housing assigned group all families who were assigned to rapid re-housing as their initial assistance, regardless of whether those families were able to access and use the rapid re-housing rental assistance. Likewise, we include in the shelter assigned group all families who were assigned shelter as their initial assistance, even if they spent no or minimal time in shelter. We also include families who may have received additional assistance following the initial assistance. For example, particularly in Pierce and Snohomish Counties, rapid re-housing assistance was at times provided to families who first entered shelter. We provide detail in the results sections as to the extent to which families received the initial assistance and the range of other assistance they may have received.

Attrition Analysis

We performed attrition analyses to determine how representative the 30-month samples are of the original baseline samples of families assigned to rapid re-housing and shelter as their initial assistance type in Cohort 2. We examined differences between the baseline samples and those who completed a 30-month interview on a number of variables, including demographic characteristics, housing and homelessness history, service needs, and housing barriers (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, and criminal justice involvement).

The findings from the attrition analyses (presented in Appendix A) indicate that the families included in the 30-month analysis for both the rapid re-housing and shelter groups did not show differential dropout. They were retained in the final outcomes sample at comparable rates (81% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 76% of shelter assigned families were retained) and are generally representative of the families in the initial baseline samples in their characteristics. Bivariate comparisons indicated that those in the outcome analysis had higher median income ($748 vs. $717) and were marginally more likely to have a history of domestic

violence (58% vs. 45%) and marginally less likely to have a child under the age of 2 (38% vs. 52%). However, these variables were not significant in a multivariate analysis controlling for other factors.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive quantitative analyses included both frequency and bivariate analyses. We used descriptive analyses to examine differences between the two groups (rapid re-housing and shelter assigned) on family background and characteristics. In addition, to provide context for the multivariate outcome findings, we first conducted a range of descriptive analyses on all outcomes. Finally, we performed a range of descriptive analyses examining over time the housing trajectories that families took, as well as a range of items related to their housing situations at 30 months.

We conducted descriptive qualitative analyses of open-ended items related to families' experiences requesting and receiving assistance, challenges they faced finding and keeping housing, and their assessment of the quality of their housing. Analyses involved deriving the most common themes across and within both groups of families.

Multivariate Outcome Analysis

As described in Exhibit 1-3, inferential analyses, designed to explain differences in outcomes, include several multivariate analyses, such as ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, logistic regression, and survival analysis. Each multivariate analysis tested whether there was a significant difference in the specific outcome between the two groups, within a model involving a host of family and HOH characteristics to control for individual family differences. Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis was used to examine interval level measures: the number of nights in housing following receipt of initial assistance, number of moves, number of nights homeless, and monthly income. Logistic regression analysis was used to examine the bivariate measures of living in one's own housing and employment status at 30 months. Survival analysis was used to examine factors that predict time to accessing housing and time to return to homelessness.

Throughout the report, statistically significant associations are denoted in tables with asterisks (i.e., ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$). The absence of an indicator indicates there is not a statistically significant relationship between variables.

Exhibit 1-3. Types of Quantitative Analyses Performed

Descriptive Analyses

Frequency distribution	Examines the distribution of a variable for range, measures of central tendency (average, median), outliers, and extent to which there are missing data.
Bivariate analysis	Examines the relationship between two variables, using chi-squares and t-tests to test for significant differences (such as between group and number of nights in one's own place).
Inferential Multivariate Analyses	
Ordinary least squares regression	Tests the effect of cohort on differences in continuous or interval measures (such as nights in housing), controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.
Logistic regression	Tests the effect of cohort on differences in dichotomous variables (such as one or more nights homeless), controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.
Survival analysis	Tests the effect of cohort on time (such as time to accessing housing). This approach models (1) the probability of moving to permanent housing and (2) how long it takes to move, controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model.

Section 2. Description of Study Sample

> *Families assigned to rapid re-housing and shelter as initial assistance were similar to each other on most demographic and background characteristics, as well as to the full sample of families served after systems reform (Rog et al., 2021).*
>
> *There were a few key differences between the two groups, however, that are important to keep in mind in reviewing the outcomes and other findings. Compared to families assigned to shelter, families assigned to rapid re-housing:*
> * *Were more likely to have lived in the county for 5 years or longer;*
> * *Were less likely to have a child under age 2;*
> * *Had higher median monthly income and were more likely to have income from SSI/SSDI;*
> * *Had higher median debt; and*
> * *Were less likely to have been homeless in the past two years, more likely to have spent time in their own place in the year prior to entry, and less likely to have had a subsidy at baseline.*
>
> *Two of these sets of factors—income and recent homeless and housing history—were key predictors between our two cohorts in the 18-month study and are important to consider in examining outcomes in this exploratory, non-randomized effort.*

The previous report provides a detailed description of the baseline data for all families served in the two cohorts (Rog et al., 2021). Where appropriate, we highlight differences between this subsample of families and the more complete Cohort 2 sample.

Demographics

The demographic composition of the families in the 30-month sample largely resembles that of the full Cohort 2 sample, presented in the 18-month outcome report (Rog et al., 2021). As Exhibit 2-1 shows, respondents were predominantly female and an average of 34 years old at baseline. They were disproportionately Black/African American or identified as Multiracial or another (non-White, non-Black/African American) race. Almost all had been born in the United States and the majority had lived for five or more years in Washington State. The only significant demographic difference between the two groups was that families assigned to rapid re-housing as initial assistance were significantly more likely than those assigned to shelter to

have been living in the county five or more years (80% vs. 62%, compared with 70% for Cohort 2 families overall).

Exhibit 2-1. Demographic Characteristics of the HOHs of Families

	Shelter Assigned N=133		Rapid Re-housing Assigned N=83
Age	34 years		34 years
Female	93%		92%
Hispanic	13%		7%
White	41%		34%
Black/African American	38%		36%
Multiracial	11%		13%
Asian	1%		2%
Native American	1%		5%
Pacific Islander	2%		4%
Other race	5%		6%
Born in US	89%		92%
In state 5+ years	81%		90%
In county 5+ years	62%		80%**
Military	3%		6%
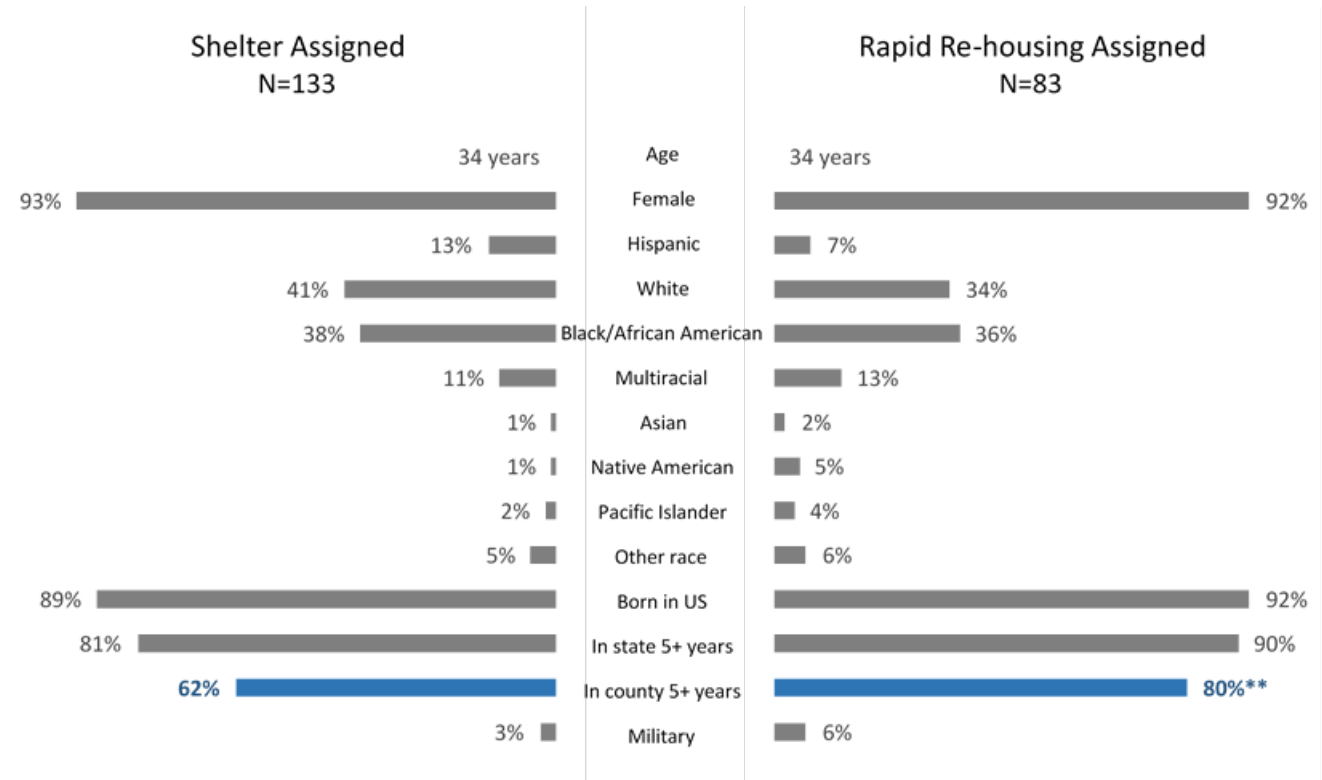
* p < 0.05 ** p <0.01 *** p < 0.001. Blue lines indicate significant differences.

Family Composition

Likewise, family composition is similar to that of the full Cohort 2 sample and comparable across the groups (see Exhibit 2-2). About a quarter of HOHs had a spouse or partner. They had, on average, approximately two children and about 10 percent were pregnant at the time of the baseline interview. One quarter of families in both groups had a child living away at baseline, most often voluntarily with another family member or friend. One significant difference between the two groups is that rapid re-housing assigned families were less likely to have a child under two than shelter assigned families (27% vs. 44%, compared with 37% for Cohort 2 families overall).

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Exhibit 2-2. Composition of Families

	Shelter Assigned N=133		Rapid Re-housing Assigned N=83
Spouse	29%		22%
Any child under 2	**44%**		**27%***
Pregnant	10%		11%
Child living away	24%		24%
Number of kids <19	1.9		1.7
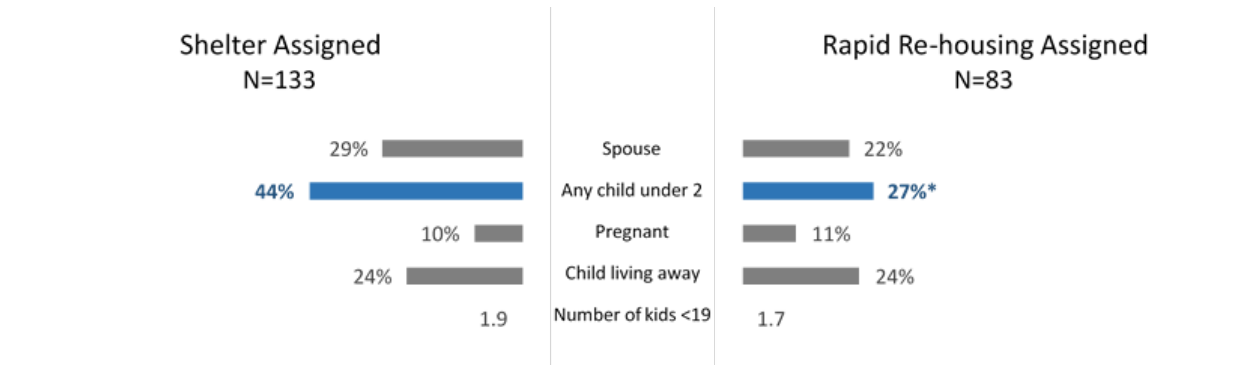
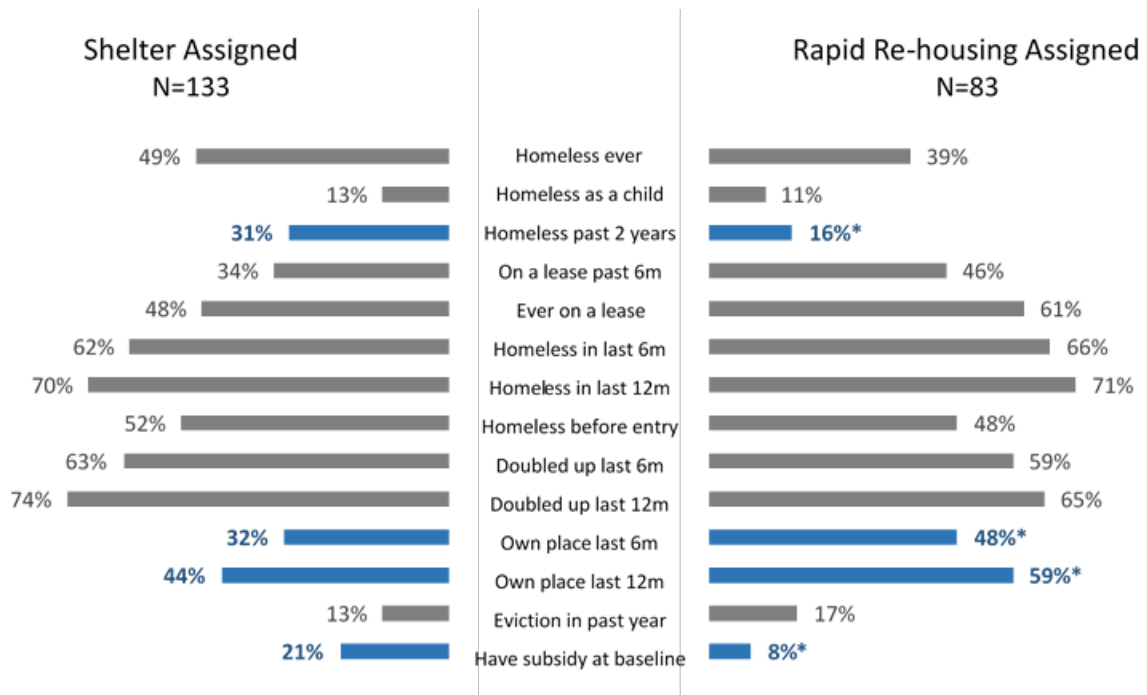** p < 0.05 ** p <0.01 *** p < 0.001. Blue lines indicate significant differences.*

Homeless and Housing History

There were some differences in the homeless and housing history of families in the two groups (see Exhibit 2-3). Rapid re-housing assigned families were significantly less likely to have been homeless in the past 2 years (16% vs. 31%, respectively, compared with 25% for Cohort 2 families overall). Rapid re-housing assigned families were likewise more likely than shelter assigned families to have spent time in their own place in the six months prior to entry (48% vs. 32%, compared with 41% of Cohort 2 families overall) and in the year prior to entry (59% vs. 44%, compared with 52% of Cohort 2 families overall). Although families assigned to shelter appeared to have higher rates of ever having experienced homelessness (49% vs. 39%, compared with 47% for Cohort 2 families overall), this difference was not statistically significant. Families assigned to rapid re-housing were less likely than those assigned to shelter and those in the full Cohort 2 sample to have a subsidy for permanent housing at baseline (8% vs. 21%, compared with 18% of Cohort 2 families overall), a factor that influences families' ability to access housing (Rog et al., 2021). Across these variables, compared to the full Cohort 2 sample, shelter assigned families were more likely and rapid re-housing assigned families were less likely to have experienced homelessness in the past two years and to have a subsidy. Conversely, rapid re-housing families were more likely and shelter assigned families less likely to have spent time in their own housing in the past year.

Families in both groups resembled one another and the full Cohort 2 sample on other aspects of their homeless history, including having experienced homelessness as a child, having been homeless the night before entry and in the six months or year before entry. Families in both groups likewise resembled one another and the full Cohort 2 sample on other components of their housing history, including having been evicted from housing in the year prior to entry and having been on a lease or in a doubled up setting in the six months and year prior to entry.

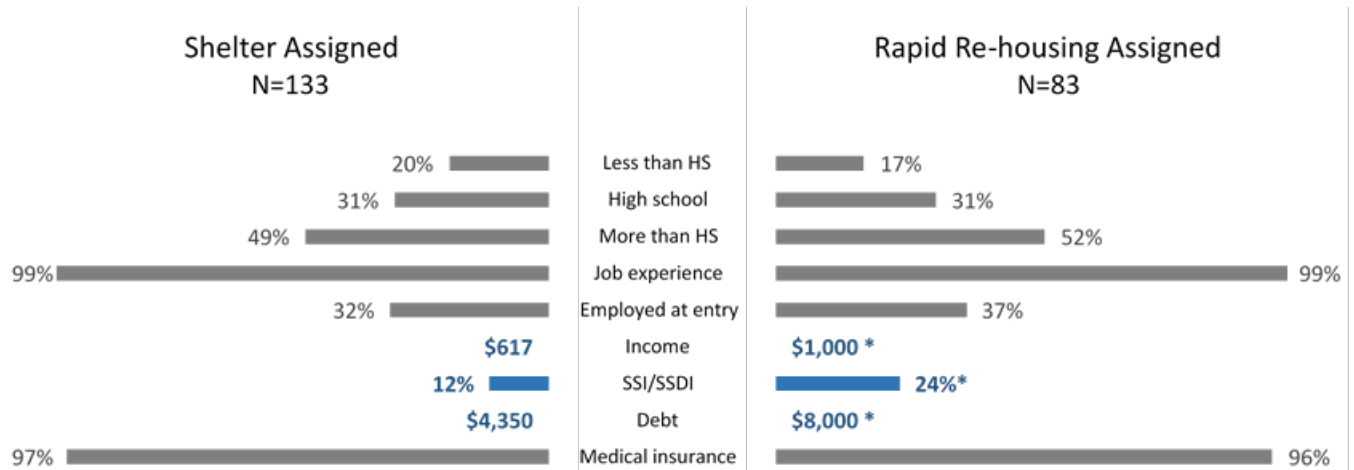*Exhibit 2-3 Housing and Homeless History of Families*

Shelter Assigned N=133		Rapid Re-housing Assigned N=83
49%	Homeless ever	39%
13%	Homeless as a child	11%
31%	Homeless past 2 years	**16%***
34%	On a lease past 6m	46%
48%	Ever on a lease	61%
62%	Homeless in last 6m	66%
70%	Homeless in last 12m	71%
52%	Homeless before entry	48%
63%	Doubled up last 6m	59%
74%	Doubled up last 12m	65%
32%	Own place last 6m	**48%***
44%	Own place last 12m	**59%***
13%	Eviction in past year	17%
21%	Have subsidy at baseline	**8%***

p < 0.05 ** *p* <0.01 *** *p* < 0.001. Blue lines indicate significant differences.

Human Capital, Resources, and Debt

The two groups of families resembled the overall Cohort 2 families at baseline (Rog et al., 2021) on some human capital and resource measures, including education, job experience, employment at entry, and access to medical insurance. As Exhibit 2-4 demonstrates, families in the two groups had comparable levels of education at baseline, with a third having a high school degree and half having some college. Additionally, nearly all of the families (99% in both groups) had previously held a job, and 32-38 percent were employed at the time of receipt of initial assistance. As Exhibit 2-5 shows, characteristics of the jobs held by families in the two groups were similar at the time of receipt of initial assistance. Additionally, nearly all families in both groups (96-97%) had health insurance. All of these findings mirror those of the broader Cohort 2 sample. Yet there were a couple of significant differences between the two groups. Families assigned to rapid re-housing as their initial assistance had significantly higher median monthly income ($1,000 vs. $617, compare with $817 for Cohort 2 families overall), and they were significantly more likely to receive SSI or SSDI (24% vs. 12%, compared with 19% of Cohort 2 families overall) than shelter assigned families. Additionally, rapid re-housing assigned families had higher median debt at baseline than shelter assigned families ($8,000 vs. $4,350, compared with $6,493 among Cohort 2 families overall). For each of these measures, rapid re-housing assigned families were slightly higher and shelter assigned families were slightly lower than Cohort 2 families overall.

Exhibit 2-4. Human Capital, Resources, and Debt of the HOHs of Families

	Shelter Assigned N=133		Rapid Re-housing Assigned N=83
Less than HS	20%		17%
High school	31%		31%
More than HS	49%		52%
Job experience	99%		99%
Employed at entry	32%		37%
Income	$617		$1,000 *
SSI/SSDI	12%		24%*
Debt	$4,350		$8,000 *
Medical insurance	97%		96%

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001. *Blue lines indicate significant differences.*

Exhibit 2-5. Employment Characteristics for HOHs' Jobs at Receipt of Initial Assistance

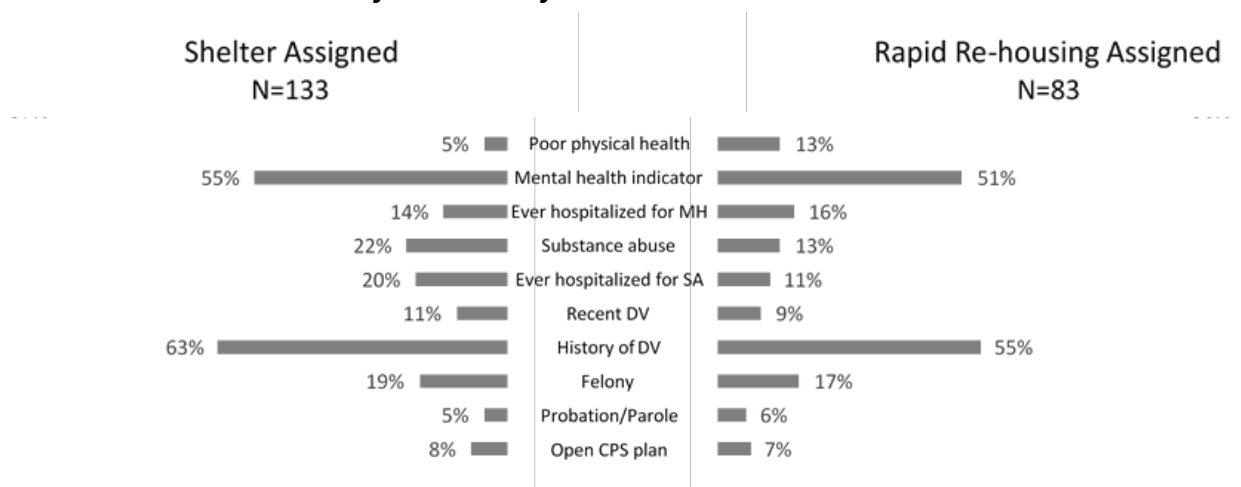|	Rapid Re-housing Assigned	Shelter Assigned
Hours per week (N=43, 29)	30	30
Median hourly wage (N=39, 29)	$11.00	$11.50
Working multiple jobs (N=43, 31)	5%	0%
Job offers benefits (N=43, 31)	28%	32%
Job type (N=43, 30)		
Permanent	70%	63%
Temporary	19%	27%
Seasonal/Day labor	12%	10%
Job offers opportunity for advancement (N=32, 26)	63%	65%

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Vulnerabilities

The two groups were generally comparable to one another and to the overall Cohort 2 sample on all measured vulnerability indicators. Half of the families in each group reported having one

or more mental health indicators at the time of the interview, including generalized anxiety disorder, depression, or low mental health functioning, and 14-16 percent reported having previously been hospitalized for mental health reasons (Exhibit 2-6). Rates of positive substance abuse screens and hospitalizations were slightly, but not statistically, higher for shelter assigned families than rapid re-housing assigned families (22% vs. 13% and 20% vs. 11%, respectively). In both groups, the majority of families indicated having experienced domestic violence at some point in the past, with about 10 percent having experienced it in the three months prior to the baseline interview. Less than 20 percent of families in either group had a history of felony conviction and five to six percent were on probation or parole at the time of the baseline interview. Fewer than 10 percent of families in either group had an open Child Protective Services (CPS) plan at baseline.

Exhibit 2-6. Vulnerabilities of the HOHs of Families

Shelter Assigned N=133 / Rapid Re-housing Assigned N=83

	Shelter Assigned	Rapid Re-housing Assigned
Poor physical health	5%	13%
Mental health indicator	55%	51%
Ever hospitalized for MH	14%	16%
Substance abuse	22%	13%
Ever hospitalized for SA	20%	11%
Recent DV	11%	9%
History of DV	63%	55%
Felony	19%	17%
Probation/Parole	5%	6%
Open CPS plan	8%	7%

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001. Blue lines indicate significant differences.

Implications for the Analysis

It is important to reiterate that the families included in this exploratory analysis were not randomly assigned to receive rapid re-housing or shelter as their initial assistance. Instead, at the time Cohort 2 families were recruited, family assignment to different interventions were influenced by a variety of factors, including assessment results,[3] specific provider criteria and denials, and family refusals and selection. The assessment at that time differed by county and predated the inclusion of vulnerability prioritization tools (such as the VI-SPDAT) in the coordinated entry systems. In addition, providers could deny families an existing service slot

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[3] Vulnerability prioritization tools, such as the VI-SPDAT, are designed to ensure people with the greatest needs receive priority for housing and homeless assistance rather than allocating assistance based on a first come-first served basis.

based on their own criteria, although there was movement in the counties to reduce or eliminate those criteria. Finally, families in all three counties had the option to refuse at least one recommended coordinated entry placement without losing their place on the waitlists if they did not feel it would be a good fit for their needs.

Therefore, differences identified between rapid re-housing assigned families and shelter assigned families may reflect how they were selected for the respective interventions. For example, families with relatively lower incomes as well as those with children under two and who may have had limited ability to work may have been intentionally assigned to shelter to provide more time to enter the housing market. On the other hand, families who spent time in their own place in the year prior to entry may have been more likely to be assigned to rapid re-housing because they had a track record in housing. We include these variables in the multivariate analyses to control for their effects on the outcomes as much as possible.

Section 3. Families' Housing and Homelessness Outcomes

Approximately 70 percent of families in the 30-month Cohort 2 sample, comparable percentages of both rapid re-housing assigned and shelter assigned families, were in their own housing 30 months after initial assistance.

Families continued to access housing and experience housing stability in the 12-month period between 18 and 30 months after initial assistance. The majority of families who accessed housing did so in the first 12 months after being assigned to their initial assistance. However, five percent of the rapid re-housing assigned families and 17 percent of the shelter assigned families first accessed housing between 12 and 30 months, such that by 30 months, most families in both groups had accessed housing at least once. Yet rapid re-housing assigned families accessed housing faster than shelter assigned families, on average in half the time. Rapid re-housing assigned families also spent more days in their own housing over the 30 months than shelter assigned families. As with access, this difference was driven by differences between the groups in the first six months.

Comparable percentages of families assigned to rapid re-housing and shelter returned to homelessness after entering housing. Eighteen to 20 percent of families returned to homelessness within 18 months after entering housing (a rate comparable to other studies).

Across all homeless and housing settings, families moved a median of four times over the 30 months (averaging approximately five moves over the 30 months and one move between 12 and 18 months). Families in both the rapid re-housing assigned and shelter assigned groups had similar numbers of moves.

Over the course of the 30 months after initial assistance, families in both groups decreased in the extent to which they experienced both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Approximately 23 percent experienced either sheltered or unsheltered homelessness over the final 12 months. Group differences in homelessness in the first six months after initial assistance diminished over time and were not statistically significant in the final 12 months of the 30-month period.

Although a number of family-level factors relate to one or more of the housing and homelessness outcomes, none of them emerged as consistent predictors of outcomes across models. Only having a subsidy at baseline related to more than one outcome, predicting greater access to housing and more nights in that housing.

The primary goals of the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative, through reforming the homeless service delivery systems in three counties, were to reduce the time families experience homelessness, increase their access to stable housing, and decrease their returns to homelessness. The findings from our 18-month analysis comparing families served before and after systems reform indicate that the Housing First focus of the systems changes helped more families access housing and helped them access it more quickly, leading to longer stays in housing for those served after reform. Families served before and after reform returned to homelessness and moved at a comparable rates. However, families served after reform spent more time in unsheltered settings than families served prior to reform (although they spent less time in shelter; Rog et al., 2021), a more negative unintended effect of systems change during a time of tight housing markets and high demand for homeless services.

In this section, we first examine the extent to which families are living in their own housing at 30 months, followed by examination of continued housing access, housing stability, and homelessness. We examine first how these outcomes compare with earlier 18-month findings and then explore if they differ between shelter assigned and rapid re-housing assigned families.

Families Living in Own Housing at 30 Months

Overall Finding: Approximately 70 percent of families in the 30-month sample were living in their own housing 30 months after initial assistance. Neither the type of initial assistance nor family characteristics were significant predictors of being in one's own housing at 30 months.

Living in Own Housing at 30 Months - Descriptive Analysis: Thirty months after initial assistance, 71 percent of families in the rapid re-housing assigned group and 67 percent of families in the shelter assigned group were in their own housing (a non-significant difference between the groups). For each group, the proportion in their own housing at 30 months is comparable to that at 18 months, when 70 percent of rapid re-housing assigned families and 62 percent of shelter assigned families were in their own housing. In both groups, families living in their own housing at 30 months had spent the majority of their time in their own housing in the past year (314 days for rapid re-housing assigned families and 306 days for shelter assigned families).

Living in Own Housing at 30 Months - Multivariate Analysis: We conducted a binary logistic regression analysis to test whether rapid re-housing assigned families were more likely to be in their own housing at 30 months than shelter assigned families when family characteristics were considered. Findings indicate that the likelihood of being in one's own housing 30 months after initial assistance is comparable across the groups, controlling for family characteristics (Exhibit

3-1). Across both groups, none of the family characteristics differentiated those who were in their own housing from those who were not. Caution should be used in drawing conclusions from the lack of significant findings. It is possible that the baseline factors included in the model are too distal from the 30-month point in time to have an effect on the outcome. However, it is also possible that the small sample size limits our ability to detect significant differences in the outcome.[4]

> **Logistic Regression**
> Examines the influence of cohort on differences in dichotomous variables, such as whether one is employed or not, controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model. The odds ratio indicates the probability that the outcome will occur given that the covariate occurs. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates the factor improves the odds of the outcome; an odds ratio less than 1 indicates the factor decreases the odds of the outcome.

Exhibit 3-1. Predicting Probability of Living in Own Housing 30 Months after Initial Assistance (N=213)

Covariate[+]	Odds Ratio
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	1.46
Age	1.02
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	1.44
Multiracial/other	1.77
Hispanic	1.20
Spouse/partner	1.06
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	0.54
4+	0.62
Any children under 2	0.65
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	0.55
More than HS	0.68
Employed at entry	1.05
Income at entry	1.14
Receives SSI/SSDI	0.73
Ever convicted of a felony	0.99
History of domestic violence	1.04
Substance abuse screen	0.85
Mental health indicator	1.43
Any time in own place in year before entry	1.30
Experienced a prior eviction	1.21
Has a subsidy	2.90

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; there are no significant differences across the counties.

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[4] Bivariate analyses that did not control for other characteristics indicated that having a subsidy at baseline was associated with greater likelihood of being in one's own place, but that no other covariates were associated with the outcome.

Access to One's Own Housing

Overall Finding: The 30-month analysis of the subset of Cohort 2 families indicates that a small number of families accessed housing for the first time between 18 and 30 months, although the majority of families accessed their housing in the first 12 months after initial assistance. Between the two groups, families assigned to rapid re-housing moved into housing faster than those with shelter as their initial assistance, but, by 30 months, comparable percentages had spent at least one night in their own housing.

Access to One's Own Housing - Descriptive Analysis: Families in the 30-month sample continued to access housing between 18 and 30 months, although this primarily involved families assigned to shelter for their initial assistance (see Exhibit 3-2). The majority of families in both groups who accessed their own housing first did so in the first 18 months after initial assistance. Only seven percent of the sample (4% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 9% of shelter assigned families) first accessed their own housing between 18 and 30 months. Rapid re-housing assigned families, on average, first accessed housing in half the time it took for shelter assigned families.

Exhibit 3-2. Cumulative Percentage of Families Entering Own Housing by Each Additional Six-Month Increment and Average Number of Days to Entering
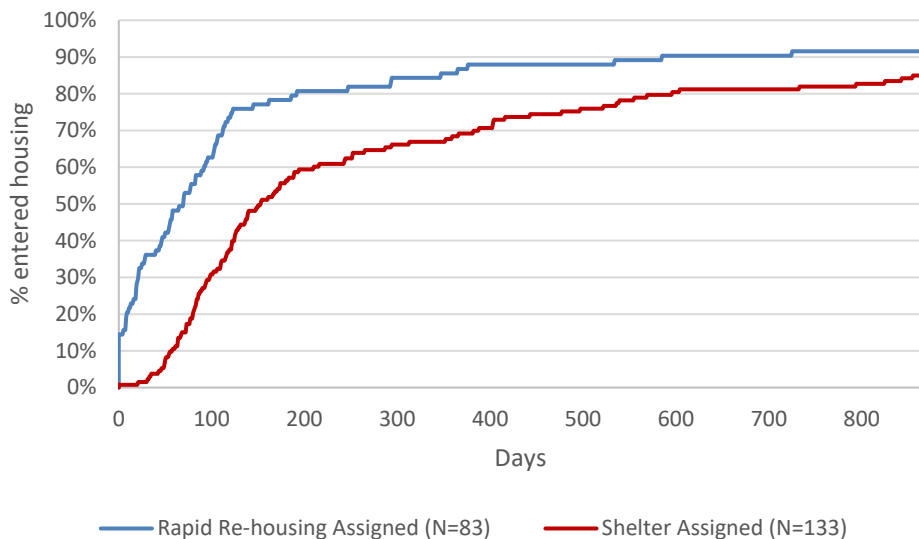
	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)		Shelter Assigned (N=133)	
	% with 1+ nights	Average days to housing	% with 1+ nights	Average days to housing
By time period:				
Days 0-180	78%	51	56%**	98***
Days 0-365	87%	73	68%**	125***
Days 0-517	88%	77	76%*	154***
Days 0-697	90%	90	81%	181***
Days 0-865	92%	98	85%	209***

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]Average is calculated among those who entered housing.

By 18 months, over 80 percent of the families in the 30-month sample had accessed their own housing (consistent with the 75% of families who had accessed their own housing by 18 months in the full Cohort 2 sample; Rog et al., 2021). By 30 months, nearly 88 percent of families in the 30-month sample had spent at least one night in their own housing.

As Exhibit 3-3 shows, at all points in time over the 30-month follow-up period, rapid re-housing assigned families had a higher probability of being in their own place, with 78 percent moving in within the first six months,[5] 87 percent moving in within the first year, 88 percent moving in within 18 months, 90 percent by 24 months, and 92 percent by 30 months. A comparable percentage of shelter assigned families (85%) entered their own housing during this 30-month period, but they moved in at a slower rate: 56 percent moved in within the first six months, 68 percent moved in within a year, 76 percent moved in within 18 months, and 85 percent by 30 months. It is important to note, however, as discussed further in Section 4, not all families retained their housing over this period; some families left their own housing and remained in other locations for the duration of the follow-up, while others temporarily left housing and lived in other settings but re-accessed their own housing by 30 months.

Exhibit 3-3. Time to Enter One's Own Housing (N=216)

Access to One's Own Housing - Multivariate Analysis: We conducted a survival analysis to test whether rapid re-housing assigned families accessed their own housing faster than shelter assigned families when family characteristics are considered. Survival analysis is a statistical technique for modeling how long it takes for an event of interest to occur (Singer & Willett, 2003), such as time to accessing one's own housing after receipt of initial assistance.

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[5] "Six-month" increments are approximate. The third and fifth increments ending at 517 and 865 days, respectively, were truncated to maximize the size of the samples and, consequently, have fewer days than other increments.

Results of a survival analysis predicting probability of entering one's own place over the 30-month follow-up are presented in Exhibit 3-4. The results indicate that families assigned to rapid re-housing were more likely than those assigned to shelter to enter housing in the 30-month time period, even when controlling for a number of individual and resource factors. Within each group, families who had a permanent subsidy at baseline, and families who spent time in their own place in the year before entry were more likely to enter permanent housing within 30 months after initial assistance. This is consistent with the 18-month cohort analysis findings that families with a subsidy at baseline and those with time in their own housing in the year prior to entry were more likely to enter permanent housing within 18 months after initial assistance (Rog et al., 2021). However, other factors related to housing at 18 months no longer played a role; being Multiracial (compared to White), having more than a high school education, being employed, or having higher income at entry no longer predicted greater likelihood of entering housing, while being Hispanic and having a history of eviction no longer predicted lower likelihood of entering permanent housing.

> **Survival Analysis**
>
> Tests the effect of initial assistance type on time. This approach models (1) the probability of moving to one's own housing and (2) how long it takes to move, controlling for the potential influence of other key variables included in the model. The hazard ratio indicates the likelihood that an event will occur for one group over another at a given point in time, controlling for other factors in the model. A hazard ratio of one indicates there is no difference between the groups. A hazard ratio less than one indicates there is a lower likelihood of the event occurring in one group over another; a hazard ratio greater than one indicates there is a greater likelihood of the event occurring in one group over another. For example, as seen in Exhibit 3-4, a HOH with a subsidy at baseline is 1.57 times more likely to be in housing than those without a subsidy.

Exhibit 3-4. Predicting Probability of Entering Permanent Housing over 865 Nights (N=213)

Covariate[+]	Hazard Ratio
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	1.89***
Age	0.99
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	1.24
Multiracial/other	1.51
Hispanic	0.61
Spouse/partner	1.02
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	0.86
4+	0.91
Any children under 2	0.73
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	1.00
More than HS	1.09
Employed at entry	0.95
Income at entry	1.08
Receives SSI/SSDI	0.89
Ever convicted of a felony	1.08
History of domestic violence	0.81
Substance abuse screen	0.93
Mental health indicator	0.81
Any time in own place in year before entry	1.50*
Experienced a prior eviction	0.89
Has a subsidy	1.57*

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; there are no significant differences across the counties.

Residential Stability

Overall Findings: We examined residential stability in three ways: the time spent in one's own housing over the 30-month period, returns to homelessness (among those who entered their own housing), and overall number of moves (in and outside of one's own housing). The findings indicate that both groups showed increases in the proportion of time they spent in their own housing over time relative to the time they spent in their own housing in the first six months after initial assistance, and that they maintained these increases for the duration of the 30-month follow-up.

When examining differences between the two groups, families assigned to rapid re-housing spent more nights in their own housing over the 30-month period, with the largest differences occurring in the first six months.

Both groups returned to homelessness within 6, 12, and 18 months of entering housing at comparable rates to each other (and to the rates of return within 6 and 12 months in the overall 18-month cohort sample). Families in both groups also experienced a comparable number of moves over the follow-up.

Time in One's Own Housing - Descriptive Analysis: Over the course of 30 months, families in both groups spent more than half of the nights during that period in their own housing, with those assigned to rapid re-housing spending approximately 100 more nights in their own housing.

Exhibit 3-5, presenting stability over time in six-month increments, shows that families assigned to rapid re-housing as initial assistance spent more nights in their own place than families assigned to shelter, but this difference was only statistically significant in the first six months. Between 18 and 30 months after initial assistance, rapid re-housing and shelter assigned families spent comparable numbers of nights in their own housing (an average of 241 nights among those assigned to rapid re-housing and 224 nights among those assigned to shelter). While both groups spent more time in their own housing over time relative to the first six months, only families assigned to shelter spent greater proportions of time in their own housing between 18 and 30 months than previously. This is likely in part due to the lower rates of access to and time spent in housing in this group in the earliest time period.

Exhibit 3-5. Average Number and Percentage of Nights in One's Own Housing in the 30 Months Following Initial Assistance and in Each Six-Month Period[+]

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)		Shelter Assigned (N=133)	
	Mean Days	**% Time**	**Mean Days**	**% Time**
Over 30 Months *[865 days]*	579	67%	480*	55%*
By time period:				
Days 0-180 *[180 days]*	96	53%	46***	26%***
Days 180-365 *[185 days]*	135	73%	113	61%
Days 365-517 *[152 days]*	107	70%	96	63%
Days 517-697 *[180 days]*	122	68%	116	65%
Days 697-865 *[168 days]*	119	71%	108	64%

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]Average is calculated for the full group of families with 30 months of follow-up data.

Time in One's Own Housing - Multivariate Analysis: Findings from ordinary least squares regression analysis of nights in one's own housing during the 30-month period indicate that, compared with families assigned to shelter as their initial assistance, families assigned to rapid re-housing spent significantly more nights in their own place. Controlling for type of initial assistance, families with a subsidy at baseline spent more nights in their own housing. Other individual factors were not associated with the outcome. This is consistent with the 18-month cohort analysis findings that families with a subsidy at baseline spent more nights in their own housing within 18 months (Rog et al., 2021). However, other factors related to nights in housing at 18 months, including being Multiracial (compared to white), having more education, or having higher income were not associated with more nights in housing at 30 months and being Hispanic, having a history of eviction, and having more children were no longer associated with fewer nights in housing at 30 months.

Exhibit 3-6. Predicting Nights in One's Own Housing in the 30 Months after Initial Assistance (N=213)

Covariate[+]	Coefficient
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	107.05*
Age	-0.48
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	32.61
Multiracial/other	82.93
Hispanic	-130.02
Spouse/partner	29.88
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	-60.54
4+	8.63
Any children under 2	-47.88
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	-22.88
More than HS	13.90
Employed at entry	-4.06
Income at entry	14.44
Receives SSI/SSDI	-29.93
Ever convicted of a felony	32.33
History of domestic violence	11.84
Substance abuse screen	-18.45
Mental health indicator	12.55
Any time in own place in year before entry	79.44
Experienced a prior eviction	-16.52
Has a subsidy	139.58*

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; families in Snohomish County had more nights in housing than those in King County.

Returns to Homelessness among Those Who Entered Their Own Housing - Descriptive Analysis: We examined the rate of returns to homelessness only for families for whom we had at least an 18-month period of observation for returns. This thus limited the analysis to families who entered housing within the first 12 months of receiving their initial assistance. As shown in Exhibit 3-7, comparable percentages of families assigned to rapid re-housing and shelter who entered their own housing returned to homelessness. Two to four percent returned to homelessness within six months of entering their own housing, 11 to 13 percent returned within 12 months (consistent with 11% of the overall Cohort 2 families who returned to homelessness within 12 months), and 18 to 20 percent returned within 18 months. There were no differences between the groups in returns to sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Among those who returned to homelessness within 18 months, it took an average of 295 nights for rapid re-housing assigned families and 335 nights for shelter assigned families from the date of entry into housing until return to either sheltered or unsheltered homelessness. These rates of return are consistent with those documented in the rapid re-housing literature (e.g., Gubits et al., 2018).

Exhibit 3-7. Returns to Homelessness Within 18 Months among those Entering Housing (N=158)

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=70)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
Within 6 Months	4% 3% Sheltered 1% Unsheltered	2% 2% Sheltered 0% Unsheltered
Within 12 Months	13% 10% Sheltered 3% Unsheltered	11% 7% Sheltered 4% Unsheltered
Within 18 Months	20% 11% Sheltered 9% Unsheltered	18% 11% Sheltered 7% Unsheltered
Mean Days to Return	295	335
Range of Days to Return	39-524	71-527

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$

Returns to Homelessness Among Those Who Entered Their Own Housing - Multivariate Analysis: Multivariate survival analysis indicated that type of initial assistance was not a significant predictor of the probability of returning to homelessness within 18 months for families who entered housing (see Exhibit 3-8). Families with a Hispanic HOH and a HOH with a felony conviction had a higher probability of returning to homelessness, while those with higher income at baseline had a lower probability of returning to homelessness. These findings

highlight different risk factors than those identified for returns to homelessness in our earlier analysis of returns, which found that for both cohorts, older age, employment, education, and having a subsidy at baseline were protective factors against returning to homelessness within a 12-month period, while having a mental health indicator was a risk factor. One explanation for the difference is that some of the baseline indicators, such as baseline employment and education, may have had less effect on rates of return as the time period got longer. A second explanation could be that as the percentage of people returning to homelessness got larger, there were fewer distinguishing characteristics between those who were able to remain stable and those who returned to homelessness. A final explanation could be that the smaller sample size resulted in reduced power to detect differences.

Exhibit 3-8. Predicting Probability of Returning to Homelessness in the 30 Months after Initial Assistance[+] (N=156)

Covariate[++]	Hazard Ratio
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	1.09
Age	1.03
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	0.87
Multiracial/other	0.51
Hispanic	5.66*
Spouse/partner	1.16
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 2)	
2-3	1.72
4+	0.39
Any children under 2	1.88
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	0.61
More than HS	1.16
Employed at entry	0.68
Income at baseline	0.78*
Receives SSI/SSDI	0.74
Ever convicted of a felony	4.16**
History of domestic violence	0.66
Substance abuse screen	0.43
Mental health indicator	0.69
Number of nights homeless in year before entry	1.00
Experienced a prior eviction	0.51
Has a subsidy	0.31

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]Among families who entered their own housing by 365 days and had at least 18 months of follow-up. [++]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; families in Snohomish County are less likely to return to homelessness than families in King County.

Number of Moves - Descriptive Analysis: One measure of residential stability is the extent to which families moved after they received their initial assistance. We measured moves across all homeless and housed settings, examining median as well as mean moves due to the skewness in the distributions of the measure. Over the 30-month follow-up, families in both the rapid re-housing assigned and shelter assigned groups experienced an average of 4.7 moves and a median of four moves (see Exhibit 3-9). In the first 18 months after initial assistance, rapid re-housing assigned families experienced an average of 3.2 moves and shelter assigned families experienced an average of 3.5 moves (consistent with the finding of an average of 3.5 moves for the full Cohort 2 sample), indicating that between 18 and 30 months, they experienced an average of 1.2-1.5 moves.

Exhibit 3-9. Number of Moves in the 30 Months Following Initial Assistance
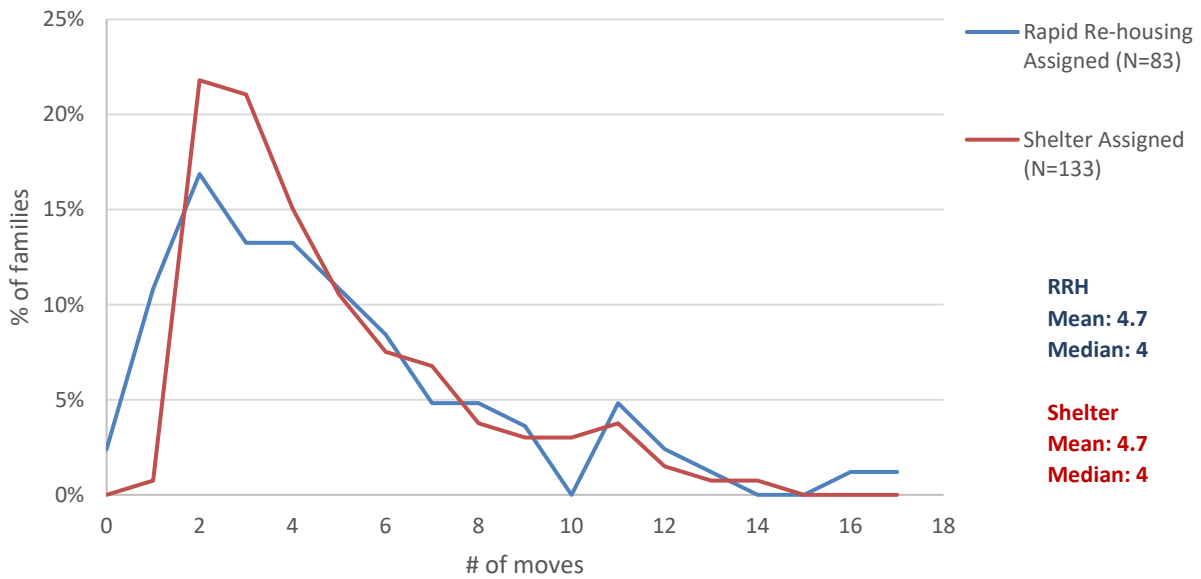
Number of Moves - Multivariate Analysis: As shown in Exhibit 3-10, multivariate analysis, using ordinary least squares regression, similarly indicates no differences across the two groups in numbers of moves. Families with HOHs who were employed at entry (compared with those who were unemployed) had fewer moves over the 30-month follow-up. Other individual factors were not associated with the outcome. These findings diverge from those of the 18-month cohort analysis (Rog et al., 2021), which found that those with a mental health indicator or a positive substance abuse screen and those with a history of eviction experienced more moves, while those of older age, those who were Multiracial, and those with a subsidy at baseline experienced fewer moves over the 18 months after initial assistance.

Exhibit 3-10. Predicting Number of Moves in 30 Months Following Receipt of Initial Homeless Assistance (N=213)

Covariate[++]	Coefficient
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	0.01
Age	-0.06
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	0.12
Multiracial/other	-0.59
Hispanic	1.06
Spouse/partner	-0.64
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	0.67
4+	-0.64
Any children under 2	0.39
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	-0.51
More than HS	-0.39
Employed at entry	-1.36**
Income at entry	-0.08
Receives SSI/SSDI	-0.27
Ever convicted of a felony	0.87
History of domestic violence	0.69
Substance abuse screen	0.57
Mental health indicator	0.03
Any time in own place in year before entry	0.01
Experienced a prior eviction	0.56
Has a subsidy	-0.91

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; there are no significant differences across the counties.

Homelessness

Overall Findings: Families in both groups decreased in the extent to which they experienced homelessness (both sheltered and unsheltered) over time, especially following the first six months after being assigned to their initial assistance. Approximately 23 percent experienced at least one night of either sheltered and/or unsheltered homelessness between 18 and 30 months, and 14 percent experienced at least one night of homelessness in the final six months. While high, this rate of homelessness is consistent with previously reported findings. For example, the Family Options Study (Gubits et al., 2016) reported that at 37 months, 17 percent of families in the rapid re-housing and usual care conditions had spent at least one night homeless in the past six months.

The majority of these families were no longer homeless at 30 months after initial assistance; at that point in time, approximately seven percent of families across both groups were living in sheltered (4% of families) or unsheltered (3% of families) homeless situations. This finding aligns with the 18-month cohort analysis, which found that approximately 10 percent of Cohort 2 families were living in a homeless situation at 18 months after initial assistance (Rog et al., 2021).

Families in the shelter assigned group, by definition, were more likely to be in shelter in the first six months after initial assistance and spent more time in shelter than rapid re-housing assigned families during that time period. These differences, however, diminished over time and were not statistically significant between 18 and 30 months. When family characteristics are considered, families assigned to shelter spent more nights in shelter over the 30-month follow-up after taking into account family characteristics. For unsheltered homelessness, the opposite pattern emerged; families assigned to rapid re-housing were more likely to experience unsheltered homelessness and for longer periods of time than shelter assigned families, again primarily in the first six months after initial assistance. These differences were, similarly, not statistically significant between 18 and 30 months. Across the 30-month follow-up, when family characteristics are considered, there are not significant differences in the number of nights of unsheltered homelessness between families in the two groups.

Homelessness - Descriptive Analysis: We examined the extent to which families experienced homelessness during the 30 months following receipt of initial assistance. Homelessness includes any time spent in shelter and in unsheltered arrangements (not just returns to homelessness after entering housing). By definition, all shelter assigned families spent time in shelter, averaging 158 nights over the 30 month timeframe. As Exhibit 3-11 shows, the majority of shelter assigned families' time spent in shelter occurred in the first six months after initial assistance, with the average number of nights dropping to 24 between six and 12 months after initial assistance and to 13 or fewer nights in each six-month increment thereafter.

Unsurprisingly, the rates of sheltered homelessness were significantly lower for families assigned to rapid re-housing compared to those for shelter assigned families. Overall, 53 percent of rapid re-housing assigned families spent one or more nights in shelter over the 30-month period, averaging 45 nights in shelter. Like the shelter assigned families, rapid re-housing assigned families' rates of shelter receipt and average nights in shelter were highest in the first six months and decreased precipitously after that time period.

In the final two six-month time periods, between 18 and 30 months, there were not significant differences between the two groups in the percentage of families who spent one or more nights in shelter or in the average number of nights spent in shelter.

Exhibit 3-11. Percentage of Families and Average Number of Nights of Sheltered Homelessness, by Type of Initial Assistance[+]

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)		Shelter Assigned (N=133)	
	% with 1+ nights in shelter	Average # of nights in shelter	% with 1+ nights in shelter	Average # of nights in shelter
Over 30 Months *[865 days]*	53%	45	100%**	158***
By time period:				
Days 0-180 *[180 days]*	47%	22	100%***	104***
Days 180-365 *[185 days]*	8%	6	26%**	24**
Days 365-517 *[152 days]*	8%	5	18%*	13
Days 517-697 *[180 days]*	6%	7	14%	7
Days 697-865 *[168 days]*	7%	4	9%	9

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]Average is calculated for the full cohort of families with 30 months of follow-up data.

Unsheltered housing showed a different pattern. Almost double the percentage of families assigned to rapid re-housing compared to those assigned to shelter (45% vs. 23%) experienced at least one night unsheltered over the 30-month follow-up, averaging 47 and 26 nights, respectively. The difference between the two groups was strongest (and only significant) for the first six month period after initial assistance and dissipated over time. Among rapid re-housing assigned families, 34 percent had experienced one or more nights of unsheltered homelessness in the 18 months following initial assistance, consistent with the rate among families in Cohort 2 as a whole (34%) and significantly higher than the rate of shelter assigned families (17%; Rog et al., 2021). Groups did not differ in the likelihood of experiencing unsheltered homelessness or the average nights unsheltered in the final 12 months of the follow-up.

Exhibit 3-12. Percentage of Families and Average Number of Nights of Unsheltered Homelessness, by Type of Initial Assistance[+]

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)		Shelter Assigned (N=133)	
	% with 1+ nights unsheltered	Average # of nights unsheltered	% with 1+ nights unsheltered	Average # of nights unsheltered
Over 30 Months *[865 days]*	45%	47	23%**	26
By time period:				
Days 0-180 *[180 days]*	28%	17	7%***	2***
Days 180-365 *[185 days]*	12%	12	6%	3
Days 365-517 *[152 days]*	7%	5	11%	5
Days 517-697 *[180 days]*	10%	6	10%	8
Days 697-865 *[168 days]*	8%	8	8%	7

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]Average is calculated for the full cohort of families with 30 months of follow-up data.

When both types of homelessness are considered, approximately 23 percent of families experienced at least one day of either sheltered and/or unsheltered homelessness between 18 and 30 months, and 14 percent experienced at least one day of homelessness between 24 and 30 months (Exhibit 3-13). The majority of these families were no longer homeless at 30 months after initial assistance; at that point in time, approximately seven percent of families across both groups were living in sheltered (4% of families) or unsheltered (3% of families) homeless situations.

Families assigned to shelter were significantly more likely to experience homelessness and spent more nights homeless than families assigned to rapid re-housing over the full 30-month period. This difference was driven by differences in the first six months after initial assistance, whereas homelessness did not differ across the groups thereafter.[6]

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[6] A multivariate linear regression predicting total nights homeless in the final 12 months of the follow-up found no evidence of difference between groups in number of nights homeless, adjusting for family characteristics. Only number of nights homeless in the year prior to entry predicted number of nights homeless in the final 12 months.

Exhibit 3-13. Percentage of Families and Average Number of Nights of Any Homelessness, by Type of Initial Assistance+[+]

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)		Shelter Assigned (N=133)	
	% with 1+ nights homeless	Average # of nights homeless	% with 1+ nights homeless	Average # of nights homeless
Over 30 Months *[865 days]*	69%	93	100%***	185***
By time period:				
Days 0-180 *[180 days]*	59%	39	100%***	107***
Days 180-365 *[185 days]*	16%	18	28%*	28
Days 365-517 *[152 days]*	13%	10	22%	18
Days 517-697 *[180 days]*	14%	14	20%	16
Days 697-865 *[168 days]*	13%	11	15%	16

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]Average is calculated for the full cohort of families with 30 months of follow-up data.

Homelessness - Multivariate Analysis: Results of an ordinary least squares regression predicting the number of nights spent in shelter over 30 months are presented in Exhibit 3-14. As expected given their group assignment, families assigned to rapid re-housing spent significantly fewer nights in shelter over the 30 months after initial assistance. Consistent with the findings of the 18-month cohort analysis (Rog et al., 2021), families with two or three children (vs. zero children) and those with more nights homeless in the year prior to entry spent more nights in shelter. Additionally, those with income from SSI/SSDI spent fewer nights in shelter over the 30 months after initial assistance. Other factors identified as important in predicting nights in shelter over 18 months after initial assistance (Rog et al., 2021) no longer played a role; those with higher baseline income had fewer nights in shelter and those with a positive substance abuse screen had more nights in shelter over the 18 months after initial assistance.

Exhibit 3-14. Predicting Number of Nights in Shelter in the 30 Months Following Receipt of Initial Assistance (N=213)[7]

Covariate[+]	Coefficient
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	-110.36***
Age	1.36
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	-15.19
Multiracial/other	1.83
Hispanic	40.03
Spouse/partner	-6.89
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	50.67**
4+	-6.94
Any children under 2	-8.95
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	-5.07
More than HS	13.62
Employed at entry	-21.78
Income at entry	4.08
Receives SSI/SSDI	-52.87*
Ever convicted of a felony	1.68
History of domestic violence	-5.46
Substance abuse screen	11.54
Mental health indicator	16.25
Nights homeless in the year before entry	0.23**
Experienced a prior eviction	19.38
Has a subsidy	-32.73

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; families in Pierce County had significantly fewer nights in shelter than families in King County.

Results of an ordinary least squares regression (Exhibit 3-15) predicting the number of nights spent unsheltered during the 30-month period following initial assistance indicate that families with rapid re-housing and shelter as initial assistance did not differ in time spent unsheltered, adjusting for family characteristics. Moreover, no family characteristics or resources predicted number of nights spent unsheltered.[8] Previously reported findings (Rog et al., 2021) indicated that families in Cohort 2 with a history of felony conviction or eviction, a positive screen for mental health concerns, or a greater number of nights homeless in the year before entry spent

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[7] Given the large difference in rates of experiencing one or more nights in shelter, a linear regression was conducted predicting number of nights in shelter among those with at least one night in shelter over the 865 nights after initial assistance. Findings were consistent with those in the model presented here.

[8] Unadjusted correlations between model covariates and number of nights of unsheltered homelessness over the 30 months likewise yielded no significant associations.

more nights unsheltered in the first 18 months after initial assistance. While a history of felony and experience of prior homelessness showed marginally significant trends in predicting number of nights unsheltered over 30 months, none of these characteristics significantly predicted unsheltered homelessness over the 30 months.

Exhibit 3-15. Predicting Number of Nights Unsheltered in the 30 Months Following Receipt of Initial Assistance (N=213)

Covariate[+]	Coefficient
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	19.77
Age	0.32
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	-8.70
Multiracial/other	13.11
Hispanic	26.27
Spouse/partner	12.43
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	-4.32
4+	-6.42
Any children under 2	9.91
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	23.13
More than HS	16.05
Employed at entry	-4.89
Income at entry	2.22
Receives SSI/SSDI	14.85
Ever convicted of a felony	23.73
History of domestic violence	-5.95
Substance abuse screen	-12.16
Mental health indicator	-3.53
Nights homeless in year before entry	0.07
Experienced a prior eviction	-12.00
Has a subsidy	-6.85

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; there are no significant differences across the counties.

Examining Patterns of Factors Related to Housing Outcomes

Exhibit 3-16 provides a summary of the findings showing a relationship between the covariates and housing and homeless outcomes. Green cells indicate a relationship between the covariate and improved outcomes and red cells indicate a relationship between the covariate and a more negative outcome. The pattern of findings suggests families assigned to rapid re-housing compared to families assigned to shelter have quicker access into housing and, in turn, longer

stays in their own housing over the time period reviewed, as well as fewer nights in shelter. No differences emerge between rapid re-housing and shelter assigned families, however, in likelihood of living in one's own housing at 30 months, returns to homelessness, number of nights unsheltered, or number of moves. Consistent with previously reported findings (Rog et al., 2021), having a subsidy related to increased likelihood of accessing and staying in one's own place. Having spent time in one's own place in the year before entry and having fewer nights homeless in the year prior to entry also predicted more positive housing outcomes. Having higher income at entry predicted reduced likelihood of returns to homelessness, while being employed at entry predicted fewer moves, but these factors were not consistent predictors across models. Similarly, having more children or a HOH who was Hispanic and a history of felony was related to poorer outcomes in individual models, but not across models. Other previously identified risk factors in the 18 month cohort analysis (e.g., lower education, substance abuse and mental health concerns and history of eviction; Rog et al., 2021), were not significant covariates across the models at 30 months. It is possible that this reflects limited power to detect effects in these smaller sample sizes, that the impact of these factors dissipates over the longer time period, and/or that these factors are less important within the Cohort 2 sample only.

Exhibit 3-16. Summary of Trends across Housing and Homelessness Outcomes[+]

	Prob of Living in Own Housing at 30 Months	Prob of/ Time to Access Housing	# Nights in Housing	Prob of/ Time to Returns	# Nights Unshel-tered	# Nights in Shelter	# Moves
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)		GREEN	GREEN			GREEN	
Hispanic				RED			
More children						RED	
Employed at entry							GREEN
Higher income at entry				GREEN			
Income from SSIDI						GREEN	
Any nights in own place in prior year		GREEN					
Nights homeless in prior year						RED	
Felony				RED			
Has a subsidy		GREEN	GREEN				

[+]Green cells indicate the factor is related to improved outcomes and red cells indicate that the factor is related to worse outcomes.

Section 4. Understanding the Nature and Stability of the Housing

This section explores the experiences and journeys families took in seeking and obtaining housing after being assigned to their initial assistance of either rapid re-housing or shelter. Both rapid re-housing assigned and shelter assigned families reported similar barriers to finding and keeping housing. Housing costs were the most commonly cited barrier to keeping housing, while stable employment was cited as key in retaining housing. Rapid re-housing assigned families typically received help in their housing search, including help from a case manager and information on landlords. Those receiving rapid re-housing most commonly obtained rental assistance and a security deposit, but other help with costs was not uncommon.

Families' housing trajectories in their own housing and the nature of families housing settings differed most between the two groups in the first six months after initial assistance. Rapid re-housing assigned families entered housing more quickly and consequently spent more time in their own housing in the first six months than shelter assigned families. Families' housing trajectories between 18 and 30 months were largely consistent with their housing trajectories as of 18 months. The majority of those in housing at 18 months remained in housing continuously thereafter, while at least half of those who were not in their own housing at 18 months were still not in their own housing as of 30 months. Families assigned to rapid re-housing were more likely than those assigned to shelter to access housing. Families who did not access housing were most commonly living doubled up at 30 months, with a smaller proportion in shelter, transitional housing, unsheltered, or in other settings.

Among families in their own housing at 30 months, shelter assigned families were nearly three times as likely as rapid re-housing assigned families to be receiving some form of assistance, most commonly a Section 8 voucher. Families in both groups who were in their own housing at 30 months had similar perceptions of the quality of their housing and neighborhoods. Over half perceived their housing as a very good fit, safe, and stable. Nevertheless, a number of families raised a variety of concerns around the safety and quality of their housing and/or neighborhoods. Shelter assigned families were more likely to report housing problems with mice, but otherwise families in both groups reported similar levels of problems with their housing. In general families across the groups reported similar levels of residential risks. Shelter assigned families also were more likely to report having recently received free food or meals.

Although the majority of families were in their own housing at 30 months, in many cases this housing appeared to be somewhat tenuous, relying on shared living situations and not what families wanted long term. In both groups, some families did not perceive their housing to be permanent, and nearly half planned to move in the next year, most commonly in order to access better quality or safer housing or neighborhoods.

The Family Homelessness Systems Initiative 30-month sub-study provided an opportunity to understand the journeys families took in seeking, obtaining, and staying in housing after their initial assistance of either rapid re-housing or shelter. In this section, we describe their experiences finding and keeping housing, and the types of supports provided to assist in both finding and moving into housing, with a deeper look at the specific nature of the rapid re-housing support. We examine the families' trajectories into their own housing over time and how these trajectories differ between those who were assigned shelter or rapid re-housing as their initial assistance. We end with a description of where families are living at 30 months. Of those in housing 30 months after initial assistance, we describe the nature and quality of that housing as well as whether the housing is subsidized.

Assistance Received in Accessing Housing over the Course of 30 Months

As noted in Section 3, the majority of both rapid re-housing assigned families (92%) and shelter assigned families (85%) moved into their own housing at some point over the 30 months after initial assistance.

Rapid Re-housing Assistance: Consistent with prior studies (e.g., Burt et al., 2016; Byrne et al., 2015; Finkel et al., 2016), 70 percent of the families in the rapid re-housing assigned group were able to access housing with the rapid re-housing assistance and an additional 22 percent entered housing either on their own or with some other type of assistance. Only eight percent of the families in the rapid re-housing assigned group never accessed housing in the 30-month period.

Among the families in the rapid re-housing assigned outcomes sample, less than four percent (N=3) did not accept the assistance, either because they had received another permanent housing offer or because they were concerned that they did not make enough money to pay for the rent after the rapid re-housing assistance expired. Twenty percent (N=17) of the assigned group accepted the rapid re-housing assistance, but did not use it. In one case, the family was still in the process of acquiring the assistance. In all other cases the families had not been able to obtain housing with the assistance, either because they were not able to find housing in the time required (i.e., did not get sufficient help in finding a unit or negotiating with landlords,

time ran out in the process), or they had one or more housing barriers (e.g., past evictions, no rental history, or low income or credit) that thwarted their efforts to obtain housing. The eight percent of families assigned to rapid re-housing who did not access their own housing at all over the 30-month follow-up all fell into this category. An additional seven percent (N=6) of families did not use the assistance and did not recall the details of the offer, but these families all accessed their own housing by other means.

Nearly a fourth (23%) of the shelter assigned families also received rapid re-housing assistance at some point during the follow-up period and moved into housing with it. For some of these shelter assigned families, the subsequent assignment to rapid re-housing was planned; being placed in shelter was considered an interim placement while families searched for housing.

Subsidies and Other Housing Assistance: Families were asked at each data collection wave if they had another form of housing assistance and whether they were able to use it. Across the baseline through 30-month interview waves, shelter assigned families were significantly more likely (45%) than rapid re-housing assigned families (16%) to report that they were currently using a subsidy (e.g. a tenant or project-based voucher or permanent supportive housing).

Largest Barriers to Finding Housing

Although the majority of families accessed housing at least once during the 30 months (and, as noted in Section 3, approximately 70% were in their housing at 30 months), most reported one or more barriers to finding and accessing their own housing. The barriers were similar across rapid re-housing and shelter assigned families. The top concerns noted were finding an affordable place to live and having income to meet the demands of the market. A few noted that there were particular income requirements that they could not meet, such as needing income that was three times the rent. As one HOH noted, "I do not have enough money to live on and not enough money to pay rent."

Evictions and credit problems (both bad credit and no credit) were the most common background issues, highlighted often in tandem with having no income. As one HOH noted, "I do not have enough credit or rental history or money." At times, eviction was noted as a marker on one's record that thwarted the ability to break into the overall rental market, illustrated by the remark "I have an eviction so I cannot get a regular apartment." Other background issues noted, although with less frequency than evictions and poor or no credit, included past criminal involvement and felonies, and poor rental histories.

Resource issues were noted by small proportions of both groups, including having no work or insufficient work, lack of transportation, lack of funding for down payment or for some other

up-front costs, needing help from a case manager or someone else to navigate the system, and just a basic lack of resources. A few families in the shelter assigned group also cited problems with landlords not taking the Section 8 voucher.

Family-related issues were cited by a small percentage of the families, and included health and mental health concerns, family size, domestic violence, and general family issues. Other barriers noted were typically very specific in nature and program or agency related.

> **Largest Barriers to Finding Housing (Most Common)**
>
> Financial/affordability
> Evictions
> Credit – bad or no
> Other background issues
> Resource issues
> Family related issues

What Helped the Most in Finding Housing

When asked what helped them most in finding housing, the majority of families in both groups noted a source of help. Those who did not report a source of help often said nothing helped them or it was not applicable as they had not secured housing. For both groups, a specific case manager or agency was the single most common response, noted by approximately one fifth of the respondents. As one HOH stated, "My navigator and case manager both supported me and gave me the tools to find and keep housing." Factors related to one's own efforts, however, were strikingly common across the two groups, second to noting the help of a case manager or agency. Families cited themselves as the reason they found housing, often saying "me" or "I did it myself." As one HOH stated, "I realized that I had to figure it out myself." Relatedly, several mentioned their use of the internet (citing Google, Zillow, Craigslist) as a key resource to finding housing. A few spoke of being proactive and motivated to take care of their families.

In addition, a small proportion (less than 10 %) of the families cited helpful Section 8 or rapid re-housing resources, having patience and/or persistence in the process, the help of family/friends, and knowing or finding a landlord or manager as well as networking, and having a job. Other sources of help noted by one to three people in each group included God, having new resources, paying off debt, help from a child's school, being from the area, and just being lucky.

> **What Helped Find Housing (Most Common)**
>
> Case manager/agency
> Myself
> Section 8/RRH
> Persistence/patience
> Internet resources

The Nature of Rapid Re-Housing Support in Finding and Financing Housing

Rapid re-housing assigned families who moved into housing with rapid re-housing assistance (N=58) were asked a number of questions about the help they received to find housing and the financial assistance received.

Finding Housing: A third or more of the families who accessed housing with rapid re-housing received a list of addresses, a referral to an online database to find private landlords, and/or help in finding an apartment (Exhibit 4-1). Smaller percentages received transportation, accompaniment to look for an apartment, and/or some other type of assistance. Sixty-seven percent of the families accessing their own housing with the rapid re-housing assistance received one or more of these supports. In addition, among rapid re-housing assigned families accessing housing, 69 percent indicated that they had a case manager.

Exhibit 4-1. Type of Help in Looking for Housing Received among Rapid Re-housing Assigned Families Receiving Rapid Re-housing Assistance

	% Received (N=58)
A list of addresses or landlords	38%
Referral to an online private landlord database	34%
Help from someone finding an apartment	33%
Transportation to look for housing	22%
From someone going with you to look for apartments	21%
Other assistance finding housing	10%

Financial and Other Assistance While in Rapid Re-housing: Several forms of financial assistance were provided as part of the rapid re-housing assistance. As Exhibit 4-2 shows, the majority of families received help with a security deposit and monthly rent. Approximately 40 percent also received help with furnishing the apartment. Smaller percentages received help with utilities or utility deposits, moving expenses, or other financial assistance.

Exhibit 4-2. Type of Financial Assistance Received Among Rapid Re-housing Assigned Families[+]

Type of Assistance	% Received (N=58)
Security deposit	90%
Monthly rent	86%
Furnishing the apartment	38%
Utilities or utility deposits	17%
Moving expenses	10%
Any other financial assistance	12%

[+] Among families who moved into housing with rapid re-housing assistance

A little more than a quarter of these families (28%) also received the support of an employment navigator while looking for or receiving rapid re-housing. During this time period, the use of an

employment navigator was being tested with segments of families in all three counties to help improve access to employment.

Families who were assigned to rapid re-housing and moved in with rapid re-housing assistance received monthly rent for an average of six months, but length of support ranged from 1 to 16 months. Only one of the rapid re-housing assigned families who moved in with rapid re-housing assistance was still receiving the assistance at the time of the 30-month interview; this family had been receiving assistance for 16 months.

Among rapid re-housing assigned families who moved into housing with the assistance but for whom it had ended as of the 30-month interview (N=57), approximately one third (N=19) reported that they could not pay the rent and needed to move. Those who continued to pay the rent after the rapid re-housing financial assistance ended typically did so through their own employment income. HOHs commonly reported getting a new job or working at a job that paid enough money to afford it; a few others said that they got a second job or worked more hours, or had two members of the household working. Smaller percentages used some other type of financial assistance, such as military benefits, TANF, and child support, or some type of income-based housing or Section 8 certificate. A few also noted a shared housing situation.

Where Families Lived Over the 30 Months after Receiving Initial Assistance

In this section, we explore in more detail the range of places families in the rapid re-housing and shelter assigned groups spent their time throughout the 30 months. Exhibit 4-3 presents the number of nights families spent in each location in each six-month increment across the 30 months. The data provide some interesting over-time trends, with both groups increasingly spending more time in their own housing and shifting in the time spent in homeless situations. It is important to emphasize that not all these trends can be attributed to the initial assistance received; individual family characteristics also account for some of these differences.
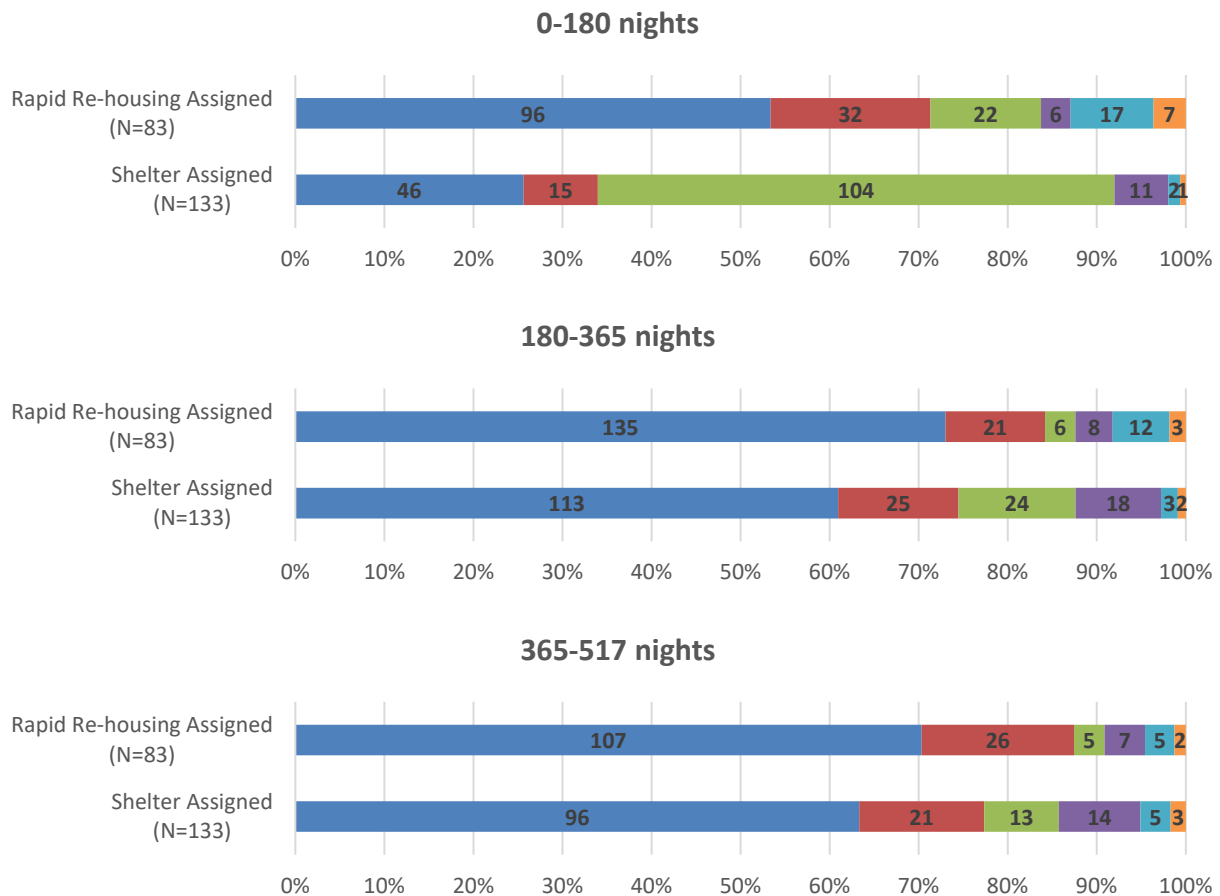
During the first six months after receiving initial assistance, the two groups differed in time spent in almost every setting. Compared to shelter assigned families, families in the rapid re-housing assigned group spent more nights in their own place, doubled up, and in unsheltered situations, but far fewer nights in shelter. Rapid re-housing assigned families spent more than twice the number of days in their own place and in doubled up settings than those in the shelter assigned group, but shelter assigned families spent almost five times the number of days in shelter as the rapid re-housing assigned families.
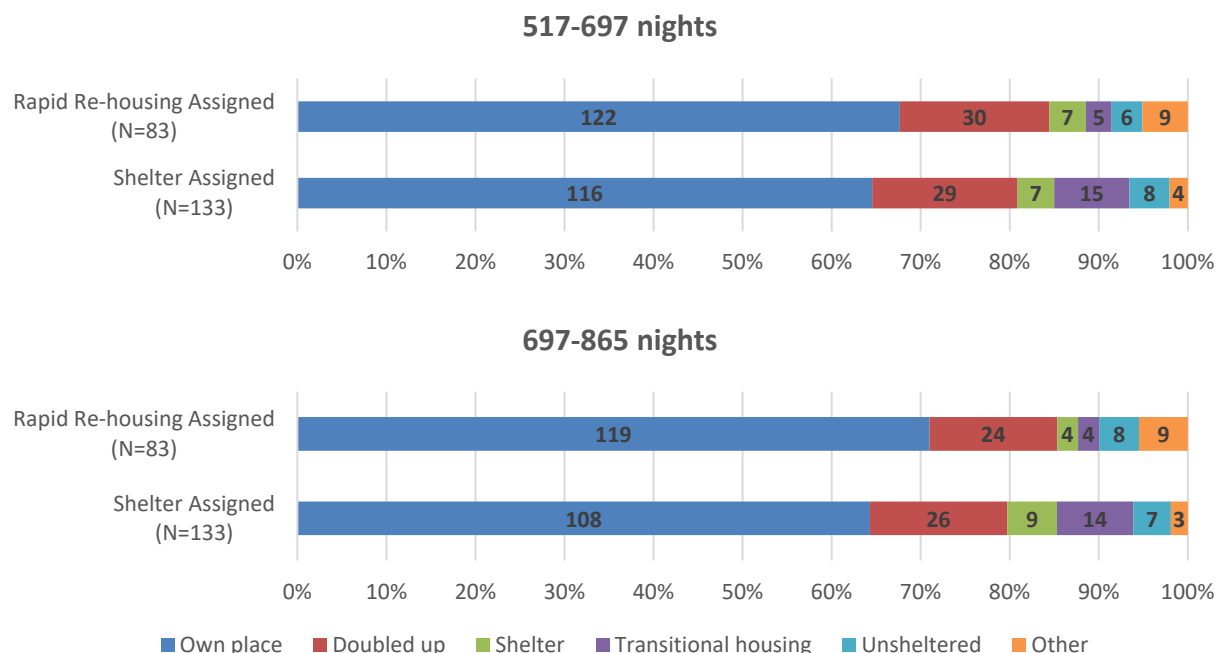
Between six and 12 months, the difference between the groups in nights spent in one's own housing diminished, with both groups showing increases in the proportion of time spent

housed. The difference in nights spent doubled up also was no longer significant, with rapid re-housing assigned families showing decreases in the proportion of nights spent doubled up and shelter assigned families showing increases. The proportion of time spent in shelter diminished significantly for both groups during this time period, but was still significantly greater for those in the shelter group. The difference in nights unsheltered was no longer significant. Time in transitional housing was statistically comparable between the groups, with families assigned to shelter showing increases in the proportion of time spent in transitional housing.

Beyond 12 months, there were no significant differences between the groups except that shelter assigned families spent more nights in transitional housing in the final 6 months. Comparing time spent in each setting during the final six months to time spent in the first six months, both groups showed significant increases in the proportion of nights spent in their own housing and decreases in the proportion of nights spent in shelter. Shelter assigned families additionally showed increases in the proportion of nights spent doubled up.

Exhibit 4-3. Length of Stay by Location Type in Six Month Increments

0-180 nights

180-365 nights

365-517 nights

517-697 nights

	Own place	Doubled up	Shelter	Transitional housing	Unsheltered	Other
Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)	122	30	7	5	6	9
Shelter Assigned (N=133)	116	29	7	15	8	4

697-865 nights

	Own place	Doubled up	Shelter	Transitional housing	Unsheltered	Other
Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)	119	24	4	4	8	9
Shelter Assigned (N=133)	108	26	9	14	7	3

■ Own place ■ Doubled up ■ Shelter ■ Transitional housing ■ Unsheltered ■ Other

Families' Individual Trajectories in Housing Over 30 Months

In the 18-month report (Rog et al., 2021), we presented families' trajectories of accessing and staying in housing to provide additional insight into the relative success that families had in achieving housing stability before and after systems reform. Exhibit 4-4 displays five trajectories that characterized families' journeys over 18 months after receiving initial assistance.
In this section, we present the 18-month trajectories for the subset of the rapid re-housing assigned and shelter assigned families included in the 30-month outcomes analysis and examine how they extend over the 18 to 30 month period.

The first two trajectories consist of families who were able to access their own housing during the 18-month period and remained in that housing through the remainder of the follow-up period. Trajectory 1 families entered housing within 180 days of receiving initial assistance and remained in their own housing. Trajectory 2 families entered housing after the first 180 days (typically within 12 months), and stayed throughout the remainder of the 18-month period. Trajectory 3 families also can be considered relatively successful in that they entered housing, typically in the first 180 days, had an interruption in housing, but then reentered and were living in their own housing at the end of the 18-month period. Taken together, these three trajectories account for 71 percent of the rapid re-housing assigned families and 63 percent of the shelter assigned families (see Exhibit 4-4).

Exhibit 4-4. 18-Month Trajectories in One's Own Housing

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)	Shelter Assigned (N=133)
Trajectory 1: Entered early, stayed	49%	41%
Trajectory 2: Entered late, stayed	6%	15%*
Trajectory 3: Re-stabilized	16%	7%*
Trajectory 4: Left	17%	14%
Trajectory 5: Never Entered	12%	24%*

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

Families in the fourth and fifth trajectories were not successful in achieving housing stability within the 18-month period. Trajectory 4 families (17% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 14% of shelter assigned families) entered housing during the 18-month period but were living in other places at the end of the 18-month period. Trajectory 5 families (12% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 24% of shelter assigned families) did not access their own housing at all during the follow-up period.

Across the 18 months, families in the rapid re-housing assigned group were significantly more likely to access housing at all and more likely to re-stabilize than shelter assigned families, but less likely to be in the group that entered late and stayed in housing.

Exhibit 4-5 presents the percentage of families in each trajectory that remained in their own place for the full time period between 18 and 30 months, those that spent no time in their own place, and those that spent some time in their own place. Information on the amount of time spent in one's own housing between 18 and 30 months provides an indication of housing stability during that time. Findings indicate that the housing stability of families between 18 and 30 months was fairly consistent with their trajectories over the first 18 months for both groups.

Of those in their own housing at 18 months (Trajectories 1-3), the majority of families (60-76%) remained in their own housing continuously between 18 and 30 months, and the remaining percentage of families spent one or more nights in their own housing during this time period. In both groups, families who got into their own housing early and remained in housing through 18 months were the most likely (76%) to remain in housing continuously from 18 to 30 months.

Exhibit 4-5. Trajectories in One's Own Housing and Housing Stability from 18 to 30 Months

	All Nights in Own Place 18-30m	Some Nights in Own Place 18-30m	No Nights in Own Place 18-30m
Rapid Re-housing Assigned Families (N=83)			
Trajectory 1: Entered early, stayed (N=41)	76%	24%	0%
Trajectory 2: Entered late, stayed (N=5)	60%	40%	0%
Trajectory 3: Re-stabilized (N=13)	62%	38%	0%
Trajectory 4: Left (N=14)	0%	50%	50%
Trajectory 5: Never Entered (N=10)	0%	30%	70%
Shelter Assigned Families (N=133)			
Trajectory 1: Entered early, stayed (N=54)	76%	24%	0%
Trajectory 2: Entered late, stayed (N=20)	65%	35%	0%
Trajectory 3: Re-stabilized (N=9)	67%	33%	0%
Trajectory 4: Left (N=18)	0%	50%	50%
Trajectory 5: Never Entered (N=32)	0%	38%	63%

Of those who dropped out of their housing before 18 months (Trajectory 4), half never accessed housing in the following 12 months and half spent at least one night in their own housing. For the final trajectory group that had not been successful in accessing housing in the first 18 months, the majority (63-70%) continued to be unsuccessful in accessing housing, with 30-38 percent spending some portion of the time in their own housing.

Case examples of trajectories are provided in Exhibit 4-6.

Exhibit 4-6. Examples of Families' Housing Trajectories

Rapid Re-Housing Example: Got into housing early, stayed throughout remainder of 30-month period   Lila, a 37-year old woman, was living with her partner and three children in their own place in Pierce County when she and her husband separated and he moved out. She could not afford the rent on her own. She called 211 and was offered rapid re-housing assistance. The provider indicated they would help her find an apartment and a job, pay her security deposit, and provide limited-time rental assistance. She moved between her car, motels, and shelter while looking for housing. It took her about three months to move into her new place. She said bad credit and an eviction on her record were the biggest barriers to finding housing. She received rapid re-housing rental assistance for one year and, during that time, was able to find a job that covered the rent when the assistance ended. She stayed in the same apartment for the remainder of the 30-month follow-up. She liked her apartment and her neighborhood but said that there was not enough public transportation and struggled to get to work when her car broke down.
Rapid Re-Housing Example: Never accessed housing in 30 months   Donna was a 40-year-old mother, with two adult children and an 8-year old daughter, who struggled with physical and mental health problems and had a felony conviction. Due to previous evictions, Donna was living in an apartment in King County that was in her son's name. She quit her job to care for her mother following a stroke and was unable to pay the rent so her landlord asked her to leave. She called 211 and was referred to coordinated entry, which then referred her to a rapid re-housing program. The provider told her they would help her pay off overdue rent, help her find an apartment and a job, pay her security deposit and storage fees, and provide short-term rental assistance. However, she was not able to find an apartment and indicated that she did not stay in contact with the provider. She said her previous evictions were the biggest barrier to finding housing. During the remainder of the 30-month follow-up period she moved between her car, shelter, and various family members' places but none of them could offer her a permanent place to stay.
Shelter Example: Did not access housing by 18 months, but entered by 30 months   Katie was a 30-year old single mother of four children, ranging in age from one to 10 years old. She was living with her grandfather but moved out of his place due to family conflict. She was provided a list of shelter numbers by 211 and was able to find a place for herself and her children. She had multiple mental health diagnoses and was not on her medication. The shelter staff was working with her to get back on her medications and to find a more permanent place to live. After two months in shelter, she moved into a transitional housing program. At the time, she had no job and no income, having already received 60 months of TANF. After one year in transitional housing, she received a tenant-based Section 8 voucher; however, she lived with her sister for about a month while looking for a landlord to take the subsidy. She was in her own apartment with a voucher by the 30-month interview. She did not like the apartment because she said the landlord was not responsive to her maintenance requests, and she was falling behind on the rent and her bills.

Largest Barriers to Keeping Housing: Not surprisingly, the single most common challenge to keeping housing cited by families in both groups was the affordability of the housing and being able to pay the rent. "No matter how much I work, I cannot make enough money," was a response that characterized the concern. Families noted the struggle in making ends meet, with the sheer price of rent and utilities. One family noted that they had to "budget to the penny," another spoke of paying rent first before buying food, and several noted the precariousness of feeling like they have it figured out until something unforeseen happens or their landlords raise the rent.

Closely related to the struggle of paying the rent is having the income, and ideally, employment to continue to pay the rent. Families cited difficulties in maintaining their employment or working the number of hours that can support the rent. Several noted job changes, losses, and lapses that challenged their ability to stay in their

Largest Barriers to Keeping Housing (Most Common)
Affordability/finances
Keeping employment/income
Family issues

housing. Several were without employment or income. A few families cited child care as a companion challenge to employment. The lack of child care was a barrier for night shifts or the ability to change jobs. One respondent stated, "I kept losing jobs because I could not work required shift hours because of child care operation." Another noted, "Extra hours were available, but daycare was closed so I was limited."

Family issues were cited, most commonly by families in the shelter assigned group compared to families the rapid re-housing assigned group. Domestic violence was the single most common family issue raised as a barrier to keeping housing. Other family-related challenges included health issues, family relationship issues, and not having an apartment of the appropriate size for the family.

Other barriers raised by one to three people include car trouble and public transportation problems, landlord issues, having to have money for deposits and other payments, making too much money to qualify for specific places, time limits in some programs, continued problems with bad credit, bad decision-making, feeling discriminated against, relapse, and being in jail, among others.

What Helped Most in Keeping Housing: By far, the most common response to what helped most in keeping one's home, for both groups but especially among rapid re-housing assigned families, was having a stable, steady job. One HOH stated that they were "working so we can afford the housing." Several additional families, primarily in the rapid re-housing assigned

group, spoke of having more than one job, working more hours, or more than one person working in the house to help support the housing.

The responses, overall, differed between the groups. For those in the shelter group, the next most common response for help in keeping housing was either having a Section 8 voucher or other type of housing assistance. Other common responses to the question of what helped shelter assigned families keep housing included the assistance of an agency and their being reportedly more responsible. "Paying bills and rent on time, and working hard" was an illustrative response. Families in both groups cited the support from families and friends, receiving services, and being motivated to not become homeless again and to have a better life for their children, as things that helped them keep their housing. As one HOH noted, she was motivated by "my will to live and support my children."

> **What Helped Keep Housing (Most Common)**
>
> Steady job/work (Both)
> Working more hours/jobs (Rapid re-housing)
> Section 8/housing assistance (Shelter)
> Agency support (Shelter)
> Family/friends support (Both)
> Being more responsible (Shelter)
> Other income (Rapid re-housing)
> Motivated for children/not to be homeless again (Both)
> Having a low-cost apartment (Rapid re-housing)

A small percentage of families in the rapid re-housing assigned group also noted the benefits of having a low-cost/affordable apartment as well as the importance of other income, such as SSI, to help pay the rent. A range of other responses were given by one or two people as to what helped them keep their housing, including having a roommate, being consistent, having transportation to work, income management and budgeting, not being sick, and having a lenient landlord.

Where Families Were Living at 30 Months

Similar to the stability of the 18-month trajectories, where families were living at 30 months was very consistent with where they were living a year earlier. As Exhibit 4-7 presents, an average of 70 percent of families in both the rapid re-housing and shelter assigned groups were in their own housing at 30 months, and approximately 15 percent were in a doubled up situation. Less than 10 percent (and generally five percent or less) were each in shelter, in transitional housing, unsheltered, or in some other situation. For each group, the proportions in each location at 30 months are comparable to where the families were living at 18 months.

Living in One's Own Place at 30 Months: One hundred forty-eight families across the two groups were living in their own housing at 30 months, 59 in the rapid re-housing assigned group

and 89 in the shelter assigned group. Among the rapid re-housing assigned families in housing at 30 months, 75 percent had accessed housing with rapid re-housing at some earlier point. Forty-two percent, in fact, were still living in the place they accessed with rapid re-housing assistance.

Exhibit 4-7. Where Families Were Living at 18 and 30 Months

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)		Shelter Assigned (N=133)	
	18-Month Location	30-Month Location	18-Month Location	30-Month Location
Own place	70%	71%	62%	67%
Doubled up	17%	13%	15%	17%
Shelter	2%	4%	6%	5%
Transitional housing	4%	2%	8%	6%
Unsheltered homeless	1%	2%	6%	3%
Other (e.g., motels, institutions)	6%	7%	2%	3%

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

As Exhibit 4-8 shows, although similar proportions of the two groups were living in their own home at 30 months, they differed significantly in the extent to which they were in their housing with assistance. Over half of the shelter assigned families (60%) were living in housing with assistance, most commonly with a Section 8 voucher (36%) and others noting permanent supportive or other permanent housing (14%), rapid re-housing assistance (7%), or some other housing, such as low-income housing (3%).

Less than a quarter (22%) of the rapid re-housing assigned families, however, were living in housing with assistance. Of the families with assistance, the largest percentages were in permanent supportive or other permanent housing (10%) or had a tenant-based Section 8 voucher (9%).

Median income varied significantly by group and housing and assistance receipt at three months. Families assigned to rapid re-housing who were in their own housing without assistance had a significantly higher median income ($2,200) than families in their own housing with assistance ($1,188 among rapid re-housing assigned families and $723 among shelter assigned families) and those not in their own housing ($805 among rapid re-housing assigned families and $720 among shelter assigned families). Shelter assigned families in their own housing without assistance had higher median incomes ($1,875) than shelter assigned families in their own housing with assistance ($720).

Exhibit 4-8. Living in One's Own Place at 30 Months With and Without Housing Assistance, by Initial Assistance Type

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
Own place with assistance	22%	60%***
Type of Assistance		
Rapid re-housing	3%	7%
Tenant-based Section 8 voucher	9%	36%***
Permanent supportive housing/other permanent housing	10%	14%
Other housing/assistance	0%	3%

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

A considerable number of families in their own housing in both groups at the end of the follow-up (25% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 17% of shelter assigned families) were on one or more waitlists for some type of assistance or housing. Most commonly, this was a Section 8 waitlist (for 22% of rapid re-housing assigned families and 15% of shelter assigned families), with a smaller proportion of families (8% of those assigned to rapid re-housing and 3% of those assigned to shelter) on another waitlist (e.g., transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, or some other type of housing assistance).

Residential Risks: As noted earlier, families in both groups noted that the biggest challenge they faced in keeping their housing was just making ends meet. Exhibit 4-9 offers some insights into the scarcity of families' resources and how lack of resources places families at risk in their housing. Shelter assigned families were significantly more likely than rapid re-housing assigned families to receive free food or meals (61% vs. 41%), but all other residential risks had comparable rates in the two groups. About one third of families borrowed money from friends to help pay bills, one quarter had their service disconnected by the telephone or cell phone company, and a quarter of HOHs went hungry. Thirteen percent of families in both groups did not pay the full amount of rent or mortgage. Smaller percentages of families experienced other problems making ends meet, such as forgoing a visit to a doctor or hospital, not paying a full utility bill or having utility services turned off, experiencing an eviction, or having their children go hungry.

Exhibit 4-9. Families Residential Risks in the Past Three Months

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
Received free food or meals	41%	61%*
Borrowed money from friends to help pay bills	36%	29%
Service was disconnected by the telephone or cell phone company	24%	28%
Respondent went hungry	19%	26%
Did not pay full amount of rent or mortgage	14%	12%
Household member needed to see a doctor or go to the hospital but could not due to cost	7%	12%
Did not pay full amount of gas, oil, or electricity bill	8%	7%
Evicted for not paying the rent or mortgage	3%	6%
Service was turned off by gas or electric company	3%	4%
Children went hungry	0%	6%

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

Nature of the Housing at 30 Months: Families in both groups who were in their own housing at 30 months after initial assistance were generally living in an apartment with two to three bedrooms and one to two baths, although there was a considerable range in the size and type of units. Some families were able to find detached houses to rent, others were in nonstandard situations such as in attics or basements, finished or unfinished.

Among those in their own housing, families in both groups, but particularly those assigned to rapid re-housing assistance, were sharing their living situations, splitting the rent to make it affordable, although that might result in families living in dining rooms or living rooms. Some moved in with family, but were paying rent and expenses. One HOH indicated that she was living with a friend in her friend's mother-in-law's unfinished basement. Her friend had a house that was being renovated, and once it was done, the respondent would need to move and look for housing. Another respondent noted that she lived with her mother in a shared housing situation and paid rent, but the lease was in her mother's name. She said that it was often a miserable situation and there was "a lot of yelling" with her mother, highlighting the fact that the situation could be tenuous and despite seeing it as permanent she was vulnerable to losing it since her mother held the lease. In these situations, although the HOH considered it shared

housing, when the housing they were living in was tied to other family members or friends, the living situation was precarious.

A number of families, particularly shelter assigned families, who were living in their own housing with assistance (a tenant-based voucher or permanent supportive or other permanent housing) viewed the assistance they were receiving as a program in which they were enrolled. Several shelter assigned families noted having finished transitional housing and graduated into Section 8 housing. In some instances, they perceived their housing as temporary and had not necessarily selected it themselves. For example, a HOH in a shelter assigned family described her situation as "shared housing" in a Christian setting that had rules tenants had to follow, including attending the church affiliated with the housing. Another shelter assigned HOH noted that she was living in young adult housing that did not allow her parental rights. Another shelter assigned HOH in Snohomish County noted that she had recently "graduated" from a program and was living in a one bedroom unit that was not big enough for her family. Upon graduating, she received a Housing Choice Voucher she could use for a larger unit, but was having difficulty coming up with the security deposit needed to move in. One rapid re-housing assigned family was living in a permanent supportive housing program for people with disabilities, which required annual renewal. Although the HOH did not perceive this as a temporary setting, her family was placed in a unit on the second floor and the stairs proved difficult for the HOH with the disability. The line between temporary/transitional settings and permanent housing was blurred in these situations.

Although the majority of families in both groups and at comparable rates indicated they could remain in their housing as long as they wanted to (approximately 84%), less than half of those assigned to rapid re-housing assistance (42%) and half of those assigned to shelter (49%) indicated they perceived that housing as permanent (a non-significant difference between the groups), and nearly half (45%) indicated that they planned to leave their housing in the next year.

Families who planned to leave housing in both groups cited similar reasons, most commonly aspirations for housing of better quality or with different amenities (e.g., laundry facilities) or that was owned rather than rented. Families also commonly cited desire for a different location or neighborhood that was safer, a higher quality environment, or more proximal to family or a job or school. Some families in each group noted they wanted to find more affordable housing and some indicated they were waiting for a Section 8 voucher. Other reasons mentioned by individual families included relocating out of state for a job or to be near family, a need to get away from family conflict and abuse, or not wanting to remain in current housing due to its rules. One family was being required to leave because the landlord was not willing to renew the

lease due to a desire to rent out separate rooms for more revenue while another wanted to remain in their housing but was facing possible eviction due to owed rent that had been stolen.

Families' Assessments of their Housing at 30 Months: Families in both groups provided similar ratings of how well their current housing at 30 months fit their needs. As Exhibit 4-10 shows, over half of families perceived their housing as a good or very good fit, and less than 10 percent perceived their housing as a bad or very bad fit.

Exhibit 4-10. Perceived Goodness of Fit of Current Housing at 30 Months

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
A very bad fit	3%	5%
A bad fit	7%	1%
An OK fit	38%	36%
A good fit	33%	26%
A very good fit	19%	32%

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001.

The majority of families in both groups indicated they felt quite stable and safe in their current housing arrangements (see Exhibit 4-11). While those in the shelter assigned group provided somewhat higher ratings of housing safety and stability, these differences were not statistically significant.

Exhibit 4-11. Families' Perceptions of Their Own Housing at 30 Months

	How Safe is the Housing		How Stable is the Housing	
	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
Not at all	3%	2%	8%	4%
A little	10%	6%	15%	8%
Somewhat	20%	22%	19%	24%
Quite a lot	66%	70%	58%	64%

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001.

Families across groups also generally reported similar rates of problems with their current housing (see Exhibit 4-12). Water leaks were the most common problem, noted by about a third of each group. Shelter assigned families tended to note higher frequency of problems, with only a difference in the prevalence of mice reaching statistical significance. In open-ended responses, several families described serious housing quality issues, such as mold, likely a result of the water leaks. Relatedly, a couple of HOHs spoke about taking their housing "as is" to get either lower rent and/or to avoid credit and background checks.

The comments of families, both to the positive and negative aspects of their housing and neighborhoods, provides texture to understanding of the factors cited above as influencing their desire to move. Aspects of the housing families often noted as positive were the unit's affordability (some due to having a Section 8 or other type of assistance), the unit size and having rooms for each of their children, and having laundry facilities in the unit or on-site. The phrase "having a roof over our heads" was not uncommon as a note of gratitude for having a home. A few spoke of management as being supportive.

Exhibit 4-12. Housing Problems in Own Housing at 30 Months

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
Water leaks	27%	34%
Cockroaches	10%	15%
Mice	5%	17%*
Rats	8%	12%
Exposed electrical wiring or holes in the floor	3%	7%
Areas of peeling paint or crumbling plaster larger than a sheet of paper	12%	17%
Without heat or running water for more than 24 hours		
1-2 times	12%	15%
3 or more times	7%	6%

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

Interestingly, many of the housing aspects that had positive features also could have negative aspects. Many said that their apartment was too small and some felt it was too costly. The absence of amenities were also cited, especially not having a washer and dryer in the unit or having them on-site but having to pay for them, lacking a dishwasher, having no storage, and having no backyard. Some were on high level floors and had disabilities that made the stairs

difficult to climb. Moreover, several families complained about the management not following through with needed maintenance. Some found the housing very expensive, particularly the cost of utilities, and especially if they could not control them.

Families' Assessments of Their Neighborhoods: In general, families did not rate their neighborhoods as highly as they rated their housing. As Exhibit 4-13 shows, less than half of the families in both groups indicated they liked their neighborhood quite a lot and 44-52 percent perceived it as quite safe. There were not significant differences between the groups in their feelings about their neighborhoods.

Exhibit 4-13. Families' Perceptions of Neighborhoods at 30 Months

	How Much Do You Like the Neighborhood		How Safe is the Neighborhood	
	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=59)	Shelter Assigned (N=89)
Not at all	18%	17%	11%	6%
A little	16%	12%	16%	8%
Somewhat	26%	33%	30%	34%
Quite a lot	40%	38%	44%	52%

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001.

Those who noted positive aspects of their neighborhoods noted the convenience of the location being near school, childcare, and/or work, near shopping, having a backyard and/or playground, having transportation, having helpful people, and having parking.

The safety of the neighborhood was often noted as a less desirable aspect. Families in the rapid re-housing assigned group most commonly mentioned crime and violence. Many spoke of shootings, violence, crime, and break-ins. A second common complaint was the extent of drug activity in the area, often finding drug paraphernalia on the ground or near their homes, and individuals hanging out near their home, often searching through garbage or making it feel unsafe at night. A number of families also noted the lack of public transportation, location on a busy street or in an un-walkable area.

For shelter assigned families, the top concerns were similar—individuals loitering in the area, crime and violence, and drugs. Like the rapid re-housing assigned families, shelter assigned families described concerns around people spending time near their homes. However, shelter

assigned families more than rapid re-housing assigned families raised concerns around the location of the housing and the neighbors. Some noted that it was not in an ideal location, far from where they need to go, that it did not offer sufficient access to public transportation or proximity to school, work or stores, or that they did not like that it was in the vicinity of a prison or casino. One participant described the neighborhood as having "not enough kid friendly places." With respect to neighbors, respondents raised concerns about noise, cleanliness, and drug use, as well as criminal history. A few noted concerns about the neighborhood not being diverse or the neighbors being racist.

Living in Another Type of Setting

Sixty-eight families (24 rapid re-housing assigned families and 44 shelter assigned families) were not living in their own housing at 30 months. Forty percent of these families never accessed housing throughout the 30-month period and 28 percent had accessed, but lost their housing during the first 18 months and did not regain it. The remaining 32 percent of families had accessed housing and had been relatively stable in their own housing during the initial 18-month period, but experienced challenges that led them to subsequently lose their housing. HOHs typically noted one or more barriers, including not having income to pay the rent, having bad credit, and having evictions.

Among those who were not in their own housing at 30 months, settings ranged from shelter and transitional housing, living with family members or friends, to a mix of doubled up, shelter, and unsheltered homeless situations. Almost a third (28%) of families were living in either shelter or some form of temporary or transitional housing. For example, one family was in a program with a three-month lease and another family noted that they were staying in shelter in which they could not have any company. Another family noted that they were in a shelter, and were using it as an opportunity to get an eviction paid off. A few families indicated that they were in shelters or temporary housing because of domestic violence situations.

Doubled up situations (49% of the families) were with families and friends; some were very time limited or sporadic, and others were more long-term arrangements. One family described their situation as bouncing around among family members. Another noted she had been living in her mother's home since the 18-month interview, recovering from surgery and not working. Several spoke of living with their grandparents, often for as much as two to three years.

Nine percent of families not in their own homes were living in unsheltered homeless situations, either fully or for sporadic periods of time, interspersed with doubled up and other situations. These families were living in cars, tents, and in and out of vacant housing situations. One HOH, for example, was staying in a mix of shelter, vacant homes, and friends' cars and trailers. Child

Protective Services (CPS) had removed her children and she no longer had benefits that helped her pay for housing. Some tried to make their homeless situations more tenable by staying in a hotel or motel when they had funds; a few lived more long-term in a hotel or motel. In fact, at the time of the 30-month interview, 15 percent of those families not in their own home (10 families) were in another setting, most commonly a self-paid motel, with the remaining families' HOH incarcerated or in a substance abuse treatment program. These families had been living in these other settings for a median of 37 nights, with the time living in that setting ranging widely from two nights to more than a year.

Section 5. Families' Employment and Income Outcomes

Families assigned to rapid re-housing and shelter worked more and had larger incomes over time over the 30 months after initial assistance. Differences between the groups in employment and income at 30 months are attributed to family characteristics. The percentage of rapid re-housing assigned families who were employed increased significantly between entry and 30 months. However, the percentage of families employed at 30 months did not differ between the two groups after accounting for individual differences. Families in both groups increased the amount of time they worked in the final 12 months of the follow-up compared to the previous 18 months.

Families' incomes rose significantly over the course of the 30 months after initial assistance, and families maintained or increased their income between 18 and 30 months. Families assigned to rapid re-housing had higher median incomes over time and at 30 months. However, after adjusting for family characteristics, the difference between the groups in their income at 30 months was not significant. These findings suggest that family characteristics played a larger role in affecting changes in employment and income over time than type of initial assistance.

Families with a HOH with a felony had worse outcomes with respect to both employment and income. Several other family-level factors related to outcomes, but none consistently did so across the models.

In addition to improving families' housing and homelessness outcomes, the Family Homelessness Systems Initiative aimed to improve families' employment and income. In our 18-month analysis comparing families served before and after systems reform, we found families served after reform had significantly more employment and higher incomes, independent of family characteristics (Rog et al., 2021). In this section, we examine changes in these outcomes between the 18 and 30 month periods for the subset of families assigned to either rapid re-housing or shelter, and explore any differences in these outcomes between the two groups.
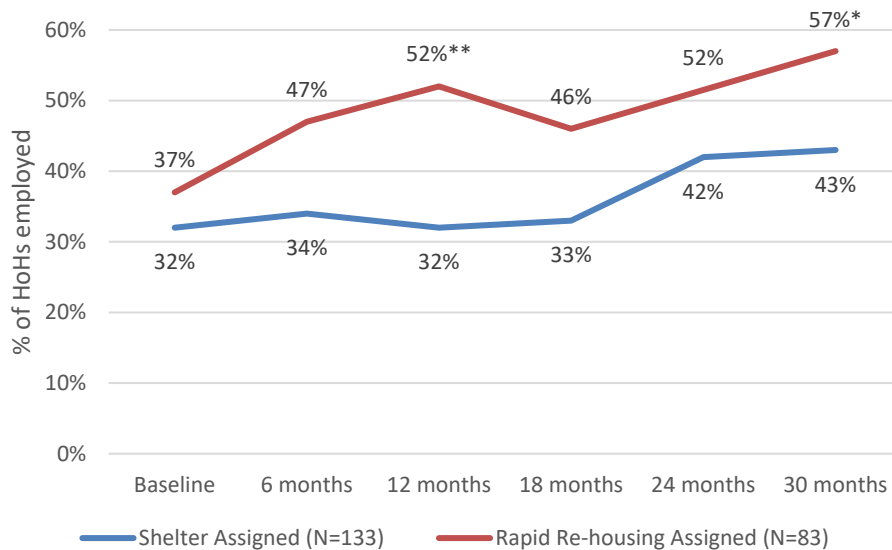
Employment

Overall Findings: Between 18 and 30 months, more families across the two groups were employed and for a greater proportion of the time than in previous periods of time. Descriptive findings indicate that rapid re-housing assigned families were more likely than shelter assigned families to be employed at each point in time following receipt of initial assistance, although this difference was statistically significant only at 12 and 30 months after initial assistance.

Rapid re-housing assigned families worked during significantly more of the 30 months overall than shelter assigned families. However, when family characteristics were included in a multivariate model, groups did not differ in their employment outcomes at 30 months, suggesting that family characteristics may play a greater role than homelessness assistance in long-term employment.

Employment - Descriptive Analysis: Exhibit 5-1 shows the percentage of families employed over time in the rapid re-housing assigned and shelter assigned groups. Rapid re-housing assigned families were significantly more likely to be employed at 12 and 30 months after initial assistance. As the exhibit demonstrates, both groups continue to increase in the percentage of families employed, with nearly half of shelter assigned families and over half of rapid re-housing assigned families employed at 30 months after initial assistance. Over the full 30 months, both groups experienced a significant increase in their rates of employment, but only rapid re-housing assigned families experienced a statistically significant increase in the percentage of families employed from entry to 30 months after initial assistance (from 37% to 57%).

Exhibit 5-1. Employment in the 30 Months Following Initial Assistance [+]

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+] Significance tests compare the rates of employment for rapid re-housing assigned families to shelter assigned families at each point in time.

Over the course of the 30-month follow-up period, rapid re-housing assigned families worked an average of 14.8 months, while shelter assigned families worked significantly less, averaging 10.9 months (see Exhibit 5-2). This pattern of findings is consistent over time, with rapid re-housing assigned families working significantly more months than shelter assigned families between entry and 18 months and between 18 and 30 months.

Exhibit 5-2. Months Employed in the 30 Months Following Initial Assistance

	Rapid Re-housing Assigned (N=83)	Shelter Assigned (N=133)
Months Employed Over 30 Months	14.8	10.9**
Months Employed Over 18 Months	8.5	5.9**
Months Employed 18 to 30 Months	6.8	5.3*

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

Families in both groups worked for more months over time, with families in both groups working for a significantly greater proportion of the final 12 months than previously.

Exhibit 5-3. Predicting Employment 30 Months Following Receipt of Initial Assistance (N=213)

Covariate[+]	Odds Ratio
Rapid re-housing initial assistance (compared to shelter)	0.60
Age	0.88
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	1.50
Multiracial/other	1.61
Hispanic	1.09
Spouse/partner	0.63
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	0.94
4+	2.12
Any children under 2	0.75
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	0.64
More than HS	0.74
Employed at entry	1.24
Income at entry	1.13
Receives SSI/SSDI	0.36*
Ever convicted of a felony	0.35*
History of domestic violence	0.82
Substance abuse screen	2.97*
Mental health indicator	0.59
Any time in own place in year before entry	1.32

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; there are no significant differences across the counties.

Employment - Multivariate Analysis: A logistic regression was used to predict employment status at 30 months following initial assistance (Exhibit 5-3). Controlling for family characteristics and employment status at entry, rapid re-housing assigned families and shelter assigned families did not differ in the percentage employed at 30 months. Consistent with findings from the 18-month cohort analysis (Rog et al., 2021), HOHs with a felony were less likely to be employed at 30 months. HOHs receiving SSI or SSDI were also less likely to be employed at 30 months. In addition, families with a HOH with a positive substance abuse screen were more likely to be employed at 30 months, whereas this was not a significant factor at 18 months (Rog et al., 2021). This finding may be due in part to the fact that a lower percentage of families with a positive substance abuse screen than families without a positive screen were employed at entry (18% vs. 38%), and thus had greater ability to increase their employment over time. It may also indicate that other unmeasured variables that correlate with substance use play a role in facilitating employment.

Income

Overall Findings: Descriptive analysis indicated that incomes increased significantly over the 30-month time frame for both groups. Rapid re-housing assigned families had a higher monthly median income at 30 months and at each previous wave than shelter assigned families, and experienced greater increases in income over time. However, as with employment, when family characteristics were included in a multivariate regression model, change in income over time no longer differed across the two groups. This suggests that family characteristics play a larger role in affecting changes in income over time than type of initial assistance.

Income - Descriptive Analysis: Families in both groups experienced significant increases in their income over the entire 30-month time frame. Over time, both groups experienced significant increases in their median income at comparable rates (58% from $1,000 to $1,580 for rapid re-housing assigned families and 54% from $617 to $950 for shelter assigned families). Median income for families in both groups continued to increase between 18 and 30 months, with shelter assigned families' income increasing 11 percent (from $855 to $950) and rapid re-housing assigned families' incomes increasing four percent (from $1,517 to $1,580). Increases in income between 18 and 30 months were not significant for either group or across groups. As Exhibit 5-4 indicates, rapid re-housing assigned families had higher monthly median income at every six-month time period than families in the shelter assigned group. These differences were statistically significant at every time period except six months following initial assistance when families in the rapid re-housing assigned group experienced a dip in their median incomes and shelter assigned families experienced an increase.

Exhibit 5-4. Monthly Median Income in the 30 Months Following Initial Assistance [+]
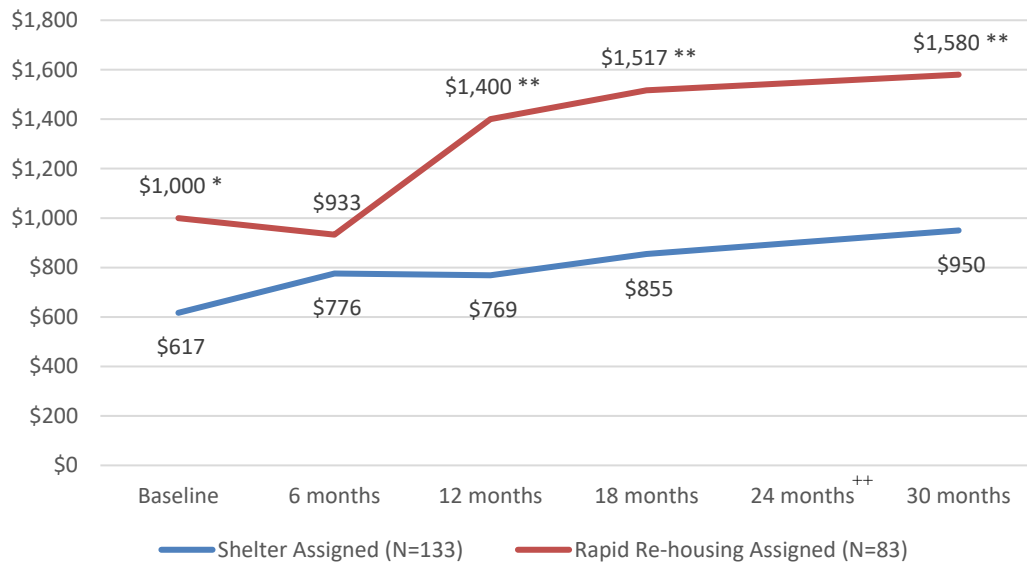
*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001.* [+] Significance tests compare the median income for rapid re-housing assigned families to shelter assigned families at each point in time. [++]Income was assessed at the time of each interview and is therefore not available at 24 months after initial assistance.

Income - Multivariate Analysis: Multivariate analysis of income at 30 months, using ordinary least squares regression, found that, controlling for family characteristics, groups did not differ significantly in their income at 30 months (see Exhibit 5-5). Consistent with 18-month findings (Rog et al., 2021), families with more income at entry had more income at 30 months. Additional factors identified as predicting more income at 18 months (Rog et al., 2021) were not significant at 30 months, including having more than a high school education and having more children. Other factors were significant at 30 months that were not significant in the 18-month analysis: families with higher incomes at 30 months were more likely to be Black/African American (compared to White), have a HOH without a felony, and to have spent time in their own place in the year prior to entry. While it is not clear why families with a Black/African American HOH had a higher income at 30 months, they also reported higher income at entry.

Exhibit 5-5. Predicting Income in the 30 Months Following Initial Assistance[+] (N=213)

Covariate[++]	Coefficient
Rapid re-housing initial assistance (compared to shelter)	0.05
Age	0.00
Race (compared to White)	
Black/African American	0.83*
Multiracial/other	0.33
Hispanic	0.16
Spouse/partner	-0.01
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	-0.22
4+	0.76
Any children under 2	-0.59
Education (compared to HS)	
Less than HS	0.32
More than HS	-0.19
Employed at entry	-0.17
Income at entry	0.19*
Receives SSI/SSDI	0.29
Ever convicted of a felony	-1.94***
History of domestic violence	-0.29
Substance abuse screen	0.79
Mental health indicator	0.14
Any time in own place in year before entry	0.69*

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+] Income is inflation-adjusted to account for differences over time in the value of a dollar and log-adjusted to account for skewness in its distribution. Using the log of income produces a more normal distribution. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; findings do not differ significantly across counties.

Examining Patterns of Factors Related to Employment and Income

Exhibit 5-6 provides a summary of the findings across employment and income. There are no differences in either outcome between rapid re-housing assigned families and shelter assigned families. A history of felony was the only individual characteristic associated with poorer outcomes across both models. As discussed previously, a few family characteristics were associated with improved outcomes with respect to income or employment, but there were no other consistent patterns in findings across outcomes. Findings indicated that at 18 months after initial assistance, individual factors, such as having a higher income and more education at baseline were linked to better outcomes for families, while having more children was linked to worse outcomes. Those findings are no longer true at 30 months after initial assistance. This may be because small sample sizes make it difficult to detect significant differences, or because the influence of those factors does not extend for such a long follow-up period.

Exhibit 5-6. Summary of Findings across Secondary Outcomes[+]

	Employment	Income
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)		
Black/African American HOH (compared to White)		🟩
Family intactness at baseline		
Receives SSI/SSDI at baseline	🟥	
Higher income at baseline		🟩
Prior felony conviction	🟥	🟥
Substance use	🟩	
Any nights own place prior to entry		🟩

[+]Green cells indicate improved outcomes and red cells indicate worse outcomes.

Section 6. Summary and Implications of the 30-Month Follow-up

Overview

This follow-up study provided a window into the housing, employment, and income status of families 30 months after entering homeless service delivery systems that were now emphasizing a Housing First orientation. The study design, including families assigned to either rapid re-housing or shelter, is exploratory in nature and does not allow us to make definitive causal conclusions about the role of the rapid re-housing and shelter in the outcomes. It does, however, offer some insights into the journeys families take and how housing, assistance, and individual factors may affect the journey.

Summary of Outcome Findings

Two and a half years after being assigned to either shelter or rapid re-housing, approximately 70 percent of the families in both groups were in their own housing, similar to the percentage living in their own place a year earlier. Forty-eight percent were working and the median income was $1,205. Over the course of the 30 months and across both groups, families spent, on average, 518 nights in their own housing and moved an average of five times, with about one move since the 18-month follow-up. About 20 percent returned to homelessness after being housed, generally about 10 months after entering housing.

Most of the outcomes for families in the rapid re-housing assigned group were similar to those for the shelter assigned group, with a few key exceptions. Although the majority of families accessed housing early on, typically within six months of their initial assistance, families assigned to rapid re-housing accessed housing more quickly than shelter assigned families. Given the nature of the rapid re-housing assistance, it is plausible to expect that it expedited access into housing more than shelter. Although individual family factors could have played a role, only having a subsidy at baseline and having lived in one's own housing in the year prior to entering the system predicted a family's probability of accessing housing.

Families in the rapid re-housing assigned group also spent a greater number of nights in their own housing over the 30 months than shelter assigned families. However, when the data were examined by six-month increments, the difference in nights spent in one's own housing was only statistically significant for the first six months after receiving initial assistance. This finding suggests that the difference in nights spent in one's own housing was related to the difference in early access to housing. Moreover, in both groups, families who got into their own housing early and remained in housing through 18 months were the most likely (76%) to remain in housing continuously from 18 to 30 months.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the two groups was in the extent to which they were living in their own housing with some type of assistance at 30 months. The majority of shelter assigned families in their own housing (60%) had some type of subsidy or assistance; however, only 22 percent of rapid re-housing assigned families who were in their own housing were receiving a subsidy or other assistance. Families in the two groups differed on a number of characteristics, most importantly baseline median monthly income and receipt of income from SSI or SSDI. It is possible that providers weighed these factors in determining whether a family could succeed in rapid re-housing. In addition, it is also likely that rapid re-housing assigned families were more likely to be able to make it on their own without assistance due to having more income and working more hours. In fact, when families receiving some type of subsidy at 30 months are compared to those without a subsidy (across the two groups), those living on their own without assistance have incomes that are approximately double those of families living in a subsidized setting.

Finding and Keeping Housing

The biggest struggles in accessing housing cited among all families were the twin challenges of finding affordable housing and having sufficient income to pay the rent. For some families as well, having evictions and credit problems (both bad and no credit) were important obstacles they needed to overcome to access their own housing. Having case management and agency support were cited as important in helping them tackle these challenges. Families also noted that their own tenacity and resourcefulness were critical to navigating the housing market and accessing housing.

Despite the majority of families being in their own housing at 30 months and having been there for most of the previous year, they reported continued struggles with affordability and income. Families noted the struggle in making ends meet, with the sheer price of rent and utilities. By far, the most common response to what helped most in keeping one's home, for both groups but especially among rapid re-housing assigned families, was having a stable, steady job. Several additional families, primarily in the rapid re-housing assigned group, spoke of having more than one job, working more hours, or more than one person in the household working to help pay the rent. For those in the shelter assigned group, the next most common response for things that helped them maintain their housing was either having a Section 8 or other type of housing assistance.

Those in housing at 30 months generally rated it as suitable, stable, and safe. Some problems, such as water leaks, were more common than others, and in a few instances, led to more serious problems (such as mold). Overall, though concerns with the housing generally related to its size and features (e.g., lack of on-site washer and dryer, or lack of storage), neighborhood

concerns were most often related to violence, drug activity, and loitering of persons from outside the neighborhood. Many of these factors colored families' perceptions of their housing as often more of a temporary rather than permanent situation, with nearly half planning to look for new housing in the next year.

The 30 percent of the families followed that were not living in housing at 30 months were living in a range of situations, including doubled up situations that were both long-term and time-limited, shelter, transitional housing, and unsheltered situations, such as living in cars, vacant buildings, and tents. Families in unsheltered situations often also stayed over time in a mix of other situations such as shelter, friend's homes, and staying in a hotel or motel when they had funds. Most (63%) of those not living in their own housing at 30 months had not had their own housing at all during the 12 months since the 18-month follow-up, and a substantial number (40%) had not had their own housing over the entire 30-month follow-up.

Implications of the Findings

In the 18-month findings, families served after systems reform had significantly more housing access and stability than families served prior to reform. Families were not selected to be in one system or another; however, there were individual differences in the families who were experiencing homelessness and requesting assistance from the system at these two time points, largely due to secular trends (Rog et al., 2021). Statistical controls were used to control for these differences, and changes in the outcomes were attributed largely to systems reform. We concluded that the implications of the findings were that communities should emphasize a Housing First orientation in their homeless service delivery systems and help families access housing as quickly as possible. The relationship of several key covariates to boosting housing outcomes, such as baseline employment and income, and having a housing subsidy, led to additional recommendations of forming and strengthening ties with employment agencies to help families increase their human capital and ties with public housing agencies to offer a bridge to subsidies for those families who cannot succeed on their own in market rate housing. Other factors that made it more difficult to access and keep housing, such as family size, histories of homelessness, and evictions, were identified as characteristics of families that may flag the need for additional supports as they enter the homeless service delivery systems. Finally, because transitional housing was so prominent in the system prior to reform and appeared to delay families' ability to regain housing, recommendations were made to consider reducing the stock of transitional housing or repurposing/targeting it to those who do not make it through a housing first approach.

The findings from this exploratory follow-up study largely continue to support these recommendations. Although equivalent proportions of families in both rapid re-housing and shelter assigned groups ended up in their own housing by 30 months, families in rapid re-

housing were able to access it more quickly and thus had longer stays in that housing. They also were more likely to be living on their own without assistance at 30 months.

Families assigned to shelter, compared to those assigned to rapid re-housing, were more likely to have a child under two, less likely to have SSI/SSDI as an income source, and had lower incomes as well as less history in their own housing. It is possible that these factors influenced their assignment into shelter as well as a tendency for families to wait for a subsidy to access housing. HOHs with a child under two may lack daycare to work and, in cases where there was no other income source such as SSI/SSDI, the prospects of accessing housing, being attractive to a landlord, and being able to remain in that housing may have seemed low without some ongoing housing assistance.

The Family Options Study, with a randomized design, found that those receiving shelter were equally likely as those receiving rapid re-housing to be in their own housing at 37 months (Gubits et al., 2016). What that study design was not able to show is the early boost into housing that rapid re-housing provides. Subsidized housing, compared to these two alternatives and transitional housing, was the superior option for a range of housing and well-being outcomes. Findings from the current evaluation also show the important role that subsidies play in bolstering housing stability. However, for systems in which the number of subsidies available is far fewer than the number of families needing housing, what are the next best options available? We would suggest that based on our 18-month findings as well as our exploratory 30-month follow-up, having a range of Housing First options is advantageous, with shelter and bridges to subsidies as a safety net for those with limited incomes and prospects for working.

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Appendix A. Attrition Analysis

This appendix outlines the results from the study attrition analysis, performed to determine if there are any significant differences in the characteristics of families targeted for recruitment and those who are included in the outcome analyses. Findings indicated there was no significant difference in rates of drop-out across the groups (76% of shelter assigned families; 81% of rapid re-housing assigned families were included in the outcomes analysis, a non-significant difference). Families were included in the outcome analysis if they had at least 865 days of housing information (865 days was selected because it constitutes 95% of the full 910 day follow-up). In these analyses, we examined group assignment, respondent and family characteristics, service needs, homeless and housing history, and housing barriers at baseline (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, criminal justice involvement). Exhibit A-1 presents bivariate analyses comparing families included in the outcomes analysis to families not included. Exhibit A-2 presents adjusted multivariate analyses examining whether each factor predicts inclusion in the outcomes analysis adjusting for other factors.

Our analyses indicate that the sample of families included in the outcome analyses is generally representative of the families targeted for recruitment. In unadjusted analyses, the outcomes sample was characterized by a higher median income and a marginally significant trend toward a higher likelihood of having experienced domestic violence and a lower likelihood of having a child under the age of 2. However, none of these factors significantly differentiated those included in the sample from those not included in the sample after other factors were controlled.

Table A-1. Comparison of Families in Outcomes Analysis to those Excluded

Characteristic	Excluded (N=62)	Outcomes Sample (N=216)
Group Assignment		
Rapid re-housing	32%	38%
Shelter	68%	62%
County		
King	29%	35%
Pierce	42%	32%
Snohomish	29%	32%
Age (mean)	33.08	34.23
Female	90%	93%
Race		
White	45%	38%
Black	37%	38%
Multiracial/other	18%	24%
Hispanic	8%	11%
Spouse/partner	34%	26%
Number of kids		
0-1	45%	44%
2-3	48%	48%
4+	6%	7%
Any child under 2	52%	38%[†]
Education		
Less than HS	27%	19%
HS	34%	31%
More than HS	39%	50%
Employed at entry	26%	34%
Income at entry (median)	$717	$748**
Receives	15%	17%
Ever convicted of a felony	20%	18%
Domestic violence history	45%	58%[†]
Substance abuse screen	13%	19%
Mental health indicator	48%	53%
Any time in own place in year before entry	42%	50%
Eviction history	13%	14%
Has a subsidy	24%	16%

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$.

Exhibit A-2. Predicting Probability of Inclusion in Outcome Analysis[+] (N=278)

Covariate[++]	Odds Ratio
Rapid re-housing assigned (compared to shelter assigned)	1.15
Age	0.99
Race (compared to White)	
Black	1.29
Multiracial/other	1.90
Hispanic	1.37
Spouse/partner	0.77
Number of kids (compared to 0 or 1)	
2-3	1.01
4+	0.89
Any children under 2	0.59
Education	
Less than HS	0.79
More than HS	1.56
Employed at entry	1.77
Income at entry	0.91
Receives SSI/SSDI	1.46
Ever convicted of a felony	0.68
History of domestic violence	1.59
Substance abuse screen	1.90
Mental health indicator	1.24
Any time in own place in year before entry	1.40
Experienced a prior eviction	0.80
Has a subsidy	0.63

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$. [+]County is included in the model as a covariate but results are not presented in the table; there are no significant differences across the counties.