

**METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX**  
**FOR**  
**Reaching Welfare Time Limits in Los Angeles County:**  
**A Study of an Early Cohort**



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**Chief Administrative Office**  
**Service Integration Branch**  
**Research and Evaluation Services**

David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer

Alisa Drakodaidis, Assistant Administrative Officer

Manuel H. Moreno, Project Director

**January 2004**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Study Design .....	1
Subject Selection .....	1
Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling .....	2
Sample Selection Criteria for Timed-Out Cohort .....	2
Sample Selection Criteria for Comparison Group .....	2
Sampling Procedure .....	3
Statistical Analysis.....	3
Data Sources .....	4
Administrative Data .....	4
Survey Data .....	5
Phase I.....	5
Phase II.....	5
Phase III.....	5
Response Rate .....	5
Statistical Tests for Survey Questions.....	6
CalWORKs Participant Survey Phase I.....	7
CalWORKs Participant Survey Phase II.....	10
CalWORKs Participant Survey Phase III.....	13
Responses to CalWORKs Survey Questions .....	16
Focus Groups.....	27
Questions for Participants in the Timed-Out Cohort.....	27
Questions for Comparison Group Participants .....	29
Focus Group Data .....	30

## Tables and Figures

### Tables

Table 1	Percent Distribution of CalWORKs Participants and Study Samples .....	4
Table 2	Percent Distribution of Survey Response Rates among the Timed-Out Cohort and Comparison Group by Primary Language .....	6
Table 3	Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants.....	31

### Figures

Figure 1	Number of Adults Living in the Household between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 1) .....	16
Figure 2	Change in Number of Adults Living in the Household between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 2) .....	16
Figure 3	Change in Marital Status between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 3).....	17
Figure 4	Experienced Housing Problems between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 4).....	17
Figure 5	Types of Housing Problems Experienced between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 4a).....	18
Figure 6	Experienced Financial Hardship between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 5).....	18
Figure 7	Types of Financial Hardship Problems Experienced Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 5a) .....	19
Figure 8	Education Level (Survey Question 6) .....	19
Figure 9	Attended School or Received Vocational Training Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 7) .....	20
Figure 10	Left School for Work between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 8).....	20
Figure 11	Needed or Used Supportive Services Before January 2003 (Survey Question 9).....	21
Figure 12	Needed or Used Supportive Services Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 10) .....	21
Figure 13	Employed between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 11).....	22

Figure 14	If Unemployed, Looking for Work between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 11a).....	22
Figure 15	Barriers to Employment Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 11b).....	23
Figure 16	Number of Times Changed Jobs between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 12).....	23
Figure 17	Held a Second Job between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 13).....	24
Figure 18	Number of Hours Worked Per Week between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 14).....	24
Figure 19	Hourly Wages between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 15).....	25
Figure 20	Change in Earnings between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 16).....	25
Figure 21	Lost Health Insurance as a Job Benefit between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 17).....	26

# **METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX FOR REACHING WELFARE TIME LIMITS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY: A STUDY OF AN EARLY COHORT**

## **Introduction**

This appendix describes the methods used to conduct the study, “Reaching Welfare Time Limits in Los Angeles County: A Study of an Early Cohort,” and includes sample selection criteria for the timed-out cohort and comparison group; sampling procedures; data sources; and statistical analysis. The CalWORKs participant survey is included, and response tabulations for all survey questions are presented in Figures 1 through 21. The protocol used for focus group interviews is included along with the questions asked in the interviews.

## **Study Design**

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion on January 21, 2003, to study how CalWORKs families were faring after reaching their time limits by comparing them to participants still receiving aid. Accordingly, this study used a research design in which the experimental group (timed-out cohort and no longer receiving aid) were compared with a stratified random sample of participants in the control/comparison group (still receiving aid). Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from both groups. Participants in the timed-out cohort and the comparison group were tracked for six months, from January to June 2003.

Data were collected using a survey questionnaire and focus group interviews. In addition, administrative records from Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and unemployment insurance records from the State of California, Employment Development Department (EDD), were used to obtain information on the participant’s demographic characteristics, program participation, and employment and income levels.

The survey employed questions about employment, income, family structure, housing stability, and supportive services needs. Questions were close-ended and provided quantitative information for data analyses.

Qualitative information was obtained through focus group interviews with both groups of participants centered on changes related to employment, income, family structure, and housing stability status.

## **Subject Selection**

The Board motion identified 2,100 CalWORKs participants reaching their time limits on January 1, 2003. These 2,100 timed-out participants were not representative of the CalWORKs population still receiving aid in January 2003. The two groups differed primarily by gender, ethnicity, marital status, and primary language.

In order to compare the timed-out cohort with a group of CalWORKs participants still receiving aid, it was essential that the comparison group share the same demographic characteristics as participants in the timed-out cohort. A disproportionate stratified random sampling technique allowed the construction of a comparison group that was demographically similar to the participants in the timed-out cohort.

## **Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling**

A disproportionate stratified random sample was obtained by separating the CalWORKs population into non-overlapping groups called strata and selecting random samples from each stratum. This sampling procedure has three major advantages. First, it creates homogeneous groups (strata) from a heterogeneous population, which helps in better representing the population being sampled. Second, it yields more precise estimates for each stratum. Finally, different sampling criteria and weights can be applied to each stratum. The comparison group was over-sampled using three different strata, namely gender, ethnicity/language, and marital status.

### **Sample Selection Criteria for Timed-Out Cohort**

The study was designed to examine differences between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at the household level. Therefore, collecting information from two persons in the same household would have been redundant. Hence, among two-parent households in the timed-out cohort, only one person was randomly selected to participate in the study. This reduced the number of timed-out participants in the final sample from 2,100 to 1,753.

### **Sample Selection Criteria for Comparison Group**

The sample selection was limited to participants who had not reached their 60-month time limit on January 1, 2003.

In order to select the comparison group, the following selection criteria were applied:

- Prospective comparison group participants could not have been sanctioned or exempt for more than four months during their participation in CalWORKs.
- Prospective comparison group participants could not have been sanctioned in 2003.
- Prospective comparison group participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 65 years on January 1, 2003.
- Prospective comparison group participants had to have received cash assistance for at least 18 months, but not for more than 48 months between January 1998 and 2003.

Approximately 18,932 participants met the above selection criteria. A random sample of participants from these households was selected within the following three strata: primary language/ethnicity, gender, and marital status.

#### *Primary Language/Ethnicity*

There were five language categories: English, Spanish, Armenian, Vietnamese and "Other." Ethnicity also had five categories: White, Hispanic, African-American, Vietnamese, and "Other." Participants who reported Spanish as their primary language or Hispanic as their ethnicity were included in the Hispanic stratum. Vietnamese, Armenian, and English participants were selected only on the basis of primary language identification. The "Other" ethnic strata included mostly other Asians, such as Chinese, Cambodians, Laotians, and Koreans.

### *Gender and Marital Status*

Gender and marital status were categorized as male and female, and currently married and currently not married, respectively.

Sampling within the above three stratum yielded a comparison group of 1,753 participants whose demographic characteristics were similar to the demographic characteristics of the participants in the timed-out cohort.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The “Survey Select” procedure using the SAS software program was used to select the samples for the comparison group and participants in the timed-out cohort. This procedure provides a variety of methods for selecting probability-based random samples, as well as sampling weights for conducting statistical tests for group comparisons.

The demographic characteristics of the comparison group were similar to the demographic characteristics of participants in the timed-out cohort. Table 1 describes the characteristics of the 2,100 participants that timed out on January 1, 2003; 18,932 prospective participants for the comparison group and final sample of 1,753 participants in the timed-out cohort and comparison group.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive analyses were conducted to test for group differences between the timed-out cohort and comparison group by using chi-square tests for categorical variables and one-way analysis of variance for continuous variables. Sample weights using the three sampling strata were developed and used in statistical tests to adjust for non-response bias.

Multivariate analyses were used to predict outcomes about housing, family structure, supportive service needs, income, and employment. Background characteristics, such as gender, marital status, and language/ethnicity, were used as control variables.

Logistic regression was used to predict the following binary variables: marital status (1 = married, 0 = no change or separated); housing problems (1 = yes, 0 = no); need for the following supportive services (1 = yes, 0 = no); transportation services, child care, Food Stamps, drug and alcohol counseling, mental health counseling, Med-Cal, domestic violence services, and housing assistance; employed between January and June 2003 (1 = yes, 0 = no); worked a second job (1 = yes, 0 = no); earned more than the minimum wage between January and June 2003 (1 = yes, 0 = no); barriers to employment (1 = yes, 0 = no); domestic violence, lack of transportation, drug or alcohol abuse, mental health problems, lack of child care, disability or health problems, and language barriers.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>CalWORKs Participants That Timed-Out on January 1, 2003 (N = 2,100)</b>	<b>Prospective CalWORKs Participants for the Comparison Group (N = 18,932)</b>	<b>Timed-Out and Comparison Group Samples (N = 1,753)*</b>
Gender			
Males	30.9	19.4	33.1
Females	69.1	80.6	66.9
Ethnicity			
White	24.3	20.4	22.9
African-American	13.4	28.7	15.9
Hispanic	21.5	41.6	24.0
Asian/Other	40.8	9.3	37.2
Primary Language			
English	26.9	66.9	30.5
Spanish	16.0	17.3	17.7
Armenian	18.6	9.0	17.0
Vietnamese	21.2	2.1	18.9
Asian/Other	17.3	4.7	15.9
Age-Group			
18-29 years	4.9	37.0	4.7
30-39 years	30.4	34.2	30.8
40-49 years	45.7	22.8	45.4
50 + years	19.0	6.0	19.1
Marital Status			
Currently Married	59.6	27.0	54.0
Currently Single	40.4	73.0	46.0

\* Characteristics of the timed-out and comparison group samples are reported in one column because, after applying the sample selection criteria to the prospective comparison group participants, the distribution of the comparison group's demographic characteristics were similar to the demographic distribution of participants in the timed-out cohort.

## **Data Sources**

Three primary data sources were used for this study: administrative data, survey data, and focus group interviews.

## **Administrative Data**

Administrative data included CalWORKs records from DPSS and EDD. Monthly extracts of CalWORKs records from the Los Angeles Eligibility Automated Determination and Evaluation Reporting (LEADER) system, GAIN Employment Activity Reporting System (GEARS), and employment data from EDD were merged to generate demographic, program participation, employment, and income information for CalWORKs families for six months before and after January 1, 2003.



## Survey Data

A short survey with 17 close-ended questions was used to track changes pertaining to family structure, housing stability, supportive services needs, employment, and income. The survey was mailed to the timed-out cohort and comparison group.

The surveys were conducted in four languages: English, Spanish, Armenian, and Vietnamese. Surveys were pre-tested in the Cudahy District Office of DPSS in Southeast County of Los Angeles with CalWORKs participants who attended a workshop on time-limits in April 2003. Surveys were also pre-tested for translation accuracy by GAIN staff workers with fluency in each of the survey languages. Survey respondents received a phone card incentive worth \$5.00 for completing the survey.

Surveys were mailed to participants in three phases. Questions in the surveys in all phases of data collection were the same, but covered different time-periods.

- *Phase I*
  - In the first phase, surveys were mailed to all 1,753 participants in the timed-out cohort and comparison group and covered the time period between January and March 2003. These surveys were mailed in May 2003.
- *Phase II*
  - Participants who returned the first survey were mailed a second survey which covered the time period between April and June 2003. In the second phase, 1,255 surveys were mailed in July 2003 (702 among the timed-out group and 554 among the comparison group).
- *Phase III*
  - In order to increase the response rate, a third survey was mailed to respondents who did not respond to the survey in the first phase.
  - In this phase, a total of 2,200 surveys were mailed to 1,036 participants in the timed-out cohort and 1,169 participants in the comparison group. The survey in the third phase covered the time period between January and June 2003.

## Response Rate

The proportion of respondents who completed and returned the questionnaire was 39 percent. The timed-out cohort had a slightly higher response rate (41 percent) than the comparison group (36 percent). Table 2 lists the response rate by language for both timed-out cohort and comparison group.

**Table 2. Percent Distribution of Survey Response Rates\* Among the Timed-Out Cohort and Comparison Group by Primary Language**

Language	Timed-Out (N = 702)	Comparison Group (N = 614)	Total (N = 1316)
Armenian	16.9	18.2	17.6
English	12.3	10.6	11.5
Spanish	19.2	16.1	17.8
Vietnamese	29.2	28.7	28.9
Asian/Other	22.4	26.4	24.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* The calculation of response rates excluded 100 surveys that were returned because the participants were not located.

The survey questionnaire was conducted on both the timed-out cohort and comparison group. Responses to each question in the survey are depicted in Figures 1 through 21 for both timed-out cohort and comparison group.

### Statistical Tests for Survey Questions

Differences between participants in the timed-out cohort and comparison group depicted in Figures 1 through 21 were tested using the chi-square statistic.

- Chi-square tests between the timed-out cohort and comparison group in Figures 1-3, 8, 16, 18, 19 and 20 were conducted together for all the categories in the variable, yielding one chi-square statistic. Statistically significant and non-significant differences between the two groups are denoted below each figure.
- Chi-square tests between the timed-out cohort and comparison group in Figures 5, 7, 11, 12, and 15 were conducted separately for each category of the variable, yielding a separate chi-square statistic for each category. Each category that was significantly different is reported in the figures.
  - The percentage reported in these figures is the percent of participants that responded positively or responded yes within each category. This is also the reason why the percentages in these figures do not add up to a 100 percent.
- Chi-square tests between the timed-out cohort and comparison group in Figures 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, and 21 were conducted for variables that had *yes/no* as the response categories.
  - The percentage reported in these figures reflects the percent of participants that responded positively or yes to the question in the timed-out cohort and comparison group.

# CalWORKs Participant Survey (Phase I)

This survey will help us understand how people are doing after they reach the 60-month time limit for receiving CalWORKs cash aid. It is voluntary and your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Please fill in the circles using black or dark ink like this: ● not like this ~~⊗~~ or this

## Section 1 - Household and Housing Information

1. In December 2002, including yourself, how many ADULTS were living in your household? (Choose one)
- 1-2  
 3-4  
 5-6  
 More than 6
- 
2. Between January and March 2003, did the number of ADULTS in your household change? (Choose one)
- Increase     No change     Decrease
- 
3. Between January and March 2003, did your marital status change? (Choose one)
- No change     Married     Separated  
 Divorced     Widowed
- 
4. Between January and March 2003, did you experience any of the following housing problems? (Choose all that apply)
- Yes     No
- Moved due to financial hardship  
 Lived in shelter  
 Evicted or received notice to evict  
 Difficulty paying the rent  
 Trouble paying utilities
- 
5. Between January and March 2003, did you experience any of the following? (Choose all that apply)
- Yes     No
- Got food from pantry or soup kitchen  
 Could not afford basic items like diapers, clothing, school supplies, etc.  
 Went hungry

## Section 2 – Education

6. As of January 1, 2003, what was the highest education level you completed? (Choose one)
- Less than High School  
 High School diploma or GED  
 2 year degree (AA or Vocational)  
 Some College  
 College degree or higher  
 Does not apply
- 
7. Between January and March 2003, were you attending school or receiving vocational training?
- YES     NO
- 
8. Between January and March 2003, did you leave school to go to work?
- YES     NO

### Section 3 - Supportive Services

9. **BEFORE January 2003**, did you **need or use** any of the following supportive services? (**Choose all that apply**)

- Child care
- Medi-Cal
- Domestic violence services
- Transportation assistance
- Utility bill assistance
- Drug or alcohol abuse services
- Housing assistance
- None of these

10. **BETWEEN January and March 2003**, did you **need or use** any of the following supportive services? (**Choose all that apply**)

- Child care
- Medi-Cal
- Food Stamps
- Mental Health services
- Domestic violence services
- Transportation assistance
- Utility bill assistance
- Drug or alcohol abuse services
- Housing assistance
- None of these

### Section 4 - Employment and Wages

11. **Between January and March 2003**, were you employed?

- YES
- NO

a. If you were NOT employed, were you looking for work?

- YES
- NO

b. If you were NOT employed what stopped you from getting a job?  
(**Choose all that apply**)

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Domestic violence
- Lack of transportation
- Mental health problems
- Lack of child care
- Disability or health problems
- Language barriers

12. **Between January and March 2003**, how many times did you change jobs? (**Choose one**)

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

13. **Between January and March 2003**, were you working a second job?

- YES
- No

14. **Between January and March 2003**, about how many hours a week did you work at all jobs combined? (**Choose one**)

- None
  - 1-10 hours
  - 11-20 hours
  - 21-30 hours
  - 31-40 hours
  - More than 40 hours
- 

15. **Between January and March 2003**, what was your hourly wage from your **main** or **primary** job? (**Choose one**)

- More than 40 hours
  - Less than \$6.75
  - \$6.75
  - \$6.76 to \$8.00
  - More than \$8.00
  - No wages
- 

16. **Between January and March 2003**, did your TOTAL wages (from all jobs combined) change? (**Choose one**)

- Increase
  - No change
  - Decrease
- 

17. **Between January and March 2003**, did you lose job benefits, such as health insurance?

- YES
- NO

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY**

# CalWORKs Participant Survey (Phase II)

This survey will help us understand how people are doing after they reach the 60-month time limit for receiving CalWORKs cash aid. It is voluntary and your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Please fill in the circles using black or dark ink like this: ● not like this ⊗ or this ✓

## Section 1 - Household and Housing Information

1. **Between April and June 2003**, including yourself, how many ADULTS were living in your household? (Choose one)
- 1-2  
 3-4  
 5-6  
 More than 6
- 
2. **Between April and June 2003**, did the number of ADULTS in your household change? (Choose one)
- Increase     No change     Decrease
- 
3. **Between April and June 2003**, did your marital status change? (Choose one)
- No change     Married     Separated  
 Divorced     Widowed
- 
4. **Between April and June 2003**, did you experience any of the following housing problems? (Choose all that apply)
- Yes     No
- Moved due to financial hardship  
 Lived in shelter  
 Evicted or received notice to evict  
 Difficulty paying the rent  
 Trouble paying utilities
- 
5. **Between April and June 2003**, did you experience any of the following? (Choose all that apply)
- Yes     No
- Got food from pantry or soup kitchen  
 Could not afford basic items like diapers, clothing, school supplies, etc.  
 Went hungry

## Section 2 – Education

6. **As of July 1, 2003**, what was the highest education level you completed? (Choose one)
- Less than High School  
 High School diploma or GED  
 2 year degree (AA or Vocational)  
 Some College  
 College degree or higher  
 Does not apply
- 
7. **Between April and June 2003**, were you attending school or receiving vocational training?
- YES     NO
- 
8. **Between April and June 2003**, did you leave school to go to work?
- YES     NO

### Section 3 - Supportive Services

9. **Between April and June 2003**, did you **need or use** any of the following supportive services? (**Choose all that apply**)

- Child care
- Medi-Cal
- Domestic violence services
- Transportation assistance
- Utility bill assistance
- Drug or alcohol abuse services
- Housing assistance
- None of these

### Section 4 - Employment and Wages

10. **Between April and June 2003**, were you employed?

- YES
- NO

a. If you were NOT employed, were you looking for work?

- YES
- NO

b. If you were NOT employed what stopped you from getting a job?  
(**Choose all that apply**)

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Domestic violence
- Lack of transportation
- Mental health problems
- Lack of child care
- Disability or health problems
- Language barriers

11. **Between April and June 2003**, how many times did you change jobs? (**Choose one**)

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

12. **Between April and June 2003**, were you working a second job?

- YES
- No

13. **Between April and June 2003**, about how many hours a week did you work at all jobs combined? (**Choose one**)

- None
- 1-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- 31-40 hours
- More than 40 hours

14. **Between April and June 2003**, what was your hourly wage from your **main** or **primary** job? (Choose one)

- More than 40 hours
  - Less than \$6.75
  - \$6.75
  - \$6.76 to \$8.00
  - More than \$8.00
- 

15. **Between April and June 2003**, did your TOTAL wages (from all jobs combined) change? (Choose one)

- Increase
  - No change
  - Decrease
- 

16. **Between April and June 2003**, did you lose job benefits, such as health insurance?

- YES  NO

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY**



# CalWORKs Participant Survey (Phase III)

This survey will help us understand how people are doing after they reach the 60-month time limit for receiving CalWORKs cash aid. It is voluntary and your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Please fill in the circles using black or dark ink like this: ● not like this ~~⊗~~ or this

## Section 1 - Household and Housing Information

1. **Between January and June 2003**, including yourself, how many ADULTS were living in your household? (**Choose one**)

1-2  
 3-4  
 5-6  
 More than 6

2. **Between January and June 2003**, did the number of ADULTS in your household change? (**Choose one**)

Increase     No change     Decrease

3. **Between January and June 2003**, did your marital status change? (**Choose one**)

No change     Married     Separated  
 Divorced     Widowed

4. **Between January and June 2003**, did you experience any of the following housing problems? (**Choose all that apply**)

Yes     No

Moved due to financial hardship  
 Lived in shelter  
 Evicted or received notice to evict  
 Difficulty paying the rent  
 Trouble paying utilities

5. **Between January and June 2003**, did you experience any of the following? (**Choose all that apply**)

Yes     No

Got food from pantry or soup kitchen  
 Could not afford basic items like diapers, clothing, school supplies, etc.  
 Went hungry

## Section 2 – Education

6. **As of July 1, 2003**, what was the highest education level you completed? (**Choose one**)

Less than High School  
 High School diploma or GED  
 2 year degree (AA or Vocational)  
 Some College  
 College degree or higher  
 Does not apply

7. **Between January and June 2003**, were you attending school or receiving vocational training?

YES     NO

8. **Between January and June 2003**, did you leave school to go to work?

YES     NO

### Section 3 - Supportive Services

9. **BEFORE January 2003**, did you **need or use** any of the following supportive services? (**Choose all that apply**)

- Child care
- Medi-Cal
- Domestic violence services
- Transportation assistance
- Utility bill assistance
- Drug or alcohol abuse services
- Housing assistance
- None of these

10. **BETWEEN January and June 2003**, did you **need or use** any of the following supportive services? (**Choose all that apply**)

- Child care
- Medi-Cal
- Food Stamps
- Mental Health services
- Domestic violence services
- Transportation assistance
- Utility bill assistance
- Drug or alcohol abuse services
- Housing assistance
- None of these

### Section 4 - Employment and Wages

11. **Between January and June 2003**, were you employed?

- YES
- NO

a. If you were NOT employed, were you looking for work?

- YES
- NO

b. If you were NOT employed what stopped you from getting a job?  
(**Choose all that apply**)

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Domestic violence
- Lack of transportation
- Mental health problems
- Lack of child care
- Disability or health problems
- Language barriers

12. **Between January and June 2003**, how many times did you change jobs? (**Choose one**)

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

13. **Between January and June 2003**, were you working a second job?  YES  No

---

14. **Between January and June 2003**, about how many hours a week did you work at all jobs combined? (**Choose one**)

- None
- 1-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- 31-40 hours
- More than 40 hours

---

15. **Between January and June 2003**, what was your hourly wage from your **main** or **primary** job? (**Choose one**)

- More than 40 hours
- Less than \$6.75
- \$6.75
- \$6.76 to \$8.00
- More than \$8.00
- No wages

---

16. **Between January and June 2003**, did your TOTAL wages (from all jobs combined) change? (**Choose one**)

- Increase
- No change
- Decrease

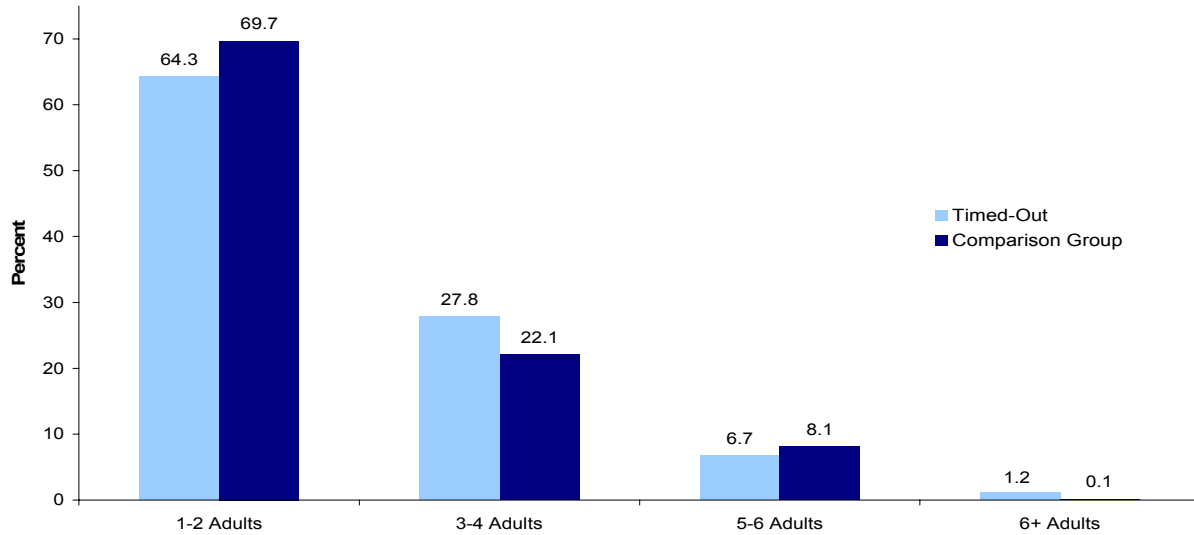
---

17. **Between January and June 2003**, did you lose job benefits, such as health insurance?  YES  NO

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY**

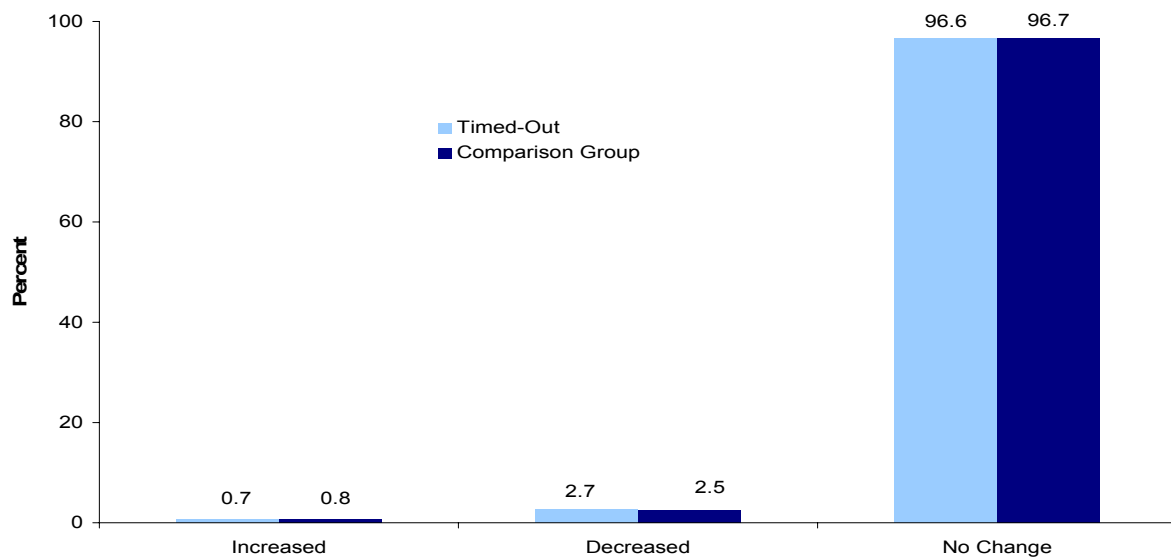
## Responses to CalWORKs Survey Questions

**Figure 1. Number of Adults Living in the Household Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 1)**



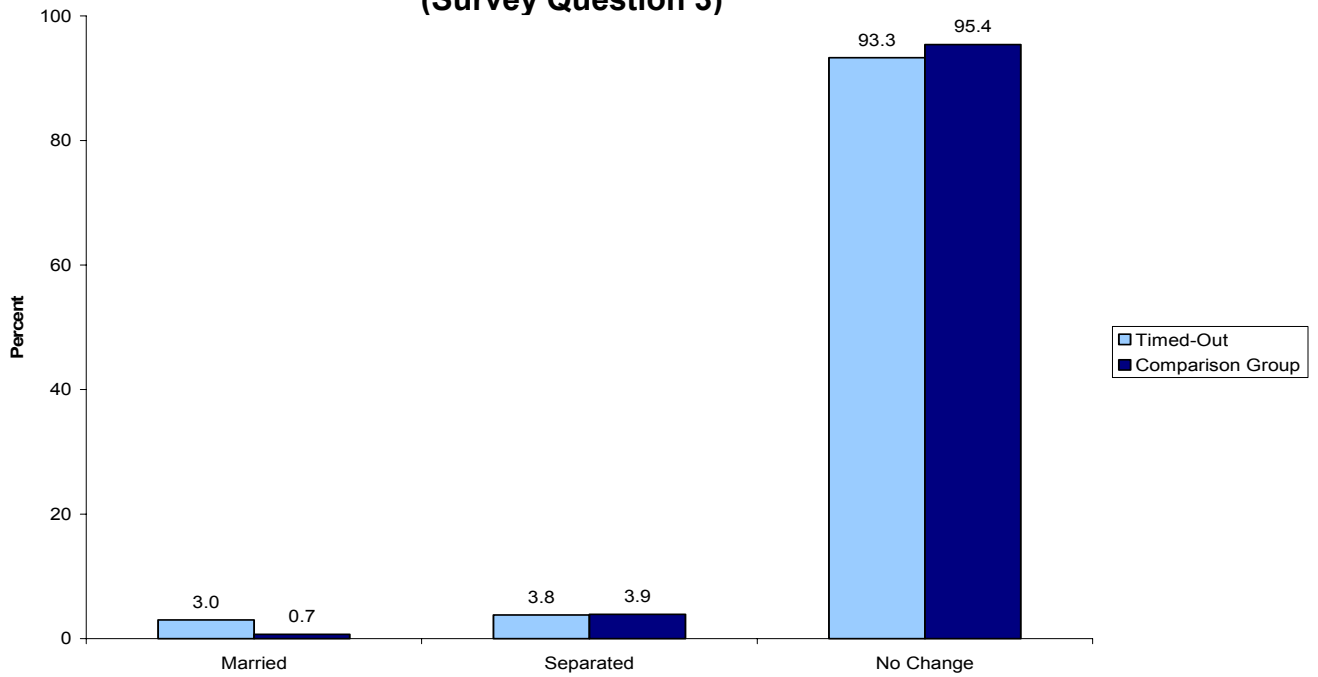
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

**Figure 2. Change in Number of Adults Living in the Household Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 2)**



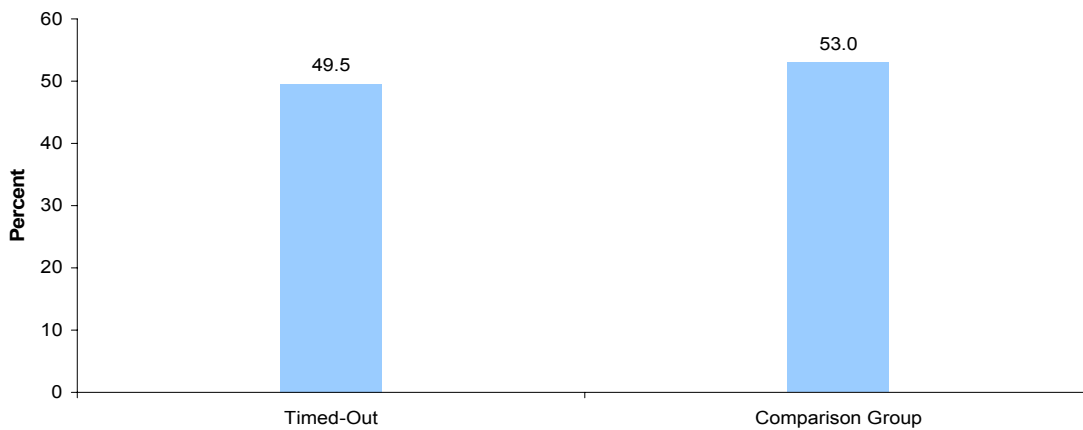
Note: No significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group

**Figure 3. Change in Marital Status Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 3)**



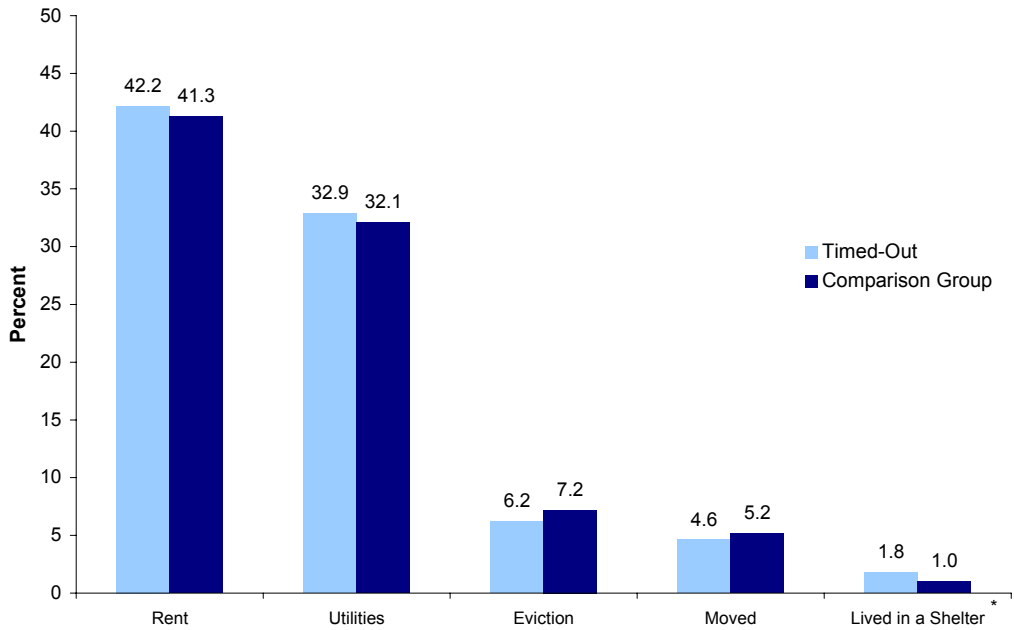
Note: Significant different between the timed-out cohort and the comparison group at  $p < .001$

**Figure 4. Experienced Housing Problems Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 4)**



Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

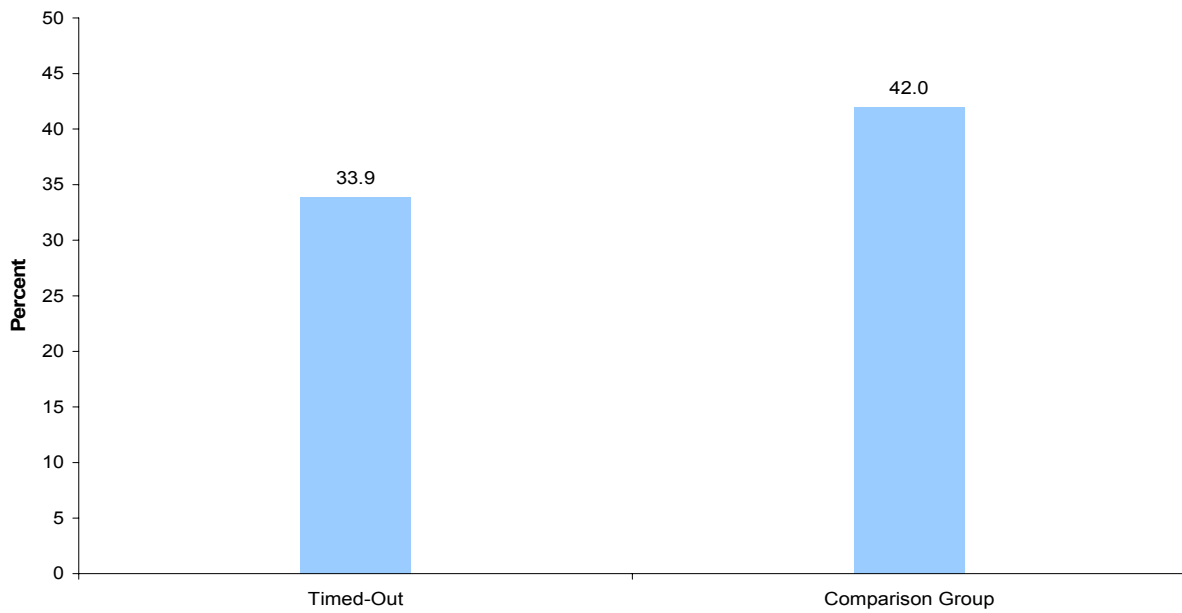
**Figure 5. Types of Housing Problems Experienced Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 4a) <sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Percentages are calculated *within* each category for the timed-out cohort and the comparison group

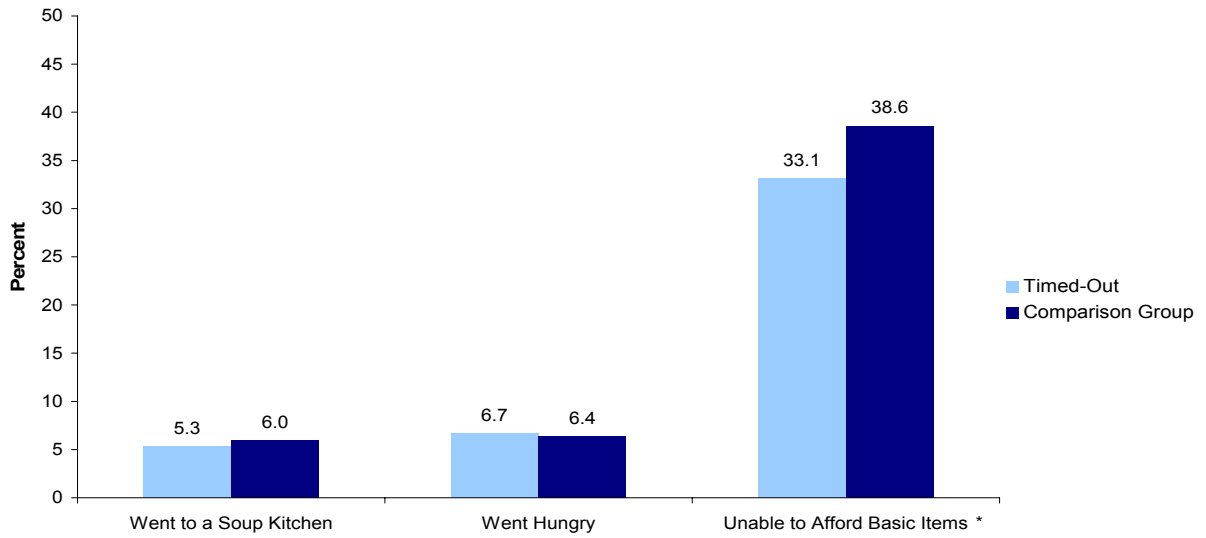
\* Significant difference between timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .05$

**Figure 6. Experienced Financial Hardship Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 5)**



Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

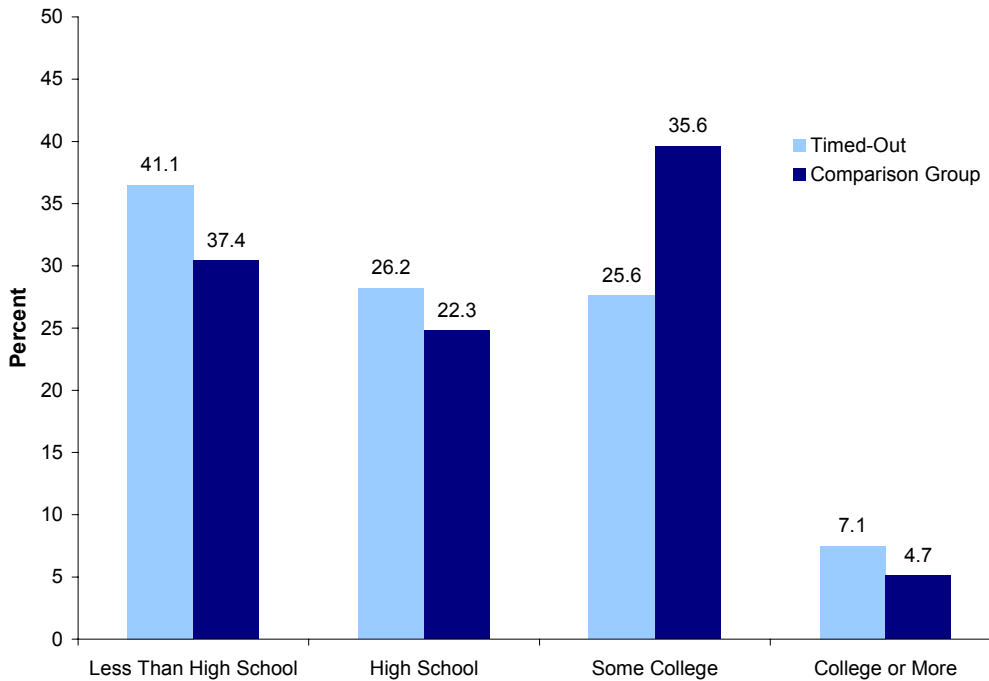
**Figure 7. Types of Financial Hardship Problems Experienced Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 5a) <sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Percentages are calculated *within* each category for the timed-out cohort and the comparison group

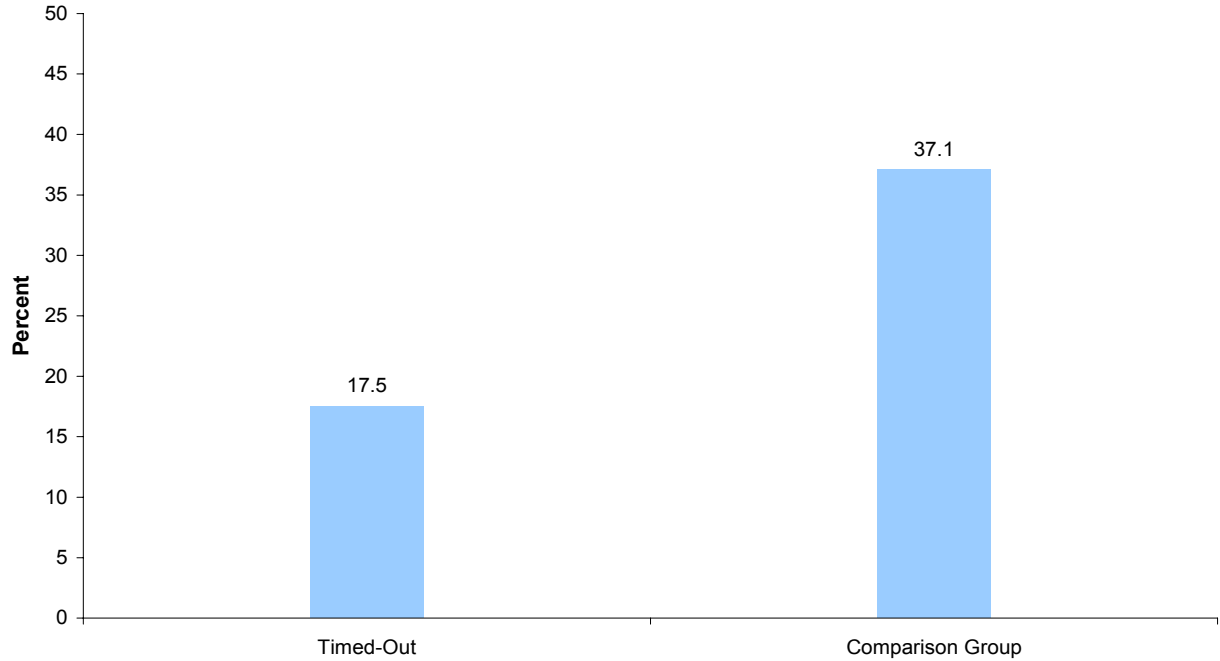
\* Significant difference between timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

**Figure 8. Highest Education Completed (Survey Question 6)**



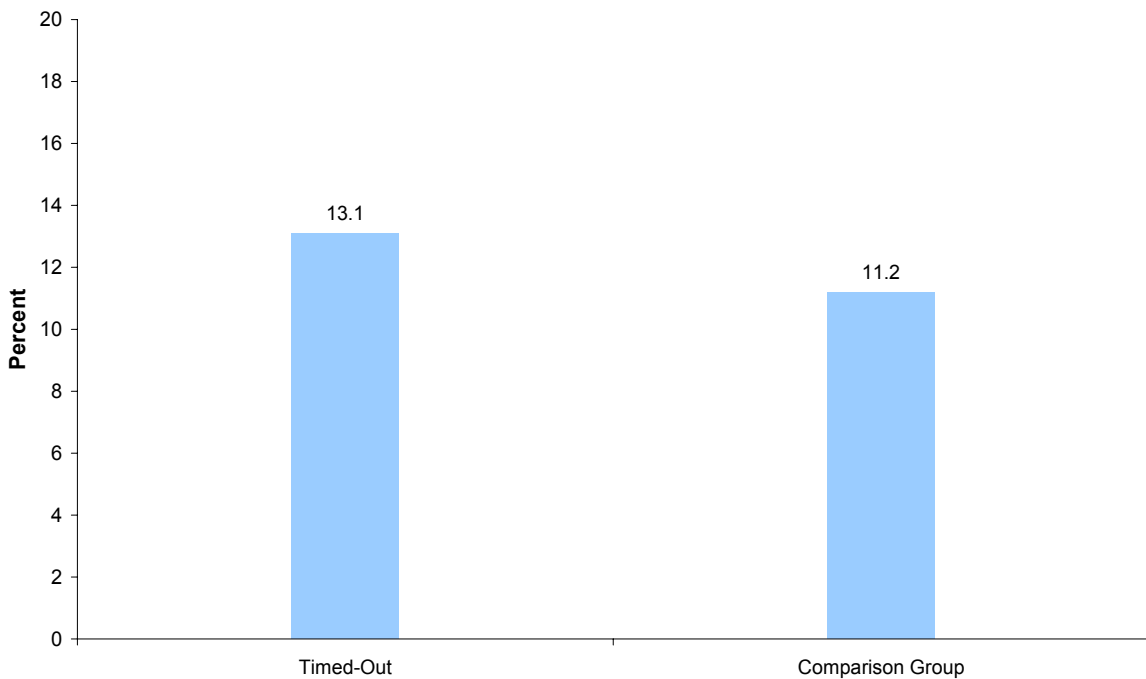
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .0001$

**Figure 9. Attended School or Received Vocational Training Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 7)**



Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .0001$

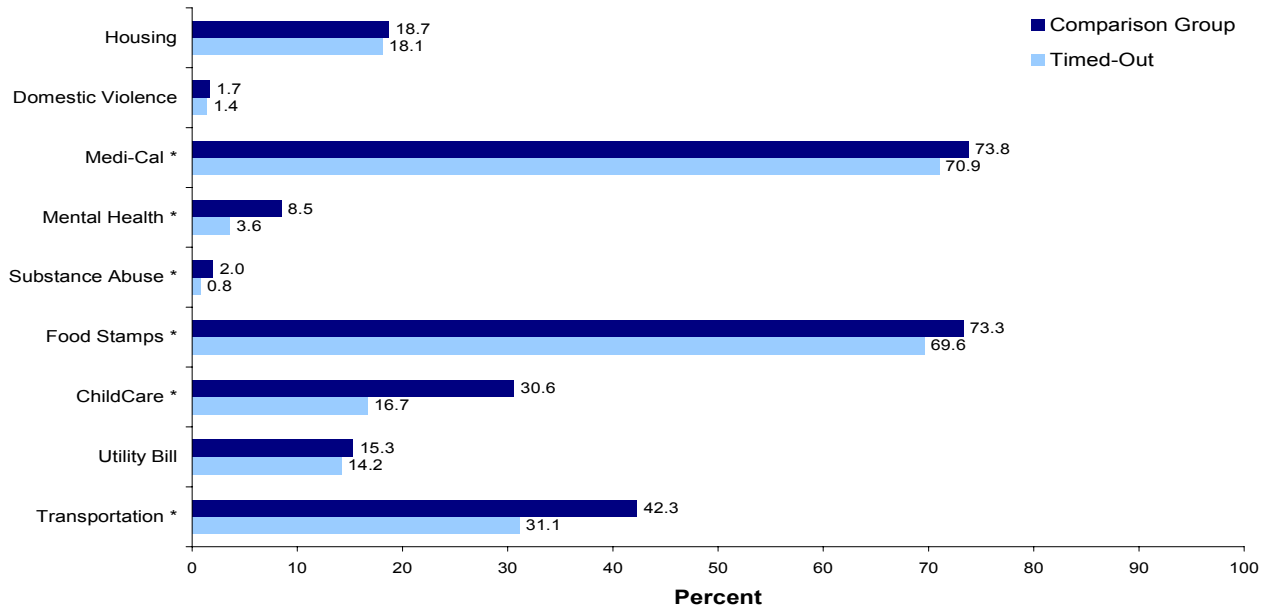
**Figure 10. Left School for Work Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 8)**



Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .05$

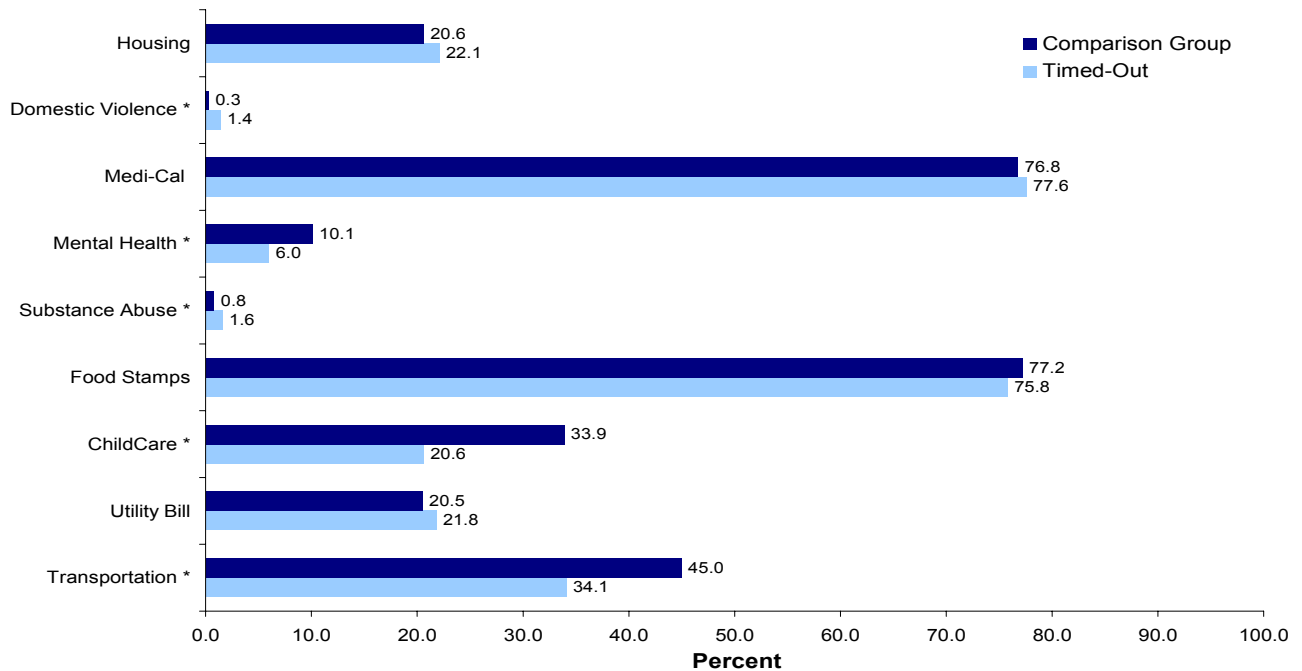


**Figure 11. Needed or Used Supportive Services Before January 2003 (Survey Question 9) <sup>1</sup>**



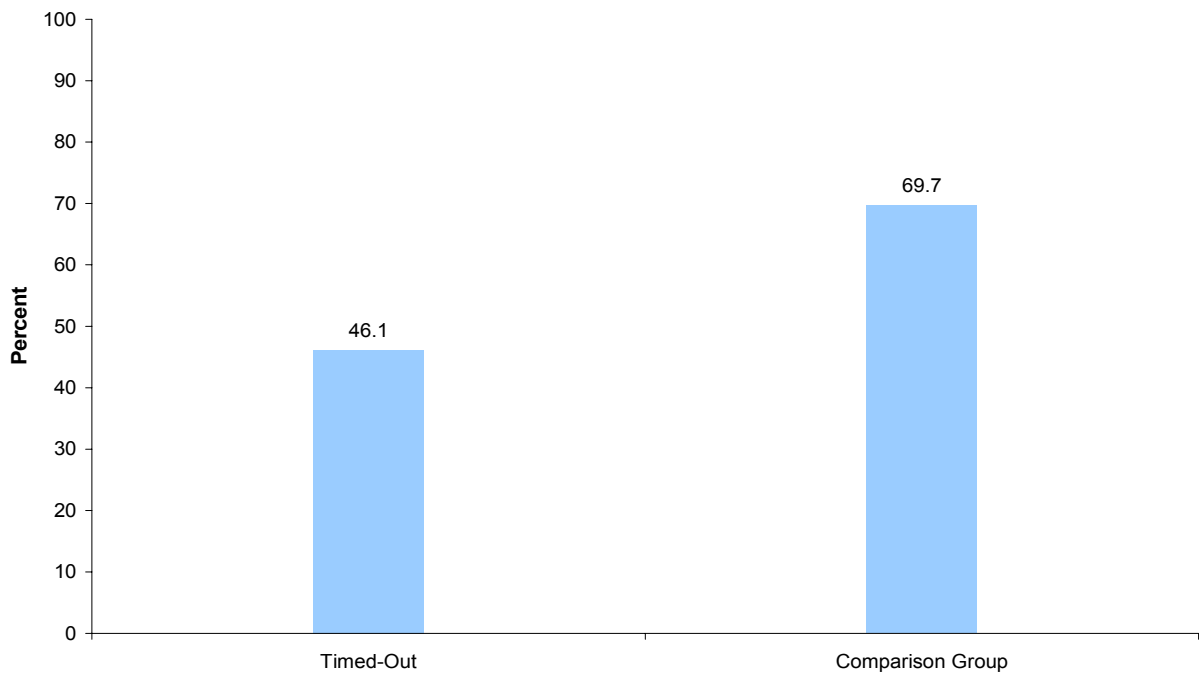
<sup>1</sup> Percentages are calculated *within* each category for the timed-out cohort and the comparison group  
 \* Significant difference between timed-out cohort and comparison group at p < .001

**Figure 12. Needed or Used Supportive Services Between January and June 2003 (Survey Question 10) <sup>1</sup>**



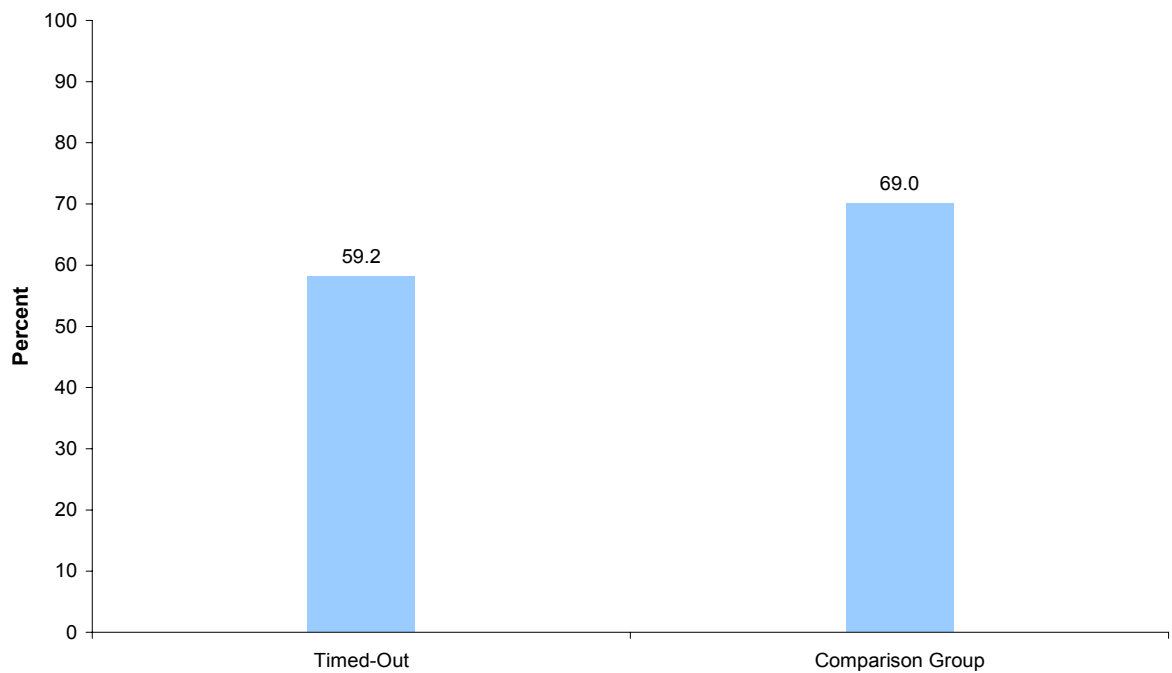
<sup>1</sup> Percentages are calculated *within* each category for the timed-out cohort and the comparison group  
 \* Significant difference between timed-out cohort and comparison group at p < .001

**Figure 13. Employed Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 11)**



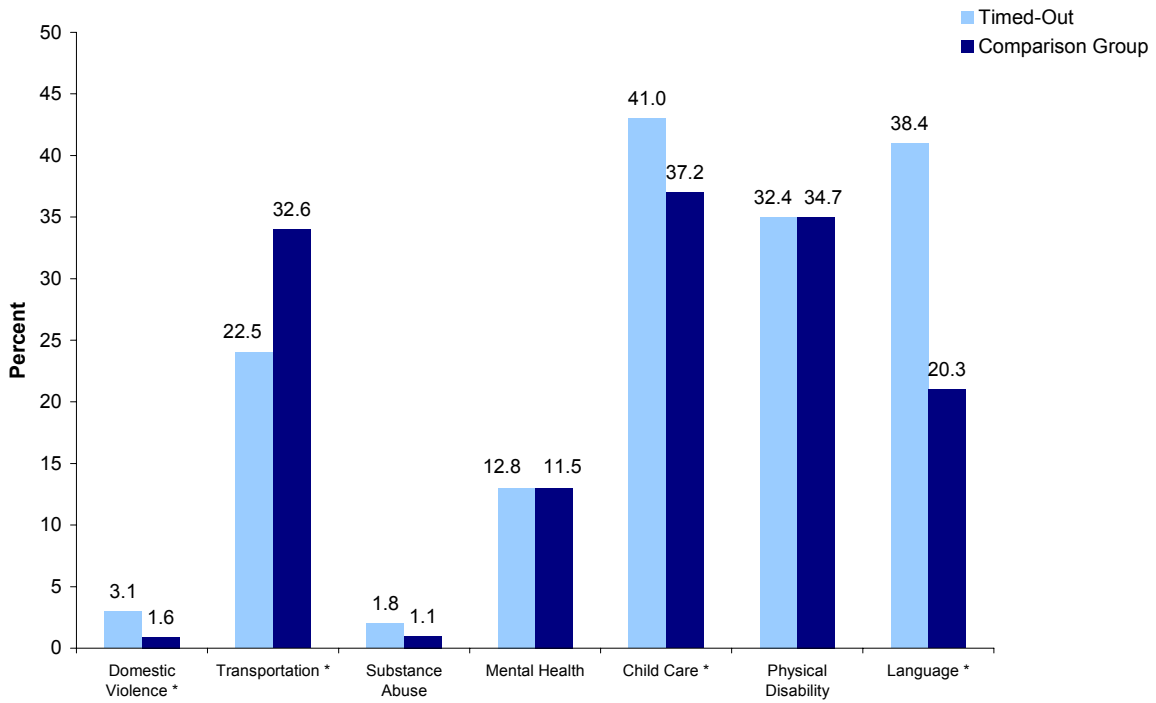
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .0001$

**Figure 14. If Unemployed, Looking for Work Between  
January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 11a)**



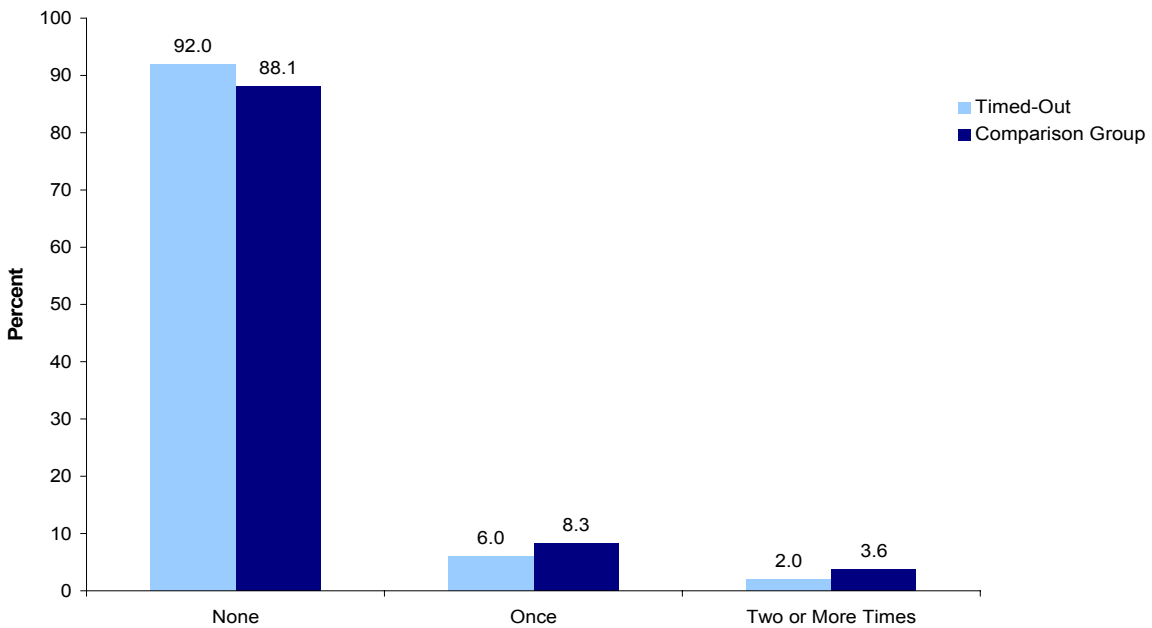
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .0001$

**Figure 15. Barriers to Employment Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 11b)<sup>1</sup>**



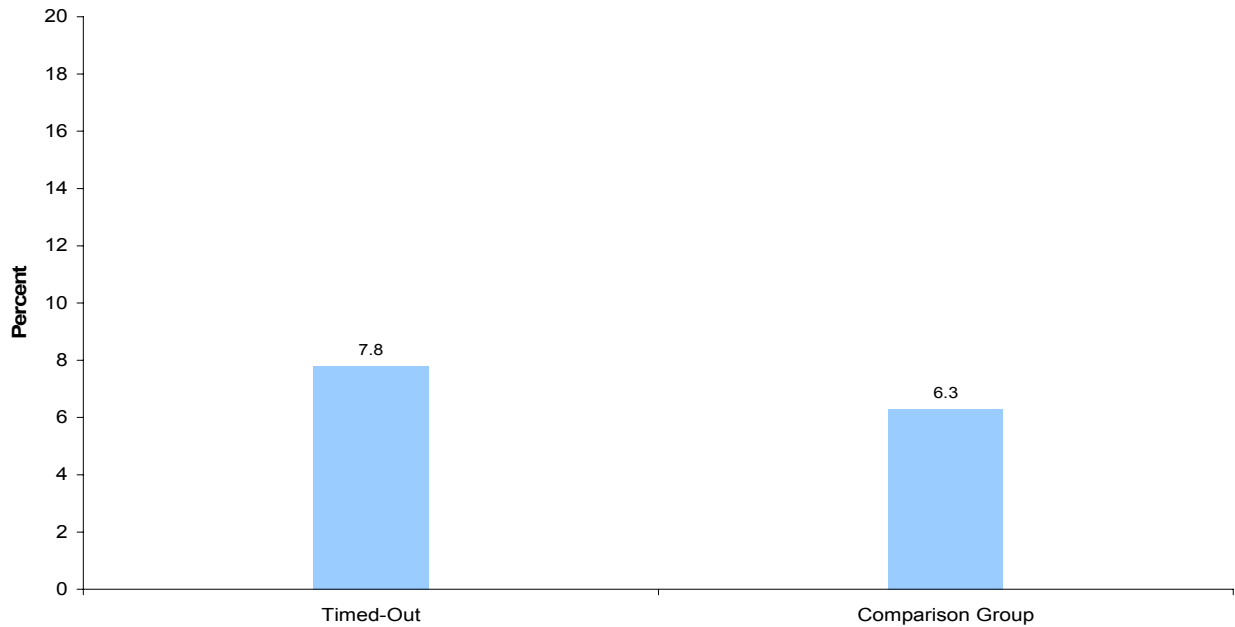
<sup>1</sup> Percentages are calculated *within* each category for the timed-out cohort and the comparison group  
\* Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .05$

**Figure 16. Number of Times Changed Jobs Between  
January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 12)**



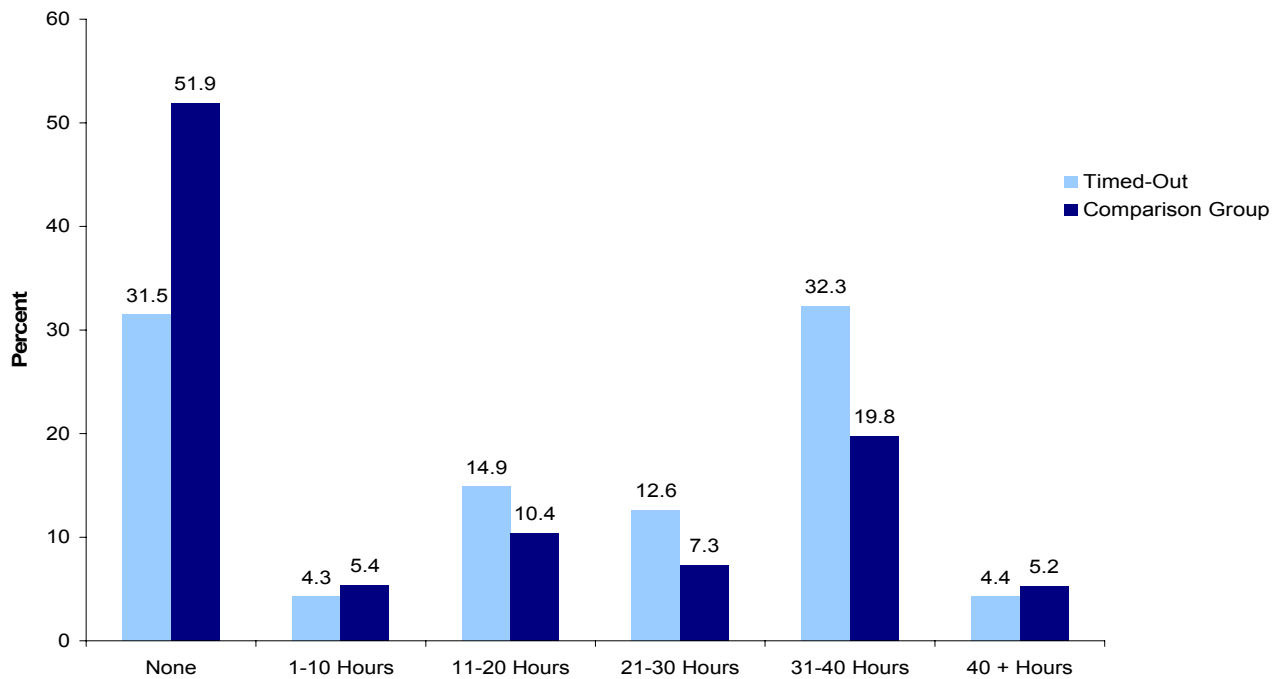
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .0001$

**Figure 17. Held a Second Job Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 13)**



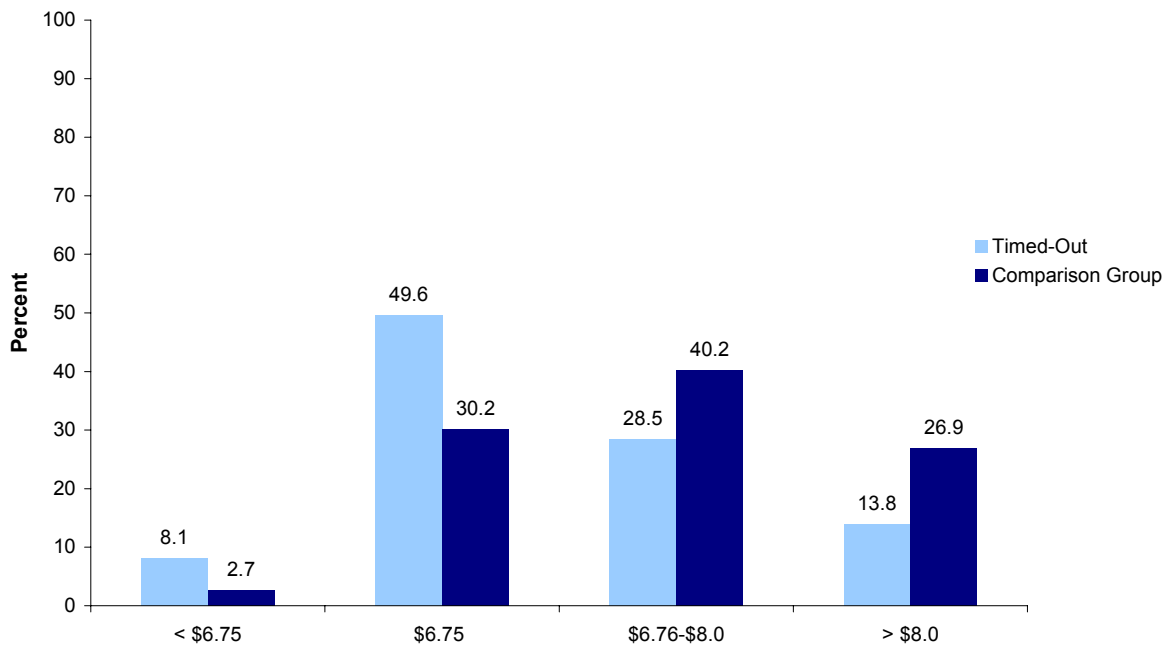
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .0001$

**Figure 18. Number of Hours Worked Per Week Between  
January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 14)**



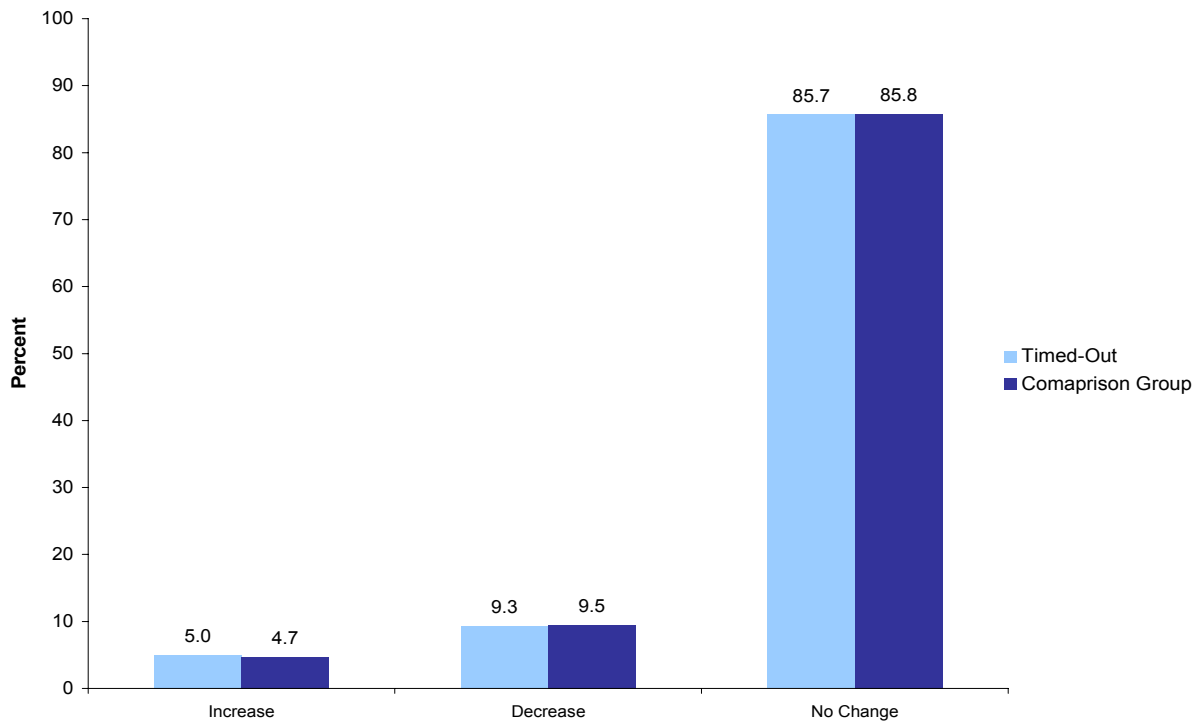
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

**Figure 19. Hourly Wages Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 15)**



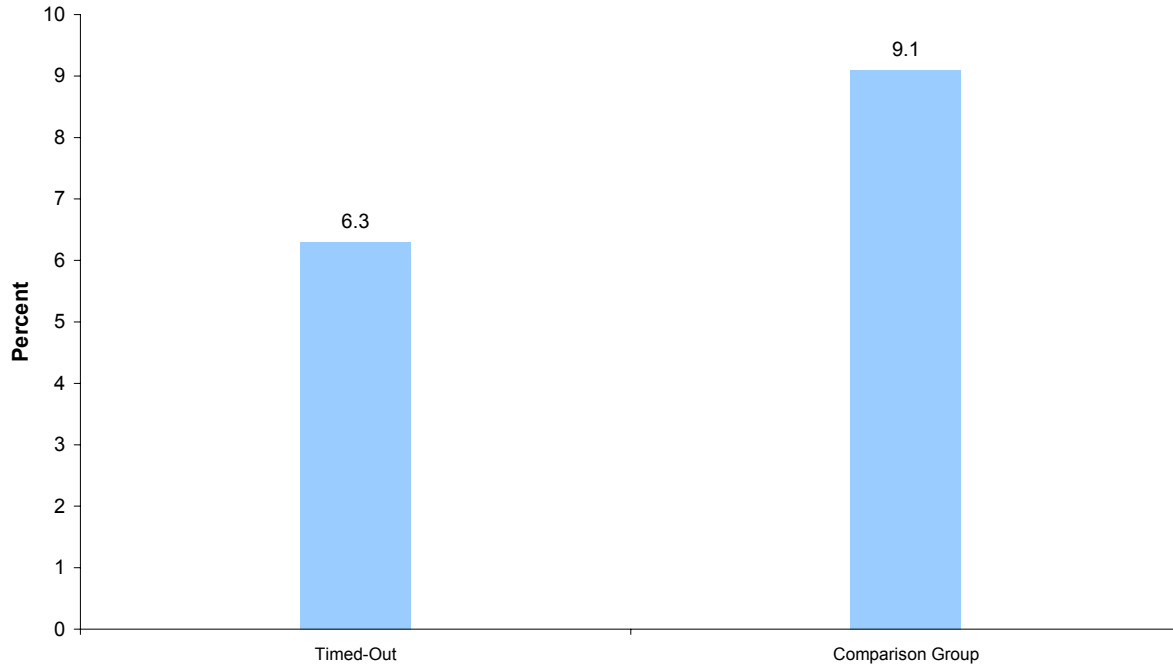
Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

**Figure 20. Change in Earnings Between January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 16)**



Note: No significant difference between timed-out cohort and comparison group

**Figure 21. Lost Health Insurance as a Job Benefit Between  
January and June 2003  
(Survey Question 17)**



Note: Significant difference between the timed-out cohort and comparison group at  $p < .001$

## **Focus Groups**

The purpose of focus groups was to provide in-depth information on the well-being of participants after reaching time limits, and further probe the questions asked in the surveys. Participants for the focus groups were selected by drawing a random sample from participants who responded to the Phase I of the surveys.

- The focus groups were conducted in two waves in July and August of 2003. The first wave was conducted in July and the second wave was conducted in August. The second wave was lagged by one-month in order to conduct phone interviews with participants who participated in the first wave of the focus groups.
- Information obtained from phone interviews was used to enhance and better understand the information obtained in focus group interviews.
- Focus group participants in the timed-out cohort were recruited from regionally concentrated populations that were representative of the main languages spoken by them, i.e. English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Armenian. Focus groups for the timed-out cohort were conducted in all of these four languages.
- Armenian and Vietnamese participants are a smaller proportion of the CalWORKs population still receiving aid. Therefore, focus groups with the comparison group were conducted only in English and Spanish.
- Participants were given information on the confidentiality of the study and were asked to sign a consent form. They were assured that their identity would not be revealed to either DPSS or any County or government organization. The consent forms were signed in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, or Armenian, depending on the primary language of the participants.
- After signing the consent form, the participants were given a brief introduction, which included the background of the facilitators, the purpose of the discussion, and the importance of the study.
- The interviews were transcribed and summarized to provide a qualitative assessment of the economic and family situation of participants who reached time limits by comparing them with those who continue to receive aid.

## **Questions for Participants in the Timed-Out Cohort**

- Were you aware that your aid was ending?
- How did you feel when your aid ended?
- Getting off of welfare is often hard for families. How have things been for you and your family since you reached your 60-month time limit for receipt of aid? Have things gotten better, worse, or about the same and in what ways?
- Have you changed your priorities? What, if anything, have you had to give up or defer?

- We would like to know if you've experienced times when you ran short of essentials – food, utilities, money for transportation, or to pay your rent.
- Have you had to make changes in your living situation or delay taking care of health or other essential needs?

*(After they answer the above, ask:)*

- Are these shortages worse since coming off of welfare? Please give examples.
- How do you stretch your dollars or what did you do when this (shortages) happened?

*(Probe for additional sources of income and where have they gone for help in making it.)*

- Next, we would like you to think back to the time before your aid ended. Were you aware that your aid would be ending, and did you receive any help (job training, counseling, or other supportive services) to prepare for the end of your aid?
- How helpful were these services?
- What other services (Medi-Cal, subsidized housing, food stamps, etc.) did you receive before your aid ended?
- Are you receiving transitional services (child care, Medi-Cal, Food Stamps)?
- If not receiving these services, why?

*(If not receiving these services, how are they meeting these needs?)*

- What information did you receive about services that would be available once your aid ended and are you using them?
- Are there services that you need to sustain your family, but can't get?
- Now we would like to know some things about your efforts to find work. What jobs have you held since your welfare ended and how did you chose them?
  - If you left a job, what led to your decision?
  - If you're not working, are you looking for work?
  - If you are working, are you bringing in more money now than you did while on welfare?
  - If not, what is the biggest barrier to getting a better job?
- While you were on welfare, what were you able to do to prepare for a better job?
- What have you been able to do to prepare for a better job since welfare ended?



- What has been the most positive thing about getting off of welfare?
- What has been the impact of the end of welfare on your family?

*(Probe for positive and negative impact.)*

- What is the greatest difficulty that you have encountered since your welfare ended? How have you tried to overcome it?
- If you could talk to the Board of Supervisors, what would you tell them that you need?

### **Questions for Comparison Group Participants**

- How have things been for you and your family since you have been receiving aid and in the GAIN program? Has receiving aid and being in GAIN helped or been bad for you and in what ways?
- Making ends meet on welfare is often hard for families. We would like to know if you've experienced times when you ran short of essentials – food, utilities, money for transportation, or to pay your rent.
  - Have you had to make changes in your living situation or delay taking care of health or other essential needs? Please give examples.
  - How do you stretch your dollars or what did you do when this (shortages) happened?

*(Probe for additional sources of income and help. Remind them that their answers will remain confidential).*

- How do you feel about the time-limit to the receipt of your aid?
- Do you know when your time clock for receiving aid will end?
- How prepared do you think you'll be to survive without aid?
- What are you doing to prepare for the time when your aid will end?
- Are you receiving any help from GAIN to prepare for that time (e.g., job training, education, counseling, or other supportive services) ?
  - How helpful are these services?
  - Are there services that you think would be helpful to prepare for the time when your aid will end but can't get?
- What other services/benefits (child care, transportation assistance, Medi-Cal, subsidized housing, Food Stamps, etc.) do you receive?
  - Have you ever had trouble getting services/benefits?

- What information have you received about services that will be available once your aid ends?
  - Are there services that you think you'll need to sustain your family but may not be able to get?
- Now we would like to know some things about your efforts to find work. What jobs have you held since you have been in GAIN, how many hours per week do you work, and what is your hourly pay?
  - How did you choose your job?
  - If you left a job, what led to your decision?
  - If you're not working, are you looking for work?
  - If you are working, are you bringing in more money now than you did while on welfare?
  - If not, what is the biggest barrier to getting a better job?
- GAIN says that you should take whatever job you can get and then get a better job. What are you doing to prepare for a better job?
  - What difficulties do you have in getting further education or training to prepare for a better job?
- How do you think GAIN has helped you move toward self-sufficiency?
- What could GAIN be doing better to help you move toward self-sufficiency?
  - How have you tried to overcome these deficiencies or barriers to self-sufficiency?
- What do you think will be the impact of reaching your 60-month time limit on your family?  
(*Probe for positive and negative impact.*)
- If you could talk to the Board of Supervisors, what would you tell them that you need?

### **Focus Group Data**

- Questions in focus group interviews among both groups of participants covered areas of income, employment, housing, supportive services, and family structure.
- Facilitators further probed how participants were coping with meeting life's necessities and if they experienced shortages of food, money, etc.
- They were asked about the types of supportive services they received prior to reaching their time limits and the services they still continue to receive, such as child care.

- Finally, participants were asked to add their comments and any other additional information.

Table 3 lists the sample characteristics of the participants that participated in the focus group interviews.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants								
	English		Spanish		Armenian		Vietnamese	
	Timed-out (N= 5)	Comparison Group (N= 5)	Timed-out (N= 8)	Comparison Group (N= 6)	Timed-out (N= 7)	Comparison Group *	Timed-out (N= 9)	Comparison Group *
Ethnicity								
White		2						
African-American	4	2						
Hispanic		1	8	6				
Vietnamese								
Cambodian	1				7			
Armenian								
Gender								
Males	1		3	1			3	
Females	4	5	5	5	7		6	
Marital Status								
Single								
Married	4	5	5	2	1		1	
	1		3	4	7		8	
Mean Age	NA	NA	41	37	42		47	
Education								
No formal education	NA	NA	6	5			9	
Less than high-school			2	1	3			
High School					3			
Some College					1			
Masters								

\* Focus group interviews were not conducted for Armenian and Vietnamese speaking participants in the comparison group because they were a smaller proportion of the CalWORKS population.