

County of Los Angeles
Chief Executive Office
Service Integration Branch



**An Evaluation of the Utilization and Effectiveness of
Four Homeless Assistance Programs for CalWORKs Families**

Research and Evaluation Services

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July 2010

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Preface

The current economic downturn has hit Los Angeles County especially hard, leading to an increase in the unemployment rate that is, as of this writing, roughly two percentage points above the national average. Welfare caseloads in the County have grown significantly as a result, as has the number of families becoming homeless. Within this difficult context, the present evaluation of the Homeless Assistance programs the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) administers for CalWORKs families provides policymakers with critical information gauging the effectiveness with which the Department has responded to the basic housing needs of vulnerable families. This report presents encouraging findings with respect to housing outcomes yielded through participation in four Homeless Assistance programs for CalWORKs families: Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction, Permanent Homeless Assistance, Moving Assistance, and Four-Month Rental Assistance. These programs offer funds to families to cover expenses such as rent, rental arrearages, utilities, security deposits, cleaning fees, and moving costs. The findings presented in this study show that utilization of these programs fosters housing stability and prevents homelessness. While the report does not conduct a full-fledged cost avoidance analysis of the programs, the findings should be considered in connection with recent work the Research and Evaluation Services (RES) unit has done elsewhere, which shows that the prevention of homelessness tends to lead to a decline in the utilization of expensive services in areas such as law enforcement and mental and physical health. In all likelihood, then, the positive homelessness prevention and housing stability results demonstrated in this report have the added advantage of yielding considerable cost savings for the County. For these reasons - and given the fiscally challenging environment in which County departments are currently operating - there are both humane and fiscal incentives to continue the County's commitment the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs.

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Principal Investigator

Acknowledgements

A number of people provided valuable support and feedback in the course of the work that went into this report. Phil Ansell at DPSS offered intellectual guidance and, along with Charlotte Lee, provided feedback to an earlier draft of this report that strengthened the analysis considerably. Michael Bono managed the study for DPSS, ensuring that we had access to the information and data needed to complete the report, and he also provided us with incisive feedback that helped us improve the overall evaluation. Jose Salgado at DPSS was responsive to all our questions about the functionality of the Homeless Assistance programs for CalWORKs families and generously shared his programmatic expertise. Kathy House and Lesley Blacher provided leadership at CEO and helped create an environment conducive to research and writing. Vani Dandillaya at CEO offered helpful comments on the report. Nancy Salem at RES also offered feedback on our work and assisted in the creation of tables and figures. Adrineh Melkonian formatted and proofread the report, catching mistakes and helping us to make the report more readable. To all these people, we give our heartfelt thanks.

Key Findings Presented in this Report

CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program	Findings
Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE)	The EAPE program was highly effective in preventing homelessness among CalWORKs families at risk of losing their housing as 89 percent of those in the 2008 cohort who received funds through the program remained housed during the year after receipt. ¹ The percentage is even higher (91 percent) in looking at families who did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year prior to utilizing the program.
Moving Assistance (MA)	Among CalWORKs families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the MA program, the portion of those that experienced at least one episode of homelessness dropped from 55 percent during the year prior to receipt of the assistance to 12 percent during the year afterwards. The average extent of homelessness among all families receiving MA funds – i.e. the average amount of time these families spent being homeless – declined from 29 percent of the time during the year prior to receipt of the funds to four percent during the year afterwards.
MA	The MA program fosters housing stability as measured by the number of address changes CalWORKs families over a period of one year. Among those in the 2008 cohort, and after adjusting for the initial address change families make upon receiving MA funds, the total number of address changes among these families declined from 3,800 during the year prior to utilization of the program to 2,600 during the year afterwards, a decline of 32 percent. Moreover, the number of address changes from a residential address to a position of homelessness dropped even more sharply, from 1,700 to 500, a decrease of 71 percent.
Permanent Homeless Assistance (PHA)	Among CalWORKs families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the PHA program, the portion of those experiencing at least one episode of homelessness dropped from 59 percent during the year prior to receipt of the assistance to 12 percent during the year afterwards. The average extent of homelessness among these families declined from 31 percent during the year prior to receipt of the funds to five percent during the year afterwards.
PHA	After adjusting for the address changes families in the 2008 cohort made upon receipt of PHA funds, the total number of

¹ There are 11,897 CalWORKs families in the 2008 cohort that was studied for this report.

CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program	Findings
	address changes declined from 4,500 during the year prior to utilization of the PHA program to 3,400 during the year afterwards, a decline of 24 percent. Additionally, the number of changes from a residential address to homelessness declined from 2,300 during the year prior to utilization to 500 afterwards, a decline of 78 percent.
Four-Month Rental Assistance (RA)	Among families in the 2008 cohort receiving assistance through the four-month RA program, the portion of those that experienced one episode of homelessness declined from 65 percent during the year prior to receiving the funds to 15 percent during the year afterwards. The average extent of homelessness among these families decreased from 25 percent of the time during the year before receipt of the funds to five percent during the year afterwards.
RA	After adjusting for the address changes that families in the 2008 cohort made upon receipt of funds through the RA program, the number of address changes declined from 1,200 during the year prior to utilization of the program to 700 during the year afterwards, a decline of 42 percent. Additionally, the number of changes from proper residential addresses to homelessness declined from 450 during the year prior to receipt of RA funds to 150 during the year afterwards, a decline of 67 percent.

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I. Introduction

1. Background

The recession that officially began in December 2007 has taken a particularly pronounced toll on Los Angeles County's labor market.² The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, while the seasonally adjusted *national* unemployment rate doubled between December 2007 and December 2009, from five percent to ten percent, the same rate increased more severely in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale Metro area, from 5.5 percent in December 2007 to 12 percent by December 2009, peaking at 12.5 percent in July 2009.³ The depth of the recession has intensified the problem of homelessness in Los Angeles County and expanded the ranks of families receiving aid through the California Work and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. According to administrative records kept by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), new applications for aid through CalWORKs in Los Angeles County rose from 16,826 in December 2007 to 20,407 in December 2009, an increase of 21 percent. Moreover, the number of new CalWORKs cases added increased from 9,431 to 12,442 over the same period, an increase of 32 percent.⁴ However, little if any research is currently available on the utilization and effects of the Department of Public Social Services' (DPSS) Homeless Assistance Programs for CalWORKs Families.

Impressive Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stability Results

The present study has been written to provide policymakers and program managers with an evaluation of four key Homeless Assistance Programs for CalWORKs Families in the County of Los Angeles. These programs, as this report will show, have yielded impressive results, both in the prevention of homelessness and promotion of housing stability. For example, roughly 85 percent of previously homeless families in a 2008 CalWORKs cohort did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year after utilizing DPSS' Moving Assistance for CalWORKs Families program. Similarly, among CalWORKs families in the 2008 cohort that utilized DPSS' Permanent Homeless Assistance program, the portion of those that experienced at least one episode of homelessness declined from 59 percent during the year prior to utilization to 12 percent during the year afterwards. Moreover, among families in the same cohort that received aid through DPSS' Four-Month Rental Assistance Program, the portion of those that

² This periodization of the recession comes from the National Bureau of Economic Research, the most widely referenced body in the United States in terms of dating recessions and developments in the business cycle. (<http://www.nber.org/cycles/main.html>)

³ (<http://bls.gov/news/archives/empisit>)

⁴ <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/research/res/pdf/CA237/2007/CA237Dec07.pdf>
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/research/res/pdf/CA237/2009/CA237Dec09.pdf>

experienced at least one episode of homelessness declined from 65 percent during the year prior to receipt of the assistance to 15 percent during the year afterwards.⁵

2. The Programs to be Evaluated

The programs to be analyzed and evaluated in this report are as follows:

a. *Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction*

The Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE) program was implemented in 2003 through a contract with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). In April 2004, the contract with LAHSA was terminated, at which point the program was brought in house to DPSS. At this time, however, the only funding available for the program was the CalWORKs Single Allocation. For this reason, the Welfare-to-Work part of the EAPE was implemented in April 2004, but implementation of the non-Welfare-to-Work part of the program did not take place until July 2004, when Net County Cost funds became available.

The EAPE program provides assistance to CalWORKs families that are unable to pay rent due to a financial hardship and that are therefore at risk of losing their housing. The program offers up to \$2,000 to help pay rent and/or utilities for up to two months in arrearages to assist families in maintaining permanent housing.⁶

b. *Permanent Homeless Assistance*

The Permanent Homeless Assistance (PHA) program is mandated and funded by the State of California and has been in place since the early 1980s.⁷ The program provides homeless CalWORKs families with funds to cover move-in costs, such as last month's rent, security deposits, utility deposits, and cleaning fees, provided the family's rent costs do not exceed 80 percent of the total monthly household income. Additionally, as a result of California's enactment of AB 1808 in 2006, the PHA program can pay up to two months in rent arrearages.

⁵ DPSS implemented the four-month Rental Assistance program in January 2005. The program was expanded to eight months in October 2009. However, due to a lack of an adequate time period for study of the program in its eight-month form, the analysis provided in this study is limited to the four-month version of the program.

⁶ Participants can use this program until the \$2,000 has been exhausted.

⁷ DPSS' official program descriptions refer to both the Permanent Homeless Assistance and Temporary Homeless Assistance programs with the acronym 'HA.' This report only looks at the Permanent Homeless Assistance program, but this report uses the acronym 'PHA' to ensure that the program is distinguished from Temporary Homeless Assistance.

c. *Moving Assistance for CalWORKs Families*

Like the EAPE program, the Moving Assistance for CalWORKs Families (MA) program was implemented in January 2003 through a contract with LAHSA and the program was brought in house after termination of the contract with LAHSA in April 2004. Since the only funding available for the program at this time was the CalWORKs Single Allocation, the Welfare-to-Work part of the program was implemented in April 2004, but implementation of the non-Welfare-to-Work part of the program did not take place until July 2004, when Net County Cost funds became available.

The MA program provides funds to secure permanent housing for CalWORKs families experiencing a financial crisis such as homelessness or risk of homelessness.⁸ In order to receive funds through the MA program, a family must have exhausted all other means of assistance, including funds from the PHA program. If the family is not homeless, a financial hardship that could result in homelessness must be demonstrated. The MA program offers funds for the last month's rent, security deposits, utility turn-on fees, and moving expenses. A family may receive up to \$2,000 in MA funds to purchase needed basic appliances and/or for the rental of a moving truck. This amount includes up to \$405 that can be used for the purchase of a stove and/or refrigerator.

d. *Four-Month Rental Assistance for CalWORKs Families*

DPSS implemented the Four-Month Rental Assistance (RA) program for CalWORKs Families in January 2005, and the program was expanded to eight months and implemented in October 2009.⁹ The program provides assistance to Welfare-to-Work families in the form of a rental subsidy lasting up to four months so that they can remain in non-subsidized permanent housing. Families receiving PHA and/or MA funds can qualify for a rental subsidy of up to \$300 per family for up to four consecutive months.

3. Research Questions

The following questions guide the research conducted for this study.

- What types of Homeless Assistance Programs do homeless CalWORKs families utilize? How many families utilize these programs?

⁸ DPSS considers a family to be at risk of homelessness if an eviction notice or three-day notice to pay or quit has been issued.

⁹ Due to the lack of an adequate time period for study of the RA program in its eight-month form, the analysis and evaluation offered in this study is limited to the four-month version of the program.

- What proportion of CalWORKs families received support through DPSS' Homeless Assistance programs, by program type, CalWORKs status, and district?
- What is the average dollar amount in Homeless Assistance aid per homeless and at-risk CalWORKs family, by program?
- What are the average number of homeless episodes and the average length of homelessness among homeless CalWORKs families?
- To what extent do the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs prevent homelessness for homeless and at-risk families? Do CalWORKs families typically become homeless after receiving support through the Homeless Assistance programs?
- To what extent do the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs stabilize housing conditions for homeless and at-risk families?

4. Data and Methods

The main source of data used in this study is DPSS' Los Angeles Eligibility, Automated Determination, Evaluation and Reporting (LEADER) system, which holds the administrative records DPSS maintains for the CalWORKs program in the County of Los Angeles. LEADER files provide comprehensive and systematic information on the characteristics and service utilization histories of CalWORKs participants. LEADER monthly housing assistance files were used to identify CalWORKs Homeless Assistance program participants and to capture details on program participation. The LEADER system was also used to collect data on participant address information and CalWORKs aid history. The homeless status of CalWORKs participants was determined using LEADER case history files that were matched against DPSS district office addresses and the Los Angeles County shelter database.

The analyses provided in this study examine two cohorts of families that utilized the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs selected for evaluation. The 2007 cohort is comprised of the 11,147 families that received at least one payment during the 2007 calendar year through one or more of the four Homeless Assistance programs selected for evaluation. These families may or may not have received other housing assistance payments before or after 2007. However, 65 percent of the homeless assistance paid to the families in the 2007 cohort was disbursed in 2007. The 2008 cohort consists of the 11,897 families that received at least one housing assistance payment through the selected programs during the 2008 calendar year but did not receive payments via these programs in 2007.¹⁰

¹⁰Please note that some families in the 2008 cohort received funds through CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs prior to 2007, but families receiving such funds in 2007 were excluded from the cohort so that the two cohorts constructed for this study would be mutually exclusive.

Before-and-After Comparisons

Comparisons of housing outcomes during the year after CalWORKs families utilized Homeless Assistance programs are compared with the homeless status and/or housing stability of these families during the year before utilization. This was done to gain a proximate sense of the extent to which the Homeless Assistance programs were successful in preventing homelessness and/or in promoting housing stability. However, in observing the results yielded through participation in each program, the reader should be aware that other confounding factors may have contributed to the reported outcomes and results. For instance, this study does not examine the employment dynamics and histories of families in either of the two cohorts. However, if the head of a family moves from unemployment to employment during the study period, the change in employment status can have an impact on the family's housing situation. A more robust set of analyses than what was possible for this study would require the use of multivariate statistical methods to isolate the effects of relevant independent variables, and/or the use of experimental methods, which would enable the study to compare outcomes for families utilizing CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs with outcomes for control groups of statistically similar CalWORKs families that did not utilize the Homeless Assistance programs. However, the difficulties involved in constructing control groups with the available data, as well as the urgency of providing timely information to policymakers at this critical juncture for the County, made any effort go beyond a descriptive before-and-after analysis unfeasible. Despite these limitations, the findings presented in this study are statistically reliable since the analyzed cohorts consist of all families utilizing the selected Homeless Assistance programs during 2007 and 2008.

5. The Sections of this Report

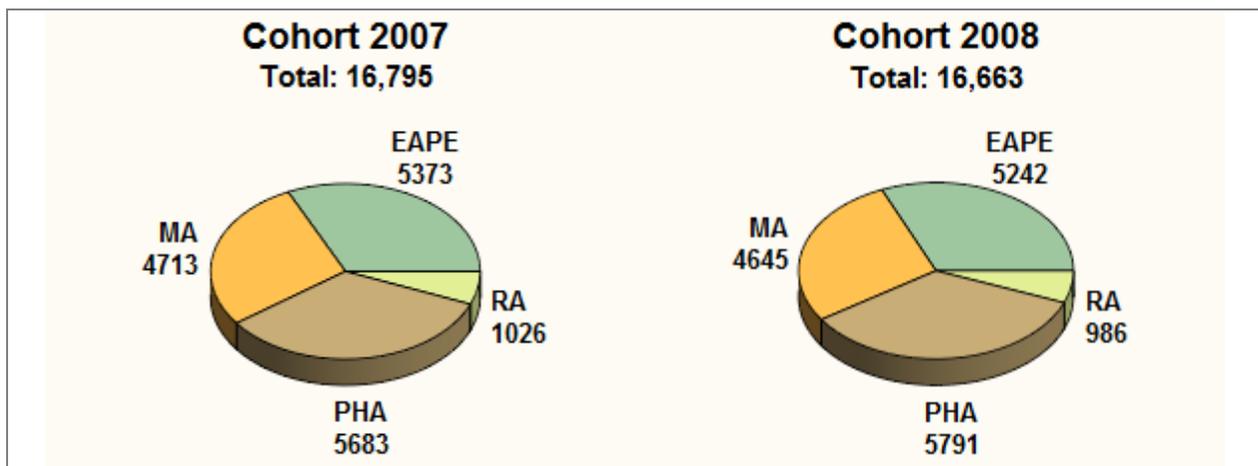
The substantive analyses of the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs evaluated for this report are provided in sections II, III, IV, and V. *Section II* looks at utilization patterns for each of the four programs and examines program utilization in relation to Welfare-to-Work status and CalWORKs districts. *Section II* also examines payments made to families through each of the four programs over a period of five years, as well as the amount of time families spent in receipt of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance funds over the study period. *Section III* examines the homeless status of families utilizing the four programs before, during and after receipt of assistance. *Section IV* examines the number and length of homeless episodes among families utilizing the four programs, both before and during receipt of the assistance. *Section V* evaluates outcomes yielded through participation in the four programs, both in terms of the prevention of homelessness and the promotion of housing stability for CalWORKs families. *Section VI*, the concluding section of the report, provides a general summary of this report's main findings.

II. Utilization of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs

1. What Types of Homeless Assistance Programs do Homeless CalWORKs Families Utilize?

Over the study period, slightly more than 23,000 families received one or more of the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs analyzed for this report. Just under half of these families (11,147) are from the 2007 cohort, and the remainder (11,897) belongs to the 2008 cohort.¹¹ Roughly half of the families receiving CalWORKs Homeless Assistance in each cohort received one type of aid, while the other half in each cohort received more than one type of aid. Figure 1 shows that the utilization of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs in the two cohorts was almost identical. Each cohort received over 16,000 assistance programs.¹² While six percent of the total Homeless Assistance utilization in each cohort was accounted for by utilization of the RA program, the other three program types - PHA, MA, and EAPE - were almost equally distributed at 34 percent, 32 percent and 28 percent respectively.

Figure 1 Utilization of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs: 2007 and 2008 Cohorts



2. Patterns of Program Utilization

Many CalWORKs families receive aid through multiple Homeless Assistance programs. The descriptive analysis in this section is limited to the 2008 cohort since the utilization patterns in the two cohorts are almost identical. In looking at the 2008

¹¹ Please note that 15 percent of the 2007 cohort and seven percent of the 2008 cohort also received homeless assistance benefits during 2005 and/or 2006.

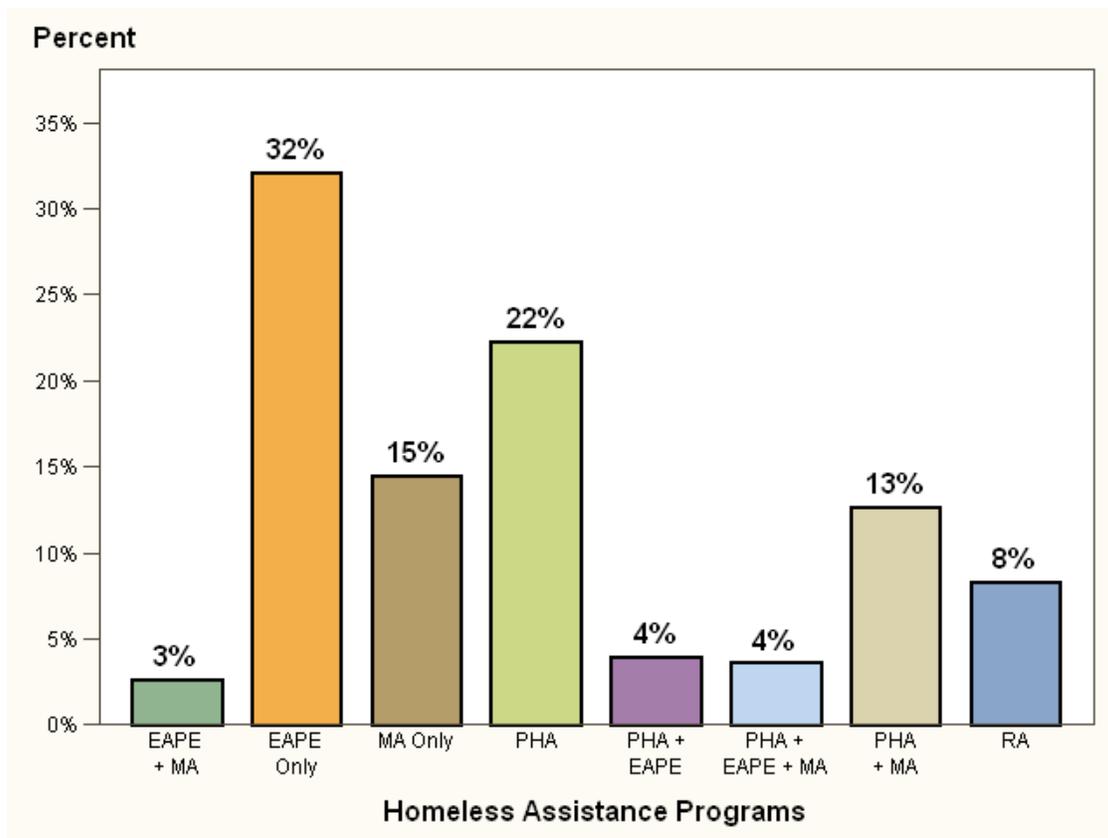
¹² Please note that one assistance program may contain multiple payments over the study period. This is looked at more closely later in this report.

cohort, the relevant patterns of Homeless Assistance utilization for families are as follows:

- *EAPE only;*
- *EAPE and MA;*
- *PHA only;*
- *PHA and EAPE;*
- *PHA and MA;*
- *PHA, EAPE and MA;*
- *RA in combination with other CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs.*

Figure 2 shows the distribution of all 11,897 families in the 2008 cohort by family utilization patterns.

Figure 2. CalWORKs Housing Assistance Utilization: 2008 Cohort



Just under one-third of the families in the 2008 cohort (32 percent) received EAPE aid only, while 22 percent received PHA only, and 21 percent received PHA aid together with EAPE and/or MA aid. The families receiving only MA aid comprised 15 percent of the cohort, and families receiving RA aid in combination with other programs (mostly MA) comprised eight percent of the cohort.

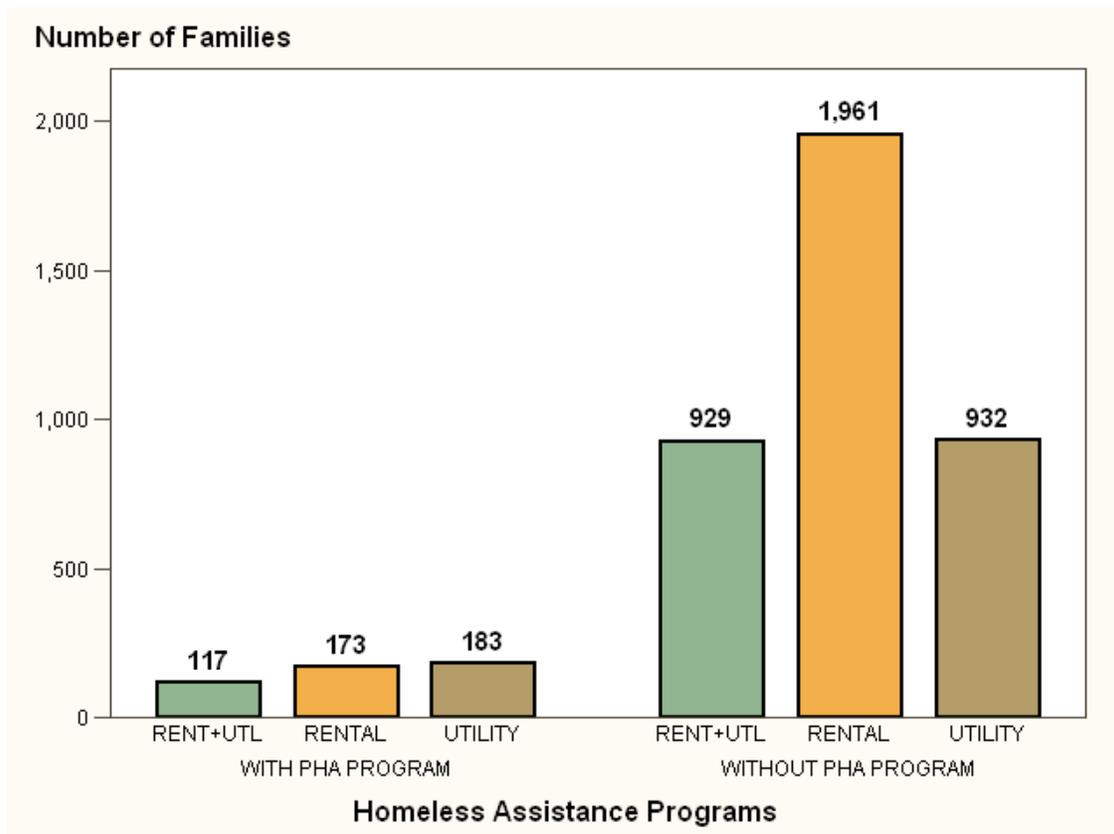
a. Utilization of Permanent Housing Assistance Program

A total of 2,907 families in the 2008 cohort, which is approximately one quarter of all families in the cohort, utilized PHA with or without RA. Only 257 of these families (nine percent) received PHA with RA. It should be noted that 12 percent of the families utilizing the PHA program received the assistance due to an exception (mostly the domestic violence exception). The remaining 88 percent of these families were first-time receivers of PHA aid.

b. Utilization of the Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction Program

Just fewer than 37 percent of the families in the 2008 cohort (a total of 4,295) utilized the EAPE program. As described above, funds made available through the EAPE program can take three forms – rental assistance, utility payments, or both. Figure 3 shows how the families specifically used the EAPE program. Only 11 percent of these families received EAPE and PHA funds together. More than half (51 percent) of the families who utilized the EAPE program without PHA funds requested rental assistance only, while another 25 percent applied for utility payments. The remaining 24 percent of families utilizing EAPE funds received both rental and utility aid.

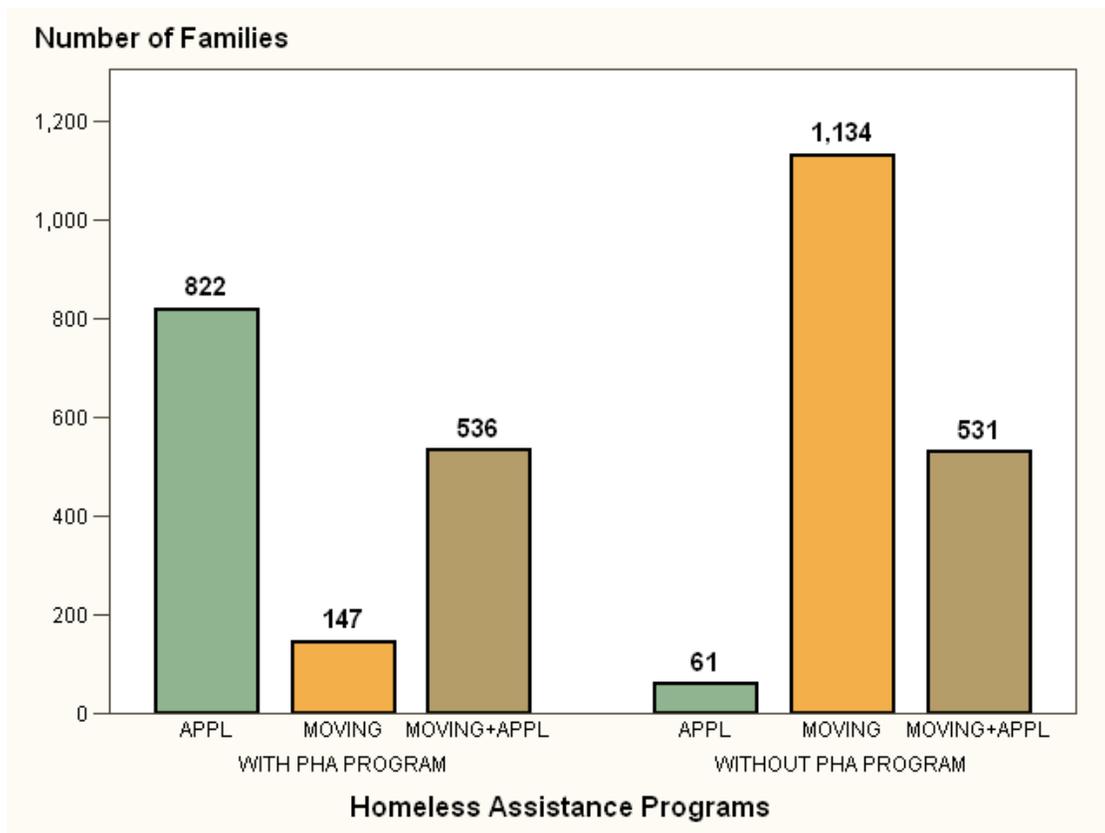
Figure 3. Number of Families Receiving Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction Funds: 2008 Cohort



c. Utilization of the Moving Assistance Program

A total of 3,231 families, 27 percent of those in the 2008 cohort, utilized the MA program during the study period. As discussed above, the MA program can take three forms – moving expenses, funds for the purchase of basic appliances, or both. Figure 4 shows that, unlike families utilizing the EAPE program, a relatively large fraction of families utilizing the MA program (almost half) received MA with PHA. In particular, almost all appliance payments were made to families receiving PHA. More than one-third (36 percent) of families receiving MA funds requested moving assistance only.

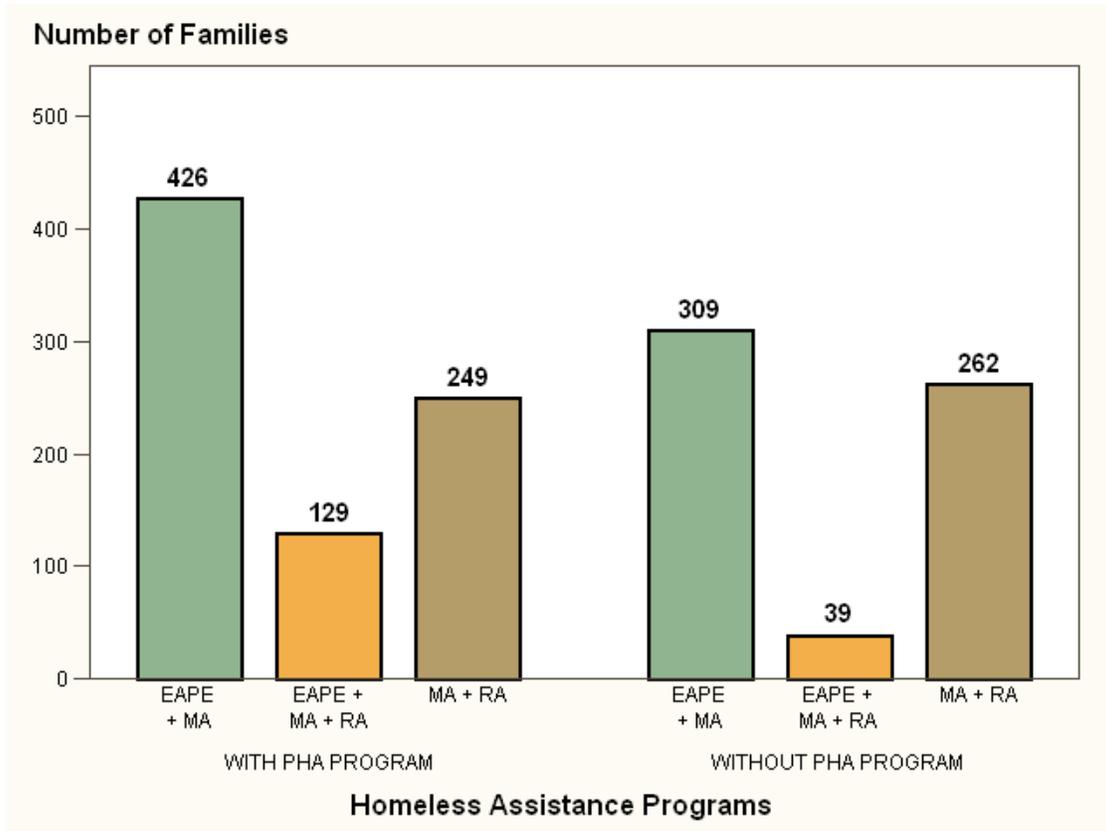
Figure 4. Number of Families Receiving Moving Assistance Program Funds: 2008 Cohort



d. Other Combinations of Program Utilization

A smaller portion of CalWORKs families in the 2008 cohort utilized combinations of DPSS' Homeless Assistance programs not described above. Figure 5 shows that most of these 1,464 families (about 12 percent of the 2008 cohort) utilized EAPE funds. There is also a significant group of families that received MA together with RA.

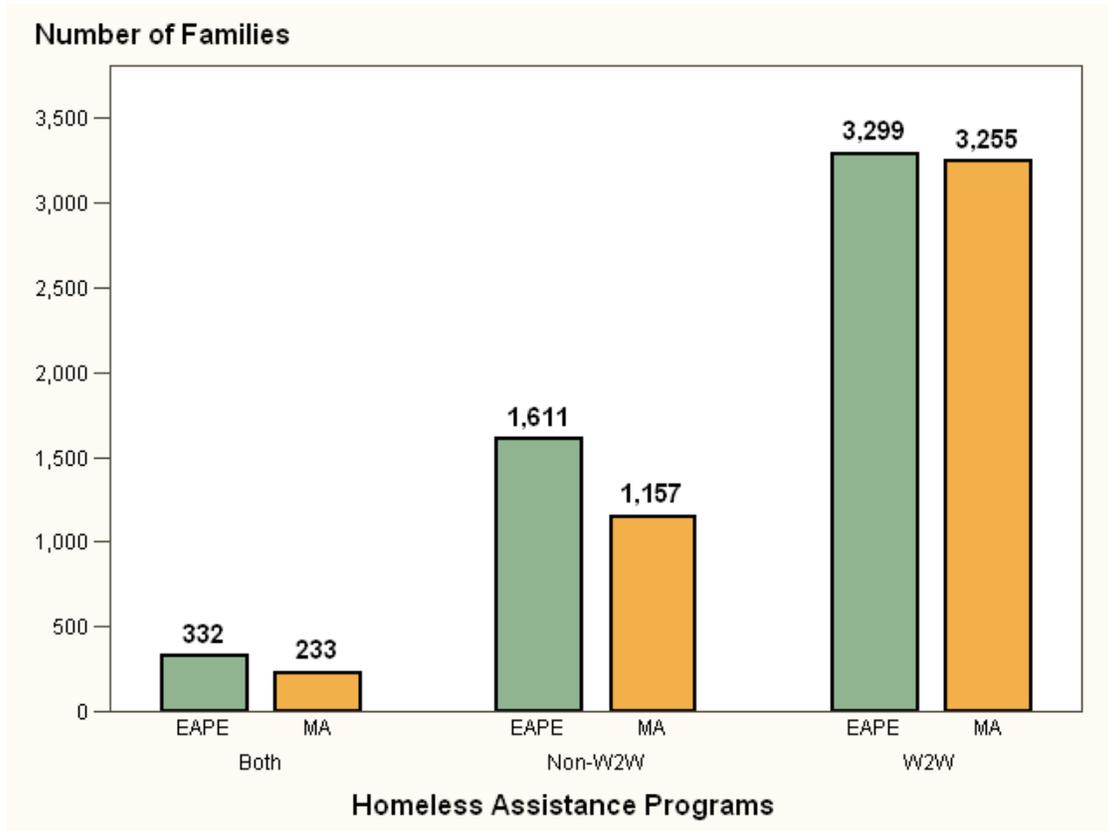
Figure 5. Number of Families Utilizing Other CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program Combinations: 2008 Cohort



3. Program Utilization and Welfare-to-Work Status

While rental assistance offered through the RA program is only available to Welfare-to-Work participants, the EAPE, MA and PHA programs are made available to both Welfare-to-Work and non-Welfare-to-Work families. Figure 6 shows that Welfare-to-Work participants in the 2008 cohort received 62 percent and 70 percent of EAPE and MA aid respectively. Roughly five percent of the families in the 2008 cohort received assistance in both Welfare-to-Work statuses. Non-Welfare-to-Work families in the 2008 cohort received Homeless Assistance aid through the EAPE program and the MA program (25 percent).

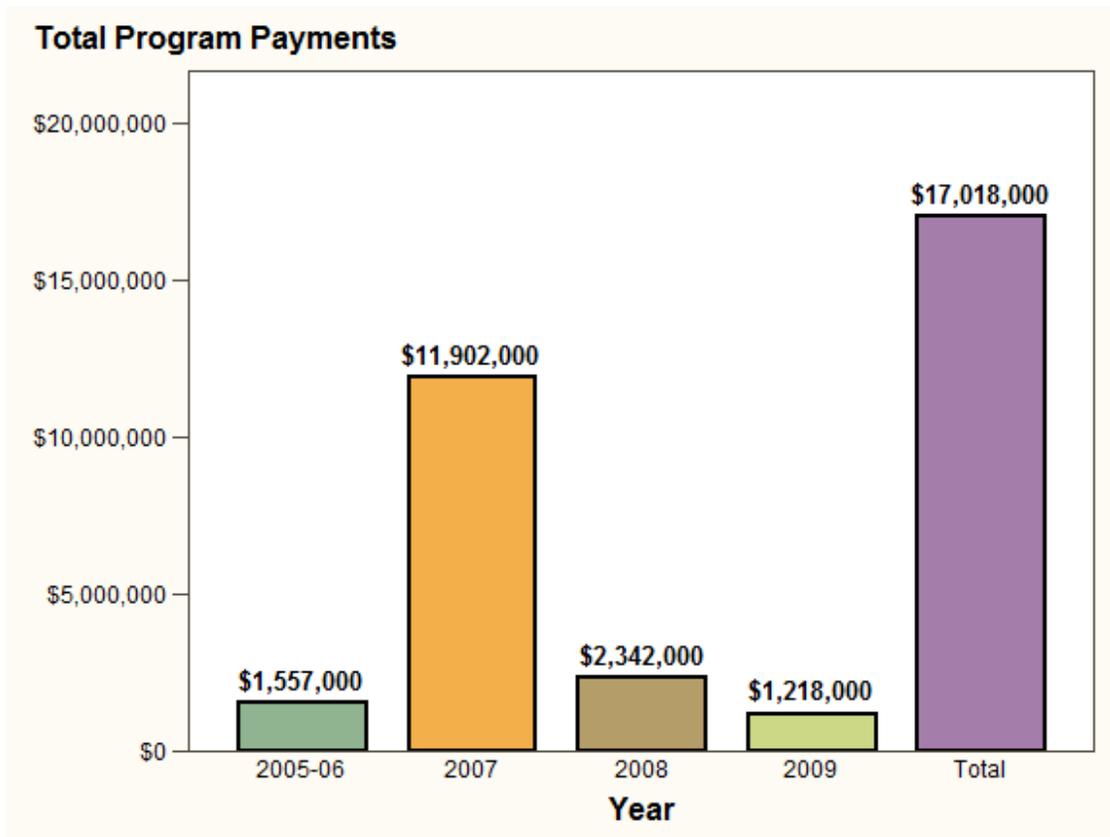
Figure 6. Utilization of Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction and Moving Assistance Programs, by Welfare-to-Work Status: 2008 Cohort



4. CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Payments over Five Years

The total payments in 2007 issued for the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs evaluated in this report were just under \$12 million. As illustrated in Figure 7, families in the 2007 cohort also received payments through the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs of over \$1.5 million prior to 2007. The payments that the 2007 cohort received dropped sharply to \$2.3 million in 2008 and to \$1.2 million in 2009. Over five years, the total payments for the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs made to families in the 2007 cohort were over \$17 million.

Figure 7. Total Payments Made to Families for Homeless Assistance Programs Over Five Years: 2007 Cohort



In 2008, the total payments for the four CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs increased to \$16 million; in addition to the \$2.3 million paid to the 2007 cohort families, more than \$13.5 million was issued to the 2008 cohort. The payments to the 2008 cohort dropped to \$1.6 million in 2009. The average payment per family over the study period was \$1,500 for the 2007 cohort and \$1,350 for the 2008 cohort.

5. Total and 24-Month Average Payments, by Homeless Assistance Program

Figure 8 shows the total payments made to families in the 2008 cohort, by Homeless Assistance program type, over 2008 and 2009. CalWORKs Families availing themselves of the PHA program received \$5.6 million in payments, which was the highest amount of all the Homeless Assistance programs over 2008 and 2009, followed by the \$4.3 million paid to families utilizing rental funds made available through the EAPE program. The lowest payment amount was made through the RA program because it covers the smallest number of participants.

Figure 8. Total Payments Made to 2008 Cohort over 2008 and 2009, by Homeless Assistance Programs

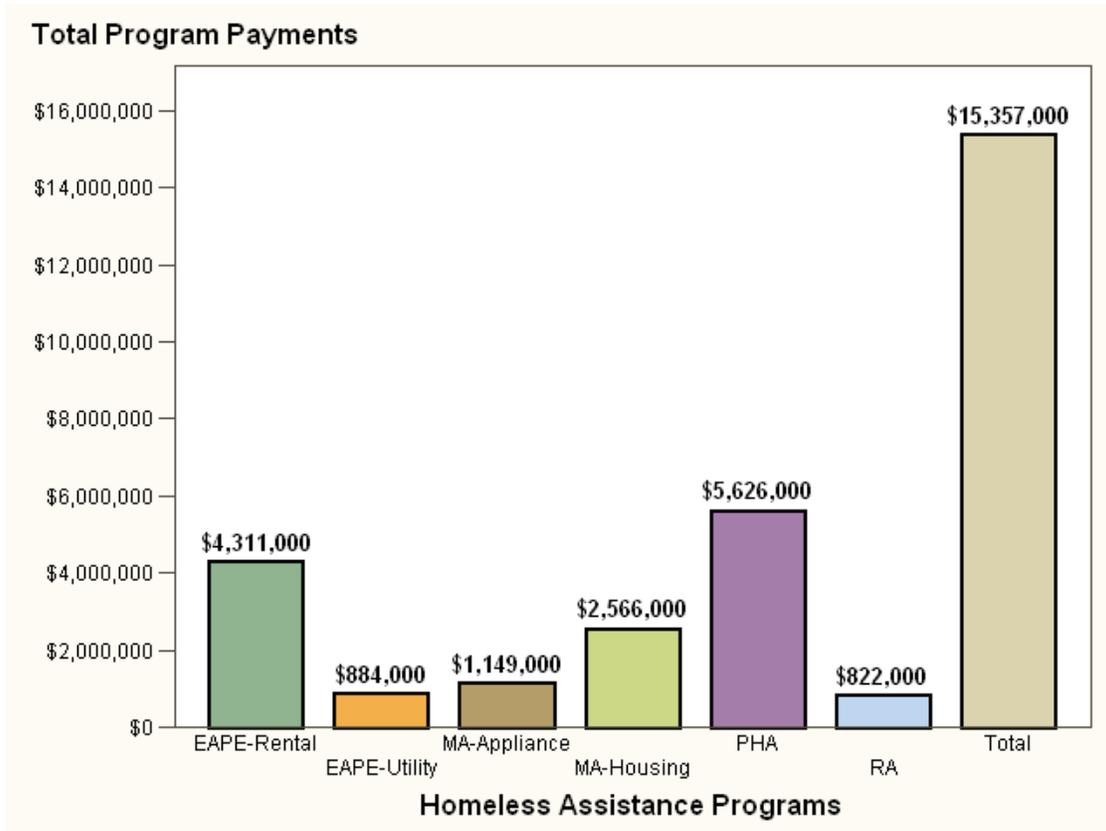
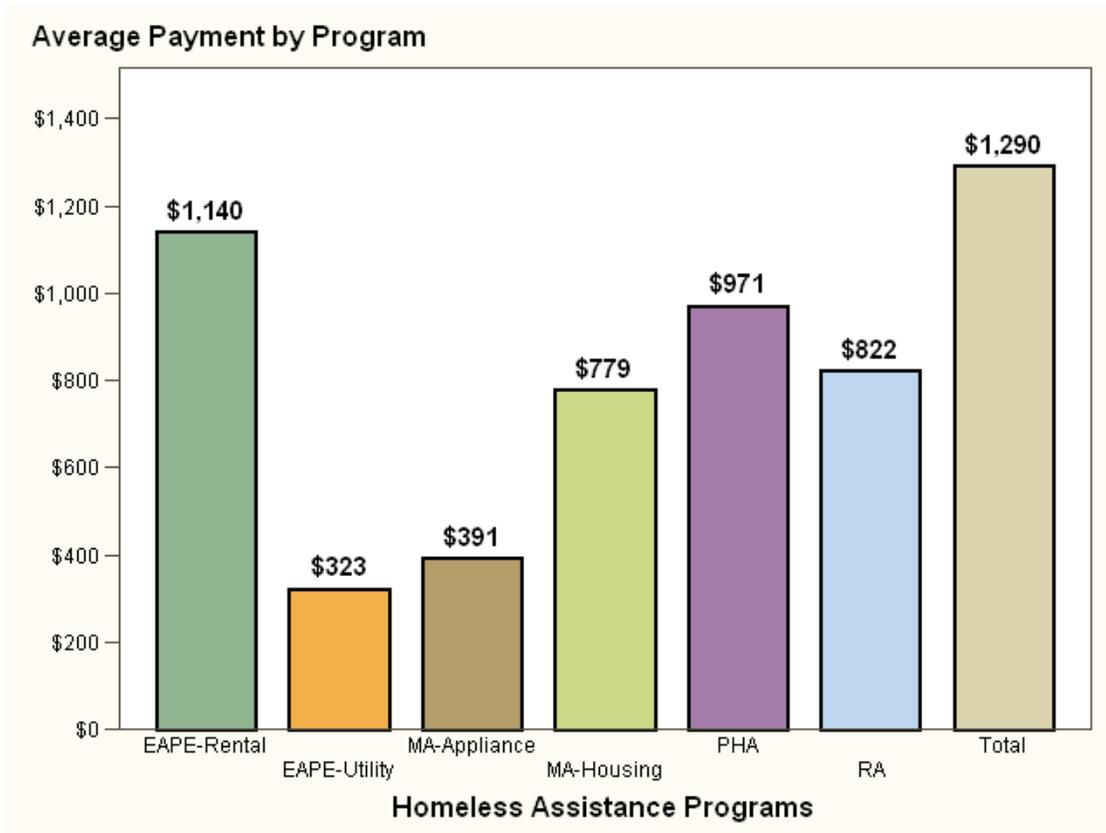


Figure 9 shows the 24-Month average CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs payments made over 2008 and 2009 to the 11,897 families in the 2008 cohort. Families that participated in a program received an average of \$1,140 in EAPE rental payment funds. While PHA payments averaged \$971 per family, RA payments averaged \$822 per family. The average payment amounts remained under the maximum of \$2,000 for the EAPE and MA programs and under \$1,200 for the RA program. Since there are many families that received more than one homeless assistance type, average payment for the total (all programs) is higher than the average for any individual program.

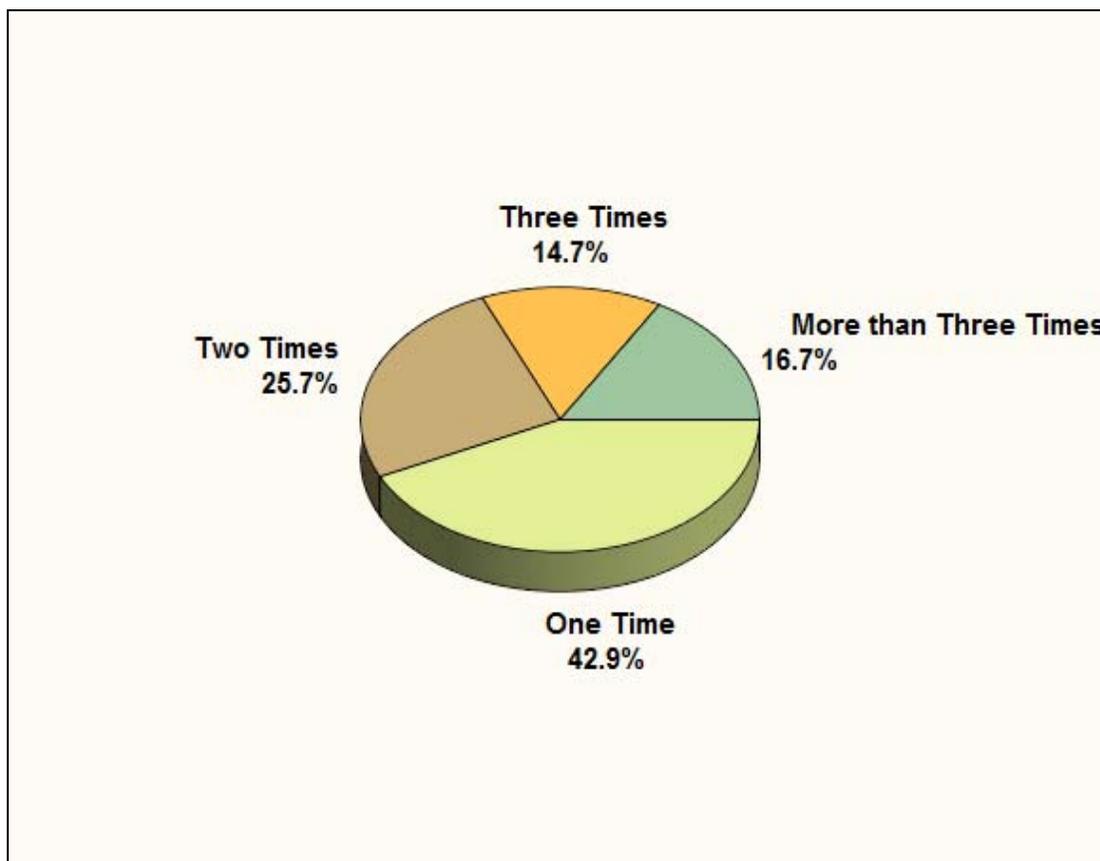
Figure 9. 24-Month Average Payments Made to the 2008 Cohort over 2008 and 2009, by Homeless Assistance Programs



6. How much Time do Families Spend in Receipt of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance?

In looking at the number of times families received funds through the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs evaluated for this report, the analysis is limited to the 2007 cohort since this group of participants has a longer span of time to study. Figure 10 shows the distribution of the number of times CalWORKs families in the 2007 cohort received homeless assistance payments over the period from 2005 to 2009.

Figure 10. Frequency of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Payments, 2005-2009: 2007 Cohort (N=11,266)



More than 40 percent of the 11,266 families received only one assistance. A quarter of the families received two assistances and 16.7 percent received more than three assistances.¹³ As discussed earlier, families who received more than one assistance received a combination of different programs such as EAPE and MA or RA and MA.

III. What is the Homeless Status of Families Utilizing CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs?

Some families are homeless at the time they receive funds through CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs, while others are at risk of becoming homeless through, for example, eviction from an apartment for nonpayment of rent due to an unexpected financial hardship. This section examines the distribution of homeless statuses among CalWORKs families utilizing Homeless Assistance programs. The most effective way to conduct the analysis is to examine the distribution of homeless statuses by program type. In what follows, CalWORKs families are categorized as homeless when the

¹³ This analysis assumes that four months of receipt of funds through the Rental Assistance program is equal to one assistance.

addresses in their administrative records are either homeless shelters or DPSS offices. Families are considered to be at risk of homelessness when they receive CalWORKs Homeless Assistance payments but the addresses in their administrative records are residential addresses.

1. The Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction Program

The EAPE program offers rental assistance and utility payments. Out of the 11,897 families in the 2008 cohort, 5,237 (44 percent) received EAPE assistance. Almost half of these families only received rental assistance; a quarter of them received both rental and utility assistance; the remaining quarter only received utility assistance. The 5,237 families utilizing the EAPE program received almost 9,000 EAPE payments, over 5,000 of which (57 percent) were for rental assistance, while the remainder were for utility payments.

The EAPE program is designed to provide emergency assistance to families at risk of homelessness such as those families who would have been evicted if no assistance were available. It is therefore expected that these families should not have been homeless at the time they began receiving the assistance. The data confirms this, showing that virtually none of the families in the 2008 cohort that received EAPE assistance were homeless at the time they received the aid.

2. The Moving Assistance Program

The MA program is made available to families for moving, housing, appliance purchases, etc. Out of 11,897 families in the 2008 cohort, 4,645 (39 percent) received funds through the MA program. Almost 30 percent of these families only received funds for housing assistance, while one-third received both assistance types. The remaining 36 percent of the families only received funds for the purchase of basic appliances. The 4,645 families received almost 6,500 MA payments, 3,000 of which (46 percent) were for housing assistance, while the rest were used for the purchase of basic appliances. The MA program provides assistance to families that have experienced a financial crisis, are at-risk or homelessness, and that need to move into permanent housing. Insofar as the program is designed, in part, to help families in need of moving into permanent housing, it is expected that some of the families receiving MA funds would have been homeless at the time of assistance. The data confirms this, showing that, out of 6,500 MA payments, 2,350 (36 percent) were made to homeless families. The remaining 64 percent of the MA payments were made to families at risk of homelessness.

3. The Permanent Housing Assistance Program

The PHA program is designed to provide assistance for move-in costs such as security deposits and utility turn-on fees. The program also provides up to two months in rental arrearages for families at risk of becoming homeless. Almost 5,800 of the families in the 2008 cohort (close to half) received funds through the PHA program. While 85 percent of these families received permanent homeless assistance for the first time, the remaining 15 percent received the assistance through an exception (mostly the domestic violence exception). The 5,800 families utilizing the PHA program received almost 6,350 PHA payments. Nearly 3,000 of these payments (45 percent) were made to homeless families. The remaining 55 percent were made to families at risk of becoming homeless.

4. The Four-Month Rental Assistance Program

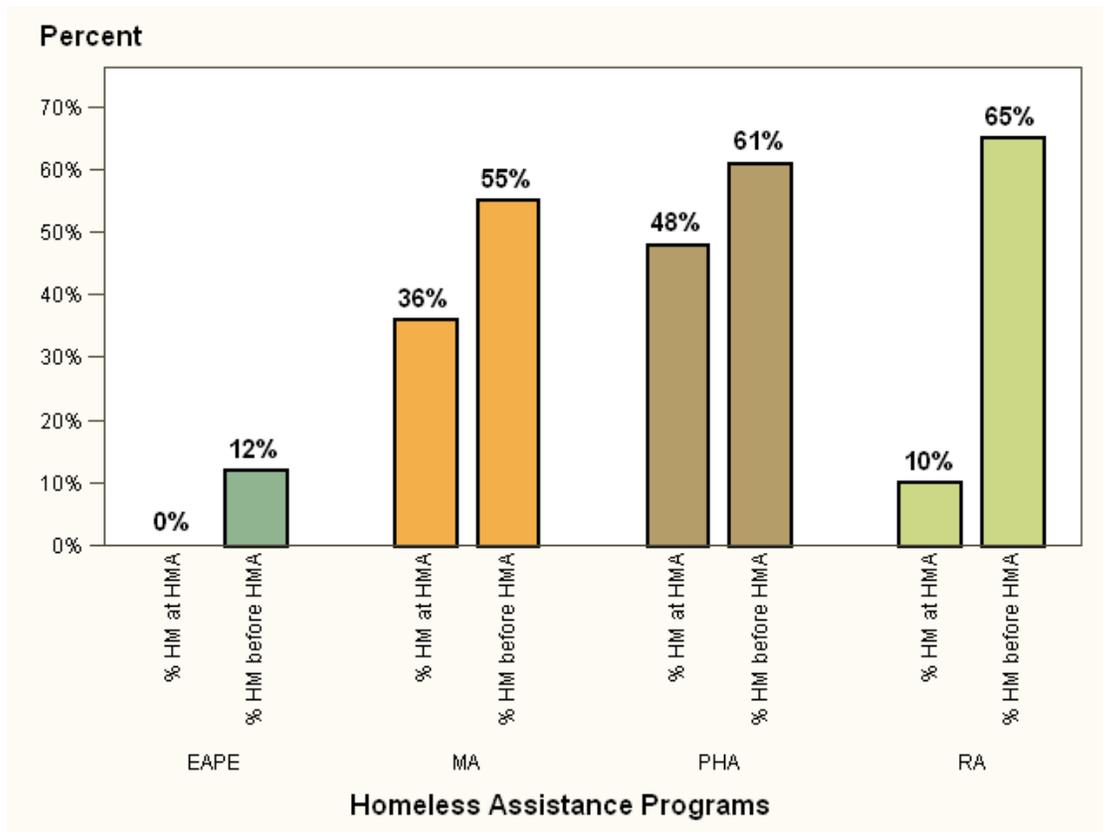
Finally, there were approximately 1,000 families in the 2008 cohort receiving four-month RA aid during the study period. These families received a total of 3,300 payments. Since CalWORKs participants have to apply for the program once they have secured non-subsidized permanent housing at the time of the request, 44 percent of the families from the 2008 cohort utilizing the RA program were homeless during for one month prior to receipt of the first RA payment.

IV. Prior Episodes of Homelessness among Families Utilizing CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs

Another important question to address is the extent to which families utilizing CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs experienced an episode of homelessness during the year prior to receipt of assistance. Related to this, this section also discusses the portion of these families experiencing relatively long episodes of homelessness during the year prior to their receipt of Homeless Assistance funds.¹⁴ Figure 11 shows the proportion of families that were homeless at the time they received Homeless Assistance (HMA) funds and during the year prior to their receipt of the funds, by program.

¹⁴ This section differs from the previous section by focusing primarily on episodes of homelessness during the year prior to receipt of funds through one of the Homeless assistance programs, whereas the previous section focused on families that were homeless at the time of receipt.

Figure 11. The Extent of Homelessness among Families during the Year Prior to and at the Time Funds Were Received through the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs: 2008 Cohort



1. The Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction Program

Only 12 percent of the families in the 2008 cohort receiving EAPE funds was homeless for at least one month prior to utilizing the program. Almost two-thirds of this 12 percent had an episode of homelessness lasting between one and three months, and one-third had an episode lasting more than three months. While they were participating in CalWORKs prior to receiving EAPE payments, only four percent of the families in the 2008 cohort were homeless more than half the time.

2. The Moving Assistance Program

By contrast with the EAPE program, 55 percent of families in the 2008 cohort receiving funds through the MA program were homeless at some point during the year prior to their utilization of the program. Just under one third (30 percent) of the families utilizing the MA program had homeless episodes lasting between one and three months; one quarter had episodes lasting more than three months. While they were participating in CalWORKs prior to their utilization of the MA program, 28 percent of these families were homeless more than half the time. More than half

of the families receiving MA funds during a homeless episode remained homeless for 50 percent of their time in CalWORKs, and these families were homeless for an average of 4.5 months.

3. The Permanent Housing Assistance Program

The significance of prior episodes of homelessness is greatest among families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the PHA program. More than three-fifths of the PHA payments made to this group were made to families that were homeless at some point during the year prior to their utilization of the program. More than one-fifth of these families had one month of homelessness; 15 percent had between two and three months of homelessness; and 25 percent had more than three months of homelessness. While they were participating in CalWORKs prior to their receipt of PHA aid, almost 30 percent of families experiencing episodes of homelessness remained homeless for more than half the time. Half of the families receiving PHA payments during a homeless episode were homeless for 50 percent of the time during the year prior to receiving the PHA funds, and the average duration of homelessness among these families was four months.¹⁵

4. The Four-Month Rental Assistance Program

Among the 1,000 families in the 2008 cohort receiving funds through the RA program, 65 percent were homeless at some point during the year prior to their receipt of RA aid. One quarter of these families had one month of homelessness; 17 percent had between two and three months of homelessness; 19 percent had more than three months of homelessness. Additionally, one quarter of the families that were in CalWORKs prior to their receipt of funds through the RA program were homeless more than 50 percent of the time, and their average length of homelessness was two months.

V. Housing Outcomes

To what extent do DPSS' CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs prevent homelessness and provide housing stability for CalWORKs families that are either already homeless or at risk of homelessness? This section addresses this question through a series of before-and-after analyses of families receiving aid through the Homeless Assistance programs. Two measures of housing outcomes are used in assessing the effects of the programs in question: (a) *Homelessness*, which is measured in three ways: (i) the proportion of families that are homeless during the year after they utilize a particular program as compared to the proportion of families that were homeless during the year prior to utilization; (ii) a before-and-after comparison of the average extent of homelessness, which is the percentage of time within a defined period that a CalWORKs family remains homeless; and (iii) a before-and-after

¹⁵ It should be noted that these calculation do not include families at risk of homeless while they were receiving PHA funds.

comparison of the average number of months a CalWORKs family remains homeless; (b) *Housing stability*, which is measured by the number of address changes a CalWORKs family makes over a defined period of time. The analyses presented in this section are conducted separately for homeless families and families at risk of homelessness, and the results are presented separately for each CalWORKs Homeless Assistance program.

1. The Effectiveness of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs in Preventing Homelessness

a. The Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction Program

As discussed above, the extent of homelessness among families in the 2008 cohort receiving aid through the EAPE program is low. This is to be expected since the program is designed to help families at risk of eviction in maintaining their housing. Since the results for these families are similar whether they utilized the EAPE program one time or multiple times, the analysis here looks at all 5,237 families in the 2008 cohort that received EAPE funds. Additionally, since only two percent of these families were homeless at the time they received the EAPE aid, no separate analysis is done for homelessness at the time of receipt.

The key question to ask in evaluating the EAPE program is the degree to which families were able to avoid becoming homeless after receiving EAPE funds. Among families in the 2008 cohort that were not homeless during the year prior to receiving funds through the EAPE program (almost 4,600 families, which is 88 percent of the families receiving EAPE aid), 91 percent did not become homeless within one year after receiving this assistance. Moreover, 75 percent of the almost 700 families that experienced an episode of homelessness during the year prior to their receipt of EAPE funds did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year after receipt of the funds, and 60 percent of the families that became homeless after utilizing the EAPE program remained homeless for no more than three months during the year after receiving the EAPE aid.¹⁶ These results indicate that the program is quite effective in preventing families facing potential eviction from becoming homeless.

b. The Moving Assistance Program

The MA program is different from the EAPE program since more than one third (36 percent) of the 4,645 families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the program were homeless at the time they applied for MA funds, and the remaining two thirds were at risk of becoming homeless. Moreover, more than one quarter of the at-risk families had been homeless at some point during the year before they

¹⁶ The data shows no significant difference by different EAPE types – i.e. rental aid versus utility aid or both - nor is any difference observed by Welfare-to-Work status. In addition, results for the families in the 2007 cohort were similar to the results for the 2008 cohort.

started receiving the MA aid. Those utilizing the MA program consisted of significant proportions of both homeless and at-risk families.

Among families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the MA program, the portion of those that experienced at least one episode of homelessness dropped from 55 percent during the year prior to receipt of MA aid to 12 percent during the year after receipt of the aid. The average extent of homelessness among all families receiving MA aid declined from 29 percent of the time during the year prior to receiving MA assistance to four percent of the time over the year after receiving this assistance. Moreover, among all families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the MA program, the average number of homeless months (including families with no months of homelessness) decreased from three months during the year before receipt to less than one month during the year afterwards.

Almost 85 percent of the families that were homeless at the time they applied for aid did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year after they received the MA funds. Moreover, the average extent of homelessness among families that were homeless at the time they began to receive MA aid declined from 54 percent of the time during the year before they applied for MA aid to six percent during the year after they received the aid. The average number of homeless months among these families decreased from five months over the year before they received assistance to less than one month over the year afterwards.

The results were somewhat less dramatic but still significant for families at risk of homelessness at the time they received MA aid. Within this subset, the proportion of families experiencing an episode of homelessness dropped from 30 percent during the year before they received the assistance to nine percent during the year afterwards. Additionally, the average number of homeless months decreased among the at-risk families receiving MA funds from 1.5 months during the year prior to receipt of the funds to less than one month during the year after receipt.¹⁷

A significant decline was also observed among families at risk of homelessness that had prior histories of homelessness (750 families), among which 85 percent did not become homeless during the year after they received MA aid. The average extent of homelessness within this group of families decreased from 13 percent of the time during the year prior to receipt of MA funds to three percent of the time during the year after they received the MA funds.

The data also shows that, among families that were not homeless during the year prior to receiving MA aid (almost 2,100 families, which is 45 percent of the

¹⁷ The data shows no significant difference by different types of MA assistance - i.e. assistance used for housing versus assistance used for basic appliances or assistance used for both purposes - nor are any significant differences observed based on Welfare-to-Work status. In addition, results for the families in the 2007 cohort were almost identical to the results observed for the 2008 cohort.

families in the cohort that utilized the program), only seven percent became homeless within the year after their receipt of the assistance. The MA program therefore yielded effective outcomes in preventing homelessness among at-risk families with a history of homelessness, and utilization of the program was also correlated with the elimination of homeless among these types of families.

c. *The Permanent Housing Assistance Program*

The results the PHA program yielded over the study period were equally encouraging. Of the 5,800 families in the 2008 cohort that participated in the PHA program, 55 percent were homeless at the time they began receiving the aid and 45 percent were at risk of homelessness. One-fifth of the at-risk families had been homeless at some point during the year prior to the receipt of the PHA aid.

Among families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the PHA program, the portion of those that experienced one episode of homelessness dropped from 59 percent during the year prior to receipt of PHA aid to 12 percent during the year afterwards. The average extent of homelessness among these families declined from 31 percent of the time during the year prior to receipt of the assistance to five percent of the time during the year afterwards, and the average number of homeless months decreased from three months during the year before assistance to less than one month during the year afterwards.

Among families in the 2008 cohort that were not homeless during the year prior to utilizing the PHA program (almost 2,400 families, which is 41 percent of all families in the cohort that received PHA aid), eight percent became homeless during the year after receipt of the PHA funds. At the same time, 85 percent of the 3,400 families that experienced an episode of homelessness during the year prior to utilization of the PHA program did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year after receiving the PHA funds. Moreover, the average extent of homelessness among these families declined from 52 percent of the time during the year prior to receipt of the aid to seven percent of the time during the year after receipt of the aid. The average number of homeless months for these families decreased from four months during the year prior to utilizing the PHA program to less than one month during the year after utilization.

As was the case in looking at the effects of participation in the MA program, results among families at risk of homelessness at the time they utilized the PHA program were less pronounced but still somewhat significant. The proportion of these at-risk families experiencing an episode of homelessness dropped from 21 percent during the year prior to receiving the PHA funds to eight percent during the year after receipt of the PHA funds. The average extent of homelessness among at-risk families declined from nine percent of the time during the year before receiving the PHA aid to three percent of the time during the year afterwards, and the average number of homeless months decreased

from one month during the year prior to utilization of the program to less than one month during the year afterwards.¹⁸

d. The Four-Month Rental Assistance Program

Assistance through the four-month RA program was provided to almost 1,000 families in the 2008 cohort. Since only 98 families were homeless at the time they received this assistance, no separate analysis is done by the homelessness of families at the time they utilized the RA program. However, it should be noted that 65 percent of the families receiving RA funds had been homeless within one year prior to utilizing the program.

Among all families in the 2008 cohort that received aid through the RA program, the portion of those that experienced one episode of homelessness declined from 65 percent during the year prior to receiving the RA aid to 15 percent during the year afterwards. Moreover, the average extent of homelessness decreased from 25 percent of the time during the year before receipt of RA funds to five percent during the year after receipt of these funds, and the average number of homeless months decreased from three months during the year before receipt of RA funds to less than one month during the year afterwards.¹⁹

In looking at families in the 2008 cohort that were not homeless before utilizing the four-month RA program, (almost 350 families, which is 35 percent of all those receiving aid through the program), nine percent experienced an episode of homelessness during the year after utilizing the program.

e. Summary of Homelessness Prevention

Figures 12 and 13 summarize the impact of participation in the MA, PHA and RA programs. The overall picture that emerges is one of impressive homelessness prevention. It should be noted here that, insofar as the EAPE program is designed to prevent families from getting evicted – or, put differently, because the program is designed to help families maintain their housing – the before-and-after comparison is less meaningful as a measure of program effectiveness than simply the portion of families that become homeless after receiving the EAPE funds. For this reason, the EAPE program is not included in Figure 12 or Figure 13. Additionally, in order to account for the populations for which each program is intended, the before and after proportions for the MA and PHA programs are provided separately for families that were homeless and families that were at risk of homelessness at the time of receiving the assistance.

¹⁸ The data shows no significant differences between families that used PHA funds for the first time and those that used them with an exception. In addition, the results for the families in the 2007 cohort are almost identical to the results observed for the 2008 cohort.

¹⁹ Please note that the measure of the extent of homelessness is inclusive of all families, including those with no episodes of homelessness.

Figure 12. Homelessness 12 Months Before and 12 Months After Receiving Homeless Assistance Funds, by Program: 2008 Cohort²⁰

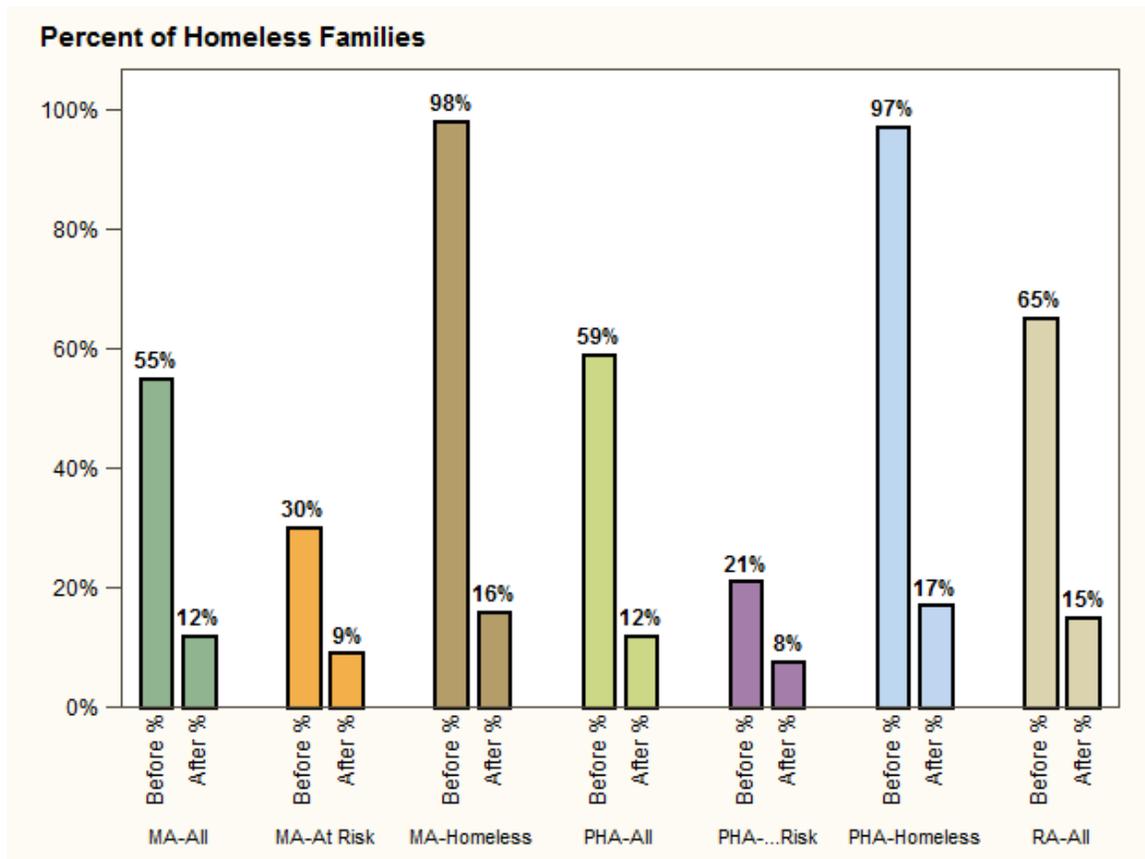


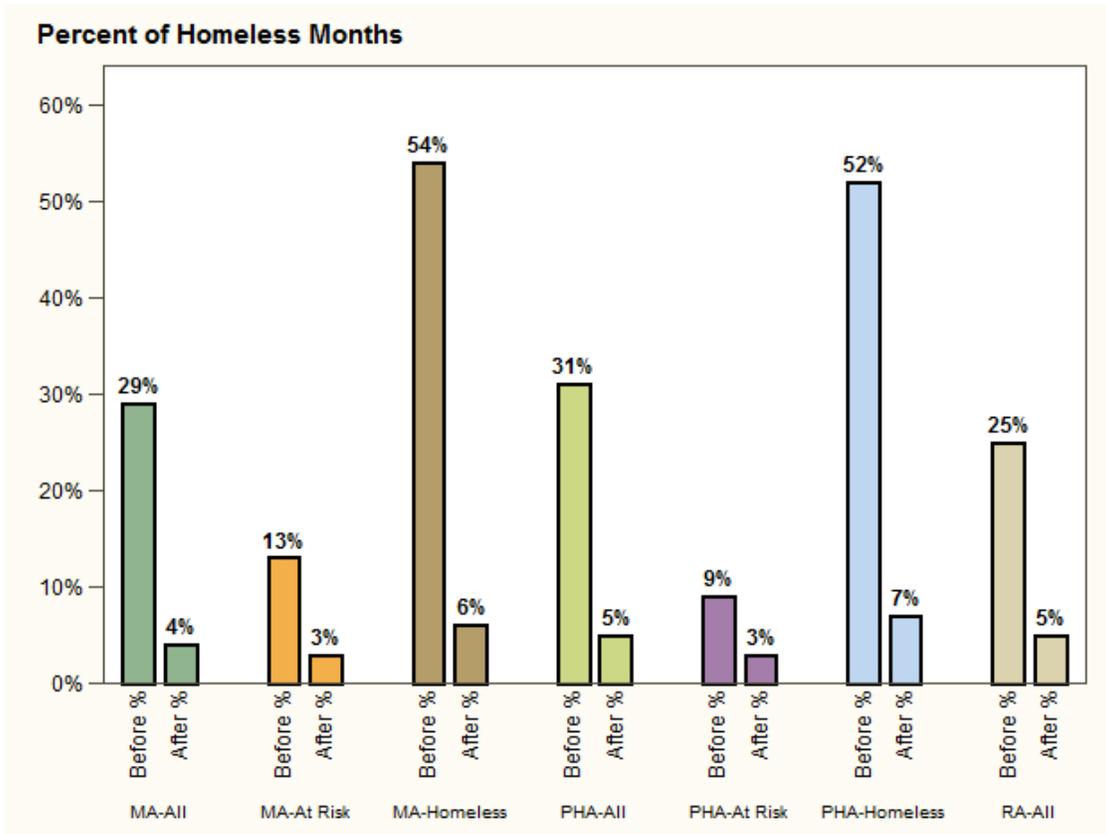
Figure 12 shows that the MA, PHA and RA programs yielded sharp declines in homelessness during the year after CalWORKs families participated in them. For the MA program, the decline was from 55 percent during the year prior to utilization to 12 percent during the year afterwards. For the PHA program the decline was from 59 percent during the year before utilization to 12 percent during the year afterwards. For the RA program the decline was from 65 percent during the year prior to utilization to 15 percent during the year afterwards. Additionally, and where relevant, the declines in homelessness were also significant for families that were at risk of homelessness at the time of receiving assistance and that had already experienced an episode of homelessness during the year prior to receipt of Homeless Assistance aid. It should also be noted that roughly 90 percent of the families receiving EAPE funds did not become homeless during the year after utilizing the program.

Figure 13 shows the average extent of homelessness during the year prior to program utilization and during the year after utilization for the families in the 2008

²⁰ For Figure 12, 'Before' and 'After' refer to one year before and one year after receipt of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance funds.

cohort, by program. Once again, it is important to point out that the EAPE program is not included in the figure because the before-and-after comparison is less meaningful than simply the average extent of homelessness during the year after receipt of EAPE funds. The average extent of homelessness declined from 29 percent of the time during the year prior to receipt of aid to four percent of the time during the year afterwards among families utilizing the MA program, from 31 percent of the time to five percent of the time for families utilizing the PHA program, and from 25 percent of the time to five percent of the time for families utilizing the RA program. The declines for at-risk families utilizing the PHA and MA programs were less pronounced but still significant. Moreover, families utilizing the EAPE program remained housed for an average of 96 percent of the time during the year after receipt of the assistance.

Figure 13. The Average Extent of Homelessness 12 Months Before and 12 Months After Receiving Homeless Assistance Funds, by Program: 2008 Cohort



2. The Effect of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Programs on Housing Stability

Along with the prevention of homelessness, Homeless Assistance Programs for CalWORKs families are also designed to stabilize housing conditions for families utilizing them. The most effective way to gauge the extent to which the programs

promote housing stability is to compare the number of address changes families make during the year before and the year after utilization. Since the results for the 2007 and 2008 cohorts are similar, only the results for the 2008 cohort are presented in this section.

a. The Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction Program

Among the 5,237 families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the EAPE program, 2,268 (43 percent) did not change addresses before or after program utilization. More than three-fifths (62 percent) of the families in the 2008 cohort receiving EAPE funds did not change address during the year prior to utilizing the program, and this proportion increased slightly to 65 percent during the year after utilization. One quarter of the families changed address once during the year prior to receipt of EAPE funds and this proportion remained unchanged during the year afterwards. The overall housing stability for the families utilizing the EAPE program did not change much during the year after utilization. The number of address changes before utilization of the program was just over 2,900 and dropped by roughly ten percent to 2,600 during the year after the assistance. Moreover, the average number of address changes per family declined from 0.6 during the year before utilization to 0.5 during the year afterwards. A significant majority of the families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the EAPE program (78 percent) did not change addresses when they received the assistance. The remainder of this population was split evenly between families that changed address at the time they received EAPE funds and families that entered CalWORKs with no prior address listed in their administrative records. These relatively mild results are not a function of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program but rather of the types of CalWORKs participants to which the EAPE program is targeted.

b. The Moving Assistance Program

Unlike the EAPE program, which is designed to provide emergency assistance to prevent evictions, the MA program is designed to cover moving expenses so that families may move to permanent housing, either from a temporary residence or from a position of homelessness. It can therefore be expected that almost all families receiving MA funds will move to a new residence during the time they utilize the program. The data confirms this, showing that 91 percent of the 4,645 families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the program changed address at the time they received the MA aid. Only six percent of the families receiving MA funds do not show an address change, and three percent did not have a prior address on record. Of the 4,200 families that moved at the time of assistance, half moved from another residential address while the other half moved from a position of homelessness.

More than two-fifths (43 percent) of the families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the MA program moved once within one year before receiving the funds;

33 percent moved twice; and 20 percent moved more than two times. Only three percent of the families utilizing the MA program stayed at the same address. Three-fifths of the families utilizing the MA program did not change address during the year after the assistance; 27 percent changed address once; 13 percent changed address more than once. Families utilizing the MA program made a total of 8,000 address changes during the year prior to receipt of MA funds, an average of 1.7 changes per family. If the one address change families make upon receipt of MA funds is deducted from the totals, the number of changes declined to from 3,800 during the year prior to receipt of MA assistance to 2,600 during the year after receipt of these funds, an average of 0.6 changes per family. Additionally, an especially large decline is seen in the number of address changes from a residential address to position of homelessness which declined from 1,700 during the year prior to receipt of MA assistance to 500 during the year afterwards.²¹

c. The Permanent Housing Assistance Program

The PHA program is similar to the MA program insofar as both provide assistance to CalWORKs families to cover moving and rental expenses so they can move to permanent housing, either from a temporary residence or from a position of homelessness. Therefore, as is the case with the MA program, it can be expected that almost all families receiving funds through the PHA program will move to a new residential address at the time the funds are received. The data confirms this once again, showing that 89 percent of the 5,800 families in the 2008 cohort utilizing the PHA program changed address at the time they received the PHA funds. Only six percent of the families utilizing the PHA program did not change address at the time the funds were received, and five percent did not have a prior address in their administrative records. Out of the 5,200 CalWORKs families in the 2008 cohort that moved at the time they received PHA funds through the PHA program, more than half (58 percent) moved from a position of homelessness to a proper residential address, while the remaining 42 percent moved from one residential address to another.

Two-fifths of the families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the PHA program changed address once within one year before receiving the funds; 34 percent changed address twice; 18 percent changed address more than two times. Only eight percent of the families utilizing the PHA program remained at the same address during the year before receiving PHA funds. Excluding the initial moves most families make upon receipt of the PHA funds, just under three-fifths (59 percent) of the families utilizing the PHA program did not move to a different address during the year after receipt of the aid; 27 percent moved once; 14 percent more than once. Families receiving PHA funds made a total of 9,600 address changes during the year before utilizing the program, an average of 1.7 changes per family. When the one address change made upon receiving

²¹ The percent change in the number of families moving from a residential address to a position of homelessness is a measure of the proportion of families that become homeless.

PHA funds is deducted from the totals, these families made a total of 4,500 during the year prior to utilization of the PHA program to 3,400 address changes during the year after receiving PHA funds, an average of less than one change per family. Moreover, the number of changes from residential addresses to homelessness declined from 2,300 during the year prior to utilization to 500 during the year afterwards.

d. The Four-Month Rental Assistance Program

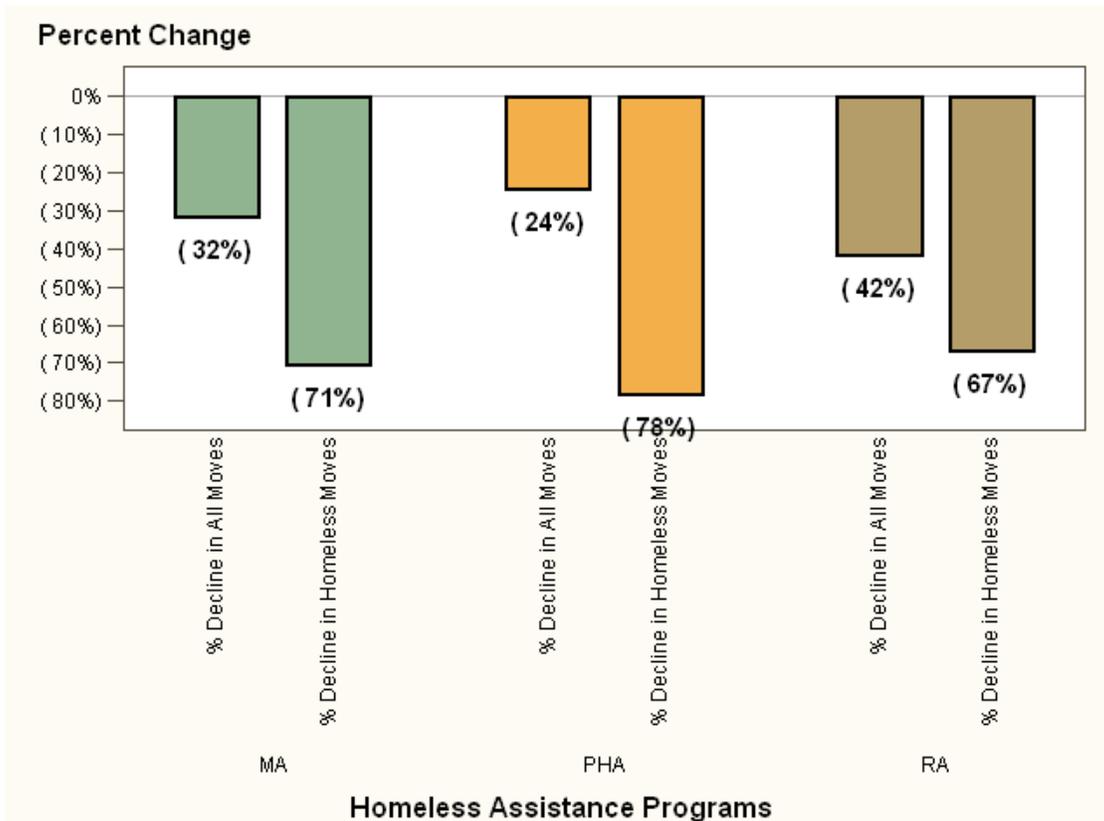
A total of 1,000 families in the 2008 cohort utilized the RA program in 2008, 671 of which changed address at the time they received the funds. Three-fifths of these families that changed address at the time they received RA assistance moved from a position of homelessness to a proper residential address, while the remaining 40 percent moved from one residential address to another.

More than one third of the families in the 2008 cohort that received RA funds changed address one time during the year prior to utilizing the program; 38 percent changed address twice; 21 percent changed address more than two times. Only four percent of the families utilizing the RA program remained at the same address during the year prior to receiving RA funds. Half the families receiving these funds did not change address during the year after utilizing the RA program; 32 percent changed address once; 18 percent changed address more than once. A total of 1,800 address changes were made during the year prior to utilization of the RA program, an average of 1.8 per family. When the initial moves that families make upon receipt of MA funds are deducted from the totals, then families utilizing the RA program made 1,200 moves during the year prior to utilization of the funds and 700 during the year afterwards, which is less than one move per family. Additionally, among families in the 2008 cohort receiving funds through the RA program, the number of address changes from residential addresses to positions of homelessness declined from 450 during the year prior to receipt of RA funds to 150 during the year afterwards.

e. Summary of the Impact of the Four Programs on Housing Stability

The housing stability results were encouraging for all four programs evaluated in this report. Figure 14 compares address changes during one year before and one year after participation in the MA, PHA, and RA programs. The MA program yielded a decline of 32 percent; the PHA program yielded a decline of 24 percent; the RA program yielded a decline of 42 percent. (The EAPE numbers are not shown since there are not statistically significant housing stability outcomes yielded in connection with participation in this program). Moreover, the changes from positions of being housed to positions of homelessness between the year before and the year after receipt of aid declined by 71 percent among families receiving funds through the MA program; 78 percent among families receiving funds through the PHA program; and 67 percent among families receiving funds through the RA program.

Figure 14. Decline in Number of Address Changes and Number of Families Becoming Homeless, 12 Months After Receiving Homeless Assistance Funds, by Program: 2008 Cohort



VI. Conclusion

A Vital Safety Net for Vulnerable Families in a Time of Economic Uncertainty

The analyses presented in this study provide strong evidence that the funds offered to CalWORKs families through DPSS' Homeless Assistance programs prevent homelessness and promote housing stability. Across all three aggregate measures of homelessness deployed in comparing the before-and-after results of program utilization – i.e. the proportion of families experiencing an episode of homelessness, the average percentage of time families spent being homeless, and the average number of months they spent being homeless – participation in the MA, PHA and RA programs yielded impressive results. Utilization of these programs also boosted housing stability as the average number of address changes for families decreased significantly during the year after receipt of assistance. Moreover, the proportion of families becoming homeless – that is, those moving from residential addresses to positions of homelessness – declined sharply during the year after these programs were utilized.

The outcomes are equally encouraging in specifically examining the preventive results for at-risk families. The EAPE program, in particular, is specifically designed to prevent homelessness by helping CalWORKs families remain housed when they face potential eviction. The program is effective in doing this as 89 percent of the families in the 2008 cohort that were at risk of eviction and utilized the EAPE program did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year after receiving EAPE funds.²² Additionally, among at-risk families in the 2008 cohort that utilized the MA program, the proportion of those experiencing an episode of homelessness declined from 30 percent during the year prior to receiving the assistance to nine percent during the year afterwards.

Additional research would have to be conducted to determine the cost effectiveness of the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs. Put differently, this study did not look at whether these programs yield significant service cost offsets for the families utilizing them. However, other recent reports from the Chief Executive Office's RES unit have shown that the provision of housing assistance to homeless individuals significantly reduces their utilization of County services.²³ If this pattern holds true in the case of the CalWORKs Homeless Assistance programs, then maintenance of these programs can be viewed, not only as an investment in a vital safety net for vulnerable families, but also as an investment in the fiscal health and viability of the County during these times of economic uncertainty and increasingly scarce public resources.

²² The percentage of those remaining housed is even higher (91 percent) if the analysis is limited to families that did not experience an episode of homelessness during the year prior to receipt of the EAPE funds.

²³ Moreno, Manuel H. Halil Toros and Max Stevens. *The GR Housing Subsidy and Case Management Pilot Project: An Evaluation of Participant Outcomes and Cost Savings*. County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office, Service Integration Branch, RES, September 2009; Stevens, Max, Halil Toros, Manuel H. Moreno, et al. *Cost Avoidance Yielded through Participation in the Long Beach Homeless Veterans Initiative*. County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office, Service Integration Branch, RES, March 2010. See also: Culhane, Dennis P. and Stephen Metraux. *Using ALP Data for Determining Patterns and Costs of Services Use by GR Recipients in Los Angeles County*. County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office, Service Integration Branch, RES. July 2009.