

Online Appendix:

Labor Market Attachment and Perceived Barriers to Work Among Homeless Families

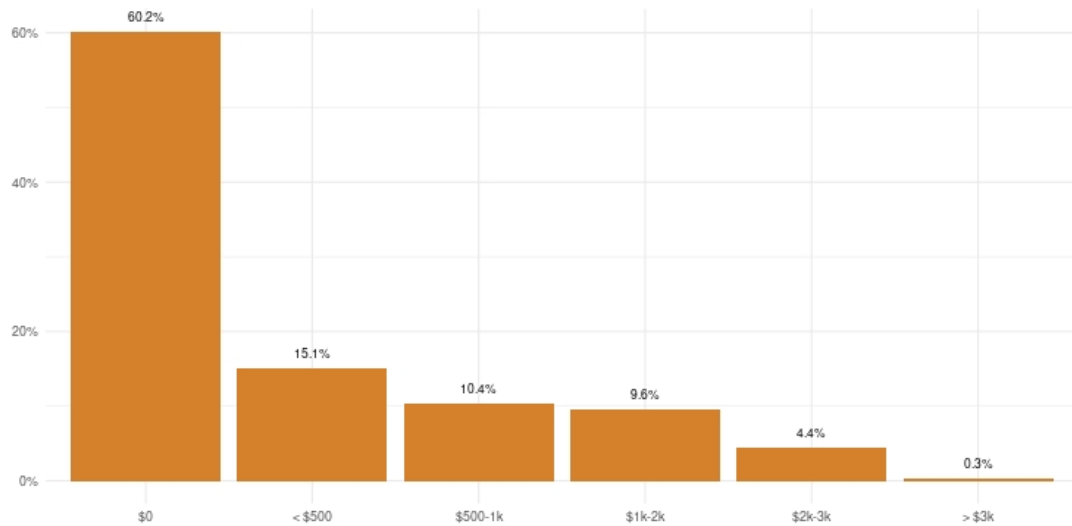
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This Appendix provides more background and detail on the empirical analysis in the accompanying paper.

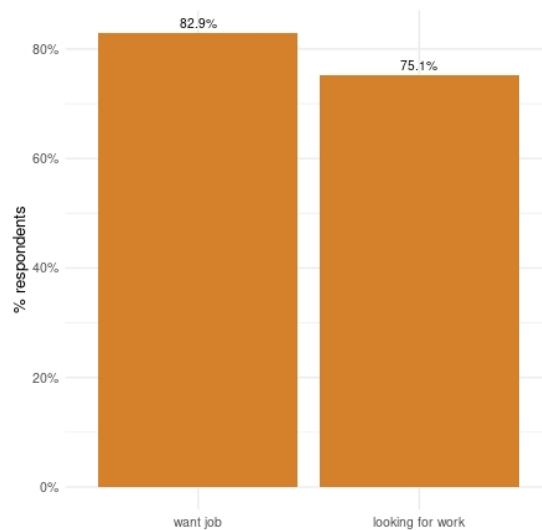
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Figure 1: Reported work income in past month.



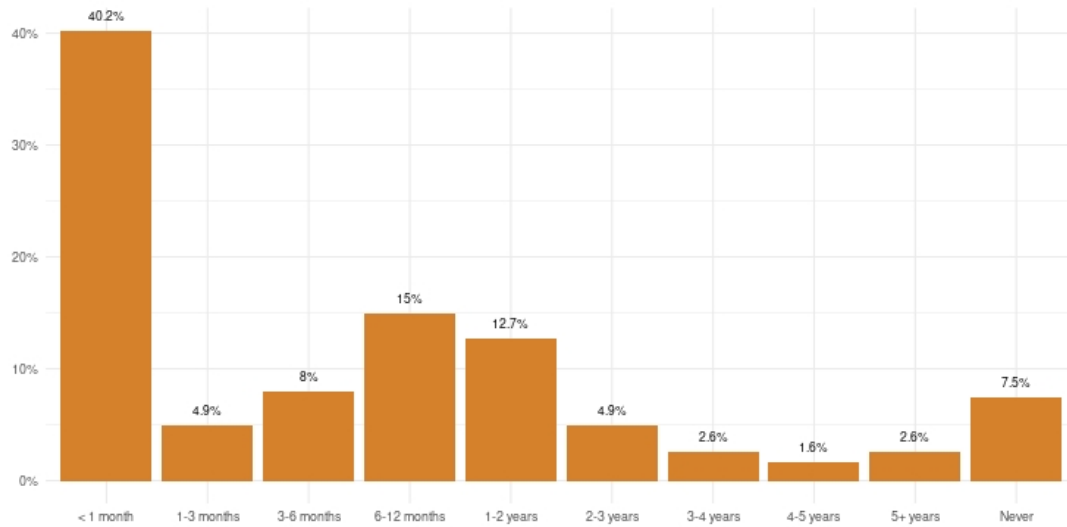
Notes: Limited to sample not reporting physical disability and responding to some combination of paid work and work income questions (n = 595). Those not reporting paid work in last 30 days (n = 358) are imputed zeroes, all other categorical responses are further binned for simplicity of presentation (n = 237).

Figure 2: Job search among unemployed



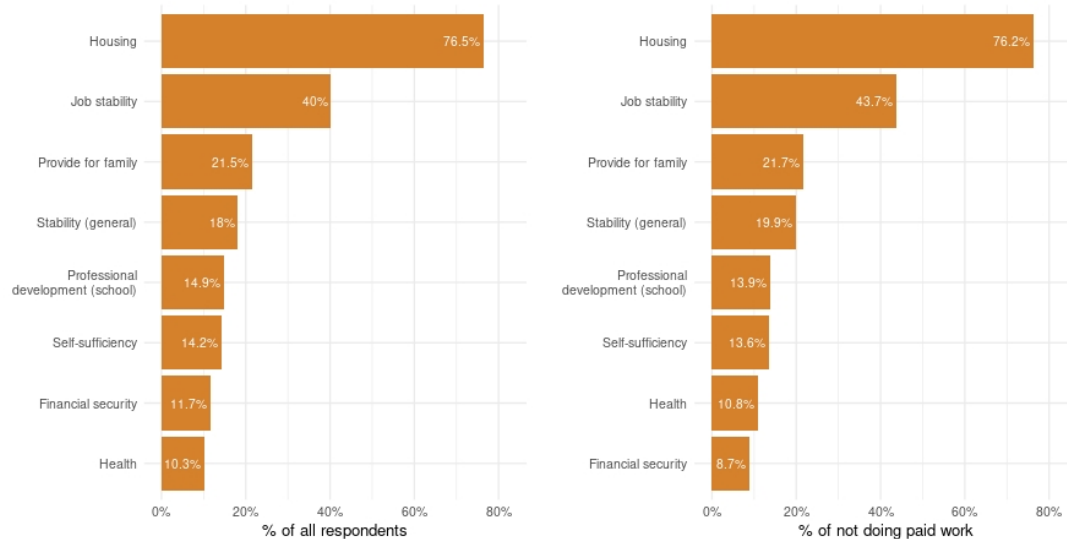
Notes: Includes all individuals responding affirmatively across both questions and not reporting current paid work (n = 346). "No" and "maybe" are both scored false in the case of "want job", "looking for work" has only yes/no options. Responses are coded to be cumulative between questions (i.e. "looking for work" is conditional on "want job" being true).

Figure 3: Time since last paid work



Notes: Notes: This figure reports the distribution of time since last paid work among survey respondents (n = 614). Those reporting paid work in last 30 days are encoded in a separate question.

Figure 4: Aspirations for next 6 months



Notes: Categories were created from an open response question asking, “Looking ahead to six months from now, what do you hope will change in your life between now and then?”. Using an inductive coding approach, responses were tagged with 30 different topic tags, which were used to construct indicators summarizing the goals or hopes of respondents. This figure omits tags that were not present in at least 10 percent of responses in the full sample. The left panel shows the percent of respondents mentioning a given topic in their response among all respondents, while the right panel restricts to those who had not worked in the last 30 days. Answering the question was not mandatory, and 562 of the 623 respondents who began the survey responded. Responses could include more than one hope or aspiration.

A Additional Study Context

The paper focuses on a sample of homeless families with children recruited from emergency homeless service facilities across Illinois as part of a large-scale randomized controlled trial (RCT) which administered cash assistance to homeless families: the Illinois Stability Investment for Family Housing (SIFH). The SIFH pilot is an initiative of the Illinois Office of Preventing and Ending Homelessness (IOPEH) at the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

Working with the Inclusive Economy lab at the University of Chicago, recruitment occurred via referrals from case managers in a Continuum of Care (CoC) facility serving homeless families such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, or street outreach. Participating organizations' staff within the participating CoC's attended information sessions where they were provided detailed information on the SIFH study and its eligibility requirements, and were given access to the online application portal. Case managers then informed potential participants at their organizations, who were screened for eligibility, asked for informed consent, and then randomized into either the treatment group (\$9,500) or the control group (\$500).

The eligibility criteria for the SIFH program were as follows:

- The individual was referred by a case manager in a participating CoC facility/organization (e.g. emergency shelter, transitional housing facility, or street outreach organization serving unhoused people).
- The individual met the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of literal homelessness as demonstrated by being in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) OR met the Category 4 definition of homelessness, Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence¹
- The individual must be 18 years or older when applying.
- The individual must be accessing services with a child 17 years of age or younger, or self-attest to being pregnant.
- The individual must be willing to consent to participate in the program.
- The individual must be a Legal Permanent Resident and/or Citizen of the United States.
- The individual must not already be working with a permanent supportive housing provider to find a home or the recipient of a HUD housing voucher. Families with offers for rapid rehousing or are looking for a place through this program ARE still eligible to apply.

¹The study was extended to serve families experiencing domestic violence in victim service provider shelters halfway through the recruitment window.

- The individual must not be receiving Social Security Insurance (SSI) or have any family member(s) in your household who are receiving SSI benefits²

Eligibility was determined through a three-part screening process. First, the case manager was made aware of the criteria and asked to only refer individuals meeting the criteria. Second, applicants submitted self-attestations that they met all the criteria as part of the application. Third, an approved manager at the CoC facility reviewed the HMIS client identifier and application details for those referred, and verified that, to the best of their knowledge, the applicant met the eligibility criteria. Applicants needed to meet all aspects of eligibility to participate in the SIFH study.

After being referred, individuals applied to participate in the SIFH study through an online application hosted by a technology partner, AidKit. Applications were completed jointly by the applicant and their case manager.³ Consent for the program and research was collected at the time of the application. Program participation required consent to share their past and future interactions with continua of care as recorded in the HMIS with the research team. Additional optional research consent was collected for surveys as well as three other optional consents for (1) linking to other administrative data, (2) linking children to educational records, and (3) linking to data on arrests and court activity. Initial information on age, demographics and contact information were collected as part of the application process. In addition, applicants were offered an incentivized baseline survey that could be taken directly after the application was complete. Across all surveys issued by the research team, \$50 incentives were provided for successful completion (including the baseline).

B Survey Details

B.1 Survey questions: employment and income

Below are the set of questions from our optional baseline survey related to employment and income that we highlight in the main text.

1. Did you do any paid work at all during the last month (anything that brings in money)?
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) I don't know or prefer to not answer
2. When did you last work for pay at a full-time job for 2 weeks or more?

²This eligibility criteria was set because SSI benefits could not be protected in this program.

³In some instances where CoC facilities were understaffed, research staff trained in the program helped participants apply to the program.

- (a) 3 months to 6 months ago
 - (b) 6 months to a year ago
 - (c) 1 to 2 years ago
 - (d) 2 to 3 years ago
 - (e) 3 to 4 years ago
 - (f) 4 to 5 years ago
 - (g) 5 or more years ago
 - (h) Never worked full-time
 - (i) I don't know or prefer to not answer
3. Why did you leave that job? (Select all that apply.) [Skip if Question 2 = Never worked full-time]
- (a) Personal reasons
 - (b) Family reasons (including pregnancy)
 - (c) Taking care of children / no childcare
 - (d) Health issues
 - (e) There was no more work to do / the job ended
 - (f) Poor work arrangements (hours, pay, etc.)
 - (g) Fired because employer considered performance to be poor
 - (h) Lack of stable housing
 - (i) Difficulty getting to and from work
 - (j) Other, specify:
 - (k) I don't know or prefer not to answer
4. Do you want a regular job now, either full- or part-time?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) Maybe – it depends
 - (c) No
 - (d) I don't know or prefer to not answer
5. Are you actively looking for work now? [If 4 = Yes or Maybe - it depends]
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) I don't know or prefer to not answer
6. Are any of the following stopping you from getting a job? (Select all that apply.)

- (a) I already have a job
 - (b) Ill health, physical disability
 - (c) Child care
 - (d) Family responsibilities (including taking care of children)
 - (e) Lack necessary schooling, training, skills or experience
 - (f) In school or other training
 - (g) Difficulties getting to work
 - (h) Lack of stable housing
 - (i) Other, specify:
 - (j) I don't know or prefer not to answer
7. Over the last month, how much money did you make from working?
[Question 1 = Yes]
- (a) \$100 or less
 - (b) \$101 to \$250
 - (c) \$251 to \$500
 - (d) \$501 to \$750
 - (e) \$751 to \$1000
 - (f) \$1001 to \$1,500
 - (g) \$1,501 to \$2,000
 - (h) \$2,001 to \$2,500
 - (i) \$2,501 to \$3,000
 - (j) More than \$3,000
 - (k) I don't know or prefer not to answer

B.2 Survey questions: mental and physical wellbeing

Below are the set of questions from our optional baseline survey related to physical and mental health that we highlight in the main text.

1. Do you have a physical disability? This could be difficulties with walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying.
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) I don't know or prefer not to answer
2. Does this physical disability keep you from holding a job or living in stable housing? [If Question 1 = Yes]

- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) I don't know or prefer not to answer
3. Do you have a psychiatric or emotional condition such as depression or schizophrenia?
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) I don't know or prefer not to answer
4. Does your psychiatric or emotional condition keep you from holding a job or living in stable housing? [If Question 3 = Yes]
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) I don't know or prefer not to answer
5. Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?
- (a) Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge
 - i. Not at all
 - ii. Several days
 - iii. More than half the days
 - iv. Nearly every day
 - v. I prefer not to say
 - (b) Not being able to stop or control worrying
 - i. Not at all
 - ii. Several days
 - iii. More than half the days
 - iv. Nearly every day
 - v. I prefer not to say
 - (c) Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
 - i. Not at all
 - ii. Several days
 - iii. More than half the days
 - iv. Nearly every day
 - v. I prefer not to say
 - (d) Little interest or pleasure in doing things
 - i. Not at all

- ii. Several days
- iii. More than half the days
- iv. Nearly every day
- v. I prefer not to say