

Action for Prosperity 12-Month Follow-up Clients Participating in Services between July 2009 and October 2010

Action for Prosperity (AFP) combines housing, workforce training, life skills building and flexible financial assistance to provide families hit hard by the recession with the services and supports needed to increase self-sufficiency and avoid homelessness.

In late 2009 and 2010 287¹ families participated in the AFP pilot program.

The Key Assumptions of AFP are:

1. There were households recently impacted by economic conditions who would be able to return to a level of self-sufficient employment with strategic and targeted assistance.
2. The combination of housing stabilization, workforce training and employment, and assertive engagement, in addition to systems alignment and service and benefit layering would be effective for these households.
3. Despite the economic environment, when presented with trained and skilled applicants businesses and employers would hire them.

The goals of AFP are to:

- Stabilize housing;
- Increase life skills necessary to remove barriers to meaningful employment.
- Provide comprehensive workforce development services; and,
- Test system and jurisdictional ability to align services and collaborate under mutually agreed upon goals with shared outcomes, resources and risk.

AFP clients in the first program cohort had significant gains in income and housing stability.² A 12-month follow-up study was conducted to determine how well the results held up over

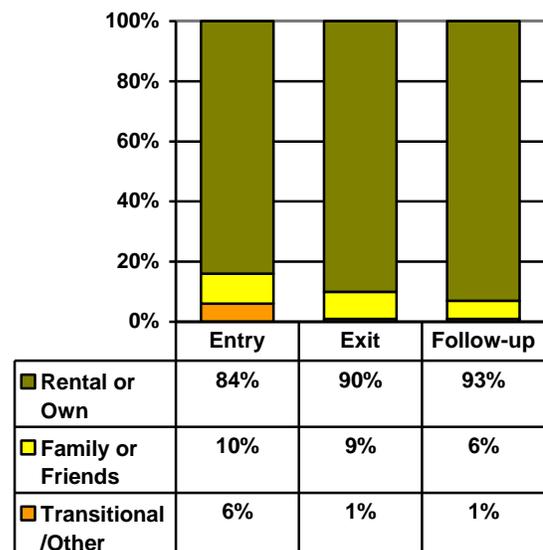
time. Providers contacted families who completed the program or who participated in services for at least 9 months to see how they were faring 12 months after exiting services. In all there were 212 families who met the criteria. Of these, 128 were located (60%) and surveyed.

Participants were asked about their housing status and stability, employment status and stability and income. Their responses were compared to similar questions asked at entry to and exit from the program.

Housing Status

One goal of AFP was to stabilize the housing of families who had recently lost their income. Rent assistance funds from the federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) were used based on the family's individual financial circumstances. AFP was extremely successful at stabilizing housing by the time participants exited the program and this stability continued during the next 12 months. At exit and follow-up 90% and 93% of families were renting or owned their own home.

**Figure 1: Housing Status
Measured at 3 Test Points (N=128)**



¹ The total number of participants served was 359. Participants not included in this report were those enrolled during the first few months of implementation who did not actively engage with their case manager.

² See Action for Prosperity Final Report on Program Outcomes July 2009 – October 2010

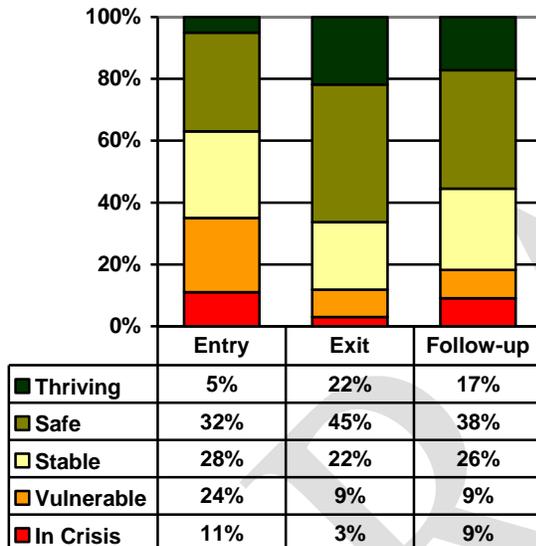
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Housing Stability³

AFP provided families rent assistance in order to keep their housing while they worked on obtaining employment. As can be seen in Figure 2, stability of participant housing increased from 65% at entry to 89% at exit. Most of participant housing remained stable over the 12 months after exiting services but the participants as a group lost a little ground. At exit, 89% percent of participant housing were scored as stable or higher on the Housing Stability measurement of the AFP Matrix compared to 82% at follow-up.

Figure 2: Housing Stability
Measured at 3 Test Points (N=128)



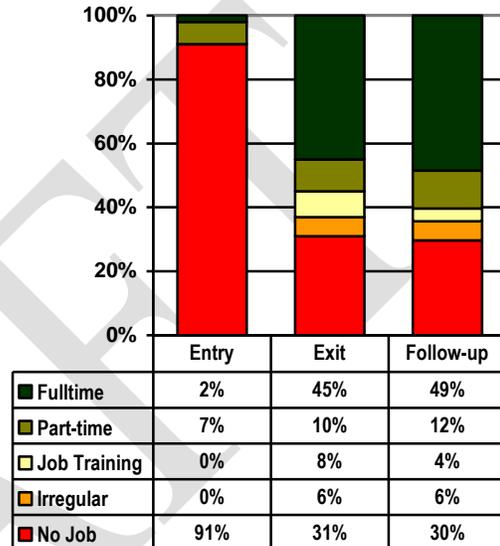
³Housing Matrix Score Definitions

- Thriving:** *Housing of choice such as home ownership or non-subsidized rental*
- Safe:** *Safe and secure non-subsidized, affordable choices limited by moderate income*
- Stable:** *Safe and secure subsidized rental, Section 8, or public housing*
- Vulnerable:** *Temporary/Transitional housing, unaffordable housing or imminent eviction.*
- In Crisis:** *Temporary shelter, doubled-up or homeless*

Employment Status

At program entry, only 9% of the participants were working. This improved significantly to 55% at program exit and continued to improve to 61% at the 12-month follow-up. These gains are even more impressive given the state of the local economy during this same period.

Figure3: Employment Status
Measured at 3 Test Points (N=128)



Employment Stability⁴

At exit and one year after leaving AFP, 60% of clients had stable employment or better as rated by the Employment Scale on the AFP Matrix. Employment stability was remarkably stable over the 12 month follow-up period.

⁴Employment Matrix Score Definitions

- Thriving:** *Maintains permanent full-time employment with adequate income and benefits*
- Safe:** *Full-time employment, adequate pay and/or benefits*
- Stable:** *Full-time employment, inadequate pay and no benefits or part-time with few benefits*
- Vulnerable:** *Part-time employment, no benefits or temporary employment without benefits*
- In Crisis:** *Unemployed*

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Figure 4: Employment Stability
Measured at 3 Test Points (N=128)

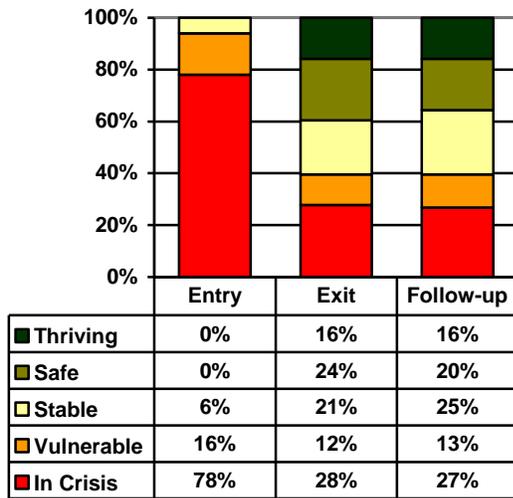
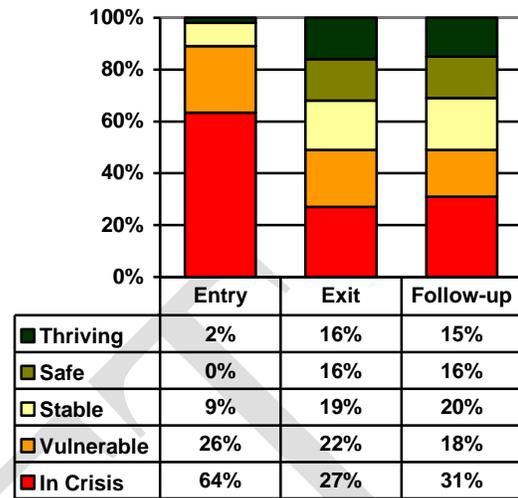


Figure 5: Income Stability
Measured at 3 Test Points (N=128)



Income Stability⁵

A high percent (90%) of AFP participants were struggling to earn enough income to feed and house their families⁵ at the start of services. At exit, the percent had decreased to 51% and after 12 more months remained at 51%. Even though the percent of Vulnerable and In Crisis families was almost halved and income increased significantly after participating in the program, it was still difficult for a significant number of the families to earn an income higher than 125% above poverty level.

As an example, Figure 6 shows the Federal Poverty Level related to each Matrix score and the actual income amount for a three person family.

Figure 6: Federal Poverty Level Example

Score	Percentage of Federal Poverty Level	Annual Income for Three Person Family
Thriving	More than 200%	More than \$36,620
Safe	Between 176%-200%	\$32,043-\$36,619
Stable	Between 126%-175%	\$22,888-\$32,042
Vulnerable	Between 101%-125%	\$18,310-\$22,887
In Crisis	Less than 100%	0-\$18,309

Summary and Conclusions

1. [There is strong evidence that housing support in conjunction with job skills interventions offered to families who are recently unemployed and at risk of losing their housing is effective. These benefits extend even twelve months after services have ended. Despite very difficult economic circumstances, the housing and employment outcomes produced by AFP were sustained twelve months after the termination of services](#)

⁵Income Matrix Score Definitions:

Thriving: > 200% of poverty adjusted for family size
 Safe: Between 176-200% of poverty
 Stable: Between 126- 175% of poverty
 Vulnerable: Between 100-125% of poverty
 In Crisis: Below poverty

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2. While ~~AFP employment and housing stability remain strong twelve months after services ended~~produced profound employment outcomes, ~~family~~ wages from employment are not sufficient to meet self sufficiency standards and fully lift the ~~families~~ out of poverty. This appears to be a result of the fact that the most commonly available jobs in the Oregon economy do not pay a self-sufficiency wage and not a lack of job skills and employment opportunity ~~AFP participants have at and after program exit. However families were in a dramatically better place than they were prior to entering the program.~~
3. ~~TMovement to increased self-sufficiency was affected by the availability of jobs that pay a self-sufficiency wage in this economy. Despite this,~~ the high success rate of this program during difficult economic times bodes well for future program cohorts when the economy improves.
4. While families are training and searching for jobs, homelessness can be successfully averted through the use of short-term rent assistance funds. Housing stability allowed program participants to fully focus on employment. Also, short term rent assistance was sufficient to allow families to remain housed even twelve months after assistance ended.