

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Evaluation of the Tenancy Preservation Program

March 2010

Christina Citino

Alison Glasgow



UMASS DONAHUE INSTITUTE • RESEARCH AND EVALUATION GROUP

Tenancy Preservation Program

Closing the Front Door to Homelessness

The Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP):

- is an effort designed to prevent the destabilizing effects of eviction and the impact of housing instability and homelessness for an extremely vulnerable population—those with disabilities.
- is a collaborative effort of MassHousing, Massachusetts Housing Court, regional service providers, and state agencies within the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.
- aims to preserve tenancy among individuals and families at imminent risk of eviction for whom the grounds for eviction are directly related to a disability.



Tenancy Preservation Program

Closing the Front Door to Homelessness

TPP:

- acts as a neutral intermediary between landlord and tenant.
- identifies needed services, develops a service plan, and manages and monitors adherence to the plan.
- attempts to locate more appropriate housing if the tenancy cannot be saved.
- coordinates with appropriate organizations if the problem cannot be resolved.



Tenancy Preservation Program

Closing the Front Door to Homelessness

TPP is a collaborative program that works with:

- Housing court divisions
- Legal Services and private attorneys
- Local housing authorities, landlords, and property managers
- Local and state agencies
- Community-based service providers



Tenancy Preservation Program

Closing the Front Door to Homelessness

TPP is based in Fair Housing Law.

- In order to become a TPP case, a tenant must have a disability and show that the disability is related to the lease violation.
- In doing so, the tenant establishes a right to reasonable accommodation, allowing the court to postpone eviction proceedings until a suitable reasonable accommodation can be identified and implemented.
- TPP plays a key role in identifying and establishing the components of a reasonable accommodation.
- An accommodation might take the form of the tenant agreeing to modify his or her behavior or the tenant agreeing to have a third party (e.g., a representative payee) manage public benefits on his or her behalf to ensure that rent is paid on time.



Tenancy Preservation Program Evaluation

The Evaluation, which began in July 2007, documented:

- The number of tenancies and individuals served by the program
- The characteristics of tenancies and individuals served by the program
- Variations in program characteristics and implementation across courts and sites
- Program outcomes
- Variations in outcomes by tenant, household, and program characteristics
- Program costs
- Areas for improvement or expansion

Data collection occurred over a two-year period and included:

- Site visits with staff and Local Advisory Committees
- Court observations
- Tenant-level data collection on program cases and consultations



Tenancy Preservation Program Results

Today's presentation will address:

- Tenancies served
- Tenant and household characteristics
- Case characteristics
- Outcomes
- TPP Consultations
- Program Costs
- Recommendations



Tenancy Preservation Program

Tenancies Served

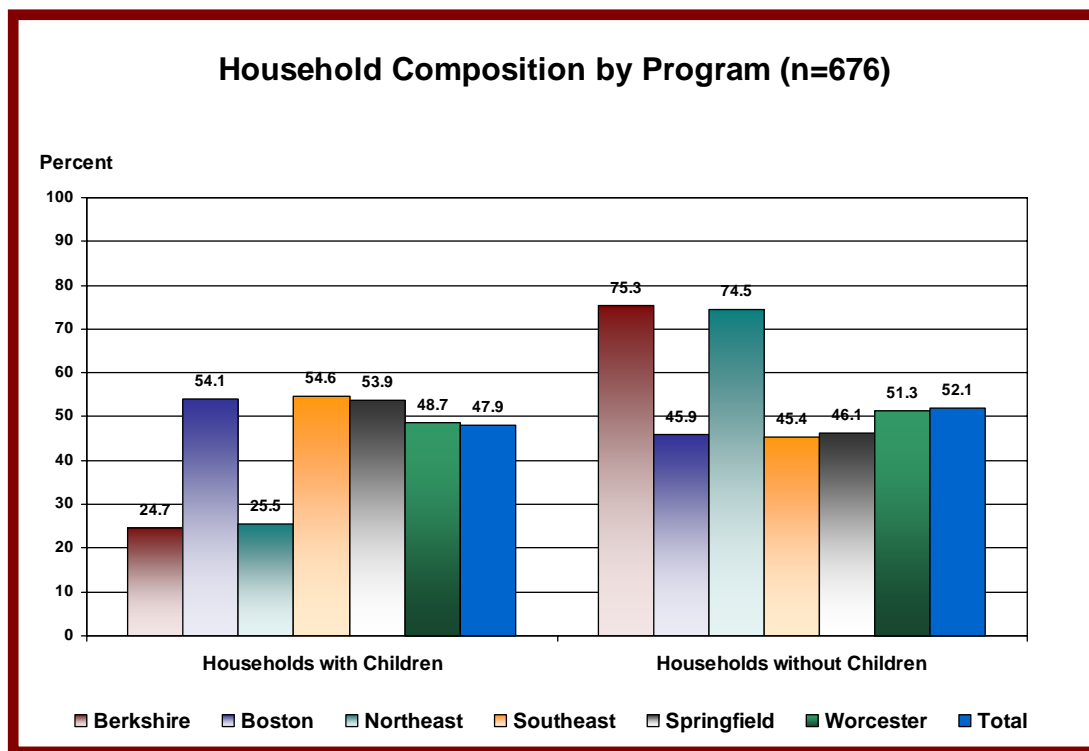
- From January 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, TPP worked with 676 unique tenancies across the Commonwealth. The 676 cases amounted to 732 adults, 581 minor children, and 106 adult children.
- Throughout FY09, TPP staff worked with an average of 179.3 open cases per month.

TPP Providers and Service Area by Housing Court			
Housing Court	TPP Provider	Service Area	FY09 FTE
Boston	Bay Cove Human Services	City of Boston	5
Northeast	Eliot Community Human Services	Essex County and selected towns in Middlesex County	2
Southeast	Father Bills & MainSpring	Bristol and Plymouth Counties	5
Western Western MA	Mental Health Association	Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties	7
Western Berkshire	Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority	Berkshire County	2
Worcester	Community Healthlink	Worcester County and selected towns in Middlesex and Norfolk Counties	4

Tenancy Preservation Program Tenancies Served

Household Composition

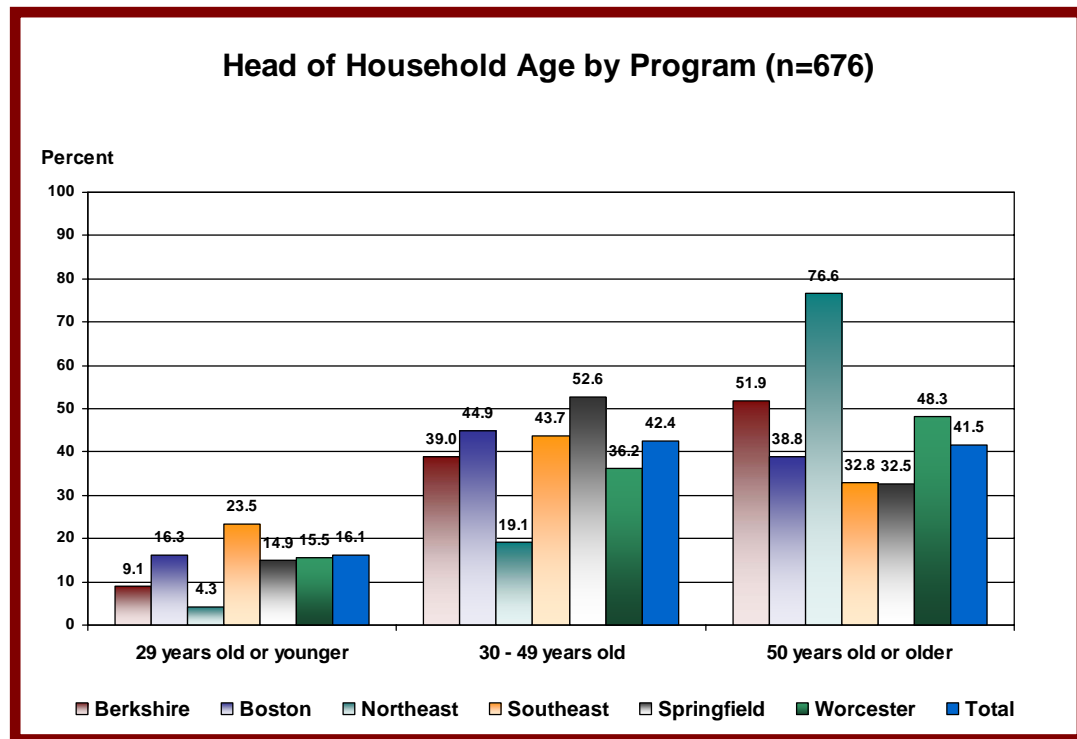
- The 1,419 residents assisted through the program were predominantly from single adult households (47.8% of cases) or single adult households with one or more children (44.2%).
- Fewer than 10% of tenancies were households containing two or more adults.



Tenancy Preservation Program Tenancies Served

Age

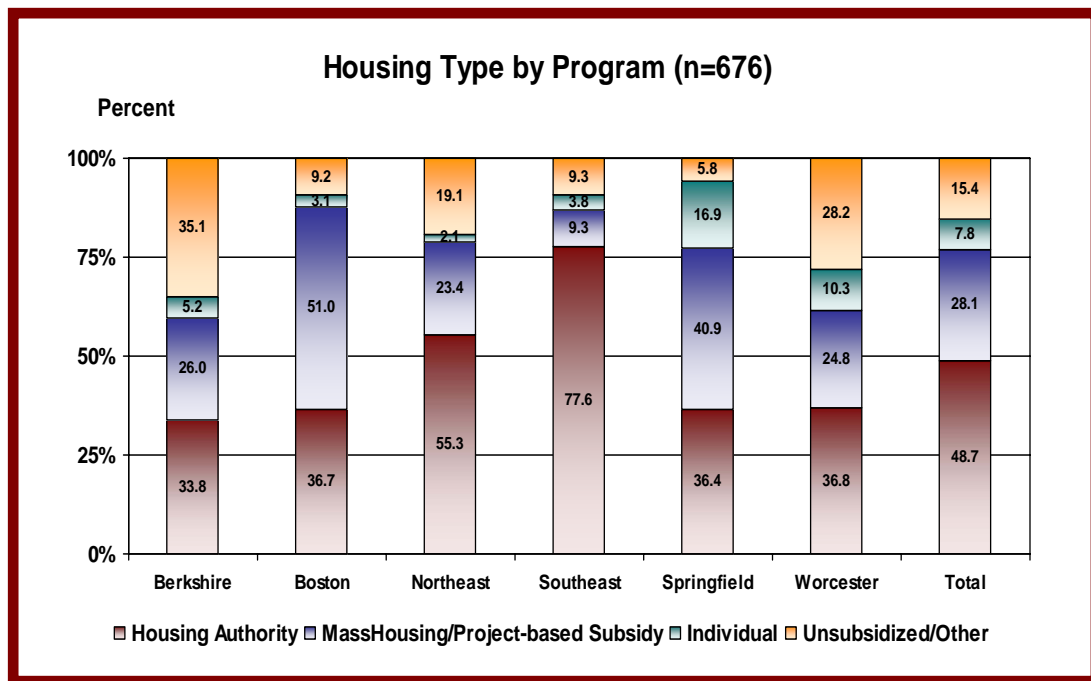
- The mean age of householders served was 46.8 years. Householders with children were significantly younger (38.4 years) than householders without children (54.5 years).
- Programs that were more likely to serve adult only households were also more likely to serve older householders.



Tenancy Preservation Program Tenancies Served

Housing Type

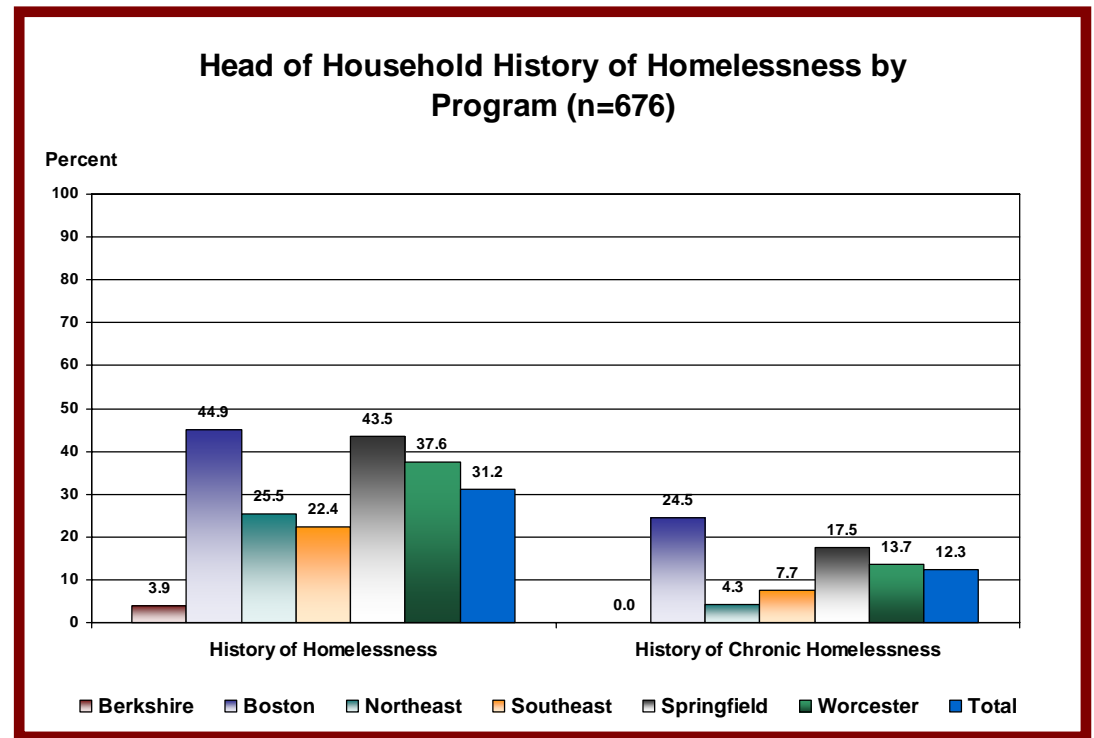
- Nearly half of all TPP cases were tenants of a local housing authority (48.7%), and an additional 35.9% were in subsidized housing through either project-based (28.1%) or individual (7.8%) subsidies.
- Fifteen percent of all cases were in unsubsidized housing.



Tenancy Preservation Program Severity of Need

History of Homelessness

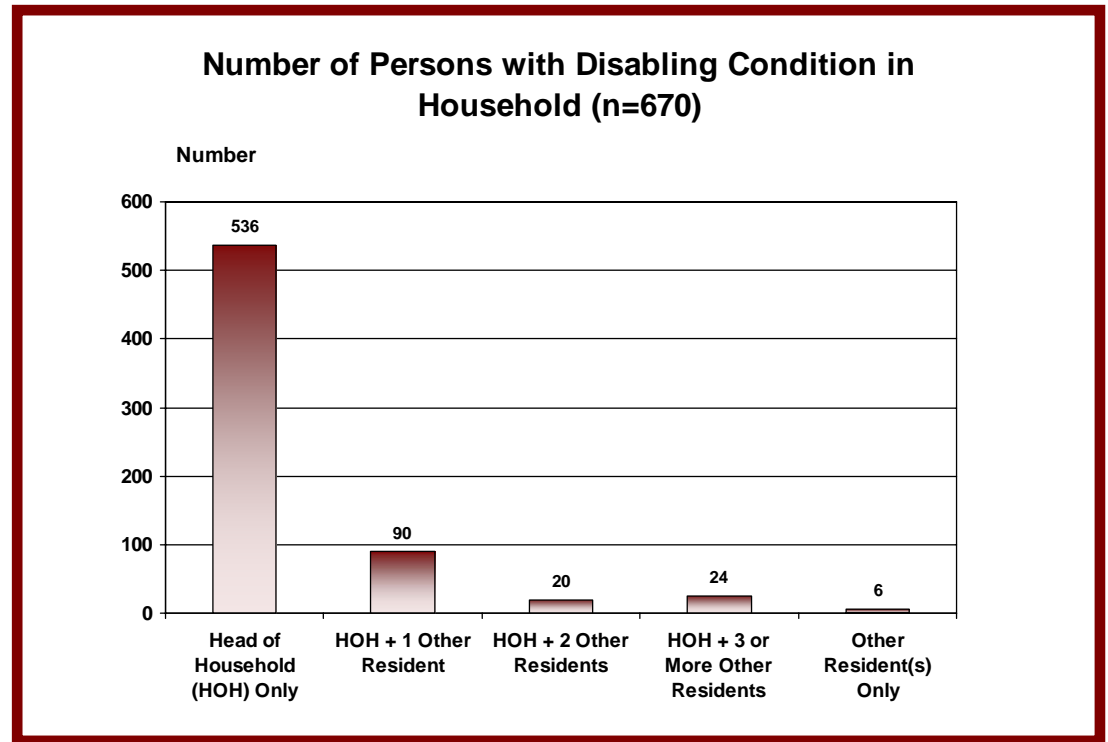
- Nearly one-third of cases report at least one episode of homelessness in the past, and 12.3% have a history of chronic homelessness.
- Homelessness does not vary by household composition or gender.
- Householders younger than 50 years of age were more likely to have ever experienced homelessness than older householders.



Tenancy Preservation Program Severity of Need

Disability

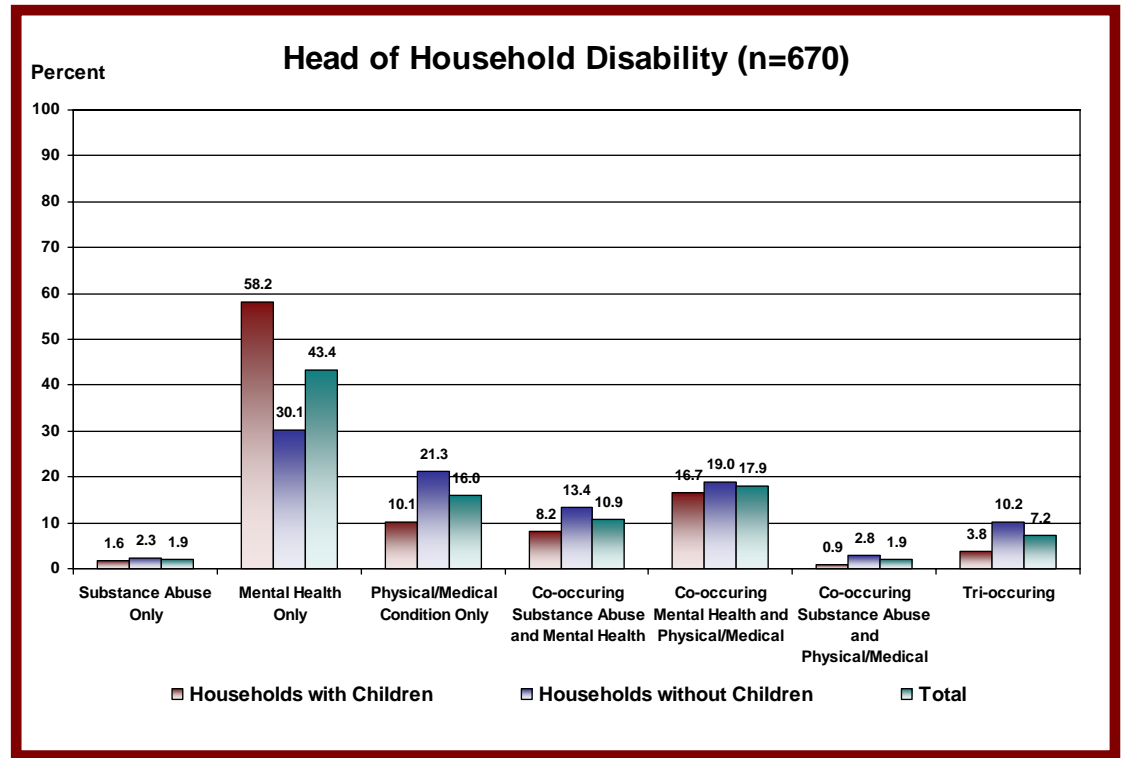
- Every TPP household had at least one individual with a disabling condition.
- In nearly every case, the head of household had a documented disability.
- In 20% of cases where the head of household had a documented disability, either another member of the household or multiple additional members of the household had a disabling condition. This translates to 134 households where the head of household and at least one other individual had a disability.



Tenancy Preservation Program Severity of Need

Disability

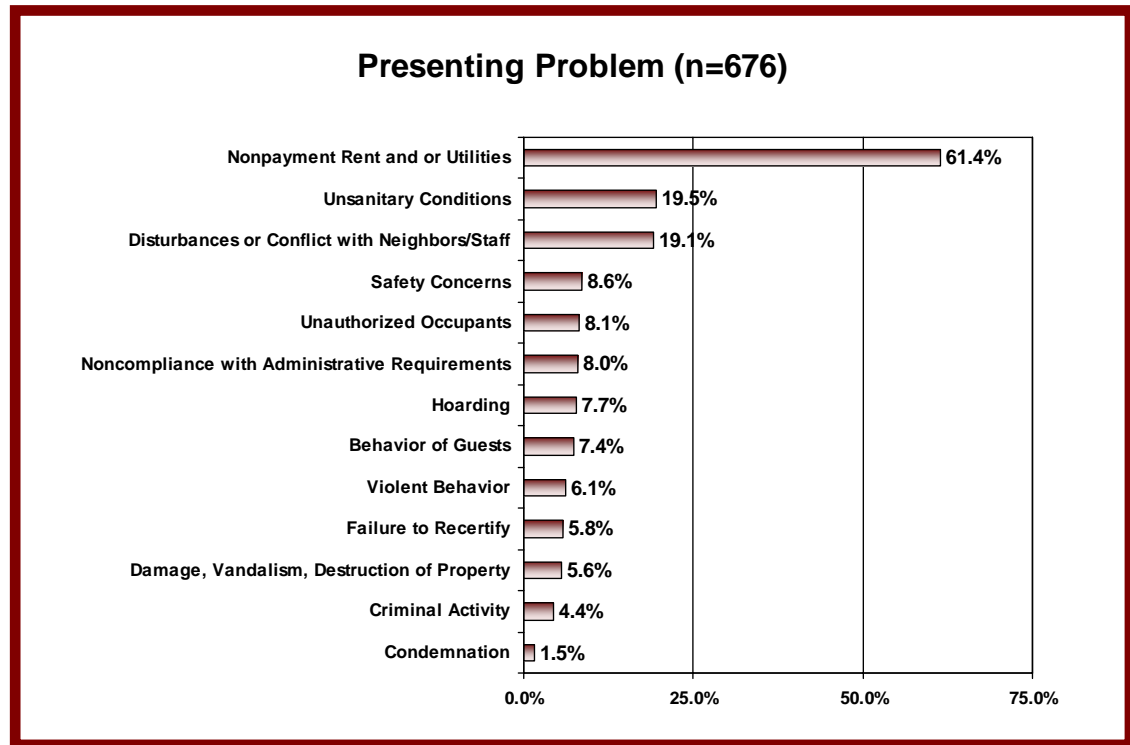
- The disabling condition(s) reported among 43.4% of householders could be categorized as solely mental health related.
- Approximately 2% of householders had substance abuse as the only reported disability.
- 31% of householders had co-occurring conditions and 7.2% had tri-occurring conditions.



Tenancy Preservation Program Severity of Need

Presenting Lease Violation

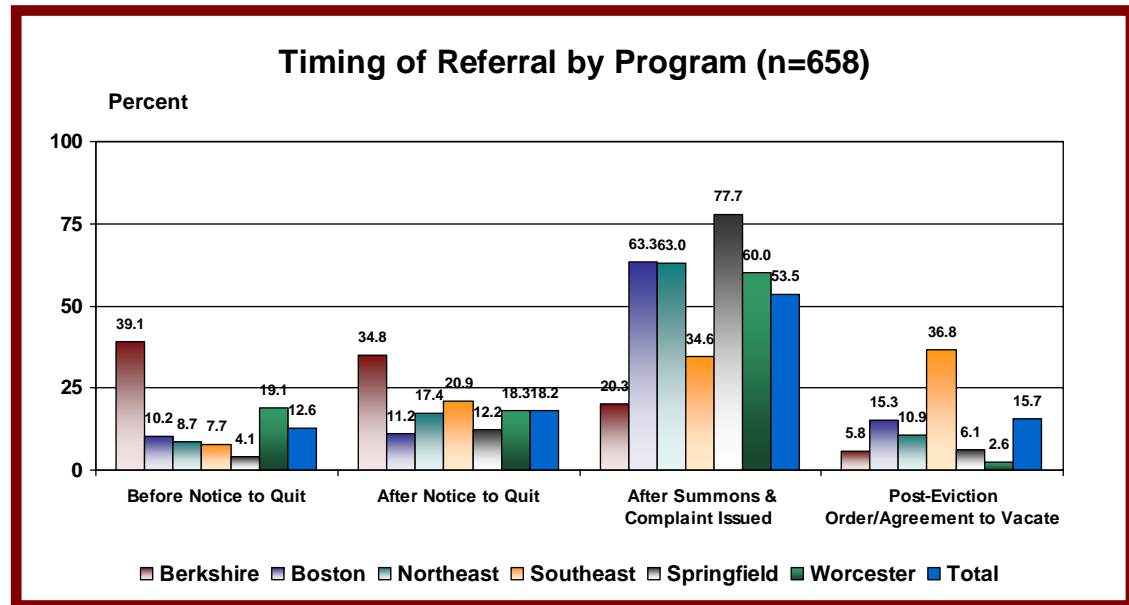
- The most common presenting problem was, by far, non-payment of rent and/or utilities (61.4%).
- While a significant number of cases had additional presenting problems, it is worth noting that 45.1% of all documented cases presented with non-payment as the only issue threatening the tenancy.
- In all cases, rental and/or utility arrearages were tied directly to a disability.



Tenancy Preservation Program Program Characteristics

Timing of Referral

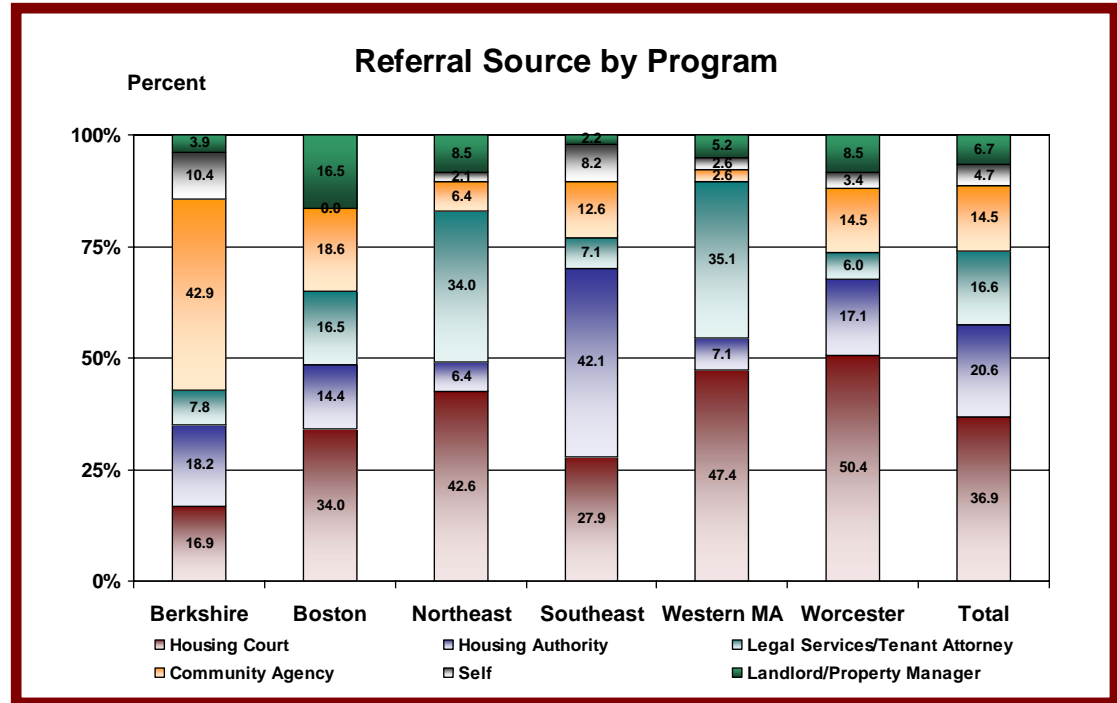
- Four of the six programs require that at minimum a Notice to Quit has been issued to open a case.
- Case data demonstrate that every program had at least one case where the referral was made before the Notice to Quit was issued. In fact, 12.6% of all cases were referred before a Notice to Quit was issued.
- 53.5% of tenants were referred to TPP after a Summons and Complaint was issued.



Tenancy Preservation Program Program Characteristics

Source of Referrals

- Housing Court was the most common referral source among four of the six programs.
- Nearly 21% of all cases were referred by a local housing authority.
- More than one-fourth of all cases were referred by the tenant's landlord (LHA, landlord, property manager, or representative).



Tenancy Preservation Program Program Characteristics

Case Duration

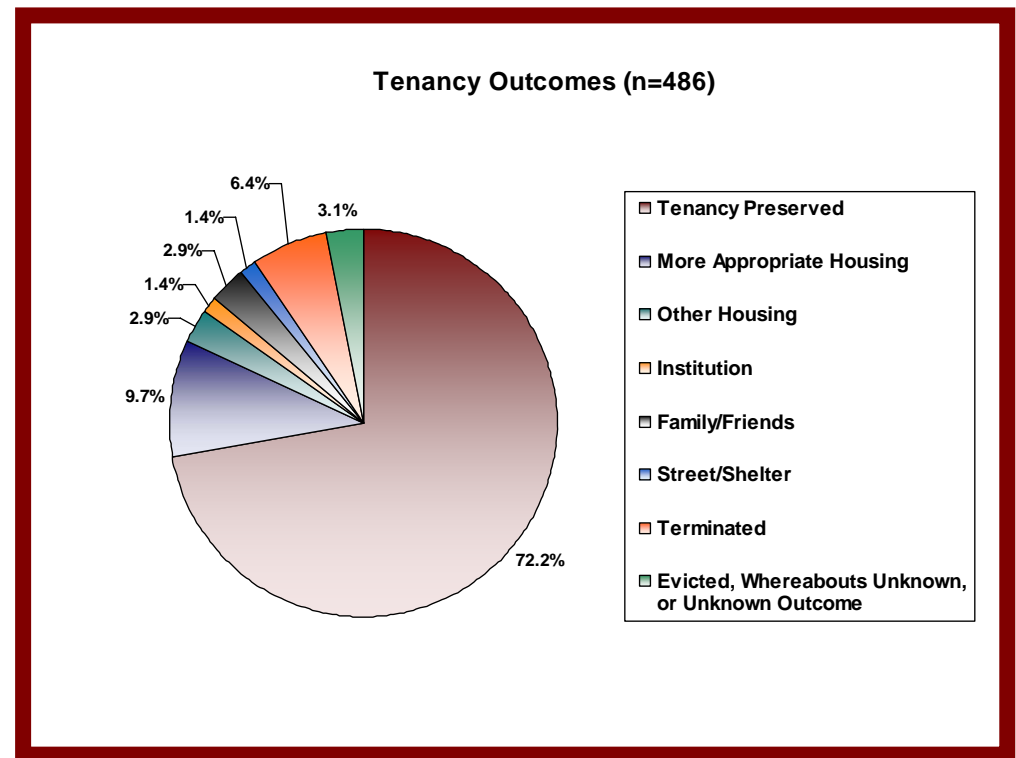
- Of the 676 documented cases, TPP closed 526 during the study period.
- The mean duration a case was open was 148.8 days, or just under five months.
- Nearly 40% of cases concluded within a two-month period, and an additional third were open three to five months.

Case Service Duration Case Data 1/1/2008 – 6/30/2009	
Number Closed Cases	526
<u>Days from Intake to Discharge</u>	
Mean Duration	148.8
Median Duration	115.5
Range Duration	8 – 586
<u>Months from Intake to Discharge</u>	
0 – 2 months	38.4%
3 – 5 months	32.5%
6+ months	29.1%

Tenancy Preservation Program Outcomes

All Tenancies

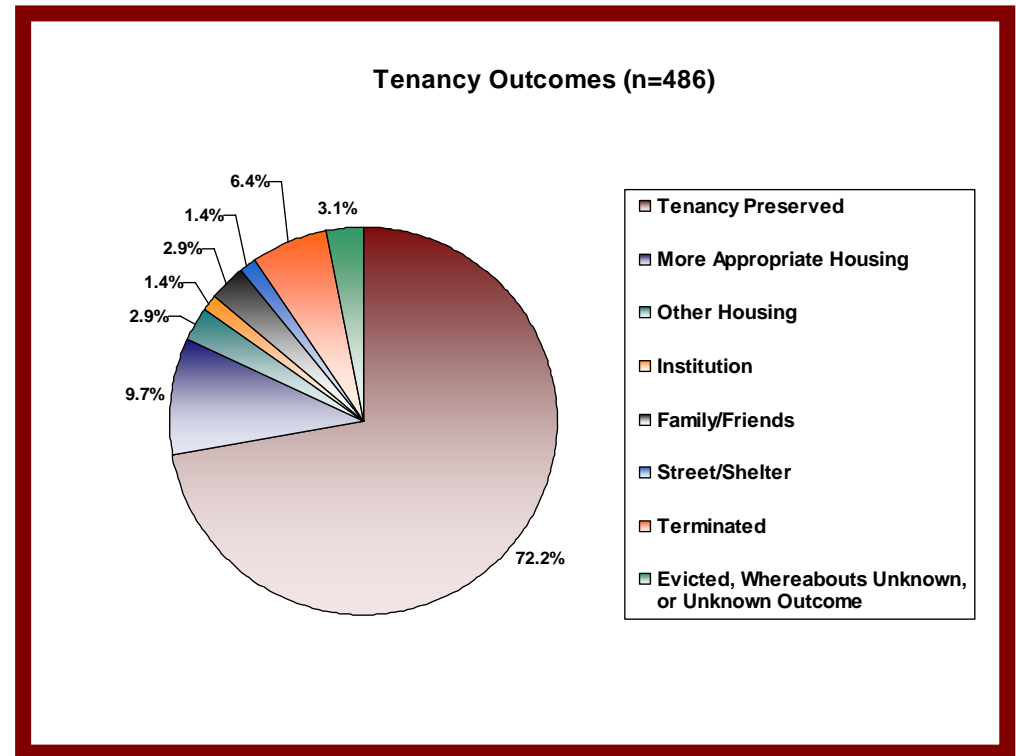
- Of closed cases (n=486), 82% resulted in stable housing either through the preservation of the existing tenancy (72.2%) or moving to more appropriate housing (9.8%).
- The preservation of tenancy or transition to more appropriate housing among these nearly 400 TPP cases represents the stabilization of housing for 830 adults and children.



Tenancy Preservation Program Outcomes

All Tenancies

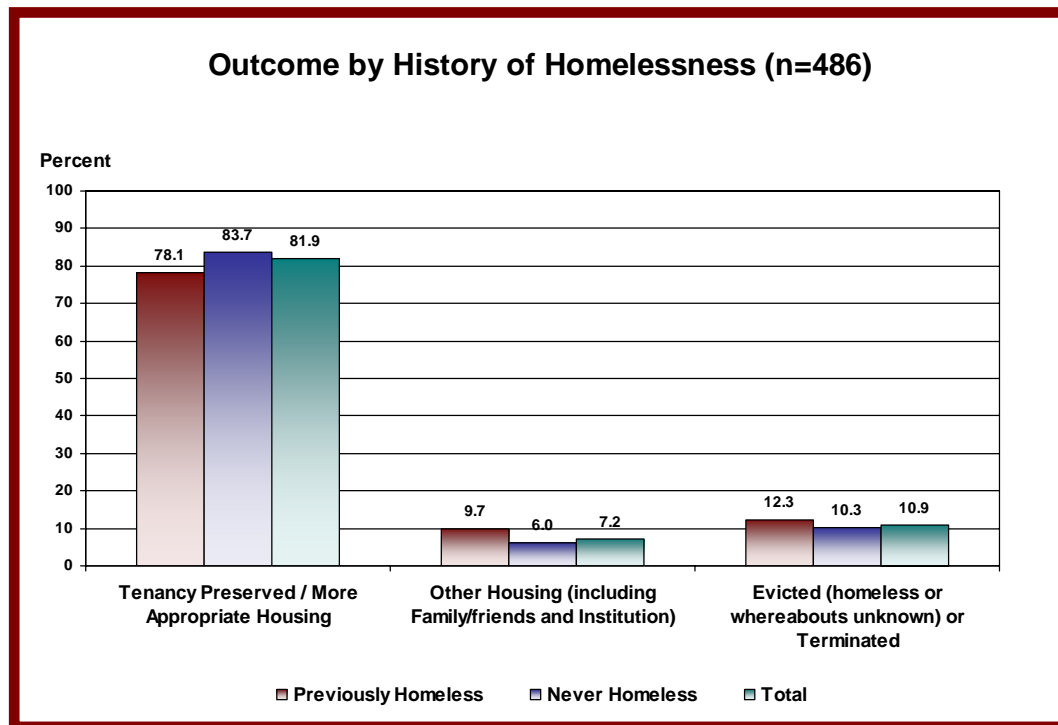
- 7.2% of closed cases resulted in “other” housing, including living with family and friends or placement in an institution.
- Only 10.9% of closed cases resulted in eviction or termination from TPP.
- Less than 2% of closed cases are known to have resulted in eviction to a shelter or the street.



Tenancy Preservation Program Outcomes

Outcomes by Characteristics

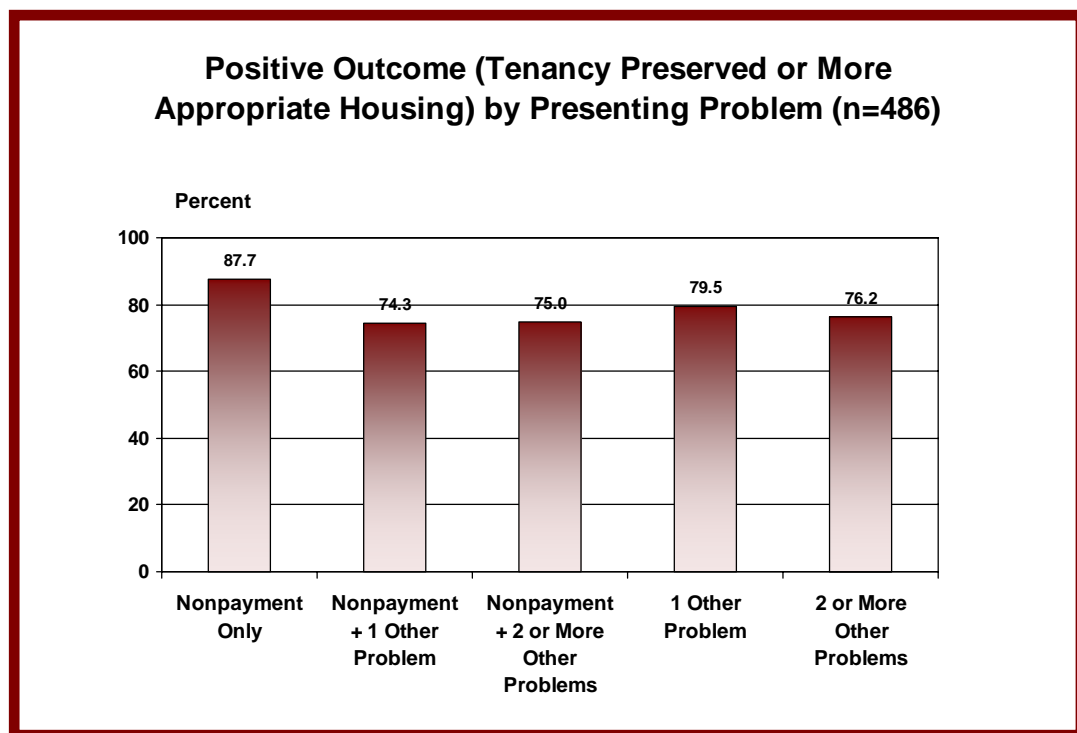
- Analysis of tenancy outcomes by household and householder characteristics yielded no significant differences in outcome. Analyses included comparisons by household composition, gender, age, primary language spoken, veteran status, and history of domestic violence.
- Analysis of tenancy outcomes by severity demonstrated that history of homelessness and the nature of the disability were not associated with outcome.



Tenancy Preservation Program Outcomes

Outcomes by Characteristics

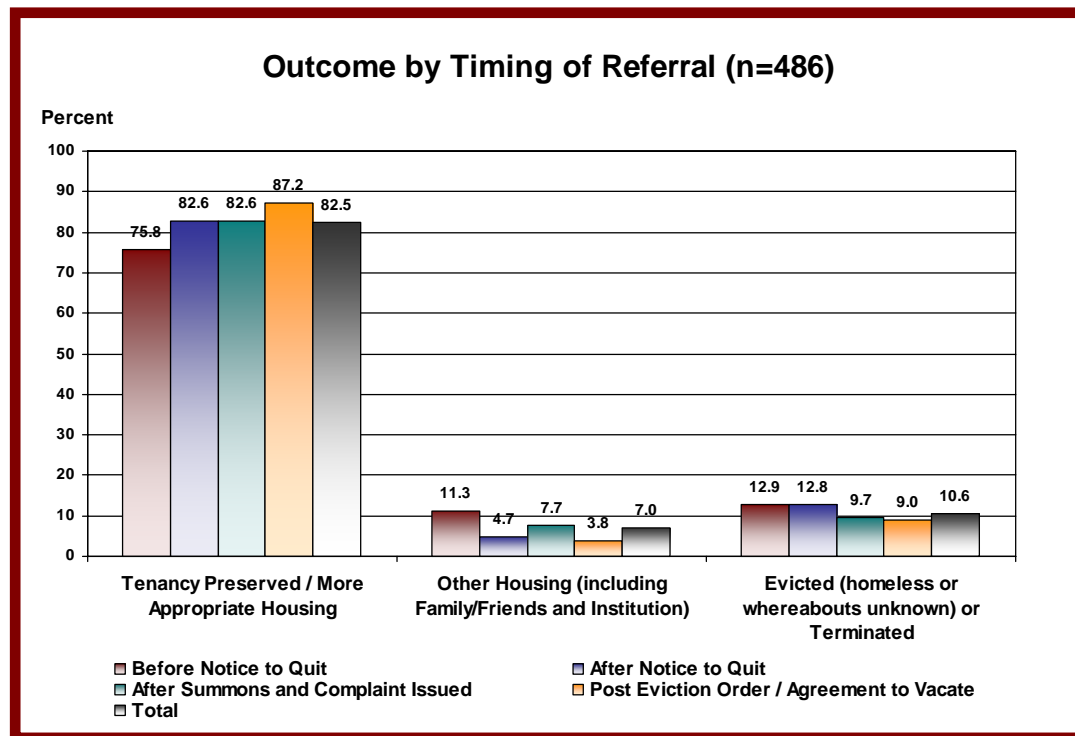
- Tenancies that presented solely with non-payment of rent or utilities were significantly more likely than all others to result in a positive outcome.
- In fact, nearly 9 out of 10 non-payment cases resulted in the preservation of the existing tenancy or a transition to more appropriate housing.



Tenancy Preservation Program Outcomes

Outcomes by Characteristics

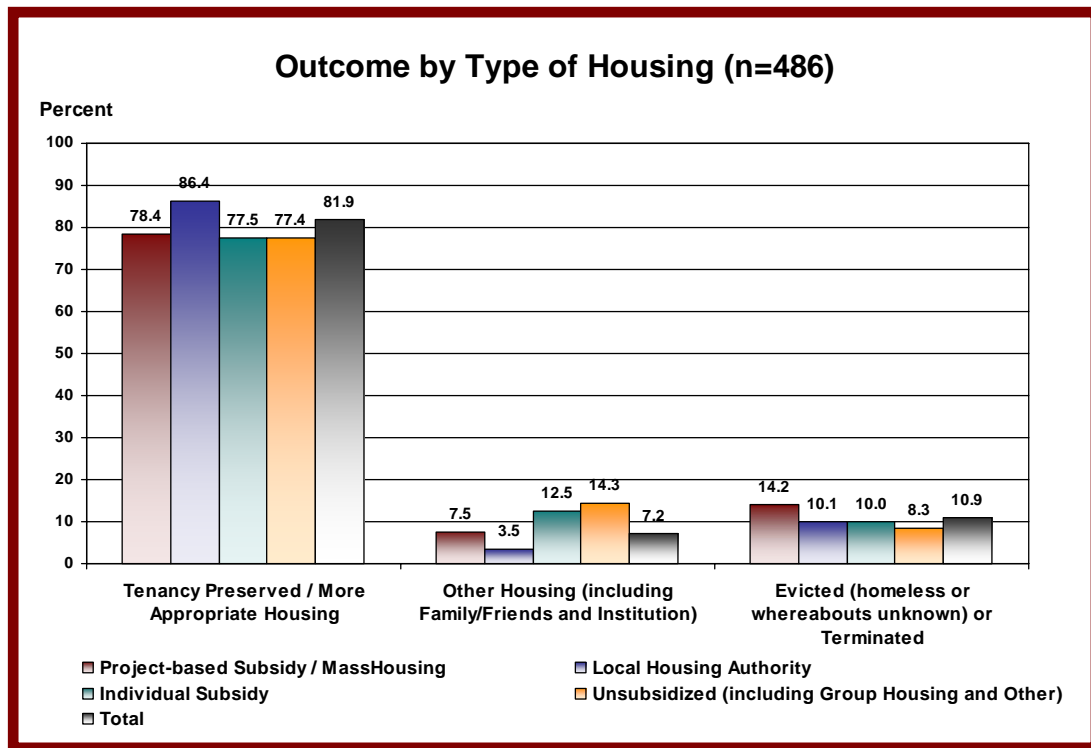
- Analysis of tenancy outcomes by programmatic factors included type of housing, timing of referral, referral source, and service provision (duration and effort).
- Timing of referral varied significantly across programs, but was not associated with positive outcomes. Similarly, there were no significant differences in outcome by duration or effort.



Tenancy Preservation Program Outcomes

Outcomes by Characteristics

- Tenants of local housing authorities were more likely than those of other housing types to have had the tenancy preserved or to have moved to more appropriate housing.
- Given this, it is not surprising that having been referred to TPP by a local housing authority is also correlated with a positive outcome.



Tenancy Preservation Program Consultations

- Situations where TPP staff interacts directly with a tenant or has significant awareness of the presenting problem(s) for an identifiable tenant, AND the tenant is not eligible or not yet eligible for TPP services.
- Service provision ranges from a single interaction to substantial investments of time.
- Consults commonly occur when TPP:
 - has the expertise to assist a tenant but not necessarily preserve the tenancy.
 - is unsure if the tenant meets eligibility criteria and engages in an “investigation phase.”
 - uses consultation as a mechanism for working with tenants who are eligible for services but are on the waiting list.

Tenancy Preservation Program Cost

Overall Cost

- The FY09 TPP budget for all 6 programs was \$1,670,605.
- On average, programs spent approximately 71% of documented time serving cases and 29% of time serving consults.
- If the budget were allocated 71% for cases and 29% for consults, the cost per case (case budget/number cases) was \$2,377 and the cost per consult (consult budget/number consults) was \$925.

FY09 Cases and Consults Costs Information	
FY09 Budget	\$1,670,605
FY09 Number of Cases	499
FY09 Number of Non-case Consults	524
FY09 Unique Tenancies	1,023
Percent Effort on Cases	71%
Percent Effort on Consults	29%
Case Budget	\$1,186,130
Consult Budget	\$484,475
Cost per Case	\$2,377
Cost per Consult	\$925
Cost per Unique Tenancy	\$1,633

Tenancy Preservation Program Cost

Cost by Characteristics

- Comparisons of cost by householder and case characteristics found that cost per case did not vary by the householder's gender, history of homelessness, or severity of disability.

FY09 Cost Comparison by Tenant Characteristics Case Data 7/1/2008 – 6/30/2009		
	Number	Cost
Tenancies	499	\$2,377
Gender		
Female	373	\$2,343
Male	126	\$2,463
Ever Homeless		
Never Homeless	348	\$2,361
History of Homelessness	151	\$2,400
Disability		
Single HOH Disability	295	\$2,390
Co-occurring / Tri-occurring Disability	197	\$2,370

Tenancy Preservation Program Cost

Cost by Characteristics

- Tenancies with lease violations other than non-payment of rent or utilities were more costly to serve than cases where non-payment was the issue. In other words, tenancies at-risk due to behavioral issues required more effort than non-payment cases, and therefore were more costly.
- Given that adult-only households were more likely than households with children to present with behavioral lease violations, it is not surprising that these households were more costly to serve than households with children.

FY09 Cost Comparison by Tenant Characteristics
Case Data 7/1/2008 – 6/30/2009

	Number	Cost
Tenancies	499	\$2,377
Household Composition		
Households with Children	237	\$2,130
Households without Children	262	\$2,593
Language		
English	454	\$2,320
Spanish / Other	45	\$2,912
Presenting Problem		
Including Non-payment or Non-payment Only	300	\$2,098
Problem Does Not Include Non-payment	199	\$2,788

Tenancy Preservation Program Cost

The characteristics of the TPP population and their risk factors for homelessness suggest that:

1. Without intervention, this group is at high risk of eviction.
2. For nearly 85% of cases and 56% of consults, an eviction is likely to result in an immediate loss of subsidy or, at minimum, jeopardizes the long-term security of the subsidy.
3. The loss of subsidy creates a substantial barrier to rapid re-housing following an eviction.
4. Barriers to rapid re-housing often result in the need for emergency shelter or, when that is not an option, extremely unstable or unsafe housing.



Tenancy Preservation Program Cost

- 237 of the 499 FY09 TPP Cases were families. This amounts to approximately 48% of the FY09 TPP Case Budget spent serving families (\$569,342).
- At a cost of \$110 per shelter night, \$569,342 purchases 5,176 shelter nights OR 105 nights for 49 shorter-stay homeless families OR 444 shelter nights for 12 longer-term shelter families.
- Of the families served in FY09 whose cases were closed (165), 143 families or 86.7% were stabilized in housing.

TPP Cost per Family:	Family Shelter Cost per Temporary User:	Family Shelter Cost per Long-term User:
\$2,130	\$11,550	\$50,000
Equals the cost of 19 shelter nights	Average shelter stay of 105 nights	Average shelter stay of 444 nights

Tenancy Preservation Program

The need for TPP services is greater than program capacity.

- The 2007 American Community Survey estimates that 11.4% of adults aged 21 to 64 years in Massachusetts have a disability. Even excluding the elderly and having a more conservative definition of disability than used for TPP, if this percent were applied to the number of disposed eviction cases (FY08 = 23,441), then it is possible that nearly 2,600 eviction cases could be eligible for TPP services. By comparison, TPP was able to serve 499 cases in FY09.
- Five of the six programs had a waiting list for services during all or some part of FY09.
- During FY09, TPP opened 652 consultations. In general, consultation occurs when TPP workers are unable to open a case. In some situations, caseloads preclude staff from opening an additional case and minimal services are provided while the tenant is on the waiting list. In other situations, tenants do not meet program eligibility criteria, but TPP workers feel duty-bound to provide assistance due to the nature of the circumstances or until eligibility can be established. Regardless, the frequency of requests for assistance and the nature of the consultations speak directly to existing gaps in services.

Tenancy Preservation Program

The need for TPP services is greater than program capacity.

In addition to issues of staff capacity, the nature of consultations indicate the following service gaps, including the lack of:

- housing search and placement services for those eligible tenants who first come to TPP when preserving the tenancy is no longer an option.
- services for tenants experiencing extremely tragic circumstances, but lacking a disability that would trigger the use of reasonable accommodation. Due to the current economic climate and increasing frequency of foreclosures among landlords, requests for assistance of this nature appear to be on the rise.
- capacity to address the “early warning” referrals coming directly from landlords, management companies, housing authorities, and community agencies that are increasingly contacting TPP at the first sign of a troubled tenancy.
- specific knowledge or experience necessary to assist clients facing eviction among frontline case workers in Massachusetts.
- services for homeowners facing foreclosure.

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

