



HOUSING NEEDS OF ADULT CONSUMERS

Access to stable housing is often a concern for consumers entering mental health and/or substance abuse treatment programs. Consistent with prior research, NC-TOPPS consumers are more likely to state a need for housing assistance if they are older, African American, or if they lack steady income.¹ Consistent with past research on mental health and substance abuse treatment,² consumers entering mental health treatment are much more likely to request housing assistance than those with substance abuse or co-occurring disorders. In keeping with national patterns, NC-TOPPS consumers who received housing assistance largely found it helpful and showed improvement in their housing situation.³

Table 1 represents the need for housing among 7,392 adult consumers who entered and completed treatment or had at least one update interview in fiscal year 2012-13.

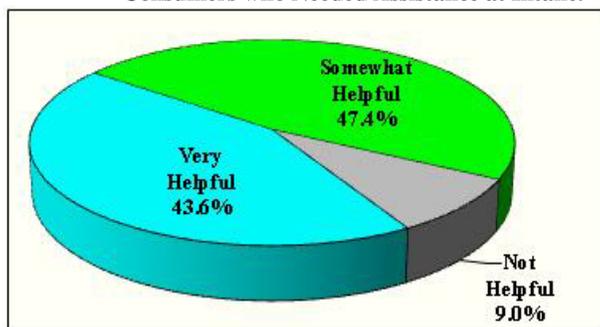
- Over half (53.3%) of adult mental health consumers entering treatment cite housing assistance as important compared with slightly over a quarter of substance abuse consumers. Consumers with co-occurring disorders fall between the other two groups at 37.9%.
- In keeping with general population trends, older consumers are more likely to need housing assistance than younger consumers. The need for housing assistance increases directly with age.
- African-American consumers are more likely to view housing assistance as important when entering treatment.
- Although national data suggest female heads of households are more likely to receive housing assistance,¹ among NC-TOPPS consumers, there is only a slight gender difference in the desire for housing assistance.
- The less stable housing circumstances are at intake, the higher the percentage who view housing assistance as important. Dramatic increases in the need for housing are evident as number of moves in the past year increases.
- Likewise, the need for housing assistance is higher among consumers for whom employment is less stable. Consumers who are employed part-time or not employed have greater need for housing assistance.

Table 1. Consumers Rating Housing Assistance as “Important” at Intake: by Selected Characteristics.

Characteristic at Intake		Rate Housing Assistance as “Important”	
		Percent	N
Age/ Disability Group	Adult MH	53.3	3,045
	Adult SA	27.4	3,214
	Co-occurring	37.9	1,133
Gender	Female	39.8	3,817
	Male	33.0	3,575
Age	Under 30	32.6	2,326
	30-49	36.3	3,551
	50 & Older	43.5	1,515
Race/ Ethnicity	African Am./Black	48.5	3,384
	White//Caucasian*	29.8	3,617
	Other Race/Ethnicity	30.5	391
Times Moved in Past 3 Months	None	23.9	2,777
	One	40.9	1,894
	Two-Three	61.4	1,908
	Four-Five	76.1	529
	Six or More	79.7	283
Employment Status	Full-Time	14.1	349
	Part-Time	28.5	551
	Unemployed	39.1	3,673
	Not in Labor Force	42.7	2,819

**Of Hispanic Origin or Not of Hispanic Origin
 N=7,392 adult consumers who needed housing assistance at intake
 and who had at least one update during 2012-13*

Figure 1. Helpfulness of Housing Assistance among Consumers who Needed Assistance at Intake.



N is based on the most recent rating among 3,135 consumers who needed housing assistance at intake.

Overall, 91 % of consumers who received housing assistance found it *Very Helpful* or *Somewhat Helpful*. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that consumers with mental health and substance abuse diagnoses show similar rates of satisfaction, regardless of whether their housing preference matches their housing type.⁵

NC-TOPPS SNAPSHOT



Table 2 presents information on living arrangements at intake versus the most recent update for adults needing housing at intake. Treatment appears to have a positive impact on housing for NC-TOPPS consumers.

- After beginning treatment, consumers are slightly more likely (4%) to reside in a private or permanent residence. Likewise, the percentage living in temporary housing declines (by 3%) after three months or more in treatment.
- The proportion who reported being homeless dropped from 17.3% at intake to 10.9% at the update interview and, among the homeless, a slightly higher proportion were sheltered than at intake.

Table 3 expands on the information shown in Table 2, comparing place of residence at the most recent interview with place of residence at intake.

- Most consumers living in private housing at intake remained in this setting at the update interview.
- Almost half of those living in temporary housing at intake moved to a permanent setting.
- Almost 40% of consumers who were homeless when entering treatment were able to transition to private or permanent housing (28.2%) or temporary housing (11.2%). This finding is consistent with past research that shows housing supports to mentally ill consumers reduces rates of homelessness.⁶ In addition, substance abuse is a cause of homelessness,⁷ and treatment helps reduce homeless rates among this population as well.

Table 2. Living Arrangements at Intake and Follow-Up among Consumers in Need of Housing Assistance at Intake.*

Living Arrangements: / Characteristic at Intake	Type Interview / Column Percent	
	Intake	Update
Private or Permanent Residence	55.5	59.5
Temporary Housing	12.9	9.9
Residential Program	4.8	9.1
Facility Institution	6.9	7.3
Homeless (All Consumers)	17.3	10.9
▪ % of Homeless Sheltered	64.6	69.5
▪ % of Homeless Unsheltered	35.4	30.5
Other	2.6	3.4

N=7,392 consumers who have an initial and at least one update interview. Number of Homeless Consumers: Intake=1,282; Update=804

Table 3. Place of Residence at Follow-Up by Place of Residence at Intake.

Residence at Intake	Residence at Update / Row Percent					
	Private or Permanent	Temporary Housing	Residential Program	Facility Institution	Homeless	Other
Private or Permanent	80.3	6.2	4.8	3.3	3.0	2.4
Temporary Housing	48.1	27.8	9.6	1.9	9.8	2.8
Residential Program	30.4	8.2	38.0	12.7	5.4	5.4
Facility Institution	17.0	3.9	12.7	56.6	5.3	4.5
Homeless	28.2	11.2	12.6	2.8	41.0	4.3
Other	46.0	10.1	12.7	7.4	9.0	14.8

N=7,392 consumers

DEFINITIONS:

Housing Assistance: Basic shelter or rent subsidy.

Homeless Sheltered: Living situation is a homeless shelter or domestic violence shelter.

Homeless Unsheltered: Living situation is on the street, in a car, or camp.

REFERENCES:

1. National Low Income Housing Coalition 2012. "Who Lives in Federally Assisted Housing?" *Housing Spotlight* 2(2).
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4. Tsai., Jack, Gary R. Bond, Michelle P. Salyers, Jena L. Godfrey, and Kristin E. Davis. 2010. "Housing Preferences and Choices Among Adults with Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders: A Qualitative Study." *Community Mental Health Journal* 46(4): 381-388.
5. Tsai, Jack, Gary R. Bond, and Kristin E. Davis. 2010. "Housing Preferences Among Adults with Dual Diagnoses in Different Stages of Treatment and Housing Types." *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation* 13(4): 258-275.
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7. National Coalition for the Homeless. 2009. "Substance Abuse and Homelessness." Washington, D.C.: National Coalition for the Homeless.

SOURCE: NC-TOPPS ADULT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONSUMER INITIAL AND UPDATE INTERVIEWS—STATEWIDE

TIME PERIOD: JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2013