

A Study of Households in Iowa that Left the Food Stamp Program

Helen H. Jensen, Steven Garasky, Cory Wessman, and Sarah M. Nusser

Staff Report 02-SR 97
March 2002

**Center for Agricultural and Rural Development
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011-1070
www.card.iastate.edu**

Helen Jensen is a professor of economics and head of the Food and Nutrition Policy Division, Center for Agricultural and Rural Development; Steven Garasky is an associate professor of human development; Cory Wessman is a former graduate assistant, Center for Agricultural and Rural Development; and Sarah Nusser is an associate professor of statistics; all at Iowa State University.

Report submitted to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Project Grant No. 43-3AEM-8-80100. Grant Officers: Thomas A. Carlin and Elizabeth Dagata.

The authors acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the Iowa Department of Human Services in conducting the survey from the state administrative records. At Iowa State University, S. Patricia Batres-Marques helped prepare the final report, Suwen Pan assisted with analysis of data, and Diane Anderson and Linda Anderson of the Statistics Laboratory participated in the development of the survey design and instrument and implementation of the survey.

This publication is available online on the CARD website: www.card.iastate.edu. Permission is granted to reproduce this information with appropriate attribution to the authors and the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-1070.

For questions or comments about the contents of this paper, please contact Helen Jensen, 578 Heady Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-1070; Ph: 515-294-6253; Fax: 515-294-6336; E-mail: hhjensen@iastate.edu.

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Vietnam Era Veteran. Any persons having inquiries concerning this may contact the Director of Affirmative Action, 318 Beardshear Hall, 515-294-7612.
--

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Survey Methodology and Data	3
Administrative Record Data	3
Iowa Food Stamp Leavers Survey and Questionnaire Development	3
Survey Design and Implementation.....	4
Sample.....	4
Survey Implementation.....	6
Groups for Comparison.....	8
Results.....	8
Basic Statistics	8
Program Participation	9
Reasons for Leaving the Program.....	10
Education	11
Health.....	11
Earnings and Income.....	12
Employment.....	13
Measures of Well-Being	14
Respondents' Views of the Food Stamp Program	16
Discussion.....	17
Endnote	40
References.....	41

Tables

Table 1:	Final call outcomes for entire sample.....	19
Table 2:	Distribution of entire sample.....	20
Table 3:	Comparison of food stamp population with weighted means from 1999 Iowa Survey.....	21
Table 4:	Case head descriptive statistics	22
Table 5:	Program participation	23
Table 6:	Reasons given for leaving the Food Stamp Program	24
Table 7:	Education and training of case head.....	25
Table 8:	Health and health insurance coverage	26
Table 9:	Earnings and income	27
Table 10:	Employment and reasons why respondent was not working	28
Table 11:	Type of work schedule for those who worked in last month	28
Table 12:	Type of occupation for those who worked in last month	29
Table 13:	Type of employer for those who worked in last month	30
Table 14:	Employment benefits for those who worked in last month.....	30
Table 15:	Reason for not enrolling in employer-provided health plan for those who worked in last month	31
Table 16:	Children and childcare costs.....	31
Table 17:	Mode of transportation to work for those who worked in last month.....	32
Table 18:	Distance to work for those who worked in last month.....	32
Table 19:	Measures of well-being at the time of interview	33
Table 20:	Use of community resources	34
Table 21:	Economic hardship	34
Table 22:	Housing quality	35
Table 23:	Expectations and views concerning self-sufficiency.....	35

Figures

Figure 1: Caseloads for Iowa’s Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Food Stamp programs: 1990-2000	36
Figure 2: Education and training, stayers and leavers	36
Figure 3a: Measures of well-being, stayers and leavers	37
Figure 3b: Measures of well-being, non-ABAWDs and ABAWDs.....	37
Figure 4a: Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with financial support, stayers and leavers.....	38
Figure 4b: Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with financial support, non-ABAWD and ABAWD.....	38
Figure 5a: Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with nutritional support, stayers and leavers.....	39
Figure 5b: Iowa Food Stamp program respondent satisfaction with nutritional support, non-ABAWD and ABAWD.....	39

Abstract

Iowa experienced sharp decreases in Food Stamp Program (FSP) enrollment in the last years of the 1990s. This period followed significant changes in social assistance programs in the state, the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and a period of good economic conditions. Data collected in a 1999 survey conducted in Iowa provide information about the well-being of families that had participated in Iowa's Food Stamp Program in 1997, the time immediately following the introduction of the new regulations. Nearly 58 percent of those participating in the FSP in 1997 were not participating in the program when interviewed in 1999. Those who left the FSP in 1997 showed better economic and employment outcomes than did others. This was true for working age adults without dependents or a disability. Adults without dependents or a disability who remained in the FSP in 1997 showed evidence of the greatest hardships: they were most likely to have very low income, less contribution from earned income, and to have experienced food insecurity and hunger in the last year. Over one-half of all of the households in the survey had used private food assistance in the past year.

Key words: food assistance, Food Stamp Program, welfare reform.

Executive Summary

In 1998, the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded four studies designed to improve understanding of the circumstances of people who left the Food Stamp Program (FSP) in 1997. Specifically, the USDA sought information about the underlying economic, programmatic, and non-programmatic factors that affect the well-being of these low-income individuals and families. Because of the importance of program linkages and the role of the FSP as a program to support those leaving the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, there was a need to evaluate whether the new program rules were effective in moving households and individuals toward economic self-sufficiency. And, more broadly, for the purposes of evaluation and effective policy design, it is important to understand the role that the FSP plays in the new welfare era, including whether the FSP continues to meet the needs of low-income households for obtaining food. This report provides the results from the study in Iowa.

The Iowa Food Stamp Leavers survey was conducted to evaluate the status of persons in the FSP in 1997. Iowa experienced sharp decreases in FSP enrollment following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996. Of particular interest were those who left the program during 1997 (leavers) and able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), who faced stricter FSP eligibility requirements after the welfare reform. The survey questionnaire was administered through a telephone interview in June, July, and August of 1999. Those sampled were very much like the general population of FSP participants in 1997: predominantly female, non-Hispanic white, and most having children in the household. Those who left the program tended to be younger, married, and to have young children. The ABAWDs were more likely to be male and black.

Results from the survey showed that FSP participants in Iowa are relatively well educated (80 percent had completed high school or a general equivalency diploma) but have low incomes. On average, the FSP households received \$965 of income per month,

with total household income being significantly higher for those who left the program than for others. Earnings represented one-half of the total income, and for leavers, earnings represented over 60 percent of income. In contrast, the relatively small group of ABAWDs who remained in the FSP had low household income and the smallest share of income from earnings for the groups analyzed. Nearly 60 percent of the FSP households worked in the month before the interview; 66 percent of the leavers and 70 percent of the ABAWDs worked. Less than one-half (42 percent) of the 1997 FSP participants were participating in the FSP at the time of the interview in 1999. Those classified as ABAWDs in 1997 participated at a much lower rate in 1999 (18 percent). The “leavers” indicated they left the program because their income increased, they got a job, their family situation changed, or because the FSP presented too much paperwork. Relatively more ABAWDs reported being cut off from program benefits.

Although FSP participation fell dramatically during the two-year period, other measures of well-being indicate that the families studied here continued to struggle. The majority (67 percent) of the 1997 FSP participants had household incomes below the poverty level in 1999. Over one-half (55 percent) of the FSP families were food insecure at some time in the previous 12 months. An estimated one-fourth (28 percent) of Iowa’s FSP families and two-fifths (41 percent) of all of the 1997 ABAWDs were food insecure, experiencing hunger at some time in the year before the 1999 interview. These percentages are high and reflect the unmet basic needs of this population (those who had participated in the FSP in 1997 and who were still in Iowa in 1999). Use of other community resources, such as visiting emergency shelters or receiving county relief benefits, was common (42 percent of the full sample). Over one-half of the sample (57 percent) and nearly two-thirds of the ABAWDs had received privately provided food assistance in the last year. On a positive note, most of the families (85 percent) had access to health insurance, although the rates were lowest for the ABAWD group.

The Iowa survey shows that Iowa’s food stamp recipients combine earnings and public and private assistance in an effort to meet basic needs. Often these efforts are not successful. Assistance programs, including private food assistance, remain important resources. Subsidies such as those for rent allow individuals and families to remain outside of other programs. Can earnings replace or supplement program benefits? It is not

clear whether the lower work effort of those who stayed on food stamps is a function of abilities and choice (labor supply) or of the lack of work opportunities (labor demand). The question of labor supply versus labor demand remains a persistent issue and one likely to be especially important if overall economic conditions decline.

A STUDY OF HOUSEHOLDS IN IOWA THAT LEFT THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Introduction

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 brought about significant changes in the scope and structure of most major programs targeted to the low-income population, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), child welfare, and child support. The Act transferred significant authority to states for the design and implementation of programs; the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program replaced AFDC. As a result, the Food Stamp Program (FSP) remains as the only major federal entitlement program based solely on need and targeted to low-income households.

Although the new funding for programs run under the TANF block grant began during federal fiscal year 1997, for many states, including Iowa, major changes in welfare programs began earlier with state requested and federally approved waivers. Iowa renamed the AFDC program and initiated the Family Investment Program (FIP) in October 1993. Reforms tied to support for job training, childcare, and transportation were designed to encourage and require welfare recipients to make changes toward achieving self-sufficiency. Complementary changes to the FSP were implemented as well. Certain FSP provisions were changed to disregard earnings from a new job, and some other income, in determining eligibility and to allow deposits into Individual Development Accounts (IDA). Subsequent changes in the FSP were implemented in 1996 under PRWORA. The most significant FSP changes in 1996 were limitations on eligibility for many immigrants and the creation of the eligibility distinction and unique FSP rules for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), which covers adults between the ages of 18 and 50.

Changes in the FSP limited benefits to ABAWDs. ABAWDs who are not otherwise exempt from work registration may not receive FSP assistance for more than 3 months

within any 36-month period unless engaged in a work or training activity at least 20 hours a week or some other qualified work activity (e.g., workfare). Iowa had no high unemployment areas exempt from work requirements.

In 1998, the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded four studies designed to better understand the circumstances of people who left the FSP in 1997. The states included Arizona (Phoenix area), Illinois, Iowa, and South Carolina. Specifically, the USDA sought information about the underlying economic, programmatic, and non-programmatic factors that affect the well-being of these low-income individuals and families. Clearly, the effects of FSP limitations brought on by PRWORA would be evident in 1997 for some of these families. Because of the importance of program linkages and the role of the FSP as a program to support those leaving TANF, there was a need to evaluate whether the new program rules were effective in moving households and individuals toward economic self-sufficiency. And, more broadly, for the purposes of evaluation and effective policy design, it is important to understand the role that the FSP plays in the new welfare era, including whether the FSP continues to meet the needs of low-income households for obtaining food. This report provides the results from the study in Iowa.

Iowa experienced sharp decreases in FSP enrollment following the passage of PRWORA in 1996, as did other states (Figure 1). Specific questions of interest include the following:

- How did those who left the FSP differ from those who stayed on the program?
- What were the economic outcomes for those who left the FSP and for ABAWDs who left the FSP compared to others?
- Were those who left the FSP able to improve their overall well-being, as measured by food security, housing quality, and other measures of economic hardship? How did ABAWDs who left FSP fare during the period?
- What were the barriers faced by those leaving the program and by ABAWDs leaving the FSP?
- Did low wages, problems with childcare, or problems with transportation limit the success of those who left the program at attaining economic self-sufficiency?

In order to address these questions, the project developed two types of data for analysis: administrative record data and a new survey administered by telephone to FSP households during the summer of 1999. The next sections provide background to the study, information about the sample and data used for the study, and the survey results.

Survey Methodology and Data

Administrative Record Data

The Iowa Department of Human Services provided administrative record data of all cases receiving food stamps for the period December 1996 through January 1998. The unit of observation was the case head. The records in the file corresponded to unique cases. Each case record included the case name (the person who applied for food stamps), the person name (the case head), program participation information (that is, whether the case received only food stamps or also received FIP or Medicaid, and the case's participation by month in the FSP), an ABAWD indicator for the case if the case was canceled or closed, household size, number of adults, and demographic information on the case head. This file was used to draw the sample and for initial comparative analysis. Later, similar information was added for the period January 1998 through March 2000. Information from administrative data was added to that obtained from the sampled households to supplement information related to program participation.

Iowa Food Stamp Leavers Survey and Questionnaire Development

The Iowa Food Stamp Leavers survey was conducted to evaluate the status of persons who had left the Iowa Food Stamp Program during 1997. The survey drew on the experience and findings of an earlier survey, the 1998 Iowa Survey of Program Dynamics (I/SPD). This earlier survey, funded by the U.S. Census Bureau and Iowa State University, was designed to investigate methods for integrating locally relevant questions into the Census Bureau's Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD) instrument. The Iowa Food Stamp Leavers survey included questions from the I/SPD, although the structure and questions were shortened considerably and other sections of particular interest for the study of the FSP and ABAWD population were added.

The unit of observation for the Iowa Food Stamp Leavers survey was the case head (as defined in the FSP case in 1997). The questionnaire included sections on household

characteristics and status (including a roster of household members), employment and employment-related questions of the case head, earnings and household income, program participation, education and training, and health insurance. The survey also included questions designed to provide indicators of well-being and self-sufficiency and to measure food and housing security. The USDA Food Security Module (18 food security related questions) was included directly in order to classify households on the basis of food security, food insecurity, and hunger (Bickel et al. 2000). Questions related to housing insecurity asked about the quality of housing and reliance on family, friends, or other community services for housing. Other questions were added to measure “means of making ends meet,” the use of community food kitchens, and other community resources. The questionnaire was administered through a telephone interview.

Survey Design and Implementation

Sample. The Statistical Laboratory at Iowa State University designed and administered the survey and edited the data. Nusser, Anderson, and Anderson (2000) provide a detailed description of the survey design and implementation. The target population for the survey was defined to be all Iowa FSP cases that were active at least one month during 1997 and that had case heads living in Iowa at the time of the survey. Because of resource constraints, cases with case heads that had left Iowa were defined to be ineligible. The Iowa Department of Human Services provided a data file containing all cases receiving food stamps between December 1996 and January 1998. This file contained 111,435 records.

Records in the FSP file correspond to unique cases, and the unit of observation was the case. Each case is associated with individuals identified as the case name (the person who applied for food stamps) and the person name (the case head, the oldest person in the household on food stamps). A case was defined as leaving the FSP (i.e., a “leaver”) if, after having received FSP benefits, the case experienced a minimum of two consecutive months’ absence from the program during the period December 1996 through January 1998. A two-month criterion was used to allow for some administrative slippage and to conform to the other Food Stamp leaver studies underway. Some of the leavers as classified by the 1997 status may have returned to the FSP to become participants at the time of the survey in 1999.

In the Iowa Food Stamp Leavers study, cases that remained active in the FSP throughout 1997 were included in the sample design in order to allow comparison between those who left the FSP and those who did not. Cases with an out-of-state address and records indicating only participation in December 1996 or January 1998 were removed from the target population file.

The data file that formed the basis for the sampling frame contained 104,196 records after the file was cleaned. A stratified random sample of cases was selected based on three variables that partitioned the frame into 18 strata (2 food stamp leaver levels \times 3 household composition levels \times 3 population density levels). The three variables were defined as follows:

1. Food Stamp (FS) leaver

- Leaver: case was active in 1997 and left the FSP for at least two consecutive months during the period December 1996 through January 1998.
- Stayer: case was active in 1997 and either did not leave the FSP by December 1997 or left only during single nonconsecutive months.

2. Household composition

- Likely ABAWD: case had no children in household, case head was 18-49 years old, and case did not receive FIP benefits.
- Family: number of children in household was greater than zero, the work registration status of the case head indicated an exemption due to pregnancy, or the case head received FIP benefits.
- Other household (not family and unlikely to be ABAWD): case head work registration status was exempt,¹ case head was a child under 18 years of age, or case head was an adult 50 years old or older.

3. Population density, based on rural-urban continuum codes for counties (Butler and Beale 1993)

- Metro: county is in a metropolitan area. This categorization corresponds to counties in metropolitan areas with population of 250,000 to 1 million and in metropolitan areas with population of less than 250,000 (county codes of either 2 or 3).

- Adjacent to metro: county is adjacent to a metropolitan area. These counties include counties with an urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metropolitan area; urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metropolitan area; and completely rural or urban population of less than 2,500, adjacent to a metropolitan area (county codes of 4, 6, or 8).
- Nonadjacent to metro: county with urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metropolitan area; urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metropolitan area; and completely rural or urban population of less than 2,500, not adjacent to a metropolitan area (county codes of 5, 7, or 9).

Resource constraints dictated a target sample size of approximately 700 completed cases. Relatively more cases were sampled from the subpopulations of the ABAWDs, FSP leavers, and ABAWD-FSP leavers because they were the subpopulations of interest. The telephone survey was conducted with case heads who were located and willing to participate. A \$25 gift certificate to a local food store was provided to all respondents completing the interview as an incentive, and great efforts were made to obtain participation in the survey.

Survey Implementation. Sample case heads were mailed letters before receiving a first telephone contact. Those case heads with telephone numbers were sent a letter introducing the study and were provided a toll-free number should they have questions about the study. Other mail and investigative follow-up was conducted for those case heads with no known telephone number or for non-responders. Table 1 summarizes the outcome of calls for the entire sample.

A case was considered “located” if any contact information was obtained on the case head that led to a contact telephone number. Efforts to obtain a contact telephone number included resubmitting the case to the Iowa Department of Human Services for more recent information, conducting directory assistance and change of address searches using reply postcards and an 800 toll-free call-back number, and using any information gathered from a third party (relative, neighbor, or friend, when possible). Of the 2,526 total contacted for interview, about 50 percent of these cases (1,275) were located for possible interview. Telephone interviews were conducted during June, July, and August of 1999.

A case was considered eligible if the respondent was living in Iowa in a non-institutionalized setting at the time of the study and verified receipt of FSP benefits in 1997. Of those located, 16 percent (199) had moved out of state, were deceased, institutionalized, or were never on FS and were deemed ineligible. Nearly two-thirds of those ineligible had moved out of the state. Of the 1,076 eligible and located cases, 735 (68.3 percent) were interviewed. There were an additional 106 cases deemed located and eligible, but who did not provide an interview. In addition, there were 235 cases where persons were not contacted (no telephone or not contacted after a maximum number of calls).

The response rate for the entire sample was 36.0 percent. This includes the 49.5 percent unlocatable cases. The overall response rate was adjusted for the eligibility rate (AAPOR 1998; Nusser, Anderson, and Anderson 2000). The relatively high percentage of unlocatable cases reflects the great difficulty in tracking this population in 1999 using contact information that in many cases was two or more years old. The unlocatable rate was about double that obtained for the I/SPD, a sample drawn from similar records but tracked in a few months after the administrative data snapshot was taken.

FSP leavers comprised approximately three-fourths (548 of 735; 74.6 percent) of those interviewed (Table 2). Household composition strata were determined from administrative record data. Based on classifications using the administrative data, nearly two-thirds (437 of 735; 64.4 percent) of respondents in the completed interviews were identified as likely ABAWDs. Analyses of the interview data, however, revealed that about one-half of the likely ABAWD respondents were not ABAWDs in 1997 when they left the FSP or in December 1997 if they were FSP stayers. In other words, only about one-third (230 of 735; 31.3 percent) of the completed interviews could be classified as having been individuals who were ABAWDs in 1997. We relied on the interview data for the ABAWD and non-ABAWD classifications used for the subsequent analyses. Of the 230 ABAWDs interviewed, 187 were leavers and 43 remained in the program in 1997 and were classified as “stayers.”

Weights were calculated for each case to adjust for unequal selection probabilities and nonresponse within sampling strata, and for ineligible cases. The 735 sample interviews were weighted to represent the population of cases in Iowa that received food stamps at some time in 1997 and were eligible to participate in the survey (e.g., were

residing in Iowa at the time of the interviews). All statistics given in this report are weighted estimates. The estimated population size is 91,578 cases; of these, there were an estimated 8,106 ABAWD (8.9 percent) and 83,472 non-ABAWD cases. There were 51,332 stayer cases (56.1 percent) and 40,246 leaver cases (43.9 percent). Means and variances for the sample data were calculated using SAS (Survey Means) and account for the stratified survey design.

Comparison between the total FSP population in 1997 (based on administrative records) and the sampled population shows that in many respects the survey is representative of Iowa's 1997 Food Stamp population (Table 3). The FSP population is predominantly white (over 80 percent); averaged nearly 2.5 persons in the household, and had an average of 7.7 months on FSP during 1997. However, the survey participants were more likely to be female respondents (72 percent), older, and with fewer one-person households than the overall FSP population.

Groups for Comparison. Given the objectives of the study and survey, the analysis focused on two groups for comparison: individuals who left the FSP ("leavers") and those who did not leave the FSP ("stayers") in 1997; and ABAWDs. Within the ABAWD group, stayers and leavers were compared. The leaver and stayer groups were defined as for the survey strata. It is important to reiterate that the stayers and leavers could have changed status since 1997. Some of the leavers in 1997 could have returned and participated in the FSP in 1999. The ABAWD classification was determined based on reported survey information. Statistical tests (t-tests) compared the FS stayers versus leavers, and ABAWD group stayers versus leavers. All data reported in the tables come from the weighted survey data.

Results

Basic Statistics

Table 4 provides the demographic composition of the overall sample: stayers, leavers, ABAWDs, and the ABAWD stayers and leavers. Statistically significant differences in means between the subpopulation groups of interest (stayers versus leavers, and ABAWD stayers versus leavers) are noted.

The total Iowa FSP population is predominantly female and non-Hispanic white. The majority of the respondents were not married at the time of the interview, although most households had children. Those who left the program in 1997 were more likely to be male and black. Also, the leavers were more likely to be younger, married, and to have a child younger than six years at the time of the interview.

The ABAWD group had the largest share of males and blacks: nearly one-half of ABAWDs were male, and almost one-quarter were black. A relatively smaller share of ABAWDs was married. As expected, the ABAWD group differed especially by not living in households with young children. Except for the ABAWD group, most households had children; nearly one-third had children younger than six years.

The FSP sample was located mainly in urban areas, and relatively more ABAWDs were located in urban areas, as might be expected given greater mobility (not having dependents or being disabled). The classification “urban” includes all metro counties and other non-metropolitan urban areas. (Rural includes all rural areas, both adjacent and non-adjacent to metropolitan areas.) Most respondents lived in rented housing. ABAWDs were less likely than others to own their own car. Both the stayers and the non-ABAWD groups were more likely to rent housing.

Within the ABAWD group, ABAWD-leavers were more likely to be male or to be non-Hispanic white. Although the ABAWDs lived predominantly in urban areas, the ABAWD-leavers were somewhat more likely to be rural. More ABAWD-leavers were disabled; perhaps they became classified as disabled in the period 1997 to 1999.

Program Participation

Most program participants left the FSP at some time during the period 1997 through March 2000. Table 5 reports the program history for the sample participants, which is based on data reported from administrative records. Only 42 percent of those sampled based on their program participation in 1997 were participating in the FSP at the time of the interview in 1999. However, many had exited from the program at some point. The number of exits and length of spells were measured from December 1996 to March 2000. As expected, the average number of exits from the FSP was higher for leavers (an average of 1.3 times) than for stayers (0.8 times).

In analysis not reported in the table, we found the average length of the first spell off the FSP was 20 months, and leavers, on average, stayed off the program for over two years (25 months). That is, many, once having left the program in 1997, never returned to the program. One-fourth of the sample had multiple exits during the period observed. For those with two exit spells, the average length of time of the second spell off the FSP was 5 months; for those with three exit spells, the average time was 6 months.

As expected, stayers remained on FS for a longer period in 1997 than did leavers (Table 5). Stayers were on the program for most of the year (9.6 months) in 1997, in contrast to the 5.2 months for leavers. The stayers included new entrants to FSP who did not leave subsequently during the year.

ABAWDs were less likely to be in the FSP at the time of interview than were others. On average, ABAWDs participated in the FSP 6.5 months in 1997. In the following two years (1998, 1999), their participation in the FSP was comparable to others. All leavers and ABAWD-leavers had fewer months receiving food stamps in this later period.

There is evidence that a significant portion of the FSP participants had relatively long-term participation in the FSP. A majority (52.6 percent) of the FSP sample had received food stamp benefits in the year before the survey. Over 70 percent of the stayers received benefits in the last year, compared to 28 percent of leavers; nearly one-half (47.1 percent) of ABAWDs received FSP benefits in 1998. Nearly 18 percent of the total FSP sample received benefits from the FIP, and 22 percent received benefits from the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program in the previous year. There were no differences in the participation rates for these programs between the stayers and the leavers. ABAWDs participated in FIP (Iowa's TANF program) and WIC at lower rates than did others. This outcome might be expected, as FIP and WIC eligibility depend on need as well as family structure. That is, these programs require children to be present or that the participant be pregnant. ABAWD-stayers were more likely to receive public health insurance and rent subsidies than the ABAWD-leavers. Nearly 90 percent of ABAWD-stayers reported receiving public health insurance.

Reasons for Leaving the Program

As shown in Table 6, those who left the FSP program some time during the survey period (1997-1999) reported that the primary reason for leaving the FSP was either that

their income increased (they now received too much money) (19.0 percent) or that they got a job (13.0 percent). Other reasons cited by the leavers group were too much paperwork (3.1 percent) and family changes (4.0 percent). The ABAWD group also was more likely than other groups to cite that they were cut off and they didn't know why (4.3 percent), they were cut off because of work requirements (2.0 percent), or they chose to quit (8.1 percent). Over one-half of the sample reported being in the FSP in the last year and therefore did not report a reason for leaving the program (hence "not applicable").

Education

Table 7 and Figure 2 show that FSP participants in Iowa are relatively well educated. Eighty percent had completed high school or a general equivalency diploma (GED), and over one-third had received some post-secondary education. Educational attainment was higher among leavers, compared to stayers. Nearly 10 percent of the individuals sampled were currently attending school. Analysis of those attending school shows that of those attending school, about one-half were full-time and one-half were part-time students.

Health

Table 8 summarizes information on health status and coverage for the survey respondents. The sample had a relatively high share of respondents with some type of health or disability problem. Nearly 20 percent of respondents were disabled and 34 percent of respondents considered themselves to be in poor health. Leavers or ABAWDs were less likely to be disabled. (Some ABAWDs considered themselves disabled, but they may not have been recorded as "exempt from work requirements due to disability.") However, there were no statistical differences in reporting poor health for the different groups.

Over one-half of the individuals sampled (56.3 percent) were covered by some type of public health insurance during the past year, and this was most often Medicaid. Medicare coverage was available to relatively more stayers than others, and this difference may be due to the stayer group having more of the older respondents. Nearly 40 percent (38.6 percent) reported being covered by private health insurance during the last year, and another 7 percent were covered on another person's health insurance plan. During the past year, slightly more than one-half (55.4 percent) of ABAWDs had

received public health insurance, and nearly one-half (44.5 percent) had received private health insurance.

Earnings and Income

By 1999, a majority of the FSP survey respondents was working (had labor earnings in the previous month). Sixty percent of the FSP respondents reported employment in the month preceding the interview; leavers were more likely to be employed than stayers were, as shown in Table 9. Seventy percent of the ABAWD group and 76.1 percent of the ABAWD-leavers were working for pay. Although stayers were less likely to work, over one-half of all those who stayed in the FSP through 1997 were working in 1999.

Overall, the average income for those who worked was \$405 per month. Leavers earned more than stayers; ABAWDs earned less than others. However, the leavers also worked more hours than others. On average, the sample respondents reported being employed in their current job for over thirty months.

As expected with a greater number of adults in the household, more households of leavers (39 percent) than of stayers (20 percent) had another person earning a salary in the preceding month. Nineteen percent of ABAWDs had another person in the household who worked for pay during the preceding month. The earnings of other persons in the household contributed to the greater disparity in overall earnings between leavers and others. Leavers had significantly higher contributions to earnings from others in the household.

The average total earnings of the FSP households were \$567 per month. The leavers' household earnings were the highest among the groups: \$751 per month. ABAWD households earned \$383 per month on average. This low figure is attributable partly to lower earnings when the ABAWD respondent worked and partly to lower contributed earnings from another adult in the household.

Child support, FIP benefits, and other sources of non-earnings income also contributed to the total household income. About 17 percent of the households received child support. For those receiving the support, it represented a relatively important source of income. A small percentage of the ABAWD households received child support. It would be possible for someone classified as an ABAWD to be in a household with child support due to change in household status between the period 1997 and 1999. Over 12 percent of the households received FIP (i.e., TANF) benefits. The monthly value of this

benefit, for those receiving it, averaged \$350 per month. Other non-earnings income averaged \$283. The primary source of other earnings was social security and SSI.

In sum, the average total income for the sampled households was \$965 per month. Total household income was significantly higher for leavers compared to stayers and for non-ABAWDs compared to ABAWDs. Leaver households reported a total monthly income of \$1,122 compared to \$844 for the stayer households. ABAWD-leavers had an income of \$888 per month on average.

Differences in the contribution of earnings to income show some striking contrasts. On average, earnings represented one-half of the total income. For the leaver households, earnings represented 62 percent of income, compared to less than one-half for FSP stayers. In contrast, 53 percent of ABAWD households' income came from earnings. ABAWD-leavers received 65 percent of income from earnings. The low household income and low share of income from earnings for ABAWD-stayers suggest the severe economic difficulties faced by these ABAWD households. Although the differences in earned percentage of income between the ABAWD and non-ABAWD households are not statistically significant, the lower earning levels and higher percentage of income suggest the economic difficulties faced by the ABAWD households.

Employment

Nearly 60 percent of those respondents sampled were working in the month before the interview. Both leavers and ABAWDs were more likely to work than their counterparts. Table 10 shows that the main reason respondents were not working was that they had a disability or health problem. This condition was the major reason reported for not working for all groups in the FSP sample. Disability or poor health was more prevalent among stayers (30 percent) compared to leavers (14 percent) who were not working. Of those not working, relatively higher shares of leavers compared to stayers and of ABAWDs were looking for jobs but could not find one in the last month.

Most of those working had day-schedules (Table 11). Over three-fourths (77.4 percent) of working stayers worked during the day. For those working, evening, night work, and rotating shifts were more common for the leavers.

Data in Table 12 indicate that clerical work was the most common occupation for all groups except for the ABAWDs. ABAWDs were more likely to be employed as

child-care workers, craftsman and structural workers, and service workers in various industries including food/beverage service occupations. Over 70 percent of the employed worked for a private company (Table 13). For others, nearly 10 percent worked in a government job and 11 percent were self-employed. Over 9 percent of all subgroups except for the ABAWDs were self-employed; the ABAWDs were less likely to be either self-employed or working for the government. Nearly 85 percent of ABAWDs worked for a private company.

Among those who were employed, only about one-half received very basic employer-paid benefits (Table 14). Only 40 percent received sick days, 55 percent received vacation time, 47 percent received pensions, and 56 percent were in jobs that offered health insurance. For this population, there were few differences among the jobs for the various groups compared. Over one-half had jobs that offered health insurance plans, and slightly less than one-half were enrolled in the plan. Table 15 provides information on why those with employer-provided plans did not participate. The most likely reasons were that the costs were too high or they had not worked long enough to qualify.

For those with children, costs of childcare can represent a major cost and barrier to employment (Table 16). The average cost of childcare, for all respondents, was \$44.32 per month. For those with childcare costs, the costs averaged over \$200 per month. Nearly 8 percent of respondents indicated they had lost time at work because of childcare problems; this included nearly 10 percent of stayers.

Most of those who were employed drive to work (Table 17). A lack of public transportation, its inaccessibility, and limited transportation services made a private vehicle the primary mode of travel to work. Nearly 10 percent of those employed rode with a friend or carpooled to work. Other analysis (Table 18) shows that for the majority of those employed, the commuting distance was less than 5 miles. However, nearly 15 percent of those who worked the previous month commuted over 20 miles to work.

Measures of Well-being

Consistent with the earnings and income data reported in Table 9, Table 19 and Figure 3 show that a majority of the 1997 FSP participants had not escaped poverty by the summer of 1999. Based on the official U.S. Census Bureau poverty thresholds for 1999, about two-thirds (67.3 percent) of the FSP households were in poverty in 1999. This includes nearly 70

percent of those who stayed in the FSP and 70 percent of ABAWDs. Over one-half of ABAWDs had income less than 50 percent of the poverty income, although there is evidence that ABAWD leavers fared somewhat better than ABAWD stayers.

The survey also included the 18-question USDA Food Security Module (Bickel et al. 2000). This index classifies respondent households as either (1) food secure, (2) food secure without hunger, (3) food secure with moderate hunger, or (4) food secure with severe hunger (Bickel et al. 2000). Less than one-half (44.9 percent) of all respondent households were food secure at the time of the interview in 1999 (Table 19). Another one-fourth (27.3 percent) of the full sample households were food insecure without hunger, and nearly 28 percent (27.8 percent) experienced food insecurity with hunger.

What is striking is that although the likelihood of being food secure did not differ for any of the food security categories between stayers and leavers, the phenomenon of experiencing food insecurity or hunger was particularly severe for the ABAWD and FSP stayers groups. Over 50 percent of ABAWDs were food insecure or experienced hunger; nearly 60 percent of the (relatively small) ABAWD stayer group experienced the more severe condition of hunger.

Respondents could have used a number of what could be called “community resources.” These include emergency shelters, county general assistance (county relief), free clothing, public health services, alcohol or substance abuse programs, and mental health or domestic violence service counseling (Table 20). In the past year, ABAWDs used one or more of these community resources at a rate significantly below that of others. The overall pattern of use suggests that ABAWDs may underutilize the general community services available to them. There were no statistical differences between stayers and leavers.

Over one-half of the FSP population used private food assistance in the past year (Table 20). Respondents are said to have received “private food assistance” if they used any of these resources in the past year. For example, they may have received food or money for food from friends or relatives; received food from a church, food pantry, or food bank; received other emergency food assistance; or eaten in a community soup kitchen. ABAWDs used private food assistance at a rate greater than did others. Over one-half (56.6 percent) of the full sample received private food assistance. Almost equal proportions of leavers (55.2 percent) and stayers (57.6 percent) used this kind of

assistance. Nearly 65 percent of ABAWDs used the private food assistance services, including over 75 percent of the ABAWD-stayers.

Other measures of well-being include two related to housing and economic hardship during the past year. Respondents were asked about any experience of not being able to pay rent or being evicted and about the loss of telephone service due to economic situations. Nearly one-fifth of the surveyed respondents were unable to pay rent or were evicted (19.5 percent) at some point during the last year (Table 19). This was a greater problem for leavers (25.3 percent) and for the ABAWDs (25.7 percent) than for others. Also, nearly as many (18.8 percent) had lost use of telephone service during the past year due to their household's economic situation. More details are provided in Table 21. Many experienced problems related to housing quality (Table 22).

A final measure of well-being relates to having access to health insurance. Evidence presented in Tables 8 and 14 shows that over one-half of those who worked were offered employer-provided insurance and that over one-half of the respondents received public health insurance, mainly through Medicare and Medicaid. In order to determine overall access to health insurance, these categories of access were combined across respondents to determine which individuals were "missed" or were without access to health insurance from these two sources. The results indicate that most of the full sample (84.5 percent) had access to some health insurance. Stayers had a higher likelihood of being covered (89.4 percent) compared to leavers (78.4 percent). The group least well covered by some form of health insurance was the ABAWD-leaver group.

Respondents' Views of the Food Stamp Program

The survey respondents were relatively optimistic about their prospects for the year ahead; the FSP stayer was the group most likely to expect to continue to receive program benefits (Table 23). Over one-fifth of the survey participants (21.8 percent) expected to receive food stamps one year from now. Among stayers, nearly one-third expected to receive the benefits (32.2 percent). In contrast, only 8.5 percent of leavers and 13.6 percent of ABAWDs expected to receive the food stamp benefit in the next year. For those currently receiving food stamps (in 1999), the need most often cited for enabling the respondent to leave the FSP was more education, affordable childcare, and more

dependable transportation. Only 11 percent of ABAWDs saw a need for more education; they were the group least likely to have a high school degree or to be attending school. Respondents were also asked their opinion about program delivery. Nearly three-fourths of respondents thought that Iowa's FSP did a good job of helping people to make ends meet and to meet nutritional needs. Figures 4 and 5 show that stayers were more satisfied with the program and thought that the FSP helped families make ends meet. The stayers were less convinced the program did a good job of helping people to meet their nutritional needs.

Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to understand the current circumstances of individuals and families who participated in the FSP in Iowa in 1997. Survey data were obtained from individuals who either left the FSP in 1997 or stayed through 1997 and perhaps exited later. Of specific interest was the group of FSP participants known as ABAWDs. These individuals faced stricter FSP eligibility requirements because of the welfare reform legislation of 1996 (PRWORA).

Comparisons were made among individuals who left the FSP (leavers) in 1997, those who did not leave (stayers), and the ABAWD groups to assess the circumstances of the groups of interest. Less than one-half (42 percent) of the 1997 FSP participants were participating in the FSP at the time of their interview in 1999. Those classified as ABAWDs in 1997 participated at a much lower rate in 1999 than did the others (18 percent versus 44 percent). The reasons for leaving the FSP cited by the participants indicate consistency with the objectives of welfare reform: they left because their income increased, they got a job, or their family situation changed. However, a significant number indicated that there was too much paperwork involved with the FSP or that they were cut off and did not understand why.

Understanding the status of 1997 FSP participants in terms of employment, earnings, and income is key to understanding their living circumstances. Three-fifths of the full sample of respondents worked in the month before their interview; 66 percent of the leavers worked and 70 percent of the ABAWDs worked. As might be expected, those who left the program had higher household earnings and incomes compared to those who

stayed. Over 60 percent of household income for the leavers group came from earnings. In contrast, the relatively small group of ABAWD stayers had low household income and the smallest share of income from earnings of the groups analyzed.

While FSP participation fell dramatically, other measures of well-being indicate that the families studied here continue to struggle. The majority (67 percent) of the 1997 FSP participants had household incomes below poverty in 1999, and over one-half of the ABAWDs had household income less than 50 percent of poverty income levels. We estimate that over one-half (55 percent) of these families were food insecure at some time in the previous 12 months. An estimated one-fourth (28 percent) of all families and two-fifths (41 percent) of all of the 1997 ABAWDs were food insecure with hunger in 1999 at some time in the year before the interview. The percentages are relatively high and reflect the basic needs of this population (those who had participated in the FSP in 1997 and who were still in Iowa in 1999). It also may be possible that this population would be more likely to report food problems in the last 12 months since they were receiving (or had received) food stamps in 1997. We cannot determine whether having been a food stamp recipient led to more frequent reports of food problems. Use of other community resources, such as visiting emergency shelters or receiving county relief benefits, was common (42 percent of the full sample) as well. Over one-half of the sample (57 percent) and nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the ABAWDs had received privately provided food assistance in the last year. On a positive note, nearly all of the families (85 percent) had access to health insurance, although the rates were lowest for the ABAWD group.

To summarize, 1997 FSP participants combine earnings and public and private assistance in 1999 in an effort to meet basic needs. Often these efforts are not successful. Assistance programs, including private food assistance, remain important resources. Subsidies such as those for rent allow individuals and families to remain outside of other programs. Can earnings replace or supplement program benefits? It is not clear whether the lower work effort of those who stayed on food stamps is a function of choice (labor supply) or of the lack of work opportunities (labor demand). The question of labor supply versus labor demand remains a persistent issue and one likely to be especially important if overall economic conditions decline.

TABLE 1. Final call outcomes for entire sample

Final Case Disposition	Number of Cases
Completed interviews	735
Non-interviews: likely eligible ^a	
Refused	91
Language barrier, no proxy	7
Not available during study period	6
Incompetent, no proxy	<u>2</u>
Subtotal (assumed eligible)	106
Non-interviews: known ineligible ^b	
Moved out of state	135
Institutionalized ^c	43
Deceased	16
Did not receive Food Stamps	<u>5</u>
Subtotal (ineligible)	199
Non-interviews: unknown eligibility	
No phone ^d	133
Maximum call attempts ^e	102
Unlocated cases	<u>1,251</u>
Subtotal (unknown eligibility)	1,486
Total Cases	2,526

^a Respondent was deemed to be living in Iowa in a non-institutionalized setting, but 1997 FSP receipt was generally not verified.

^b Respondent did not meet at least one of the three eligibility criteria: (1) living in Iowa during study period, (2) living in a non-institutionalized setting, and (3) not an FSP recipient during 1997.

^c Living in jail, a nursing home, or a half-way house.

^d The lack of a telephone for the respondent was verified with a secondary contact. A message was left with the secondary contact.

^e A respondent was reached at some point during the call process for 28 of the 79 maximum call attempt cases.

TABLE 2. Distribution of entire sample

FS Leaver	Household Composition	Population Density	Completed Interviews	Estimated Population	
FS Leaver	Family	Metro	68	13,192	
		Adjacent to Metro	82	6,130	
		Nonadjacent	<u>66</u>	<u>7,770</u>	
		Subtotal		216	27,092
	ABAWD ^a	Metro	63	2,425	
		Adjacent to Metro	58	780	
		Nonadjacent	<u>65</u>	<u>1,043</u>	
		Subtotal		186	4,248
	Other	Metro	47	4,585	
		Adjacent to Metro	39	1,306	
		Nonadjacent	<u>60</u>	<u>3,015</u>	
		Subtotal		146	8,906
Not FS Leaver	Family	Metro	23	15,373	
		Adjacent to Metro	24	6,463	
		Nonadjacent	<u>29</u>	<u>10,291</u>	
		Subtotal		76	32,127
	ABAWD ^a	Metro	13	1,851	
		Adjacent to Metro	13	531	
		Nonadjacent	<u>17</u>	<u>1,476</u>	
		Subtotal		43	3,858
	Other	Metro	26	7,665	
		Adjacent to Metro	21	3,173	
		Nonadjacent	<u>21</u>	<u>4,509</u>	
		Subtotal		<u>68</u>	<u>15,347</u>
TOTAL			735	91,578	

^a ABAWD status for 1997 was determined based on interview data.

TABLE 3. Comparison of food stamp population with weighted means from 1999 Iowa Survey

	For Entire Population and Sample				
	For Population		For Survey		
	N	Percentage	N	Mean	S.E.
Female respondents (%)	104,196	63.3	735	72.0 ^a	2.9
White	104,196	82.4	735	87.2 ^b	2.5
African-American (%)	104,196	9.2	735	6.7	1.8
Hispanic, other (%)	104,196	10.3	735	3.4	1.4
Number of people in household	104,196	2.4	735	2.9 ^a	0.1
Number of adults in household	104,196	1.3	735	1.6 ^a	0.0
Number of children in household	104,196	1.1	735	1.3 ^a	0.1
Age of respondent	101,690	37.7	735	40.4 ^a	0.8
Months on FS in 1997	104,196	7.6	735	7.7	0.3
Months on FS in 1998	104,196	4.8	735	5.5 ^a	0.3
Months on FS in 1999	104,196	4.3	735	5.0 ^a	0.4

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.

^b Statistically significant at 10% level.

TABLE 4. Case head descriptive statistics

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD	ABAWD	
					Stayers	Leavers
Estimated population	91,578	51,332	40,246	8,106	3,858	4,248
Percent of total	100.0	56.1	43.9	8.9	4.2	4.6
Female (%)	72.1	78.9	63.3 ^a	53.1	64.6	42.6 ^a
Race/Ethnicity (%)						
Black	6.7	4.3	9.8 ^a	24.3	27.9	21.0 ^a
White	87.2	88.0	86.3	65.9	55.7	75.2 ^a
Hispanic, any race	3.4	3.4	3.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Married at time of interview (%)	33.3	28.3	39.7 ^a	21.3	17.9	24.4
Children						
Household has one child < 6 years old (%)	32.0	28.1	37.1 ^a	7.6	1.9	12.8 ^a
Household has one child >= 6 and < 12 years old (%)	33.3	33.4	33.1	14.4	18.1	11.1 ^a
Household has one child >= 12 and <18 years old (%)	22.0	21.8	22.2	27.3	45.8	10.6 ^a
Number of children < 6 years	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.2 ^a
Number of children 6-11 years	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1
Number of children 12-17 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.1 ^a
Number of adults in household	1.6	1.4	1.8 ^a	1.7	1.4	1.9
Age of respondent (years)	40.4	42.3	38.0 ^b	37.6	38.4	36.8
Living in urban area (%)	69.0	70.5	67.0	82.4	84.1	80.8 ^b
Housing and transportation (%)						
Own home	27.1	26.5	28.0	30.3	39.6	21.9 ^a
Rent housing	65.0	70.1	58.4 ^a	52.9	57.4	48.7 ^a
Do not own a car	21.5	23.1	19.4	54.4	75.1	35.6 ^a
Has current disability (%)	18.6	22.2	14.1 ^a	5.3	0.8	9.4 ^b
Considers oneself in poor health (%)	34.4	36.0	32.5	30.5	32.0	29.2

Note: Data are weighted to represent everyone in Iowa who received food stamps at some time in 1997. Unweighted samples are: total sample (n=735); stayers (n=187), leavers (n=548); non-ABAWDs (n=506), ABAWDs (n=229).

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.

^b Statistically significant at 10% level.

TABLE 5. Program participation

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD	ABAWD	
					Stayers	Leavers
FSP participant at time of interview (%) ^b	41.9	58.8	24.2 ^a	18.4	18.4	18.5
Total number of months on FS in 1997	7.7	9.6	5.2 ^a	6.5	8.8	4.3 ^a
Total number of months on FS in 1998-99 (24 months possible)	10.5	15.2	3.5 ^a	10.7	16.1	2.2 ^a
Number of exits from FS program	1.0	0.8	1.3 ^a	1.08	0.8	1.3 ^a
Received FS benefits in last year (%)	52.6	71.6	28.3 ^a	47.1	90.6	18.7 ^a
Received FIP benefits in last year (%)	17.6	18.7	16.2	2.3	0.7	12.8 ^a
Received WIC benefits in last year (%)	22.3	22.5	22.0	7.6	1.9	3.7
Received public health insurance ^b (%)	56.3	68.6	40.6 ^a	55.4	89.8	24.2 ^a
Received rent subsidy ^b (%)	25.5	32.7	16.4 ^a	22.7	33.7	13.0 ^a

Source: Administrative Record Data.

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.

^b Based on interview data.

TABLE 6. Reasons given for leaving the Food Stamp Program (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Income increased, too much money	19.0	13.1	26.5	9.5
Got a job	12.6	6.9	19.9	22.1
Family changes	4.0	3.1	5.2	0.5
Too much paperwork	3.1	0.8	6.1	2.5
Cut off, do not know why	3.2	2.8	3.7	4.3
Maximum benefits received	1.5	0.1	3.2	2.9
Cut off because of work requirement	0.4	0.2	0.6	2.1
Did not get paperwork in on time	0.9	0.1	2.0	0.7
Chose to quit	2.6	1.2	4.2	8.1
Moved out of county	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.4
Not applicable	52.6	71.6	28.3	47.1

TABLE 7. Education and training of case head (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Has completed high school degree or GED				
Has some post-secondary education	39.9	34.8	46.3 ^a	22.3
Currently attending school	10.3	9.8	11.0	4.7
Full-time student	55.3	57.2	52.9	52.5
Part-time student	44.7	42.8	47.1	47.5
Current schooling fulfills food stamp eligibility requirements	0.8	0.0	1.8 ^b	0.0
Received job training	6.4	5.0	8.1	4.5
Job training required for food stamp eligibility	2.4	2.0	2.9	1.5

^aStatistically significant at 5% level.

^bStatistically significant at 10% level.

TABLE 8. Health and health insurance coverage (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Currently disabled	18.6	22.2	14.1 ^a	5.3
Considers oneself in poor health	34.4	36.0	32.5	30.5
Covered by any type of public health insurance in past year	56.3	68.6	40.6 ^a	55.5
Covered by Medicare at any time in past year	21.6	27.5	14.2 ^a	9.5
Covered by Medicaid at any time in past year	47.9	61.9	30.1 ^a	50.3
Covered by other government health program in past year	2.4	1.0	4.1 ^a	3.8
Covered by private health insurance at any time in past year	38.6	32.5	46.3 ^a	44.5
Covered by another person's health insurance plan	7.0	4.3	10.5 ^a	2.9

^aStatistically significant at 5% level.

TABLE 9. Earnings and income

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD	ABAWD	
					Stayers	Leavers
Worked for pay in last month (%) ^c	59.0	53.5	65.9 ^a	70.3	64.0	76.1
Mean earnings in last month for all respondents ^d (\$)	235.30	205.78	272.97 ^b	214.65	151.15	257.13
Mean earnings in last month for only respondents who worked ^d (\$)	404.72	391.31	418.52	325.96	297.77	338.56
Mean work hours in last week for respondents who worked	38.2	29.4	45.9 ^a	24.0	9.4	48.5 ^a
Current job duration for those who worked (months)	32.1	33.9	30.2	32.5	47.8	20.9 ^a
Another person in household worked for pay in last month (%)	28.4	19.9	39.1 ^a	18.6	2.2	33.6 ^a
Other adult's earnings in last month for all respondents ^e (\$)	242.19	174.30	325.91 ^a	113.89	19.66	178.83 ^a
Total earnings of household ^f (\$)	566.78	423.84	751.42 ^a	383.07	188.09	517.69 ^a
Receive child support (%)	16.8	16.8	16.8	4.7	0	8.9 ^a
Amount of child support, if received (\$)	609.03	509.70	736.12 ^b	798.97	0	789.97 ^a
Receive FIP benefit (%)	12.4	13.9	12.5	1.3	0.5	1.5 ^a
Amount of FIP benefit, if received (\$)	350.57	330.42	307.76	265.47	296.50	335.55
Other non-earnings income, if received (\$)	283.45	326.41	228.67 ^a	258.91	253.59	263.74
Total household income ^g (\$)	965.13	844.46	1122.40 ^a	742.90	537.78	888.34 ^a
Earned percentage of income ^g (%)	51.6	43.4	62.4 ^a	53.1	36.1	65.2 ^a

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.

^b Statistically significant at 10% level.

^c Only households that reported having worked at least one hour were considered to have "worked for pay." Respondents who worked zero hours but responded to have been employed were included as "working" in other tables, but not here.

^d Excluded were 11 households for not reporting respondent's earnings.

^e Excluded were 32 households for not reporting other respondent's earnings.

^f Excluded were 33 households for not reporting either respondent's earnings or second adult's earnings.

^g Excluded were 44 households for not reporting either household earnings or other income.

TABLE 10. Employment and reasons why respondent was not working (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Worked last month	59.6	53.5	67.3	70.3
Not working and reason:				
Disabled, health problems	23.1	30.1	14.1	12.2
Looking for a job, cannot find a job	5.1	4.1	6.4	11.6
Retired	3.6	4.4	2.5	0.0
Temporary physical problem	0.2	0.1	0.4	1.9
Full-time student	3.1	2.2	4.3	0.5
Caring for children/parents, stay-at-home mom	3.9	5.4	2.0	1.8
Transportation problems	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.0
In transition	0.6	0.1	1.2	1.3
Seasonal work	0.4	0.0	1.0	0.4

TABLE 11. Type of work schedule for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Employed days	69.3	77.4	61.1	67.9
Employed evenings	9.4	5.2	13.8	8.0
Employed nights	9.4	7.9	10.9	4.0
Employed rotating shift	3.0	0.1	6.0	3.8
Employed split shift	1.5	0.2	2.9	6.7
Something else	7.3	9.3	5.3	9.7

TABLE 12. Type of occupation for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Professional, technical, managerial	3.8	2.5	5.1	2.7
Clerical	20.3	24.2	16.3	5.9
Sales, retail clerk, telemarketer	8.3	5.4	11.3	3.3
Food/beverage service	9.1	5.7	12.7	10.0
Personal service	1.4	0.0	2.8	0.0
Health services	7.7	9.1	6.4	1.4
Cleaning services	4.3	5.3	3.2	9.1
Building/grounds services	4.9	5.2	4.5	9.0
Recreation services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Childcare worker	6.3	7.4	5.1	19.6
Agricultural worker	3.6	5.4	1.7	0.7
Processing occupations	1.1	0.0	2.2	1.6
Benchwork (assembly)	3.6	1.7	5.6	7.7
Machine trades	5.6	6.3	5.0	0.4
Operatives	6.8	10.1	3.6	6.5
Craftsman and structural work	4.7	2.9	6.5	16.0
General Labor	8.1	8.8	7.5	5.4
Protective services	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.6

TABLE 13. Type of employer for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Government	9.8	9.9	9.7	4.9
Private company	71.4	70.8	72.1	84.1
Non-profit organization	5.2	4.9	5.6	5.9
Self-employed	11.0	12.9	9.0	3.7
Family business or on farm	1.4	1.5	1.2	0.6
Don't know	1.1	0.00	2.3	0.7

TABLE 14. Employment benefits for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Sick days	40.9	48.6	32.8 ^b	39.1
Vacation time	55.1	50.6	59.8	39.7
Help for childcare	8.3	7.4	9.3	10.1
Pension	47.2	44.7	49.7	59.4
Other benefits	22.6	19.2	26.1	15.3
Promotion	42.6	40.2	45.1	49.7
Job-offered health insurance plan	56.1	53.8	58.4	58.8
Enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance plan	44.1	45.7	42.5	54.2

TABLE 15. Reason for not enrolling in employer-provided health plan for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Covered by another insurance plan	29.7	31.2	28.7	13.5
Cost was too high	38.0	50.5	31.3	44.8
Has not worked long enough, plan just started	34.9	18.4	43.4	27.0
Health insurance plan is inadequate	0.3	0.0	0.5	4.3
Do not understand how to apply for it	0.4	0.0	0.7	10.8
Didn't Know	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0

TABLE 16. Children and childcare costs

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Average cost of childcare per month for all respondents(\$)	44.32	47.90	39.76 ^a	1.82
Percentage with childcare costs (%)	20.9	21.7	19.9 ^a	1.0
Average cost of childcare per month for those with childcare costs (\$)	211.92	220.52	199.94	184.15
Average cost of childcare per month for those who worked (\$)	68.27	79.85	56.51 ^a	2.22
Lost time at work because of childcare problems (%)	7.8	10.2	4.7 ^a	0.1

^aStatistically significant at 5% level.

TABLE 17. Mode of transportation to work for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Drive	75.0	71.6	78.4	55.5
Ride with friend	10.0	12.1	7.9	8.3
Car pool	1.6	0.0	3.2	1.4
Public transport	3.8	3.8	3.8	1.0
Walk	4.9	5.4	4.4	3.8
Work from home	1.0	0.2	1.7	1.9
Bicycle	0.9	1.6	0.1	8.2
Combination	2.1	3.7	0.5	20.0
Special bus/van	0.8	1.6	0.0	0.0

TABLE 18. Distance to work for those who worked in last month (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Worked at home	1.0	0.3	1.7	1.9
A mile or less	22.4	24.8	20.0	23.4
One to five miles	35.5	41.8	29.2	40.4
Five to ten miles	15.7	13.4	17.9	21.5
Ten to fifteen miles	5.5	2.7	8.3	2.6
Fifteen to twenty miles	5.9	4.1	7.6	1.7
Twenty to thirty miles	5.5	3.8	7.2	4.4
Thirty to fifty miles	7.4	9.2	5.6	3.4
Fifty to one hundred miles	1.3	0.0	2.5	0.7

TABLE 19. Measures of well-being at the time of interview (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD	ABAWD	
					Stayers	Leavers
Household income below poverty ^b	67.3	70.6	63.1	70.7	74.5	68.1
Less than 50% poverty income (%)	32.6	33.7	31.7	53.9	67.0	42.0
50-100% poverty income (%)	38.5	31.5	44.1	21.8	14.5	28.3
100-130% poverty income (%)	12.6	11.7	13.4	12.8	16.7	9.3
130-185% poverty income (%)	7.6	12.0	4.1	6.3	0.6	11.4
Over 185% poverty income (%)	8.6	11.1	6.7	5.3	1.2	8.9
Food secure	44.9	40.7	50.3	47.2	40.2	53.7 ^a
Food insecure without hunger	27.3	30.1	23.7	11.6	1.4	20.9 ^a
Food insecure with hunger	27.8	29.2	26.0	41.2	58.5	25.5 ^a
Used community resources in the past year ^c	41.6	40.2	43.5	30.5	30.5	30.5
Used private food assistance in the past year ^d	56.5	57.6	55.2	64.2	76.2	53.3 ^a
Could not pay rent or evicted in last year	19.5	14.9	25.3 ^a	25.7	18.9	31.8 ^a
Lost use of phone due to economic situation in last year	18.8	16.1	22.2	16.6	14.8	18.2
Lost use of electrical utilities	5.34	4.62	6.26	2.31	1.3	3.2
Had access to health insurance	84.5	89.4	78.4 ^a	77.8	91.1	65.6 ^a

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.

^b Excluded were 45 households for not reporting household earnings or other income.

^c Community resources include: emergency shelter, general assistance/county relief, free clothing, public health services, alcohol or substance abuse programs, mental health care, or domestic violence services.

^d Private food assistance responses include help from friends to buy food, food pantry, or soup kitchen.

TABLE 20. Use of community resources (in percentages)

	Total	Stayer	Leaver	ABAWD
During the past year, household used...				
Help from friends/relatives to buy food	44.4	43.4	45.7	31.9
Help from food pantry/church to buy food	28.7	29.7	26.4	51.5
Soup kitchen	2.7	1.3	4.4 ^b	11.7
Emergency shelter	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.0
General assistance	8.9	6.8	11.5	6.6
Free clothing resources	15.0	18.8	10.1 ^b	20.0
Public health services	14.0	8.8	20.6 ^a	5.0
Alcohol or substance abuse treatments	4.3	3.8	4.9	6.3
Mental health or counseling services	28.1	33.4	21.5 ^b	19.1
Domestic violence services	2.2	1.4	3.1	1.11

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.^b Statistically significant at 10% level.**TABLE 21. Economic hardship (in percentages)**

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
At some point in past year, household's economic situation was such that they..				
Could not pay rent	17.5	14.8	21.0	22.8
Were evicted	2.0	0.1	4.3 ^a	2.9
Lost use of electrical utilities	5.3	4.6	6.3	2.3
Lost use of phone	18.8	16.1	22.2	16.6
Could not visit doctor	26.4	25.5	27.5	18.2

^a Statistically significant at 5% level.

TABLE 22. Housing quality (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Does your home currently have...				
A leaky roof or ceiling	18.3	19.2	17.2	13.6
Plumbing that doesn't work right	11.0	11.3	10.5	15.0
Rats, mice, or insects	24.9	29.9	18.5 ^a	31.8
Broken windows	15.8	16.5	14.8	8.8
Broken heating system	6.1	6.3	5.9	11.8
Exposed wires or electrical problems	7.5	7.6	7.5	5.1
Broken stove or refrigerator	7.2	6.9	7.5	4.2
Chipped or peeling paint	19.9	20.1	19.8	20.5

^aStatistically significant at 10% level.

TABLE 23. Expectations and views concerning self-sufficiency (in percentages)

	Total	Stayers	Leavers	ABAWD
Expect to receive FS one year from now	21.8	32.2	8.5	13.6
Among those currently receiving food stamps: In order to leave FS, respondent feels...				
That they need more education	19.1	22.7	14.5	11.1
That they need more affordable child care	14.2	15.1	13.0	0.8
That they need more dependable transportation	13.4	11.9	14.7	3.4
That they need something else	16.3	22.0	9.0 ^a	4.7

^aStatistically significant at 5% level.

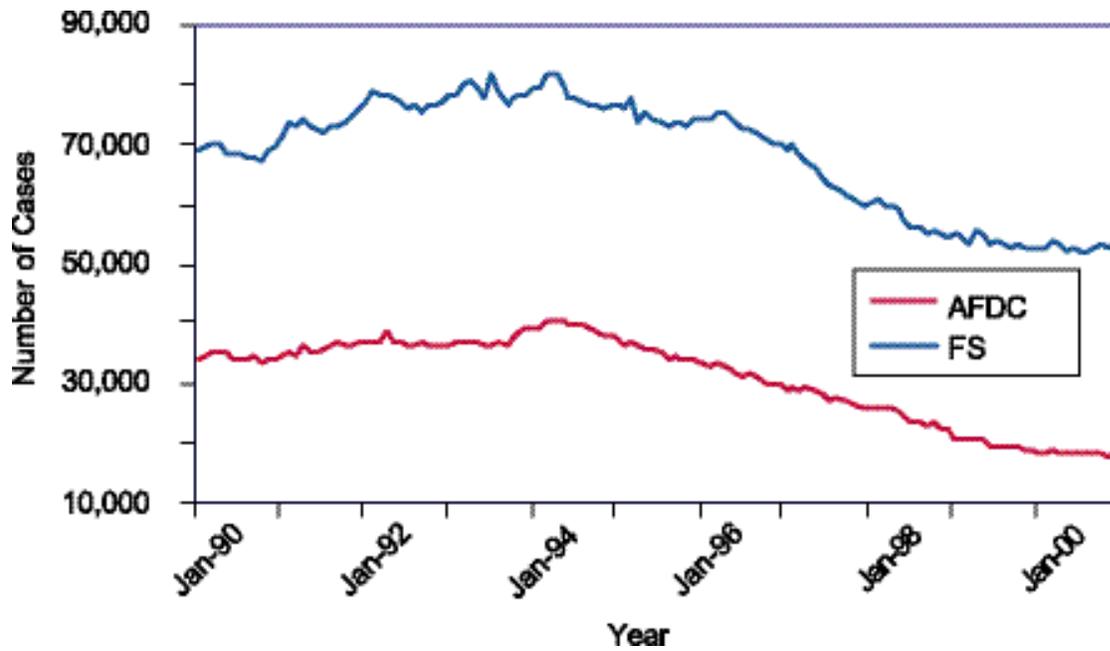


FIGURE 1. Caseloads for Iowa’s Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food Stamp (FS) programs: 1990-2000

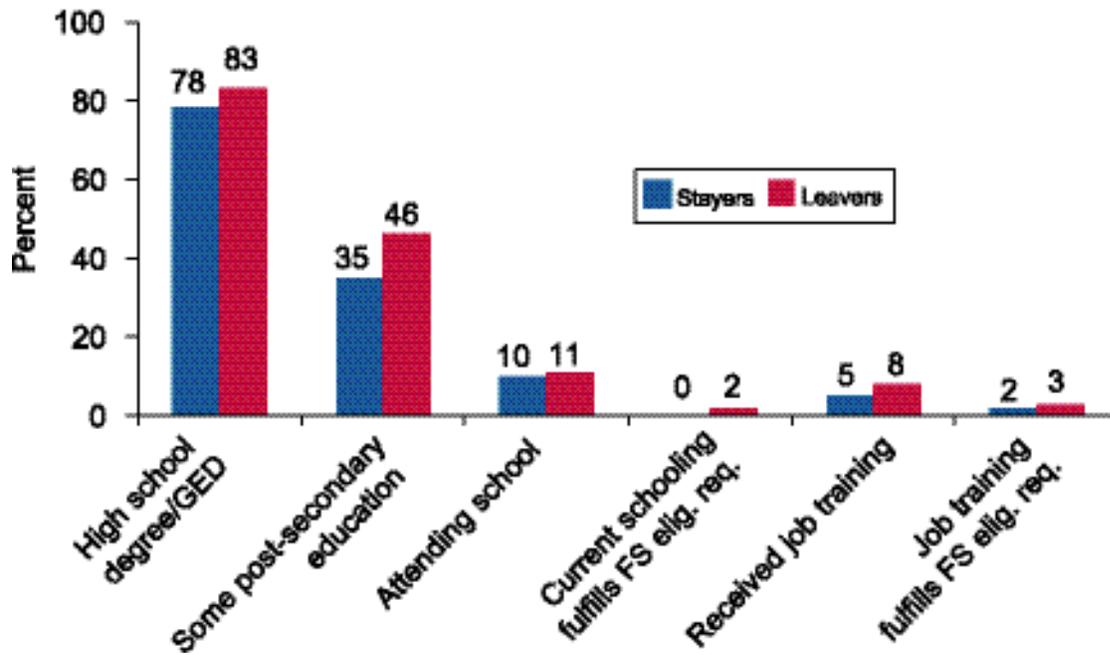


FIGURE 2. Education and training, stayers and leavers

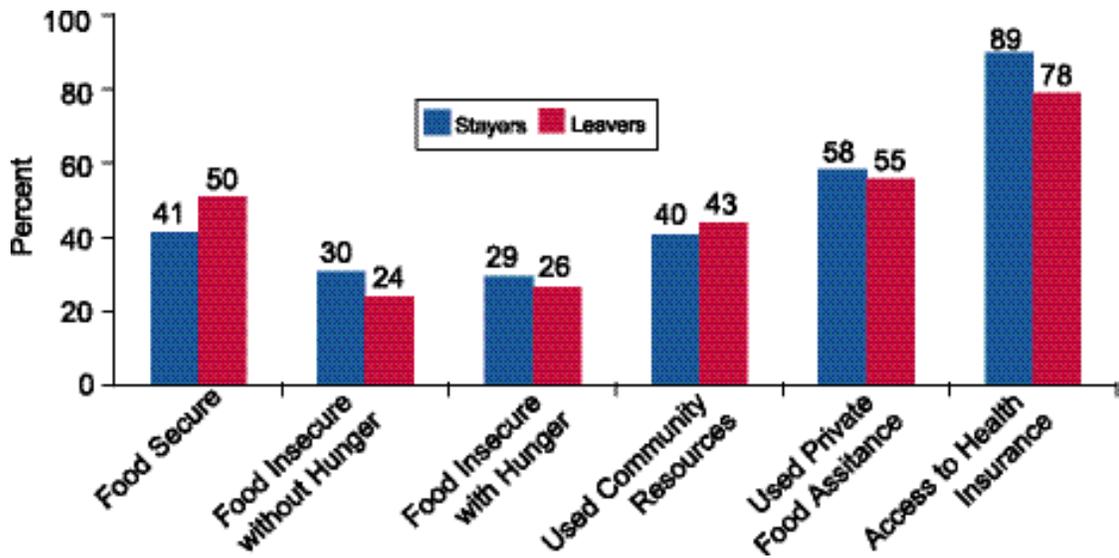


FIGURE 3A. Measures of well-being, stayers and leavers

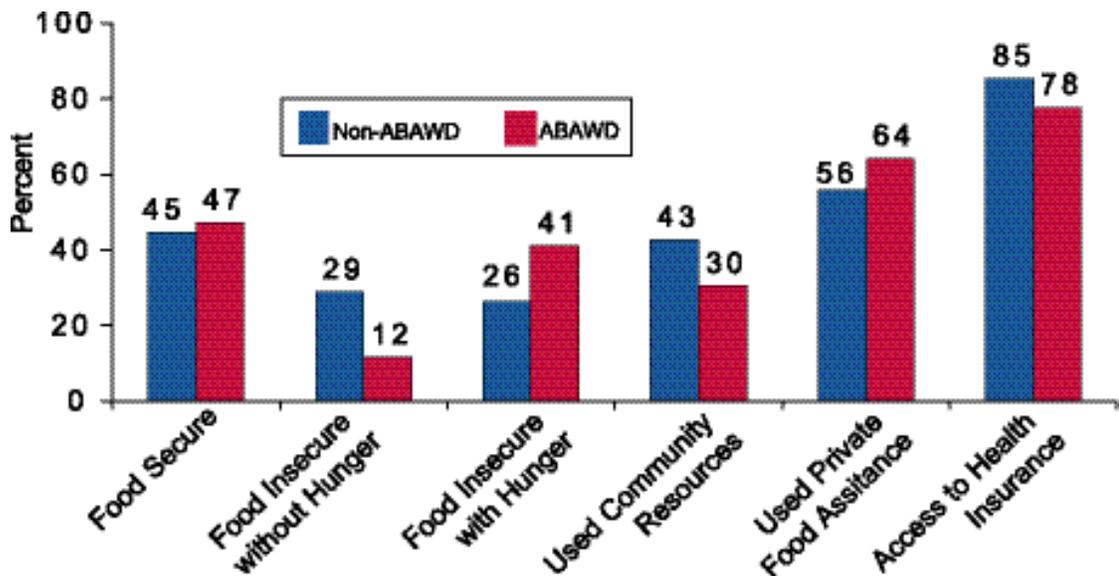


FIGURE 3B. Measures of well-being, non-ABAWDs and ABAWDs

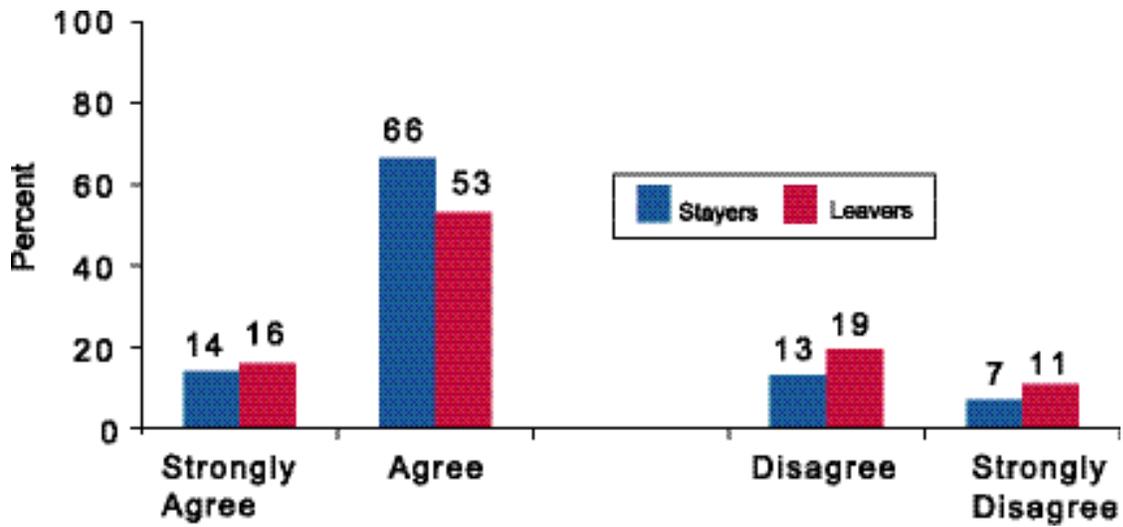


FIGURE 4A. Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with financial support, stayers and leavers

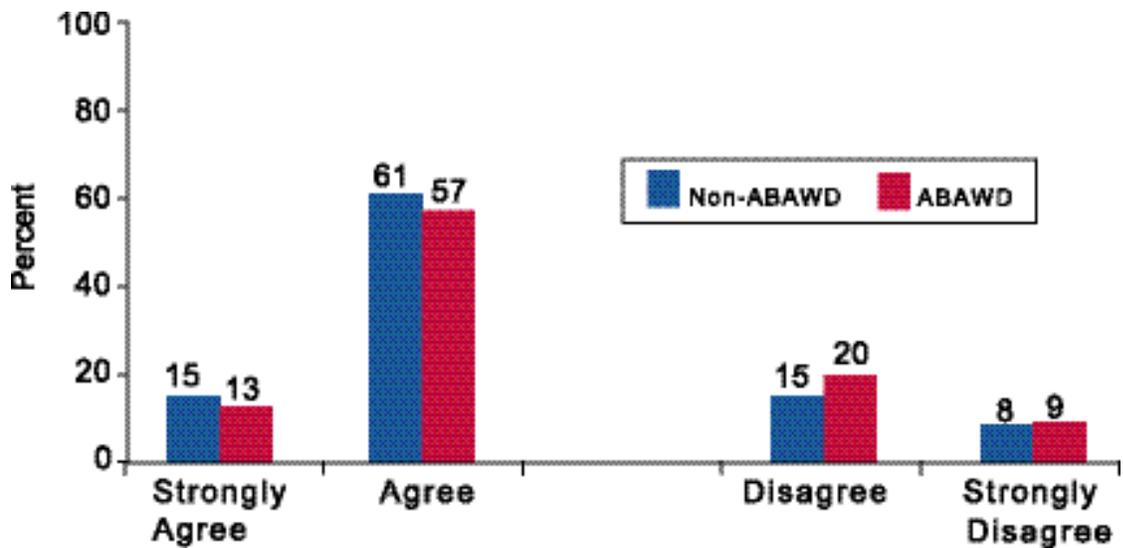


FIGURE 4B. Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with financial support, non-ABAWD and ABAWD

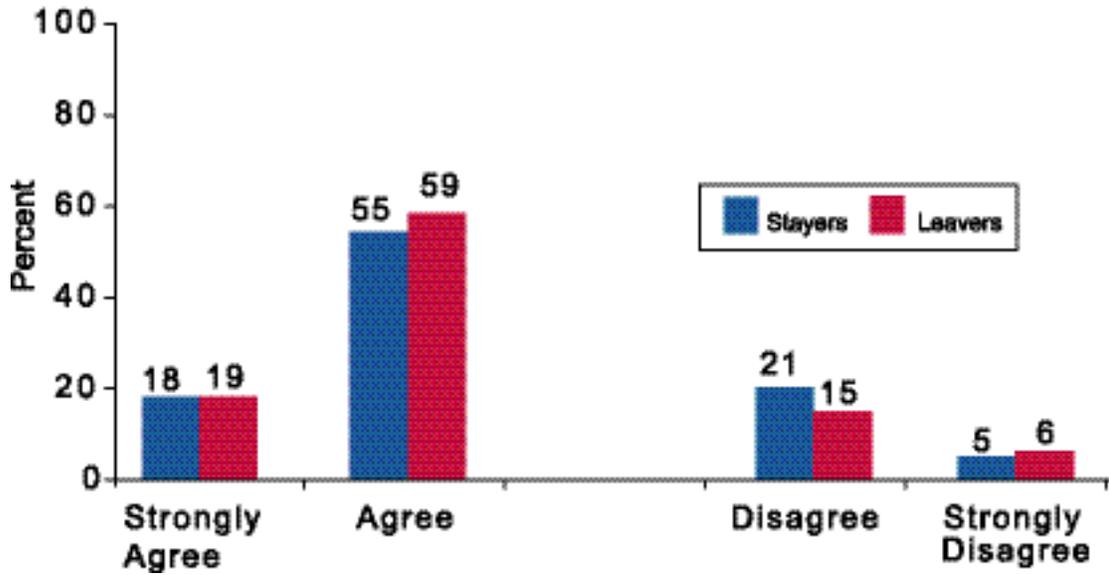


FIGURE 5A. Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with nutritional support, stayers and leavers

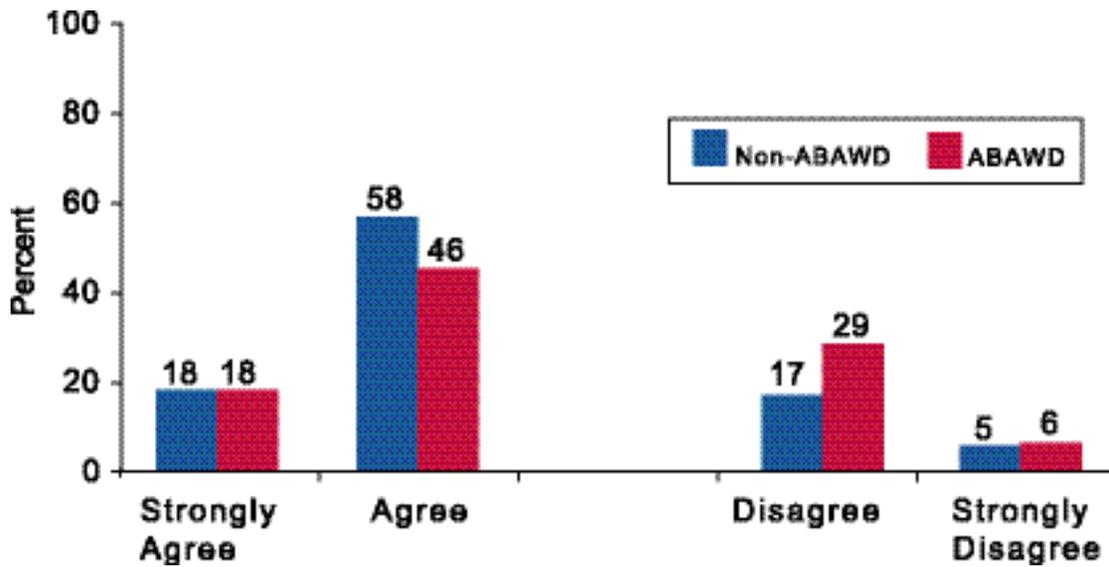


FIGURE 5B. Iowa Food Stamp Program respondent satisfaction with nutritional support, non-ABAWD and ABAWD

Endnote

1. Reasons for exemption from work registration include being physically or mentally unfit to work; caring for dependent child(ren) under age six or for an incapacitated person; enrolled in Promise Jobs; receiving FIP-UP benefits or UI benefits; enrolled in a certified alcohol or drug rehab program; being a migrant or seasonal worker; already working the required number of hours; or enrolled in school half-time.

References

- American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). 1998. *Standard Definitions: Final Disposition of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for RDD Telephone Surveys and In-Person Household Surveys*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: AAPOR.
- Bickel, G., M. Nord, C. Price, W. Hamilton, and J. Cook. 2000. *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000*. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation. March.
- Butler, M., and C. Beale. 1993. *Rural-Urban Continuum Codes for Metro and Nonmetro Counties: 1993*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.
- Nusser, S.M., L.L. Anderson, and D.G. Anderson. 2000. "Iowa Food Stamp Leavers Survey Methodology Report." Department of Statistics and Statistical Laboratory, Iowa State University, December.