

## **CHAPTER II: OVERALL WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS**

This chapter presents findings on the overall welfare and employment status of survey respondents at the time of the follow-up surveys. Data are also presented for various demographic sub-groups. In addition, the chapter examines the welfare and employment status of persons by the reasons they left welfare. Finally, the chapter provides data on perceptions among respondents about their status with regard to the 24-month time limit on Work First cash assistance.

### **A. WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT THE TIME OF THE FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS**

Survey respondents were asked whether they were still off welfare at the time of the interviews and whether they were working for pay.

#### **Overall Welfare and Employment Status**

- As indicated in Exhibit II-1, the percentage of respondents who were off welfare and working at the time of the surveys was 46 percent for the 6-month leavers and almost 49 percent for the 18-month leavers.
- About 42 percent of the 6-month leavers and 39 percent of the 18-month leavers were off welfare but not working.
- About 12 percent of the 6-month leavers and the same percentage of 18-month leavers were back on welfare at the time of the surveys. The majority of the recidivists were not working.

#### **Respondents Still off Welfare – Percent Employed**

- For respondents who were still off welfare, Exhibit II-2 shows the percentage who were employed at the time of the surveys.
- As indicated, about 52 percent of the 6-month leavers who were still off welfare were employed, compared to almost 56 percent of the 18-month leavers who were still off welfare.

Exhibit II-1 - Welfare and Employment Status

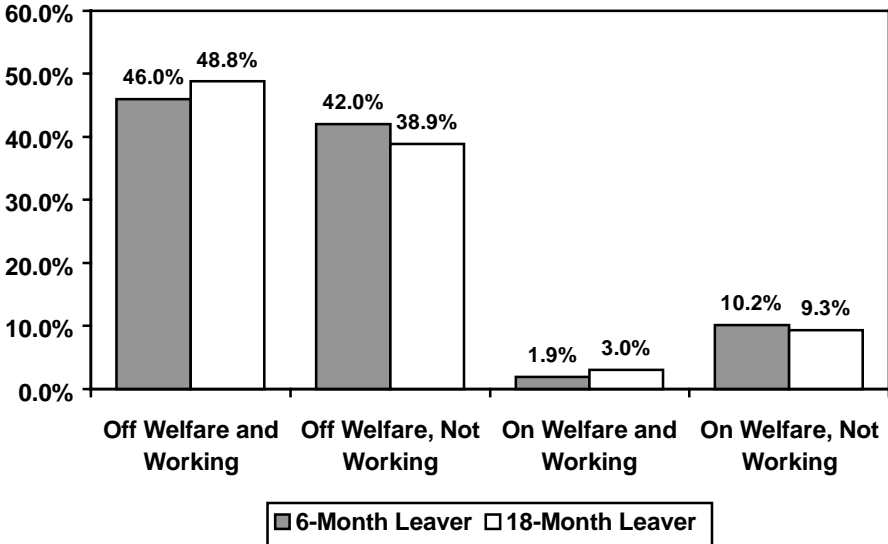
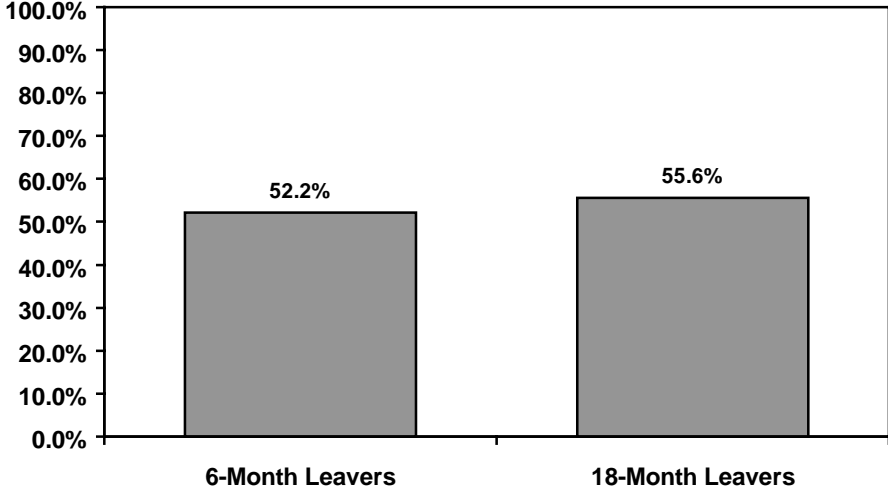


Exhibit II-2 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working



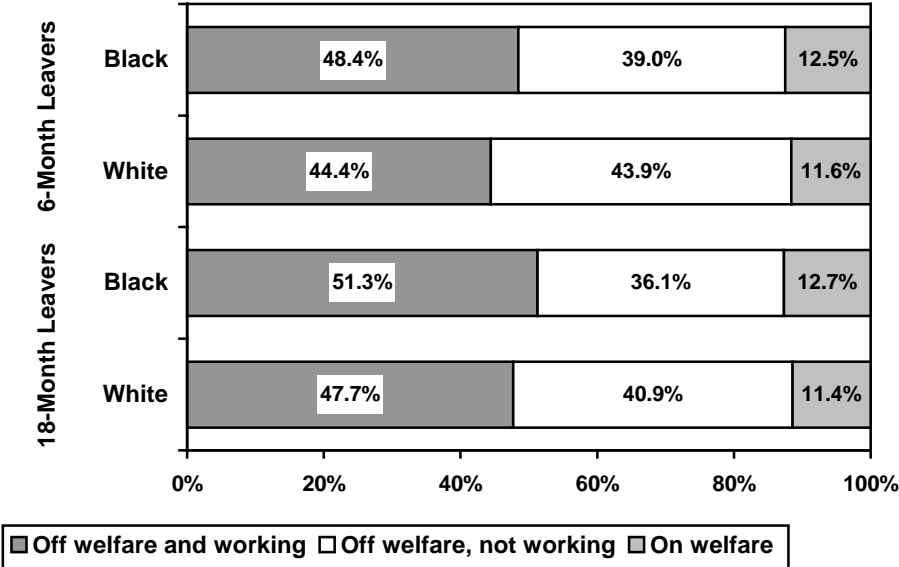
**B. WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS**

This section analyzes the overall welfare and employment status of the survey respondents, by selected characteristics.

**Welfare and Employment Status by Ethnicity**

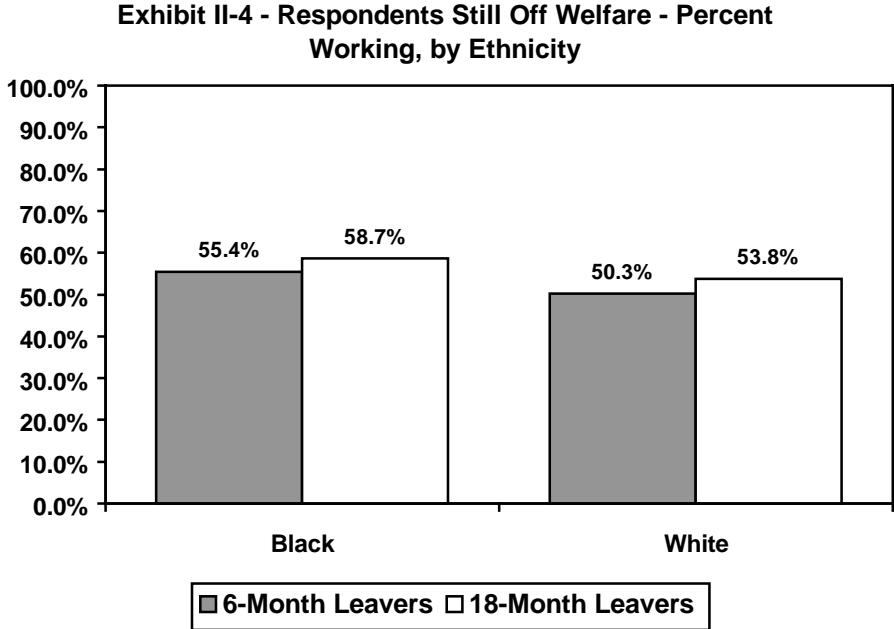
- Exhibit II-3 shows that in both samples of leavers, blacks were somewhat more likely than whites to be off welfare and working.
- There was not a great difference between blacks and whites in the percentage who were back on welfare.
- Whites were somewhat more likely than blacks to be off welfare but not working.

**Exhibit II-3 - Welfare and Employment Status, by Ethnicity**



**Persons Off Welfare – Percent Employed by Ethnicity**

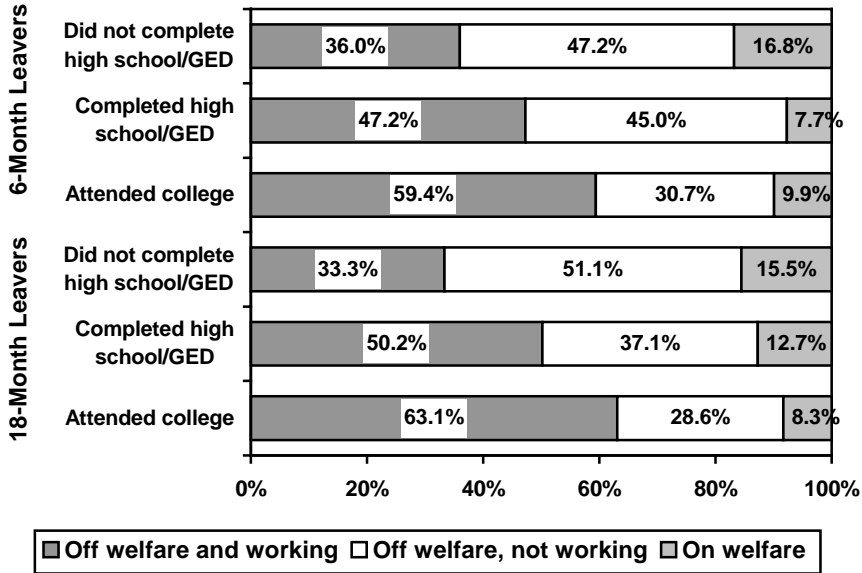
- For persons who were still off welfare, Exhibit II-4 shows the percent who were working by ethnicity. As indicated, blacks were employed at higher rates than whites in both samples of leavers.



**Welfare and Employment Status by Education**

- Exhibit II-5 shows that education was a major factor in the welfare and employment status of respondents. Among persons who had attended college, 59 percent of the 6-month leavers and 63 percent of the 18-month leavers were still off welfare and working. The figures for high school drop-outs were only 36 percent and 34 percent, respectively.
- Education also had a major impact on recidivism rates. Among high school drop-outs, the recidivism rate was almost 17 percent among the 6-month leavers, and 15.5 percent among the 18-month leavers. In contrast, the recidivism rates for persons who had attended college were only about 10 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

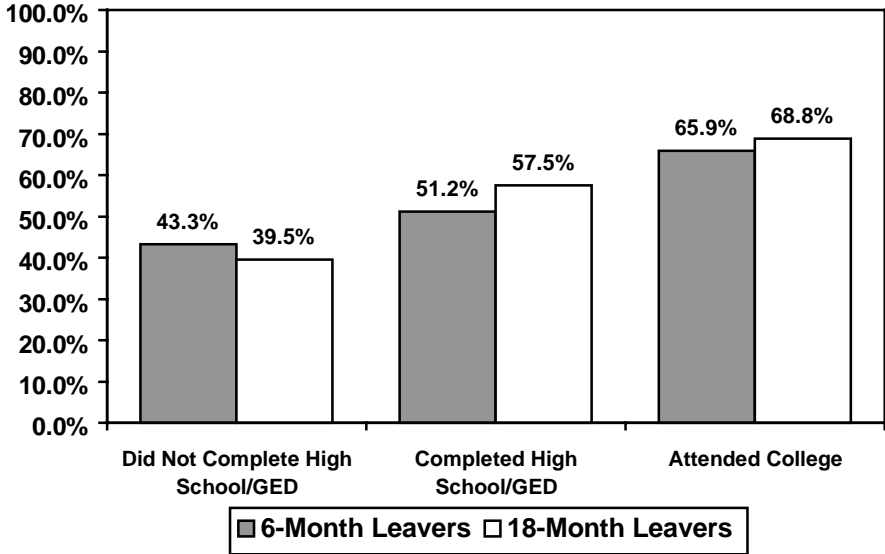
Exhibit II-5 - Welfare and Employment Status, by Education



Persons Still Off Welfare – Percent Employed by Education

- For persons who were still off welfare, Exhibit II-6 shows that persons who had attended college were employed at much higher rates than persons who had dropped out of high school.

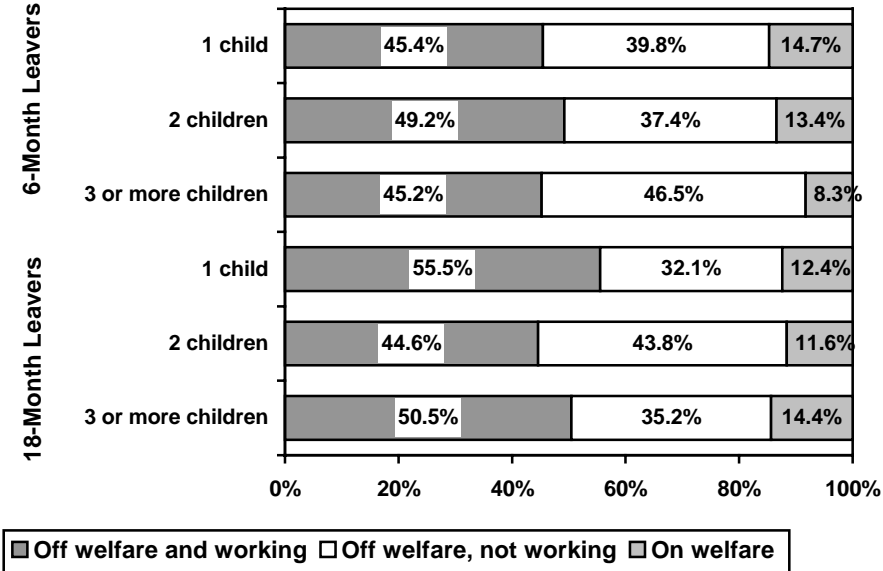
Exhibit II-6 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working, by Ethnicity



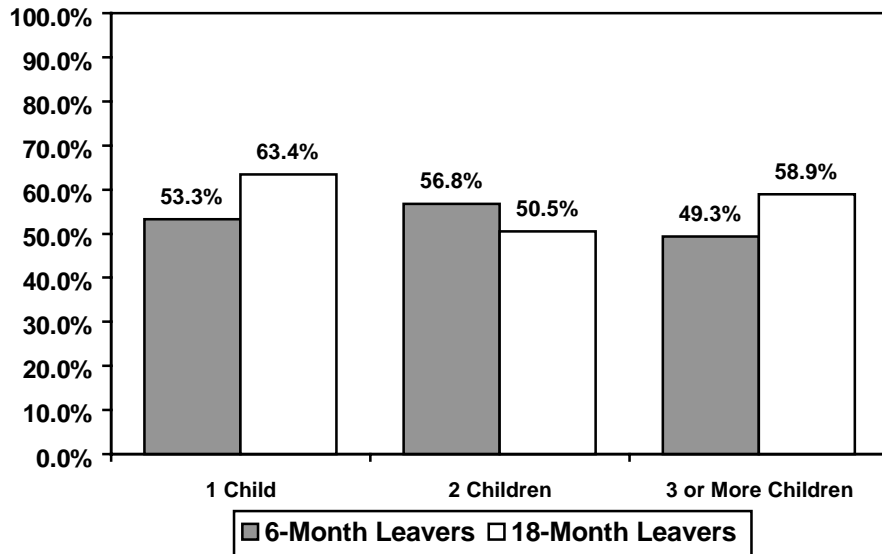
Welfare and Employment Status by Number of Children

- Exhibit II-18 indicates that the number of children in the family did not show a consistent relationship with the percentage of leavers who were still off welfare and working, or with the recidivism rate.
- For respondents who were still off welfare, Exhibit II-8 also shows that the number of children in the household had no clear effects on the percentage who were working.

**Exhibit II-7 - Welfare and Employment Status, by Number of Children**



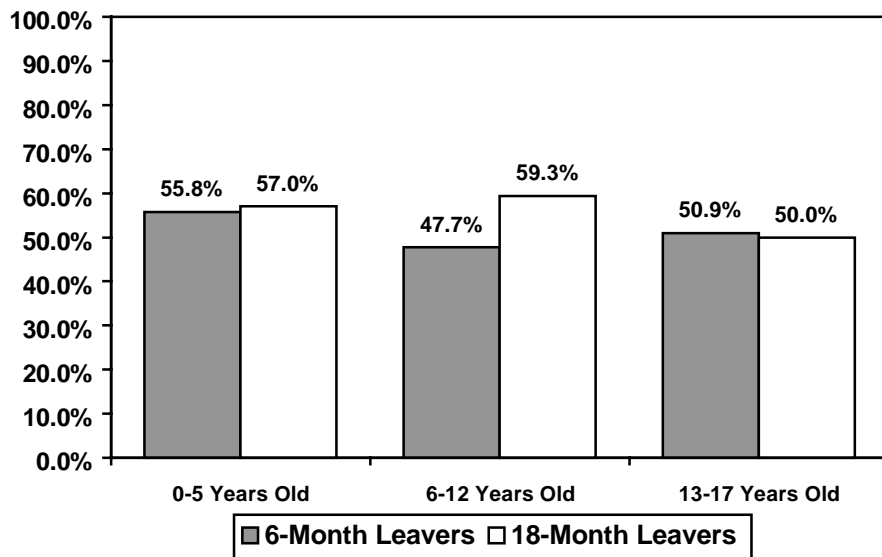
**Exhibit II-8 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working, by Number of Children**



**Employment Status by Age of the Youngest Child**

- For persons still off welfare, Exhibit II-9 shows the percent employed by the age of the youngest child.
- The data indicate that leavers whose youngest child was aged 0-5 were somewhat more likely to be working than leavers whose youngest child was 13 to 17.

**Exhibit II-9 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working, by Age of the Youngest Child**



**Welfare and Employment Status by the Presence of Other Adults**

- Exhibit II-10 shows that the presence of other adults in the household had an impact on employment rates and recidivism rates among both samples.
- Among persons with no other adults in the household, 48 percent of the 6-month leavers and 53 percent of the 18-month leavers were still off welfare and working, compared to only 42 percent and 43 percent, respectively, of persons with one or more adults in the household.
- However, recidivism rates were much higher among the respondents with no adults in the households.
- As indicated in Exhibit II-11, the employment rate among respondents who were still off welfare was lower for those living with one or more other adults.

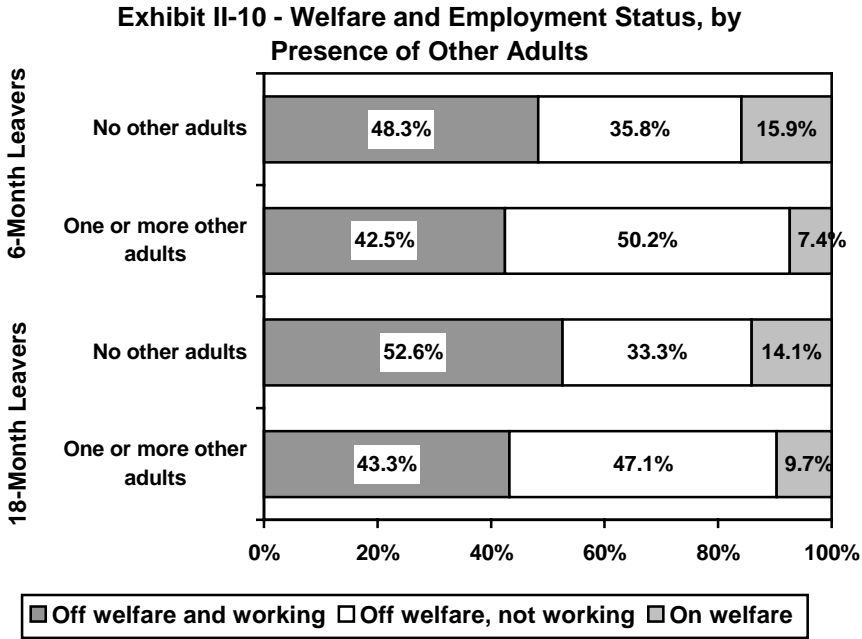
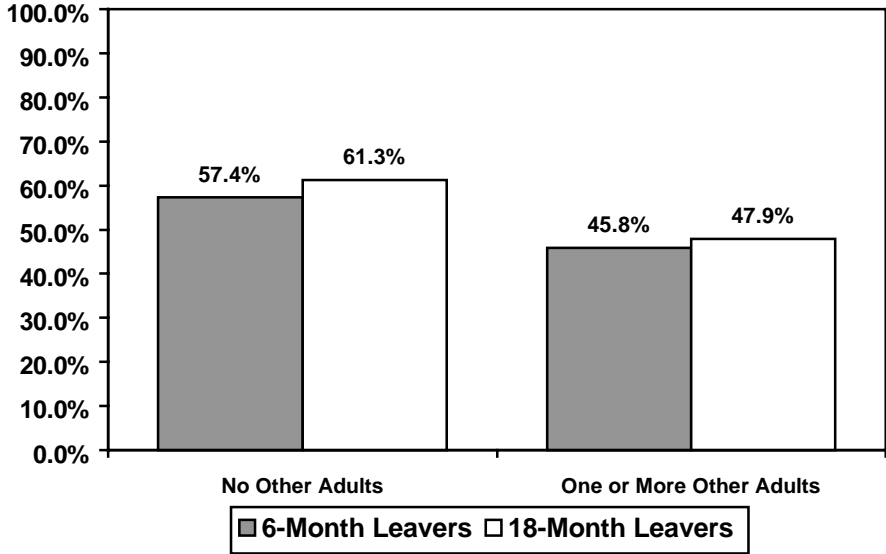




Exhibit II-11 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working, by Presence of Other Adults



**Welfare and Employment Status by Marital Status**

- Exhibit II-12 shows that, among the 6-month leavers, married respondents were much less likely than non-married respondents to be off welfare and working. However, the recidivism rate was much lower for married respondents.
- In the 18-month leaver sample, married respondents also had a lower recidivism rate than other respondents, and also had a higher percentage who were off welfare but not working.
- For respondents who were still off welfare, Exhibit II-13 shows that married respondents were less likely to be working than non-married respondents, although the difference was not very great in the 18-month sample.

Exhibit II-12 - Welfare and Employment Status, by Marital Status

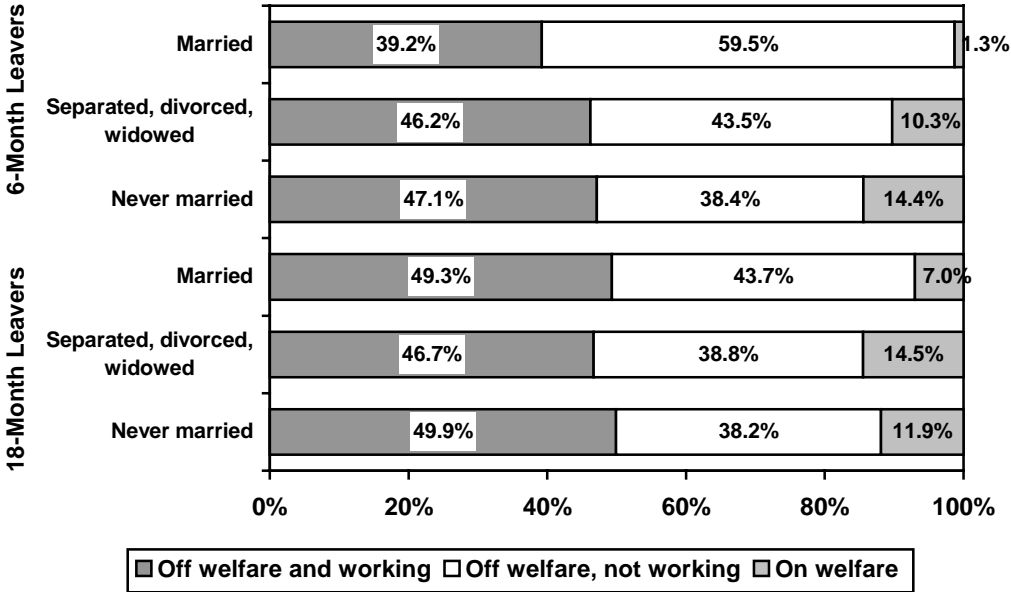
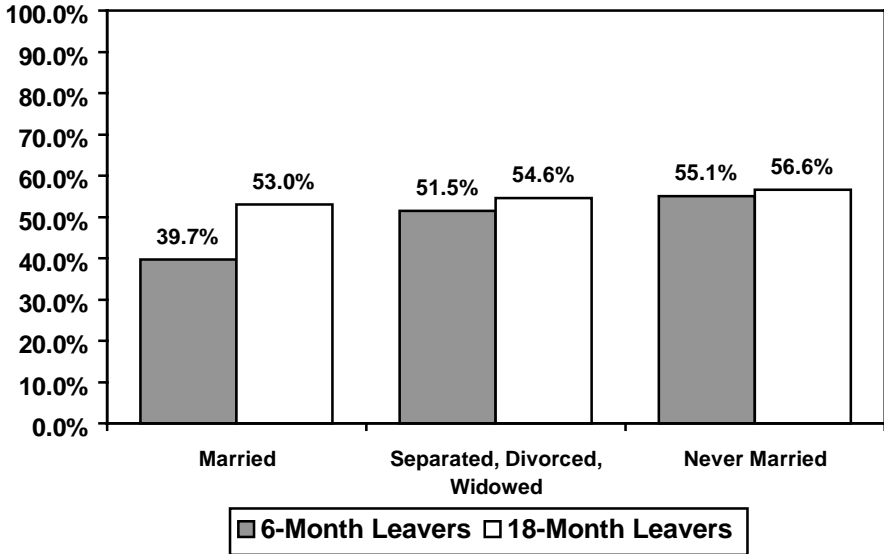
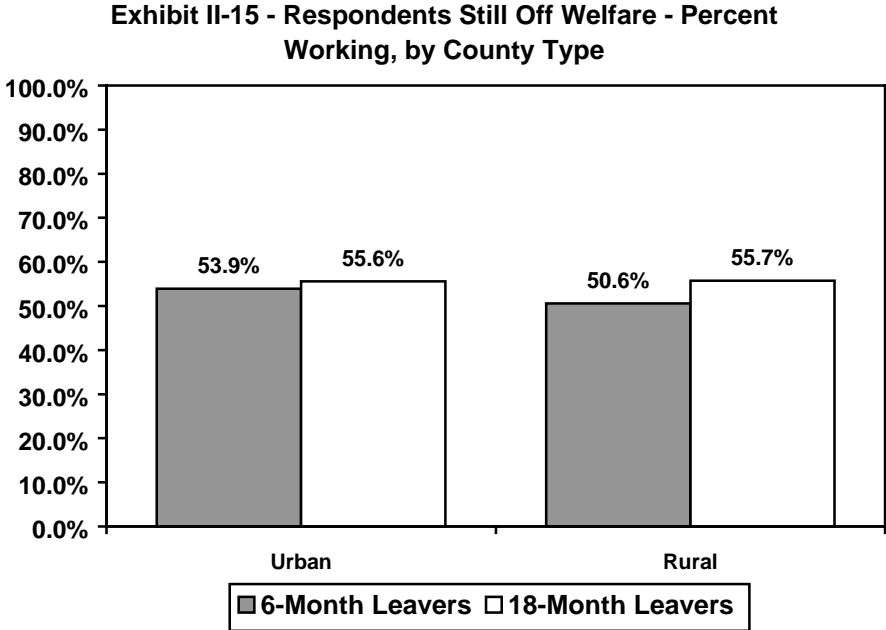
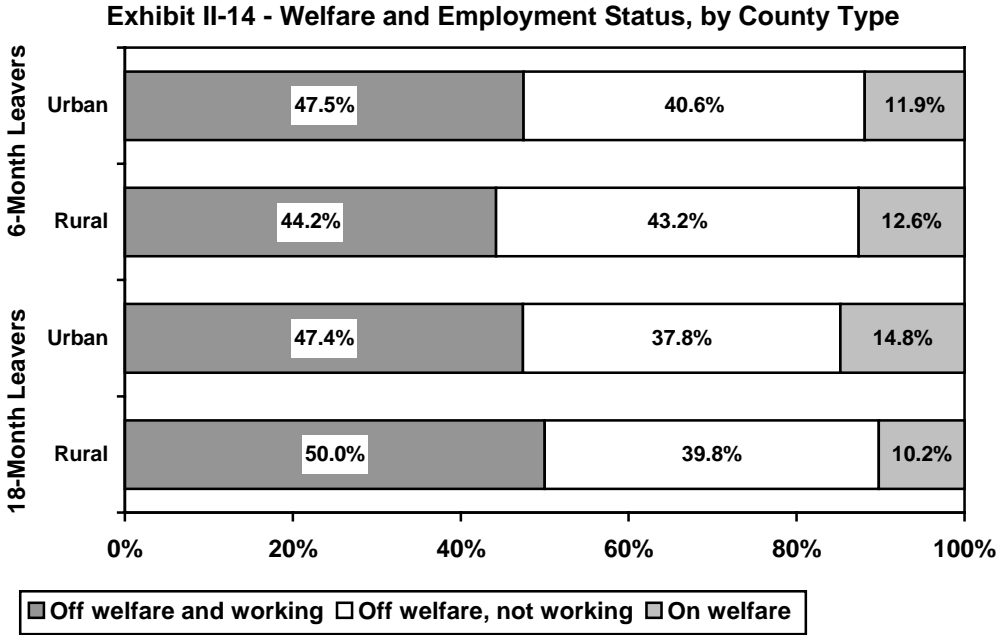


Exhibit II-13 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working, by Marital Status



Welfare and Employment Status by County Type

- Exhibit II-14 shows that there was not a great deal of difference between urban and rural counties in the employment and welfare status of the leavers at the time of the surveys.
- Exhibit II-15 indicates that among those respondents who were still off welfare, the employment rate was slightly higher among persons in rural counties.



**C. EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY REASON FOR LEAVING WELFARE**

**Reasons Given for Leaving Welfare**

- Respondents were asked to think back to the time when they last received a monthly welfare check. They were then asked the reason they left cash assistance.
- Exhibit II-16 shows that 58 percent of the 6-month leavers and 65 percent of the 18-month leavers mentioned that they had left welfare due to getting a job, earning more money, or working more hours.
- Almost 8 percent of the 6-month leavers and almost 9 percent of the 18-month leavers mentioned time limits as the reason for leaving. It is possible, however, that additional respondents obtained employment when they reached the time limit and gave employment as the reason for leaving welfare.

**Exhibit II-16  
Self-Reported Reasons Why Respondents  
Last Left Welfare**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>6-Month Leaver</b>	<b>18-Month Leaver</b>
Found a job, got a higher paying job, or worked more hours	58.0%	65.1%
Didn't want welfare anymore/didn't want hassle/didn't want to use up benefits	10.4%	7.7%
I reached the 24-month time limit	7.7%	8.7%
Received child support income that made me ineligible	7.8%	6.4%
I was cut off/sanctioned for not following the rules or cooperating	8.4%	5.5%
Got married/moved in with parent of my child/other change in household	4.8%	2.7%
Approved for SSI/disability	2.3%	1.9%
I did not want to use up my benefits/I was concerned about time limits	1.8%	2.1%
I moved out of North Carolina	2.3%	1.3%
Unemployment benefits	1.4%	0.8%
Recovered from a health problem	0.9%	1.1%
My child(ren) turned 18	0.8%	1.1%
Had an increase in assets	0.8%	1.0%

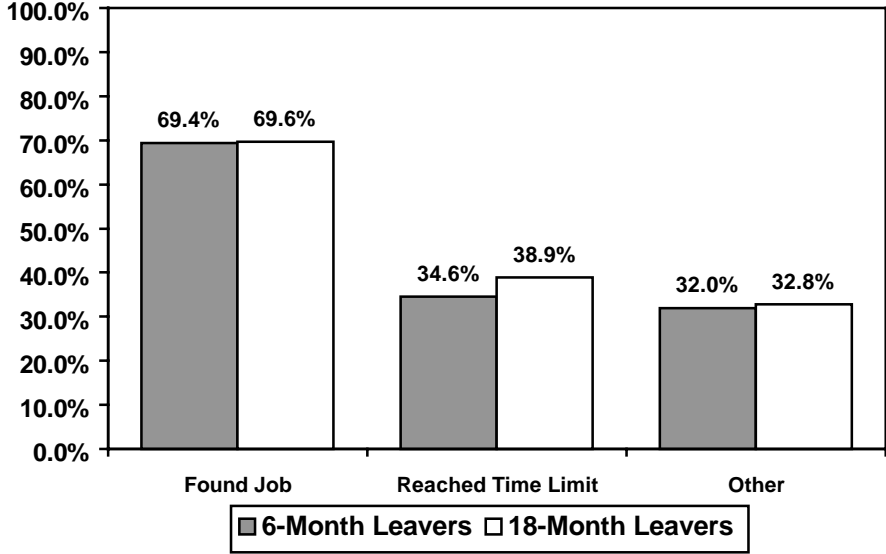
Moved within NC	0.3%	0.8%
No longer had to take care of a family member at home	0.3%	0.6%
My child(ren) turned one	0.0%	0.5%
Got help from family or friends	0.2%	0.2%
Other	0.9%	1.0%

\*Percentages add to more than 100% because more than one answer was allowed.

**Welfare and Employment Status by Reason for Leaving Welfare**

- For persons who were still off welfare, Exhibit II-17 shows the welfare and employment status of respondents based on their self-reported reasons for last leaving welfare.
- The data show that respondents who had left welfare for employment-related reasons were much more likely to be working than respondents who mentioned time limits or other reasons.
- Only 35-39 percent of the respondents who had left welfare due to time limits were working. It should be noted, however, that a very small number of respondents in the sample said that they had left welfare due to time limits.

**Exhibit II-17 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Working, by Reason Left Welfare**



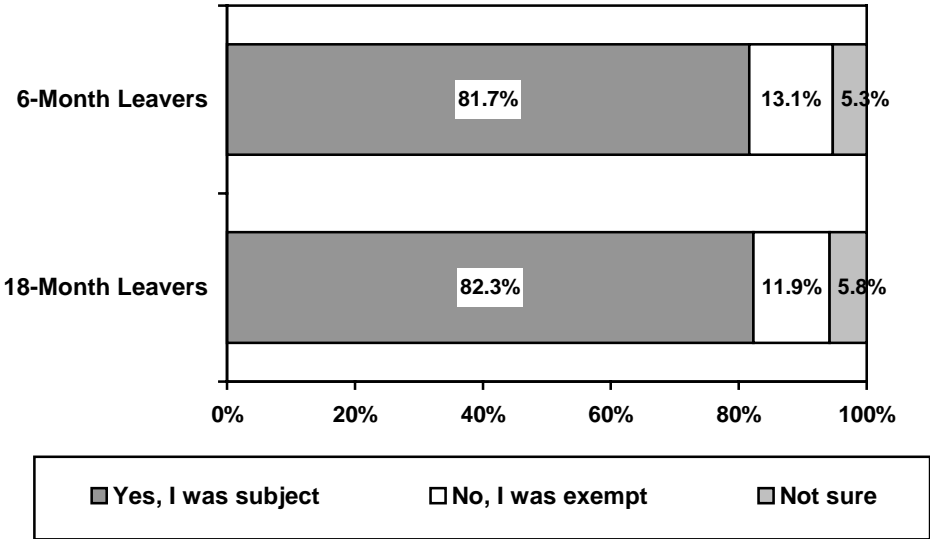
**D. RESPONDENTS STILL OFF WELFARE — SELF-REPORTED TIME CLOCK STATUS**

Respondents who were still off welfare were asked whether, when they were on Work First, they were subject to the 24-month time clock. Those who said yes were asked how many months they thought they had left on their clock when they left Work First.

**Percent Who Thought They Were Subject to the Time Clock**

- As shown in Exhibit II-18, about 82 percent of the respondents in both samples believed they were subject to the 24-month time clock when they were on Work First. The remaining 18 percent said that they were not subject to the time limits or were not sure.

**Exhibit II-18 - Respondents Still Off Welfare - Percent Who Thought They Were Subject to the 24-Month Time Limit When on Work First**



**Number of Months Left on the Time Clock**

- For persons who were still off welfare and who thought they were subject to the 24-month time limit while on Work First, Exhibit II-19 shows the number of months that respondents thought they had left on their time clocks.
- As indicated, almost 9 percent of the 6-month leavers and 11 percent of the 18-month leavers thought that they had used up their two years of benefits.
- Another 43 percent of the 6-month leavers and 40 percent of the 18-month leavers thought that they had 1-12 months left on their time clocks.

- Almost half of the leavers in both samples thought that they had more than a year left on their time clocks.

**Exhibit II-19 - Respondents Still Off Welfare and Who Thought They Had Been on the 24-Month Time Clock - Estimated Number of Months Left**

