



September 2010

**NORC**  
at the UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

## Resident Relocation Survey

Funded by a grant from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

# Brief

### Key Findings

Almost three quarters of leaseholders are not working and 44% are not looking for a job

Among the unemployed, half are in fair or poor health

Nearly half of unemployed leaseholders are disabled

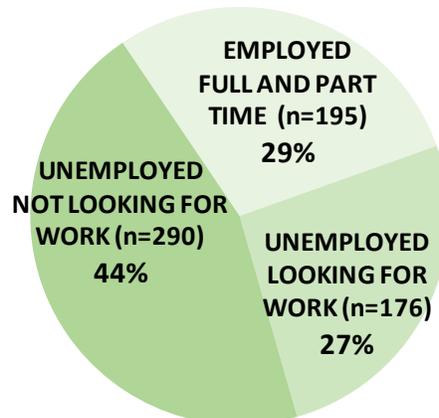
Leaseholders who are not looking for work are less likely to report economic hardships than those who are employed or looking for a job

## EMPLOYMENT OF RELOCATED LEASEHOLDERS

In 2000, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) began the Plan for Transformation, an ambitious plan to rebuild or replace substandard high-rise public housing developments in Chicago. During the Transformation, CHA leaseholders were relocated to other housing either in the private market with the assistance of a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) or in other public housing units, including traditional CHA developments as well as new mixed income developments. With support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, NORC at the University of Chicago conducts the Resident Relocation Survey (RRS). The RRS collects data from current and former CHA leaseholders on their experiences with relocation. This report presents findings on employment from our fourth survey with these leaseholders.<sup>i</sup>

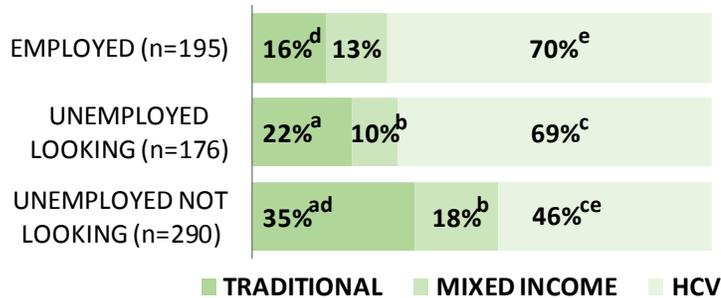
**EMPLOYMENT** Only 29% of all leaseholders are employed, either full or part time. **The majority (71%) is not currently employed and 44% are not looking for work (Figure 1).** The RRS asked leaseholders about their employment history and the number of jobs they have had. For those who

**FIGURE 1. LEASEHOLDER EMPLOYMENT**



reported an employment history (n=366), on average, leaseholders worked 1.77 jobs. Currently employed leaseholders reported an average 1.80 jobs, while those looking for work had held 1.87 jobs. These groups reported more jobs than those who were not looking, who had, on average, worked at 1.52 jobs.

**FIGURE 2. HOUSING GROUP BY EMPLOYMENT**



**EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING TYPES**

Leaseholders reside in one of three types of housing – traditional CHA, mixed income CHA, and HCV (Housing Choice Voucher). Unemployed leaseholders who are not looking for work are less likely to live in HCV housing than those who are employed or looking for a job. On the other hand, leaseholders living in traditional CHA are overrepresented in the unemployed and not looking for work category (Figure 2).

NOTE: Bars sharing a superscript letter (a, b, c) are significantly different at the p<.05 level, chi-square tests.

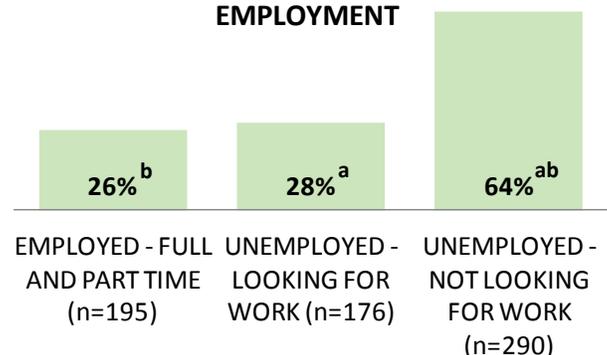
**HOUSEHOLD AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS** Table 1 shows the household and demographic characteristics of the employed and unemployed leaseholders. **Overall, employed leaseholders tend to be younger, female, and better educated than the other two groups.** They also have higher incomes. On the other hand, unemployed leaseholders not looking for work are different from the other two groups in terms of housing composition, with more living in households by themselves (without children or other adults).

TABLE 1. HOUSEHOLD AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	EMPLOYED (n=195)	UNEMPLOYED	
		LOOKING (n=176)	NOT LOOKING (n=290)
Mean Age	42.30 <sup>b</sup>	42.42 <sup>a</sup>	56.88 <sup>ab</sup>
Age Range	27-71	27-63	28-92
Female	96% <sup>ab</sup>	89% <sup>a</sup>	87% <sup>b</sup>
Less than High School Education	26% <sup>ab</sup>	42% <sup>a</sup>	49% <sup>b</sup>
Income Less than \$8,000	28% <sup>ab</sup>	74% <sup>a</sup>	67% <sup>b</sup>
Children in Household	73% <sup>b</sup>	66% <sup>a</sup>	36% <sup>ab</sup>
Only One Adult in Household	50% <sup>a</sup>	55%	60% <sup>a</sup>

NOTE: Within rows, employment groups sharing a superscript letter (a, b, c) are significantly different at the p<.05 level, chi-square tests and t-tests.

**HEALTH** Figure 3 shows that most of the unemployed leaseholders who are not looking for work report their current health to be fair or poor. **However, while still less than the aforementioned group, about one quarter of the employed as well as those looking for work are in fair or poor health.** The survey asked if a doctor had ever told them that they have a health problem.<sup>ii</sup> While leaseholders suffered from a range of health problems, the most prevalent issues were arthritis/rheumatism (35%), hypertension/blood pressure (50%), asthma (22%), and vision problems (42%). **On average, all leaseholders suffered from 2.78 health problems, but there were differences across the employment groups.** Employed

**FIGURE 3. FAIR OR POOR HEALTH BY EMPLOYMENT**



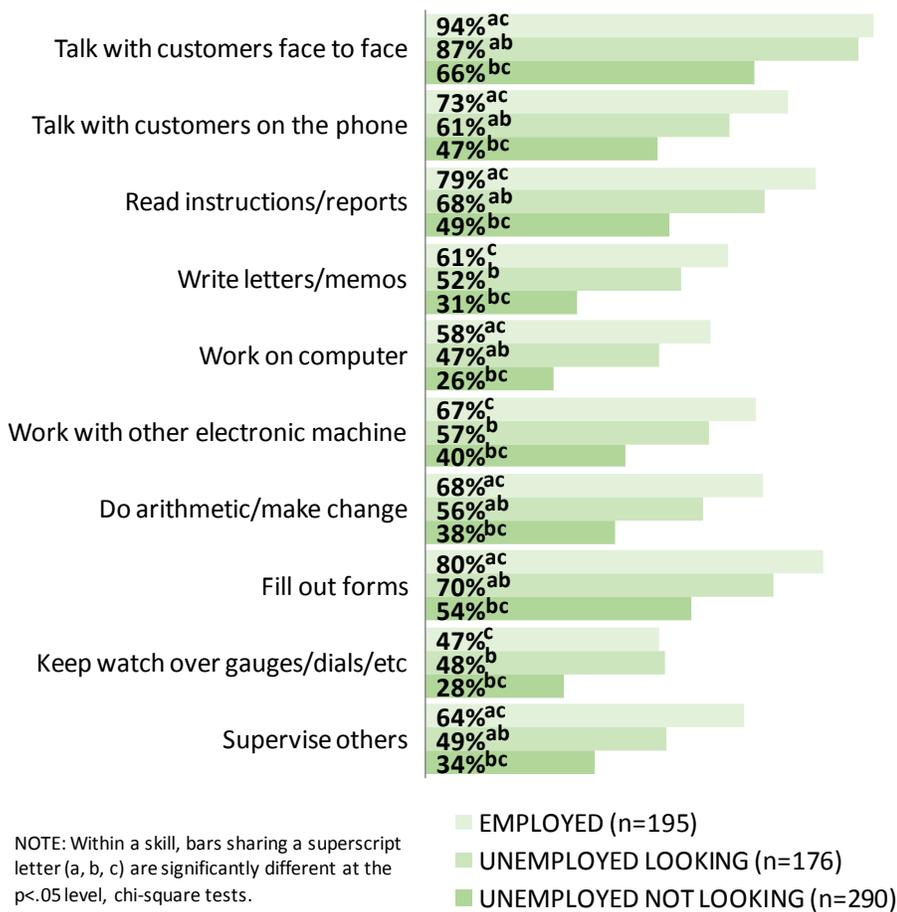
NOTE: Bars sharing a superscript letter (a, b, c) are significantly different at the p<.05 level, chi-square tests.

leaseholders reported an average of 1.58 problems and those looking for work were similar, reporting an average of 1.75 problems. However, unemployed leaseholders not looking for work reported the most health problems, with an average of 4.21.

**48% of unemployed leaseholders are disabled and 7% are retired. Only 3% are in school.**

**REASONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT** When asked why they were not working, 24% of the unemployed reported that they could not find jobs, 7% were retired, 7% were taking care of a child or someone with a health condition, and about half (48%) were disabled. Very few reported problems with transportation (4%), lack of skills (3%), being laid off (4%), keeping house (2%), being school (3%), or some other reason (3%) as to why they were not working.

**FIGURE 4. SKILLS BY EMPLOYMENT**



**SKILLS** Figure 4 shows the proportion of leaseholders who have at least a little experience with the skills listed. While most groups have some experience with talking to customers, reading instructions, working with machinery, doing arithmetic or making change, and filling out forms, they have less practice writing letters or memos, working on computers, watching gauges and dials, and supervising others. Overall, the groups vary greatly, with employed leaseholders reporting the most experience with these skills and the unemployed and not looking group reporting the least experience.

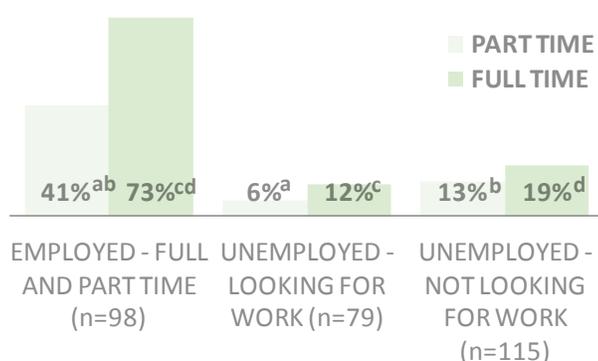
**ECONOMIC HARDSHIP** The survey asked leaseholders if they ever had their telephone disconnected, their electricity shut off, or their belongings repossessed. They were also asked if they were not able to pay their rent or have money for food. Leaseholders not looking for work reported fewer economic hardships than the

employed and those looking for work. On average, employed leaseholders and those looking for work reported greater economic hardship (0.66 and 0.77 respectively) than the unemployed and not looking for work (0.41). A greater proportion of leaseholders who are unemployed and not looking for work reported experiencing no economic hardships, while about half of the other two groups reported some problems. On the other hand, many more of the employed and those looking for work reported three or more hardships than those who are not looking for work (Table 2).

TABLE 2. ECONOMIC HARDSHIP	EMPLOYED (n=195)	UNEMPLOYED	
		LOOKING	NOT LOOKING
Mean Economic Hardship	0.66 <sup>b</sup>	0.77 <sup>a</sup>	0.41 <sup>ab</sup>
No Economic Hardship	58% <sup>ac</sup>	48% <sup>ab</sup>	71% <sup>bc</sup>
3 or More Hardships	7% <sup>a</sup>	4%	2% <sup>a</sup>

NOTE: Within rows, employment groups sharing a superscript letter (a, b, c) are significantly different at the p<.05 level, chi-square tests and t-tests.

FIGURE 5. OTHER EMPLOYED ADULTS



**OTHER EMPLOYED ADULTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD** The survey asked leaseholders if any other adults living in the household were employed. Figure 5 shows these results for households in which there is more than one adult. **Overall, there are many more adults who are working full or part time jobs in the households of leaseholders who are employed that than among those who are not employed.**

NOTE: Bars sharing a superscript letter (a, b, c) are significantly different at the p<.05 level, chi-square tests.

<sup>i</sup> Only leaseholders who reported that their preferred choice was subsidized housing were included in the analysis (n=661). Number of cases reported is unweighted and percentages are weighted.

<sup>ii</sup> Respondents were asked if a doctor had told them they have (any of the following): arthritis/rheumatism, ulcers, cancer, hypertension, diabetes, kidney/liver problems, asthma, other respiratory diseases, stroke, blood circulation problem, heart trouble/attack, sickle cell anemia, hearing/vision problems, emotional/nervous problems, sexually transmitted illness, HIV positive/AIDS, and any other illness.

For more information, call Greg Lanier at 312-357-3780, or visit our web site, <http://www.norc.org/projects/Resident+Relocation+Surveys.htm>