

# Family Options Study

Short-term Impacts of Housing and Services  
Interventions for Homeless Families

May 17, 2016



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# Presentation Overview

- Overview of Family Homelessness
- Overview of the Family Options Study
- Short-term Outcomes for Families
- Intervention Costs
- What now?



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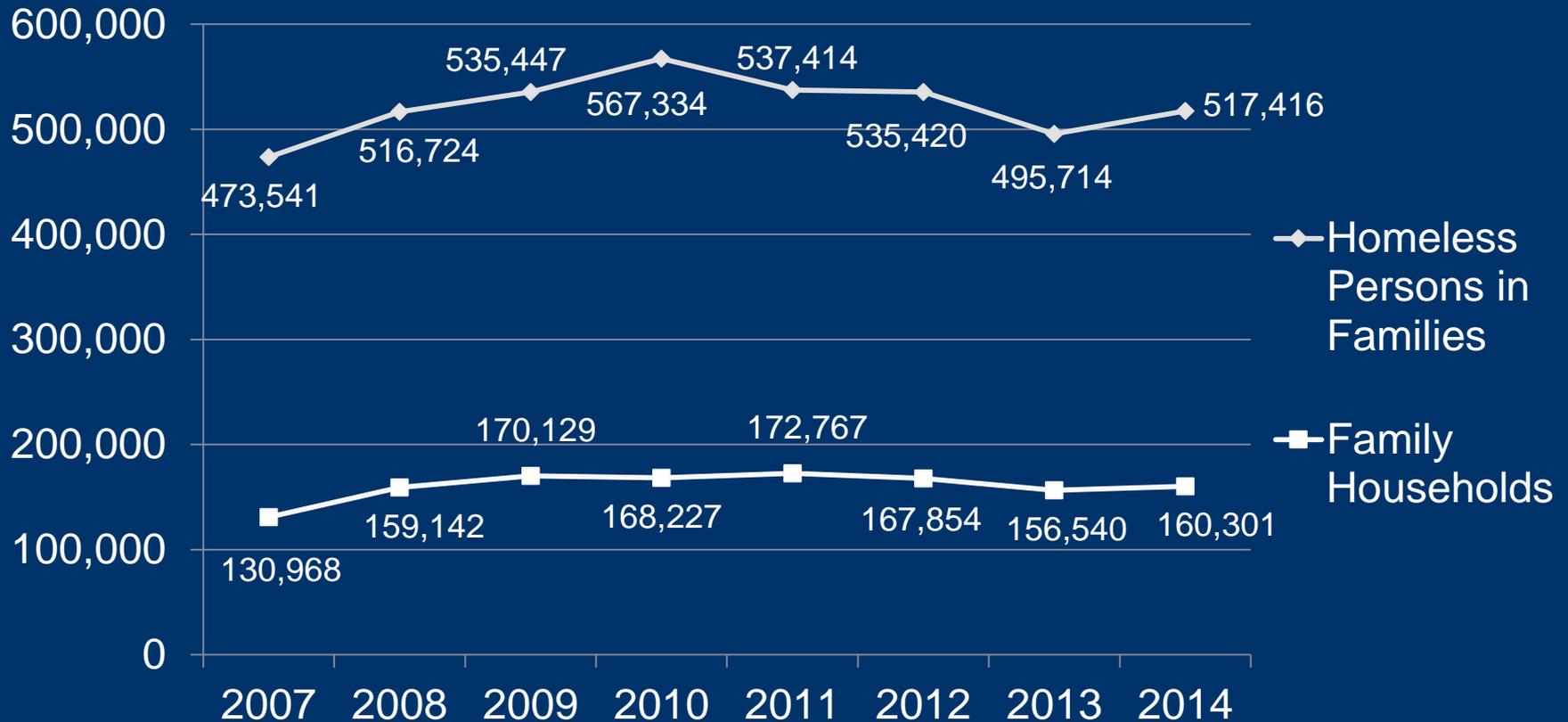
# Overview of Family Homelessness



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# One Year Estimates of Sheltered Families with Children



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# What Do We Know About Homeless Families?

- Most of the sheltered adults in families are women (78.4%)
- Of all sheltered homeless children in families, just over half (50.5%) are under the age of six
- Nearly 75% of the sheltered family population identify as members of a minority group
- Most common household size among sheltered families is 3 people; but 2 person families (parent + child) are 5.6 times as common among homeless families than among all US families (23% vs. 4.1%)
- Disability rates among sheltered adults in families with children (21.3%) are 2.5 times higher than that of the U.S. adults in families with children (8.5%), but still lower than that of adults in shelter as individuals (46.6%)



# Programs that a Community May Use to Address Homelessness

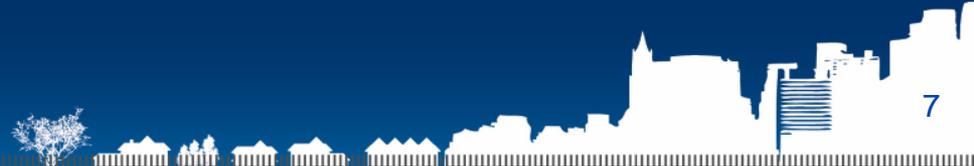
- Emergency Shelters
- Transitional Housing
  - Project-based vs. Scattered-site
  - Transition-in-place vs. not transition-in-place
- Permanent Supportive Housing
  - Project-based vs. Scattered-site
- Rapid Re-housing
- Mainstream Housing Subsidy (e.g. Housing Choice Voucher or Public Housing Unit)



# Overview of the Family Options Study



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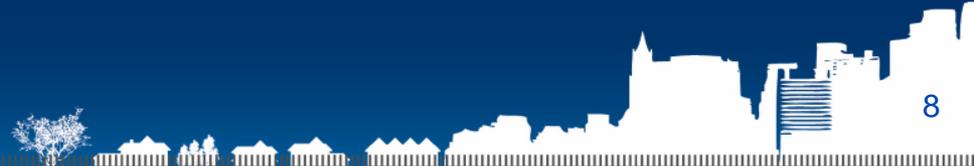


# Family Options Study

- Designed to generate evidence about which types of housing and services interventions work best for families experiencing homelessness
- Examines three types of interventions:
  - Permanent housing subsidy (SUB)
  - Community-based rapid re-housing (CBRR)
  - Project-based transitional housing (PBTH)
- With comparison to the usual care (UC) available in communities



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# Study Sites



# Intake and Random Assignment

Families in emergency shelter 7+ days with at least one child age 15 or younger

Informed consent

Eligibility screening for available intervention slots

Baseline survey

Random assignment among available slots for which families are eligible

SUB

PBTH

CBRR

UC



# Interventions in the Study

## SUB

**Subsidy**— permanent housing subsidy, usually a Housing Choice Voucher, no supportive services

## CBRR

**Community-Based Rapid Rehousing**—short term rental assistance with limited, housing-focused services

## PBTH

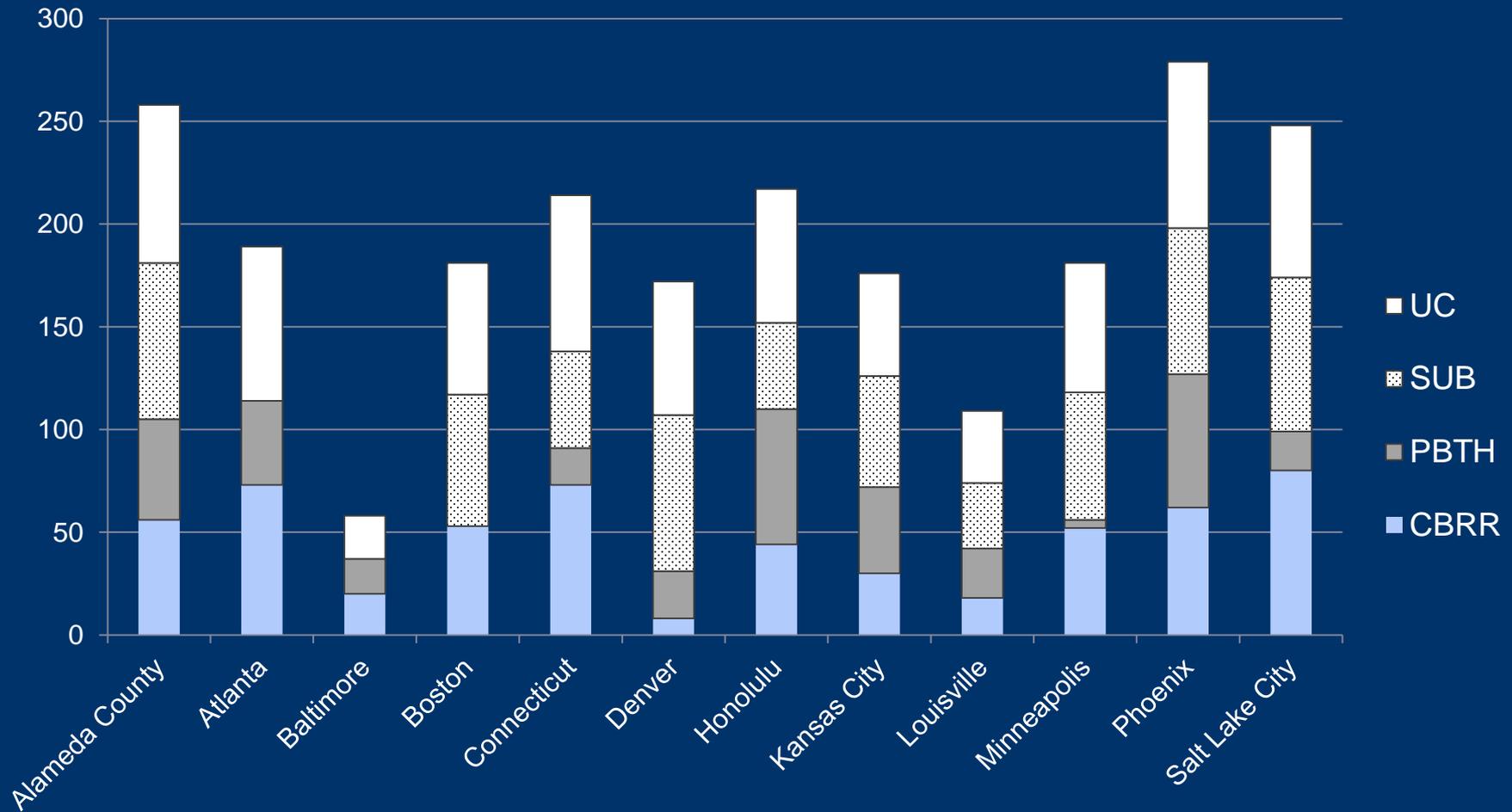
**Project-based Transitional Housing**—single-site, temporary housing with multidimensional supportive services

## UC

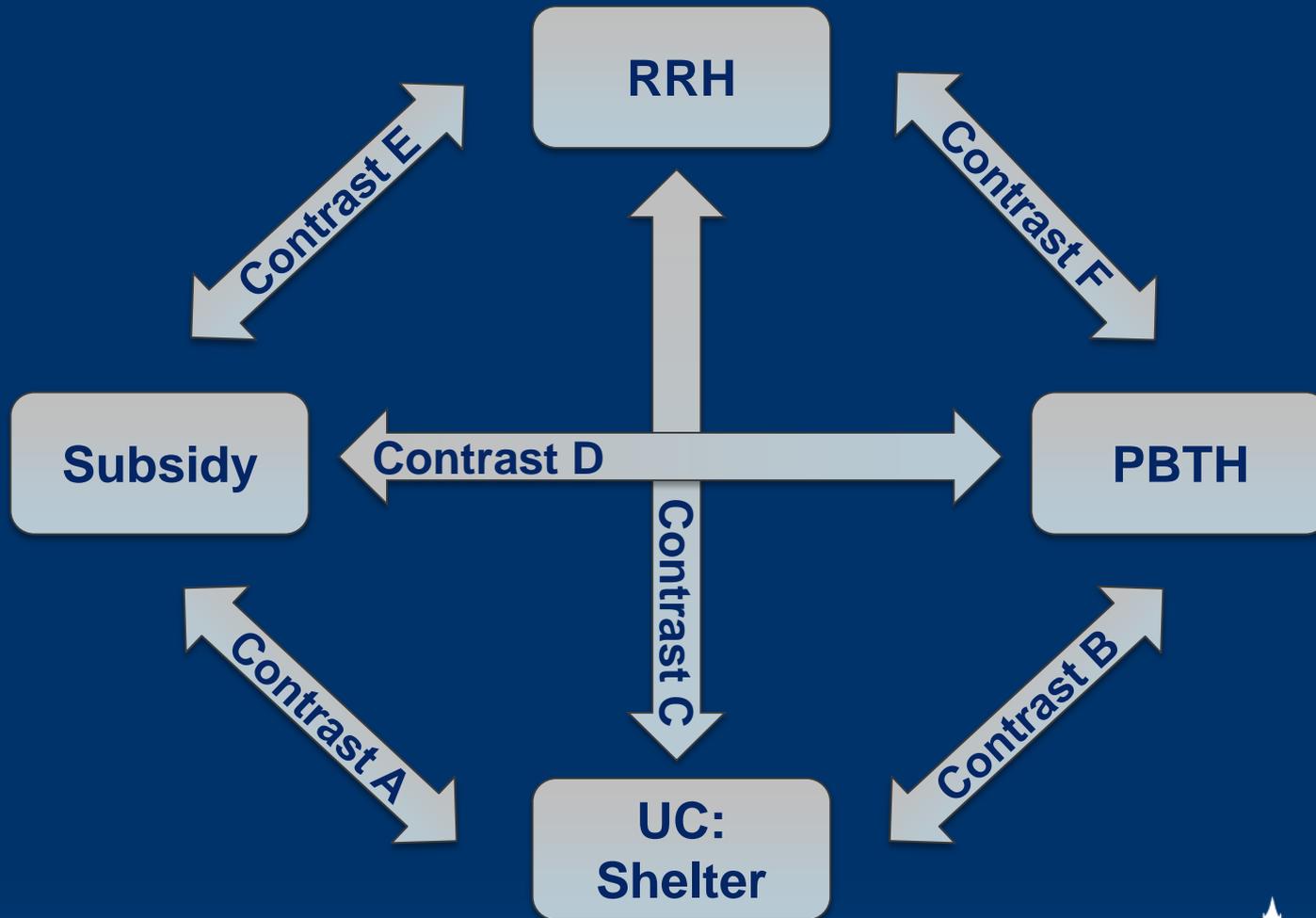
**Usual Care**—services and housing that families would access on their own in the absence of a direct referral to another intervention



# Enrollment by Intervention and Site



# 6 Pairwise Comparisons



# Data Sources

## Participant data

- Baseline interviews at random assignment
- Interim contacts with families at 6-month intervals
- Follow-up survey 18 months after random assignment
- Data on child outcomes at 18-months\*

## Administrative data

- HUD data on housing assistance (PIC and TRACS)
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

## Site-based data to describe the interventions

- Service data
- Intervention cost data

\* Funding for this data collection through NICHD: 5R01HD066082



# Policy Question Being Addressed

***Policy question:*** Does priority access to a particular intervention yield differences in outcomes for homeless families over the short-term (approximately 18 months) and/or the long-term (approximately 36 months)?

- Impact estimates reveal the *average impact* of offering a family priority access to a specific intervention.
- The study design provides evidence about the kinds of assistance families use under these scenarios and the effects of that program use.
- Study families used a variety of housing and homelessness assistance under these scenarios which mirror the “real-world” conditions in which families are not required to use any one type of assistance.



# Impacts of Interventions

- Effects of assignment to three active interventions compared to usual care and to one another
- Impacts estimated on 73 outcomes across five domains:
  - Housing stability
  - Family preservation
  - Adult well-being
  - Child well-being
  - Self-sufficiency
- Preselected a set of 18 outcomes of primary interest



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# Primary Outcomes

## Housing Stability (intervention goal: lower values)

- At least 1 night homeless or doubled up in the past 6 months or in shelter in past 12 months
- At least 1 night homeless or doubled up in the past 6 months
- Number of places lived in the past six months
- Any stay in emergency shelter in months 7 – 18 after random assignment

## Family Preservation (intervention goal: lower values)

- Family has at least one child separated in the past 6 months
- Spouse/partner separated in past 6 months, of those with spouse/partner present at random assignment
- Family has no child reunified, of those families with at least one child absent at random assignment



# Primary Outcomes

## Adult well-being (intervention goal: lower values)

- Health in past 30 days was poor or fair
- Psychological distress
- Alcohol dependence or drug abuse
- Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 6 months

## Child well-being (intervention goal: lower values)

- Number of schools attended since random assignment
- Childcare or school absences in the last month
- Poor or fair health
- Behavior problems



# Primary Outcomes

## Self-sufficiency (intervention goal: higher values)

- Work for pay in week before survey
- Total family income
- Household is food secure



# Short-term Outcomes for Families



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# Summary of Impact Results

<i>Outcomes</i>	SUB vs. UC	CBRR vs. UC	PBTH vs. UC
<b>Housing stability</b>	+ + +		+ +
<b>Family preservation</b>	+		
<b>Adult well-being</b>	+ + +		
<b>Child well-being</b>	+ +	+	
<b>Self-sufficiency</b>	- +	+ +	



# Usual Care

- Shows what happens without special offers of assistance
- UC families were not faring well 20 months after study enrollment
- UC families spent substantial periods of time in emergency shelter (4 months) following random assignment
- UC families participated in homeless and housing assistance programs at fairly high rates- roughly 28% exited shelter and had no recorded use of subsequent housing/shelter assistance
- The mix of services used by UC families was expensive with an average cost per family of \$30,000



# Subsidy

- When SUB is available to families in shelter they take it up at high rates (84%) and continue to use it for a sustained period
- Compared to CBRR, PBTH and UC, SUB caused striking improvements in housing stability
- Benefits extended beyond housing stability, especially when compared to UC, including increased family preservation, decreased adult psychological distress, decreased intimate partner violence, and reduced school mobility for kids
- Reduced labor market engagement but improved food security and reduced economic stress



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# Community-based Rapid Re-housing

- Take up of CBRR was relatively low (60%)
- More rapid departure from emergency shelter than UC, but not more rapid than SUB or PBTH
- CBRR was equivalent to UC and less effective than the other active interventions in preventing subsequent homelessness and in improving other aspects of housing stability
- CBRR families demonstrated increased family income when compared to SUB families, and modestly improved food security when compared to UC families



# Project-based Transitional Housing

- Take up of PBTH was the lowest of all interventions (54%)
- PBTH reduced homelessness compared to UC, but did not lead to other effects
- CBRR produced more favorable effects in all measures of adult well-being when compared to PBTH, which is surprising given the amount of services offered in PBTH programs

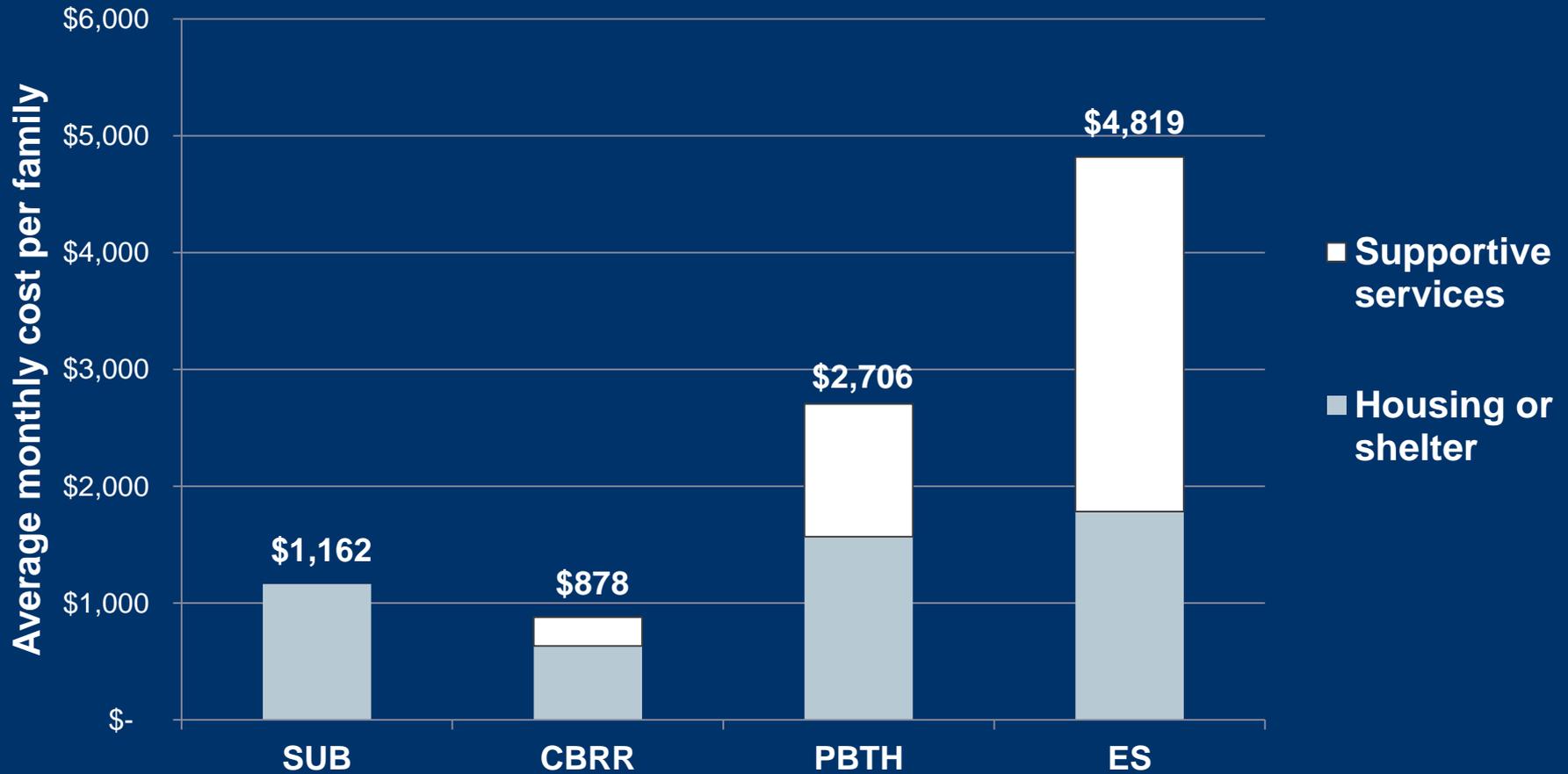


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# Intervention Costs

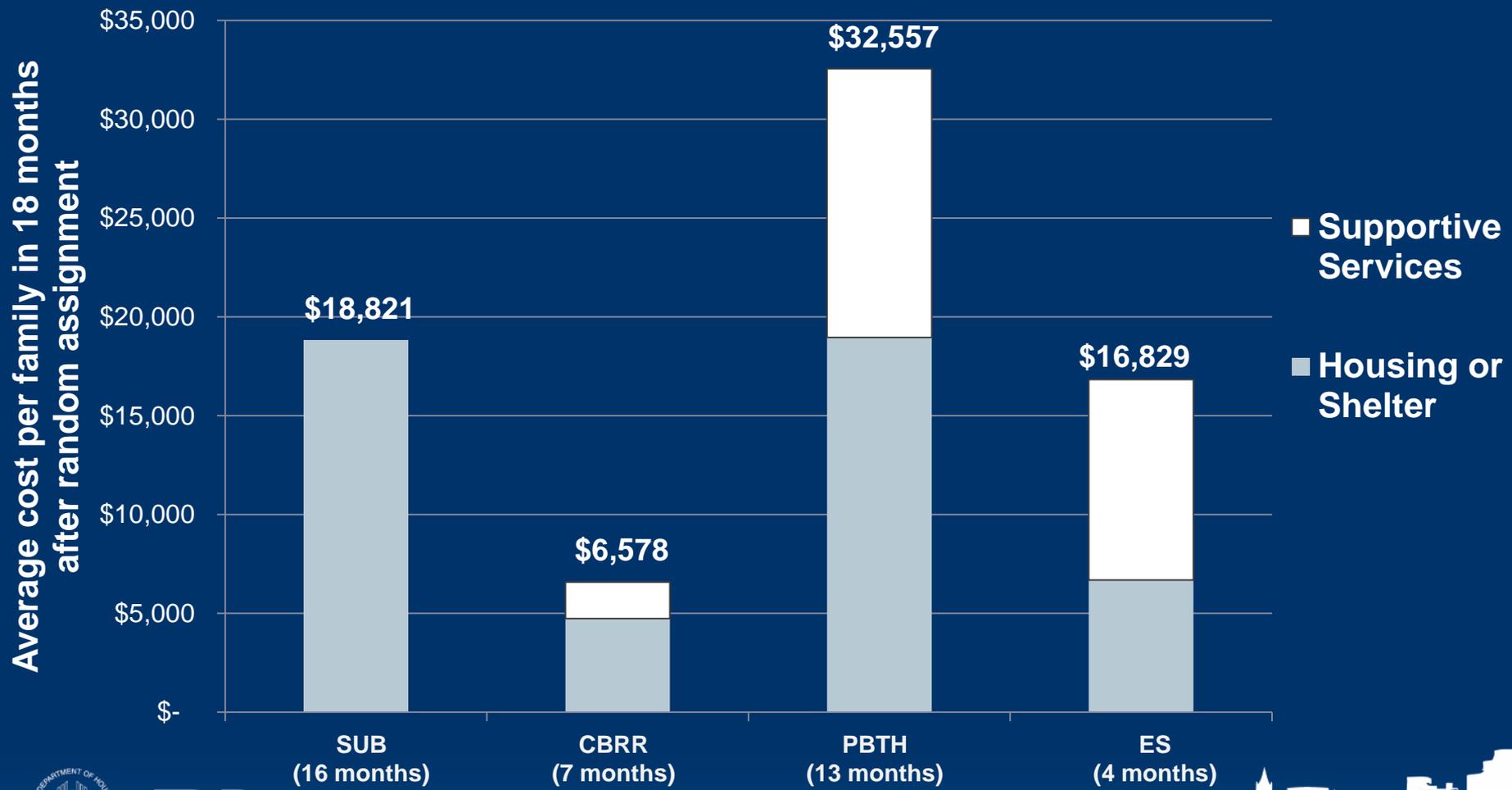


# Average Monthly Cost (per family)

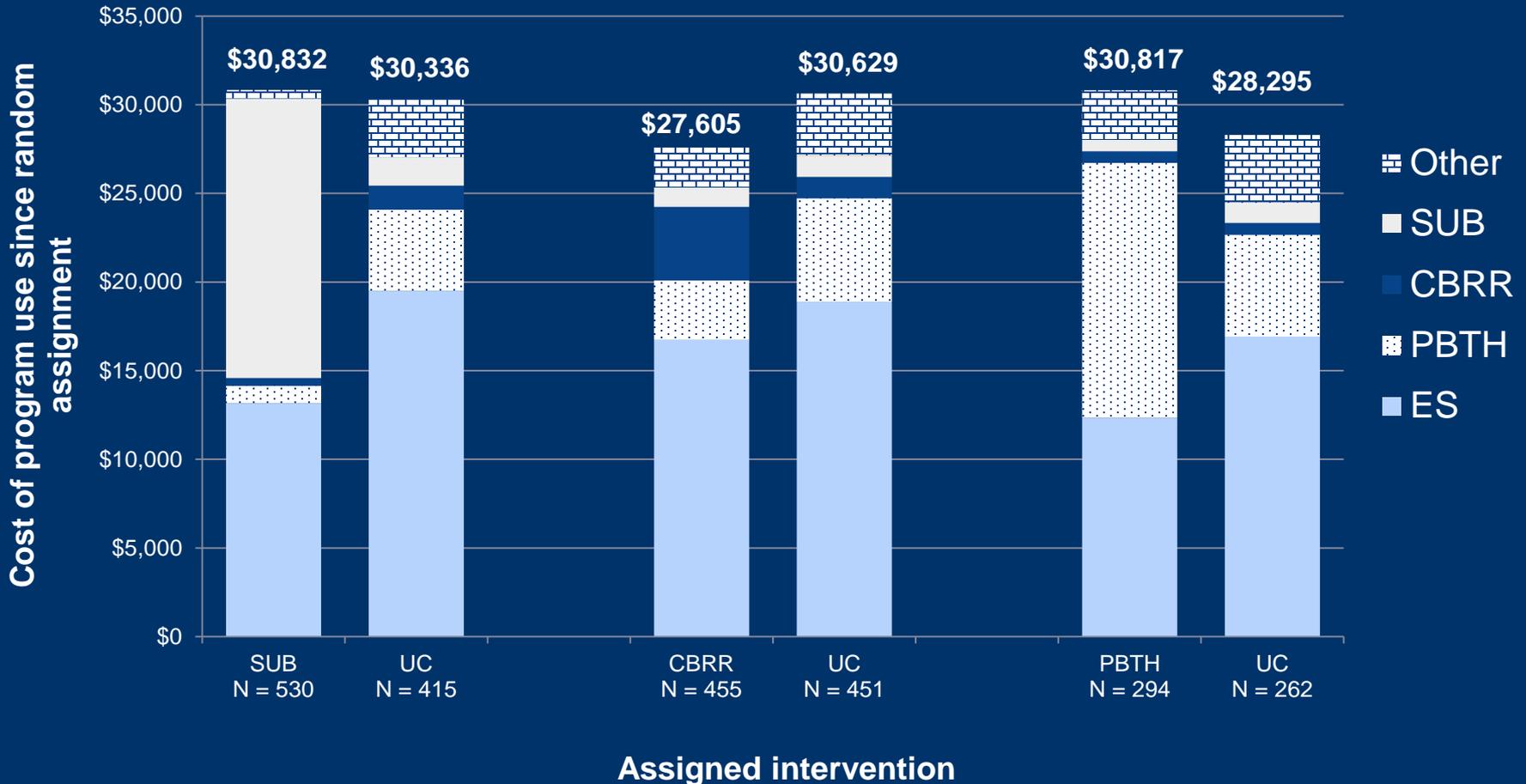


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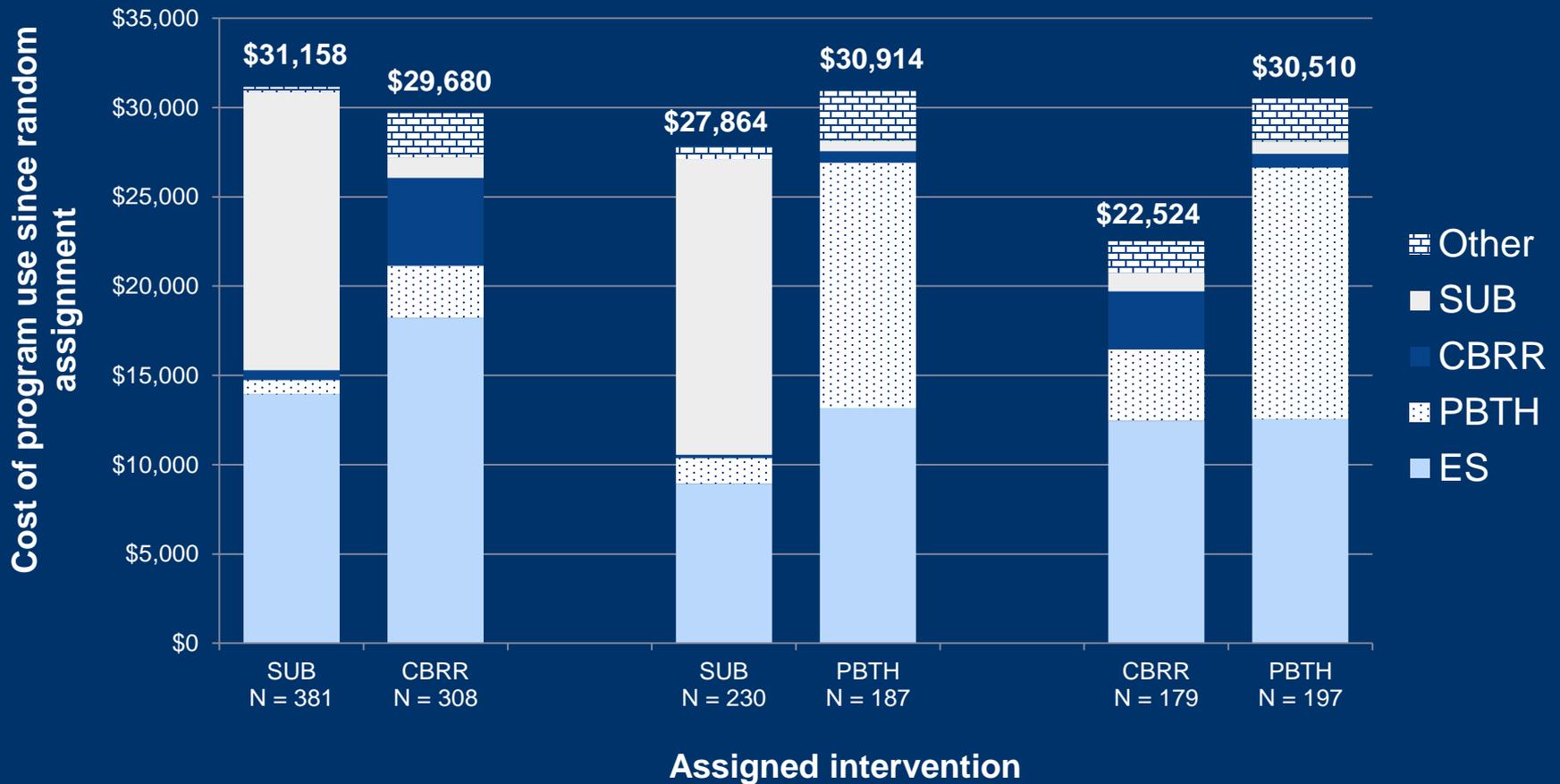
# Average Cost Per Family Per Stay Over Follow Up Period



# Cost of All Program Use Since RA: UC vs. Active Intervention



# Cost of All Program Use Since RA: Active Intervention vs. Active Intervention



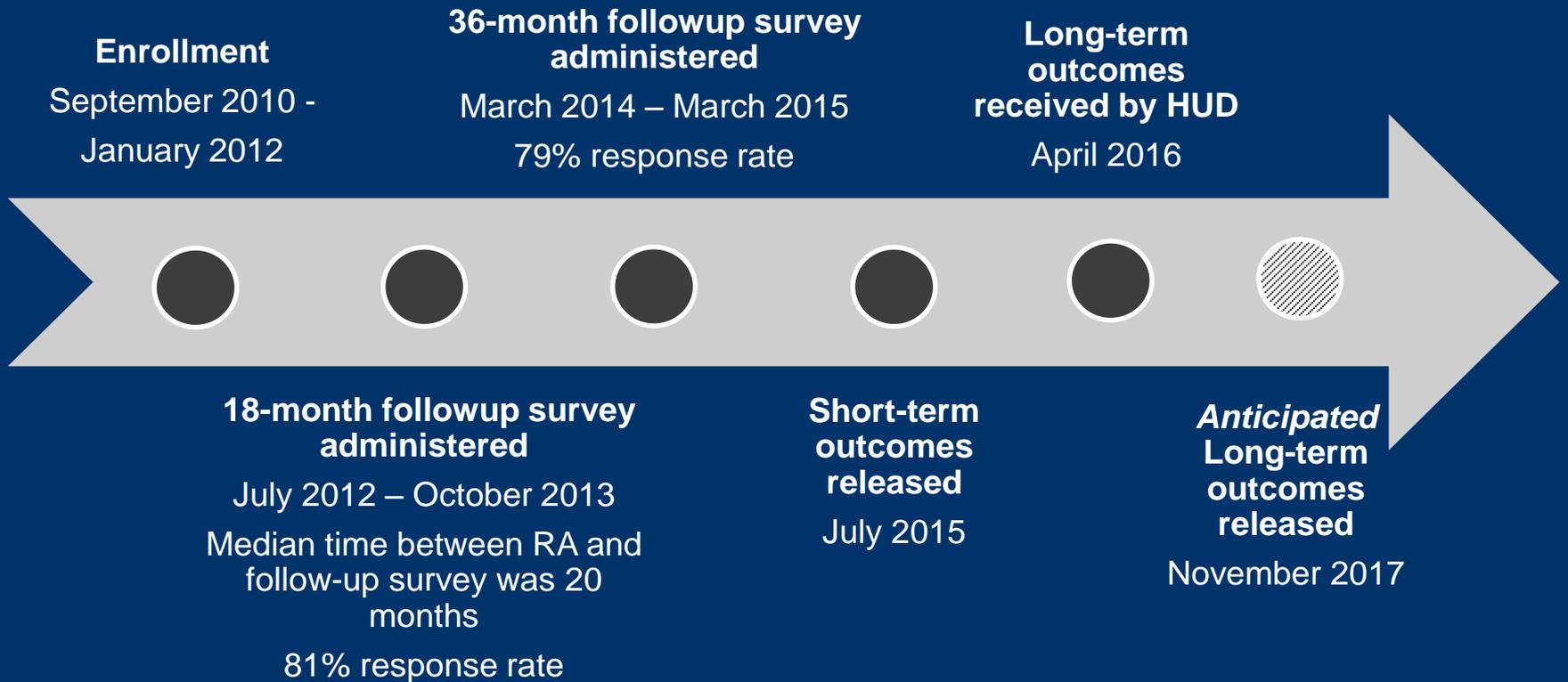
# What Now?



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# Study Timeline



# Additional Information

- Website for the Family Options Study

[http://www.huduser.org/portal/family\\_options\\_study.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/family_options_study.html)

- HUD Contact: [anne.l.fletcher@hud.gov](mailto:anne.l.fletcher@hud.gov)

[a.l.fletcher@hud.gov](mailto:a.l.fletcher@hud.gov)

- Learn more about Homeless Assistance in your community:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/>



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