

These questions are either identical to or minor modifications of questions asked in the 1987 Urban Institute study. We modified the wording of some questions to make sure that the respondent and the researcher mean the same thing by their answers (e.g., on Question 13, some women living with their children will say they live alone, because they do not live with a spouse or boyfriend. We want to be sure that "alone" means "alone.")

Section 2, Questions 16a and b
Section 3, Questions 45a and b

These questions are modified versions of a question asked in the 1987 Urban Institute study. We changed the format from obtaining only a single response to probing for all relevant responses and then asking the respondent to identify the primary reason. This eliminates the difficulty in interpreting single responses such as Respondent 1 saying "couldn't pay the rent," Respondent 2 saying "lost my job," and Respondent 3 saying "Was doing drugs," when all three could not pay the rent because they lost their jobs because they were doing drugs.

Section 2, Questions 17-19
Section 3, Questions 46-47c

These questions were not in the 1987 Urban Institute study.

Subsequent research by NIDA (1992) indicates that many homeless people spend a considerable amount of time in institutions or in temporary arrangements with friends or family between the interview date and the time when they last had a permanent place to stay (Question 11). In other words, they are not literally homeless during the whole period since they last had a permanent place to stay. The answers to these questions will let us determine how much of the time they were literally homeless.

Section 2, Question 20

We want this question included to learn whether respondents have any experience in the housing market on their own. Never having been a primary tenant has been shown (Weitzman, 1989) to differentiate homeless from never-homeless families.

Section 2, Questions 21-23
Section 3, Questions 48-50

HHS requested these questions. Local studies (Piliavin, Sosin, and Westerfelt, 1986; Sosin, Colson and Grossman, 1988) have shown seriously elevated rates of childhood experiences in foster care among the adult homeless. The answers to these questions will help identify the prevalence of childhood out-of-home placement and runaway behavior among the adult homeless population for the first time on a national sample. High prevalence could indicate a preventive role in programs within HHS responsibility.

Section 2, Questions 28-32
Section 3, Questions 51-55

These questions are of interest to Department of Agriculture - Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), FEMA, and HHS' Health Care for the Homeless program—the federal agencies supporting emergency services. Answers to these questions will provide some explanation of the movement of homeless people from one type of community to another, such as the