

Dennis P. **Culhane** (Ph.D., Social Psychology, Boston College, 1990) is Professor of Social Welfare Policy and Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, and the Co-Director of the Cartographic Modeling Laboratory. He recently received the “A Home for Every American” National Partner Award from the US interagency Council on Homelessness and was selected by *Esquire* magazine as one of the “Best & Brightest in 2005” in a profile that highlighted his groundbreaking research on homelessness.

Scientific Accomplishment. D Culhane studies homelessness and housing policy. His research has been instrumental in a national shift in how society addresses homelessness, including expansions in supportive housing for people who are chronically homeless, and housing stabilization programs for people at-risk of homelessness. 3 examples of findings from among several recent articles in journals or govt reports: (1) A study in Fannie Mae’s *Housing Policy Debate* tests a typology of family homelessness based on patterns of public shelter utilization and examines whether family characteristics are associated with those patterns. The results indicate that a substantial majority of homeless families stay in public shelters for relatively brief periods, exit, and do not return. Approximately 20% stay for long periods. A small but noteworthy proportion cycles in and out of shelters repeatedly. Families with long stays are no more likely than families with short stays to have intensive behavioral health treatment histories, to be disabled, or to be unemployed. Families with repeat stays have the highest rates of intensive behavioral health treatment, placement of children in foster care, disability, and unemployment. The results suggest that policy and program factors, rather than family characteristics, are responsible for long shelter stays. (2) In a paper published by the US HUD Office of Policy Development and Research: Although many formerly homeless people remain in permanent supportive housing for many years, substantial numbers leave within months of entry. The questions of why people leave permanent housing and what happens to them constitute the principal focus of a study examining the experience of some 943 residents of permanent supportive housing in Philadelphia during the period from 2001 to 2005. It turns out that it is not necessarily a bad thing that some people leave “permanent” supportive housing. (3) From *Crime and Delinq*: Incarceration histories and shelter use patterns of 7,022 persons staying in public shelters in NYC were matched with data on releases from New York State prisons and New York City jails, 23% of a point-prevalent shelter population was identified as having had an incarceration within the previous 2-year period. Persons entering shelter following a jail episode exhibited different shelter stay patterns than did those having exited a prison episode; hence different dynamics predominate and different interventions are called for in preventing homelessness among persons released from jail and from prison.

Present and Future. D Culhane is first author on a forthcoming US DHHS and DHUD report on accountability, cost-effectiveness, and program performance over the past decade as regards policies toward the homeless. Little is still known about the cost effectiveness of housing interventions for homeless persons without a severe mental illness or for families, nor about lower cost interventions relative to supportive housing. He and his co-authors propose investigation of less costly interventions, especially for adults with substance use disorders and families, and propose a framework for considering such investigations. D Culhane is currently involved in three jurisdictions (Massachusetts, NYC, and Philadelphia) in the testing of lower-cost housing and support interventions to address family homelessness. He is also partnering with the State of New York Office of Mental Health to devise a new model of supportive services for housing for adults with disabilities.

PSC and Research. D Culhane is the PI of a grant from The Conrad Hilton Fdn. for his work on homelessness, the PI for grants from the William Penn Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust for the Philadelphia Neighborhood Information System: A Web-based Geographic Information System [GIS] for Community Planning and Development, and Co-Investigator and GIS Core Leader for an NCMHHD P60 (S. Kumanyika, PI) on health disparities and obesity. He has been an active in-house reviewer for the new PSC working paper series. The Penn PSC has opted not to specialize in GIS and other geographic-related analytic and information technologies, but, to the extent that researchers have needs in this area, D Culhane is the PSC liaison to the relevant community, at Penn and beyond. Examples include collaboration with **Chang** on her grants on neighborhood characteristics and obesity, prior work with **Mandell** on a longitudinal data base for research addressing the needs of children in Philadelphia, and a planned study (with **Charles** and **Zuberi**) tracing the history of the neighborhoods under study by WEB DuBois from 1900-present to better understand the role that social ecology has played in the social, economic, and demographic change in Philadelphia.