

Housing Mobility Programs in the U.S.

2015



Prepared for the Sixth National Conference on Housing Mobility, Chicago, June 2015, by Audrey Berdahl-Baldwin (conference co-sponsored by PRRAC, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Metropolitan Planning Council)

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Current Housing Mobility Programs in the U.S.

Baltimore, Maryland – Baltimore Housing Mobility Program

Since 2003, the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program (BHMP) has helped over 2,800 families move to higher opportunity neighborhoods. The settlement from the 1995 Thompson v. HUD desegregation lawsuit led to the creation of the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, which began to offer counseling in 1996 through a partial consent decree offering tenant-based vouchers to 1,342 families. The program was expanded in 2012 as part of the final settlement in the Thompson case, adding an additional 2,600 vouchers.

The Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership, a nonprofit organization, administers BHMP and outlines a set of geographic criteria in order for voucher holders to participate in the program. The original target neighborhoods were “areas less than 10 percent poor...less than 30 percent black...[and] with no more than 5 percent of residents in subsidized housing.” The targeting criteria were recently amended, using a multi-faceted opportunity map of the region. Participants must stay in their new residence for a year and “remain in eligible areas for at least two years.” The Baltimore Housing Mobility Program gives preference to families with children under the age of eight.

An important component of BHMP is the program’s work with landlords. “Landlord education and outreach” help to increase access to higher opportunity neighborhoods. As part of pre-move counseling, participants have the chance to tour different communities and attend workshops. After the move, BHMP provides counseling for two years and offers “second-move counseling.” BHMP helps with financial planning and connects participants to quality schools, transportation, and employment resources in their new neighborhoods. More than two-thirds of participating households “remain in integrated, low-poverty communities.”

<http://www.brhp.org>

Buffalo, New York – Housing Opportunities Made Equal of New York

Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) is a nonprofit that offers a housing mobility program through the Greater Buffalo Community Housing Center (CHC), serving HCV holders in Erie County. Since 1963, HOME has worked to advance fair housing “through education, advocacy, the enforcement of fair housing laws and the creation of housing

opportunities.” A settlement in 1996 from the *Comer v. Kemp* case led to the establishment of the Community Housing Center and an increased number housing subsidies. The Community Housing Center became a HOME program in 1999 and has helped 2,167 people move to higher opportunity neighborhoods and has supported over 4,500 families.

In order to be eligible for CHC’s services, families must be first-time HCV holders and must currently reside in a neighborhood with a poverty level greater than 30 percent. CHC provides individual counseling and workshops for families. Participants attend an initial “mobility meeting,” which covers “renter’s rights and protections under fair housing laws, how to identify good housing and how to meet landlords’ screening criteria.” This meeting also discusses the advantages of high-opportunity neighborhoods, which the organization defines as areas with a poverty level below 25 percent. CHC provides financial incentives for opportunity moves by offering a \$400 security deposit grant.

In addition to one-on-one counseling, voucher holders can learn about housing options by calling or visiting the organization. CHC has a resource room with a “mobility library,” which contains binders with information about different neighborhoods in the Buffalo area, including transportation accessibility, churches, schools, and grocery stores.

Participants also have access to a computer and telephone at the Community Housing Center so that they can view online listings and call landlords. The organization also helps families tour units by providing escorted searches on an as-requested basis. Upon housing selection, the CHC will also review rental agreements and leases when requested.

To support the selection process and increase access to higher opportunity areas, CHC reaches out to landlords and maintains a landlord database. Landlords learn about the organization through mailings and trainings, and are invited to list their units with Community Housing Center.

For families that moved to areas of greater opportunity, CHC provides post-move services. The GO! Program works with participants to establish short- and long-term goals after their move. The organization makes referrals and connects households to local community agencies that provide services such as job training and placement, credit counseling, and adult education.

<http://www.homeny.org>

Chicago Metro, Illinois – Housing Choice Partners

Housing Choice Partners (HCP) is a nonprofit based in Illinois whose mission is to reduce intergenerational poverty by promoting expanded housing choice for low-income households. Since 1995, HCP has provided services to nearly 17,000 households through programs such as mobility counseling, relocation of public housing residents, Good Neighbor workshops, consulting to assist others in developing mobility programs, and a Rental Housing Support Program through the State of Illinois (a project-based subsidy program similar to the voucher program). About 11,000 people have participated in an HCP mobility counseling program of some kind. Nearly 3,000 moves to opportunity areas have been made throughout the Chicago-land region as a result – about 26% of housing choice voucher households participating in mobility programming. This means that nearly 3,000 households have been able to use their voucher not just to pay the rent, but to improve their lives.

HCP officially partnered with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) in 2003, during the CHA's Plan for Transformation, which resulted in thousands of public housing units coming down and new mixed-income replacement housing being built. At this time, HCP worked with nearly 1,000 public housing families who decided to take a housing choice voucher as their relocation option. Of those 1,000 clients, about 45 percent moved to opportunity or low-poverty areas with less crime, better schools, and a better quality of life.

Under HCP's current CHA mobility program, counselors help HCV participants identify and tour communities of opportunity, defined by the CHA as areas with less than 20 percent poverty and less than 5 percent CHA housing saturation, or economically improving areas. HCP provides workshops for clients on home maintenance, financial management, tenant rights and responsibilities, as well as classes on how to find a good school and how to be active participants in their new community. The program supports the move-in process by offering financial assistance to some participants through a grant of up to \$500 to be used toward a security deposit. After the move, HCP counselors provide follow-up supportive services within the first year, which includes assisting with landlord or other issues and connecting clients to needed social services. Retention is important, and HCP can help with future moves within opportunity areas. HCP also conducts education and outreach to landlords and real estate agents about the HCV program. Services are offered in both English and Spanish.

HCP's other programming includes assisting with the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) mobility program through a Community Development Block Grant, managing a State of Illinois project-based subsidy program, administering income certifications and inspections as would a PHA. The organization is also contracted with the Joliet and Will County Housing Authority for relocation and mobility services.

HCP also recently completed a three-year demonstration program with the Metropolitan Planning Council and seven Chicagoland housing authorities, including Chicago Housing Authority, DuPage Housing Authority, Housing Authority of Cook County, Lake County Housing Authority, McHenry County Housing Authority, Oak Park Housing Authority, Waukegan Housing Authority, to test strategies around regional mobility, portability, and project-based units to expand housing choice. The regional effort was supported by HUD, with evaluation support provided to RAND Corporation by the MacArthur Foundation. Finally, HCP launched its own consulting services to assist Public Housing Authorities, entitlement jurisdictions and others around the country in developing similar programs.

<http://www.hcp-chicago.org>

Cincinnati, Ohio – Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Ohio

Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Ohio began its Mobility Program in 1984 after receiving six years of funding from a consent decree from the *Hutchins v. Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority* case. The program continues to help housing choice voucher holders move to higher opportunity neighborhoods in the greater Cincinnati area. In order to participate in the program, families must be willing and able to move to areas with a poverty level below 15 percent and stay in their new unit for one year. Participating households receive vouchers from the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Hamilton County Tenant-Based Assistance Program (TBA).

HOME's Mobility Program in Ohio offers workshops, financial assistance, landlord-tenant support, and listings of available housing. HOME personnel serve as intermediaries between tenants, landlords, and Section 8 staff members from the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority. In addition, the program connects with schools to help children transition into their new community. Between 2012 and 2015, HOME's Mobility Program has provided counseling to 642 families, supplied financial assistance to 94 households, and facilitated 272 moves to higher opportunity communities.

The program has a landlord outreach specialist who recruits landlords and offers introductory trainings on the housing choice voucher program. The organization also hosts a workshop called, “The Heart of Your Business,” which convenes and supports landlords involved in the mobility program. Between 2012 and 2015, the program has recruited 184 landlords.

<http://www.cincyfairhousing.com>

Connecticut: Bridgeport, Waterbury, Bridgeport, Danbury, and Stamford – New Opportunities

New Opportunities is a community action nonprofit organization that provides an array of services which include housing mobility counseling, rental search assistance, and tenant education to eligible Housing Choice Voucher and RAP program participants. New Opportunities’ Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance program is one of the many services that advances the organization’s mission “to improve the quality of life for economically disadvantaged individuals by providing the necessary resources to increase the standard of living, foster self-improvement, and maximize self-empowerment.” Since 2010, New Opportunities has assisted hundreds of families through their housing mobility program. “Needs assessments and referrals” comprise an important component of this program, since the organization directs participants to resources such as “energy assistance, food banks, security deposit resources, charitable foundations, credit counseling, furniture resources, [and] legal services.” In addition, New Opportunities organizes education and outreach to recruit landlords, facilitates empowering tenant education, and assists in negotiating rental amounts. The “tenant education” service element includes topics such as credit, budgeting, and money management; local communities and their resources; interviewing, communication, and negotiation skills; tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities; fair housing laws and discrimination; etc. The “search assistance” component involves facilitating mobility moves from areas of concentrated poverty into less impacted areas by providing targeted unit searches. Bilingual communication, both written and oral, is provided to non-English-speaking participants.

<http://www.newoppinc.org/housing-mobility>

Connecticut: Hartford – Housing Education Resource Center

The Housing Education Resource Center (HERC) was established in 1980 as the Housing Coalition for the Capitol Region. Its original purpose was to promote affordable housing throughout the region, to serve as a resource for local

supporters of such housing, and to develop and disseminate educational materials addressing some of the barriers to affordable housing development. HERC began providing mobility counseling services in 1992. Beginning in 2002, HERC began providing mobility counseling supported by a state contract and has served nearly 500 households.

HERC’s mobility counseling participants receive comprehensive counseling, assistance and support services that enable them to explore their housing options throughout the region with the goal of improving their living situation and environment. Clients receive tenant education, budget and credit education and advice, housing search assistance, referrals to other service providers, and a variety of other services aimed at facilitating relocation from high- to low-poverty neighborhoods. HERC provides a Tenant Education Workshop, which includes education and training on credit repair, budgeting, and money Management, amenities in new communities, communications skills, tenant rights and responsibilities, fair housing, and housing searches. HERC then provides a family needs assessment to identify client needs and goals, related referrals, and housing search assistance.

<http://www.herc-inc.org/>

Connecticut: New Haven – Home, Inc.

HOME INC operates its Housing Counseling and Regional Mobility Programs under a contract with the State of Connecticut, and collaborates closely with the state’s rental subsidy administrators and housing authorities. These programs seek to maximize the use of available housing subsidies and to offer housing opportunities in low-poverty areas of South Central and Southeastern Connecticut. Participation is purely voluntary, for both the resident and the eventual landlord. HOME INC assists participants by maintaining a list of available homes, preparing them for their search, orienting them to available services, helping them resolve outstanding credit problems, and assisting landlords with government programs.

The three Connecticut housing mobility programs were originally established as part of the settlement of a fair housing case filed by the ACLU of Connecticut and state legal services programs.

<http://www.homeinc-ct.org>

Cook County, Illinois – Housing Authority of Cook County

The Housing Authority of Cook County provides housing mobility counseling through the Community Choice Program

(CCP). This program aims to help housing choice voucher holders move to “high-performing communities” in suburban Cook County. For CCP, these opportunity areas are characterized by low crime rates, quality schools, low poverty levels, housing stability, job access, numerous community resources, and diverse resident demographics. With the support of CCP, 40 households have moved to higher opportunity areas. There are currently 40 families enrolled in the program, and 38 are in the process of finding housing.

CCP helps voucher holders search for homes and also refers families to different residences. The program distributes resource materials and organizes workshops. To date, 96 people have attended one of CCP’s workshops. CCP also recruits landlords and connects them to families with housing choice vouchers. Participants can attend a housing fair where they meet landlords who have available units. Voucher holders can also tour a housing unit. The program assists with paperwork and expedites the inspection process to facilitate a quick move-in process. In addition, CCP works with families to develop a “personalized action plan.” Families are welcome to reach out the organization as they transition into their new home, and CCP visits the household 90 days after the move.

For greater accessibility, CCP partners with Language Line and has used Russian and Korean language interpreters to help some families move to new homes. In addition to CCP personnel, a staff member from Housing Choice Partners – which offers mobility counseling for the city of Chicago – supports the operation of Cook County’s Community Choice Program.

<http://thehacc.org/hcv/community-choice-program>

Dallas, Texas – The Inclusive Communities Project

The Inclusive Communities Project’s Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) is a housing mobility program that works “to insure that families are made aware of and have access to high quality rental housing in lower poverty, higher opportunity areas of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Kaufman, Rockwall and Tarrant counties.” Since 2005, ICP’s Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) has served over 3,000 families who have housing choice vouchers administered by the Dallas Housing Authority.

MAP offers a variety of services that support housing mobility by helping its families locate and access homes in high opportunity areas. Types of assistance range from education/information, housing search assistance, move-related financial assistance, landlord negotiations and bonuses, fair

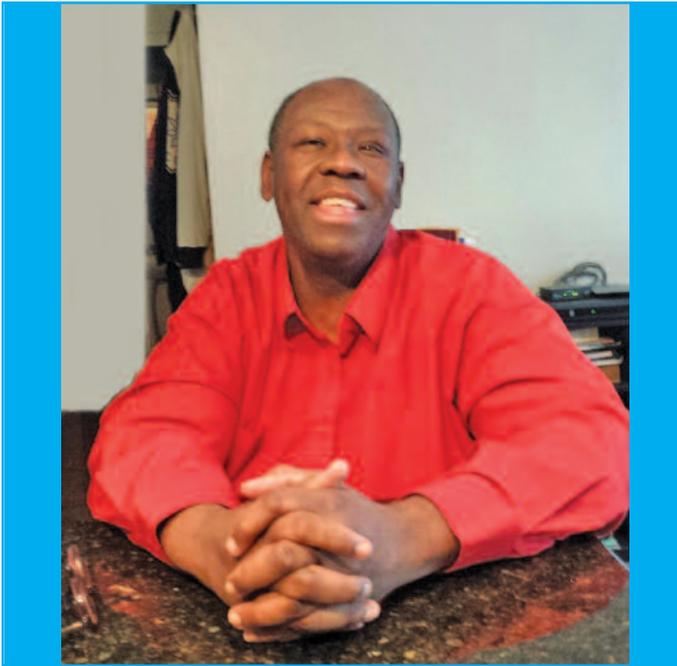
housing counseling, referrals to social service agencies, and other post-move help. ICP counselors regularly attend Dallas Housing Authority relocation briefings to connect with voucher holders.

The Inclusive Communities Project defines high opportunity areas (HOAs) as neighborhoods in which the income falls at or above 80 percent of the area median income, the poverty rate is no more than 10 percent, and the public schools are high performing. MAP created an online application, OpportunityMoves.org, to help families better determine where these types of neighborhoods exist. In order for ICP to verify HOAs, counselors check zoned schools in the area. Elementary schools must be categorized by the Texas Department of Education as having met standards, and high schools must have a four-year graduation rate of 90 percent or greater. For families with children, school quality must be confirmed in order for voucher holders to be eligible for ICP’s financial support, such as application fee and security deposit assistance. Connecting education to housing mobility is an important feature of ICP’s program. As part of the program’s post-move counseling, ICP works with families and schools to support the transition for students.

Looking at January 1, 2015 through May 31, 2015 provides a snapshot of the number of families with whom MAP comes in contact:

MAP’s educational presentations at DHA take place for relocating Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) families, relocating Walker Settlement Voucher (WSV) families (vouchers bearing payment standards up to 125% of FMRs as part of the Walker remedies), families off the waiting list who are receiving HCVs for the first time, and Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher recipients. As of May 31, 2015, there were a total of fifty-nine (59) housing mobility presentations made by MAP (44 HCV, 5 VASH, and 10 WSV). Attendees have totaled 1,549 (1405 HCV/VASH holders and 144 Walker Settlement Voucher holders). Voucher-holding families, who are relocating but did not attend a DHA group briefing, continue to be referred to MAP by DHA. MAP provides one-on-one counseling and education to these families as well, and they are included in these numbers.

Of the 1,405 HCV/VASH families briefed through May 31st, there were 1,022 (about 73%) attendees who signed Interest Forms indicating they wanted to be contacted by ICP to hear more about the opportunities available. Counselors were able to reach 668 heads-of-household by telephone and of these families, 588 (about 88%) continued interest after speaking one-on-one with a counselor. Another 354 either did not return messages/mailings or the counselors were not



able to reach the family at the telephone number provided MAP. The MAP counseling staff includes one counselor who is fluent in Spanish.

<http://inclusivecommunities.net/moving.php>

King County, Washington – King County Housing Authority

The Community Choice Program is a pilot program by the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) designed to help housing choice voucher holders with young children make more informed choices about neighborhood and school quality when deciding to move. Community Choice particularly focuses on serving families with elementary school-aged children, as part of KCHA's increased focus on improving the educational outcomes of children and youth supported by its housing programs. Community Choice helps households move to very high opportunity areas with high quality schools (schools where the third-grade reading level is at least 80 percent and where less than 20 percent of students receive free or reduced lunch). Since KCHA began to offer Community Choice in January 2014, the program has served 58 households and helped nine families move to higher opportunity areas.

The Community Choice Program contracts with the nonprofit Hopelink, which provides pre- and post-move counseling. Hopelink, an established service provider in the local high opportunity communities, helps families connect with schools and serves as an advocate for the family with the school. Hopelink also coordinates landlord outreach.

Participants have access to a range of pre-move services, which include completing family assessments, developing move plans, and focusing on financial planning. As part of the housing search, families learn more about available high-opportunity housing and can tour units. Community Choice assists with paperwork and security deposits, as needed. After the move, the program helps children enroll in school and checks in with families to make sure that they are settled in the new unit and are connected to needed resources, such as transportation, child care, and the food bank. Community Choice offers financial assistance with summer or extracurricular activities for children, such as summer camps and afterschool activities. Community Choice also helps with family development case management, and is available to help with any potential issues with the landlord and/or school. The program contacts families 90 days prior to lease expiration.

<http://www.kcha.org/housing/vouchers/search>

Minneapolis, Minnesota – Minneapolis Public Housing Authority

The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority offers a Mobility Voucher Program, which helps families with children move to low-poverty areas in Minneapolis or in the seven-county

metro area. Participants must have a job or be enrolled in job-training or education program. In addition to attending workshops and on-going support meetings, voucher holders agree to live in their new home for a "minimum of three years." During this three-year period, the MPHA sustains counseling support.

<http://www.mphaonline.org/section-8>

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Housing Opportunity Project

The Housing Opportunities Program serves families with housing choice vouchers from the Philadelphia Public Housing Authority. Through this program, participants learn about and move to housing in Opportunity Areas in the city of Philadelphia as well as Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties. For HOP, Opportunity Areas are neighborhoods with "socio-economic diversity, low rates of violent crime, job growth, school quality, and the presence of businesses and other features such as transportation." Quadel administers the Housing Opportunity Program, which began program design work in the September 2013 and started working with families in the first quarter of 2014. Over 80 participants have signed leases, with 45 households in Opportunity Areas.

HOP counselors help individual families search for and transition into their new home. Counselors work with participants to “develop an action plan” and “provide housing referrals and introductions to landlords with housing for rent in Opportunity Areas.” With the support of counselors, families tour units to inform their housing search. Counselors foster relationships with landlords to help complete paperwork and facilitate the move-in process. With the support of donations from a collection of nonprofits, HOP financially assists households with paying their security deposit. HOP also offers educational sessions for HCV households. Participants must attend a workshop on managing a budget, understanding tenant rights, negotiating a lease, working with landlords, maintaining a home, and being a good neighbor. Language translation services are available if it would serve a participating family.

After participants have moved into their new home, HOP continues to work with families. Post-move services are aimed at retaining the family in a high-opportunity area and connecting households to community resources.

<http://www.pha.phila.gov/housing/housing-choice-voucher>

Richmond, Virginia – Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME) is a nonprofit that seeks to address individual and structural discrimination in housing. The organization offers housing counseling and education for homeownership, foreclosure prevention, tenancy, financial literacy, and reverse mortgage, as well as engages in research and advocacy work to advance fair housing throughout Virginia. HOME began to offer its Move to Opportunity program in January 2014 and receives funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Development and the City of Richmond. The program partners with three housing choice voucher administrators in the Richmond Metropolitan area to help families find housing in communities of higher opportunity. HOME’s Move to Opportunity program has provided housing mobility counseling to 221 families and facilitated 37 opportunity moves.

HOME supports voucher holders through a spectrum of programs, available in both English and Spanish. As part of its pre-move services, the nonprofit offers workshops on managing money and being a “superior tenant.” Participants receive individual counseling to assist in their housing search. HOME also helps with required paperwork and works to “ensure all necessary documentation is completed and the lease is fair.”

HOME’s Move to Opportunity program works closely with landlords. HOME provides brochures and organizes informational sessions on the benefits of the HCV program for landlords. HOME staff members are also available to serve as an intermediary between landlords and tenants if any conflicts develop. The organization conducts preliminary and formal inspections of properties to ensure the unit meets HUD’s housing quality standards.

HOME continues to support families by developing “personalized goals and action plans” in order to help people “with money management, credit recovery, and...plans for future homeownership.” HOME sustains its involvement with families for up to a year after they move.

<http://homeofva.org>

San Diego, California – San Diego Housing Commission

The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) supports over 15,100 low-income families with housing choice vouchers through a wide-range of programs. HUD re-designated SDHC as a Moving to Work agency in 2009, and SDHC has implemented a number of rental assistance programs to support San Diegans with housing vouchers. Once determined eligible to receive a voucher, applicants must attend a briefing on the program to explain the lease-up process and their programmatic responsibilities – sessions are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. These briefings also emphasize the advantages of moving to a low-poverty neighborhood and offer information on various communities.

Additional services include facilitating “mobility counseling with the family and providing information about SDHC mobility resources in the community.” SDHC also assists participants with completing paperwork, if necessary, as well as negotiating contract rents with the owner. Beyond rental assistance, SDHC organizes a homeownership program. For eligible HCV holders who have rented for at least a year, this program includes courses on finding a home, negotiating a price, and managing finances.

Through SDHC’s Choice Communities program, HCV holders “move to low-poverty neighborhoods in the City of San Diego that offer a broader selection of schools and more employment opportunities.” SDHC lists nine “Choice Communities” by their zip code. With the support of this program, 263 families have moved from high- and medium-poverty areas into Choice Communities.

SDHC works closely with landlords and community organizations to support the housing voucher program. SDHC provides

informational flyers on the advantages of the HCV program to landlords. In the fiscal year of 2014, SDHC's voucher program supplied "nearly \$145 million to the private sector economy through federal rental assistance payment to more than 5,600 San Diego landlords and property efforts." SDHC holds "formal or informal discussions with property owner groups" as well as "social service agencies."

Beyond supporting the housing search and move-in process, SDHC provides education classes for HCV participants. The Achievement Academy, founded in 2009, offers skills-based education programs at no cost to voucher holders. The Achievement Academy's programs focus on "job training, career planning, and financial literacy education." An MTW Family Self-Sufficiency Program is available to participants as well. Achievement Academy partners with a number of local organizations to support workshops and employment opportunities.

As a Moving to Work agency, one of SDHC's unique programs is its "Path to Success" rent reform program, which re-designs the method used to determine the amount of subsidy rendered on the participant's behalf. Since July 2013, SDHC has implemented "minimum monthly rent payment amounts for participants who are identified as able to work (Work-Able)." SDHC determined the minimum rent amounts using California's minimum wage as a standard, and then calculated the amount of rent affordable to a family working full-time at this rate. SDHC envisions this program as helping to "expand the HCV program to those families on the waiting list" since work-able participants will pay a larger amount for their monthly rent, thus resulting in savings of funds to assist additional families.

www.sdhc.org

Yonkers, New York – Enhanced Section 8 Outreach Program, Inc.

Since 1994, the Enhanced Section 8 Outreach Program has served over 800 families in Westchester County. The non-profit originated as part of a settlement agreement from the 1991 Giddins v. HUD housing discrimination lawsuit.

The organization focuses on neighborhood integration, working closing with landlords throughout Westchester County and regularly reviewing real estate listings to find housing opportunities for English- and Spanish-speaking families. In order to achieve access to low-poverty/minority areas ESOP, has secured 120 percent rent exceptions from HUD and permission to use Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs).

ESOP sends outreach letters to eligible families periodically, detailing the kinds of services that families holding housing choice vouchers can expect to receive. ESOP does an in-depth interview with families, determining what their housing needs are and what particular obstacles the office would need to address with each family in order to achieve a successful move.

A central component of the program is ESOP's multifaceted and sustained support for families, which continues long after the location of new housing. An integral part of the ESOP relationship with its families is that the access to services continues well after the lease-up in the new home. These services include assistance with obtaining and/or maintaining food stamps, accessing daycare subsidies and health insurance, and providing financial advice on matters such as households' 401(k) and 403(3)(b) plans.

<http://www.nyshcr.org/programs/section8hcv/sec8admins.htm>

New Mobility Programs

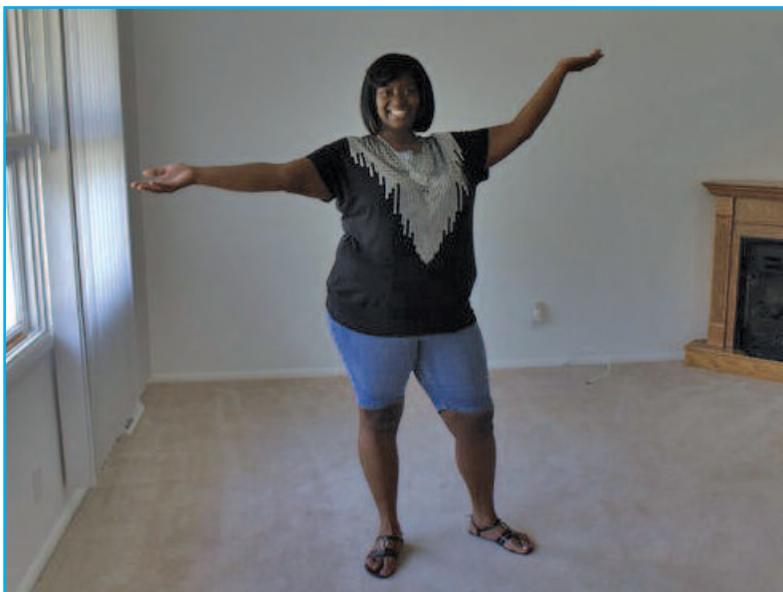
Joliet, Illinois – Housing Choice Partners

The nonprofit Housing Choice Partners is providing housing mobility counseling to 112 households that are relocating from a public housing building scheduled to be demolished in Joliet, Illinois. These families have the option to move to another public housing unit or use a housing choice voucher, if qualified. Housing Choice Partners offers counseling services on moving to

opportunity areas as an option for relocation. The definition of opportunity areas is based on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Opportunity Index, which uses census tract information on measures such as school rankings, unemployment rate, poverty rate, job accessibility, transportation accessibility, and health hazards exposure.

Available in both English and Spanish, services include landlord outreach, education on tenant rights and responsibilities, and workshops on how to manage finances, find high-quality schools, and participate in new communities. HCP offers an incentive of \$150 – an amount determined by the public housing authority – toward a new security deposit for relocating to an opportunity area. The program began in January 2015.

<http://www.hcp-chicago.org/2014/program/consulting>



Twin Cities, Minnesota – Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council's Community Choice program will begin to offer housing mobility counseling in the fall of 2015. Community Choice emerged out of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to equity and conviction that the region is stronger when residents have access to opportunity and live

in communities that provide possibilities for success, prosperity, and a high quality of life.

Community Choice will work closely with landlords by participating in landlord association meetings, connecting with community organizations, and attending landlord/owner workshops. Families will learn more about low-income, high-opportunity areas by looking at neighborhood profiles that highlight community

characteristics such as education, transit, and employment. Community Choice will work one-on-one with families to develop individual assessments and goals. The program will offer housing search assistance and budget counseling. Participants will attend workshops on tenant responsibilities and community engagement. Community Choice will connect households to supportive service providers and neighborhood organizations. The program will establish a two-year contract with families but will continue to offer ongoing support based on need.

Interpretative services will be available at no cost for families who would prefer support in a language other than English.

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Housing/Services/Metro-HRA-Rental-Assistance>

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