

**To:** HUD Transition Team  
**From:** Mobility Works \*  
**Re:** Voucher Reform Comments

**December 7, 2020**

Voucher reform advocates have been working for years to get HUD to implement reforms to the Housing Choice Voucher program to support, encourage and incentivize housing mobility moves. Given the powerful and ever-growing body of research showing the positive impact on families, particularly children, who are able to use the HCV to move to a safe, well-resourced neighborhood/community, HUD should be doing everything within its power to help families make such moves.

Mobility Works endorses the comprehensive submission of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC), [Housing Choice Voucher Reform: A Primer for 2021 and Beyond](#). Research and on the ground experience shows that many families want to live in areas where they feel safer and that offer an educational opportunity and a good environment for raising children, but face barriers in doing so. Many face barriers just using their voucher at all, as well told by news reports across the country of families that wait years for a voucher, only to have it expire when they can't find housing that meets HCV criteria and a willing landlord. Mobility counseling has a proven track record of successfully empowering families to navigate and overcome both market barriers and the programmatic barriers described in the PRRAC memo.

**Specifically**, the members of the Mobility Works consortium know from direct, on the ground experience what a difference it makes for a family to be able to access financial assistance in the form of security deposits and other move related expenses to help them overcome the barrier that such costs often pose to voucher families seeking to use their voucher in higher opportunity, better resourced areas. HUD should seek elimination of restrictions on use of Housing Assistance Payments for housing related expenses such as security deposits to the extent necessary to expand family choices in harder-to-rent areas. HUD should also implement a change in the administrative fee formula to encourage and require PHAs to use a portion of their administrative funds to affirmatively further fair housing and support housing mobility in their voucher programs.

Of course, HUD should seek the additional funding that affirmatively furthering fair housing and housing choice in the voucher program will require, but in the meantime, HUD should exercise its discretion and authority to prioritize using existing funds in this way.

*\*Mobility Works is a consortium of non-profit groups, researchers and policy experts that works to help low income families move from poor, segregated neighborhoods into diverse communities with high performing schools, and other resources and amenities that improve the children's life chances and choices. MW does its work by teaming up with housing authorities, local fair and affordable housing advocates, and philanthropies to develop regional housing mobility programs which promote fair and inclusive housing opportunities. See [www.mobilityworks.org](http://www.mobilityworks.org)*