

Housing Mobility Programs in the U.S.

2018



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**Mobility
Works** 

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Introduction

Assisted housing mobility is both a housing policy and a civil rights practice, giving low income families participating in our largest federal housing program – the Housing Choice Voucher program – a real choice to move to neighborhoods and communities of their choice, including high opportunity communities from which they have been traditionally excluded.

Housing mobility programs are also an essential complement to ongoing efforts to restore and revitalize low income communities of color. Originating as court-ordered remedies in the landmark public housing desegregation cases *Gautreaux v HUD* in Chicago and *Walker v. HUD* in Dallas, housing mobility programs have expanded to dozens of public housing agencies (PHAs) – although housing mobility has not yet been “taken to scale” in most cities.



The housing mobility field has advanced significantly since our last national conference, in Chicago in 2015. We have seen the passage of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, which holds a mirror up to local administration of the Housing Choice Voucher program; the formation of the foundation-supported “Mobility Works” technical assistance group, offering design services to PHAs that want to start a housing mobility program; the release of the Small Area Fair Market Rent rule, finally implemented in April of 2018; the Rental Assistance Demonstration, with its new promise of housing choice for public housing residents; the landmark study by Raj Chetty and his colleagues that more firmly establishes housing mobility as a bridge to economic mobility; the launch of Chetty’s Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO) research project to develop deeper insights into the efficacy of different housing mobility strategies; and most recently, a bipartisan housing mobility demonstration bill that has already passed the House and that has the potential to fund up to fifteen new housing mobility programs in fiscal year 2019-20. We are truly on the cusp of a new era in housing mobility policy and practice.

This report provides a snapshot of the housing mobility field in the fall of 2018. It is our hope that this report will soon be outdated, as more PHAs and fair housing groups implement housing mobility programs, and existing programs expand and are brought to scale. It is long past time to balance our substantial housing investments in low income communities with meaningful investments in housing mobility.

PART ONE: Established Housing Mobility Programs

(organized alphabetically by state)

California

San Diego - San Diego Housing Commission

In 2009, HUD designated the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) as a Moving to Work agency. With this flexibility, SDHC created the Choice Communities initiative, the agency's poverty deconcentration program for Housing Choice Voucher recipients. The Choice Communities program aligns with local efforts to affirmatively further fair housing and is informed by national efforts, such as Moving to Opportunity.

The Choice Communities program provides families that receive rental assistance with more flexibility to choose to live in neighborhoods that offer greater access to transportation, educational options, and employment possibilities. Higher payment standards are set in designated Choice and Enterprise communities where rental costs would typically be higher. Voucher families that choose to move to these designated areas are eligible for no-interest security deposit assistance valued up to the voucher payment standards for the area and the family's voucher size. Funded through housing choice voucher administrative funds, SDHC provides a mobility counselor to help families with pre- and post-move counseling, housing search assistance, landlord liaison work, and guidance about neighborhood amenities.

Once deemed eligible to receive a voucher, participants 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 communities' amenities. SDHC also assists participants with completing paperwork, if necessary, as well as negotiating contract rents with the owner.

The SDHC supports 15,348 low-income families with housing choice vouchers through a wide-range of programs. With the support of this program, over 400 families have moved into an area of high opportunity since implementation in 2010.

www.sdhc.org ■

Connecticut

The Connecticut housing mobility programs were originally established as part of the settlement of a 2001 fair housing administrative complaint filed by the ACLU of Connecticut and state legal services programs demanding compliance with a state fair housing law guaranteeing adequate rents and mobility assistance for state voucher tenants. These state-funded mobility programs currently serve both families with state-administered Housing Choice Vouchers and families in the state-funded Rental Assistance Program. The state provides funds for "housing" or "mobility" counselors and sets Exception Payment Standards in higher opportunity areas in the major metro areas in the state. However, the current state contract with the mobility agencies is quite weak, lacking in strong opportunity or significant performance standards.

Hartford and Bridgeport - Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies

In 2017, the Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies (CCFSA) entered into a new contract with the Connecticut Department of Housing to provide housing mobility counseling and search assistance. The program's goals are to support tenant education, mobility counseling and housing search assistance for eligible participants in the Department of Housing's Housing Choice Voucher program and Rental Assistance Program. Services focus on moving low-income tenants from areas of low opportunity, and priority is placed on serving families with young children. ■

New Haven and New London - 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, primarily in the New Haven and New London metro areas. Participation is 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.

<http://www.homeinc-ct.org> ■

Illinois

Gautreaux et al. v. Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was the nation's first major public housing desegregation lawsuit. In 1969, a federal judge in Chicago issued a judgment order prohibiting CHA from constructing any new public housing in areas of the city that were predominantly African-American unless CHA also built public housing elsewhere. In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that HUD could be required to use the entire Chicago metropolitan area to remedy its past discriminatory conduct in Chicago. This Supreme Court decision paved the way for the remedial program most often associated with the case – the Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program – the nation's first major housing mobility program.

The resulting mobility programs in the Chicago area are inspired by the Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program that is no longer in existence.



Chicago - Housing Choice Partners

Housing Choice Partners (HCP) is a private nonprofit based in Chicago, IL, whose mission is to reduce intergenerational poverty by promoting racial and economic diversity in housing. HCP provides direct services primarily in Cook County, IL, and consults on fair housing and mobility programming throughout the United States. The organization administers the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Mobility Counseling Program and is also funded through a Cook County Community Development Block Grant Program to provide support to the Housing Authority of Cook County's HAAC mobility program. HCP also receives funding through the State of Illinois' Rental Housing Support Program to administer a project-based subsidy program for 70 units.

HCP was founded in 1995 with funding from the HACC to assist with the desegregation of voucher households in Cook County's southern suburbs. HCP officially partnered with CHA in 2003 to assist with relocation of public housing residents during the CHA's Plan for Transformation. At this time, HCP worked with nearly 1,000 public housing families who decided to take a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) as their relocation option. Of those clients, approximately 45% moved to low-poverty areas with less crime, better schools, and a better quality of life.

Under HCP's current CHA mobility program, counselors help participants tour communities deemed Mobility Areas, defined by the CHA as Chicago Community Areas with 20% or less poverty and less than median reported violent crimes (.67 per 100 Community Area residents), or Community Areas with improving poverty and violent crime rates, along with significant job opportunity clusters (over 200 jobs per census block). The CHA, as a Moving to Work agency, has implemented Exception Payment Standards that allow for up to 150% of the regional FMR in Mobility Areas to adjust for higher cost housing markets. In addition, voucher households in need of an accessible unit to accommodate a disability are eligible to rent a unit valued up to 250% FMR anywhere throughout the City of Chicago.

New mobility program enrollees, primarily families with children under the age of 18, attend an orientation at HCP on the counseling services offered and how to search for and use a voucher in a higher-opportunity neighborhood. Family goals are identified and used to focus discussion on where voucher holders may like to move. Additional information is provided on financial management, tenant rights and responsibilities, navigating local school systems, civic engagement, and healthy housekeeping. Participants are assigned a counselor who assists with finding housing, navigating the voucher process, and connecting to a new community. Group tours of Mobility Areas are provided weekly, and one-on-one tours are provided as needed. Households that move to a Mobility Area are eligible to receive an assistance award of up to \$500 towards a security deposit or move-in fee.

HCP counselors provide follow-up supportive services at 30 days and 3 months after participants move, which include landlord/tenant mediation and service referrals. HCP also conducts education and outreach to landlords and real estate agents about the HCV program and creates community partnerships to support clients in connecting to their new neighborhood. Approximately 1000 new participants enroll in HCP's CHA mobility program each year, with 300-350 moving to a Mobility Area. The program is funded through CHA's Resident Services department. Services are offered in both English and Spanish.

<http://www.housingchoicepartners.org> ■

Cook County - Housing Authority of Cook County

The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC), working with the nonprofit Housing Choice Partners, has had a housing mobility program since the mid-1990s. In June of 2016, HACC created its Community Choice Program (CCP), a mobility counseling program fully administered by the HACC. CCP is funded using HCV administrative fee income. The program aims to help voucher holders move to higher-opportunity communities in suburban Cook County¹, which are characterized by low crime rates, higher-performing schools, low poverty levels, access to employment options and transportation, and diverse resident demographics. Census tracts with less than 10% poverty and 17% or less African American composition are designated as opportunity areas. The HACC was part of the Small Area FMR (SAFMR) pilot and continues to utilize SAFMRs so that voucher households have greater access to higher-cost housing markets.

The HACC has a dedicated team that works under the CCP. The team offers pre-move counseling, community outreach, landlord outreach, post-move counseling, and is able to streamline the leasing process by conducting inspections themselves, separate from the general voucher program. The pre-move counseling begins when applicants are still on the waitlist and lasts a minimum of six months. Clients are invited to a mobility workshop where they complete a goal-setting action plan. The HACC offers workshops to families on landlord/tenant

1 The HACC's jurisdiction covers all of suburban Cook County, IL, not including the municipalities of Oak Park, Cicero, Maywood, and Park Forest, all of which have their own public housing authorities.

rights and responsibilities and financial literacy. Other benefits provided by the program include housing search assistance and transportation to tour and view units in opportunity areas. When a client moves to an opportunity area, they are eligible to receive up to \$1000 in security deposit assistance or up to \$350 towards a move-in fee. The HACC provides post-move services via phone and home visits on a case-by-case basis.

The HACC also recruits landlords and connects them to families with housing choice vouchers. They find landlords by identifying LIHTC properties in opportunity areas, finding large property management companies, reviewing current landlords in opportunity areas for more units or referrals to other landlords, identifying landlord associations in opportunity areas and educating them on the HCV program, and holding monthly landlord workshops. The program assists with paperwork and expedites the inspection process to facilitate a quick move-in process. CCP also offers landlord incentives such as setting up vendor files eliminating the need to ask for the same paperwork multiple times, expediting paperwork, and a landlord mitigation fund to cover up to one month rent for damages beyond normal wear and tear with adequate documentation.

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> ■

Lake County - Lake County Housing Authority

The Lake County Housing Authority (LCHA) provides housing mobility services through C.H.O.I.C.E.S. (Choose Housing Options in Communities Empowering Self-Sufficiency), which is open to all voucher families in Lake County, IL, through funding from administrative fees. C.H.O.I.C.E.S. began January 1, 2016 as a result of a combination of HUD’s affirmatively furthering fair housing notice and a local needs assessment that showed a high concentration of vouchers in one locality. LCHA recognized the trend of its housing choice voucher participants to lease up in areas that are heavily concentrated with housing subsidy and poverty. LCHA worked to develop a program to encourage its HCV participants to move to areas that provide more opportunities for families to become self-sufficient over time and that have deconcentrated areas of poverty.

LCHA allows for Exception Payment Standards of 110% of FMR if the housing is located in an opportunity area. LCHA serves approximately 3,000 people annually in all of its housing programs.

<http://lakecountyha.org/housing-choice-voucher-program> ■

Maryland



Baltimore - Baltimore Housing Mobility Program

The Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership (BRHP) administers the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program (BHMP). Created by the historic housing desegregation class action lawsuit, *Thompson v. HUD*, the Program provides HCV’s for families to rent private homes in opportunity areas in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties, as well as Baltimore City. The *Thompson* plaintiffs, African-America residents of Baltimore City public housing, sued HUD and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City in 1995. A year later, the Parties entered into a *Partial Consent Decree* and reached a final *Settlement Agreement* in 2012.

Since 2003, BRHP has provided vouchers along with pre- and post-move counseling to over 3,900 families. In 2018, the Program will assist several hundred more families, and will continue to serve at least 4,400 families in total. As part of the settlement, BRHP provides comprehensive counseling services and other special provisions to create and sustain mobility moves to opportunity areas for voucher holders. BRHP provides extensive pre- and post-move counseling, housing search services, and Security Deposit Assistance. Pre-move counseling will help prepare a family to meet the standards of private market landlords and to understand what to expect in their new communities. This includes a series of required, two-hour workshops as well as individual counseling and planning appointments. The Program assigns the family a Housing Search Counselor when they receive their voucher. Additionally, the family receives referrals for units in opportunity areas and the chance to go on a housing search tour to learn about different communities. The family may apply for Security Deposit Assistance. The family contributes \$200-500 towards the deposit and the Program provides the balance equal to one-month's rent. Post-move counseling continues for two years, including required home visits and phone interviews. BRHP also provides referral and other assistance such as connecting participants to quality schools, transportation, and employment resources in their new neighborhoods. Counseling services are available as long as the family remains in the program.

The Program's special provisions help voucher holders to successfully lease in opportunity areas. These include exception payment standards that match rental market conditions in opportunity neighborhoods, and a generous voucher search time that allows families ample time to find homes in these areas. These provisions coupled with counseling have led to a 90+ percent voucher success rate. The Program specifies geographic criteria where voucher holders may lease. Initially the program targeted neighborhoods with less than 10 percent poor, less than 30 percent African-American, and with no more than 5 percent of residents in subsidized housing. In 2014, the Program transitioned to opportunity-based targeting. The new opportunity criteria leverage existing opportunity indices supplemented with ACS, HUD, school, and internal administrative data. Participants must stay in an opportunity area for at least two years and remain in their new residence for a year.

The final but equally important component of the counseling program is handled by the Program's Landlord Relationship Specialist. Landlord recruitment, outreach, and education all help to increase access to higher opportunity neighborhoods by increasing the supply of homes to which the Program can refer voucher holders. BRHP provides landlord-tenant mediation and negotiations to support both the landlord and the family in an effort to keep families stably housed. ■

Minnesota

Minneapolis – Minneapolis Public Housing Authority

The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) offers a Mobility Voucher Program, which helps families with children move to low-poverty areas in Minneapolis or within the seven-county metro area that includes Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the counties of Hennepin, Carver, Scott, Dakota, Washington, Ramsey, and Anoka. This program is structured to increase housing choices for families who are on MPHA's Housing Choice Voucher waiting list or are current Housing Choice Voucher participants and who currently live in areas of concentrated poverty. Participants must be working or be enrolled in job training or an education program and be willing to relocate to an area of low poverty, defined as census tracts where no more than 40% of its residents are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. In addition to attending workshops and ongoing counseling, participants must agree to live in their new home for a minimum of three years, during which MPHA sustains counseling support. Incentives for taking part in the program include application fee, moving, and security deposit assistance, and increased payment standards.

As of 2018, 73 families had made moves to opportunity areas with the aid of mobility counseling, with 34 families under contract with the program. The program has struggled to meet expectations and goals due to significant staff turnover, a tight rental market, and a lack of affordable rental housing, among other factors.

<http://mphaonline.org/section-8/participants/hcv/mobility-voucher-program/> ■

St. Paul – Metropolitan Council

Community Choice is a program of the Metropolitan Council's Metro Housing Rental Assistance that assists families with Housing Choice Vouchers find housing in areas of opportunity. Eligible families must have at least one minor child in the household and must be committed to job training, furthering education, and securing employment. Families receive personal mobility counseling that assists in identifying opportunity-rich neighborhoods with high-performing schools and low poverty levels. In addition, families must participate in counseling assessments, self-sufficiency goal setting and community and housing search assistance. Landlords participating in the program work directly with mobility counselors from Metro RHA to provide properties in opportunity-rich areas. These counselors also provide training on budgeting and finance and how to be a successful renter, and assist with any move-related finances such as security deposit or moving expenses.

<https://metro council.org/Housing/Services/Metro-HRA-Rental-Assistance/Community-Choice-program.aspx> ■

Missouri

St. Louis – Ascend STL

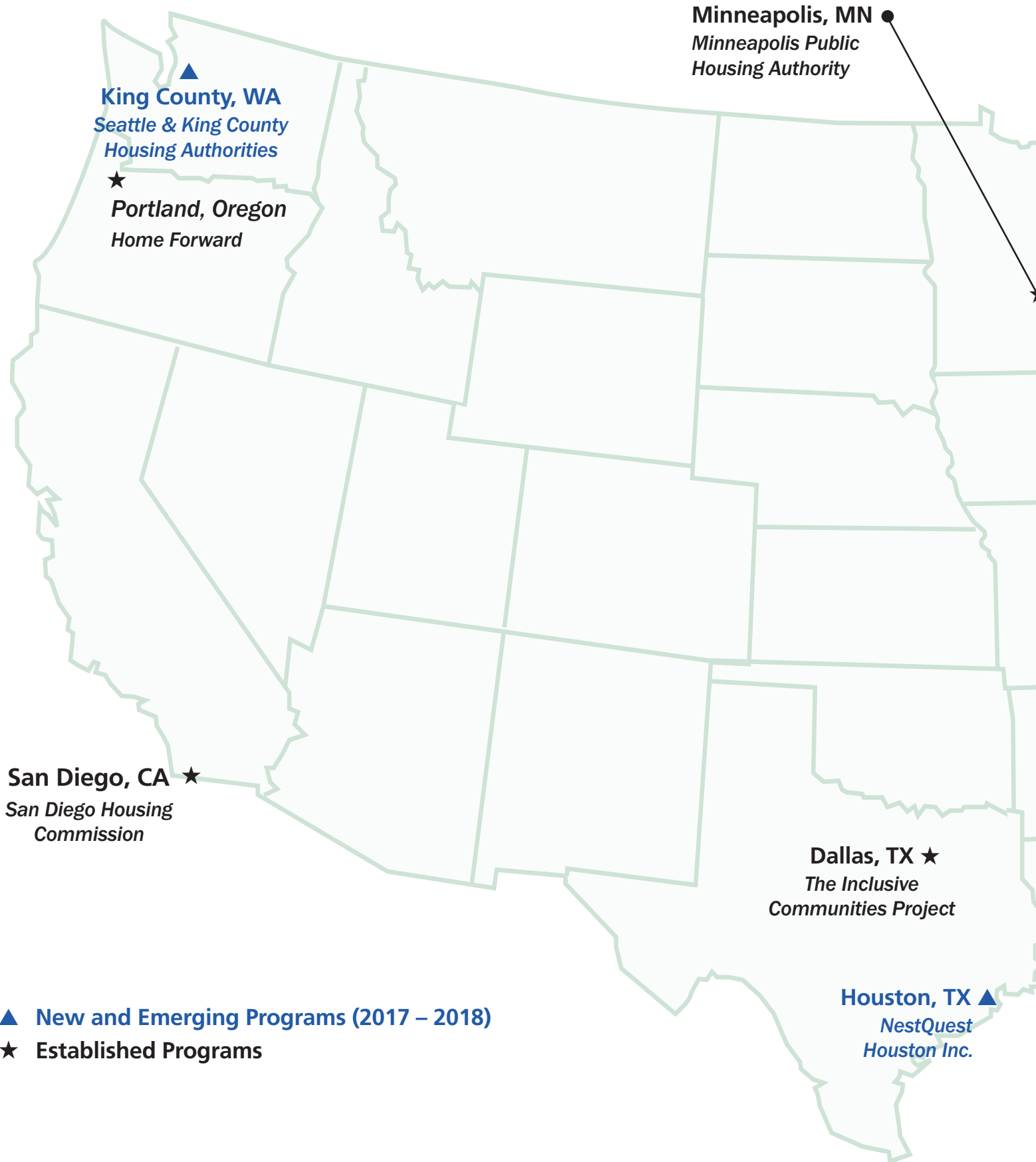
Ascend STL is a nonprofit agency reenvisioned in 2017 to host a regional mobility program, Mobility Connection, in partnership with the St. Louis Housing Authority (SLHA) and the Housing Authority of St. Louis County (HASLC). Using a start-up grant from HUD, the Mobility Connection program helps connect HCV families with homes in High Opportunity Areas throughout the St. Louis region. These areas are defined by census tracts in St. Louis City and County where 10% or fewer families live in poverty and 10% or less of the housing units are subsidized. The determination is based on data from the most recently available American Community Survey 5-year estimates, or the Decennial Census and Picture of Subsidized Housing (PIC) data aggregated by HUD. High Opportunity Areas have historically been difficult for families to move into, either because they are too expensive or because property owners choose not to participate in the voucher program. Participants of the SLHA and HASLC voucher programs are eligible to take part in the Mobility Connection program.

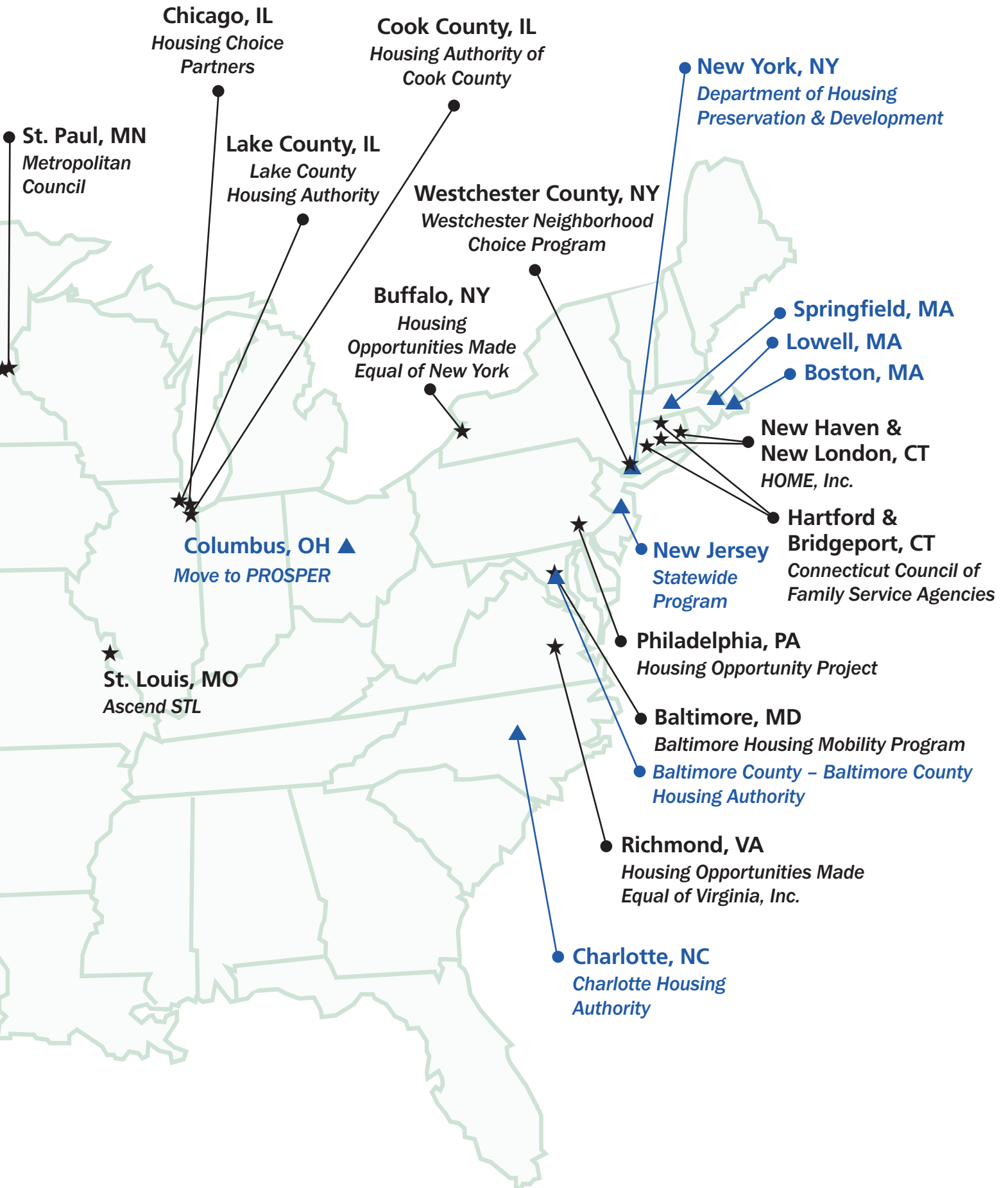
Program applicants must meet additional criteria for the Mobility Connection program, including criminal and rental history checks. Once enrolled, the families receive pre- and post-move counseling and housing search assistance. The program utilizes Exception Payment Standards and Small Area FMRs to make housing in High Opportunity Areas more affordable. Program staff work with families and property owners to facilitate good tenant-landlord matches and positive relationships between parties.

In total, Mobility Connection has enrolled over 125 households in the program, most of whom are families with children. On average, larger families tend to participate.

<https://www.ascendstl.org/> ■

Housing Mobility Programs in the U.S.





Buffalo - 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 (GBCHC), serving housing choice voucher holders in Erie County, NY. Since 1963, HOME has worked to advance fair housing through education, advocacy, the enforcement of fair housing laws, and the creation of housing opportunities. In the early years, approximately 65 percent of families chose to lease housing in opportunity communities. As resources and staffing have decreased, the rate of households choosing opportunity tracts has fallen below 50 percent.

Five years of initial funding was provided by the federal consent decree resolving *Comer v. Kemp* in 1993; however, HOME was able to extend those funds from 1998 – 2007. Thereafter, the GBCHC has operated with support from the agency's nearly 400 dues paying members and corporate sponsorships, and the intermittent foundation support (most significantly from the John R. Oishei Foundation & the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo). The only new government support has come from the Town of Hamburg, NY. HOME has also dedicated a portion of its current three-year FHIP agreement in support of the GBCHC.

- *Nearly 5,000 families leased housing in opportunity areas since 1999*
- *Funded by foundation support from John R. Oishei Foundation & the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and HOME Inc.*

Two public housing agencies (PHAs), the Rental Assistance Corp of Buffalo and the Belmont Shelter/Belmont Housing Resources, are involved with GBCHC. They also use PHA policy reforms such as, cross-listing of applicants (on the waiting lists of participating PHAs), portability agreements, exception rents (rarely), and expanded search times (now only in exceptional situations). Since opening its doors in April of 1999, GBCHC has helped nearly 5,000 households lease housing.

GBCHC defines opportunity areas as census tracts with fewer than 25 percent of households below the federal poverty level. GBCHC provides the following services:

- Presentations at Section 8 orientation sessions (held at PHAs) on the protections of fair housing law, the advantages of housing mobility and services of the GBCHC;
- Small group sessions (held at HOME) on how to identify housing, how to market to prospective landlords, how to prepare a rudimentary household budget;
- Individual mobility counseling sessions to discuss the housing needs and community preferences of the family;
- Access to a Mobility Library with information about every community in Erie County, housing listings in communities of interest, continued assurance throughout the housing search process;
- Access to a Security Deposit Assistance Grant (currently \$400) for households moving from high poverty to opportunity census tracts; and
- Access to a case management program which offers linkages to agencies offering educational services (GEDs, post-secondary vocational certificate, pre-collegiate), financial literacy education, and employment services. expanded search times (now only in exceptional situations). Since opening its doors in April of 1999, GBCHC has helped nearly 5,000 households lease housing.

<http://www.homeny.org> ■

Westchester County – Westchester Neighborhood Choice Program

The Enhanced Section 8 Outreach Program (ESOP), founded as a settlement of the *Giddins v. HUD* case in 1993, was phased out in 2016, and was replaced by a state of New York housing mobility program administered by CVR, a private contractor that also administers the Housing Choice Voucher program for the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

The Westchester Neighborhood Choice Program (WNCP) is a mobility counseling program serving all of Westchester County, NY, administered by CVR New York and operated in partnership with the Westchester County HCV program. WNCP provides mobility counseling services to eligible families with children. WNCP's services include assistance searching for, applying to, and maintaining tenancy in quality rental units in designated opportunity areas in Westchester County. WNCP launched in 2016 after absorbing the caseload of the Enhanced Section 8 Outreach Program. WNCP works to maintain the tenancy of ESOP's former clients through advocacy for increased payment standards, landlord tenant mediation, lease negotiations and individualized customer service for landlords and connections to social services for tenants. WNCP also recruits new tenants for mobility counseling services. Services for new clients include assistance searching for apartments in opportunity areas, connecting tenants with brokers working with WNCP, negotiating rental and lease terms, pinpointing communities that meet participant family needs and walking landlords and tenants through the move process to ensure an efficient and positive experience with the HCV program for landlords.

Eligible candidates must have children in the household under 18 years of age, be in good standing with the housing authority and their landlord, and must meet other documentation requirements. WNCP defines opportunity areas as census tracts in Westchester County with no more than 60% minority concentration, no more than 20% poverty concentration, and where a majority of students are passing 4th grade proficiency exams and passing the majority of regents exams.

Because Westchester County is one of the most segregated and expensive housing markets in the country, the rents in Westchester's opportunity neighborhoods are far more than the county average. As such, WNCP has secured payment standards at 120% of the county FMR as well as authorization to use 110% of SAFMRs in designated opportunity areas, which are necessary to have even minimal rental options. WNCP plans to conduct a rent study of Westchester County in late 2017 to support a request for exception payment standards above 120% of FMR and 110% of certain SAFMRs. ■

Oregon

Portland – Home Forward

Home Forward (HF), formerly the Housing Authority of Portland, has been designated a Moving to Work agency since 1998. HF covers Multnomah County, including the cities of Portland and Gresham. The agency uses targeted payment standards to increase moves to higher opportunity areas. In 2013, HF was awarded a grant to develop tools to provide mobility counseling to HCV participants. Using their MTW flexibility, HF is able to waive requirements that families served through set aside tenant-based vouchers be selected from a waitlist. Instead, families are referred to HF by specific community partners.

HF has also implemented two measures to improve landlord acceptance of vouchers. First, the Landlord Guarantee Fund reimburses landlords for any damages by HCV participants up to a maximum value of two months' rent. Second, HF provides vacancy-loss payments to owners through the end of the month after the month in which a subsidized tenant moves out. These payments are made when vacancies are unforeseen or unexpected and the owner has not received proper notice of the intent to vacate.

<http://www.homeforward.org/> ■

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Housing Opportunity Program

The Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) is funded by HUD and serves families with housing choice vouchers from the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Through this program, participants learn about and move to housing in Opportunity Areas in the city of Philadelphia and surrounding Delaware Valley. The focus for recruitment into the mobility program is families with younger/school aged children, but HOP accepts all voucher holders into the program. In 2015, HOP served 73 families and 39 moved to opportunity areas. Another 17 tenants also moved to opportunity areas with minimal counseling from HOP. Opportunity Areas are defined as census tracts with poverty rates at 19.9% or lower in Philadelphia and 9.9% or lower in the neighboring counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery, and/or any unit in the catchment area of a neighborhood school performing in the top 20% of Philadelphia Schools (Philadelphia Only).

HOP mobility counselors assist the voucher holder through every step of the leasing process including workshops on home maintenance, financial management and tenant rights. The counselors also provide landlord outreach and unit search assistance. Other services include a credit report and credit counseling if needed, mandatory workshops and a resource guide that include topics such as landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, household budgeting, and fair housing law, referrals to available units, search and move tips, and post move support to link the family with resources and services in their new community.

Policy reforms include payment standards up to 120% for opportunity areas, and portability adjustments for higher performing schools especially high schoolers as there are no higher performing neighborhood schools in Philadelphia. HOP also offers landlord incentives such as expedited inspections.

<http://www.pha.phila.gov/housing/housing-choice-voucher/housing-opportunity-program.aspx> ■

Texas

Dallas – Inclusive Communities Project

The Walker Project, Inc. (WPI), now Inclusive Communities Project, Inc. (ICP), was established in 1990 pursuant to the Consent Decree in the *Walker v. HUD* housing desegregation litigation to promote fair housing and provide support to Walker class members. WPI operated in that capacity through the spring of 2001. After several years of inactivity, the newly constituted Board of Directors of WPI changed the name of the 13-year-old non-profit,



and committed to revitalize its activity in the area of civil rights, fair housing, and inclusive, non-discriminatory community development.



The Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) is Inclusive Communities Project's housing mobility program that works to ensure that families are made aware of and have access to high-quality rental housing in lower-poverty,

- 430 families moved to opportunity areas in 2015
- Funding from the Walker Settlement Fund

higher-opportunity areas in Dallas County and the six adjacent counties of Collin, Denton, Ellis, Kaufman, Rockwall and Tarrant. MAP was created in 2005 to provide support for Dallas Housing Authority’s Walker Settlement Voucher holders that had already made their initial moves to Walker Targeted Areas (WTA) but were making subsequent moves while seeking to remain in WTAs. The program is funded by the Walker Housing Charitable Trust.

Over 350 families move to areas of high opportunity each year through MAP. High opportunity areas are defined as a Walker Targeted Area (WTA) with additional qualities. WTAs, as defined by the *Walker Court*, are census tracts with no public housing that are at or below City of Dallas average levels of poverty (22.3%) and Black population (27.5%). In addition to meeting those qualities, MAP opportunity census tracts must meet the following, according to the most recent census data:

- Income levels at or above 80% of the area median income
- Poverty rate less than 10%
- Zoned elementary schools must “meet standards” and the zoned high school must have a 4-year graduation rate of 85% or greater.



ICP mobility counselors attend voucher and relocation briefings at the local housing authorities and speak about mobility assistance and the benefits of moving to a high-opportunity area, fair housing rights and responsibilities, and the services that ICP provides. ICP provides financial assistance for application fees and security deposits, as well as landlord bonuses that help reduce market rents to match payment standards and holding fees pending the leasing process. Counselors offer a variety of services that support housing mobility by helping families locate and access homes in high opportunity areas. Types of assistance range from education and information, housing search assistance and counseling designed to help clients access good schools, safe neighborhoods, employment, and a healthy environment; landlord recruitment and negotiations, fair housing counseling, referrals to social service agencies, and other post-move help, such as serving as a liaison between clients, landlords, and the housing authority, and one-on-one post-move support. ICP created an online application, OpportunityMoves.org, to help families determine where opportunity neighborhoods exist.

Supplementing ICP’s counseling program and as a result of the Walker litigation, the Dallas Housing Authority has implemented policy reforms to decrease barriers for families wishing to move to a higher opportunity neighborhood. These include the ability of vouchers to be used within the seven-county area without going through the porting process; increased payment standards up to 125%, when needed; and expanded search times (120 days) for Walker Settlement Vouchers. For all Dallas-area PHAs, Small Area FMRs are used as part of a settlement agreement resulting from ICP litigation against HUD.

ICHDC (Inclusive Communities Housing Development Corporation) also administers a sublease program for participants of the Dallas Housing Authority’s (DHA) Housing Choice Voucher Program. Under this initiative, ICHDC leases units in safe, well-resourced communities of the Dallas Metroplex and makes the units available to eligible families. This program is geared to provide DHA voucher holders with access to apartments that would otherwise be unavailable to them. The units are located in neighborhoods within the attendance zones of high performing public schools and access to gainful employment.

<https://www.inclusivecommunities.net/mobility-assistance-program/> ■

Richmond – 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. HOME began to offer its Move to Opportunity program in January 2014 and receives funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Development, the City of Richmond, and local foundations. 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. The program partners with four housing choice voucher administrators in the Richmond



At the 2017 Virginia Governors Housing Conference, HOME was honored to receive the Inclusive Community Award for its Move to Opportunity Program.



Metropolitan area to help families find housing in communities of higher opportunity.

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, credit and budgeting, renters education on rights and responsibilities, and 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.



My'Shanniece and her two sons found an apartment in a quiet neighborhood. "We are able to have more family time because everything is stable. I feel more secure. I just needed a chance and HOME helped make this happen for me and my family."

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. So far, HOME's Move to Opportunity program provided housing mobility counseling to 195 families and facilitated 35 opportunity moves in 2015. HOME defines opportunity areas as areas with poverty rates at or lower than 20%.

<http://homeofva.org/mtop#.V-p-oPkrJpg> ■

New and Emerging Mobility Programs (2017 – 2018)

Massachusetts

Lowell and Springfield

In March of 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHCD) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop and implement a state-funded mobility counseling program in concert with DHCD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. This program is funded with federal dollars using DHCD's Moving to Work flexibilities. DHCD's HCV program currently administers over 22,000 HCVs, with a waitlist of over 115,000 households and wait times exceeding 10 years. Massachusetts' HCV program is administered through Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs), and DHCD has identified two RAAs in which to pilot mobility counseling programs. Massachusetts is piloting the program to test program design and the feasibility of expanding mobility counseling in the state.

Massachusetts' mobility counseling programming will include pre- and post-move counseling, including workshops and individual counseling, landlord interviewing identification of desired neighborhoods, assistance with housing search, connections to community support, tours of communities, and follow up support and services. Mobility counseling participants will have access to a limited amount of funds to aid the moving process, earmarked for financial needs including security deposits, first/last month rents, realtor fees, moving costs, and transportation costs. Programs will use the Diversity Data Kids Index to identify opportunity areas in each of the regions, and will use Small Area Fair Market Rates (SAFMRs) to expand the number of available apartments in opportunity areas.

The pilot programs will be implemented in areas covered by two RAAs: Way Finders, covering Western Massachusetts, including Springfield and Holyoke, and Community Teamwork Inc., covering

the Merrimac Valley and parts of the North Shore region of Massachusetts. A complete list of areas covered by Massachusetts's RAAs is available [here](#). Through an RFP process, the American City Coalition and Mobility Works were selected to help the state develop the pilot programs. Because these programs began recently, there are not yet data on the number of families served. ■

Boston, Massachusetts

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is developing a new housing mobility program to be launched in early 2019, initially targeted to existing HCV families with children living in high-poverty neighborhoods. BHA, which has jurisdiction to place families throughout the metropolitan area, has developed an opportunity map of the region with an added emphasis on crime data. Small Area Fair Market Rents (FMRs) will be used selectively where necessary to give families access to high opportunity communities. A digital tool is being developed in partnership with MIT to help families identify neighborhoods that would be ideal for their needs. The mobility program will be funded primarily with agency administrative fees and will seek to place at least 100 families in the first year. ■

King County, Washington

King County Housing Authority and Seattle Housing Authority

The Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO) project aims to generate new knowledge of effective ways to promote and facilitate families' housing mobility in the United States, and is an ongoing collaboration between an interdisciplinary research team and housing practitioners from across the country. The Seattle and King County Housing Authorities are 2 of the 18 Public Housing Authorities who have signed a letter of intent indicating their agencies'

commitment to the CMTO effort. The CMTO research team is led by Raj Chetty (Harvard University), Nathaniel Hendren (Harvard University), Lawrence Katz (Harvard University), Stefanie DeLuca (Johns Hopkins University), Christopher Palmer (MIT) and Peter Bergman (Columbia University). As part of CMTO, the Seattle and King County Housing Authorities are piloting a multi-year demonstration housing mobility program and study to evaluate best practices and effective strategies to increase geographic choice for families with children under 15 through tenant and landlord focused interventions. This project focuses on strategies that may be particularly effective in tight housing markets, like those in Seattle and King County, by reducing information gaps, increasing housing supply through search assistance and landlord outreach, and eliminating financial barriers related to families' access to housing in high opportunity areas. Opportunity areas are informed by Chetty's et al's models using linked national data on economic mobility outcomes.

CMTO in Seattle/King County has contracted with a community based organization to provide services that include:

- Opportunity area education to increase families' knowledge and interest in opportunity areas;
- Marketability coaching to increase families' competitiveness for private market rental units by working to understand and mitigate rental barriers;
- Housing search assistance to expand and improve families' housing search process and leasing outcomes;
- Landlord engagement with property owners and landlords in designated opportunity areas in order to create housing opportunities for CMTO families, as well as expedited lease-up processes to support increased landlord participation; and
- Flexible financial assistance for families to defray moving expenses such as application fees, moving costs, and security deposits.

Among the number of programs CMTO was influenced by was KCHA's Community Choice

Program (CCP) mobility pilot that ran from 2014-2017. The target population for CCP included families with at least one child under 12 years old and focused on mobility supports for new and existing voucher families in order to access housing in areas with high performing school districts. Both CCP and most recently CMTO are part of KCHA's commitment to supporting immediate and longer-term educational outcomes among youth in its housing programs. ■

Houston, Texas

NestQuest Houston Inc.

NestQuest Houston was founded in 2017 and is non-profit organization created to promote voucher mobility for families participating in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program with the Houston Housing Authority. The organization works with voucher holders and local landlords to increase client access to areas with excellent schools within Harris County and the City of Houston. The school ranking published by childrenatrisk.org data is used to identify top-rated schools that have ratings of A+ through B.

NestQuest serves as a buffer between the owner and the housing authority. Through their sublease program, NestQuest pays the rent and utilities directly, and then leases to families with vouchers. They work with landlords and apartment complexes that do not accept housing choice vouchers. Security Deposits are also provided. NestQuest is funded by the Houston Endowment Inc.

Currently NestQuest has served 4 clients while 6-7 are in the process of leasing up. There are approximately 35-40 clients that are searching for units. NestQuest anticipates serving up to 350 families. A requirement to participate in the program is that the participant must have at least one minor in the household and select a unit within a high-opportunity area.

<http://nestquesthouston.com/> ■

Charlotte, North Carolina Charlotte Housing Authority

The Charlotte Housing Authority (CHA) is in the beginning stages of implementing a mobility program. CHA's *Opportunity Housing Program* offers families with young children the ability to move into areas of higher opportunity. The targeted neighborhoods have lower poverty and lower crime rates with access to high performing schools, transportation and employment opportunities. This program allows families to not only use their subsidy to pay rent but also to advance their household goals and maximize family potential.

CHA has partnered with C.O.R.E. Programs, Inc. to provide counseling to families on the waiting list and current voucher holders pre-and post-move. Target neighborhoods are mapped out by census tract and payment standards are applied to each tract. CHA is working with local partners to identify and recruit landlords in areas of opportunity. ■

Columbus, Ohio

Move to PROSPER

Move to PROSPER (MTP) is a new program in its early stages of development that works to make affordable rental housing in high opportunity neighborhoods available to low income families in the Columbus area. The program is designed to offer three years of rental support to low-income single women with low-wage jobs, who have 1-3 children ages 13 and under, at least one of whom is in school. MTP specifically asks for applicants that do not have Housing Choice Vouchers, seeking to expand housing opportunity beyond the parameters of traditional mobility programs. Additionally, MTP provides life coaches that work with renters on not just mobility, but also financial literacy, education and employment, and health and wellness issues. MTP is comprised of a steering committee, with representation from a variety of community groups, Ohio State University personnel, social work professionals, doctors, lawyers, developers, and social service providers. The subsidies come entirely from

landlords renting to families in the program and philanthropy. MTP has relationships with participating landlords who own 2-bedroom apartments in the high performing Gahanna, Olentangy, Dublin, and Hilliard school districts, working to help them understand that renting to low-income residents is easy and feasible.

In summer 2018, the first 10 families began moving into their new homes before the start of the school year. Each family participated in various MTP workshops, covering the topics of financial stability and the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, as well as an implicit bias training course for both landlords and tenants. Ohio State's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity assisted with developing the curriculum. While the pilot program is starting out with 10 families, MTP hopes to expand to a three-year, 100 family demonstration program in the future. ■

State of New Jersey

The state of New Jersey is developing a new statewide housing mobility program, as one part of a broad settlement of fair housing claims related to the implementation of the Hurricane Sandy relief funds in New Jersey. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) intends to expand upon its current efforts to improve access to housing opportunities outside areas of concentrated poverty by establishing intensive counseling and incentive components to its HCV program to more strongly encourage and make it easier for voucher holders to locate affordable housing in communities that better reflect the racial and economic diversity of the State.

Tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers give recipients the freedom to choose the types of housing and the locations that best meet their needs. DCA intends to pilot a program to assist 100 families per year to relocate to rental units in the areas of higher opportunity that best meet the needs of the family, including nearby schools, public transportation, employment opportunities, healthcare facilities and other community amenities.

The pilot program will offer a range of counseling services that will increase the likelihood of a successful transition to a new community. By way of example, those services might include financial literacy and household budgeting, job readiness and development, and nutrition. ■

New York City

NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (which is separate from the New York City Housing Authority) is piloting a Mobility Counselling Program as part of its Family Self Sufficiency Program. The new program will use Small Area FMRs to access rents in select NYC neighborhoods with high performing schools and low crime rates. The program will offer pre-move counseling, credit repair, and housing search assistance, along with financial support for security deposits and moving expenses. HPD is also experimenting with owner incentives and broker's fees to expand the number of available units. HPD's Housing Mobility Program is primarily focused on helping low income families access higher opportunity neighborhoods in the city, but clients will also be able to search outside the city. ■

Baltimore County

Baltimore County Housing Authority

- *Aims to move 2,000 families to opportunity areas over a 10 year period*
- *Funded by HUD*

In March of 2016, Baltimore County and HUD entered into a conciliation and voluntary compliance agreement pursuant to a fair housing complaint filed by the NAACP Baltimore County Branch, Baltimore Neighborhoods, and three individual complainants. The agreement requires Baltimore County to create a mobility program which will allow 2,000 housing choice voucher (HCV) holders to move to opportunity areas over a 10 year

period. The agreement identified specific high opportunity census tracts for the mobility program. The program will initially be open to families from the HCV waiting list who are identified as the next eligible families to receive vouchers and within a year, expand to serve families who use a HCV to subsidize their housing costs.

Other requirements of the program include educating families about the benefits of the mobility program and encouraging their participation during the family's annual HCV recertification process, and when families give their notice of intent to move. For families to be eligible for the mobility program, the head of household or spouse/partner must be employed or in a training program, seeking employment, or willing to participate in a training program, or have a disability with various hardship exceptions. Families may also be required to attend pre-move counseling workshops.

The program will use payment standards up to 120% for housing in certain census tracts and may increase payment standards above 120% with approval from HUD. They will also conduct outreach to landlords in the specified census tracts in order to market the program and increase the availability of housing.

Services for families in the program will include an outreach plan to inform families, and organizations employing or serving low income workers and families with disabilities, 36 months of mobility counseling including pre and post move counseling, individual family plans, credit repair, financial literacy, household banking and budgeting, house-keeping and maintenance tips, negotiations with landlords, housing search assistance including tours, education and childcare, referrals to training and employment options, assistance seeking reasonable accommodations, a fund to assist with moving expenses, security deposits, application fees, or utility hook-ups, orientation to new communities and linkage with community organizations that can provide post-move support to families, fair housing briefings, assistance and referrals if families encounter discrimination or harassment. ■

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