PROVIDING CHOICE: HOUSING MOBILITY COUNSELING PROGRAMS

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Mobility expertise and slides, in major, part prepared by Jennifer O’Neil of Quadel Consulting
### Housing Choice Voucher Holders by Location and Minority Status (by tracts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voucher Holder Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>% Voucher Holders in Disproportionately Minority Areas</th>
<th>% Voucher Holders in High Poverty Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical Area of the State</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Voucher Holders</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Voucher Holders</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White Voucher Holders</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Map of Connecticut showing minority and white voucher holders](image)
Low income families shouldn’t be restricted to struggling neighborhoods because they can’t afford alternatives.

Families should be able to live in the communities where they work.

Federal housing policies should ensure that families using federal subsidy programs have a choice to live outside of distressed neighborhoods that can undermine their health, their employment prospects, and their kids’ school success.
When families move to higher opportunity neighborhoods they experience:

- Better health
- Greater stability
- Safer neighborhoods
- Access to better schools
WHAT THE MTO RESEARCH SHOWS

- Dramatic health gains - reduction in rates of obesity, anxiety, and depression
- MTO families that live for longer periods in lower poverty achieve better employment outcomes
- Youth living in lower-poverty neighborhoods achieve higher English and math test scores
WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

- **DeLuca and Rosenblatt – Baltimore**
  - Students proficient or better in math went from 44.8% to 68.9% in opportunity neighborhood school
  - Students proficient or better in reading went from 54.2% to 76% in opportunity neighborhood school

- **Schwartz – Montgomery County, Maryland**
  - Children in public housing benefitted academically from merely living in low-poverty neighborhoods
KEY COMPONENT: MISSION

- De-concentration (poverty/race)
- Fair housing (overcoming barriers/informed choice)
- Improved quality of life for families (safety, quality of housing & neighborhood, education, health, employment)
- Support Employment and Self-Sufficiency (economic & racial diversity)
KEY COMPONENT: REASONABLE THRESHOLDS

- Poverty
- Racial Segregation
- School Performance
- Safety/Crime
- Employment
- Opportunity index
KEY COMPONENT: SERVICES

- Landlord Outreach
- Pre-Search Counseling
- Housing Search Assistance
- Post-Move Counseling
- Community partners
WORK IN PROGRESS

- Gautreaux – Chicago 1976-1998 (more than 25,000 families over 22 years)
- The MTO Demonstration 1994 (over 850 families)
- Baltimore (Thompson) 1994 (over 2500 families)
- Dallas (Walker) 1990 (1367 families)
- Voluntary programs - Chicago and others (mid 1990’s to the present) (Chicago - 3500 families)
WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

- Broaden the definition of opportunity
- Counseling
  - Quality
  - Group vs individual
- Measure incremental success
- Post-move support
- Fair housing enforcement
- Making housing mobility an integral part of voucher program operations
CT has had a mobility counseling program since 2002. It has helped many families, but not produced the integration results associated with strong mobility counseling programs. This is largely due to lower funding levels and outdated definitions of a successful move.

### Mobility Participants Remaining in Town of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>% Participants Staying</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89% of CT mobility moves are to areas that are disproportionately minority (30% minority or greater).
RESOURCES

- Expanding Choice: Practical Strategies for Building a Successful Housing Mobility Program (2013)

The full reports can be downloaded at the Poverty & Race Research Action Council website: www.prrac.org