



## HUD and Housing Authorities Perpetuated Segregation in the Hartford Area

The Fair Housing Act imposes on HUD and public housing authorities an affirmative duty to “further fair housing,” that is, to take conscious steps to counteract segregation. Despite this legal mandate, HUD has for decades funded subsidized housing in poverty-concentrated areas with disproportionately high Black and Hispanic<sup>1</sup> populations, perpetuating the segregation it is legally required to counteract. After conditions in three HUD-subsidized buildings in North Hartford became unlivable in 2018 and 2019, HUD terminated its subsidies with those buildings and relocated the residents. But rather than providing the resources the residents needed to leave this highly segregated area of Hartford (as many wanted to do), HUD and Hartford-based housing authorities designed a relocation plan that had the effect of keeping the vast majority of families in racially segregated, high poverty areas. To make matters worse, HUD then re-subsidized two of those same properties. HUD violated the law, failed residents, failed the neighborhood, and is now obligated to create opportunities for a better future.

### How Did We Get Here?

Five years ago, HUD described North Hartford as “one of the poorest [areas] in the country,” with “alarmingly high rates of unemployment, violent crime, and food insecurity.”<sup>2</sup> Within those neighborhoods, HUD subsidized three properties that were in decrepit condition. Infill was infested with mice and roaches. Black mold permeated Barbour Gardens. Gas leaks at Clay Arsenal Renaissance Apartments (CARA) were left ignored. All the while, HUD resisted ending its contracts with the private landlords, instead paying them tens of millions of dollars. In the fall of 2017, the Center for Leadership and Justice (CLJ) organized a successful grassroots campaign culminating in HUD’s agreement to end those contracts and provide families living in the three properties with vouchers to relocate.

### Relocation Gone Wrong

When the families received their vouchers—and were told they could use them to move anywhere in the country—they expressed immense excitement. But it quickly became clear that HUD and the local housing authorities had no intention of providing tenants with a meaningful choice of where to live. On

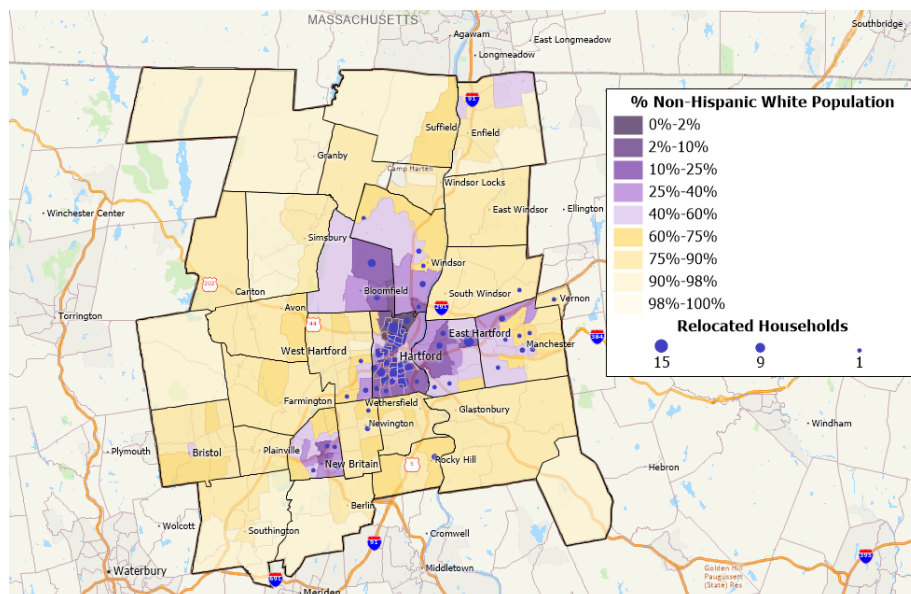
	CARA	Infill	Barbour Gardens
# of Units	150	52	84
Voucher Administrator	Hartford Housing Authority	Hartford Housing Authority	City of Hartford (Imagineers)
Jurisdiction of Voucher Administrator	City of Hartford	City of Hartford	Broader Hartford Region
Initial Relocation Time	90 Days	120 Days	120 Days
Mobility Counseling Offered?	No	No	No

<sup>1</sup> The word “Hispanic” is used to refer to people who identify themselves as “Hispanic” or “Latino,” as defined by the Census Bureau. The use of this term is not intended to suggest that “Hispanic” is preferable to terms such as “Latino” or “Latinx.”

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PROMISEZONEHARTFORD.PDF>

the contrary, families faced three unnecessary and avoidable obstacles, each of which made it more difficult for families to move out of Hartford:

- **Lack of Mobility Counseling**: Despite decades of research showing that services called “mobility counseling” can help families move to less segregated, higher-opportunity areas, defendants failed to provide those services to the families. These services include finding owners of rentals in higher-opportunity areas, building relationships with them, and connecting voucher holders to those landlords. HUD has successfully used these services in other relocations, but it failed to provide them here despite repeated requests from OCA, CLJ, and U.S. Senators Blumenthal and Murphy.
- **Unreasonable Deadlines**: The families were told they would have either 90 or 120 days to relocate but were left with uncertainty about extensions. Because they had little help overcoming obstacles with finding housing in higher-opportunity areas, these deadlines placed undue pressure on them to move quickly and caused them to settle for remaining in Hartford and other lower opportunity, more segregated areas, rather than risk losing their vouchers.
- **Appointment of a Non-Regional Voucher Administrator**: HUD also failed to appoint regional voucher administrators with the best payment standards. This created three obstacles for the families: (1) they were deprived of information about the value of their vouchers outside of Hartford, (2) they had to “port” to other housing authorities before moving to areas outside of Hartford (which slowed them down), and (3) they did not have access to the best payment standards in higher-opportunity areas and so were unnecessarily priced out of some units in those areas.



The vast majority of families relocated from racially segregated (low-percentage non-Hispanic white) neighborhoods in North Hartford to similar neighborhoods in Hartford. Even the families who left Hartford largely moved to segregated neighborhoods in East Hartford and New Britain.

## Re-Subsidizing the Same Properties

After HUD botched the process of relocating tenants who had lived in CARA, Barbour Gardens, and Infill, HUD had to decide where to transfer the budget authority that previously subsidized those buildings. Although HUD could have used these newly-released funds to subsidize housing in higher-opportunity areas, it chose instead to perpetuate segregation by re-subsidizing CARA and over half of the units in Barbour Gardens.