



CLPHA was proud to join the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Housing Mobility with PRRAC and Mobility Works as a first-time co-sponsor and we were pleased to engage so many of our member public housing authorities (PHAs) in the meeting. As panelists, moderators, and active participants, our members discussed their mobility program innovations and brought an important perspective to the national conversation.

In her opening remarks with PRRAC Executive Director Philip Tegeler, CLPHA Executive Director Sunia Zaterman emphasized that collaboration is essential to succeed in our work and encouraged partnerships between PHAs, mobility advocates and stakeholders. In addition to pointing out some of the creative innovations in the field, Zaterman asserted that nationally, we need to come together to establish a focused research agenda.

The two-day meeting united leading national researchers, policy experts, and housing mobility practitioners to learn from each other and share best practices for improved and expanded housing mobility initiatives. Conference sessions included profiles of new programs and successful mobility practices; new social science research on the impacts of housing mobility; and the evolving regulatory landscape in the Housing Choice Voucher, Choice Neighborhoods, and Rental Assistance Demonstration programs.

Session summaries can be found below, and the session slides and photos are available on PRRAC's website: <https://prrac.org/the-7th-national-housing-mobility-conference/>.

## **Research Update: New Insights into Housing Mobility Implementation and Outcomes**

**Deb Gross, CLPHA, Moderator**

**Martha Galvez, Urban Institute**

**Philip Garboden, Johns Hopkins University**

**Craig Pollack, Johns Hopkins University**

CLPHA Deputy Director Deb Gross moderated a panel featuring three researchers who presented findings on landlord participation in the HCV program and on the impact that mobility programs have on the health outcomes of residents. In her opening remarks, Gross emphasized the need for a shared research agenda that mobility program advocates, stakeholders, and PHAs can support to develop evidence-based recommendations for policy makers seeking to improve and expand housing mobility programs.

Martha Galvez, a senior research association at the Urban Institute, and Phillip Garboden, Professor of Sociology at the University of Hawaii, showed that landlord perceptions of the HCV program and local housing market conditions and payment standards are barriers to HCV participation.

Associate Professor Craig Pollack with Johns Hopkins University presented unpublished findings from two separate studies that examined the impact of mobility programs on children's health. The Mobility Asthma Project shows that children who move to higher opportunity neighborhoods are exposed to significantly fewer asthma-inducing allergens like mouse droppings, and when studying hospitalization among young children, voucher holders have a 17 percent reduced risk of hospitalizations. The benefits, he noted, were concentrated among young children and girls.

## **Resident Perspectives on Housing Mobility**

**Andrea Juracek, Housing Choice Partners, Moderator**

**Sheila Proano, Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership, Moderator**

Two beneficiaries of housing mobility programs spoke candidly about their experiences and shared personal insights about the impact that access to higher opportunity neighborhoods has had on their lives. When asked whether she considered her participation a success, one speaker said, "My story isn't finished. I need to see how my kids do. My success long-term will be based on how my kids turn out." Since beginning the program with the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership, she earned her GED, entered local community college, transferred to a four-year



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college, and then completed a Master's in Public Health. Her oldest son is going to college and is in the Air Force Reserve.

## **Choice-Mobility in the Rental Assistance Demonstration**

**Megan Haberle, PRRAC, Moderator**

**Brian Knudsen, PRRAC**

**Sheryl Seiling, Housing Authority of Cook County, IL**

**Tom Davis, HUD Office of Recapitalization**

An afternoon panel focused on the choice mobility option in the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), which allows residents in RAD properties to request a voucher after one or two years of residency, depending on the property type. Brian Knudsen from PRRAC described a study currently underway to understand how PHAs are communicating the choice mobility option to tenants. Knudsen highlighted Fort Worth Housing Solutions as a good example of communications about choice mobility, as they notify tenants of the mobility option at lease signing and recertification. Sheryl Seiling from the Housing Authority of Cook County, IL discussed HACC's experience with choice mobility, reporting that while a very small proportion of RAD residents have requested vouchers through choice mobility, most of their family projects are not yet eligible. Commenting on the choice mobility option, Tom Davis, director of HUD's Office of Recapitalization, discussed its pros and cons. It provides an opportunity for residents to respond to life changes and promotes market accountability by incentivizing property owners to keep their tenants satisfied. Alternatively, choice mobility also increases property turnover and raises equity issues for applicants on voucher waiting lists.

## **Regional Partnerships to Promote Mobility**

**Greg Russ, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, Moderator**

**Susan Rollins, Housing Authority of St. Louis County**

**Ken Barbeau, Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee and Kori Schneider Peragine, Milwaukee Fair Housing Council**

**Andrew Lofton, Seattle Housing Authority**

Representatives from four PHAs presented on their efforts to form regional partnerships. Susan Rollins of the Housing Authority of St. Louis County described how her agency created a partnership with the City of St. Louis Housing Authority to collaborate on such elements as software compatibility and formulating similar methods for determining rent reasonableness. Together they also formed Ascend St. Louis, an agency working with both housing authorities to assist families in moving to high-opportunity areas. Andrew Lofton of the Seattle Housing



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Authority provided an overview of Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO), a demonstration program that SHA is conducting alongside the King County Housing Authority. The program is testing mobility strategies to determine what types of assistance are most effective for helping families lease-up in high-opportunity areas. Finally, Ken Barbeau of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee and Kori Schneider Peragine of the Milwaukee Fair Housing Council described their activities to create a regional partnership in Milwaukee and the surrounding suburban counties. Their plans include a mobility program for families that decreases the poverty rate of vouchered households through regional locational choice and pre- and post-move assistance.

## **Small Area FMRS and Alternative Payment Standards**

**Philip Tegeler, PRRAC, Moderator**

**Rob Silverman, SUNY Buffalo and Deborah Thrope, NHLP**

**Sarah Oppenheimer, King County Housing Authority and Steve Field, Chicago Housing Authority**

A panel on Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) featured trends in SAFMR implementation and presentations from two members who have used MTW authority to implement alternative payment standards. Robert Silverman of the University of Buffalo provided some initial findings from a study and that he and a colleague are conducting on SAFMR implementation. Examining the 24 mandatory SAFMR areas, Silverman found that the average payment standard in low-opportunity zip codes is slightly higher than in high-opportunity zip codes, limiting the SAFMR rule's ability to promote mobility. Deborah Thrope from the National Housing Law Project described some initial trends that NHLP has seen in SAFMR implementation, including the grouping of zip codes, limited regional coordination, using MTW status to implement alternative payment standards, and little voluntary implementation.

Discussing alternative payment standards, Sarah Oppenheimer of the King County Housing Authority and Steven Field of the Chicago Housing Authority presented on their agency's payment standards. Using a six-tier standard, Oppenheimer noted that their standards have increased geographic choice, increased lease-up rates, and supported cost containment. CHA's model includes an exception payment standard of 150% of FMR, and Field reported that this standard has increased the number of voucher holders in high opportunity areas. Expanded geographic choice should continue as more HCV participants use the exception payment standard, particularly when paired with CHA's landlord incentive payments and housing search assistance.



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## **Master Lease Programs and Other Project-Based Mobility Approaches**

**Robin Snyderman, Brick Partners, Moderator**

**Tory Gunsolley, Houston Housing Authority and Isabel Lopez, NestQuest**

**Demetria McCain, ICP/Inclusive Communities Development Corporation**

**Priya Jayachandran, National Housing Trust**

As an alternative to traditional mobility programs, master lease and project-based mobility programs have proven successful in high-cost areas with risk of tenant displacement. These approaches also reduce reliance on landlord recruitment, which is oftentimes a primary obstacle to successful mobility programs.

Tory Gunsolley and Isabel Lopez detailed the relationship between the Houston Housing Authority and NestQuest, a nonprofit organization that works with voucher holders and local landlords to increase access to high-performing school districts. The collaborative relationship between the agencies is essential to the program's success, which has seen hundreds of families move to more affluent areas within the region. Gunsolley described the NestQuest model as evidence of the possibilities for mobility programming in the absence of MTW flexibility.

Demetria McCain of the Inclusive Communities Development Corporation touched on the sublease initiative in Dallas, which involves the Inclusive Communities Project as lease-holders. McCain explained that this system has created more cooperative relationships with landlords and greater success for voucher holders. Priya Jayachandran of the National Housing Trust spoke to her organization's efforts to partner with other local and national partners to invest in project-based solutions to challenging payment standards and landlord participation. Despite initial frustrations with securing properties, the HOPE acquisition program is moving forward into its next phase.



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