Has HOPE VI Transformed Residents Lives? New Findings from the HOPE VI Panel Study

The Urban Institute

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June 2007
The HOPE VI Panel Study

Tracks the living conditions and well-being of residents from five HOPE VI sites where revitalization began in mid to late 2001

- Shore Park/Shore Terrace  
- Wells/Madden  
- Few Gardens  
- Easter Hill  
- East Capitol Dwellings  

Atlantic City, NJ  
Chicago, IL  
Durham, NC  
Richmond, CA  
Washington, D.C.
HOPE VI Panel Study—Methods

- Baseline survey and interviews pre-relocation (summer 2001)
  - 887 heads of household
- Follow up survey and interviews summer 2003
  - 736 heads of household
- Final survey and interviews summer 2005
  - 715 heads of household
- Response rate was 85% at each wave, among non-deceased
Sample Characteristics

- Majority are African-American, single female heads of households
- Extremely low-income
  - Employment rates low (22% full-time, 17% part-time)
  - Only half graduated high school
- 75% have children; 42% have children under 6
- Approximately 10% are 62 and older
Relocation Outcomes, 2005

- Other public housing/project-based Section 8: 22%
- HOPE VI: 5%
- Original public housing: 16%
- Unassisted renter: 10%
- Unassisted homeowner: 4%
- Homeless/in prison: 1%
- Voucher: 43%

Total: 100%
Most Residents Have Not Moved Back

- Concern that relocation would leave residents concentrated in other very poor, minority communities
- Few in new mixed-income as of 2005; likely to increase as sites are completed.
- Still, for many residents, relocation has meant profound improvements in quality of life
Majority of Movers Have Vouchers

- Voucher movers were slightly better off at baseline
  - younger,
  - more had high school diploma
  - More were employed
- But also very poor, long-term public housing residents;
- Would not have moved without HOPE VI
Voucher Holders Have Better Housing

Current Housing Compared to Baseline

Voucher holders, 2005
- Better: 70%
- Same: 22%
- Worse: 8%

Other public housing residents, 2005
- Better: 40%
- Same: 35%
- Worse: 25%
Voucher Holders Live in Low-Poverty Neighborhoods

Average Poverty Rates for HOPE VI Panel Study Respondents, by Housing Assistance, 2001 and 2005 (percent)

- Other public housing: 37% in 2001, 34% in 2005
- HOPE VI: 37% in 2001, 46% in 2005
- Voucher: 39% in 2001, 23% in 2005
- Unassisted renter: 38% in 2001, 23% in 2005
- Homeowner: 34% in 2001, 23% in 2005

Source: 2005 HOPE VI Panel Study
Safety Is Biggest Benefit of Relocation

HOPE VI Panel Study Respondents Reporting that Drug Selling in Their Neighborhood Is a "Big Problem," by Housing Assistance (percent)
Profound Impacts on Quality of Life

- Relocatees reported wide range of life improvements including:
  - allowing their children to play outside
  - less fighting among neighborhood children
  - sleeping better and
  - feeling less worried about drug dealing and violent crime
Voucher Holders Feel Less Worried

Percent Reporting Anxiety Episode of One-month or Longer in the Previous Year

2001 2005
Voucher Holders 30% 21%
Other Public Housing 28% 24%
Children in Voucher Households Also Benefit from Relocation

Children in Voucher Households Exhibit More Positive and Less Delinquent Behaviors

- **Voucher household**: 62 positive behaviors, 43 delinquent behaviors (Difference marginally significant at the 11 percent level)
- **Other public housing**: 3 positive behaviors, 12 delinquent behaviors (Difference statistically significant at the 5 percent level)
Voucher Holders Have Trouble Making Ends Meet

Financial Hardship in 2005

- Trouble paying utilities: 45% (voucher holders), 8% (other public housing residents)
- Food hardship: 62% (voucher holders), 47% (other public housing residents)
- Late rent: 8% (voucher holders), 20% (other public housing residents)

*Difference between voucher holders and public housing residents is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.*
Poor Health is the Biggest Challenge

Self-Reported Health Status of HOPE VI Respondents, 2005

Age of respondent

Percent reporting fair or poor health

18-44 45-64 65+
U.S. total U.S. black women HOPE VI
Very High Prevalence of Health Problems

Presence of Chronic Illness among HOPE VI Respondents and Black Women Nationwide, 2005
(percent)

- Arthritis: HOPE VI sample 14%, U.S. black women 29%
- Asthma: HOPE VI sample 11%, U.S. black women 23%
- Obesity: HOPE VI sample 14%, U.S. black women 29%
- Depression: HOPE VI sample 7%, U.S. black women 14%
- Diabetes: HOPE VI sample 7%, U.S. black women 17%
- Hypertension: HOPE VI sample 21%, U.S. black women 39%
- Stroke: HOPE VI sample 3%, U.S. black women 6%

Legend: □ HOPE VI sample □ U.S. black women
Deaths per 1000 persons: All US Female, African American Female & HOPE VI Female

Mortality Rates for HOPE VI Respondents versus National Samples, 2005

- HOPE VI women
- Black women
- All women

Percent vs. Age

Age categories: 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74

Percent values:
- 25, 25, 12, 7, 18
- 51
HOPE VI Did Not Affect Employment

Barriers and Low Employment

- Severe mobility
- Depression
- Asthma
- No high school education
- Child under age 6
- Child care problems
- Anxiety

Percent employed

Employment barrier
HOPE VI Did Not Cause Homelessness

Original Residents Homeless and Doubled-Up in Past Year (percent)

- HOPE VI Panel Study: 3.9 homeless, 1.2 doubled-up
- MTO restricted voucher group: 4.6 homeless, 1.4 doubled-up
- MTO regular voucher group: 3.7 homeless, 1.9 doubled-up
- MTO control group: 3.1 homeless, 1.3 doubled-up
HOPE VI Is Not the Solution for the “Hard to House”

• Many “Hard to house” residents stayed in traditional public housing
• Little better off—if at all—than they were at baseline
  - Little improvement in housing quality
  - Modest improvement in safety
• Need for creative approaches
Conclusions: Most Residents Are Better Off

- For private market and mixed-income movers, HOPE VI has more than met the goal of providing an improved living environment.
- Those who remain in traditional public housing have not realized the same benefits.
- The problem of the hard to house requires a different approach.
Where Do We Go From Here?

- Encourage more families to choose vouchers
  - But provide ongoing support and second mover counseling
  - Address problems with utility allowances
- Ensure plans are sensitive to children’s needs
- Provide extra support to vulnerable residents with health problems during relocation
Remaining Challenges

- Address problems in traditional public housing
  - Housing quality and crime
- Develop models to serve “hard to house” families
- Fund HOPE VI revitalization of the remaining stock of severely distressed public housing