



PD&R

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research

Summary of Key PD&R Research and Housing Survey Activities

FY 2013

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The following document provides the current status of all major FY 2013 housing research and survey activity undertaken by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R). While many PD&R projects are designed to address multiple goals and objectives in furtherance of the Department's overall mission, each of the projects summarized below is listed under one of the five [HUD Strategic Goals](#) with which it is most closely aligned. This summary is current as of July 2013.

Strategic Goal 1: Strengthen the Nation's Housing Market to Bolster the Economy and Protect Consumers

THE AMERICAN HOUSING SURVEY

The statutorily mandated American Housing Survey (AHS) is the richest source of information about the nation's housing stock and the characteristics of its occupants, and it plays an important role in assessing the performance of government housing programs. HUD provides funding, oversight, and leadership on the AHS, while the Census Bureau provides operational management and conducts data collection. The additional funding devoted to Research & Technology beginning in FY 2010 and continuing through FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013 has enabled HUD to restore the AHS to near its historical level of 60 metropolitan-area surveys on a 4-year rotating basis.

The AHS metropolitan surveys are important because they allow PD&R to observe housing market activity at a subnational level. For instance, a metropolitan survey was conducted in New Orleans in 2011, which in turn enabled comparison to the surveys conducted in 2004 (the year before Hurricane Katrina) and in 2009 (4 years after the storm). The surveys in 2009 and 2011 document the change to the housing inventory caused by the hurricane and the subsequent progress of rebuilding efforts.

The additional funding has also allowed HUD to expand the AHS national sample to include an oversample of HUD-assisted units for 2011 and 2013. This important expansion results in reliable statistics on HUD-assisted tenants' views of the condition of their housing. Finally, the additional funding has enabled HUD to design and implement topical modules on various subjects of interest, including housing modifications for disabled persons in 2011. In 2013, the AHS will include new questions to provide greater insight into the causes of doubled-up households.

ANALYTIC SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN HOUSING SURVEY (AHS)

The objective of this project is to facilitate the preparation of AHS data and documentation for the survey's users, both inside and outside HUD; prepare the Components of Inventory Change (CINCH) and Rental Dynamics reports; prepare the HUD Assisted Renters and Their Units reports; prepare and update the AHS bibliography; and highlight the special features of the AHS by investigating housing issues of current concern.

COMPONENTS OF INVENTORY CHANGE (CINCH) REPORTS and RENTAL DYNAMICS

CINCH reports measure changes in the characteristics of the U.S. housing stock. Using data collected in the American Housing Survey (which is conducted every 2 years), the characteristics of individual housing units are compared across time. This comparison allows researchers to see not only changes in the characteristics of housing units but also in the characteristics of occupants. Information is available on the characteristics of units added and removed from the housing stock.

Each report has two sections. The first, labeled "Losses," shows losses to the housing stock in a given 2-year period using the first as the base year. In other words, the first section shows the disposition of all units that were present at the beginning of the period. The second section, labeled "Gains," shows gains in the housing stock during the 2-year period, using the second year of the period as the base year. That is to say, the second section shows the source of all units that were present at the end of the period. CINCH reports are published every other year and describe changes in the housing stock between the years when the American Housing Survey is conducted.

Rental Dynamics reports examine changes in the rental housing market with particular emphasis on the affordability of rental housing. Using data from the American Housing Surveys conducted during the two years under consideration, it answers such questions as: "Have the number of rental units affordable to households with very low incomes increased or decreased over the period?" or "What happened to the rental units that were affordable to low-income households at the beginning of the period?"

COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS REPORTS

Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) reports, available through the [U.S. Housing Market Conditions portal site on www.huduser.org](http://www.huduser.org), assist and guide HUD in its operations and have proven useful to builders, mortgagees, and others concerned with local housing condition trends. For each analysis, field economists develop a factual framework based on information available, as of a particular date, from both local and national sources. Each analysis takes into consideration changes in the economic, demographic, and housing inventory characteristics of a specific housing market area during three periods: from 2000 to 2010, from 2010 to the as-of date of the analysis, and from the as-of date to a 3-year forecast date. CHMA reports focus on major metropolitan housing markets, as well as smaller markets with significant FHA multifamily loan activity.

FHA SMALL INVESTOR MORTGAGE INSURANCE PROGRAM DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to:

- 1) Provide a brief history of the design, size, scope, and risk of past FHA single family rental programs and the utilization of multifamily programs for properties with 5 to 50 units;
- 2) Query the market to determine what financing resources/channels currently exist for investors interested in purchasing 1- to 4-unit rental properties and 5- to 50-unit rental properties;
- 3) Determine program parameters and the projected market for an FHA program to finance single-family rental properties;
- 4) Determine how program parameters, regulations, and/or processes might be changed and what the market response might be for modifications to existing multifamily programs to encourage their use in 5- to 50-unit rental properties; and
- 5) Estimate the impact of both of these potential FHA program changes on home prices, rental affordability, and overall housing market conditions.

HOUSING COUNSELING OUTCOME EVALUATION: PRE-PURCHASE AND FORECLOSURE COUNSELING OUTCOME STUDIES

HUD released two reports in FY 2012 that add to the literature on housing counseling programs. Those reports, *Pre-Purchase Counseling Outcome Study* and *Foreclosure Counseling Outcome Study*, are part of the Housing Counseling Outcome Evaluation, designed to document the circumstances of housing counseling clients enrolled in the fall of 2009 in foreclosure and pre-purchase counseling at a broad sample of HUD-funded housing counseling agencies across the country. The Housing Counseling Outcome Evaluation is the second in a series of studies on HUD's housing counseling program. The first report, *The State of the Housing Counseling Industry*, published in 2008, presented the first systematic overview of the housing counseling industry and of HUD-approved housing counseling agencies and the clients they serve.

PD&R designed these two reports to document the circumstances and outcomes of families enrolled in two different types of housing counseling: foreclosure prevention and pre-purchase counseling. To accomplish this objective, PD&R collected information on participants' background characteristics, their motivations for seeking counseling, the services they received over a 6-month period, and select housing outcomes approximately 18 months later. The foreclosure counseling study findings suggest that broad and intensive outreach could be critical to the success of foreclosure counseling and that telephone counseling was effective for those who sought it. The pre-purchase counseling study results are consistent with the limited literature on the effectiveness of pre-purchase housing counseling and generally indicate that counseling assists clients in making good decisions regarding homeownership and might help to make homeownership more sustainable.

MONTHLY HOUSING SCORECARD

This report is produced monthly, with bimonthly regional spotlight content provided by PD&R field economists. The Scorecard presents key statistics from the monthly Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) reports and FHA loan modifications, as well as key housing market indicators such as mortgage finance costs and home sales and prices. Regional spotlights include narrative discussion of local initiatives funded through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and Hardest Hit Fund (HHF).

PRE-PURCHASE HOMEOWNERSHIP COUNSELING DEMONSTRATION AND IMPACT EVALUATION

The objective of the Pre-Purchase Homeownership Counseling Demonstration and Impact Evaluation is to test the effectiveness and impact of two different types of pre-purchase housing counseling modalities on mortgage preparedness, homebuyer outcomes, and loan performance for a large sample of prospective low-, moderate-, and middle-income (LMMI; less than 120 percent of Area Median Income) first-time homebuyers. HUD is working with three national lenders and two national pre-purchase counseling intermediaries to enroll and randomly assign a sample of 6,000 prospective LMMI first-time homebuyers to one of three groups:

- 1) Remote online pre-purchase education plus telephone counseling;
- 2) In-person group pre-purchase education plus individual pre-purchase counseling; and
- 3) A control group in about 28 metropolitan areas across the country with high mortgage loan application volumes.

The research team will track the sample over 3 to 4 years and determine the extent to which their outcomes might result from the counseling intervention they received. The Abt team has been working with the three national lenders to design and implement the demonstration recruitment process, design the study database, recruit counseling agencies in the 28 metropolitan areas to participate in the demonstration, and plan and implement the 8-week pilot period. The pilot period is expected to start in the fall of 2013, with the 20-month enrollment period to follow in early 2014.

SURVEY OF MANUFACTURED HOMES PLACEMENT (Joint Report with the U.S. Census Bureau)

This report contains data on the number of new manufactured home placements and on sales price, setup, and characteristics of these new homes. Reports are produced quarterly, on an ongoing basis.

SURVEY OF MARKET ABSORPTION (Joint Report with the U.S. Census Bureau)

This study reports on the rate at which newly completed multifamily rental units and condominiums/co-operatives are absorbed (rented or sold). Characteristics such as average asking rents and prices are also collected. Reports are produced quarterly, on an ongoing basis.

SURVEY OF NEW HOME SALES AND COMPLETIONS (Joint Report with the U.S. Census Bureau)

This study is a survey of the sales volume and prices of new single-family homes conducted in conjunction with Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey. Reports are produced monthly, on an ongoing basis.

U.S. HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS ONLINE

The 20-year run of *U.S. Housing Market Conditions* (USHMC) as a print-based quarterly publication drew to a close with release of the final issue, published in February of 2013 and describing conditions as of the conclusion of Q4 of 2012. An all-new, [Web-based version of USHMC](#) is now available on www.huduser.org and promises to be a more useful and far-reaching information product for those with an interest in housing markets in the United States.

As noted in the final print issue's Transforming USHMC for the Digital Age article, "Beginning with the 2013 editions, USHMC will change significantly. First and foremost, *U.S. Housing Market Conditions* will no longer refer to a specific publication but to a new website within the larger www.huduser.org network that [houses] all PD&R housing market publications and indicators. The new USHMC website will be home to all the familiar products that our readers have come to expect in the previous print editions: National Data tables and summaries, Historical Data tables, and Regional Activity that includes narrative Regional Reports and Housing Market Profiles. From the new USHMC home page, readers will click directly on a link to any of these sections of interest. In addition, from the USHMC home page, readers will be able to access several other PD&R publications pertaining to regional and local housing market conditions, including the *Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis* (CHMA) and *Market at a Glance* (MAAG) reports. From the new USHMC home page, readers will have the option to search by report type or select a particular geography of interest and see all the available reports for that particular geography. Readers will access the most recently produced reports on the USHMC website and the more dated material from the 'Archives' section on the site."

Strategic Goal 2: Meet the Need for Quality Affordable Rental Homes

ASSESSMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN, ALASKA NATIVE, AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN HOUSING NEEDS

Congress has mandated a study of the housing needs of Native Americans because, while these needs are generally known to be severe, the extent of the problems is not well quantified. This study will also consider a wide range of issues by using the census information describing the needs of the Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian populations. The study will consider their socioeconomic situations, thus providing a broader context to housing needs. Because passage of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) in 1996 fundamentally changed the way federal funding is delivered to tribal people, issues surrounding the changes NAHASDA has introduced also form a key part of the study. The study's components will include a deep analysis of census data, a household survey in all 50 states about housing conditions, a qualitative lender survey, and case studies about issues for American Indians living in urban areas.

CONSOLIDATED PLAN/CHAS DATA

In 1995, HUD created the Consolidated Plan to serve as the combined planning document (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy and Community Development Plan) required from state or local governments participating in several large HUD grant programs. The Consolidated Plan is designed to help grantees assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions. To support this process, PD&R works with the Census Bureau to produce a custom dataset (the CHAS data) with information on housing needs—particularly the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households. The CHAS data were updated in 2009 to rely on the Census Bureau's new annual survey, the American Community Survey (ACS), and have been produced every year since then. In 2013, HUD released CHAS data based on the 2006 to 2010 and 2008 to 2010 ACS. PD&R also works with HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) to make the CHAS data accessible to grantees preparing their Consolidated Plans. The CHAS data are included in [CPD Maps and the eCon Planning Suite](#); new applications created by HUD to streamline the Consolidated Plan process and provide HUD grantees with a common platform for data-driven decisionmaking.

DHAP INCREMENTAL RENT TRANSITION STUDY

HUD conducted an important study of the households assisted by the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP-Katrina) after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf Coast. DHAP-Katrina was a post-disaster housing assistance program that provided a time-limited, declining rental subsidy, along with case management services, to households affected by Hurricanes Rita and Katrina who still did not have permanent housing 2 years after the storms. The study tracked the client sample for 2 years after DHAP-Katrina ended, conducted a follow-up telephone survey with the sample of DHAP Phase I/II/III families at that 2-year mark, conducted data analysis, and described the study findings [in a final report](#).

The results indicate that participants were largely satisfied with their DHAP-Katrina housing and with the case management services they received. Results of post-program outcomes some 7 years after the storms (and 2 years after the program ended) indicate that many DHAP-Katrina participants transitioned to the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, but that many other former DHAP-Katrina participants seem to be at risk of housing instability. The study fulfills three important needs for HUD and disaster housing responders. First, it provides systematic information on the outcomes realized by disaster housing assistance recipients. Second, it explores how these outcomes vary with the characteristics of clients, the services they receive, and the market-rate rent transition strategy to which they are subject. Third, this study lays the groundwork for important considerations in disaster housing policies.

FAIR MARKET RENTS

Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are primarily used to determine payment standard amounts for the Housing Choice Voucher program, to determine initial renewal rents for some expiring project-based Section 8 contracts, to determine initial rents for housing assistance payment (HAP) contracts in the Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy program (Mod Rehab), to serve as a rent ceiling in the HOME rental assistance program, and in the calculation of maximum award amounts for Continuum of Care grantees. HUD annually estimates FMRs for 530 metropolitan areas and 2,045 nonmetropolitan county FMR areas. By law, the final FMRs for use in any fiscal year must be published and available for use at the start of that fiscal year (October 1).

FMRs are gross rent estimates. They include the shelter rent plus the cost of all tenant-paid utilities, except telephones, cable or satellite television service, and Internet service. HUD sets FMRs to assure that a sufficient supply of rental housing is available to program participants. To accomplish this objective, FMRs must be both high enough to permit a selection of units and neighborhoods, and low enough to serve as many low-income families as possible. The level at which FMRs are set is expressed as a percentile point within the rent distribution of standard-quality rental housing units. The current definition used is the 40th percentile rent, the dollar amount below which 40 percent of the standard-quality rental housing units are rented. The 40th percentile rent is drawn from the distribution of rents of all units occupied by recent movers (renter households who moved to their present residence within the past 15 months). HUD is required to ensure that FMRs exclude non-market rental housing in their computation. Therefore, HUD excludes all units falling below a specified rent level determined from public housing rents in HUD's program databases as likely to be either assisted housing or otherwise at a below-market rent, and units less than 2 years old.

HUD's LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (LIHTC) DATABASE

HUD has updated the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) database annually since the mid-1990s to include new and rehabilitated properties placed in service. Initially, this data was collected by a contractor that worked closely with the state allocating agencies to compile the information. Following the passage of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) in 2008, and in keeping with its mandate that the state housing finance agencies (HFAs) provide HUD demographic and economic data on tenants in LIHTC units, PD&R began collecting LIHTC property and tenant information directly. The property data are available through an interactive query system at LIHTC.huduser.org. Data are updated annually, usually in the summer. The tenant data are not yet immediately available internally or externally because initially, most state agencies were unable to report complete data on their LIHTC tenants, and also due to the lack of funds needed to develop a system through which states could do so. PD&R is currently developing a database system for gathering the data and creating reports, but this system is not yet operational. PD&R hopes to have sufficiently complete LIHTC tenant data from a large enough number of states to begin reporting meaningful statistics on LIHTC tenants to Congress by the end of 2013.

INCOME LIMITS DATA

The U.S. Housing Act of 1937 requires that HUD set income limits that determine the eligibility of applicants for HUD's assisted housing programs. One of the major active assisted housing programs is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8). HUD's Section 8 Income Limits begin with the production of Median Family Income (MFI) estimates. HUD uses Section 8's FMR area definitions in developing MFI estimates; therefore, HUD develops income estimates for each metropolitan area, parts of some metropolitan areas, and each nonmetropolitan county. HUD calculates Section 8 Income Limits for every FMR area, with adjustments for family size and for areas that have unusually high or low income-to-housing-cost relationships. Numerous other federal, state, and local programs rely on HUD's Income Limits. The most notable of these programs, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, uses a combination of HUD's Section 8 Income Limits and a special set of Income Limits mandated by the 2008 Housing and Economic Recovery Act to determine whether families are eligible to occupy LIHTC units. These income limits also govern the maximum rental rates for LIHTC units.

PICTURE OF SUBSIDIZED HOUSEHOLDS

Initially issued only as a hard copy report, the *Picture of Subsidized Households* and its accompanying set of data files provide essential statistics on the characteristics of families that participate in HUD rental subsidy programs. This study is widely used by researchers and the public, and is one of HUD's primary tools for disseminating information on the beneficiaries of rental subsidy programs at the national, state, county, public housing agency (PHA), project, and census tract levels. Place-specific queries can be generated on the *Picture of Subsidized Households* section of www.huduser.org. Full data extracts can be downloaded in Excel spreadsheets available at the same location. The *Picture of Subsidized Households* for years 2010 through 2012 was recently released and is available on www.huduser.org.

QUALITY CONTROL STUDY

The Quality Control for Rental Assistance Subsidy Determinations study provides annual national estimates of the extent, severity, costs, and sources of rent errors in tenant subsidies for the Public Housing, Tenant-Based Voucher, and Project-Based Assistance programs. Typically released in October, the studies are used to assess HUD's performance in reducing improper payments, an important legal obligation of the Department. They also point out the sources of errors, enabling the Department to target these areas for further improvement.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION (RAD) EVALUATION

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) is a central part of HUD's strategy to preserve and improve affordable rental housing. RAD is designed to provide stable public funding to assisted housing projects, increase the ability of those projects to access private capital, and enhance the long-term viability of converted projects. PD&R is developing an evaluation that will focus on the conversion of public housing projects. The evaluation will describe the types of projects that participate in RAD and associated activities, such as the level of rehabilitation activity, the extent of resident relocation, and the reliance on various financing sources. The evaluation will also measure outcomes for RAD projects and seek to compare those outcomes to similar projects that do not participate in RAD. PD&R also recently published a [Notice of Funding Availability](#) for research grants related to the Rental Assistance Demonstration.

THE RENTAL HOUSING FINANCE SURVEY

The newest of the national surveys, the Rental Housing Finance Survey (RHFS), is designed to create a nationally representative sample of data on the financing of multiunit rental housing. The RHFS, conducted in partnership with the Census Bureau, will be biennial, and will include both longitudinal and cross-sectional elements. Initial results from the 2012 RHFS were published in early 2013; preparations are currently underway for the 2014 RHFS. With the RHFS, HUD can gain a better understanding of multifamily rental loan origination volumes, property characteristics associated with these originations, and operating cost and revenue characteristics for multifamily rental properties in the United States.

STUDY OF PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES' ENGAGEMENT WITH HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

In support of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, HUD is supporting a research effort to explore and document how Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) currently serve and interact with homeless households. The goal of the study will be to:

- 1) Establish a baseline level of current engagement of PHAs in serving homeless households;
- 2) Explore barriers identified by PHAs that prevent the organization from targeting housing assistance to homeless households; and
- 3) Identify mechanisms to reduce or eliminate the barriers identified in #2, above.

The study consists of two data collection efforts: a Web-based survey of all public housing agencies and an in-depth follow-up telephone survey with a select set of 125 PHAs. Data provided by this study will yield real-time information for HUD policymakers seeking to engage PHAs in the federal goals of ending homelessness by targeting housing assistance to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In addition to providing baseline data about the current level of engagement that PHAs already maintain, the study will provide insight into the barriers PHAs face in targeting homeless households for assistance, and will identify mechanisms that PHAs have used to overcome these barriers. A final report will be available in the fall/winter of 2013, along with a public use dataset based on census survey data.

WHAT HAPPENS TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROPERTIES AT YEAR 15 AND BEYOND?

In the past few years, thousands of properties financed through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program have become eligible to leave the program, thereby ending rent and income-use restrictions on these properties. In the worst-case scenario, more than 1 million LIHTC units could leave the affordable housing stock by 2020, a potentially serious setback to the goal of expanding housing choices for low-income households. PD&R commissioned the LIHTC study to discover what happens to these properties as they become eligible to leave the program.

The report examines the factors that affect owners' decisions to leave the LIHTC program and the implications of these departures for the affordable housing market. Based on interviews with owners, tax credit syndicators and brokers, and direct investors, the study describes the issues and decisions that LIHTC property owners confront as their tax-credit projects reach the 15-year mark. The authors find that most LIHTC properties remain affordable despite having reached and passed the 15-year period of compliance with Internal Revenue Service use restrictions. A limited number of exceptions are closely related to local housing market conditions and to events that occur at year 15 and beyond, including whether the property's use restrictions change, and whether the property is sold to a new ownership entity.

WORST CASE HOUSING NEEDS 2011: REPORT TO CONGRESS

HUD finds dramatic increases in worst case housing needs during the 2009 to 2011 period that cut across demographic groups, household types, and regions. This rise in hardship among renters is due to substantial increases in rental housing demand and weakening incomes that increase competition for already-scarce affordable units.

Given the severely challenged economic conditions that the United States confronted during this period, particularly surrounding the housing market, it is not surprising that the need for housing assistance continues to outpace the ability of federal, state, and local governments to supply it. The forthcoming *Worst Case Housing Needs 2011: Report to Congress* will examine the causes of and trends in worst case needs for affordable rental housing. The Summary of *Worst Case Housing Needs 2011* was published in February 2013; the complete report is due out later this year.

Strategic Goal 3: Utilize Housing as a Platform for Improving Quality of Life

AGING IN PLACE: MANAGING THE USE OF REVERSE MORTGAGES TO ENABLE HOUSING STABILITY

The overall objective of this research is to provide a better understanding of whether, and under what circumstances, reverse mortgages lead to increased financial security, well-being, and independence among older homeowners who wish to age in place. The decision to obtain a reverse mortgage is influenced by a variety of factors, including individual, market, and household characteristics, but also by the ability of the senior to appropriately evaluate the decision, as moderated by decision frames and access to information.

Some policy advocates promote reverse mortgages as a means of reducing government expenditures, including health care costs. However, others are more skeptical, challenging that the complexity of the product and vulnerability of seniors creates opportunities for ill-informed decisions that can erode housing and financial stability. There is a tremendous policy need for research that can inform regulations, reverse mortgage (underwriting) standards, and counseling protocols for reverse mortgage clients moving forward.

This project is funded by the MacArthur Foundation under its How Housing Matters to Families and Communities Grant program, with contributions from CredAbility (a nationwide housing counseling agency) and The Ohio State University, along with matching funds from a HUD research partnerships grant. The project is estimated for completion in late 2015.

EVALUATION OF THE RAPID REHOUSING FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

HUD's FY 2008 appropriation included a \$25 million demonstration of the rapid rehousing for homeless families program, including funding for a mandatory evaluation of the demonstration. In February 2010, HUD launched an Evaluation of the Rapid Rehousing for Homeless Families Demonstration program. Rapid rehousing is based on the notion that there is a band of families with minimal barriers to housing that could be stabilized with a limited amount of housing assistance and services. Grantees were invited to develop their own assessment tool that would be used to identify eligible families, as well as match them to the appropriate intervention, and to offer short-term assistance (3 to 6 months), long-term assistance (12 to 15 months), or both.

Twenty-three grants were awarded, and all grantees are participating in both a process and an outcomes evaluation. The process evaluation focuses on describing the rapid rehousing programs established by each grantee, including the target population, the housing/service package offered, and the challenges faced in establishing the program. In addition to the process study, the research team is tracking a cohort of 500 households served through the demonstration program, and interviewing each household 12 months following the *end* of the household's rapid rehousing assistance. The process study findings and data from the outcomes evaluation will be available in early 2014.

FAMILY OPTIONS STUDY

The Senate Report 109-109 for the FY 2006 Transportation, Treasury, the Judiciary, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill directed HUD to "undertake research to ascertain the impact of various service and housing interventions in ending homelessness for families." In response to this directive, HUD launched the Family Options Study. The goal of the study is to learn more about the effects of housing and services interventions for homeless families. Previous research has described the characteristics and needs of homeless families and has explored the effectiveness of different interventions, but none of the past work has explicitly compared the results of different interventions using a rigorous methodology.

The Family Options Study compares several combinations of housing assistance and services in a multisite experiment to determine which interventions work best to promote housing stability, family preservation, child well-being, adult well-being, and self-sufficiency. To provide the strongest possible evidence of the effects of the housing and services interventions, the evaluation is using an experimental research design. During the enrollment period (September 2010 to January 2012), more than 2,300 homeless families across 12 communities enrolled in the study. Families were interviewed at baseline, are being tracked every 3 months, and will be interviewed 18 months following random assignment.

An interim report, along with the final research design of the study, was published in the spring of 2013. This interim report describes the baseline characteristics of the families enrolled in the study and the housing and services interventions the families were offered. The report also describes the study's design and implementation, and provides preliminary information about the extent to which families have enrolled in the assigned interventions. A final report documenting the outcomes for study families will be available in early 2015. All documents and reports relating to the Family Options Study can be found [here](#). In 2011, HUD also funded [three grants](#) to support studies that enhance or complement the Interventions for Homeless Families Demonstration.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM DEMONSTRATION

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program serves voucher holders and residents of public housing, and aims to increase a family's income and savings. Case managers work with families to connect them with services and employment opportunities while money accumulates in an escrow account.

The intent of the FSS program demonstration is to gain a deeper understanding of FSS and to illustrate strategies that assist participants in obtaining greater economic independence. The demonstration requires a random-assignment model because participant self-selection into FSS limits the ability to assess whether program features (rather than the characteristics of the participating families) lead to tenant income gains. Random assignment will limit the extent to which selection bias drives observed results. The demonstration will document the progress of a group of FSS participants from initial enrollment to program completion (or exit). Although the primary objective of FSS is stable, suitable employment, the many interim outcomes of interest include:

- 1) Getting a first job;
- 2) Getting a better paying job;
- 3) Self-employment or small-business ownership;
- 4) No longer needing benefits provided under one or more welfare programs;
- 5) Obtaining additional education, whether in the form of a high school diploma, higher education degree, or vocational training;
- 6) Buying a home;
- 7) Buying a car;
- 8) Setting up savings accounts; or
- 9) Accomplishing similar goals that lead to economic independence.

The study is underway and currently in the site recruitment phase.

HOUSING MODELS FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Senate report language accompanying HUD's 2009 appropriation directed the Secretary to "conduct an evaluation of the housing models that are most effective in preventing and ending homelessness for youth aged 16 to 24." HUD has chosen to focus this project on the housing needs of the nearly 30,000 youth who "age out" of the foster care system each year. The study will catalog the range of housing programs that serve youth aging out of foster care, including their funding mechanisms; identify "model" programs with documented outcomes; conduct an in-depth review of communities who

are using Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers to serve this population; and identify opportunities to mitigate the risk of homelessness for youth as they transition out of the foster care system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is a partner in the support and management of this study. The literature/program typology [is available here](#). Additional publications are expected to be released later in 2013.

HUD RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND CRIME

Media articles have suggested that crime increases when low-income voucher households move into neighborhoods. More recent scholarship has found either no relationship or a relationship limited to very large clusters of voucher households. An article by PD&R staff on Charlotte, North Carolina has been accepted for publication in *Housing Policy Debate*. The Charlotte results indicate that vouchers can have a positive association with crime. The estimates vary by crime category, crime quantile, voucher household type, and concentration of vouchers.

The authors are also gathering data in Dallas and intend to match incident and arrest addresses to addresses of assisted households to examine the extent to which HUD assisted tenants are involved in crime as perpetrators or victims. They also intend to match Social Security Numbers to examine the role of different family members within assisted households.

NATIVE AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE BUILDING PRACTICES DEMONSTRATION

PD&R, in partnership with the Office of Native American Programs, launched an effort in FY 2011 to support and increase sustainable construction in Native American communities. By building sustainable housing, tribes provide their members with healthier, more comfortable, and more resource-efficient homes.

This initiative includes several activities. HUD is working with other federal agencies and key stakeholders to identify and overcome barriers to the adoption of sustainable construction practices in Indian country. A call was issued seeking tribes interested in this effort. Participating tribes receive technical assistance to support their adoption of sustainable construction practices in residential construction or rehabilitation projects. HUD has posted case studies on the [Sustainable Construction in Indian Country](#) portal site within PD&R's www.huduser.org parent website. HUD has also issued [small research grants](#) to supplement this larger contract.

RENT REFORM DEMONSTRATION

The HUD Rent Reform Demonstration project is designed to test alternatives to a solely income-based rent structure. Rent reform may impact assisted housing residents in terms of the rents they pay and the amounts they save and earn, as well as the income stream to the housing agency that administers the subsidy. The demonstration will be undertaken at select Moving to Work (MTW) sites, because these sites provide a natural laboratory for experimentation and observation of rent reform strategies. The research team and MTW sites will work with HUD to decide on an intervention that can be implemented at all sites in substantially the same manner.

SMALL AREA FMR DEMONSTRATION

Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are used to define payment standards that govern the amount of assistance that Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) participants receive. HUD currently publishes a single FMR for each HUD metropolitan FMR area. To provide program participants with wider access to opportunity areas, the Department has developed Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs), which set FMRs at the ZIP Code level within metropolitan areas. SAFMRs represent a fundamentally different way of operating the HCVP in metropolitan areas; therefore, HUD is testing SAFMRs through a demonstration program to better understand the programmatic effects. There are five public housing authorities participating in this voluntary demonstration program, which is slated to run through September 2016.

SUPPORT AND SERVICES AT HOME EVALUATION

Support and Services at Home (SASH) is a program being implemented in Vermont as part of the state's comprehensive health care reform. It coordinates services to support aging in place and health care services in HUD housing. HUD is supporting an evaluation of SASH through an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Administration on Aging. The Research Triangle Institute (RTI) is conducting the study, which will compare characteristics of housing properties that participate in SASH and those that do not, and will provide a comprehensive statistical comparison between SASH participants, non-participants, and comparison beneficiaries in terms of acute care utilization, Medicare expenditures, transfers to nursing homes, and adverse medical events. The first round of site visits has been completed and HUD has delivered the necessary data on HUD households to RTI.

USING NEAR REPEAT ANALYSIS FOR MEASURING URBAN AND HOUSING PROBLEMS: THREE EXAMPLES WITH SPATIAL ANALYSIS EXTENSIONS

Near repeat analysis is an emerging spatial approach used to measure the spread of crime. Research shows that when a crime occurs, there is a high probability other crimes will occur at nearby locations in relatively short periods of time. Near repeat crimes occur because the incidents themselves, or the areas where they occur, share commonalities that lead to more crime opportunities. The theoretical underpinning of near repeat research is geographic and based on Tobler's first law of geography (objects or events closer to each other are more similar than those further away). This underpinning facilitates the extension of the near repeat concept to housing and urban-related problems because they also show spatial and temporal proximity patterns due to commonalities. This research is exploring the application of near repeat analysis to two urban and housing and problems that exhibit differing geographic cluster patterns:

- 1) Spread of foreclosures; and
- 2) Concentration of Housing Choice Voucher program participants.

Foreclosed properties and voucher participant relocations are both known to occur within close proximity and short time periods of one another because they are respectively governed and limited by the underlying spatial organization of the housing market.

Using these two examples, this research will highlight the underlying geographic principles that permit the transfer of the near repeat concept to housing, urban development, and other social science disciplines to derive a new avenue of research about their underlying processes. This research will also use the near repeat results with other spatial analysis techniques to gain further understanding and produce enhanced policy insights for mitigation, monitoring, and investigation.

VETERANS HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION

Congress set aside \$10 million in HUD's FY 2009 budget "to test the effectiveness of strategies to prevent veterans from becoming homeless." HUD collaborated with VA and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to design the Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration (VHPD) and awarded grants to five sites in February 2011. The evaluation includes site visits, baseline and follow-up surveys, and use of administrative data to create comparison groups. The VA's National Center on Veteran Homelessness is collaborating with researchers to conduct the data analysis needed to complete the study. This project is in alignment with the 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, which aims to "prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 5 years." While enrollment in the study is currently behind schedule, HUD's Special Needs Assistance Program Office (SNAPS) has undertaken a variety of activities to increase participation.

Strategic Goal 4: Build Inclusive and Sustainable Communities Free From Discrimination

ACCELERATING POST-DISASTER COMMUNITY RECOVERY

PD&R's research focus here is on validating a process for coastal and riverine communities to use in planning development activities that can reduce the long-term impacts of flooding. It will include:

- Assessment of available models;
- Identification of points of intervention where the relevant models can be integrated into the planning process;
- Identification of opportunities to demonstrate the use of the models in local planning;
- Demonstration of the approach;
- Outreach to help other communities better understand the opportunities;
- Identification of parallel concepts describing other threats to communities; and
- Feedback to the model developers on the model's use at the community level.

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING PILOT PROJECT

After Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) implemented the Alternative Housing Pilot Program, in which the design and construction of innovative disaster housing was performed by state and local governments. Grants were provided to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

HUD assisted FEMA by providing technical assistance to the grantees and evaluating the overall program. The evaluation concluded that it is possible to build housing in a post-disaster environment that is safe and rapidly constructed while accommodating the needs of the disaster survivors. This housing has the potential to be used permanently as a long-term community housing resource.

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS DEMONSTRATION

Choice Neighborhoods is designed to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into neighborhoods of choice—viable, mixed-income neighborhoods where families have access to employment opportunities, well-functioning services, good-quality public schools and education programs, and a variety of viable transportation options. PD&R is conducting a long-term study of the Choice Neighborhoods program based on the first round of implementation grantees (in Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Seattle). The first phase of this study includes an implementation analysis and baseline data collection. PD&R expects to publish a report in fall 2014 which will describe baseline conditions in the five sites and analyze the implementation of the program through its first 2 to 3 years. PD&R is also conducting a survey of households living in each of the five neighborhoods and intends to conduct follow-up research after the Choice Neighborhoods transformation plans have been substantially implemented (approximately 2017 to 2020).

FY 2013 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM

The Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP) supports efforts by the research community to build on existing research evaluating new and existing tools and strategies that promote and implement more effective policies for sustainable communities. **In FY 2010, six grants were awarded. For this round of sustainability research grants,** HUD is primarily interested in sponsoring cutting-edge research in quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation; transportation and infrastructure planning; and green, energy-efficient practices. HUD gives priority to applications that advance evidence-based research on the effectiveness of federal programs in these areas, which include HUD programs such as HOME, CDBG, public housing, Choice Neighborhoods, and the range of HUD programs that address sustainability issues. The results from the program will enable HUD to develop a broader sustainability agenda beyond current departmental priorities and any future efforts or initiatives that it may consider.

GREEN AND ENERGY RETROFIT ASSESSMENT

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriated \$3.5 billion for HUD to distribute to public housing agencies and \$235 million for privately owned, multifamily assisted housing to perform green and energy retrofits. The expected benefits of these funds were to enhance the quality, longevity, and energy efficiency of HUD's existing housing stock, and to assist in the creation and preservation of jobs. This initiative was also intended to support the nation's economic recovery, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consumer energy costs, and broaden the nation's stock of green and energy-efficient affordable housing. PD&R developed an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the distributed funds. The Green and Energy Retrofit Assessment (GERA) study will span 4 years and will evaluate the short- and long-term performance of the energy investments. The evaluation will consist of four broad efforts:

- 1) Developing an energy savings model;
- 2) Validating the model;
- 3) Updating the model; and
- 4) Reporting the findings.

The resulting report will include an analysis of the cost, implementation, and energy savings associated with the completed retrofits.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION—FAMILIES

This is a study on measuring discrimination against families with children in rental housing. The purpose will be to increase the Department's understanding of rental housing discrimination on the basis of familial status. The Federal Fair Housing Act (as amended in 1988) prohibits such discrimination, yet HUD does not know the extent of discrimination against families with children in rental housing. Indeed, to date there are no statistically valid studies estimating the incidence in the United States of discrimination in rental housing markets against families with children. This study will build the empirical and conceptual foundation for producing such an estimate.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION—SOURCE OF INCOME

The purpose of this study is to increase the Department's understanding of housing discrimination on the basis of source of income in U.S. rental housing markets. The intent is to explore and summarize what is known about the nature and extent of source of income discrimination; to determine whether the incidence of source of income discrimination can be reliably measured; and to define and test a promising methodology for identifying and measuring source of income discrimination.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION STUDY 2012

This [report](#) measures housing market discrimination against African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics nationally. The study continues use of the paired-testing method to detect discrimination, but has modified its data collection procedures and analysis techniques to reflect changes in the nature of housing market searches since the last national study was conducted in 2000. The findings indicate a decline in the direct denial of service to racial and ethnic minorities but continuing differences in the housing opportunities made available to minorities when compared to comparable white home seekers.

HOUSING SEARCH PROCESS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

This housing discrimination research will focus on developing knowledge of differential rental housing search patterns by race and ethnicity. A wide variety of types of research approaches may be considered. The principal objectives are:

- 1) To significantly expand the body of knowledge regarding rental housing search methods used by racial and ethnic minorities;
- 2) To thoroughly explore the relative importance and implications of this knowledge for future discrimination testing research; and
- 3) To carefully and fully document the research in the form of a final report suitable for use by both researchers and the fair housing enforcement community.

IMPACT OF HOUSING ON YOUNG CHILDREN

Using Transformation Initiative (TI) funding, HUD entered into an interagency agreement with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to co-fund a rigorous study titled *Housing Trade-Offs as They are Perceived and as They Affect Children's Well-Being*. The study investigates how housing options and their links to neighborhoods and schools jointly affect the socio-emotional development, academic achievement, and health of children ages 3 to 8. Families with at least one child in that age range will be randomly assigned to either receive a housing choice voucher or not. Random assignment is the basis for strong causal inference about the impact of housing on children. The study will also examine a sample of low-income families who did not apply for a voucher.

Over a period of 40 months, researchers will survey all three groups of study participants—those receiving a voucher, those not receiving a voucher, and similar families who did not apply for a housing choice voucher—three times. Data collected will include family demography, housing quality, cognitive and health outcomes, residential preferences and tradeoffs (including data from a vignette study), and interviewer rating of neighborhood features thought to be key to child development. The study will advance knowledge by producing strong evidence about how families make housing choices, the impact of those choices on children, and the impact of receiving a housing choice voucher on families' choices and children's outcomes.

INTERFACE OF MOBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: THOMPSON STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess achievement of the goals of the partial settlement agreement in *Thompson v. HUD*, which African American residents of public housing in the city of Baltimore initiated in 1995. In 1996, HUD agreed to a partial consent decree that provided significant desegregative opportunities to the plaintiff class families. The study will conduct research and analysis related to expanding housing opportunity through a program of sustainable mobility using remedial vouchers, and will answer research questions designed to both inform the Department on the outcomes of that case and explore the broader application of lessons learned to reduce racial isolation and concentration of poverty.

Some of the areas the research will address include:

- 1) Analysis of the physical and environmental conditions of the neighborhoods of families using the Thompson vouchers;
- 2) An assessment of initial neighborhood choices of families using Thompson vouchers to move to opportunity areas in the Baltimore region; and
- 3) The identification and analysis of impediments to meeting the objectives of the settlement.

The study will also build on an in-house analysis of geographies of opportunity that is underway in PD&R. A final settlement was reached in November 2012 that will allow more than 2,000 additional families to be served. The settlement also calls for the continuation and expansion of the housing opportunity study.

INTEGRATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND TRANSIT

This project seeks to bridge the housing transportation gap by creating an easy-to-read, illustrated guide of approximately 80 to 100 pages in length for local decisionmaking officials and other interested groups. Given the wide range of actors and disciplines that need to be engaged in the planning process and the variety of places and conditions where development can occur, this guide will be a primary tool for understanding and articulating the range of benefits that can be realized by optimizing the beneficial relationship between public transportation and comprehensive community development, particularly for low- and moderate-income individuals.

The intention is to emphasize guidance and methods relating to how communities can incorporate multiple modes of transportation (including buses and bicycles) and to serve elected officials and other decisionmakers by providing a quick and effective method of introducing principles, concepts, and language regarding transit and access to low-income communities. The guide will lay out appropriate strategies that include physical design and operational elements, location of key facilities and how to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the transit network, shared paths and streets, bus facilities (including stops, terminals, and signage), and guidance on the process of integrating multiple modes of transportation.

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM

In July 2008, Congress established the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to stabilize neighborhoods suffering the negative effects of foreclosures and abandonment. From 2008 to 2011, a total of \$7 billion was appropriated to NSP and allocated to state and local governments and nonprofits across the country. PD&R is conducting an evaluation of NSP with a particular focus on the second round of funding—known as NSP2—in which \$1.93 billion in grants were made to 56 entities through a competitive selection process. This evaluation includes three components:

- 1) An implementation analysis based on site visits and interviews;
- 2) A visual tracking survey, in which the research team is conducting direct observations (also known as a “windshield survey”) of neighborhoods in Palm Beach County, Florida, and Cuyahoga County, Ohio that were particularly affected by foreclosures; and
- 3) Analysis of NSP-funded investments and the effect of those investments on their surrounding communities.

A final report is expected in late 2013.

PILOT FOR AN ESTIMATE OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) PEOPLE

The purpose of this study is to pilot techniques designed to obtain a baseline in-person measurement of housing discrimination faced by same-sex couples in at least two metropolitan rental markets. The study will also include a pilot test of discrimination against transgender people in a single metropolitan market. The study will build upon recent work that generated a national estimate of discrimination against same-sex couples using a paired-testing methodology via email. The current project will expand to in-person testing, and will also include a side-by-side comparison of stand-alone email tests in one market. The goal is to compare the utility of email-only testing to testing that culminates in an in-person visit.

RENTAL HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF OR WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS

The principal objective of this effort is to extend an existing 2005 pilot study to obtain valid national estimates of rental housing discrimination against persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as discrimination against persons using wheelchairs. The study deploys a paired-testing methodology to measure, not just differential treatment, but also failure by the rental agent to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability.

RENTAL HOUSING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF MENTAL DISABILITY

Housing discrimination on the basis of disability is currently the most common basis for housing discrimination complaints submitted to HUD or Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) agencies. In 2010, 48 percent of all complaints submitted were based on disability, and an analysis of the complaints submitted in FY 2010 reveals that 40 percent of all disability complaints were categorized as being related to *mental* disability. The purpose of this research effort is to increase the Department's understanding of housing discrimination on the basis of mental disability, including the forms and prevalence of such housing discrimination. Specifically, this project will support the following tasks:

- 1) The establishment of an expert panel to provide guidance to the contract team and HUD over the course of this project;
- 2) A systematic and rigorous review of a sample of housing discrimination complaints where mental disability has been the basis of complaint;
- 3) A series of short papers on relevant topics (e.g., housing search practices of persons with mental disabilities, ethical considerations in paired testing with persons with mental disabilities, etc.); and
- 4) Pilot testing to measure discrimination against persons with mental disabilities in a minimum of one metropolitan rental market, with the goal of demonstrating a potentially feasible approach to nationwide testing.

A final report is expected in winter 2015.

RURAL HOUSING RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE COUNCIL (HAC)

Recent research conducted by HAC in cooperation with the Office of Policy Development and Research includes:

- 1) *A Location Analysis of Federally Assisted Housing Programs in Rural Areas;*
- 2) *An Examination of Rural People, Poverty and Housing Using the 2010 Decennial Census and the American Communities Survey Data;*
- 3) *Collaborations in the Colonias: An Examination of Initiatives that Focus on Housing and Public Health Along the U.S./Mexico Border Region; and*
- 4) *A Toolkit on Understanding and Addressing Homelessness in Tribal Communities.*

These reports are available at www.ruralhome.org.

STUDY OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SAME-SEX COUPLES

This [study](#) measures baseline levels of rental housing discrimination against men partnering with men and women partnering with women for a representative national (metropolitan) sample of housing units. The study used paired email tests instead of traditional paired in-person testing to measure housing discrimination. Between June and October 2011, the study successfully administered 6,833 tests in 50 metropolitan areas across the country in which Craigslist market coverage was available. The study tested female and male couples separately and compared the treatment of same-sex couples with that of heterosexual married couples.

Strategic Goal 5: Transform the Way HUD Does Business

CITYSCAPE

The goal of *Cityscape* is to bring high-quality original research on housing and community development issues to scholars, government officials, and practitioners. *Cityscape* is open to all relevant disciplines, including architecture, consumer research, demography, economics, engineering, ethnography, finance, geography, law, planning, political science, public policy, regional science, sociology, statistics, and urban studies.

A *Cityscape* issue consists of:

- 1) A symposium of original refereed research papers (with commentary) on a common theme;
- 2) A “debate” (Point of Contention) among scholars on an unresolved intellectual issue in HUD’s mission area;
- 3) A section of original refereed papers that do not share a common theme; and
- 4) A section of shorter papers (Departments) edited by various PD&R staff.

PD&R publishes *Cityscape* three times a year. The journal is available both online and in print, the latter via subscription. A complete listing of—and links to—all issues published since the journal’s 1994 inception can be found [here](#).

EVALUATION OF THE SECTION 811 PROJECT RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION

The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) Demonstration evaluation will assess the implementation and preliminary outcomes of a newly authorized program that provides project rental assistance to state housing agencies to house extremely low-income people with disabilities in scatter units in new or existing affordable housing developments funded by LIHTC, HOME, or other sources. State housing agencies must have entered into partnerships with state health and human services and Medicaid agencies to offer long-term services and supports to participant households. In addition, the evaluation will compare this new model of housing assistance to the traditional Section 811, which provided capital advances and operating subsidies to nonprofits developing affordable housing for low-income people with disabilities.

EVIDENCE MATTERS

Evidence Matters is a quarterly publication that demonstrates HUD’s commitment to evidence-based policymaking by presenting objective, data-driven analysis of major housing and community development issues. It emerged in the midst of a growing call for evidence-based policymaking from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, and nonprofits like the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. These organizations often cite random controlled trials (RCTs) as the best (and sometimes the only) research upon which policy should be made or programs scaled up. PD&R has supported, and will continue to support, RCTs to inform policymaking; however, the mission of this publication is to share how PD&R and others have wrestled with research findings using a variety of methodologies that may challenge existing or proposed policies.

GIS DATA RESOURCES

PD&R is leading an initiative to coordinate and centralize the delivery of geospatial data and applications to HUD staff, grantees, and customers. As part of this initiative, PD&R will be unveiling a new GIS Data Resources pages on www.huduser.org. The new section will provide internal and external customers with one-stop shopping for HUD’s extensive geospatial resources, and will include a comprehensive listing of all currently available HUD Web mapping applications. It will also provide access to geo-enabled HUD data through Web services and downloadable GIS data files.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (HCVP) ADMINISTRATIVE FEE STUDY

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Administrative Fee Study is designed to evaluate the amount of funding needed to administer a high-performing, efficient HCVP based on direct measurement of the work actually performed by voucher administrators and a detailed collection of overhead and non-labor costs associated with the program at a sample of 60 high-performing Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). The study will measure and identify the tasks performed by PHA staff to meet program requirements, to assist voucher holders in finding and renting suitable housing in a timely way, and to ensure that a broad range of affordable rental housing throughout the community is available to voucher families. The study will use these data to model the total administrative cost per voucher for each PHA in the study, as well as costs for the major tasks involved in voucher administration at different types of PHAs operating in different labor and housing markets and serving different client populations. These cost models will then be used to develop a new administrative fee formula that is based on the actual costs of operating the voucher program and adjusts for market and other local factors known to affect PHA costs.

Ultimately, the findings of the study will be used to inform the development of a new formula for allocating HCVP administrative fees. The research team has confirmed 53 high-performing PHAs to be part of the full study data collection. Recruitment of sites will continue until 56 PHAs have been confirmed for participation in the study. The 56 PHAs plus the 4 pre-test PHAs will form the full study sample. The random moment sampling (RMS) data collection for the full study, which started in January 2013, is being conducted in cohorts over a 70-week period (through early April 2014). The cost data collection, including the collection of transaction count data, is being conducted in cohorts over the same 70-week period. The research team will begin conducting small program interviews to ascertain their administrative costs in August 2013, will conduct data analysis and develop and test the new administrative fee formula between April and July 2014, and will draft the final report from August to October 2014. A final report is expected in November 2014, with briefings to follow in December 2014.

NATURAL EXPERIMENTS

One way of evaluating public policy is to deploy so-called “natural experiments,” which make use of policy discontinuities through time and/or across geographic space that create comparable groups uncontaminated by self-selection. Because there is a control group, it is possible to identify the impacts, if any, of the policy in question. Natural experiments offer promising ways to determine whether policies produce their intended effects and whether the assumptions that go into public policy are valid.

In 2010, HUD provided funding to support scientific research that makes use of natural experiments to evaluate the impacts of local, state, and federal policies. HUD is particularly interested in funding evaluations that can help policymakers determine how to spend taxpayer dollars effectively and efficiently, though other types of projects were also considered. HUD’s objective is to promote new and innovative ways of forming evidence-based public policy relevant to its mission of creating strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all.

PUBLIC USE MICRODATA SAMPLE (PUMS) DATABASE

In another effort to advance the federal-wide *Open Government Initiative*, in February 2012, HUD launched its Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) database, [a public database](#) to help the research community better understand the characteristics of households receiving assistance under the Department’s main rental programs. PUMS includes household-level data for 5 percent of households assisted through the Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, Section 8 Project-Based Rental, and the Section 202/811 programs. The PUMS samples include data on household characteristics as well as geographic details about where tenants live. With this household-level dataset, researchers can calculate results and statistical relationships at levels of demographic or geographic detail not available in HUD’s tabular reports. Data for 2009 data are currently available; data for 2010 are expected to be released in the summer of 2013. HUD intends to release annual updates.

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

In FY 2012 PD&R gained new authority to accept unsolicited research proposals that meet published research priorities and that have at least 50 percent of project funding supplied from other sources. This recently initiated program offers an exciting new way to encourage and support important research projects. In the 1990s, a similar matching program led to the development and creation of the Jobs Plus demonstration that yielded important findings on how the combination of job supports and rent incentives created long-term income benefits for public housing tenants, and thus was used to justify a new initiative in HUD's FY 2013 budget proposal.

USPS VACANCY DATA

Through an interagency agreement with the United States Postal Service (USPS), HUD receives counts of total and vacant business and residential addresses in the United States at the ZIP+4 (ZIP9) geographic level. HUD uses these data for a variety of purposes, including research on neighborhood change; tracking disaster recovery; gauging the foreclosure crisis; analyzing housing markets; and measuring the impact of HUD funding on communities for programs such as the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI), and the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP). HUD is also permitted to make the vacancy data available at the census tract level to government and nonprofit organizations through a permitted user sublicense agreement. Permitted sub-licensees access these data through www.huduser.org via a password-protected portal. HUD has received these data quarterly since December 2005.