

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL

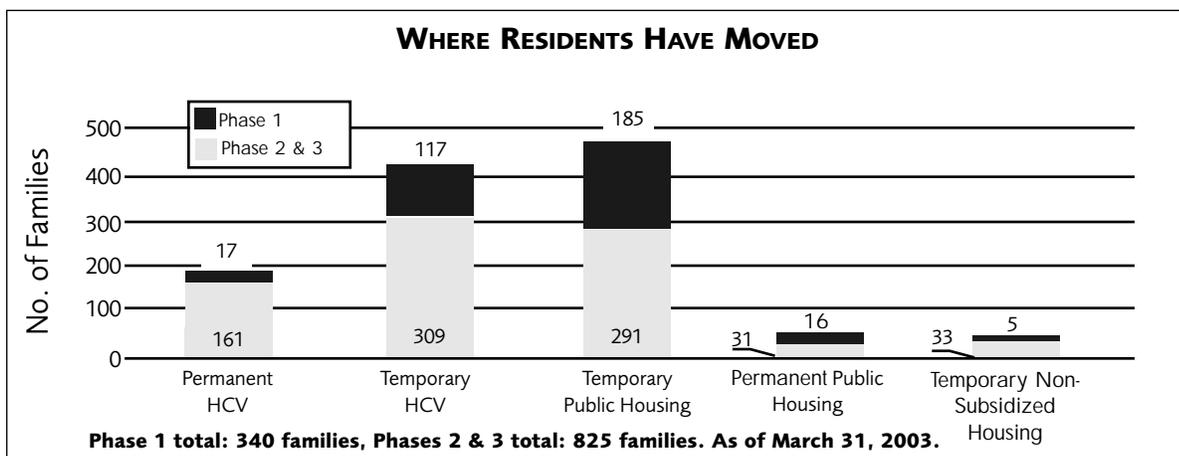


The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Plan for Transformation goes beyond the redevelopment of dilapidated housing. Its success will be gauged by whether the thousands of affected families have access to better opportunities through quality housing in stable and sustainable neighborhoods. For some people, this housing will be within new, mixed-income communities built as part of the Plan for Transformation. For others, it will be within existing CHA housing that is renovated and better managed. And still others will use Housing Choice Vouchers to move into private rental housing. Since most households will be moving at least once, access to opportunity will be judged not only in their final moves, but also in the temporary choices they make along the way. Success is contingent not only on the quality of the new housing stock, but also on the effectiveness of relocation and service strategies. This progress report reviews the status of CHA relocation and support service activity.

RESIDENTS' CHOICES

As of March 31, 2003, about 10,000 CHA residents subject to relocation had completed housing choice clinics and surveys to help them make decisions on their future moves. The vast majority of residents (89.4 percent) opted to move to new or rehabbed public housing once new apartments were available. Only 10.6 percent chose to move permanently to private rental housing using Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs).¹

For most residents who choose public housing, relocation involves three stages: (1) moving out of their current homes; (2) staying temporarily at one or more apartments while preparing for a final move; and (3) settling into their final homes (either moving out of temporary housing or making their temporary housing permanent). Almost half of these households (50.8 percent) have chosen temporary HCVs, leaving them the right to return to CHA housing when available. The other half (48.4 percent) selected temporary housing in new or rehabilitated public housing apartments. A small percentage (0.8 percent) opted to live in non-subsidized housing while the new apartments were developed. The chart below reflects where people actually moved:



WHERE ARE CHA FAMILIES GOING?

Not surprisingly, given the limited supply and availability of affordable housing, and the concerns raised about initial mobility counseling,² most relocating families have moved into a handful of racially segregated neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty.³ Looking at the neighborhoods the residents left compared to their new neighborhoods, there were modest improvements.⁴ For example, in census tracts that relocating residents left, 95 percent of the population was African-American, compared to 90 percent African-American census tracts that residents relocated to through August 2002.

¹ For more information on the relocation process, see MPC Fact Sheet #3 at www.metroplanning.org.

² For details, see the reports of Thomas Sullivan, CHA relocation process independent monitor, at <http://www.viewfromtheground.com/view.cfm/stories/sullivanreports.html>.

³ For details, see Fischer, Paul, "Where Are The Public Housing Families Going? An Update," 2002. Available at http://www.povertylaw.org/advocacy/fischer_study.doc

⁴ Ibid.

While ninety percent of families moved to census tracts with median income at or below the city family median income of \$42,474 for their first moves, the fact is that the high rise developments from which CHA families moved were in census tracts with a median income of \$17,304 - 40.5 percent of Chicago's median. Median family income in residents' new census tracts was \$27,283, or 63.8 percent of median.⁵

Independent of the housing choice clinics, and learning from history about measures to prevent racial and economic segregation, the CHA has entered into a contract with the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities to proactively support families interested in moving to integrated neighborhoods with low poverty rates. Through the Gautreaux II Program,⁶ which started in the fall of 2001, as many as 500 vouchers were made available to families interested in such opportunities, whether or not they were scheduled to move in the near-term. A total of 1,100 households expressed an interest in participating. Of them, 549 have received counseling services and 223 have already moved to new homes in private sector "opportunity areas."

RELOCATION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The quality and availability of information and supportive services provided to transitioning CHA residents are critical to achieving opportunity moves and informed choices. The success of the relocation process requires a comprehensive strategy coordinating housing counseling and social services. CHA and the Chicago Department of Human Services collaborated with housing specialists, mobility, relocation and Good Neighbor counselors, property managers, and resident leaders to create and launch the Service Connector program in 2001. This program aimed to function as a "bridge" between residents and services, and sought improvements in four areas of residents' lives: job placement, lease compliance, household stability and community integration.

SERVICE CONNECTOR ACTIVITY

KEY PROGRAM OUTCOMES	NUMBER OF RESIDENTS SERVED SEPT. 2001 THROUGH MARCH 2003
Job placement*	1,851
Lease compliance	13,951
Household stability	20,372
Community integration	20,491

*Initial full-time placements (part-time positions and longevity issues were not tracked)
Source: Chicago Department of Human Services, 2003

REFORMING THE SYSTEM

Based on lessons learned in the first three years of the 10-year Plan for Transformation, recommendations received from its independent monitor and a number of studies, CHA recently revamped its relocation service strategy in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Human Services. The new strategy incorporates recommendations MPC made in its recent publication, *Temporary Relocation, Permanent Choice: Serving Families With Rent Vouchers During the Chicago Housing Authority Plan for Transformation*. Concerned that the existing relocation and service strategy was too complex, fragmented and burdensome for families, the report encouraged a single point of contact for residents rather than multiple relocation and service providers, and a proactive rather than reactive approach. In May 2003, a new Request for Proposals signaled the first step in implementing this new comprehensive approach. Geared to start in September 2003, initial contracts will target more than 10,000 households (see table) affected by the Plan for Transformation.

TARGET POPULATION FOR NEW CHA SERVICE STRATEGY

Leaseholders who remain in CHA family developments not scheduled for demolition or rehabilitation until 2005	6,250
Leaseholders opting to take Housing Choice Vouchers	2,230*
CHA Scattered-Site leaseholders	2,300
Total	10,780

*Includes 760 prospective HCV households moving between February and December 2003.
Source: Chicago Department of Human Services, Request for Proposals for CDHS Support Services for CHA Residents, 2003

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The history of the initial Gautreaux program, which was launched by court order in 1976 to help specified low-income families from Chicago public housing move to privately owned housing in non-segregated communities throughout the metro area using Section 8 subsidy certificates, can be found at www.lcmoc.org.

For a more comprehensive analysis of CHA's historic Plan for Transformation, visit MPC's Web site at www.metroplanning.org. MPC Fact Sheets and other research papers that examine various components of the Plan are available.

For more information about MPC's Public Housing in the Public Interest program, contact Robin Snyderman, housing director, at 312.863.6007 or rsnyderman@metroplanning.org, or Roberto Requejo, housing associate, at 312.863.6015 or rrequejo@metroplanning.org.

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