

A HOPE Unseen: Voices From the Other Side of HOPE VI

A Field Study
prepared by
Center for Community Change
for
ENPHRONT
(Everywhere and Now Public Housing Residents Organizing Nationally Together)

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The following organizations participated in this research project:

- Herman Gardens Resident Council, **Detroit, MI**
- Friends and Residents of Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg, **District of Columbia**
- Enough is Enough, **Jersey City, NJ**
- Low Income Families Fighting Together (LIFFT), **Miami, FL**
- Elm Haven Residents' Council, **New Haven, CT**
- Richmond Tenants Organization (RTO), **Richmond, VA**
- Guinotte Manor Tenant Association, **Kansas City, MO**

This report was prepared by Dushaw Hockett and Ed Gramlich of the Center for Community Change. Special thanks to Ed who served as primary researcher and who visited the seven public housing jurisdictions examined in this report in order to conduct interviews and gather and analyze data.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY THIS “FIELD STUDY” OF HOPE VI?

HOPE VI gets a lot of favorable coverage in the media. However, too often, only one side of the HOPE VI story is told. Usually, the genuine voices of most public housing residents affected by HOPE VI get edited out of the story.

Local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), the media, and HUD (the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) often give the impression that everyone benefits from the HOPE VI program. There is a sense that every public housing resident either gets a nice new townhouse or the opportunity to move into a nice apartment using a housing voucher. However, most of the residents interviewed for this study had different experiences.

ENPHRONT (Everywhere and Now Public Housing Residents Organizing Nationally Together), a national organization of public housing residents, anticipated that there would be major debate about the future of the HOPE VI program after its authorizing language expired in September, 2002. Therefore, the organization's leadership, along with staff of the Center for Community Change (CCC), thought it crucial that Congressional leaders and other policy makers have an opportunity to hear some of the voices that many feel truly represent the majority of public housing residents impacted by HOPE VI. *A HOPE Unseen* is an attempt to capture these voices on paper. The concerns articulated by residents (and carefully documented in this report) and their recommendations for reforming HOPE VI should be seriously considered by Congress in discussions about whether to reauthorize HOPE VI or any successor program.

In addition to the reauthorization of HOPE VI being an impetus, this field study was also written to complement another report, *False HOPE*, which identifies shortcomings and inconsistencies in the HOPE VI program and proposes specific reforms to address them. The National Housing Law Project was the primary author of *False HOPE*, with contributions from the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, Sherwood Research Associates, the National Low Income Housing Coalition and ENPHRONT. Copies of *False HOPE* can be obtained at www.nhlp.org/html/pubhsg/index.htm.

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HOPE VI, A LITTLE BACKGROUND

In 1989, Congress created the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (NCSDPH), directing it to identify severely distressed public housing and to come up with a plan to address the problem. In 1992, the Commission presented its Final Report to Congress, estimating that 6 percent of the nation's public housing stock (86,000 units) was severely distressed and should be rehabilitated or replaced. The Commission also released a "National Action Plan" for addressing residents' needs, the condition of the housing stock, and management problems at severely distressed public housing properties. The Commission highlighted the fact that most public housing was in good condition, providing "an important rental housing resource for many low income families."

The Commission did not place heavy emphasis on demolition as a necessary activity to treat distressed properties. The Commission also expressed support for replacing distressed public housing units with hard units that would be deeply subsidized. Still further, the Commission recommended that equal and significant attention be given to both the human and physical conditions of distressed public housing properties.

Responding to the National Action Plan, Congress in 1993 created and funded the HOPE VI program. HOPE VI was funded through annual appropriations acts until 1998, when Section 24 (revised) of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA) established a statutory basis for the program through fiscal year 2002. Clearly, authorizing language for the program has already ended, though Congressional Appropriators did fund HOPE VI for fiscal year 2003 through an appropriations act. Funding for fiscal year 2004 is uncertain and currently under debate. Section 24 of QHWRA stated the purposes of HOPE VI to be:

1. Improving the living environment for public housing residents of severely distressed public housing projects through the demolition, rehabilitation, ...or replacement of obsolete public housing projects;
2. Revitalizing sites...and contributing to the improvement of the surrounding neighborhood;
3. Providing housing that will avoid or decrease the concentration of very low income families; and,
4. Building sustainable communities.

Since 1993, Congress has appropriated a little under \$600,000,000 each year for HOPE VI (with 1993 being the lowest appropriation and 1994 being the highest). PHAs submit competitive applications to win HOPE VI dollars. In order to award funds to a project, HUD annually issues a NOFA (Notice of Fund Availability) containing minimum requirements (thresholds) that all applicants must meet, as well as rating factors -- points which HUD applies to score competing applications in other areas. In the absence of formal regulations, NOFAs form the basis for the rules that govern the implementation of HOPE VI grants.

Between 1993 and 2002, HUD has awarded nearly \$4.5 billion to 98 housing authorities in the form of 165 HOPE VI revitalization grant awards. Since 1996, HUD has also funded 177 demolition-only grants (close to \$300,000,000) to 90 housing authorities. According to HUD's 2002 Annual Report to Congress on the HOPE VI program, as of September 30, 2002, HOPE VI grantees planned to demolish 78,259 public housing units and replace them with 33,853 new public housing rental units. As planned, the net loss of public housing rental units available for low-income families would be 44,406 units. Roughly 55,000 units have already been demolished and only about 10,000 public housing rental units have replaced them. In addition to the newly-built public housing units, housing agencies also plan to rehabilitate 8,470 public housing rental units and construct or rehabilitate 3,146 homeowner units that would be federally subsidized (under an Annual Contributions Contract). However, the pattern under HOPE VI has been that these homeowner units tend not to be available to households with the lowest incomes.

As of September 30, 2002, grantees also plan to relocate 56,049 households, with only 27,127 scheduled to return to the revitalized public housing community. Thus, as planned, more than half (28,922) of the relocated families will not return to the new, improved community that many of them were promised. An analysis of HUD figures reveals that a great majority of them will end up in other public housing developments. Many others will be permanently relocated with housing vouchers. A significant portion (2,699) of the households scheduled for relocation have already been evicted.

HOW THE STORIES WERE GATHERED/METHODOLOGY

ENPHRONT (Everywhere and Now Public Housing Residents Organizing Nationally Together), a national organization of public housing residents, wanted to heighten Congressional awareness of the problems its members are experiencing with HOPE VI. As a result, the organization asked the Center for Community Change (CCC) to interview residents and document, through their unfiltered voices, the human impact of the HOPE VI program.

ENPHRONT leaders chose seven different HOPE VI revitalization projects located in seven different public housing jurisdictions (listed in the next section) for CCC to study. At each HOPE VI site, ENPHRONT identified resident leaders whom CCC staff asked to obtain key HOPE VI documents, such as the HUD-approved HOPE VI application, resident participation plan, relocation plan, and community and supportive services plan. These documents were used to provide background descriptions for each site, and to refine a basic set of questions to be asked of residents interviewed for this report.

CCC staff asked the site leaders within each of the seven jurisdictions to identify ten residents to interview in order to learn how HOPE VI affected them, their families, and their communities. During the Spring and early Summer of 2002, CCC staff traveled to the seven HOPE VI sites, interviewing public housing residents, usually one-on-one in residents' homes. When requested by a resident, an interview was occasionally held at a central location (such as a resident council office or on-site at a community center).

Also, when residents' work schedules required, or when residents felt more comfortable in a group setting, questions were posed in small groups.

The interview questions were rooted in the goals and purposes of the HOPE VI program as established by the 1998 statute, Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) and related documents. Residents' responses would, therefore, show whether and to what extent the HOPE VI program was living up to those statutory and policy intentions.

THIS REPORT RESPECTS RESIDENTS' VOICES

As was stated previously, CCC and ENPHRONT thought it crucial that Congressional leaders and other policy makers have an opportunity to hear the unfiltered voices representative of the majority of public housing residents impacted by HOPE VI.

With that goal in mind, readers of this report should know, and remember while reading, that the intent of the approach used in this field study was to document, without any unnecessary treatment, the feelings and opinions of impacted residents, as told to the interviewer.

Resources did not allow for a scientific sampling of residents; nor did they allow for "fact checking" of some opinions expressed by residents. For example, in Detroit at the Herman Gardens HOPE VI site, one resident is quoted as saying:

"They changed the locks. People would go out to the market and when they got back their locks were changed. That was the way of putting fear in you to move."

There was not time to verify such assertions by interviewing Detroit Housing Commission personnel or seeking documentation which might or might not have been readily forthcoming. However, since a number of residents spoke of this problem, several are quoted in this report because of their shared assessment of the atmosphere at the HOPE VI site at that time of the interviews.

The quotes in this report reflect the direct experiences of those interviewed, and on occasion the experiences they heard about from family and friends. An example of the latter, "indirect" experience comes from residents of the Arthur Capper/Carrollburg HOPE VI site in the District of Columbia. Because D.C. has had four other HOPE VI projects, residents naturally look to the experience of people they know at those other sites as an indication of what might occur at their community, which was recently awarded a HOPE VI grant. For instance, at Arthur Capper/Carrollburg, a resident worried:

"They say we're going to come back, but I just don't see it...Where are the old residents of the 'Ellen Wilson' HOPE VI project across the street?...Housing was promising residents at Ellen Wilson that they would get back in – but it didn't happen."

Whether “direct” or “indirect,” whether precise or given to slight generalization, the comments offered by the public housing residents interviewed are valuable and valid because they reflect the range of emotions – positive and negative – that people experience when projects of the nature and scope of HOPE VI are undertaken.

Finally, keep in mind that the stage of redevelopment varied from site to site. For example, in D.C., the Grant Agreement (contract between HUD and the housing agency) was signed one month prior to the interviews. Consequently, residents could only communicate general information they had about important topics such as resident participation in the planning process, relocation, reoccupancy criteria, and community and supportive services. On the other hand, in Kansas City, the public housing portion of the HOPE VI redevelopment was completed years before the interviews. Therefore, residents were able to respond thoroughly to the full range of questions.

THE SEVEN HOPE VI PUBLIC HOUSING SITES

**Figures Based on information in HUD-Approved Revitalization Plans
(note that some plans may have since changed)**

For more information about each site, see Appendix A.

Detroit: “Herman Gardens”

1996, \$24,224,160

Demolish 1,573 units (538 with HOPE VI);

Replace with 208 “public housing” (ACC) units;

166 of these affordable to extremely low income residents

District of Columbia: “Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg”

2001, \$34,937,590

Demolish 707 units

Replace with 707 “public housing” (ACC) units;

417 of these affordable to extremely low income residents

Jersey City, NJ: “Curries Woods”

1997, \$31,624,658

Demolish 712 units (with mix of HOPE VI funds and other resources)

Replace with 569 “public housing” (ACC) units (239 by HOPE VI);

232 of these affordable to extremely low income residents

Miami: “Scott/Carver”

1999, \$35,000,000

Demolish 850 units

Replace with 215 “public housing” (ACC) units;

80 of these affordable to extremely low income residents

New Haven, CT: “Elm Haven” renamed “Monterey Place”

1993, \$45,331,593

Demolish 462 units
Replace with 185 “public housing” (ACC) units;
200 of these affordable to extremely low income residents
(The 95 units rehabbed at the Senior Tower are factored out of this calculation.)

Richmond, VA: “Blackwell”
1997, \$26,964,118
Demolish 440 units
Replace with 152 “public housing” (ACC) units;
82 of these affordable to extremely low income residents

Kansas City, MO: “Guinotte Manor”
1993, \$47,579,800
Demolish 412 units
Replace with 419 “public housing” (ACC) units;
all affordable to extremely low income residents

SUMMARY OF REPORT FINDINGS

Loss of Public Housing Units Affordable to Low-Income Households

As of September 30, 2002, HUD reports that HOPE VI grantees planned to demolish 78,259 public housing units (up from 72,000 units in March, 2002), with only 33,853 new public housing rental units planned to take their place. That means 44,406 public housing units will be gone, forever unavailable to low-income families, particularly extremely low-income families (those between 0%-30% of Area Median Income).

HUD adds, however, that HOPE VI grantees (as of March 2002) plan to provide an additional 29,000 non-public housing, but still “affordable” units. However, these units generally are not available and/or affordable to the average public housing household.

- At five of the seven sites examined in this report, there was a net loss of public housing units (Annual Contributions Contract units); at four sites the loss was very significant – 60% to 87%.
- At six sites only a fraction of the new replacement public housing units were targeted to households with “extremely low” incomes (30% of the median), even though the average public housing family at the sites studied had an income below 14% of the are median income.

Residents Felt “Deceived” About Their Chance to Return to the New, “Revitalized” Community

Many residents felt deceived by promises that they would return to nice, new homes. As time passed, they concluded that they were misled; either they or many of their neighbors would not be allowed to return when the HOPE VI project was complete.

- At four sites residents were originally told that everyone would be able to return to new homes, but now residents seriously doubt this will happen. They felt lied to by those promoting HOPE VI.
- At five sites residents felt betrayed when they could not return because there were not enough new units, or because there were not enough units of the right room size for their household.
- The “promise” that residents could return to new homes created by HOPE VI was also “broken” when long-time residents learned about specific criteria that had to be met in order to come back. The criteria mentioned by residents at five sites included: higher incomes, excellent credit history, and no police record.
- For a lot of residents at three of the sites, once they learned how strict the occupancy rules would be at the new development, their desire to return was seriously dampened.
- At four sites, residents described tactics they thought were used by housing authorities to force people out of public housing. By getting residents to move before relocation obligations arise, the housing authorities are able to avoid the cost associated with relocation, such as relocation assistance and the obligation to offer replacement housing.

Residents Experienced A Variety of Relocation Problems

Although residents were presented with the relocation “options” of either public housing elsewhere or a housing voucher, many felt that these were not genuine options.

- At five sites residents felt steered away by housing personnel from their preferred choice for relocation.
- At six sites, units targeted for voucher use were scarce and/or in poor condition and; at two sites residents feared landlords would quit the housing voucher program in a couple of years, leaving them vulnerable.
- At two sites, public housing designated as relocation or permanent replacement housing was in poor condition and/or scheduled for future demolition.

Residents discussed four additional problems:

- At three sites some felt rushed out of their homes.
- At four sites overall assistance in searching for replacement housing was inadequate.
- At four sites transportation to search for replacement housing was often not available.
- At four sites relocation options were too far from jobs or community networks.

Poor Local Administration of Housing Choice Vouchers Presents Problems for Residents Not Returning to the Redeveloped Community

Many of the residents interviewed for this study had problems using their housing voucher to rent a decent quality unit. Residents experienced other problems as well that are more a reflection of poor administration of voucher assistance on the part of local housing agencies than they are problems with the voucher program itself. In fact, according to a recent analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), during the six months from August 2002 to January 2003, the number of families receiving housing voucher assistance rose by 60,000. Further, in January 2003, local and state housing agencies were using 94.9 percent of authorized vouchers. The CBPP analysis states that if the rate of increase in voucher utilization evidenced in this six-month period continues for the remainder of fiscal year 2003, some 95.9 percent of authorized vouchers will be used by families for the fiscal year as a whole. So, while the good news is that the voucher program is increasingly serving more and more households, the unfortunate news, documented by *A HOPE Unseen*, is that poor administration of voucher assistance, in some cases, is causing families to live in substandard housing or experience other hardships.

Problems with the local administration of vouchers described by residents included:

- Virtually every resident who chose a housing voucher experienced significant problems with the substandard quality of their unit.
- Most residents experienced financial hardship with their housing voucher because the PHA did not adequately prepare them for the added financial responsibility of utility costs.
- Residents in three cities had to move when their landlords lost ownership of their homes due to foreclosure. Other residents feared that their landlord might suddenly decide to get out of the housing voucher program in order to get more rent money.

Additional Harmful Impacts Experienced with HOPE VI

- ***Elderly Residents.*** At five sites, residents commented on the negative impact that HOPE VI has had on seniors. Nationally, HUD reports that 16% of public housing residents are elderly and that 33% of the households are headed by seniors. Among the seven sites in this study, figures were available for five. Detroit data indicated that 67% of its households were headed by an elderly person, and Miami reported 56%. For the others, the numbers were: 31% for D.C., 27% for New Haven, and 19% for Richmond.

The negative impact on seniors described by residents included:

- HOPE VI seemed to be breaking up extended families and leading to worries about caring for elderly grandparents. Extended families often lived in close proximity at public housing communities. This enabled them to care for one another, particularly elderly family members.

- The phasing of the redevelopment process led to non-seniors temporarily occupying units set aside for seniors. This practice prevented seniors from moving into places most suited to their needs. It also introduced fears and tensions into seniors' lives at one housing development as they had to contend with "drug activity" from people relocated from another HOPE VI project.
- At sites where reconstruction was underway or partially complete, there were not enough planned one-bedroom units for seniors, or seniors who needed two bedrooms for medical reasons were denied the extra space.
- Adjusting to living elsewhere permanently, or even for several years during redevelopment, was very difficult for seniors. A number of elderly public housing residents had lived in their communities for over 20 years. Residents attributed increased ill health, and even premature death, to the anxiety caused by the HOPE VI move.
- ***Disabled Residents.*** Concerns about accommodations for people with disabilities were raised at four of the sites. Nationally, HUD reports that 31% of public housing households are headed by a person with a disability. Among the seven sites in this study, figures were available for five. Miami data indicated that 43% of its households were headed by a person with a disability. Three of the other sites are in the range of 30% to 37%. Richmond is at 19%.

The concerns about the disabled included: apparent failure to assess household needs; an insufficient number of accessible units and; keeping disabled people in housing that was not appropriate for their condition.

- ***Family and Children.*** In several instances, families were almost torn apart in the course of the HOPE VI process. For instance, because the PHA refused to give them a larger apartment, a couple had to go to court in order to fight the decision and to force the agency to recognize the grandchild as a household member. Children also suffer sometimes from the anxiety of frequent moves, or even the prospect of homelessness.
- ***Homelessness.*** Instead of gaining improved living conditions, six households experienced homelessness.
- ***Multiple Moves.*** Because the HOPE VI redevelopment process takes several years to complete, some residents end up moving more than twice. Several residents cited as the reason for multiple moves landlord turnover in the housing voucher program.
- ***Loss of a Sense of Community.*** Several people at each site volunteered information about how much they cherished the strong sense of community at their "old" public housing property.
 - ♦ People frequently remarked that their public housing community was "family" and that neighbors looked out for elderly residents and each other's children.

- ♦ People said that they felt safe in their old public housing communities; after HOPE VI they felt insecure and isolated.

HOPE VI Does Not Always Provide Residents with a Better Community

One of the stated aims of HOPE VI is to provide an improved living environment for residents of distressed public housing, whether they return to the revitalized community, when completed, or move permanently into another form of replacement housing (i.e., other public housing, etc.). Residents, with a few exceptions, did not feel that they were living in better environments.

- ***General Safety and Security.*** At two of the three sites where redevelopment was complete or near completion and original residents had returned, they reported experiencing some improvement in their living environment. Those residents who were permanently relocated off-site reported conditions that, for the most part, were worse (i.e., drugs, crime, violence) than the conditions at the site from which they were relocated from.
- ***Impact on Children.*** Sometimes HOPE VI places children in different neighborhoods where the violence is greater, or where they are viewed as outsiders and therefore subject to taunting.
- ***Location of Replacement Housing.*** Sometimes replacement housing was far removed from established social support networks, as well as daily essentials such as bus transportation and grocery stores.
- ***Living with Stricter Rules.*** For some of those living in new HOPE VI units, the stricter rules felt oppressive. New rules ranged from the type of chairs one could have on a porch to prohibiting cookouts to registering visiting family members.

Residents Did Not Believe That Their Public Housing Was Truly “Severely Distressed”

Residents at five sites felt that their public housing complexes were not so run down or “distressed” that the only option was demolition. Instead, they were convinced that their developments could have been renovated at a reasonable cost and without demolition. In fact, some residents discussed capital improvement work that housing agencies had recently done at their developments prior to applying for and receiving HOPE VI funds.

Residents Had Difficulty Accessing Community and Supportive Services

Various HUD materials such as NOFAs, Grant Agreements and, later in the life of the program, informal guidance documents, emphasize the need to not only improve public housing buildings, but to also improve the quality of life for residents by increasing their capacity for greater economic self-sufficiency.

Despite all of the glowing words about “community and supportive services” or “self-sufficiency,” there were problems at all seven sites examined for this report:

- Residents did not know about supportive services.
- Residents had great difficulty accessing the supportive services.
- Supportive services were just beginning – several years after the HOPE VI demolition had taken place.

Residents Encountered Obstacles to Meaningful Resident Participation in the HOPE VI Grant Planning and Implementation Process

The HUD NOFAs, Grant Agreements, and guidance documents contain language that either require or promote resident participation throughout the entire HOPE VI process. However, at each of the sites residents encountered significant obstacles to full and meaningful participation.

Outreach to Residents. All HOPE VI NOFAs beginning in 1996 required “notice” to residents about the intent to apply for HOPE VI funds. The HUD guidelines on Resident and Community Involvement in HOPE VI from 1998 forward stressed public housing authorities’ “responsibility for communicating and disseminating information...to ensure that all affected residents have opportunities to participate...” Those HUD guidelines also stated that “Residents should be encouraged to participate...”

- At six sites, there seemed to be very little done to encourage residents to get involved. And when any outreach was done, it was not timely.
- In general, residents reported that some people occasionally got flyers, while others did not get flyers. If flyers or posters were used to notify residents of a public meeting, they were only provided the same day as the meeting.

Meetings. Meetings might have been held, but at each of the sites residents said that the housing authority did not engage them in a genuine or meaningful discussion about the redevelopment plan.

- In most places there was not enough information for residents to effectively contribute. Residents complained that there was: little or no written material to take home to study; an absence of knowledgeable staff who could answer questions; and, use of technical jargon. All of this served to discourage continued participation by many.
- At several locations, meetings were held at times and places which limited optimum participation.
- At four sites residents reported that housing officials used meeting sign-in sheets to misleadingly indicate to HUD that all of those attending supported the HOPE VI application.

Limited Representation. Residents at five sites claimed that committees making HOPE VI decisions were not representative of most residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CORRECT HOPE VI PROBLEMS

Based on the experiences of public housing residents represented by ENPHRONT, the following series of reforms are strongly recommended. These suggested improvements also reflect recommendations supported in part or whole by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the National Housing Law Project, the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, and the Center for Community Change.

At the core of these recommendations is the belief that the HOPE VI program has the potential to be an effective vehicle for preserving and improving public housing properties and families. Therefore, CCC and ENPHRONT support the reauthorization of HOPE VI, but only if comprehensive reforms are made to address the issues related to replacement housing, resident participation, relocation and the overall impact of HOPE VI on families residing in distressed public housing. Furthermore, it's recognized that a reformed HOPE VI program will only work if Congress adequately funds the public housing Capital and Operating Funds in order to prevent further deterioration of the public housing stock.

Replacement Housing

HOPE VI must not result in the net loss of hard units in the metropolitan housing market that are targeted to and affordable for extremely low income households. Therefore, it is necessary to:

- Define “affordable units” as those which are targeted to households at or below 30% of the metropolitan median income and which have rents set at no more than 30% of the household income and; which are subject to low-income use restrictions for a period of time comparable to public housing use restrictions.
- Allow HOPE VI funds to be used in conjunction with project-based vouchers in order to spur production of more hard replacement units.
- Provide significant bonus points to applications that commit to replace/rehabilitate those public housing units lost with new or rehabilitated units affordable to extremely low-income households.
- Require replacement units constructed at the HOPE VI site or in other neighborhoods at non-HOPE VI sites to have services and amenities equal to or better than those of the redeveloped site.
- Require a significant portion of each grant be used to develop hard replacement units in economically integrated and racially diverse neighborhoods and; increase the maximum number of points a PHA can earn in an application for developing housing that maximizes replacement housing and promotes desegregation.
- Count homeownership units as replacement housing only if original residents of the site impacted by HOPE VI qualify to buy them.

- Promote and support the creation of local ordinances that preserve existing public housing units and guarantee that all demolished public housing units will be replaced one-for-one and that original households have a firm guarantee to reoccupy new units that are available, affordable and properly sized. [See Appendix C for examples].

Definition of “Severely Distressed”

A clearer definition of “severely distressed” must be developed. Because the current definition used by HUD is so general, HOPE VI funds are used to demolish and reduce the number of public housing units that are not the most severely distressed. As a result, scarce units that are serving families with the lowest incomes are being lost. Therefore, it is necessary to have a definition of “severely distressed” that:

- Reflects the opinions of residents, advocates, PHAs, and housing experts. (HUD should establish an advisory panel of these stakeholders to develop a new definition.)
- Assesses whether the PHA has taken all reasonable steps to maintain the property.
- Ensures that HOPE VI focuses solely on the most “severely distressed” properties.

In addition, it is necessary to:

- Require PHAs to provide the public with evidence that a property is “severely distressed,” and to provide written responses to questions and doubts from resident and community organizations regarding this evidence.
- Require the PHAS (Public Housing Assessment System) to include site-specific, yearly reports on the physical condition of individual properties, which should be available for public review.
- Require HUD to create and maintain a list identifying properties that are severely distressed based on the new definition.

Reoccupancy

All original households should be encouraged to return to revitalized communities. Although the purpose of HOPE VI is to address the needs of families as well as properties, too few residents return to revitalized HOPE VI communities. Therefore, it is necessary to:

- Require a right to return to units developed by HOPE VI for residents who lived at the HOPE VI site anytime one year before submission of the housing agency’s funded HOPE VI application and who remain public housing residents or who receive voucher assistance.
- Require a PHA’s application and redevelopment plan to provide for sufficient units to house all those wanting to return.
- Require these units to be affordable and properly sized for returning residents.
- Require, as a threshold at a HOPE VI revitalized site with a substantial number of non-public housing units, that “ACC units” (“public housing”) and project-based

voucher units be reserved for families with incomes at or below 30% of median income.

- Require the provision of high quality supportive service programs to ensure that residents have all the support necessary (i.e., financial management training, asset building, credit clean-up, etc.) to return to and remain at the revitalized community.
- Include in the NOFA a project selection criteria that evaluates the extent to which an application shows that all reasonable steps will be taken (including establishing reoccupancy criteria prior to relocation) to ensure the maximum number of existing residents will be given priority and encouraged to reoccupy dwelling units in the revitalized community.

Resident Participation

PHAs must involve residents of impacted properties in the HOPE VI application and implementation process in a meaningful way that begins early on and that continues throughout. Such early and ongoing participation is essential to ensure that revitalized communities reflect the needs of the families HOPE VI was meant to serve.

Existing HOPE VI requirements fail to ensure that residents are genuinely engaged in the HOPE VI process. Therefore, it is necessary to:

- Require that HUD develop regulations regarding resident participation in the HOPE VI process.
- Incorporate into the statute and make mandatory, elements of HUD's existing guidance document, "Resident and Community Involvement," including language that suggests PHAs involve residents in the HOPE VI planning process "a year or more before submission" of the application.
- Require PHAs to set aside funds from each HOPE VI grant award to be provided to resident organizations in order to obtain independent technical support. PHAs should also be required to provide funds to the resident organization early in the HOPE VI planning process and prior to the submission of an application in order for residents to effectively engage in the grant planning process.
- Require a non-binding vote, open to all impacted residents, on a final draft application. This will help promote broad resident participation, transmitted to housing agencies in the redevelopment process, and it will also gauge resident support for the project.
- Allow residents to establish (in accordance with 24CFR 964) a duly-elected resident council for the revitalized property, which the PHA must recognize.
- Bar PHAs from HOPE VI eligibility if they are not in compliance with HUD's current resident participation rules at 24CFR 964.
- Require HUD to make documents and information available on-line regarding local HOPE VI grants as well as national program information, including: grant applications, grant agreements, revitalization plans, relocation plans, community and supportive service plans, quarterly progress reports, and national aggregate summary reports of quarterly progress reports.

Relocation

PHAs must go beyond the URA (Uniform Relocation Act) requirements in order to meet the purposes of the HOPE VI program and to reduce the emotional and physical strain of relocation. Therefore, it is necessary to:

- Require relocation to be conducted in stages to avoid overwhelming the local rental market and to facilitate relocation effectively.
- Require each HOPE VI grant to budget the standard URA compensation amount (\$5,240 per occupied unit) for one-on-one counseling and high quality mobility and relocation services. Any unexpended funds must be devoted to supportive services for residents.
- Require PHAs to provide voucher recipients with: housing search assistance; assistance adjusting to the voucher unit (including assistance in budgeting for increased utility costs) and; search and relocation assistance if the family is required to make additional moves.
- Require PHAs to track for a minimum of two years, all people who resided at the property one year prior to submission of the funded HOPE VI application, with special attention paid to those relocated with voucher assistance and residents no longer receiving housing assistance from the PHA.
- Remove from future NOFAs (Notices of Funding Availability) the provision awarding points to PHAs that relocate residents of a proposed HOPE VI site prior to submission of the application.
- Require that all relocating residents be offered at least three specific comparable replacement dwelling units.
- Require PHAs to do more to ensure that units targeted for Housing Choice Vouchers comply with Housing Quality Standards and; require PHAs to do more to ensure landlord stability and continuity in the housing voucher program.

Supportive Services

PHAs must provide an adequate level of supportive services. Supportive services are a crucial part of restoring distressed public housing communities. True revitalization can only happen when human needs are addressed with a commitment equal to that of property improvement. Therefore it is necessary to:

- Develop regulations regarding the delivery of community and supportive services under HOPE VI.
- Require community and supportive services to begin before relocation in order to minimize emotional strain; ensure that residents are in a position to exercise their right to return to the revitalized community and; to help residents successfully engage in self-sufficiency activities.
- Require provision of community and supportive services to all impacted residents, regardless of where they relocate, and require reporting from the PHA to determine the results of these efforts.

- Require PHAs to provide a minimum community and supportive services investment (from the HOPE VI grant or other sources) equal to 15% of the HOPE VI grant.
- Provide incentives for PHAs to link residents with existing services and to leverage foundation and other non-federal monies.
- Require HUD to link the HOPE VI program with other federal programs that can provide funds for supportive services in order to maximize use of HOPE VI dollars for replacement housing and relocation.
- Require PHAs to link their community and supportive services programs under HOPE VI with their obligations under Section 3 of the 1968 Housing and Community Development Act.

REPORT FINDINGS

A NET LOSS OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS AFFORDABLE TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

At the national level, the number of rental units available and affordable to extremely low-income families is dramatically less than the need. According to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, in 2001, there were nearly 10 million households who rent and have incomes below \$17,500, yet there were only 8 million rental units available to them which they could afford – and about 3 million of those rental units were already occupied by higher income households. (*The State of the Nation's Housing, 2003*) HUD's analysis of 1999 Census data showed that nearly 5 million households not receiving any form of housing assistance had "worst case housing needs," meaning that they either paid more than 50 percent of their income for shelter, or lived in housing that was "substandard" in quality. (*A Report on Worst Case Housing Needs in 1999*, Office of Policy Development and Research, 2001). Because there are not enough units available and affordable to the lowest income families and there are not enough housing subsidies, any loss of housing affordable to these families only exacerbates an already critical problem.

While not the cause of the housing affordability problem facing low-income renters in this country, HOPE VI is certainly exacerbating the problem. As of September 30, 2002, HOPE VI grantees planned to demolish 78,259 public housing units (up from 72,000 in March 2002) and replace them with 33,853 new public housing rental units. As planned, the net loss of public housing rental units available for low-income families would be 44,406 units. Roughly 55,000 units have already been demolished and only 10,000 public housing rental units have been built to take their place.

RESPONDING TO HUD'S POSITION ON THE NET LOSS OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

In response to concerns about the net loss of public housing units, HUD has stated that funded HOPE VI projects (as of March 2002) include an additional 29,000 non-public housing, but still "affordable" units. These "affordable" housing units tend to be subsidized by a variety of resources such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). And while the average tax credit-financed apartment resident earns less than 40 percent of their area's median income (*National Low Income Housing Coalition Advocates Guide*), compared to public housing, fewer families with the lowest incomes are served under the tax-credit program due to the fact that only a portion of the units in tax-credit developments have affordability restrictions. In addition, unlike the public housing program's rent structure (which includes a calculation based on the percentage of a household's income), tax-credit units operate under "flat rents" or fixed rents that do not change as the income of the household changes. For these reasons, LIHTC units, while a great resource for expanding the affordable housing inventory, cannot serve as substitutes for scarce and uniquely operated (i.e., rent structure, etc.) public housing units. The average median income for public housing residents in 2002 was 18.5 percent

(approximately \$10,000) of the national median income. Therefore, the 29,000 units of “affordable” housing promised by HOPE VI grantees, for the most part, are not truly available and affordable to most public housing residents and households with extremely low-income households.

The housing voucher program plays a big role, too, in providing replacement housing (in addition to relocation housing) for residents impacted by HOPE VI. Low-income families use vouchers to help pay for housing that they find in the private market. In general, a family with a voucher is required to contribute 30 percent of its income for rent and utilities. However, it is possible for a family to pay more depending on the rent amount of the apartment targeted for voucher-use and the payment standard (an amount set by the local housing agency that determines the amount of rent a voucher can cover).

HUD contends that critics of the loss of public housing fail to realize that “the picture is more complicated than it may appear.” (HUD *Best Practices/Lessons Learned Report*, June, 2002). The agency states that in addition to the public housing and “affordable” non-public housing units being constructed under HOPE VI, there are, as of March 2002, roughly 16,455 housing vouchers that will supplement these units. However, HUD’s explanation fails to acknowledge the housing affordability crisis described above. **The nation is at a point in time when it cannot afford to lose a single rental housing unit, especially public housing, affordable to low income and extremely low-income households.**

LOSS OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS AT THE SEVEN SITES

Press releases about HOPE VI projects, and HOPE VI applications themselves, often give the casual observer the impression that there will not be a loss of affordable housing. For instance, the Blackwell HOPE VI project in Richmond, VA proposed developing 540 new units where once there were 464 units. However, only 152 of the new units planned will be public housing units affordable to families with the lowest incomes.

Net Loss of Public Housing Stock

Figures based on HUD-approved Revitalization Plans (see Appendix A)

At five sites of the seven sites, there was a net loss of public housing units (ACC units). At four sites the loss was very significant.

- **Richmond’s** application called for demolishing 440 units of public housing at ***Blackwell***. Only 152 (28%) of the 540 new units promised will be public housing units. That represents a 65% loss in the stock of public housing that once existed at Blackwell.
- **Miami** plans to demolish 850 units of public housing at the ***Scott and Carver Homes***. Only 215 of the new units promised will be public housing units, a 75% loss of public housing stock.

- There were 1,573 units at **Detroit's Herman Gardens** in 1996 (and 2,273 when first built). The Detroit Housing Commission has demolished all of these units and plans to replace them with 804 new ones. However, only 208 will be public housing units – an 87% loss.
- In **New Haven**, 462 units were demolished at *Elm Haven*, replaced by 297 units at “Monterey Place,” of which only 185 are “public housing units” (excluding the senior building, Edith Johnson Tower). That is a 60% net loss of public housing units.
- Less dramatic is the 20% possible net loss of public housing units in **Jersey City**. There were 712 units at *Curries Woods* originally. The HOPE VI revitalization plan incorporates existing redevelopment projects and calls for constructing and rehabbing 617 units, 569 of which will be public housing units.

HOW MANY NEW PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ORIGINAL HOUSEHOLDS AND THOSE WITH EXTREMELY LOW INCOMES?

The net reduction of needed public housing units is only a part of the story. In many cases, even the public housing units that are replaced, for the most part, will not be available to the original public housing families and other households with extremely low incomes. A public housing unit can be occupied by a household with an income of up to 80% of the areawide median income. That income level is relatively high (i.e., for a four-person household in Richmond, VA it was \$52,700 in 2002).

The average public housing household, according to the HOPE VI applications examined for this report, had incomes far below the 80% level. In fact, their incomes were considerably less than the level HUD defines as “extremely low” (at or below 30% of the area median). At the five sites listed above, the average household income ranged from 10% in the District of Columbia to 17% in Miami. Yet, not all of the new public housing units planned for construction are to be targeted to households within this income range. The HOPE VI applications indicated the following targeting:

- **Detroit, Herman Gardens:** Out of 208 new public housing units, 86 family units will be targeted to households with incomes below 30% of the median income, and 80 of the senior units will be targeted to households with incomes below 35% of the median. The average income of former Herman Gardens residents was 11% of the median. So, at best, only 166 public housing units might be available to the average Herman Gardens household and other extremely low-income families, compared to the 1,573 units prior to HOPE VI – nearly a 90% loss in units available to former households and the extremely poor.
- **Jersey City, Curries Woods:** It is estimated that only 232 (41%) of 569 new public housing units will be targeted to those with incomes below 30% of the median. But the average income for Curries Woods residents at the time the HOPE VI application was prepared was 15%. At a minimum, this is a 67% loss in units available to the

average Curries Woods household and other extremely low-income households (considering that there were 712 units originally at Curries Woods).

- **New Haven, *Elm Haven (Monterey Place)*:** The HOPE VI Revitalization Plan called for constructing 185 new public housing units and refurbishing 95 senior public housing units at the Edith Johnson Towers. The plan set an income mixing goal that would result in half of the total 392 households scheduled to reoccupy the new Monterey Place development having “extremely low” incomes. Therefore, it is estimated that about 200 new and rehabbed units will be targeted to those households below 30% of the area median income. Yet, the application stated that 72% of the original households had extremely low incomes (the average Elm Haven household income was only 14% of the median). Overall, there will be a 64% reduction in public housing stock (from 557 units including Edith Johnson Towers) even remotely available to the typical Elm Haven household and those with the lowest incomes.
- **Richmond, *Blackwell*:** Out of the 152 new public housing units to be built, 70 will be targeted to households above 35% of the median income. That leaves only 82 units that might be available to former Blackwell residents. However, the application does not specifically say if any of these will be targeted to those with household incomes below 30% of the area median. Assuming they are, that represents an 81% cut (from 440 units) in housing that might be available to the average Blackwell household (that had an income of only 16% of the median) and other extremely low-income households.
- **Miami, *Scott/Carver*:** Although 215 new public housing units are promised, only 80 will be for renters. The remaining 135 units will be “rent-to-own” and not affordable to the average Scott/Carver household with an income of \$7,200 (17% of the median). (The PHA states that rent-to-own units will be affordable to households with \$16,000 in annual income.) Consequently, there will be a net loss of 91% of the public housing units formerly available to the average Scott/Carver household – 80 units versus 850 units.

In the **District of Columbia** there will be a one-for-one replacement of the 707 public housing units at the ***Arthur Capper and Carrollsburg*** and, thus, no net loss of public housing units. However, based on the revitalization plan examined in 2002, only 217 (53%) of the family units will be targeted to households with incomes below 30% of the median. And, only 200 (66%) of the senior units will be so targeted. The average income for families at Arthur Capper/Carrollsburg is only 10% (\$8,587) of the areawide median income; for seniors it is 8.7% (\$7,416). Thus, as planned, 290 units will not be available to original Arthur Capper and Carrollsburg families and other households with extremely low incomes.

In **Kansas City**, because of strong advocacy by residents and aggressive monitoring and intervention by a court-appointed receiver, there was a one-for-one replacement of demolished units and a firm “right to return” for residents of ***Guinotte Manor***.

DECEPTION REGARDING REOCCUPANCY OF THE REVITALIZED PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTY

Residents at five sites felt deceived by glowing descriptions of HOPE VI, by pretty architectural drawings, and primarily by “promises” that they would return to nice, new homes. However, as time passed, many concluded that they were misled. They realized that they or many of their neighbors would not be allowed to return once the HOPE VI project was completed. Residents described various aspects of the redevelopment process around which they felt misled regarding their potential to reoccupy the revitalized public housing property:

- ***Right to Return:*** Some residents felt misled by the promise of a “right to return.” Many felt that the statement was communicated to them as being guaranteed an apartment in the “revitalized” community. In the end, they felt lied to.
- ***Replacement Housing and Unit Configuration Plan:*** Others felt betrayed when they were unable to return due to the insufficient number of new units targeted and affordable to them, or because there were not enough of these units of the right size for their household.
- ***Stricter Screening and Reoccupancy Criteria:***
 - Still others felt tricked when they later learned about rigid return criteria which would prevent most from returning.
 - Some decided that they would be better off not returning once they learned about strict rules that would apply if they did return.
- ***Relocation:*** At two sites, residents were led to believe that an off-site move would be temporary and felt that the housing agencies knew otherwise.

In addition to the problems cited above, residents at four sites discussed the issue of ***harassment*** -- behavior from the housing authority which residents felt was designed to force people away permanently.

Residents in Kansas City and Miami did not experience the types of deception or harassment described above. **Kansas City** residents had witnessed the demolition of other public housing in their city and the subsequent permanent displacement of those residents. As a result, they relentlessly worked with the PHA Receiver and HUD to win a “right to return.” Residents in **Miami** felt early on that most of them would *not* return, so they vigorously opposed two separate HOPE VI applications.

MISLED REGARDING RIGHT TO RETURN

At four sites, residents were originally told that everyone would be able to return to the revitalized community, but now residents seriously doubt that they will be able to return. They felt lied to by those promoting HOPE VI.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“They told us that we could move back in. But I don’t believe them. We are not going to be able to afford them. They are not going to be for low-income people. If they ever do rebuild [*it had been five years*], they are not going to be for us. I believe that because of the way they put us out of there. What they told us and what they did were two different things. Point blank they lied to us. Herman Gardens should be built by now. If they ever do build anything over there, I don’t believe they will be for low-income people. I am not the only one that believes that. They are getting rid of public housing. Why, I don’t know. There are a lot of poor people on the street.”

Resident 2:

“They said if we wanted to come back to Herman Gardens, we could come back. And the majority of the residents wanted to move back. I was expecting to return to Herman Gardens; they said it would be ready in about two years. They said that there would be condos, and that us residents would be able to buy the place where we lived. It has been four years now since I was moved out of Herman Gardens – and nothing has been built.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“They told us that HOPE VI was a great idea. The Authority said... ‘When Blackwell is built back up, you’ll be the first to come back’. Everything that was said has been a lie. Nobody could have told me that I wasn’t going back to Blackwell. I just knew I was going back. When that thing hit me; when they sent me that letter that told me that I was not able to come back...I was tore up. [*Because her car was repossessed her credit rating was not sufficient to return to the revitalized Blackwell community.*] Look at how many people are in my shoes today.”

Resident 2:

“Nothing happened the way they told us it would happen. I think we were told lies when those people came to our doors. This one lady came to our door promising us all this stuff we were going to get if we let them take our apartments. But it was all different when it came time to move out of Blackwell.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Resident 1:

“At the beginning they showed us the townhouses that they were going to build...showing us how pretty they were going to be. They didn’t tell us that we would get kicked out.”

Resident 2:

“They promised us one-for-one replacement. It was in all the papers. No one was to be displaced is what they promised...But all of a sudden the Plan changed two years ago.”

Resident 3:

“When it came down to the wire for HOPE VI, they sent letters out saying that people with one-bedroom units were not going to get townhouses. They had lied. They started off with a lie and each time they built one section they came back with another lie. Each time they promise this and that and you lose faith because you can’t trust them or believe them. I was thinking that I would be here to stay -- but now I got to go.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsburg: Residents felt deceived for a variety of reasons, even though it was very early in the HOPE VI process and no one had been relocated yet. As discussed earlier in this report, their feelings can be attributed to a pattern of controversial HOPE VI grants implemented by the local housing agency in prior years. The District of Columbia ranks number 5 nationally in terms of total HOPE VI dollars awarded to date, with over \$145 million for five HOPE VI “revitalization grants” and three HOPE VI “demolition only” grants.

Resident 1:

“They explained the HOPE VI project to us in a way that they wanted us to believe that they were going to refurbish the housing that is here already – not completely demolish it. They said that we agreed to the demolition, but we were tricked.”

Resident 2:

“They say we’re going to come back, but I just don’t see it. I would love to stay here, but it doesn’t look like it’s going to happen. Where are the old residents of the ‘Ellen Wilson’ HOPE VI across the street? Now that HOPE VI is done there, it’s mostly business people living there. Only 2% of the residents are black. Housing was promising residents at Ellen Wilson that they would get back in -- but it didn’t happen. At our meetings now we say that we don’t want the same thing happening to us that happened over there.”

MISLED REGARDING REPLACEMENT HOUSING AND UNIT CONFIGURATION

At four sites, residents felt betrayed when they realized they would be unable to return because there were not enough new units targeted on and affordable to them, or because there were not enough units of the right size for their household.

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Resident 1:

“One of the HOPE VI staff promised me in writing that I could come back here to Curries Woods. I have been here 28 years, and was told that residents who had seniority would get a townhouse. Then they turn around and say that I can’t have a townhouse because there were not going to be enough of them.”

Resident 2:

“They told us that everyone was going to get a two-bedroom townhouse. But later, Housing stated that only 12% will be able to come back. They are not building enough units. If they are going to continue HOPE VI, they are going to have to put up the proper number of apartments and make sure that all of the residents are accounted for. Either do it right or don’t do it at all.”

Resident 3:

“At every meeting, me or somebody else, would ask, ‘What about the people with one bedroom?’ The Director said that eventually everybody would get a two-bedroom townhouse.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“At the meetings they didn’t tell us that there wouldn’t be any five-bedroom units. The information they gave us was mostly misleading and lies.”

Resident 2:

“I can’t go back to Blackwell. I can’t qualify because I am a ‘single’ and I’m only allowed a one-bedroom unit. But there are no one-bedroom units in Blackwell and there are not going to be any. They never told us about that when they started HOPE VI.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Now called “Monterey Place”):

“We were supposed to move back here, but later HOPE VI tells me that there’s not enough room here to fit our family size. We lived in Elm Haven 26 years. We now live at Hamilton Street, another public housing complex where I am afraid to let my children play outside. I was told we either move to Hamilton Street or nothing. Somebody else at HOPE VI said that all we had to do was stay at Hamilton Street for six months and then they would move us to Westville Manor. But, once we moved they said this is where you’ve got to stay. All they wanted to do was get us out of here. It was a closed deal. It looks like we’re stuck there.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“HOPE VI is a bad storm that is washing people away from the community. HOPE VI is bad because it doesn’t guarantee people a place to live. HOPE VI could be better if they built enough low income housing for the people that need it, and if they keep it in the area where people are used to living.”

Resident 2:

“We hope they build more low income housing than what they got – not decrease it. They should never decrease low-income housing; they should build more. There are already too many homeless.”

Miami, Liberty Square:

Resident 1:

“Liberty Square has 750 units. They were going to tear down the buildings, but wouldn’t guarantee us that we could come back. They told us that they would not build back the same number of units. We spoke about this at meetings. We wanted a written guarantee that we could move back.”

Resident 2:

“We should be able to come back to our homes if we choose. And, there should be more low-income apartments replaced because the average low-income person can’t afford the homes that they’ve got planned. A lot of low income families would be put out – we’d be homeless.”

MISLED BY UNREASONABLE SCREENING AND REOCCUPANCY CRITERIA

The “promise” that residents could return to the new homes created by HOPE VI was also “broken” when long-time residents learned about specific criteria that had to be met in order to come back. The criteria mentioned by residents at five sites included: higher income, excellent credit history, and no police record.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“Most of the people who come from Blackwell can’t go back. If HOPE VI had made it understandable to residents that you had to have a certain income level to get back, I am sure that most people would have voted against tearing down those houses.”

Resident 2:

“They gave people the impression that they were going to give us a chance to start out as being a homeowner with a starter house. The Authority sat in the room and guaranteed people a fresh start with criminal records and such. But now they tell people that they must qualify for a house on the market. If people could have qualified in the market, they would not have needed HOPE VI.”

Resident 3:

“I always worked and had a perfect rental history. I applied to return to Blackwell but was disqualified because they were worried about my credit. Who don’t have bad credit one time or another? But I had a perfect rental history. That should have stood for something. All the years I lived in Blackwell...that should have stood for something.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

“You must keep your rent up. You must have good housekeeping. And, you can not have any criminal activity of any kind. Also, your life can’t change while you’re waiting for HOPE VI to get done. For example, if you had three children when you left, then when you come back you will only be eligible for a place with three children...even if you have another child or an aging parent to take care of when you return.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

“You have to have a certain amount of money. I would not qualify with my income. They are going a little bit higher than my income. They probably won’t have enough units that I could afford. So, I won’t be able to move back in because I don’t have enough money.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

Resident 1:

“The Re-Entry Committee here is just getting started. I am on that committee. At Re-Entry they are saying that if you are not making \$30,000 a year, then there is no need to apply. The people here are making a lot less, especially seniors and the disabled. I am disabled, so why are you going to talk to me about \$85,000 and even \$30,000 when I am only making \$6,000?”

Resident 2:

“The Housing Authority gave people the impression that everyone would be able to come back, but they have turned it around and now state that you would be eligible to come back only if you met the income requirements. It is false advertising because you said there would be a spot for low-income people. Regardless of whether you have a job or are in training, you said low income would be accepted. That’s in black and white. That’s how you got your proposal [HOPE VI grant]. Now are you going to stick by this?”

Resident 3:

“I don’t believe that they are going to build 700 units of public housing because they said the same thing about “New East Capitol” up the street – and it didn’t happen there. Housing told them that they were going to move back in. But when the time came, the guidelines went up – the income bracket went up. In one or two years you can’t improve your income enough; there’s no way you can go from \$9,000 a year to making \$40,000. It’s impossible.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“They said whoever wanted to come back, could. After they started getting people out, that’s when it came out that in order to return you’d have to have a job and a certain amount of income. For a 2-bedroom place, you would need \$16,000; for a 3-bedroom place, you would have to have \$19,500. This excluded 98% of the residents!! If we were making that kind of money we wouldn’t be there from the get-go.”

Resident 2:

“If your income isn’t right, you’re not coming back. You need to be making good money as a police officer or an executive secretary or a nurse – but not a nurse’s aid, or a cashier or sales associate. You have to have good credit. Tell me one person in Scott Homes or any other public housing

that has good credit. That's why we're here. They aren't doing anything to help us get good credit."

UNREASONABLE REOCCUPANCY RULES DISCOURAGE RETURN

HUD allows PHAs (or a management company contracted by the PHA to operate a newly built HOPE VI site) to establish rules for residents who wish to live at the new development. For many residents, once they learned how strict the new occupancy rules would be, their desire to return was seriously dampened.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

"Once I heard about the rules I decided that it's better being in the projects. Those rules aren't fair. That's another reason why I wouldn't move there. You can't barbecue and there is a 10 p.m. curfew. They tell you what kind of chairs you can have on your porch. It would be like being locked up."

Resident 2:

"I wouldn't move back because they have too many strict rules. Some of the people I know who returned are now moving out because it is too strict. You can't cook out. Children can't be out at certain hours. You can't have company after 11 PM. There can't be cars parked out front."

Resident 3:

"It's like a concentration camp. They tell you what kind of lawn furniture you can have and the kind of curtains you can have. You can't sit on the porch, and you can't come out doors with rollers in your hair. Some people have already been put out of the new places for playing basketball and having music."

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

"From what I have heard from friends who have relocated to the other new public housing projects, I don't think I would want to return to a new 'Herman Gardens' because there are too many strict rules. I heard of a situation where a woman's window was broken by accident – she got kicked out."

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg:

“I first learned about HOPE VI from a neighbor who had gone through HOPE VI at the Ellen Wilson projects. They were saying that a lot of residents there didn’t try to return because they were afraid that if they moved in, the rules were so strict that would probably be evicted.”

MISLED REGARDING RELOCATION OPTIONS

At two sites, residents mentioned yet another way that the promise that they would return rang false. Residents claim that some people were misled into making moves that wound up being permanent, but under the guise that relocation would be temporary. They felt that housing agency staff knew of the likelihood that many of them would be unable to return.

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Resident 1:

“They did not explain Section 8 to us. What they are doing is giving people Section 8, moving them off site, and not allowing people to return. Everyone is being misled. They get the vouchers and they think they are coming back.”

Resident 2:

“A lot of people can’t read, so are not aware that if they take a ‘permanent’ Section 8 that they won’t be able to return. This hurts the Spanish-speakers too.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“Some people never had a real ‘choice’; they chose to move off-site during redevelopment, not knowing that they would have to get on a waiting list to return.”

In Miami, residents were not tricked, but many lost the right to return anyway.

Miami, Scott/Carver:

“Many people moved out of Scott on their own because they ‘knew’ that they would be moved. But because they moved on their own, they don’t have a right to return.”

HARASSMENT

At four sites, residents described tactics they thought were used by housing authorities to force people out of public housing. By getting residents to move before relocation obligations arise, the housing authorities are able to avoid the cost associated with relocation, such as relocation assistance and the obligation to offer replacement housing. On a related point, HUD reports that as of September 30, 2002, over 2,700 households scheduled for relocation have been evicted. Though HUD does not indicate the reason behind these evictions, this high number documented in the context of HOPE VI is consistent with the aggressive eviction activity reported by many residents who believe that PHAs' unusual behavior in this area is driven by HOPE VI rather than normal lease enforcement practices.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

"They changed the locks. People would go out to the market and when they got back their locks were changed. That was the way of putting fear in you to move."

Resident 2:

"That happened to a couple of my friends. That's why I moved out before the demolition, to avoid all of that. So, I got no moving assistance."

Resident 3:

"When I was in Herman Gardens they would have surprise inspections. They would give me maybe two days' notice of the inspection. I took off from work a half a day and got there early to meet them. But they had already been there and took my lock and put it on a vacant apartment upstairs. I had to show them that I was there before the appointed time... and they eventually put my old lock back on my door. There were children who came home from school and could not get into their houses. The whole thing is like being in a prison. I don't think I want to go back anymore."

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

"They are doing all kinds of stuff that they would never do before. They are doing it to try to get people out of Curries Woods so that they don't have to give them relocation money or Section 8. So many people are messed over and it's just not right. Just the other day they sent the police on me. I was outside the building selling candy for the church. I have a vendor's license, but they sent the cops and told me to stop."

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“The old property manager had people terrified. People would be at work and she would unlock their door and put their stuff out on the street. This happened to quite a few people.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

“They nit-picked people to get them out. If you got four citations (at \$25 a citation) you’d get kicked out. They’d get you for trash in your yard and things like that. They scared people by saying things like, ‘We know you had a lot of traffic at your house.’ We guess that some 100 people moved out on their own and got no money, even though RRHA says it was only 18. They are doing that right now over at Mosby and Gilpin (other public housing sites).”

MIAMI RESIDENTS OPPOSED HOPE VI APPLICATIONS

Residents at both the Liberty Square and the Scott/Carver developments opposed the HOPE VI applications because of their awareness that most of the residents would not be able to return.

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“I got a petition with 250 residents saying they want to return. But at the last meeting, HOPE VI said they didn’t want to see it.”

Resident 2:

“At one of the meetings, HOPE VI asked, ‘Aren’t we tired of living in subsidized housing? Don’t we want to own our own home?’ Well of course we do – who wouldn’t? But why is it that they’re gonna beautify this community, make it a gated community, and we are not good enough to stay here? We could stay here with the roaches. We could stay here with the drugs. We could stay here with the shootings. But we can’t stay here when they beautify it.”

Resident 3:

“Everyone approved of HOPE VI to make our homes better, but we wanted written guarantees that we could return. LIFFT (Low Income Families Fighting Together) had the Liberty Square HOPE VI stopped. We marched. We alerted the media. We spoke out at meetings. We did

not want HOPE VI unless we had a guarantee of coming back to our homes.”

CHALLENGES WITH RESIDENT RELOCATION

The implementation of HOPE VI grants always entails some relocation of existing residents. While the targeted public housing units are demolished or rehabbed, residents must be moved elsewhere. Sometimes, the relocation is expected to be temporary (defined by the Uniform Relocation Act as one year or less), and it could be either on site or off-site. For many, the relocation is expected to be permanent because HUD, through HOPE VI, does not provide for adequate replacement housing units targeted on and affordable to low income families, particularly extremely low-income families.

HUD requirements, beginning with the 1993 HOPE VI NOFA, made it clear that housing authorities had to provide “suitable, decent, safe and sanitary housing” for residents who had to relocate because of HOPE VI. In addition, PHAs are required to comply with the Uniform Relocation Act (URA). The URA requires that relocated residents be compensated for actual moving expenses and related relocation expenses (i.e., packing, storage, etc.), as long as they are reasonable. In addition, URA requires PHAs to take steps to minimize displacement and its adverse consequences. Persons displaced should be offered three “comparable” dwelling units that are deemed “available.” The PHA must identify at least one such unit. For a unit to be “comparable,” it must meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS), be of adequate size, and be located in an area generally not less desirable than the location from which residents are relocated. “Available” means that the resident has the time and means to secure the unit. Lastly, URA requires that minority households be offered housing opportunities that are not located in an area of minority concentration.

RELOCATION PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY RESIDENTS

Residents described a variety of problems related to relocation. In general, although residents were presented with the “options” of public housing elsewhere or a housing voucher, they felt that these options were not genuine. Units targeted for housing vouchers were scarce and in poor condition. Alternative public housing was in poor condition and/or scheduled for future demolition. Other relocation problems included being rushed to accept whatever housing was available, and a lack of assistance in searching for replacement housing.

APPROPRIATE RELOCATION OPTIONS WERE LIMITED

Most residents indicated that the PHA did explain to them that they had two relocation options: either another public housing unit or a housing voucher; and that these options applied whether relocation was to be permanent or temporary. However, a number of residents indicated that their options were very limited.

Residents identified four categories of relocation barriers:

1. Residents felt steered to other public housing.
2. Residents felt steered to vouchers.
3. There were problems with alternative public housing.
4. There were obstacles to using vouchers.

Residents Felt Steered To Other Public Housing

At two sites some residents felt as if they were steered to public housing; that housing vouchers were not a genuine option.

Richmond, Blackwell:

“They offered us choices, they told us about Section 8 and other public housing. But the Authority wanted to keep as much of the Section 8 to themselves as they could, so they directed as many people as possible to other public housing as their relocation ‘option’.

They intimidated people so that they would not take Section 8. With the HOPE VI everybody at Blackwell was assigned a caseworker. She would say things like: ‘Your utility bills are going to be very expensive. If you get Section 8 you’ve got to keep your utilities paid because if you don’t they’re going to put you out.’ Well this would intimidate people into thinking that they couldn’t afford Section 8, so they took the public housing option.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“The only option they gave me was the public housing at Hamilton Street. That is what they told me I **had** to take. It was Hamilton Street or nothing.”

Residents Felt Steered To Vouchers

At two sites, some residents felt as if they were steered to vouchers; that alternative public housing was not a genuine option.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

“They just gave us a month and told us that if we didn’t take a Section 8, they could do nothing for us.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“They were promoting vouchers. It was like they wanted more people to take vouchers than public housing.”

Resident 2:

“A lot of people were taking Section 8 even though they didn’t want it. But they took them because they were afraid they would be homeless since the PHA said people had to vacate by June 22.”

Problems with Alternative Public Housing as a Relocation Option

At two sites some residents felt that moving to a different public housing site was not a viable option. For some, other public housing properties were in very bad condition. Others were aware of plans to demolish those public housing communities in a few years, too.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

“The options weren’t very good because the places that they were trying to tell you to go to were other public housing complexes -- I would not let a dog live in some of them. Anyway, these other public housing complexes were in the process of going through transitions too, so you really couldn’t move there either. For example, Parkside was going to go through HOPE VI at the time, yet they had the nerve to offer it as a relocation option!”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg:

Resident 1:

“Right off the top people began to ask questions like: Where are you going to put us? There’s no place in DC to put people from a whole housing project. What’s empty? We had people relocating into Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg from other public housing communities in DC that were undergoing HOPE VI. They didn’t have any place to put those people, so where were they going to put us?”

Resident 2:

“The question is, what’s going to happen when they run out of places to relocate people to? The way they are telling it, not everybody’s going to qualify for Section 8. So the only other option then is another public housing property. But they’re steady saying they are going to HOPE VI this here and HOPE VI that there. Add to that the tough criteria to get into HOPE VI and where are we gonna go?”

Resident 3:

“As far as other public housing, there is no public housing left. They’re tearing it all down. And, a lot of places don’t take Section 8. So where are we going to go?”

Resident 4:

“I wondered, if you are closing down all public housing, why would you move us to another public housing site? They’re going to be moving us from one to another.”

Resident 5:

“One of the residents here said that they know of people who Housing took to look at other public housing complexes. That resident said that they wouldn’t move to those other public housing places, that they would rather live in a tent before living in those buildings which were not up to code.”

Obstacles to Using Housing Vouchers

At six sites, residents felt that housing vouchers were a very limited option for either “temporary” or “permanent” relocation. Problems included:

- The poor quality of units targeted for voucher-use;
- Landlord discrimination;
- Fear that landlords would quit the voucher program in a few years, requiring residents to move again and;
- Lack of preparation for public housing residents to make the transition into the voucher program.

It is important to note that these problems, for the most part, are a reflection of poor administration of voucher assistance by local agencies as opposed to problems inherent to the overall housing voucher program (see next section for discussion regarding the voucher program).

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“Going to other public housing was really the only option because there were so many problems with the Section 8 ‘option’. They gave us a list of Section 8s but it was outdated by maybe two or three years. For example, a lot of the properties on that list weren’t available. We talked to the owner of one place and it hadn’t been on the market for four years. A lot of the Section 8 houses that they offered were in bad neighborhoods, had drug dealers next door, or were occupied already. Most realtors won’t deal with Section 8. When the landlord sees that you’ve got Section 8 they kick up the rent.”

Resident 2:

“The list of Section 8 houses that the Authority gives you has all of these slumlords on it. You go and see a property and wonder how they can rent it to anybody.”

Resident 3:

“Along the way there were obstacles in the way which were ridiculous. For example, when I would talk to a realtor about a possible Section 8 place they sounded all positive about you coming in to live in the community. But all of a sudden as HOPE VI became known, the rents escalated and the application fee increased. Some would say that they had a two-year waiting list.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“The houses on the Section 8 list were terrible; they were really awful. The majority of the houses on the list should not have been on there. They were not ready for residents. Later I asked the Section 8 office if they ever go out to look at the places on their list, and the answer was ‘no’.”

Resident 2:

“I was having a hard time finding a Section 8 place. They were rushing me and telling me that I had to go [*leave Herman Gardens*]. You see they just wanted me to take anything on that list that they gave us. I did not want any of those.”

Resident 3:

“It was hard to find houses through Section 8. We have 28,000 households on the Section 8 waiting list.”

Resident 4:

“Residents were given a list of Section 8 properties that were no good. Most of the places on the list either should have been condemned or were on the way to being condemned.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Resident 1:

“The Section 8 places that they were sending people to look at were atrocious.”

Resident 2:

“I know a woman who is 71 years old. They wanted her to move to a Section 8, but the house is falling apart.”

Resident 3:

“Section 8 doesn’t offer stability. I don’t want to be moving around from place to place. If a landlord don’t want us no more, I have to move again. The landlord can say ‘this Section 8 is for two years’. The landlord can write me a letter and tell me I have to move in 30 or 60 days. I don’t want to go through that.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“As far as Section 8, there wasn’t much out there. This place here that we took was the only one available during the time we had to look under Section 8.”

Kansas City, Guinotte Manor:

Two residents considered taking a housing voucher, but decided against it. One used the Housing Authority’s list, but she claimed that the only affordable places were “rat traps.” Another said that the units she saw that were targeted for voucher use were generally in “bad neighborhoods” with a lot of drug dealers. Both noted that they had difficulty getting landlords to accept their housing voucher.

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

Resident 1:

“I have learned about a number of people who have been relocated by other HOPE VI projects, and after their two years’ of Section 8 are up they are being told to move...That is why people are afraid to take it.”

Resident 2:

“Some people around here that I spoke with do not want a Section 8 because when you go to a place that takes Section 8 and someone else wants to buy the property, they will not leave it open for a low income person. Where will you go then with your Section 8 voucher? It is not good any more because it only runs a certain amount of time. Some people say Section 8 is only good for two years. Then you are on the street.”

Resident 3:

“I have a friend who used to live at Stanton (public housing property). She took a Section 8 when that place went HOPE VI. She said it is not working too good because there have been different problems with the people who own the houses. She has to keep going back to the Housing office.”

Resident 4:

“Giving you a voucher does not guarantee you a house. Our fear is that given the time pressures of the HOPE VI, that we won’t be able to find a Section 8 to move to. It is my understanding that there are 15,000 households with a voucher, but only half of them are finding housing. Now the Housing Commission is going to put another 707 households out there to compete. Where are we going to move to?”

Resident 5:

“At one meeting there was a man who said he had 30 clients who had Section 8, but none of the suburbs were taking their vouchers. One lady told me that her 90 days to search were up, so she had to go back and get her voucher redone because she couldn’t find anything, or landlords did not want to accept Section 8.”

OTHER PROBLEMS RELATED TO RELOCATION

Residents discussed four additional problems:

- Some felt rushed out of their homes;
- Overall assistance in searching for replacement housing was inadequate;
- Transportation to search for replacement housing was often not available;
- Relocation options were too far from jobs or community networks.

Residents Were Rushed To Locate Replacement Housing

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“Everything was going down so fast; they hardly gave us time to pick the right landlord. Everything was in a rush. When we got the Section 8 list we were rushed to move. So we did not have enough time to go and choose a good house. If you did not find a house in a certain amount of time, you lost your voucher. If I had more time to choose, I would not have chosen the house I live in now. But I had to rush; I had no choice.”

Resident 2:

“They really rushed us out of Herman Gardens. I was having a hard time finding a place. They were rushing me and telling me that I had to go. You see they just wanted me to take anything on that Section 8 list that they gave us. I did not want any of those because they were all dilapidated or too far away. But they more or less just rushed me out of there.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

Resident 1:

“I didn’t have enough time to find a real decent place I wanted to live in because I was being pushed to get out. So I took a four-bedroom dump.”

Resident 2:

“This place is the only one I could find in the quickest time.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

“They are pushing people just to get out of Scott. They give people a voucher, \$50, and tell them they have so many days to move. I know at least 12 people who left Scott and now are not pleased.”

Residents Did Not Get Adequate Assistance Searching For A New Home

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“One day they took us around to look, but all he did was drive past the places. We couldn’t go in them to look. The house I found, I found on my own. I found it in the newspaper.”

Resident 2:

“The Authority didn’t give me any help in finding replacement housing. I did it on my own.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Resident 1:

“I am disabled, but I got papers that say that I’ve got to look for a Section 8 apartment on my own. They did not offer to take me out to look at places.”

Resident 2:

“They gave me a listing of apartments and also said to get the *Jersey Journal* newspaper to look up apartments.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

“They did not really take the time with people to help them with the options. They didn’t even take the time to bring you out to look at the other public housing sites. You actually had to sign a paper without looking at these places. You didn’t have an option. They told us they were tearing down the property, and we had to go. So you had to go out and find a place on your own.”

Transportation To Search For Replacement Housing Was Often Not Available

Richmond, Blackwell:

“They didn’t offer bus money or gas money. They did have vans though. The van would take a bunch of people around [But the van would not stop to allow residents to view the house; if the outside of a place appealed to a resident, then they would have to independently attempt to contact the landlord]. The people who found the best houses were those who could get out and do it on their own.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“They didn’t offer us transportation to look at possible places. Early in the HOPE VI there was this man who did come out to help people look for places. But at that time we weren’t thinking of Section 8; we thought we would be moving back to Monterey Place. After this man left, his replacement didn’t offer people rides.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

"I was working, so I could only go around looking for places after work. But at that time of the day there was nobody at the Section 8 office. They didn't pay carfare to go looking, and the Section 8 office did not have time to drive us around to explore the places on the list."

Resident 2:

"They 'offered' us transportation to look at places, but most of the time when you asked, they said the Housing Commission van was being used for something else."

Relocation Options Were Too Far Away

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

"Section 8 did not show enough concern for those of us who did not have a car and needed to remain in the area. They kept telling me about places far away from my job. I wanted to stay in the same general area as Herman Gardens because it was close to my job. I didn't have a car, and I could catch a bus or cab from Herman Gardens. It was only seven minutes to get to work."

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

"They wanted to put me at the Marion Gardens public housing complex. But the transportation there is not good. I would have to take a cab to go food shopping."

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

"The other public housing was too far out at Eastern Circle."

Miami, Scott/Carver:

"They shouldn't move people from a neighborhood where people have lived all of their lives and that they were pleased with to some place far away."

HOPE VI AND THE HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM

Because few HOPE VI projects rebuild an adequate number of units available and affordable to low-income families, particularly those with extremely low incomes, the HOPE VI program relies extensively on the use of housing vouchers (though it is important to reiterate that the majority of relocated households end up in other public housing properties: roughly half of 25,000 households relocated under grants from 1993-1999 were moved to other public housing). A significant number of residents affected by HOPE VI are expected to use vouchers to find permanent replacement housing.

Residents interviewed for this report identified several problems regarding housing vouchers. Some of these problems were discussed in the previous section on relocation. Problems identified included deteriorated units, the failure of PHAs to adequately prepare public housing residents to transition into the voucher program and unstable landlord participation in the voucher program.

As stated in the previous section, these problems stem from poor administration of voucher assistance by local agencies, and not flaws in the national voucher program. In fact, according to a recent analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), during the six months from August 2002 to January 2003, the number of families receiving housing voucher assistance rose by 60,000. Further, in January 2003, local and state housing agencies were using 94.9 percent of authorized vouchers. The CBPP analysis states that if the rate of increase in voucher utilization evidenced in this six-month period continues for the remainder of fiscal year 2003, some 95.9 percent of authorized vouchers will be used by families for fiscal the fiscal year as a whole. So, while the good news is that the voucher program is increasingly serving more and more households, the unfortunate news is that more work needs to be done to improve local administration of voucher assistance, particularly in the context of the HOPE VI program.

THE QUALITY OF VOUCHER-LEASED UNITS

Even though HUD requires units targeted for voucher use to comply with Housing Quality Standards, and public housing authorities must ensure this compliance, virtually every resident who chose a housing voucher experienced significant problems with substandard housing conditions.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“Before the landlord would fix the problems, you still had to move into a Section 8 – even though all these things on the checklist had not been fixed yet. Because Housing was in a rush for you to move, they told you that you have to move into it, and that they would fix it later. Which never got done.”

Resident 2:

“When I first moved in the walls were getting ready to cave in. When it rained, water came through all four sides. The bathroom was completely molded. The plumbing was horrible at the property, that’s why my water bills were always in the \$100s or \$200s. The basement backed up at least twice a year with sewage. The house smelled of mildew. Later, I had to get a hot water heater after it burst and flooded the basement. I called the landlord. I would send him bills, like that from Roto Rooter, and deduct it from the rent I paid. But for two years I never heard from the landlord. He never came to make the big repairs.”

Resident 3:

“When I moved into this Section 8, I had to make renovations to the house. I put in all the electrical lighting, put the garage back together, put in windows, dealt with the ceiling falling down, painted the walls, re-did the bricks, and put in new gutters. I did all of this with my own money.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“I would rather live at another public housing project than to have this Section 8 house. There is mold all over the bathtub and shower, but the landlord won’t do anything about it. I have to do everything for myself. If I need a storm door I have to buy my own. I don’t have any screens so the bugs come in. At the projects I had storm doors and screens.”

Resident 2:

“There were bats in the house, but the landlord wouldn’t do anything about them. Because there was a problem with the heating system, we had to keep it running high or it would go off all together. So my heating bills were really high. Then there was a water leak under the house and my water bill was very high. The landlord wouldn’t do anything about these. I had to keep paying my heat and water bills because if I didn’t they’d get cut off and then Section 8 would put me out. I lived like that for two years.”

AFFORDABILITY OF VOUCHER-LEASED UNITS

Many residents indicated that they experienced financial hardship with their voucher-leased replacement housing. Although housing vouchers help people pay for their rent, residents learned that there was still a financial pinch that came with it -- a pinch that they had not felt while living in public housing.

The voucher-leased units were not affordable to some households primarily because the housing authority did not adequately prepare them for the added financial responsibility, especially utility costs.

For example, even though HUD's 1996 NOFA, under which the Herman Gardens HOPE VI grant was funded, did not directly require the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC) to prepare residents for the transition from public housing to the housing voucher program, the NOFA did require a description of "counseling or other assistance that will be provided to residents receiving Section 8 as relocation or replacement housing to enable them to move to areas of lower poverty if they choose."

In addition, the Uniform Relocation Act (URA) required DHC to "minimize hardships to persons in adjusting to relocation by providing counseling...and other such help as may be appropriate." And, housing voucher regulations required a "briefing" to tell people getting housing vouchers all about things such as "utility allowances" and "household responsibilities."

The Herman Gardens HOPE VI application did pledge to provide assistance to those taking vouchers, including "ensuring that housing...is affordable..." However, people were not prepared for some key differences, particularly the high cost of utilities. The quotes below explain how voucher-subsidized rents often are not affordable to low-income families.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

"They did not explain Section 8 well enough to us; if they had, I would not have chosen Section 8. I would have liked to have stayed at another public housing project because I was not prepared for the added expenses. Section 8 pays for the rent, but now I had to also pay for lights, gas, and water. They rack up. I could not afford the bills."

Resident 2:

"Everybody took Section 8 because Housing really glorified it. Then once people got into these houses and got their utility bills, they were really surprised. Housing told us that it would be different from living in Herman Gardens where utilities were "free". But the reality of the cost of utilities did not come to light until most of the people were in the Section 8 houses. In my case, the plumbing was so bad that my utilities tripled. My water bill would almost be \$200 a month."

Resident 3:

"When we were in Herman Gardens there was no extra light and gas payment. They told me that because I did not pay light and gas before, my rent would go down so that I could afford light and gas. But my light and gas is more money than any bill I pay. My light and gas run me \$100

each. I only paid \$109 when I lived in Herman Gardens. It is causing more hardship on me, as well as on others. I don't think the HOPE VI really thought through on that, or they did not have enough resident participation when they designed it."

Resident 4:

"I got on Section 8 and was not used to paying gas and light. These bills got high and I tried to pay them down, but couldn't pay them down fast enough. So my utilities got cut off. Section 8 terminated me when they learned that my lights and gas got cut off. I was living from house to house. I was on the street."

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

"If I had been educated more about what you have to do when you get a Section 8, I would have stayed in the projects. I didn't have any guidelines. There was no one to guide me, to suggest that I find a better house...to tell me to just give it more time. I made the mistake of accepting the first thing that I could get. That was wrong because we were being forced out."

Resident 2:

"HOPE VI said that I was \$46 over the Section 8 allowance, and that if I took it I would be responsible for that extra \$46. Because the cost of the heat at that Section 8 place, I had to sell my car just to pay for the utilities."

Resident 3:

"A lot of the Section 8 houses on the RRHA [Richmond Redevelopment Housing Authority] list didn't have any information about the utility costs. People we know ended up taking these houses and paying huge gas bills. The heat bills are so high that people really can't afford Section 8."

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

"It's ok, but it is kind of a struggle when you are not used to paying for the utilities. They really didn't get us ready for that."

LANDLORD PARTICIPATION IN THE VOUCHER PROGRAM UNSTABLE

Residents of three sites had to move when the landlords they rented from lost ownership of their buildings due to foreclosure. It may be an overstatement to characterize this as a widespread problem in the context of HOPE VI. However, because a number of residents in different cities raised the issue, it was important to document it for further examination. In Detroit, five of the ten residents interviewed had either lost their

voucher-funded units, or were on the verge of losing them. Other residents feared that their landlord might suddenly decide to get out of the voucher program in order to get more rent money.

Richmond, Blackwell:

“This is my second stop since having to leave Blackwell. My first choice was Section 8. I did get a house, but eight months after moving into it the owner lost the house to foreclosure. I got a notice telling me I had only 72 hours to vacate. The Authority did not pay for that move. So, now I’m here at Gilpin Court (public housing). I am trying to build a stable home for my family. This was just a stepping stone for me. But how can I get anywhere when just as soon as I get there they are talking about tearing it down. They are talking about tearing down Gilpin now. So there is a lot of uncertainty.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“I took a Section 8 on Westwood Street and have been living there since moving out of Herman Gardens. I planned on living in this current house all of my life – until the landlord ‘lost’ his house. The landlord wasn’t paying his taxes, and his minister told him to just let the house go. Now I have to move again.”

Resident 2:

“When the Section 8 office first came around they were sounding all glorious...telling us we were going to be on Section 8 for life – that we didn’t have to worry about nothing. Now we are worried and stressed. You don’t know if the landlord will sell your Section 8 house from under you or not.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

“My niece will become homeless at the end of the month. They pushed her out. She took the Section 8 and tried to find something in Broward County. She found a house there, but Relocation didn’t investigate the landlord. She move in January. Now they’re foreclosing on the house. The owner hasn’t paid the mortgage since 1998.”

OTHER HARMFUL IMPACTS EXPERIENCED WITH HOPE VI

In addition to the problems discussed earlier in this report, residents interviewed also faced other difficulties. For instance:

- Elderly residents were uniquely affected by multiple moves and the uncertainty of the relocation process;
- Some disabled residents did not get the accessible housing they needed;
- Some families had to struggle to stay together; extended family networks threatened;
- Some families became homeless;
- Some non-elderly households ended up moving more than twice and;
- Some encountered difficulties living at a site while demolition is taking place.

A harmful impact experienced by most residents was the loss of a sense of community. Many residents cherished the sense of “community” and the spirit of “family” which existed prior to HOPE VI, and now lamented such a loss.

IMPACT ON THE ELDERLY

At five sites, residents commented on various negative impacts that HOPE VI had on the elderly. Nationally, HUD reports that 16% of public housing residents are elderly and that 33% of the households are headed by seniors. Among the seven sites in this study, figures are available for five. Detroit indicates that 67% of its households are headed by an elderly person, and Miami reports 56%. For the other sites, the numbers are: 31% for D.C., 27% for New Haven, and 19% for Richmond.

Moving (even temporarily) can be especially trying for seniors. Many seniors lived at their public housing community for quite a few years. Negative impacts included:

- At sites where reconstruction was underway or partially complete, there were not enough planned one-bedroom units for seniors, or seniors who needed two bedrooms for medical reasons were denied the extra space.
- The phasing of the redevelopment process led to non-seniors temporarily occupying units set-aside for seniors. This practice prevented seniors from moving into places most suited to their needs. At one development, it also introduced fears and tensions into seniors’ lives as they had to contend with the “drug activity” of those relocated from a different HOPE VI project.
- Extended family members in public housing communities often lived within close proximity. This enabled them to care for one another, particularly senior family members. HOPE VI seemed to be breaking up extended families and leading to worries about caring for elderly grandparents.
- A number of elderly public housing residents had lived in their communities for over 20 years. Adjusting to a temporary or permanent move elsewhere was very difficult

for them. Residents attributed ill health, and even premature death, to the anxiety caused by the HOPE VI move.

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Elderly residents of Currie Woods were very concerned about their housing situation. The HOPE VI application indicated that “half of the permanent off-site relocation will be senior citizens.” In addition, several seniors (or near seniors) were uncertain about where they might eventually live because the HOPE VI plan proposed a mere 26 one-bedroom units, and because they were convinced that the Housing Authority was not willing to allow a single senior to live in a two-bedroom unit. Thus, from residents’ perspective, the need for one-bedroom units and adequate space for medical equipment was far greater than what the housing agency had in mind.

The development process also adversely affected seniors in two other ways. First, seniors were told to expect a “temporary” move off-site for an extended period of time (at least 18 months) while the next phase of redevelopment took place. Second, it appeared that some of the replacement housing units designated for seniors had been occupied for several years by families awaiting the completion of townhouse construction. So, seniors had a long wait before returning.

Resident 1:

“There are seniors who have been living here for many years, 20 years or better, who are not being allowed to go to the newer facilities that are designed for them. Why not: because they live in one-bedroom units.”

Resident 2:

“They promised me an apartment in the building built for senior/disabled [“3 Heckman”]. They promised me that they would give me two rooms. I need room for my oxygen equipment. Now they tell me they can not give me two rooms and that I have to leave the site. But everyone in 3 Heckman has two rooms and they are there by themselves. Why would they uproot someone who has been in a complex for 28 years when there is a building on site that I can move into that has vacancies?

Eventually they told me to get packed, that they were moving me to 3 Heckman. I’ve been packed now for three months.

They told me that I had to be 62 years old to move into 3 Heckman; I will be 62 this coming October. Yet they already have younger people living at 3 Heckman.

They wanted to put me at the Marion Gardens public housing complex. But the transportation there is not good; I would have to take a cab to go food shopping. They said there was a place for me at Hudson Gardens, but they would only allow me to have a one-bedroom unit. Where am I going to put my oxygen machine?”

Resident 3:

“My mother is here; my daughter lives upstairs. We are family connected. My mother is getting up in age; there is no reason I need to leave her now. At my age starting all over again is not feasible. I don’t like the way they are squeezing people out onto the street. We have a lot of senior citizens. I think that they should put the seniors where they are supposed to be and not ask them to leave and come back in 18 months. I did find out that a lot of seniors who did leave and were put in other senior sites did not live very long. Some did not even live to unpack their clothes.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

At the time of demolition there were still 84 seniors living in Herman Gardens, along with 52 near-seniors. Five years after the demolition, Herman Gardens still was not redeveloped, and a number of former residents had died while waiting to return.

Resident 1:

“I am a senior myself. I was scared and a nervous wreck. I have high blood pressure. My pressure stays really high because of the tension; because I wasn’t used to having a lot of bills. It is just the fact of the way they made us move. So many of our residents, the older ones, they did not want to move. Many of them got sicker when they had to be uprooted. Housing did it so fast that I think a lot of the seniors just gave up. A lot of those people have since died. I really believe that it was because they pushed them out from their homes. The Gardens was all they knew.”

Resident 2:

“They started moving younger residents into the senior building; younger people from other sites that were being demolished with HOPE VI, especially from the Jeffries site. Drug activity was going on. The seniors were scared; some were afraid to leave their apartments ... It got so bad they had to put security guards in the senior building.

When the HOPE VI first started, they moved the seniors out first. Some moved into another senior building, but Housing gave a lot of seniors a Section 8. Living in a Section 8 somewhere, a senior can’t walk up to the store; they can’t ask somebody to go to the store for them. When they were in Herman Gardens, we took care of our seniors.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

“My mother was told that she can’t return to Blackwell because she doesn’t have a family [that is, the agency does not plan to build one-bedroom units]. They didn’t tell her that before she left. She tried to apply to return, but HOPE VI said that they only have homes for families.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

Resident 1:

“It’s bad enough you’re moving these people who have lived in these buildings for 10, 15, or 20 years. They can’t adjust like young people. Some people who are here moved from another HOPE VI property to here. They became ill. And now they are talking about up-rooting them again.”

Resident 2:

“There are seniors on the property who are raising grandchildren. They have legal custody of them. As a senior, she is not going to be able to go into that senior building with those children. So, she should be able to get into one of the new homes. But are they going to let her have a home with the HOPE VI if she only has \$6,000 a year?

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“They moved an 80-year-old woman out of Scott, far from her family and her church. She had lived at Scott for 35 years.”

Resident 2:

“One elderly woman is still at Scott. She is the only person left in that row. She is so insecure about moving because she has lived there many years and she heard of another elderly lady who moved and then died.”

IMPACT ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Concerns about accommodations for people with disabilities were raised at four of the sites. The concerns included: apparent failure to assess household needs; insufficient number of accessible units; and keeping disabled people in housing that was not appropriate for their condition.

Nationally, HUD reports that 31% of public housing households are headed by a person with a disability. Among the seven sites in this study, figures were available for five. Miami indicates that 43% of its households are headed by a person with a disability. Three of the others are in the range of 30% to 37%. Richmond is at 19%.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Six of the households were headed by a person with a disability and/or had a child with a disability. Three of these six included persons with mental health issues while the other three households included persons with physical disabilities.

One household, including a disabled mother and son, became homeless. Here is a shortened version of their story:

“I was working and paying rent until my depression got worse. I was still living at Blackwell then. My one son is on disability and I have another son who is having problems too. I had my health problems then, but nobody asked me about my needs when I was at Blackwell, and once I got to the Fairfield public housing project I got no referrals either.

I can't go back to work until my health improves. I am still suffering ill-health. I still forget things. Because I couldn't work I was behind on the rent. The Fairfield staff didn't tell me about any programs that I could get into to help me pay the rent. They just ignored me.

One day they gave me a letter saying that I had to leave. They gave me one day's notice to move out. They put me out; all of my things were on the street. Half of my stuff got stolen. I didn't have anybody to help me. So I moved to my Granddaddy's house. We've been living with him for two years now.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

Four of those interviewed in New Haven had disabilities; two had severe disabilities. Here is a shortened version of one story:

“We lived at Elm Haven over 30 years. We were supposed to get a two-bedroom disabled unit because my wife uses a wheel chair and a walker due to her diabetes and asthma. I have asthma too. We also needed two bedrooms because we've got our grandson. So, HOPE VI said that we'd get a two-bedroom disabled place.

Then when it comes time to move, HOPE VI says that we weren't going to get a handicapped apartment. After a lot of time and several false starts we finally got a two-bedroom unit at Monterey Place, but it is on two stories. My wife can't get up the stairs to the bedroom or bathroom. She has to sleep downstairs. We had to squeeze a hospital bed and hospital toilet in the living room. My wife cries all the time because she can't do things and I have to run up and down stairs to take care of her.

They are saying that when something opens up they'll transfer us. But we've been in this two-story place over a year now. We know that they

moved a lady who is not disabled into a handicapped-accessible place. She was friends of the property manager.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Three of the residents interviewed had disabilities and thought that they were waiting too long for an accessible unit.

Resident 1:

“This is my third place, and I’m still waiting for a handicapped accessible place to open up. I have not had problems in the apartment except for the elevators not working all the time. The one child is in a wheelchair, so there is no way I can get him up and down without it. It is not feasible for either one of us because of my health. I even have a doctor’s note stating not to put me on the eighth floor. But the Housing Authority told me either to move on the eighth floor or move out.”

Resident 2:

“There were a lot of people here who had to move who had some kind of medical problem. I am in no condition to be moving around. I have two types of arthritis, I have asthma, and I have an abnormal heart beat.

First, they tell me that I have to move off site and cannot come back. Then they tell me that I have to move off site but will be eligible to come back to 3 Heckman (the senior/disabled building) in a few years when I’m a senior. But, I’m disabled. Yet, I can’t get into 3 Heckman until I’m a senior?

They’re not building any one-bedrooms. The only one-bedroom units are in 3 Heckman, and half of them don’t have rails. They said that I have to be in a wheelchair before I am classified as disabled. Yet, the bathrooms don’t have rails, or accessibility for people to get in and out of with wheelchairs.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

The HOPE VI application stated that there were 281 households receiving Disability Insurance (SSI). However, the application only planned for 25 “accessible” units, in addition to the 300 senior units which would also be accessible.

Several of those interviewed were either disabled themselves or were caring for a disabled child. Because most people with disabilities were dependent on SSI income (about \$6,000 per year), they feared that they would not be able to return due to the high income criteria they had been hearing about.

IMPACT ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN

In several instances, families were almost torn apart in the course of the HOPE VI process. Children also suffered from the anxiety of frequent moves or homelessness.

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

Two families had to struggle to stay together during the HOPE VI redevelopment process. A 90-year-old woman was urged to move into a one-bedroom elderly-designated unit despite wanting to remain with her adult granddaughter who was also on the lease at Elm Haven. In order to stay together they hurriedly settled on a less than acceptable voucher-leased unit.

The other family consisted of two grandparents who wanted to continue to care for their grandchild. This family had to go to court just to stay together:

“But when it comes time to move, they asked why I needed two bedrooms. We needed two bedrooms because we’ve got our grandson. HOPE VI was going to stick us in a one-bedroom apartment, but I wasn’t going to put my grandson out! HOPE VI told us that we couldn’t keep our grandson. So I had to go to court to get papers allowing us to have our grandson stay with us. I had to take a lot of days off of work for that. HOPE VI put us through holy hell.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“My children are worried to death. They see it is possible for us to be out on the street again. They ask, ‘Mama, are we going to have to go through this [homelessness] again?’ They ask me all the time, ‘Mama, where are we going to live at now?’ It makes me feel bad that we won’t be able to move back to Herman Gardens. I know that my children enjoyed living there. They had lots of friends.”

Resident 2:

“My girls are young and are tired of moving and switching schools. They miss their old friends. It’s hard for me to keep them going to school because they’re tired of switching schools.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“HOPE VI is just terrible; it is a program that separates family. Some families couldn’t find a replacement place that was big enough, so they had to break up.”

Resident 2:

“I know an 80-year-old woman who is caring for her grandchildren. The place they moved to is too far away from the grandchildren’s school.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

“Where once a middle-aged mother lived with her grown daughter and her own children, HOPE VI is moving the daughter and grandchildren out to their own place. That leaves the middle-age mother living alone, unqualified to return to the new HOPE VI which is not developing one-bedroom units.”

HOMELESSNESS

Instead of gaining improved living conditions, six households experienced homelessness.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Because of the uncertainties that came with Section 8 in Detroit, homelessness resulted for one of those interviewed, as well as for the daughter of another.

Resident 1:

“Section 8 told me that because my lights were off and I took too long to find a smaller house, I was off Section 8. I was living from house to house. I was on the street. [When residents can not pay their utilities, they lose their Section 8

So I eventually went to stay with my sister. Section 8 was watching her because she let me stay with her for awhile. They were going to kick my sister off of Section 8 because I was there. I was not even able to sit on her porch. My kids couldn’t even come outside.

I didn’t want my sister to lose her house and Section 8, so I was looking into a shelter. Then, when I met an older man around the corner, I moved in with him even though I didn’t like him. I’ve got kids and have to stay somewhere.

Now I am living in still another house. It is an old ‘HUD house’ that was about to be torn down. A man let me live there rent free, but told me I had to make all the repairs. It was in terrible condition. A friend and I worked on it every day for four months. I carpeted it, painted it inside and out, and dealt with the roach infestation. I put a lot of money into it. It is now livable. We’ve been there for two years. But I have to move again in six months because the owner had not been paying his taxes.”

Resident 2:

“My daughter chose Section 8, which I told her not to do because I had heard so much about it. She did it anyway and now she is homeless.

She had one of these landlords who thought that if she was in the bathtub he could come and visit; or, if she was eating dinner he could use his key like he was her boyfriend.

The place was falling apart, and because she complained he went and had her evicted up under her nose while she was in a meeting about the problems she was having, like sewage backing up and all kinds of problems. Because she complained, they [the PHA] took her voucher.

Another reason my daughter does not have a place to stay is because her light and gas were cut off. At the same time the landlord was evicting her, she called to have her light and gas turned off; but he illegally goes and turns it back on. Now she has a \$600 gas bill and \$609 light bill. So her credit is not good with them. And if you cannot get your gas and light, you are rejected at a lot of places. So that leaves her really out in the cold.

She is homeless now, living from house to house. Her mailing address is my address. My daughter has two children, ages five and six. They are living with me because she had no place to live.

My daughter is not the only one who became homeless; other residents who I have talked to recently who took the Section 8 now have no place to go.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

A mentally disabled mother and her mentally disabled children were doubled up with her Grandfather. [see earlier section]

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Mother:

“They told everybody that nobody would have to move off site; they said that everybody is entitled to return. The main thing when they first came out with this [HOPE VI] is that they were going to help the people, the people who were decent and trying to do for themselves. I’ve been trying. I consider myself a decent person. They promised that the program would make it better for us. They promised us a place.

I lived there for 25 years and raised three kids. None of them ever did drugs or sold drugs. I’ve been on my job for 14 years. And both of my daughters are going to school and are working. They are trying. So, I

would have been a good candidate for help to relocate within Curries Woods.

They interviewed me to see if I wanted a new townhouse or a Section 8. Even then they knew I was having a problem with the rent. This was before my husband died and my daughter got hit by the car. I had a lot on me. During this interview they didn't say anything about my rent problem. I wanted the Section 8.

The only reason they said why I couldn't get a Section 8 is because I was late on my rent at Curries Woods. A lot of times I was three months late with my rent, but I would always pay part of it. No one told me that if you didn't pay your rent on time that you are not eligible to return – that you could get kicked out. Why wait until 2000 to tell me I had a problem? I went and paid the court the rent. But Housing deceived me, making me believe that everything is okay. A few days later they said that they can't accept my late payment of rent. They said I had one month to move out.

I had to move here with my sister.” [*an off-site, market rate, 3-bedroom place. Grandmother and her family live downstairs.*]

Daughter 1:

“I was on my mother's lease, so my son and I got kicked out when she did. My mother had a nervous breakdown as part of this.”

Daughter 2:

“I still had my 2-bedroom apartment at Building 51. I have a son and a daughter. So my sister and her son moved in with me.

I tried to get them on my lease, but was told that I couldn't. I put my nephew on the lease. For a whole year he was on the lease, but when I went down to Housing they said he couldn't be on the lease because that would make my apartment overcrowded.

But, if I also get evicted two weeks from now like they are threatening to do, I will have to triple-up here with my mom and sister at my aunt's house.”

MULTIPLE MOVES

Because HOPE VI projects take several years to complete, some residents might end up moving more than twice. One cause of multiple moves appears to be landlord turnover in the housing voucher program.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Five of the ten residents interviewed had lost or were on the verge of losing their voucher-leased apartment. One household had moved four times, and two had already moved twice. (One of these families was preparing to move for the third time, not counting staying with relatives and friends while homeless.) Another resident was facing her second move because her landlord had recently informed her that he too had “lost” his building. So she is back on the public housing waiting list. Even those who have been fortunate enough to remain in place know others from Herman Gardens who have had to move two or three times since leaving the Gardens.

Richmond, Blackwell:

In Richmond, three of the ten residents interviewed experienced multiple moves. While waiting for a replacement unit, one resident had to move within the old Blackwell project because of insect and rodent infestation brought on by so many vacant units slated for demolition. Another was forced to leave her replacement public housing unit because the housing authority did not help her with her disability. The third resident had to move yet again when her Section 8 landlord lost his house due to foreclosure (see earlier section).

A fourth Blackwell resident did not suffer multiple moves, but did know of others who did:

“In order to make room for Blackwell residents at other public housing projects, the Authority would put out people for any kind of dysfunctional behavior they could find. When you move someone from one development to another you are starting a host of problems right there. Violence would erupt. So, some people had to move a number of times, all because the others don’t want you there.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Two of the residents moved multiple times and were expecting to make at least four moves total before the redevelopment process was complete. One is a senior and the other is disabled. As the latter commented: “This is my third place and I’m still waiting for a handicapped accessible place to open up.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

Here, at least four of the ten residents interviewed expressed concern about having to make multiple moves once HOPE VI got underway there:

Resident 1:

“The HOPE VI application stated that we would only have to move twice. But, a number of current residents of Carrollburg moved here from other HOPE VI projects. So those people moved here and are going to have to move again. How many times are they going to run people around? The remaining public housing complexes are also targeted for HOPE VI. So

we are going to be constantly moving. All of these moves will be putting a lot of strain on people, especially the seniors.”

Resident 2:

“Some seniors moved from another HOPE VI property to here. They became ill. And now they are talking about up-rooting them again. If people move out of Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg to another public housing project, what will happen to them when they HOPE VI the other place? Where else are we going to go? People will be moving all the time, like the lady in back. She just moved here from a different HOPE VI only a year ago.”

LIVING AT THE PROPERTY WHILE DEMOLITION IS TAKING PLACE

At three of the sites, some residents experienced difficulties remaining on-site while demolition and new construction were taking place. Their problems ranged from infestations of roaches and rats (Richmond), to fear due to the lack of streetlights (New Haven).

In **Detroit**, one resident had a particularly harrowing experience:

“I was the last one to move out, the very last one. I got very sick while they were demolishing the other parts of Herman Gardens. One day I was running the water in the bath and it started backing up. The water had leaves and dirt in it. Then it started backing up into my washing machine. They said some pipes broke in the ground and started backing up into my house. All of our clothes and furniture were destroyed.

My children and I had to live upstairs in the bedrooms until they decided to come and suction out the water. That took about four days. During that time we had to wear boots.

I thought they would at least clean my house, but they didn’t. There was mud and debris all over the house. My couch was wet...my house mildewed. I lost all my stuff, but they would not replace it unless I had all my receipts. They left it like that for months, just like that. We had to live upstairs. Because the kitchen was downstairs, we kept boots handy to go to the kitchen.

I ended up in the hospital with yellow eyes and vomiting. My fingernails were even yellow. The hospital said I had some type of toxic virus or something. They said if I had not come in I would have had Hepatitis B or C... the worse one.”

LOSS OF A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Often, the general public only thinks of public housing as a place from which people want to escape. Without posing questions that might prompt a specific response, several people at each site volunteered how much they cherished the strong sense of community at their “old” public housing development.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“I get real sad sometimes when I know I can’t go back to Herman Gardens. It makes me want to cry. [She did cry.] I think because I lived there so long. I used to always say that they are going to have to put me out. That is what they did; they put me out. I just felt safe there. At Herman Gardens we just knew everybody. We knew our surroundings. You felt safe. We knew that if we left our unit, when we came back everything would be ok -- because we had neighbors looking out for us. I was friends with so many people around there and was close to them. It’s different here [off-site relocation housing], I barely know these people.”

Resident 2:

“When you lived in Herman Gardens it was like family. We got along. You could leave home and everything would be all right when you came back. It was a little closer knit than here [off-site relocation housing]. I don’t know half of the people who live here.”

Resident 3:

“Herman Gardens wasn’t just a community; it was family. People looked out for each others’ children. It just ain’t a family thing out here [off-site relocation housing]. You just can’t sit out on the porch and enjoy yourself because you don’t know nobody. We have a Herman Gardens reunion every year. We’ve had it now for 14 years. We have everything: food, music, ponies, games for the kids, etc. Even people who moved out in the ‘60s and ‘70s keep coming by. Did you know that Judge Mathis lived here?”

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“I moved into Blackwell in 1970. I think of all the years that I lived at Blackwell. My kids were raised up there. I think of all those moments and of all the enjoyment. Blackwell meant a lot to me. There were so many good things that I had at the projects that I was forced to leave because of HOPE VI.

I loved all of my neighbors at Blackwell. My neighbors would always be glad to see me. I've been in this Section 8 house for three years, but I couldn't tell you anybody's name. People around here won't speak to you. At Blackwell I would always have somebody to talk to.

The projects are not bad. Trust me. The projects was nothing but good living. There was nothing wrong with the projects. Give me a project in a heartbeat. I loved it. I loved the environment, looking outside and seeing the children play.

I have lost contact with a lot of those I knew at Blackwell. They are scattered all about. I haven't seen any of my old neighbors. I had a neighbor call me to tell me that a former neighbor's mother had passed. That really bothered me. At Blackwell if somebody passed or if there were hard times, well we all were there. We were neighbors. When they told me that the lady had passed....she was so sweet [*she cries*]. I used to cook on Sundays and go see her and carry food to her. I should have been at her funeral. They can say what they want about the projects, but that is where you find real love.

If they would have just modernized the projects instead of tearing them down, then people would still be in their neighborhood and would have been fine. I watched them tear down the unit next to me. I cried all day. I became anxious and scared because I knew that I was next. That is why I quick took this Section 8 place.

I knew everybody at Blackwell and everybody knew me and my kids. Now people are spread from here to hell. You don't know where they are. They just took advantage of a bunch of poor folks.

I've seen more good things than bad in the projects. Ain't nothing but pure love in the projects. There was more love in the projects than you can find in this area here."

Resident 2:

"I grew up in South Richmond I and lived there most of my life. I am the third generation in my family to live in that neighborhood. I moved into Blackwell itself in 1971 shortly after it was built. Where I lived was surrounded by older people who had seen me grow up. I didn't have any problems. We didn't have any drug dealers or any of that.

The Housing Authority has destroyed the community. They have taken all of us and have situated us all over the city. So all of the people we were familiar with we don't get to see.

I lived on Boston Street for twenty years. I went to school with this girl who lived across the street from me. We were in and out of each other's houses. We went everywhere together. Her father died, but I didn't know about it. That is a funeral that I would have wanted to go to.

The Authority won't give anybody a master list of how to contact one another. Why can't we communicate with each other? They don't want us to communicate because they want to keep the lie going. If we can't get together to compare notes, we won't know what's really going on."

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

Resident 1:

"I was never afraid out here from day one. My kids were all raised up here and most of the children already know me. Most of the crime was from outsiders coming in, not from the people who live here."

Resident 2:

"This is my life here at Curries Woods. My mother is here and my daughter lives upstairs. We are family connected. If I couldn't leave my children with a neighbor, my family is here. I know the residents and they know me. If something were to happen to me and I had an emergency and could not take care of myself, I don't have to worry about people saying they could not come to my house; you could always knock on a neighbor's door. Or if my daughter gets sick or something, or her children, someone would come to her aid.

I just love Curries Woods because there is bus transportation that can get you to the shopping areas. My doctors are all here; the baby's doctors are all here. All the things that would be vital to us are right here."

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

"I lived at Elm Haven almost 30 years and my granddaughter 20-some years. At Elm Haven we knew everybody. Everybody was friends. My family was living right next door to me. We cared for one another.

When we first moved into Elm Haven, it was nice; everybody was right there. It was a family thing, really. At Elm Haven people used to walk up and down the court and speak to each other. We used to cook out and gather together."

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg:

Resident 1:

“The majority of the residents are people who have lived here anywhere from 15 to 40 years. They have strong ties to their homes, and now they are being told that they have six months to find another place to live. They would like to stay here. It’s a community here. Eighty percent of the people know each other. I don’t hear about anyone getting robbed. It is safe to walk the streets at night because everybody knows one another. It is convenient for people. It is an ideal location with the subway and direct bus lines on M Street and 8th Street. You really don’t need a car.”

Resident 2:

“A lot of us keep our yards up, our homes up. We live like you’re supposed to live. We live wholesome lives. We have quite a few people who live wholesome lives in the projects. Not everybody hangs out at the corner. But Housing doesn’t emphasize that.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

Resident 1:

“This is our community. We should have the right to stay here in our own community. We have the schools here. We have the community center here. Everything is in this community for the community – and they’re taking it from us. They are putting that community there for someone else now.”

Resident 2:

“My neighbors are close-knit. If one needs something and another can do something to help, we do it. We all work together.”

Resident 3:

“I cried for a whole week. I lived in that apartment for 28 years. I raised my child there. Now they want to clear all of the Blacks out.”

Miami, Liberty Square:

“I’ve lived in Liberty Square since 1954 and raised 6 children there. I’ve never had anything stolen; never had a problem raising my children there. It is a pleasant place to live.”

HAS HOPE VI PROVIDED A BETTER LIVING SITUATION FOR RESIDENTS?

One of the stated purposes of HOPE VI is to improve the living environment of families of distressed public housing. HUD's 1997 NOFA expressed this objective most clearly:

“The essential requirement of HOPE VI remains that each revitalization effort promise a transformation of the physical site and the social dynamics of life for low income residents at that site, or in any off-site replacement housing.”

Residents, with a few exceptions, did not feel that they were living in better environments. Many still had to endure drugs, crime, and other dangerous conditions. Housing voucher tenants often faced substandard housing conditions. Children sometimes encountered hostility from other young people and dealt with the uncertainty of whether they would find permanent housing. Replacement housing was sometimes far removed from established social support networks, as well as daily essentials such as bus lines and grocery stores. Finally, for some of those living in new HOPE VI units, the stricter rules felt oppressive.

Ultimately, the findings reveal that, for the most part, original residents who returned to revitalized communities perceived their living condition to be somewhat improved. On the other hand, those households relocated permanently or temporarily (but for more than one-year, which is beyond URA's definition of temporary) off-site did not see any improvements in their living situation. Because more than half of the 56,049 households relocated (or planned for relocation) since 1993 are not scheduled to return to the revitalized community (many have been moved into other public housing), this finding speaks magnitudes about whether or to what extent HOPE VI is achieving the goal of improving the lives of families relocated from “distressed” housing.

GENERAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

At three sites where redevelopment is already underway or complete, the report is evenly split. In Richmond, most residents responded that drugs, crime, and violence are still a part of their lives. However, in New Haven and Kansas City the majority of residents felt much safer, and enjoyed a quieter and cleaner environment.

Richmond, Blackwell:

All but one of the residents interviewed were relocated elsewhere. Those moved elsewhere did not expect that they would return to the revitalized community. Two relocated residents felt that they were in a better community. One person saw no change: “I don't see where anything has changed. To me this is no different than Blackwell, and now they are talking about tearing it down too.”

Three people noted that they were worse off. One is scared because “these people are wild over here – there's gunshots.”

Two residents observed that back over on the Southside, where Blackwell is located, the crime is just as bad than before HOPE VI. In the following statement, one resident suggests that HOPE VI was not worth the loss of “community” experienced at the old property: “all they’ve got is vacant land. I miss it. I want my community back.”

One astute resident talked about the ripple effect of moving residents from one public housing project to another:

“In order to make room for Blackwell residents at other public housing projects, the Authority would put out people for any kind of dysfunctional behavior they could find. That started trouble for Blackwell people before they ever got to the other public housing project.

Most public housing is ‘self-contained’. When you move someone from one development to another you are starting a host of problems right there. The people at the other public housing project don’t want newcomers in the first place, much less somebody who they thought caused their previous neighbor to get put out. So there would be violence. Their children would get beat up. As a result, some people had to move a number of times, all because the others don’t want you there.”

For voucher residents, a former resident council president remarked:

“The areas where the Section 8s are located are very bad neighborhoods. The Section 8 properties are mostly held by slumlords and their properties are in certain neighborhoods. So that is where people end up looking. I think that way the Authority gets people where they want them anyway.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

At the time of the interviews, most of the revitalization was complete. Three of those interviewed for this project definitely thought the neighborhood was better. One said Monterey Place is more peaceful now; another said it does not have as much drug and gun activity that Elm Haven had. Here is how a third put it:

“I just love it. It is very quiet. I can sleep at night. We had a couple of shootings, but I think they dealt with that. At Elm Haven there used to be break-ins and gangs.”

Kansas City, Guinotte Manor:

At the time of the interviews, all of the public housing units were complete; only some homeownership units remained to be constructed. Everyone interviewed said that the new Guinotte Manor was a better community overall than it was before HOPE VI. More specifically, several residents remarked that in addition to the community feeling safer as a result of more street lights, the neighborhood is kept cleaner, and the management staff works better with residents.

One person said that in the beginning she did not want to move back to Guinotte, but when she saw the new places she liked them and decided to return. Another reported that some residents who chose vouchers as their permanent replacement housing now regret their decision and wish they could return.

On a more personal level, one resident said,

“People’s self-esteem has improved now that there is a new, beautiful community. Around here in this little village, everybody looks out for each other. You just feel safe where you know someone will look out for you.”

However, problems remain. One person claims that drugs and graffiti are still a problem. She does not go outside as much as she used to or would like to. Another resident notes that:

“It’s the people who moved in since the HOPE VI was finished who are a problem. They didn’t live here before and don’t realize how much better Guinotte Manor is now.”

IMPACT ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN

In a few cases, the HOPE VI move placed children in neighborhoods that residents viewed to be dangerous, or where the children were viewed as outsiders, and therefore, subjected to hostility.

Richmond, Blackwell:

The imposed move has had a mixed, although mostly negative, effect on children in four of the families, according to the residents interviewed. Children in Richmond schools have established “turf,” so that when HOPE VI moves children from one part of town to the other, the children who have moved get picked on because they are from another part of town. Two of the families interviewed mentioned this problem.

“When I was relocated to Fairfield things weren’t working out. People were picking on my children. My one son was not doing well in school because the kids were picking on him. He kept running home from school. It was a turf situation. He came from the other side of town, so the others picked on him.”

Another mentioned that she was afraid to let her children play outside, although the switch to a different school was positive.

“I don’t want to raise up my children over here at Mosby. I don’t like the neighborhood. My children can’t get out and play because there is always something going on out there. There is one good thing though. By switching schools my son’s grades came up.”

New Haven, Elm Haven Monterey Place):

One family – forced to accept a unit at another public housing property – feels as if it is under siege: “At Hamilton Street I don’t even let my kids out to play. I’m paying \$769 to live in fear.”

***LOCATION OF REPLACEMENT HOUSING:
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION***

At three sites, relocated residents complained about the absence of decent grocery stores and pharmacies, as well as the lack of convenient bus lines.

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Residents generally found themselves relocated to areas that were not convenient to stores or direct bus routes. This impact was contrary to one of the factors used to award HOPE VI grants in the 1996 NOFA under which the Herman Gardens grant was funded. The 1996 NOFA allowed up to 20 points to be assigned to competing HOPE VI applications depending on how well they helped to “...end the social and economic isolation of public housing residents and increase their access to quality municipal services...”

“There is no access to anything here. When I was in Herman Gardens I could get on a bus on the corner and ride to every place I needed to go to on that one route. One bus going, one bus back. Here if you don’t have a car or friend you can’t eat. There’s nothing in walking distance except for Farmer Jack’s, and my body really couldn’t walk that far anyway. Plus, at Farmer Jack’s if you have \$100 worth of Food Stamps, when you come out you’ll only have one bag of groceries because their prices are too high. The closest Laundromat is on Woodward.”

Richmond, Blackwell:

“Now that I am moved all the way over here, I have to pay somebody to take me to the store and such. It was much easier on the Southside because there was a grocery store and pharmacy right up the street.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

A number of residents at both Scott and Liberty Square noted that the rental units suggested for voucher use were far away. However, those that chose the Annie Coleman public housing complex were able to stay in the neighborhood.

Resident 1:

“A woman I know was moved out of Scott, way out to Homestead [over 40 miles away]. She gets off of work at 11 p.m. and takes 2 buses and a train to pick her children up from her mother’s in Liberty City and get them back home at 2:30 am. In the morning she has to get her children to school.”

Resident 2:

“People are being pushed south to Homestead – out in the boonies. The bus line is terrible.”

“I moved to the Annie Coleman public housing complex, it is clean and quiet. Also, it is just around the corner, so I am still close to the supermarket, gas station, and other things.”

LIVING WITH THE NEW RULES

HUD allows PHAs (or a management company contracted by the PHA to operate a newly built HOPE VI site) to establish unique readmission and occupancy rules for residents who wish to live at the new development. Residents at three of the sites where redevelopment was underway or completed had mixed feelings about the rules.

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

Residents mentioned a variety of rules that applied once a resident returned. For example, three residents mentioned inspections for housekeeping. Each of them thought that the housekeeping rule was good so that Monterey Place would remain in good condition.

However, several of the residents complained about some of the other rules. For example: “You can’t keep bikes on the porch, but there’s no place to put them.”

In particular there were two rules that a number of residents did not like: the rule about visitors, and the pressure to get rid of large furniture and appliances such as freezers.

Resident 1:

“If you have visitors from out of town you have to sign papers saying that they can’t stay but a certain amount of time....I think it’s fourteen days. They go around and check.”

Resident 2:

“HOPE VI told us all that we had to get rid of our furniture and other belongings because the new places would be smaller and because some of our furniture was too big to fit in the doorways.”

Resident 3:

“When you have a family you save money at the store if you have a freezer.”

The Resident Council eventually won a compromise which allowed for smaller freezers. It was also successful at changing two rules implemented in the early stage of occupancy: one against barbecuing and another about sitting on porches.

Resident 1:

“At first the Property Manager told us that there could be no grilling. But back at Elm Haven we always had our own fenced-in back yard. We were able to have flowers and vegetable gardens and cook outs. So here at Monterey Place the residents got a petition together about the grilling. The Property Manager backed off on that.”

Resident 2:

“At one time they said people couldn’t sit on their porch, but I guess the Resident Council beat that back because we can do that now.”

Kansas City, Guinotte Manor:

Most residents interviewed liked the policy of screening to determine who gets into Guinotte Manor. Also, several liked the tougher rules about keeping the revitalized property clean, claiming that prior to HOPE VI, some residents simply dumped trash in the yard.

Regarding visitors, most did not mind having to register their guests and thought that some residents needed to watch their company a little closer. Some residents, however, did have concerns about a guest registration rule. One felt the policy was “intrusive.”

“If you have somebody staying with you for a week you have to notify the Housing Authority 48 hours in advance. If my kids want to spend the night, I have to tell the Housing Authority. If you have friends over you have to inform the Housing Authority. It’s like living in jail!”

Another resident noted that the guest rule provided the property management with an opportunity to mistreat residents. This rule placed residents’ continued occupancy in jeopardy depending upon the behavior of their visitors. One elderly resident noted that this was especially true for seniors who get in trouble for the behavior of their visiting grandchildren. She claimed that some seniors were thinking of moving away from

Guinotte Manor because they felt threatened by the property manager whenever their grandchildren visited. Another resident said that while this was a problem in the past, the management was relaxing application of this rule for seniors.

In another case, two goals of HOPE VI – self-sufficiency and improved living environment -- collided, resulting in a household becoming less financially self-sufficient. In this particular situation, a resident maintained two jobs, but had to quit her night job because the project manager complained about the post-curfew behavior of her son.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Although five former residents said that their desire to return was seriously dampened by the strict rules applied at the new Blackwell, the one returnee interviewed had mixed thoughts about the rules:

“I like the restrictions. But on the other hand, they don’t want the kids playing on the grass. The rental office said to have them play in the back by the parking lot – but there aren’t any lights back there.”

WERE THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTIES TRULY “DISTRESSED?”

The HOPE VI program, by design, is suppose to target public housing properties deemed to be “severely distressed.” However, interviews with residents reveal that housing agencies may be applying for and receiving HOPE VI funds for properties that are not truly distressed. A 1998 HUD Inspector General report found that “HUD lacks a workable definition of severe distress,” and, still, this continues to be the case.

The term “severely distressed” since 1993 has been part of each appropriation enactment for HOPE VI and HOPE VI NOFAs. The definition varied from year to year until the enactment of the 1998 Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA), which revised Section 24 of the 1937 Housing Act (see Appendix A).

Beginning in 1997, official HUD documents de-emphasized demolition. In fact, the 1997 NOFA marked a change from previous years by not requiring demolition. The NOFA also stated that, “... as the program evolves it should encompass appropriate revitalization strategies at obsolete and distressed developments where revitalization may be accomplished without extensive demolition and more economical rehabilitation strategies may be available.”

However, because the term “severely distressed” has never been concretely defined, it has been easy for almost any property to meet the definition, resulting in unnecessary demolition. HUD, too, has contributed to this problem. In the HOPE VI application process, the agency simply requires housing agencies to submit a form certifying that the property meets the loose definition of “severely distressed,” and to back up the certification with documentation from an architect hired by the housing agency.

Residents at five sites felt that their public housing communities were not so run down or distressed that the only option was demolition. Instead, they were convinced that their properties could have been renovated at a reasonable cost.

Richmond, Blackwell:

The HOPE VI application did not present a very convincing case that Blackwell could not be fixed up at a reasonable cost. Under the heading “Substantial Deterioration,” the first problem mentioned is “pest infestation.” Under “Design Deficiencies,” the housing agency admits that “structural deterioration is not pervasive.”

“The apartments at Blackwell were not that bad...to be condemned like that. They could have taken some of that money to renovate them. They were giving people new floors, bathrooms, doors, refrigerators – all in the same year that they tore down the places. That was money wasted. People were forced out of their homes for no reason. What did they do to that neighborhood? They took down all of the houses, put all of these people out of these homes. They could have just remodeled them.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Residents did not feel that Herman Gardens was “severely distressed.” In fact, just before demolition, Herman Gardens was remodeled.

“Just before HOPE VI, the Housing Commission went through Herman Gardens and put in new windows, floors, and doors. They gave me a brand new stove and refrigerator, and a new bathtub. They put in brand new gutters, gutters that had been falling apart. We never had fire alarms; they even put in fire alarms. They did the lawns and planted flowers. We had the most gorgeous complex. It looked like a whole new place. Three months later I was out on the street. Then they tore it down.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsbury:

The definition of “severe distress” in the 2001 NOFA, under which the Arthur Capper/Carrollsbury grant was awarded, was also too general. Still, one of the clauses in the definition included, “cannot be revitalized... because of cost constraints.” However, the \$35 million HOPE VI grant would demolish all of the units at Arthur Capper/Carrollsbury, even though they had been remodeled in recent years and residents felt that they could be rehabilitated without demolition.

Resident 1:

“They just remodeled these places here no longer than maybe two years ago. The structures are sound. The floors are sound. The walls are sound. We just want them to come in and face-lift the place.”

Resident 2:

“The place had already been renovated about four or five years ago. They did my place. They painted, redid the floors, and gave us a new stove and cabinets. They had us believe that we would be here if they were going to do all of that fixing up. The next thing you know, we got the boot.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“Elm Haven could have been renovated. They had modernized the kitchens and bathrooms. They had put in new windows, screens, and screen doors. They had put in a new boiler and thermostats. They were good, steady buildings.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

“One of these buildings was renovated for less money, so we are saying don’t tear down the last two buildings – instead rehab them. We want Housing to amend the Plan so that we no longer have to do anymore demolition.”

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING AND EFFECTIVELY UTILIZING COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Many of the residents interviewed either did not receive or were not aware of the supportive services activities that would have assisted in improving their social and economic situation and increasing their chances of being able to return to the revitalized community.

WHAT HUD REQUIRED

The 1993 Appropriations Act that first created HOPE VI required a community services component. Over the years this has also been referred to as a “self-sufficiency program” or “Community and Supportive Services.”

The 1993 Appropriations Act allowed up to 20% of total grant funds to be spent for services such as literacy, job training, day care, and youth services. At one point, NOFAs limited the amount that could be spent for “self-sufficiency” to \$5,000 per original unit. Now, the 1998 Quality Housing and Work Responsibility (QHWRA) Act caps at 15% the amount of grant funds that can be spent for “community and supportive services.”

According to HUD’s fiscal year 2002 report to Congress on the HOPE VI program, approximately \$707 million in HOPE VI and non-HOPE VI funds have been budgeted for community and supportive services by all of the HOPE VI grants awarded between 1993 and 2001. However, as of September 30, 2002, only 28% of these funds have been spent. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the funds spent have been federal HOPE VI dollars.

From the beginning, HUD’s 1993 NOFA emphasized the need to not only improve the buildings at public housing complexes, but to also improve the quality of life for residents by increasing their capacity for greater economic self-sufficiency:

“Physical urban revitalization cannot be sustained without a revitalization of the spirit of the people of the community such that the people begin to view themselves as collective owners of the community... Thus, beyond the bricks and mortar of the physical structures, community service can be the glue that holds an urban revitalization program together, sustains it, and nourishes it.” [HOPE VI NOFA, Federal Register, Vol. 58, No.58, March 29, 1993, page 16604.]

Most NOFAs from that point forward included similar language. In 1996, for example, the NOFA stated:

“Residents of public housing communities can succeed in becoming self-reliant if they receive assistance in obtaining comprehensive training, education, and support services, and if they receive help finding gainful employment. This program should focus on offering education and job training...”

Grant Agreements signed by local officials reminded them:

“HOPE VI is intended to address the condition of people in public housing developments, and not merely to bricks and mortar. The parties will emphasize community and supportive services,...to meet the social and economic needs of the residents ... and to achieve self-sufficiency for the residents...”

HUD’s guidance document on Community and Supportive Services opened by declaring:

“HOPE VI may ultimately be judged more by its effectiveness in helping low-income families improve the quality of their lives and move toward self-sufficiency than by the physical improvements it creates. The program must offer appropriate services toward these ends to all families who reside in a development when the HOPE VI process begins as well as to other needy families that move into the development after revitalization.”

In addition, Section 3 of the 1968 Housing Act (amended in 1992) requires PHAs to use federal funds received for construction and rehabilitation to create economic opportunities for low-income persons “to the greatest extent feasible.” PHAs’ Section 3 obligations apply to several funding programs, including HOPE VI.

Despite all of these glowing words about “community and supportive services” or “self-sufficiency,” at all seven sites examined for this project, actual delivery of services was either not in evidence, or services were just beginning – several years after HOPE VI demolition took place.

The effect of this is that many residents did not receive the assistance needed (i.e., with credit problems, etc.) to be able to return to the revitalized community. Even more troubling, they did not receive the type of investment that improves the quality of their lives, consistent with one of the overarching goals of the HOPE VI program.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Even though the Blackwell application budgeted \$2.2 million in HOPE VI dollars for services ranging from day care to job training, two residents who actively pursued assistance did not get what they were seeking:

Resident 1:

“I called to see what I could do to get my credit cleared up, but the lady was so arrogant. So I contacted the Urban League to sign up for self-sufficiency to clear my credit up. I still haven’t heard back.”

Resident 2:

“As far as training for improving my employment, such as working up from a Certified Nurse’s Assistant to maybe an LPN, they didn’t say anything to me.”

The HOPE VI project at Blackwell seems to have failed to make an affirmative effort to assist two residents who have mental disabilities:

Resident 1:

“They never referred me to Self-Sufficiency because they said I was on disability, so there was no use.”

Resident 2:

“Nobody asked me about my needs when I was at Blackwell, and once I got to Fairfield [another public housing property in Richmond] I got no referrals either.”

Two other residents said that they never heard anything about social services or improving their education, even though in the case of one, she wanted to get a GED (a GED program was specifically listed in the housing agency’s HOPE VI Self-Sufficiency Work Plan). The other resident, however, knew of others who were referred to Goodwill:

“Some people we know were referred to Self-Sufficiency; for example, Goodwill. But the housing authority didn’t kick in their part of the money so Goodwill closed down the program. At Blackwell we had the highest proportion of residents who were working. They’d offer them Self-Sufficiency at times people were working so they couldn’t make it.”

Another resident identified similar limitations regarding supportive services:

“There was only one GED session at night, but it is not close by and as a single woman I am not comfortable going there at night. All of the other GED is provided during the day, but my employer won’t let me off for a couple of hours during the day to go to the GED classes.”

Finally, one resident summed it all up:

“According to the HOPE VI application, the social services component was almost the first thing that was to get started so that people could get going and take advantage of the four- to six-year redevelopment process. If the Authority had put the social services in place early on, some people might have been able to get their credit straight so that they could buy a house. On paper they have all of these programs that are supposed to exist and are funded. It was a myth. If you needed parenting help or substance abuse help I thought people would get that. It never materialized.

Some came in saying that HOPE VI was a 'magic bandwagon' and all the service providers jumped on. They got all these funds but I don't see where they provided any services in the community.

I went to Goodwill, one of the HOPE VI service providers. I went there to become computer literate. But the people there told me that they didn't have any programs under HOPE VI for Blackwell. [Computer training to be provided by Goodwill was specifically listed in the housing agency's HOPE VI Self-Sufficiency Work Plan.] After complaining I was able to get into the program.

However, I was only able to stay in the program for three weeks because my car broke down. I asked HOPE VI if there was some way that they could help me with getting my car fixed so that I could continue the computer classes. They said 'no.' But I thought that was one of the things HOPE VI was supposed to help people with – getting better skills for better job opportunities.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

The Herman Gardens HOPE VI grant was awarded in 1996 and demolition began in the Spring of 1997. However, a July 2002 revised revitalization plan submitted to HUD by the housing agency admitted that “full-scale implementation of this plan will commence immediately upon the approval of the HOPE VI budget.” Thus, the \$3.9 million in the Herman Gardens HOPE VI budget devoted to Community and Supportive Services was not used to a great extent during the six-year period after the grant was first awarded. Consequently, Herman Gardens residents did not get the level of help promised toward improving their education and employment status.

Three residents said that they were not asked by housing agency officials about job training, education, or other types of self-sufficiency activities. A fourth resident said:

“Did Housing ask us what our training and education needs were? They always ask that. But 90 percent of the time they don't do anything anyway. They were not doing anything more than they had been doing. They are not doing anything different.”

Another person did say that she got a referral for job training. However, she was not properly screened by the PHA beforehand:

“Down at Cobo Hall they politely told me that I could not be in the training because I was only working part-time. I was ready to get into the program, but you have to be working 40 hours to get into the program. I have two daughters to take care of, so can't work 40 hours.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

“I didn’t even know about HOPE VI’s “community and supportive services” component until a community organizer from outside told me about it. Today there are things happening with social services for residents, but they were not going on last year. They should have been going on since the time HOPE VI started. The only reason self-sufficiency got started was because that community organizer called them out.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

Seven residents stated that no services were offered. However, an eighth resident said services did exist early on, but they were interrupted, only to come back on line in 2002. Another thinks the programs are just getting started now.

Kansas City, Guinotte Manor:

The Guinotte Manor Tenants Association owns a for-profit subsidiary, Premier Development Services construction company. This resident-owned business secured a \$1 million “sole source” subcontract to work on five of the townhouse buildings. Training programs were provided for residents who worked on the Guinotte Manor redevelopment. Fifty residents were employed by Premier.

In order to avoid temporarily relocating residents outside of the Guinotte Manor community, half of the households were moved to vacant units at one portion of the site. However, these units were dilapidated. Therefore, during Phase I of the HOPE VI project, Premier trained residents to repair those vacant units so that they could serve as temporary housing meeting HUD’s Housing Quality Standards. In addition, during Phase II -- the demolition of the old Guinotte Manor and the construction of new units -- the General Contractor met HUD’s Section 3 hiring goals, meaning over 30 percent of the new hires were Guinotte Manor residents.

Beyond work related to redevelopment, there were other employment opportunities presented by HOPE VI. For example, one of the residents interviewed got a 4-year job working for the Immunization Coalition, making sure that all children in Kansas City public housing communities are immunized. Also, six residents served as management trainees working in the Guinotte Manor management office.

In addition, there were education opportunities such as GED, ESL, and reading classes. However, one resident thought classes were not fully utilized because there was a lack of childcare in the evenings and weekends. Childcare only became available in early 2002.

During the early stages of the HOPE VI planning process, residents stressed that they wanted training and job opportunities, as well as a revitalized physical community. Yet, today residents feel as if the service providers are not delivering what residents wanted. Residents believe that rather than adding money and resources to the project, many service providers are merely draining the HOPE VI service dollars without providing the services. For instance, jobs promised by some service providers have not materialized,

summer youth programs have not been delivered, and computer training has only recently begun.

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg:

Only \$1.5 million (4 percent) of the HOPE VI grant is planned for Community and Supportive Services (CSS). Since the HOPE VI Grant Agreement was officiated only one month before the interviews for this project, it is not likely that the full scope of CSS activities had begun. However, based on experiences of their family and friends at the four other HOPE VI projects in D.C, eight of the residents were very skeptical about future efforts related to supportive services. For example:

“No one has contacted me lately about social services, to help me get a better job in order to be able to afford to come back. I have bad credit, but no one contacted me to help me get my credit straight so that I could afford a Section 8 or move back. That is why I say a lot of people are not going to be able to come back. So they are lying about us coming back. They already know that we are not coming back.”

**CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE RESIDENT PARTICIPATION
IN GRANT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Resident 1:

“They did not have enough resident participation when they designed it. HOPE VI should have had more input from the folks they were uprooting. Residents should have had more input. If HOPE VI is going to work for people, they have to get resident input.” [Richmond, *Blackwell*]

Resident 2:

“If we had real resident participation, HOPE VI wouldn’t be in this neighborhood right now. I think that most people in this neighborhood, a majority, are against HOPE VI. Because I was hired to do the housing needs survey, I feel like I can speak for a lot of people in the neighborhood. I’ve been in the majority of everyone’s house in this neighborhood.” [District of Columbia, *Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg*]

Meaningful participation by public housing residents in all aspects of decision-making regarding their homes and communities ought to be a fundamental operating principle of housing authorities. Although HUD’s regulations [24 CFR 964] “promotes resident participation and the active involvement of residents in all aspects,” few PHAs adhere to the rules. At each of the seven sites, residents encountered significant obstacles to genuine involvement in the HOPE VI application and implementation process.

WHAT HUD REQUIRED

HUD’s NOFAs, guidance documents, and Grant Agreements (contracts) all contain language that speak to resident participation in the HOPE VI process. In practice, this

process entails a variety of steps that include assessing whether severe physical or social distress exist; considering whether to pursue a HOPE VI grant; initial planning and design; preparing an application; finalizing a revitalization plan; relocation; demolition; construction; re-occupancy; and on-going operation of the new project.

While HUD effectively promotes resident participation in the HOPE VI process, the reality of how it plays out in grant planning and implementation is quite different (as discussed below). Many of the shortcomings in the program's framework for resident participation can be traced to the absence of HUD regulations governing HOPE VI, including the absence of a regulation on resident participation in the HOPE VI program. HUD states that having few rules makes HOPE VI "unique" and "allows tremendous flexibility and local decision-making in how a city's program is planned ..." (Journal of Housing and Community Development, Nov./Dec. 1998). The few rules that do exist for the program are contained in the NOFA, Grant Agreements and guidance document on Resident and Community Involvement. Many of the rules in these documents that are firm only speak to involvement in the application preparation process, and are soft on involvement after a grant is awarded. HUD's guidance document on Resident and Community Involvement simply says that housing agencies are "encouraged [not required] to include residents on selection panels for the procurement of services related to the HOPE VI revitalization efforts." Furthermore, the guidance document illustrates the lack of teeth residents have in the grant implementation process in its statement that "the PHA has fiduciary responsibility and therefore has final decision-making authority regarding use of funds." In addition, while HUD's guidance encourages housing agencies to include residents on selection panels for the procurement of services related to the HOPE VI project, the document also states that "PHA officials or employees must constitute a majority on all selection panels."

Below is a summary of the evolution of resident participation rules under HOPE VI:

Establishing a good-sounding base in official HUD documents, the 1993 NOFA required PHAs to:

"develop a process which assures that residents are fully briefed and meaningfully involved in developing, implementing, and monitoring the HOPE VI... The process shall include...consultation with the residents of the selected development... regarding...the implementation of the HOPE VI. This consultation shall include:

- the overall redesign,
- units to be demolished,
- community service opportunities, supportive services, and
- replacement housing."

The 1996 and 1997 NOFAs were similar. They "encouraged" PHAs to "fully and meaningfully involve residents...to be affected by the proposed HOPE VI activities." These NOFAs added "outreach" and "public meeting" requirements, but they were weak;

they only required “notice” of a single public meeting to tell residents about the proposed HOPE VI project.

In some years, Grant Agreements that contained two pages of requirements about resident involvement started by saying:

“The spirit of the HOPE VI program is one of full consultation and collaboration among the grantee [public housing authority], affected residents, and the broader community...The involvement of affected residents...commenced during the grantee’s preparation of the application, and shall continue throughout the expenditure of those funds.

“The grantee will foster the involvement of and gather input and recommendations from affected residents throughout the entire development process.”

Over the years, HUD, through the NOFA process, has awarded points to HOPE VI applications that propose certain activities. The 1993 NOFA offered up to 15 points for good resident participation, while the 1996 NOFA provided 20 points. However, the 1997 and 2001 NOFAs nose-dived to only 5 points and 4 points, respectively.

In awarding points, the ‘96 and ‘97 NOFAs said HUD would look at the “extent of resident consultation in shaping the application” (implying residents should have been very much involved long before an application was drafted). These NOFAs also said HUD would consider the level of resident support for the application. But, resident participation was not supposed to stop there: HUD would look at “continued involvement and participation” including “involvement in the management of the revitalized or replacement units.”

HUD’s guidance document on Resident and Community Involvement states:

“The participation of...public housing residents living at HOPE VI sites to be revitalized...is essential to the HOPE VI program...Full resident involvement and community input are crucial elements of the HOPE VI program. The spirit of the HOPE VI program is one of full consultation and collaboration among the Grantee, affected residents, and the broader community. The Grantee must consider the advice, counsel, recommendations, and input of affected residents...in its decision-making throughout the entire development process.”

The guidance document identifies “four key principles.” Each stresses that resident participation should not be limited to one single, passive informational meeting; rather, resident participation is to be well-informed, active, and ongoing:

“Collaboration. Residents are to be included in all phases of the application preparation, planning, implementation, and operation of the HOPE VI development in this spirit of collaboration.”

“Communication. Regular communication and information sharing with residents regarding all aspects of the revitalization plan are essential...All affected public housing residents must be informed of all revitalization activities, and must make documents...available on-site at the management office, or at another easily accessible location on-site. The information...should be clear and understandable...”

“Participation. Residents should be encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of the entire development process...”

“Inclusion. Public Housing Authorities are responsible for communicating with and disseminating information to all affected residents and ensuring that all affected residents have opportunities to participate in the activities related to the HOPE VI planning and development process.”

OUTREACH TO RESIDENTS

A first step toward “fully briefing” and “meaningfully involving” residents (as prescribed in the first NOFA in 1993) is to conduct effective outreach to all residents. Residents need to be given timely “notice” that there is an intention to apply for HOPE VI funds, and they need to be thoroughly informed about and involved in shaping the potential nature and extent of the redevelopment of their homes and communities.

All HOPE VI NOFAs beginning in 1996 required “notice” to residents about the intent to apply for HOPE VI funds. In addition, HUD guidelines beginning in 1998 stressed public housing authorities’ “responsibility for communicating and disseminating information...to ensure that all affected residents have opportunities to participate...” Those HUD Guidelines also stated that “Residents should be encouraged to participate...”

How well did housing authorities “reach out” to residents to provide them with meaningful notice, to communicate with them, to provide essential information, and to encourage them to learn more about and to help shape the proposal to redevelop their public housing communities?

In general, residents reported that some people got flyers sometimes, while others did not get flyers. If flyers or posters were used to notify residents of a public meeting, they were only provided the same day as the meeting.

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg:

This HOPE VI grant was awarded under the 2001 NOFA which (unlike earlier NOFAs) provided greater specificity regarding “outreach” obligations. It gave an extra point if the housing authority “Announced meetings in ways that are [in addition to the minimum requirements] designed to generate the most participation. Methods could include flyers and posters, with adequate time appropriated to allow people to plan to attend; services such as day care, translators, transportation...”

Residents’ assessment of PHAs’ outreach efforts was a bit mixed. Three people indicated that they got flyers and two said that notices were posted in each building about meetings. However, one of those said word of mouth was the primary source of notice, while another said flyers were only about “big” community meetings – not about the various subcommittee meetings where crucial decisions were being made.

Three other residents firmly declared that they did not get any flyers or notices. Two of those said they accidentally learned about HOPE VI by showing up at a meeting: one to register a complaint; the other just to see why people were gathered across the street. One resident asserted that people were not really informed about HOPE VI due to this lack of outreach:

“They were supposed to have talked to us about the HOPE VI application at least a year in advance, before submitting the application [according to HUD’s guidelines]. But meetings were only going on for a month before. I walked in on the last week of it. I live right across the street from the Rec Center, and I just happened to see that a meeting was going on so I walked in. I didn’t know anything about HOPE VI. A majority of the residents were not informed; they didn’t know these meetings were being held.”

Frustrated by the lack of outreach and information, several residents banded together to form The Friends and Residents of Arthur Capper/Carrollsborg. Among other activities, they conducted outreach on their own.

“Later, when we found out that Housing was going to demolish the property, we went door to door telling people what was going on because they were in the dark. We were walking through the neighborhood and letting them know, passing out literature. We got 200 signatures to tell HUD that we didn’t want the property torn down.”

At five of the other sites, there seemed to be very little done to encourage people to get involved. And when any outreach was done, it was not timely.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“The housing authority made sure that residents didn’t come to meetings. RRHA was caught taking flyers out of people’s doors that we put there. So we started putting the flyers all the way inside the doors.”

Resident 2:

“The Authority didn’t do anything to encourage involvement. They claimed that they were passing out notices, but some people didn’t get a notice until the day of the meeting. Some didn’t get any notice at all. They would put flyers on the outside of your screen door, so the wind would blow them away.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

“Sometimes they would put posters in the hallways, but they posted them the same day as the meeting. They would always wait until the day of the meeting to put flyers out. They didn’t let you know two or three days in advance. You might get a notice or you might not. People would come home from work and they wouldn’t know there was a meeting over there.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

Resident 1:

“In the early days residents were not notified of meetings. Only certain people, those who were buddy-buddy with the Property Manager, got flyers.”

Resident 2:

“People would hand out flyers about meetings, but they only put them out the day before the meeting. Some people weren’t even getting flyers.”

Detroit, Herman Gardens:

Resident 1:

“Some people got flyers and some didn’t. Sometimes you got a letter, sometimes you didn’t. We ended up learning a lot of things through word of mouth.”

Resident 2:

“There were flyers at the Rental Office....but if you didn’t need to go to the Rental Office you didn’t see the flyers.”

Resident 3:

“People mostly got their information from other residents. Now Kenny goes on his bike to find people to try to get them to go to meetings.”

Miami, Liberty Square:

Resident 1:

“The PHA did not tell the residents about HOPE VI. Liberty Square had a Resident Council, but it wasn’t active in notifying residents. There were no flyers or posters.

I passed by the community center on two different days and noticed cars parked out front. The Office never told me about any meetings. On the third night I went to a meeting – that’s when I discovered HOPE VI was coming.

I got frightened, so joined the Miami Workers’ Center. The MWC got people together to inform them about HOPE VI. We called people and went door-to-door. As a group of residents, we became LIFFT.”

Resident 2:

“The Tenant Council just sprung HOPE VI on us. We learned about HOPE VI through the Tenant Council community meeting where there were architects and beautiful pictures. But, we really didn’t find out exactly about HOPE VI until LIFFT came to us. When we got hooked up with LIFFT, our eyes were opened wide. That’s when we became educated about HOPE VI. We then went door-to-door informing the other residents.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

“HOPE VI was a big surprise. It was sprung on us. At the FSS [Family Self Sufficiency] class they told us there was going to be a HOPE VI.”

Kansas City, Guinotte Manor:

Several residents remembered that it was the Guinotte Manor Tenant Association that went door-to-door encouraging residents to attend the HOPE VI meetings in order to prevent what happened to the people at the Wayne Minor project.

MEETINGS WITH RESIDENTS

There are a variety of ways in which residents and PHAs can come together regarding HOPE VI.

While the 1993 NOFA did not specifically require a “public meeting,” the 1996 and 1997 NOFAs did require one public meeting, and emphasized consultation as a way of informing residents about proposed HOPE VI activities.

The HUD Guidelines from 1998 forward mention a variety of meeting options to help ensure resident participation throughout the entire HOPE VI process. For instance, the Guidelines say “residents may participate on selection panels to choose development partners and consultants, attend meetings with the development team, program manager, public and private lenders, the city and other partners, and participate in working and advisory groups.” The later years’ Grant Agreements (contracts) contained several requirements regarding meetings, including:

“holding regular meetings with affected residents and their representatives on the status of revitalization efforts and to obtain comments, opinions, advice, and recommendations from affected residents.”

The 2001 NOFA requires a minimum of three public meetings regarding planning and preparation of the application.

At each of the seven sites, even though meetings may have been held, residents stated that housing agencies did not engage them in a genuine or meaningful way about the redevelopment plan. For the majority of the sites, there was not enough information for residents to effectively contribute to the planning process. And, at several, meetings were held at times and places which limited optimum participation.

Meeting Times And Locations Not Convenient

In order to ensure that as many residents as possible have a meaningful opportunity to participate, meetings need to be held at times and places convenient for the greatest number of residents.

In **Detroit** and **D.C.**, important subcommittee meetings (dealing with topics such as relocation, supportive services, admissions and occupancy) were generally held during business hours, which prevented many public housing residents from participating because of their work schedules.

Residents at three sites registered problems regarding the location of these subcommittee meetings. In **D.C.** they were held off-site at the housing authority’s main office, which required residents to take a bus. In **Richmond**, the Tenant Task Force and all of its subcommittee meetings were held at the housing authority’s main office, which was viewed as intimidating to most residents and discouraged many from attending. In

Detroit, Herman Garden's residents were scattered all throughout the city and, therefore, many could no longer attend meetings because they didn't have transportation.

Insufficient Information Is Provided At Meetings

In **D.C., Detroit, Richmond, New Haven,** and **Miami**, residents complained about the lack of information provided at meetings. The complaints included: little or no written material to take home to study; repetition (from meeting to meeting) of the same old message; absence of knowledgeable staff who could answer questions and; use of technical jargon. All of this served to discourage continued participation by many. Here are three telling quotes:

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollsburg:

"I went to an initial meeting, but didn't learn much about HOPE VI. No written information was passed out at the meetings. At the meetings they just went over the same things, over and over again. The meetings weren't too useful. We need the specifics – straight to the point."

Richmond, Blackwell:

"I went to a lot of meetings, but stopped going because all in all the same things were being discussed and it wasn't going anywhere. Besides, they were going to do what they wanted to do anyway. They didn't pass out any written materials at the meeting that the residents could take home. I never got enough information. And, the Authority staff were not friendly or helpful at the meetings. In fact they were confusing. Plus, they used their own kind of language which made it hard to understand sometimes."

Miami, Scott/Carver:

"There were HOPE VI meetings, but they didn't give us any information at them. They would talk about the same thing over and over. Residents wanted to know what was going on, but HOPE VI wouldn't give us a straight answer."

On a positive note, residents of **Elm Haven** in **New Haven** worked hard to change their situation. As part of their organizing effort, they succeeded in getting a new resident council. Consequently, residents now feel that they have adequate information, and can participate in a variety of meetings regarding Monterey Place (the revitalized community). It must also be noted that residents at **Guinotte Manor** in **Kansas City** stated that they always felt clearly and adequately informed. However, Kansas City was fairly unique because the agency was under a court-ordered Receivership at the time of the HOPE VI grant implementation.

Ultimately, the experiences in New Haven and Kansas City reveal that both organized resident councils and effective monitoring of housing agencies by third party entities with enforcement powers can help (though not guarantee) ensure that HOPE VI plans and outcomes reflect the interests and desires of impacted residents.

Residents Felt Meetings Were Merely “Window Dressing”

Residents in **Jersey City, Richmond, D.C., Detroit, New Haven, and Kansas City** said that meetings were not meaningful, that the housing authorities limited residents to passive roles. Residents’ descriptions of how the housing authorities viewed their role fell into three categories:

- passive listeners to what was going to be done:

“They just wanted people to sit there and accept things. They had a preconceived notion that public housing residents are ignorant.”
[New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place)]

- “rubber stamps” to approve what staff wanted:

“Everything is really decided before the monthly Task Force meetings. Staff will come and say that they met each other in the halls and had an impromptu meeting at which they decided on this or that. We are just a rubber stamp. They make their decisions and do what they want to do, then they bring it to the Subcommittee table just to ‘refeed’ it to us. We don’t really get information about the topics of the Subcommittee ahead of time. Instead of residents developing information, the City gives us information and wants us to agree with it. [Richmond, Blackwell]

- “window dressing” to give the impression of participation, when in fact the housing authority “was going to do what it wanted anyway.”:

“We understand that the HOPE VI people initially got us to do what they wanted us to do, like puppets on a string, just to get the right wording down for the HOPE VI application so that it would get the okay. I always voice my opinion when I go to the meetings, and so do others. However, we really don’t get what we want. It’s just like we’re being invited to the meetings and to be on different committees to pacify us. But the bottom line is they want the answer to be theirs – not ours. We don’t have a lot of say-so; we don’t.” [District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg]

As noted in the previous section, residents of **New Haven’s Elm Haven (Monterey Place)** worked hard to turn around a bad situation. Now there are many meetings at which residents can and do meaningfully participate. And at first, the Housing Authority of **Kansas City** did not take **Guinotte Manor** residents seriously; residents were not

initially involved in preparing the HOPE VI application and revitalization plan. However, after over a year of organizing and advocacy, and backed by a court-ordered Receiver, the Guinotte Manor Tenants Association was allowed to be actively involved in all aspects of the HOPE VI project.

Two Additional Problems Related to Meetings with Residents

Residents in **D.C.** and **Richmond** added that at times housing authority staff running meetings were rude to residents, which further discouraged future participation.

In **Jersey City**, residents claimed that the resident participation process at Curries Woods was severely restricted for most residents.

Resident 1:

“Residents were not allowed to come to the housing agency Board meetings. These meetings were closed during the time they were making the decisions regarding HOPE VI. Even now residents can’t come to Board meetings unless they send a letter stating explicitly why they want to come to the meeting. Only selected people are allowed to come to meetings.”

Resident 2:

“The public is not invited to the monthly meeting of the Tenant Task Force. So, we started to have meetings on our own, but they would not allow us to have meetings on site. We requested the community hall, but they said we could not have our meetings on site in our community hall. So, we meet at a church.”

RESIDENT PARTICIPATION WAS NOT ALWAYS REPRESENTATIVE

Often, residents felt that the official body making decisions about HOPE VI was not representative of most residents. In addition, at three sites, residents complained that existing resident organizations (or those arising in response to the HOPE VI) were denied “recognition” or were ostracized by the housing authority when they did not automatically go along with the housing authority’s plans.

Only A Select Few Were Making Decisions

In **Richmond**, **Jersey City**, **D.C.**, and **Miami**, the committees making HOPE VI decisions were not representative of most residents. (This was initially the case, too, in **New Haven**; but, that situation later improved with the election of a new resident organization.

Richmond, Blackwell:

“Now all that we have is a little, closed Task Force with nothing but Authority staff and City staff and just two former Blackwell residents. Imagine, out of 1600 former Blackwell residents, only two of us are on the Task Force. Of course, the Authority staff and the City staff always agree with what HOPE VI wants. The other resident is on the City’s side; they gave her one of the rehabbed houses. So, whenever I disagree I am always outvoted.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

“Everybody on the Task Force works for the Housing Authority. So it ain’t about helping us. Tenant Task Force people say that if they say anything they might lose their jobs. To me it’s not fair to “represent” us and work for Housing.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

“Those who were at the meeting were members of the ‘resident council’ who I felt were bought off. They said that they represented the majority of the community and that the majority wanted HOPE VI – but that was false.”

Miami, Scott/Carver:

“There was a Resident Council, but they were for HOPE VI. The Resident Council wasn’t for the residents; it was for management.”

Miami, Liberty Square:

“At first the Tenant Council was for the residents. The President of the Tenant Council was with us the first year; but on the second year she turned her back on us. We were not involved in the pre-application process. We were not part of putting together the Relocation Plan or the CSS Plan. We should have been informed and been able to be in there earlier concerning the planning...just know what they’re going to do to us.”

Isolating and/or Co-opting Alternative Voices

Residents in **Jersey City** and **Richmond** report that residents who questioned aspects of the HOPE VI project were ostracized.

Richmond, Blackwell:

“The first Committee met every week for about two or three years. It was made up of the President of the Blackwell Resident Council...The Authority got rid of this first Committee because we had rounded up various allies...The community was starting to realize that HOPE VI wasn't this great, grand thing that the Authority was telling everybody. The Authority labeled us as troublemakers and shut down the Committee. The Authority made it so that some residents were afraid to speak to us.”

Jersey City, Curries Woods:

“There are Curries Woods residents who work for the Jersey City Housing Authority. They were told that if they attended our meetings, they would lose their jobs. Also, we have residents who live at Curries Woods who are not on the Housing payroll and who are not on any committee or the Board, yet they were told that if they did not attend our meetings they would be guaranteed a townhouse.”

USING MEETINGS TO CREATE THE ILLUSION OF SUPPORT

At four sites, residents reported that officials used deceit as a way of showing support for HOPE VI grants.

Richmond, Blackwell:

Resident 1:

“In the HOPE VI application it says that residents are supposed to be involved from the beginning of the process. I was at the very first meeting concerning the HOPE VI application. It all started on a bad note.

I was invited to a meeting at a church in the South Richmond community, where Blackwell was. The purpose of the meeting was to see about revitalizing the South Richmond community. There were a lot of people there, mostly church members.

About six months later I got a call saying that the Authority is having a meeting about HOPE VI. I did not know what HOPE VI was. Here the Authority had taken the list of names from that meeting at the church and submitted it to HUD as if all of those people approved the HOPE VI application. Out of the 300 or so people at that meeting there weren't but five or six who lived in the community.”

Resident 2:

“One day (When I was still President of the Resident Council) they called me to ask me to sign a letter approving the HOPE VI application. I wanted to go to the residents before we signed it. Yet the next Monday I found out that RRHA sent it in anyway saying that I had signed it. RRHA also used the meeting sign-in sheets to say that the residents wanted the HOPE VI.”

Miami, Liberty Square:

“The Tenant Council was using the sign-in sheets of meetings to suggest to HUD that all of those people wanted HOPE VI. When we learned that, we stopped signing.”

New Haven, Elm Haven (Monterey Place):

“Those attending meetings were misled about HOPE VI. Residents wanted Elm Haven to be renovated, not demolished; however, the management company used the meeting sign-in sheets as a false declaration of resident support for demolition.”

District of Columbia, Arthur Capper/Carrollburg:

“We felt like we were misinformed and misled. We sent HUD a letter because 70% of the residents were not aware that a letter went from the President of the Resident Council to HUD saying that the residents were ‘for’ HOPE VI. We went door-to-door surveying residents, and learned that 70% were opposed to the HOPE VI. So, we sent that letter to HUD with a petition signed by residents saying that we were not for HOPE VI.”

APPENDIX A
DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVEN HOPE VI SITES

THE SEVEN HOPE VI SITES

DETROIT: “Herman Gardens”

1996: \$24,224,160

1998: \$ 2,060,000

1999: \$ 1,735,000

The Herman Gardens Resident Council assisted with this project.

Built in 1943, Herman Gardens had 2,144 units of mostly two-story multi-family buildings. In addition, the 129-unit Gardenvue senior building was on the Herman Gardens site. “The Gardens” was located on the westside of Detroit, close to “some of the most affluent neighborhoods in the City.”

When the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC) applied for HOPE VI funds under the 1996 NOFA, it intended to reduce the number of public housing units from 1,573 to 672. By August of 1996, HUD had approved the demolition of 685 units using other (non-HOPE VI) funds, and the HOPE VI application proposed demolishing another 538 units. The application also proposed renovating 274 of those existing units and building 222 new townhouses, along with 92 single-family houses and 84 duplexes, for a total of 672 units at the revitalized site.

The cover letter for the 1996 application declared, “The Plan presented in this application does far more than demolish and rehabilitate old apartments, it rebuilds lives on a foundation of entrepreneurship, jobs, and training.” However, six years later, in the fall of 2002, nothing is rebuilt: not residents’ lives which have been disrupted since demolition began in 1996; and, not affordable housing as is evident by 139 acres of empty land that once was “Herman Gardens”.

On July 31, 2002 DHC submitted a new Revitalization Plan to HUD. This latest Plan called for 804 new units: 470 rental units (350 family townhouses, only 88 of which will be public housing (or Annual Contributions Contract) units; and 120 public housing senior apartments), and 334 homeowner units. It also included a campus of Wayne County Community College, a “regional athletic facility,” and a neighborhood commercial center.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: “Arthur Capper/Carrollsbury”

2001: \$34,937,590

The Friends and Residents of Arthur Capper/Carrollsbury assisted.

The Arthur Capper/Carrollsbury public housing developments are in a compact pocket of southeast Washington, D.C. On one side they are cut off from affluent “Capitol Hill” by a freeway (but, connected through a couple of underpasses). On the other side the developments abut a recently reinvigorating area of office developments spurred by two major U.S. government office complexes. The Arthur Capper project was built in 1958 and has two parts: 297 units of high-rise seniors housing, and 96 units of low-rise “family” housing. The Carrollsbury project is 314 units of low-rise family housing.

The 2001 HOPE VI award of \$34,937,590 planned to demolish all 707 units and rebuild them “one-for-one”: 300 units of senior public housing, along with 275 “walk-up” and 132 “townhouse” public housing units (“ACC units”). Of these, 127 units will be built off-site, but very nearby. An additional 805 market rate and bond-financed units will also be built (520 on-site and 285 off-site). Commercial developers will provide 600,000 square feet of new office space in addition to that to be provided by the U.S. General Services Administration for the new Southeast Federal Center and the U.S. Navy Yard.

The District of Columbia’s PHA is the number 5 recipient of HOPE VI funds overall, amounting to \$145,169,021 over five “revitalization grants” and three “demolition only” grants.

JERSEY CITY, NJ: “Curries Woods”

1997: \$31,624,658

Enough is Enough, an organization of Curries Woods residents, assisted.

The Curries Woods public housing development was built in 1955 and had 712 units in seven high rise buildings. By 1989 there were only 600 families left when the Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA) began its “initial transformation.” This is when JCHA started to actively evict people for drug activity and chronic rent delinquency. In addition, JCHA started to use HUD Comprehensive Grant funds (not HOPE VI) to demolish some of the buildings. When a HOPE VI application was submitted in 1997, there were only 365 families left. JCHA received a \$31,624,658 HOPE VI in January 1998.

The HOPE VI application indicated that 630 new and rehabbed units would be at the new Curries Woods plus three other locations in Jersey City. However, not all of these will be funded by HOPE VI, and only 569 units will be public housing units (ACC units), according to later JCHA materials. These same materials indicate that when all is complete, there will only be 307 units at Curries Woods: 216 townhouses (150 funded by

HOPE VI) and 91 apartments for seniors and people with disabilities (funded years before by a “Modernization” grant, which is different from HOPE VI). The HOPE VI revitalization plan will add 89 units at three different off-site locations where 100 units from other funding sources already exist.

MIAMI: “Scott/Carver Homes”

1999: 35,000,000

LIFFT (Low Income Families Fighting Together) assisted with this project.

Scott Homes, 754 units in two-story buildings, was built in 1954. The 96 units at Carver Homes were built in the mid-‘60s. The HOPE VI application proposed building 80 ACC rental units, 135 ACC rent-to-own units, 141 “affordable” owner units, and 15 market-rate owner units on the Scott/Carver site. Off-site, 76 “affordable” owner units and 15 market-rate owner units will be built or rehabbed. In September of 2001, residents filed a class action law suit which has held up the project.

NEW HAVEN, CT: “Elm Haven”, renamed “Monterey Place”

1993: \$45,331,593

The Elm Haven Residents’ Council assisted with this project.

Built in 1940/41, Elm Haven had 462 units among 35 low-rise buildings, mostly two-story duplexes. In 1955, six high-rises were added, containing a total of 366 units. These high-rises were demolished in 1989, several years before HOPE VI. Also, the Edith Johnson Senior High Rise (96 units) is thought of as a part of the Elm Haven community by residents, even though it is not formally a component of the “Elm Haven” project. Elm Haven is in the Dixwell neighborhood, close to Yale University and downtown New Haven.

The Housing Authority of New Haven (HANH) was awarded a \$45,331,593 HOPE VI grant under the 1993 HUD NOFA. The Revitalization Plan has changed several times. Each Plan called for HOPE VI money to demolish the remaining 462 units. According to a HANH document dated January 1, 2002, 244 new rental units (including 45 units in a new Senior building) are in the Plan, along with 95 refurbished senior units at the existing Edith Johnson Tower. Of these 244 units, only 185 are identified as “public housing authority rentals.” The 95 units in the Edith Johnson Tower are also identified as public housing units. The balance include 44 tax credit units and 15 market-rate units. Finally, there will be 53 homeowner units.

Later, the “revitalized” Elm Haven was given the new name of “Monterey Place.”

RICHMOND, VA: “Blackwell”

1997: \$26,964,118

The Richmond Tenant Organization assisted with this project.

Blackwell was a 464-unit, scattered site public housing project built in 1970. The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) received a 1997 HOPE VI award of \$26,964,118. RRHA proposed demolishing 440 units while developing 540 new units: 232 rental units and 308 homeowner units. However, out of the total 540, only 82 units of rental public housing (“ACC units”) will be built. Another 70 units of “lease/purchase” housing will be made available to people who are “public housing eligible.”

KANSAS CITY, MO: “Guinotte Manor”

1993: \$47,579,800

The Guinotte Manor Tenant Association assisted with this project.

The 412 row houses at Guinotte Manor were built in 1954. HAKC won a \$47,579,800 HOPE VI grant in 1993 to demolish the old units and construct 419 units: 219 on site and another 200 new units scattered throughout the city. All 419 of these newly-built units are “ACC units” (public housing).

Guinotte Manor is located in the Columbus Park neighborhood, an “island” very close to downtown, but isolated from the “mainland” of the city by highways and the Missouri River. Some of the 24-acre site will be used for homeownership, market-rate housing. Roughly half of the Guinotte Manor residents were and remain people of Vietnamese ancestry. There is also a small Somali community. The others are primarily African-American.

Guinotte Manor is a Special Case

The Housing Authority of Kansas City (HAKC) was placed under receivership in 1994. (“Receivership” means that, due to severe and persistent management problems, a court places operation of the housing authority under a “receiver” – a court-appointed administrator who has unique powers to make improvements. In the case of Guinotte Manor, the Receiver has been especially helpful to residents.) This came about because Legal Services sued HAKC in 1989 in response to problems identified by public housing residents at another site (T.B. Watkins). After violations of a 1991 consent decree and HAKC’s continued failure to comply in 1992, Legal Services requested a receivership from the courts in July of 1993.

Because HAKC was under Receivership, residents of Guinotte Manor gained three important benefits that most other HOPE VI residents did not have.

One-For-One Replacement of Public Housing Units

One benefit was no net loss in public housing units. The court's consent decree required HAKC to "preserve and protect all assets" of the housing authority. So, even though the HOPE VI program does not require a one-for-one replacement of all units demolished, the Guinotte Manor Tenant Association (GMTA) and their Legal Services attorney were able to argue that a HOPE VI Revitalization Plan for Guinotte Manor must have one-for-one replacement. Without the 1989 lawsuit against HAKC, the Guinotte Manor HOPE VI might not have provided for 419 new units of "public housing" (ACC units) to replace those lost to demolition.

Full Participation by Residents

The second benefit of being under Receivership, according to resident leaders, was that HAKC eventually took resident involvement seriously...because the Receiver and HUD took residents seriously. Consequently, the Guinotte Manor Tenant Association was very active in planning all aspects of the HOPE VI project. However, the Receivership did not automatically lead to HAKC's cooperation. The Guinotte Manor HOPE VI was awarded under the 1993 NOFA (and the Receivership did not come about until September of 1994). According to resident leaders, the HAKC did not take residents seriously at first; residents were not involved in writing the HOPE VI application or the initial Revitalization Plan. Therefore, the Guinotte Manor Tenant Association put together a petition demonstrating their opposition to HOPE VI. Residents spent a year and a half organizing and meeting with HUD. This ultimately led to HUD directing HAKC to submit a new Revitalization Plan.

"Right to Return"

A primary concern of the Guinotte Manor Tenants Association regarding the initial HOPE VI Plan was that residents would have to move off-site during the project. Residents had no confidence that they would be able to return. They had observed the demolition of the Wayne Minor development some years before, and those units had not been replaced. But, because HAKC was under Receivership and because the Guinotte Manor Tenants Association consistently pressed HUD, the revised Revitalization Plan specified that any resident who wanted to could return to the new Guinotte Manor (provided that they were in "good standing" with the housing authority).

APPENDIX B

DEFINITION OF “SEVERELY DISTRESSED” PUBLIC HOUSING

IN THE 1998 PUBLIC HOUSING REFORM ACT

Section 24 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937

(j)(2) SEVERELY DISTRESSED PUBLIC HOUSING.

The term "severely distressed public housing" means a public housing project (or building in a project)-

(A) that

(i) requires major redesign, reconstruction or redevelopment, or partial or total demolition, to correct serious deficiencies in the original design (including inappropriately high population density), deferred maintenance, physical deterioration or obsolescence of major systems and other deficiencies in the physical plant of the project;

(ii) is a significant contributing factor to the physical decline of and disinvestment by public and private entities in the surrounding neighborhood;

(iii)

(I) is occupied predominantly by families who are very low income families with children, are unemployed, and dependent on various forms of public assistance; or

(II) has high rates of vandalism and criminal activity (including drug-related criminal activity) in comparison to other housing in the area;

(iv) cannot be revitalized through assistance under other programs, such as the program for capital and operating assistance for public housing under this Act, or the programs under sections 9 and 14 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (as in effect before the effective date under section 503(a) of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998), because of cost constraints and inadequacy of available amounts; and

(v) in the case of individual buildings, is, in the Secretary's determination, sufficiently separable from the remainder of the project of which the building is part to make use of the building feasible for purposes of this section; or

(B) that was a project described in subparagraph (A) that has been legally vacated or demolished, but for which the Secretary has not yet provided replacement housing assistance (other than tenant-based assistance).

APPENDIX C

**ANALYSIS OF HOPE VI GRANTEES THAT MAY BE ENGAGED IN GRANT
ACTIVITIES WORTHY OF FURTHER EXAMINATION AND, POSSIBLY,
REPLICATION. ASPECTS OF HOPE VI EXAMINED INCLUDE
REPLACEMENT HOUSING AND REOCCUPANCY**

The activities described below MAY serve as models for how other housing agencies can redevelop public housing communities. The Center for Community Change and ENPHRONT are not endorsing these local redevelopment efforts as a one-size-fit-all blueprint for all jurisdictions. However, we are highlighting them as models worthy of further examination. These briefs were gathered from phone interviews with housing agency staff, housing advocates and resident groups.

The most visible face of HOPE VI projects are the housing units themselves. There is little disagreement that replacing severely distressed housing with new units that better reflect the surrounding community and provide safer and more humane living conditions for their residents is a good idea.

What is critical in this redevelopment, however, is that the process results in no loss of units available to extremely low income families and other low income families, and that commitments be made to retain the affordability of those units in perpetuity. While developing mixed-income communities may have its merits, it must not be at the expense of housing for families at the income levels of those being displaced by demolition, particularly in tight housing markets, where affordable housing is scarce and the number of low income families with unmet housing needs are growing.

While the federal law requiring one-for-one replacement was repealed in the 1990's, some local jurisdictions recognize the need for affordable housing and have passed ordinances and regulations mandating that any revitalization projects result in no net loss of housing units.

In the case of some HOPE VI projects, in fact, cities are finding ways to use federal dollars to leverage enough state and local funds to build even more units available to low income families than are being torn down. Bond issues, housing trust funds, private financing, state housing finance agencies, tax credits, and other public and private sources of funding are being combined in cities across the country, to ensure that HOPE VI projects result in more affordable housing for low income families, not less.

Stamford, Connecticut

The city of Stamford has in place an ordinance requiring one-for-one replacement of all units of any housing built with public capital subsidies or that receives ongoing operating subsidies. The ordinance covers replacement or preservation of all housing that was in place at the time of the ordinance's passage, in October 2001. Any units demolished must be replaced with units of a similar size, based on the number of bedrooms, and be targeted to households with the same incomes as those displaced by the demolition.

The ordinance came about as a result of a citywide organizing effort, spurred in large part by residents concerned about the possibility of losing their homes in what was then the early stages of a HOPE VI application being drafted. The housing authority worked with the city in crafting the ordinance and supported its passage, believing that the city needed to maintain and grow the amount of affordable housing available to residents.

While the city's HOPE VI proposal was ultimately rejected, the budget for the planned project was projected to be \$66 million, with only \$16 million to come from the HOPE VI funds. The sources for the additional \$50 million included the use of vouchers as operating subsidy under the Section 8 rule that allows for such a transfer, and significant contributions from the city in the form of land acquisition at below cost rates. Leveraged funds were to come from State of Connecticut Bond Funds, Low Income Housing Tax Credit funds, below market financing from the Connecticut Housing Finance Agency, the City of Stamford's HOME program, as well as commercial debt and foundation grants. The city was also contributing capital funds. Of the 100 units proposed for demolition, 80 were to be replaced with new construction, and 20 with acquisition and rehab of existing units.

Seattle, Washington

Seattle, Washington's first HOPE VI projects began when federal law still required one-for-one replacement, but when that law expired the city passed its own ordinance continuing the practice. Of the 871 units demolished under the HOPE VI plan to revitalize the Holly Park housing development in that city, 400 are being rebuilt on the original site, with the remaining 471 being replaced elsewhere. Of the off-site units, 430 are funded by project-basing an equal number of vouchers, and 41 are being built with Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) funds, operating funds from HUD given in exchange for long-term affordability commitments. The scattered-site units include new homes being built by the PHA with local nonprofit developers, as well as existing market-rate homes being purchased by the PHA.

The new public housing units as well as those funded with Section 8 funds are all committed to remain affordable for 40 years, and are all targeted to households at or below 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).

The budget for the Holly Park project was approximately \$275 million, with only \$48 million coming from HOPE VI. Significant portions of the funding came from money raised from the city's public sale of affordable housing bonds, and from the process of absorbing some of the costs of long term affordability by using developer's fees (the PHA is acting as the developer in the project). Nonprofits working with the PHA to develop some of the off-site units also tapped into the state's housing trust fund, a dedicated source of funds for affordable housing development.

Kansas City, Missouri

The Housing Authority of Kansas City has been in receivership since 1994, and one of the obligations of the receiver is to preserve the assets of the housing authority. As a result, any demolition or disposition must be met with replacement of an equal number of units, based upon the number of occupied units at the time of demolition. The first project resulted in a loss of one hard unit, the second a loss of 45, and the third resulted in no loss of units. All of the new units are committed to remain as public housing indefinitely.

In order to reduce density, the three projects all included off-site development of units. One of the city's public housing developments, a seniors-only project called Heritage House, was located in the central business district. When the city wanted to demolish that housing to make way for a new mall on the site, a HOPE VI grant allowed the housing authority to replace every unit with units in three newly developed mixed-income communities elsewhere in the city. Profits from the sale of additional market rate units built in the three developments helped fund the project as well.

Atlantic City, New Jersey

Atlantic City's Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) is required by law to set aside a percentage of its gross revenue each year to be used in for revitalization projects, primarily in Atlantic City. Some of those resources have been allocated for affordable housing projects, most notably more than \$150 million in funding from CRDA that is being coupled with a \$35 million HOPE VI grant. The funds will not only replace all of the units in the Shore Park/Shore Terrace complex with scattered site units in a newly built community nearby, but also complete a significant amount of commercial and community development as well.

The new public housing units being built are slated to remain as public housing indefinitely, and will be targeted at the same income levels as those that were demolished.

Oakland, California

Thanks to an awareness on the part of Oakland's PHA board that the demand for affordable housing is increasing and that their city has some of the highest housing prices in the country, four HOPE VI projects in that city are resulting in more affordable housing being produced than is being torn down.

Each of the city's three HOPE VI projects involves replacing the exact number of public housing units torn down, as well as adding a number of units funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which are targeted to families with slightly higher incomes. The projects also developed some units targeted for low-income homeownership, which will be deed restricted to keep them affordable indefinitely. Each site is resulting in lower-

density housing, with some units being built on the original property, some being built on adjacent land purchased by the housing authority, and some being developed as scattered-site units in nearby communities.

HOPE VI grants have accounted for one-third to one-quarter of the funds needed for each project, with additional funds coming from tax credit investment, the local housing authority, the California Housing Finance Agency's HELP program, the city redevelopment authority, and private lenders. With land scarce and housing prices high in Oakland, as in other west coast cities, affordable housing is needed and cross-subsidies – where proceeds from market-rate units go toward subsidizing affordable units in the same development – are relatively easy to develop. Because of close proximity to major transit hubs, two of the city's sites have been particularly attractive for retail development within the new buildings.

New units are slated to remain as public housing units for 40 years, although the housing authority is working to stipulate that they do so in perpetuity.

Tucson, Arizona

Because of rising housing prices in Tucson, the City of Tucson Community Services Department (which functions as the city's housing authority) has committed to replace every demolished unit of public housing with at least one unit of the same size and targeted to the same income level. The 200-unit Connie Chambers development, the city's first HOPE VI project, was demolished to make way for 60 units of new public housing and 60 tax credit units on site. The project included an additional 140 units of public housing scattered throughout the community, 60 units of for sale property were also built, and 62 units of senior housing are planned by a local nonprofit, for a total net gain of 122 new units of affordable housing.

The \$14.6 million HOPE VI grant for this project was used to leverage more than \$65 million more from state and local resources. Approximately one-third of the funds came from housing development by non-profit developers, private investors and the city. These funds included significant low income housing tax credit dollars as well as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars. Another third came from city bonds and grants for street improvements, water and drainage improvements, and parks and recreation improvements. The final third came from other jurisdictions such as local school districts and the county government.

\$27.5 million of the project was spent on new housing, \$19 million for new community facilities, \$11 million on infrastructure and transportation facilities, and \$5.6 million went toward economic development and self-sufficiency programs.

The city's second HOPE VI project involved replacing an existing 80 severely distressed public housing units with 28 public housing units and 20 public housing lease to purchase units. 30 elderly/disabled affordable housing units were also constructed and targeted at households below 50 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). 50 new infill affordable

homeownership units in the surrounding neighborhood were built and targeted at households below 80 percent of AMI. In addition, the plan includes a new library and cultural center. In this case, a HOPE VI Grant of \$12.7 million was used to leverage an additional \$47 million in public and private funds.

Reoccupancy

An issue that naturally follows that of replacing poor housing units with quality ones is: Who gets to live there? HOPE VI came about because of a recognition that too many families were living in unsatisfactory conditions, and it should follow that those same families are given an opportunity to live in an improved living situation that results from the program. The fact that families' lives are uprooted by the demolition of their homes, and that they are asked to participate in a planning process that often takes years, gives further weight to the argument that residents of these developments deserve the opportunity to enjoy the full benefits of the program.

Seattle, Washington

In Seattle's HOPE VI developments any tenants who wished to move into a new unit could do so, as long as they remained in good standing with their current lease during the relocation process (no rent delinquencies, etc.). Tenants were also given the options of choosing a voucher or moving to available units in other public housing developments in the city.

Atlantic City, New Jersey

In Atlantic City all residents of the original buildings being demolished by HOPE VI were given the opportunity to move into the new units, as long as they had no habitual lease violations in their current unit after the HOPE VI project began. If residents were late paying rent, budget counseling was available to them, and if they attended the counseling the late payment was not counted against their opportunity to move into one of the new units. Similar one-on-one help was provided for residents who failed to maintain their units properly, again giving households an opportunity to clear up any violations they might have had. An estimated 30-40 households that would otherwise have been evicted were helped by this program.

Tucson, Arizona

There were no reoccupancy requirements for residents beyond what was in their existing leases at the time the program began. Priority for occupying new units was given to households currently residing at the existing site, even if it meant a family had to move into a larger unit than they had requested. Any resident who wished to move into a new unit could do so, or could opt for a portable voucher or a unit in a different public housing development elsewhere in the city.

Since most of the new units were scattered-site, residents were given their choice of which neighborhoods they wanted to move to. Residents at a general meeting designed a “points” system based on program participation, rent history, and lease compliance. This system was implemented by the PHA to use to determine which households had priority when more than one family was vying for a single unit.

Boston, Massachusetts

At Boston’s Mission Main HOPE VI site, residents of the original site were given priority when it came time to move people into the new development. Any resident with no violations of their lease during the HOPE VI period could move into a new unit with no screening process. Of 486 families displaced by demolition, 300 moved into the new units, with approximately 80 opting to move to other public housing developments in the city, and the rest choosing vouchers.