

Demographics Facts Residents Living in Public Housing

The following demographic information was obtained from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Resident Characteristics Report as of January 31, 2008.¹

General Information

- Across the nation there are over 2 million residents living in public housing, and another 4.7 million residents living in Section 8 Housing.
- A little over 931,000 residents between the ages of 18 and 61 (45%) live in public housing, with 2.4 million (52%) living in Section 8 housing.
- The average household size for residents of public housing is 2.2 people and 1.8 for residents of Section 8 housing.
- Over 21% of residents remain in public housing more than 5 years and nearly 17% of residents remain in Section 8 housing for more than 5 years as well.

Families with Children

- Approximately 842,000 children (ages 0-17) live in public housing representing 40% of residents living in public housing. Approximately 2.3 million children live in Section 8 housing representing 47% of residents living in Section 8 housing.
- 37% of public housing and 32% of Section 8 housing households are female headed with children.

Seniors

- Nearly 330,000 or 15% of residents in public housing are seniors (age 62 and above), and approximately 400,000 or 8% of residents of Section 8 housing are seniors.

People with Disabilities

- 33% of public housing and 35% of Section 8 housing households include a member who is disabled.

Income

- Social Security payments are the primary source of income for approximately 55% of seniors in public housing and 52% of seniors living in Section 8 housing.
- The primary source of income for 34% of public housing resident households and 25% of residents of Section 8 housing is through wages. However, despite the efforts of this working population more than nearly two-thirds of public housing residents and half of residents of Section 8 housing fall into HUD's "Very Low Income" category, with an income of less than 50% of the national median.
- The average annual household income of a household for residents of public housing is \$12,569 and \$8,869 for households in Section 8 Housing. This falls well below the federal poverty line, which in 2006 for a household of two was \$13,167, and for a household of three was \$16,079.

Health Status

- Residents face several barriers to health. For example, safety concerns cause residents to spend more time indoors, reducing activity levels, and amplifying obesity and related issues.² Additionally, where public housing is typically located in isolated areas, poor access to healthcare, social services and high-quality fresh foods are contributors to substandard health.³

Population Distribution

The following chart shows Housing Authorities across the country with the largest number of public housing and Section 8 units. This gives an estimate of locations with the largest number of public housing and Section 8 residents.⁴

	Housing Authority Name	Public Housing Units	Section 8 Units
1	New York City Housing Authority	161,735	97,743
2	Puerto Rico Public Housing Administration	56,454	32,539
3	Chicago Housing Authority	28,282	48,252
4	Philadelphia Housing Authority	16,572	18,588
5	Housing Authority of Baltimore City	14,452	16,262
6	Boston Housing Authority	11,938	12,189
7	Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority	11,369	14,266
8	Miami-Dade Housing Authority	9,505	16,543
9	Atlanta Housing Authority	9,321	16,610
10	Newark Housing Authority	8,715	5,389
11	D.C. Housing Authority	8,562	12,741
12	Housing Authority of New Orleans	8,071	12,659
13	Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles	7,543	44,810
14	Minneapolis Public Housing Authority	6,961	4,915
15	San Antonio Housing Authority	6,804	12,056
16	San Francisco Housing Authority	6,656	15,400
17	Seattle Housing Authority	6,237	8,484
18	Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh	6,062	7,067
19	Birmingham Housing Authority	5,611	4,660
20	Nashville Metropolitan Development and Housing	5,506	5,733

¹U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Resident Characteristic Report available at: <https://pic.hud.gov/pic/RCRPublic/rcrmain.asp>

²Carlos A. Manjarrez, Susan J. Popkin & Elizabeth Guernsey, Poor Health: Adding Insult to Injury for HOPE VI Families, The Urban Institute, Brief No. 5, June 2007, 3.

³Kathie Culhand-Pera, MD, Dillard Ellmore, DO, & Lois A. Wessel, RN, CFNP, Primary Care in Public Housing: Voices of Clinicians, Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved No. 18, November 2007, 4.

⁴U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Public Housing Agency Profiles available at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/systems/pic/haprofiles/index.cfm>