

## 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.<sup>1</sup>*

### 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

## **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.<sup>4</sup>

|    | <b>Housing Authority Name</b>                  | <b>Public Housing Units</b> | <b>Section 8 Units</b> |
|----|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 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                  |

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

<sup>2</sup>Carlos 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.

<sup>3</sup>Kathie 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.

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