

An Exploration of State- and Local-Level Subsidized Housing Catalogs: Initial Findings

Research Note #06-03

Keith E. Wardrip



The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) has the long-term goal of creating and maintaining a national catalog of subsidized housing units. As planned, this Preservation Catalog would include the most current information available on all units nationwide made affordable through HUD's project-based assistance, public housing, and HOME programs, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, USDA's Rural Development Section 515 program, and, where possible, state and local efforts (e.g., housing trust funds, bond financing, etc.). The Preservation Catalog would record the location of the units and track the date on which current use restrictions are scheduled to end. These data, and additional data from local and national partners, would be used to develop elements of an "early warning system" that would inform local and national action aimed at preserving the nation's affordable housing stock.

As a pilot study for the Preservation Catalog, this year NLIHC is undertaking the construction and maintenance of an inventory of subsidized housing units in the District of Columbia and one additional state. In preparation for this task, and with the knowledge that similar state- and local-level databases already exist, NLIHC asked state coalition partners for any information or assistance they could provide in this endeavor. This request resulted in interviews with 15 organizations that have created and continue to maintain a catalog of subsidized housing units at the state, regional, or local level. The interviewed organizations include state housing finance agencies, nonprofits, university research centers, and some of our state coalition partners themselves.

The 15 interviewees were asked to discuss their database and maintenance efforts at length. Questions focused on the types of affordable housing programs for which project- or unit-level information is available, the source of each dataset, the frequency and methodology of updating the data, and the specific preservation-oriented activities that each agency engages in, if any.

This document briefly summarizes the conversations with these 15 agencies and provides contact information for the person at each agency most intimately involved in the construction and maintenance of the database. Immediately preceding the 15 summaries is a table that briefly identifies the type of data maintained in each agency's database and the source (primary or secondary) and comprehensiveness of the data.

It is important to note that the exercise on which this research note is based did not represent a census or a formal survey of subsidized housing databases in the U.S. The agencies contacted were limited to those identified by our state partners, and this document summarizes the efforts of each of these as accurately as possible. To fully explore an agency's database of subsidized units, please visit its website or contact the database administrator using the information provided herein. Any misrepresentation of agency efforts in these pages is unintentional and the responsibility of NLIHC.

State	Agency Interviewed	HUD*	LIHTC	RHS 515	Public Housing	State HOME	Trust Fund	Bond Financing	Local Programs**
CA	California Housing Partnership Corporation	S	S	X					
CT	Connecticut Housing Finance Authority	S	P	S	S	S		P	X
DE	Delaware State Housing Authority	S	P		P	P	P	P	
FL	Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse	S	S	S	X	S	S	S	X
IL	Chicago Rehab Network	S	S	S	X		S		X
IL	Illinois Assisted Housing Action Research Project	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
MA	CEDAC	S	S	S		S		S	S
MN	HousingLink	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
NE	Nebraska Investment Finance Authority	S	P	S		S	S		
NH	New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority	S	P	S	S	P		P	X
NY	Community Service Society	X						S	S
PA	Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency	P	P			P	P	P	
VT	Vermont Housing Finance Agency	S	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
WA	Washington Low Income Housing Alliance	S	S	S		S	X		S
WA	Washington State Housing Finance Commission	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X

Key

P	primary source of data
S	accesses data from a secondary source (local or national); accuracy relies on either a formal update process, a relatively recent and thorough data cleaning, or the longevity of the database
X	included in database but either inconsistently updated or potentially incomplete
	not included in database

* Project-based assistance and projects with insured mortgages (221, 236, etc.)

** Housing programs operated by local jurisdictions (e.g., local HOME grants, local housing finance agencies, etc.).

CA --- California Housing Partnership Corporation

<http://www.chpc.net/>

Elyse Perry
(415) 433-6804 ext 13
eperry@chpc.net

CHPC replaces previous data on HUD projects with quarterly updates received from the state HUD office. CHPC's database also includes information on tax credit and RHS projects, although information on the latter is considered less complete. The agency hopes to expand its inventory to include units subsidized solely by state and local programs and nonprofits. CHPC's preservation initiatives are strengthened by the agency's designation as a "qualified entity," which guarantees that it is copied on opt-out and prepayment notices sent by landlords to HUD.

CT ---Connecticut Housing Finance Authority

<http://www.chfa.org/MainPages/default.asp>

Laura Zajac
(860) 571-4323
laura.zajac@chfa.org

CHFA maintains a nearly comprehensive database of subsidized housing units in Connecticut. With the exception of units funded by the state HOME program, which are currently being added, all major affordable housing programs are included, and state HUD and RD offices have agreed to provide future updates on a quarterly basis. CHFA has confidence in the accuracy of the projects in the database, although some locally funded developments may be missing. Under the Freedom of Information Act, CHFA requested and received REAC scores from HUD, which the agency feels are very helpful in identifying properties at risk of losing their affordable status.

DE --- Delaware State Housing Authority

<http://www2.state.de.us/DSHA/>

Susan Eliason
(302) 739-4263
susane@dsha.state.de.us

DSHA has an inventory of public housing projects for two of three counties in Delaware and is the contract administrator for 60 project-based Section 8 sites, which constitutes approximately 95% of such projects in the state. It is also the tax credit allocation for the state and oversees the state's housing trust fund, HOME program, and bond financing efforts.

FL --- Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse

<http://www.flhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu/>

Bill O'Dell
(352) 273-1171
billo@ufl.edu

FHDC regularly updates a statewide database of subsidized housing units through contacts with HUD and RD state offices, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, and 26 local housing finance agencies. FHDC compiles and cross-references the data from these disparate sources to ensure that the data are of the highest quality. Units produced with local HOME dollars are not included, and the public housing information was last updated in early 2005.

IL --- Chicago Rehab Network

<http://www.chicagorehab.org/>

Rachel Johnston
(312) 663-3936
rachel@chicagorehab.org

Information on HUD-subsidized and tax credit properties is officially updated every quarter using data from the respective online databases. The database is also kept up-to-date as new and better information trickles in from local practitioners and state and local governments. The state RD office provides information on RHS properties, and the state housing finance authority is the source of data for units developed using trust fund dollars and the Affordable Housing Tax Credit program. Although not all local affordable housing programs are integrated into CRN's database, units subsidized by the City of Chicago's Department of Housing are included.

IL --- Illinois Assisted Housing Action Research Project (IHARP)

http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/voorheesctr/iharp_home.html

Janet Smith
(312) 996-2151
janets@uic.edu

A partnership project of the Voorhees Center (University of Illinois-Chicago), Housing Action Illinois, and Latinos United, IHARP is a nearly comprehensive database of subsidized housing units in IL. (Data for HOME-financed projects have been collected but not fully integrated into the database yet.) Lacking the funding for a schedule of regular updates, the database administrators request and receive current data from government agencies as they evaluate individual housing programs. The last update occurred in 2004, when

the project partners and the Chicago Rehab Network worked on the Consolidated Plan for the State of Illinois.

MA --- Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation

<http://www.cedac.org/>

Bill Brauner
(617) 727-5944
bbrauner@cedac.org

With the exception of federal and state public housing developments, CEDAC maintains a comprehensive database of subsidized housing units in Massachusetts. New information on HUD and LIHTC projects is incorporated quarterly, and all data discrepancies for existing projects are investigated before they are integrated. Updates to other assisted housing programs are provided only periodically, and changes are manually entered into the database.

MN --- HousingLink

<http://www.housinglink.org/>

Colleen O'Brien
(612) 520-9221
cgobrien@housinglink.org

HousingLink maintains a comprehensive database of all subsidized housing units in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. New developments/units are added annually, and project status (planned with financing committed, ready for occupancy, etc.) is updated quarterly thanks to the good working relationships that exist between the agency and the affordable housing funders in the region. The database will soon be expanded to provide information

on the income targeting of the units in each development. Although currently limited to the Twin Cities region, it is hoped that the database will one day include statewide information.

NE --- Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

<http://www.nifa.org/>

Teresa Kile
(402) 434-3916
teresa.kile@nifa.org

As the tax credit allocation agency, NIFA keeps close tabs on LIHTC properties. However, unlike many other state housing finance agencies, NIFA also includes projects subsidized through HUD, RHS, and other state programs (e.g., HOME, housing trust fund) with which it is otherwise uninvolved. Each year, a list of projects is exported from the database and sent to the appropriate state office, where someone edits the information and returns it to NIFA. The database excludes public housing and units subsidized solely through local programs (if any).

NH --- New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority

<http://www.nhhfa.org/>

Kathleen Moran
(603) 310-9290
kmoran@nhhfa.org

As the state finance authority, NHHFA operates the tax credit, state HOME, and bond financing programs that produce affordable housing. Regular contact is maintained with HUD (monthly) and RD (annually) state offices to ensure that all projects are accurately included in the database. Information on locally funded

developments is updated only when local representatives observe errors or omissions.

NY --- Community Service Society

<http://www.cssny.org/index.html>

Tom Waters
(212) 614-5366
twaters@cssny.org

CSS maintains a database of developments in New York City that receive either project-based assistance or mortgage subsidies from HUD (excluding 202/811 properties). Also included are projects built with state and city tax-exempt financing (Mitchell-Lama). The database is current as of December 2005, and CSS hopes to update it quarterly with information from HUD, state and city offices, and a dedicated network of housing activists and tenant leaders. CSS also hopes to add 202/811 and tax credit properties to the database, which they plan to make accessible on their website at some point in the future.

PA --- Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency

<http://www.phfa.org/>

Frank Bobak
(717) 780-3879
fbobak@phfa.org

PHFA maintains a database of housing units that have been funded through one or more of the following sources: tax credits, state HOME, bonds, the reserve fund, and money allocated by the Department of Community and Economic Development. They also administer the Section 8 contracts for over 700 HUD-subsidized projects, for which they receive monthly updates. Public housing,

RHS projects, and units funded solely by state and local programs are not included in the PHFA database.

VT --- Vermont Housing Finance Agency

<http://www.vhfa.org/>

Maura Collins
(802) 652-3434
MCollins@vhfa.org

VHFA maintains a totally comprehensive database of subsidized housing units. All programs – from federal to local – are included, and property managers are annually surveyed to ensure that the information is current. Edits proposed by property managers are thoroughly investigated by VHFA staff. The completeness of the database is partly the result of VHFA’s mission – to be the housing resource for the state of Vermont – and partly enabled by the limited number of properties that need to be tracked (fewer than 500).

WA --- Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

<http://www.wliha.org/>

Shane Rock
(206) 442-9455
shane@wliha.org

WLIHA maintains a database of subsidized housing units that includes HUD projects, tax credit properties, and RHS housing. The first is updated twice yearly using HUD’s online database, while the last two are the result of contacts with state-level offices; however, no edits are made to the database without investigating any discrepancies between the new and historic data. Units subsidized by the state housing trust fund are included, but the data are considered less reliable than other programs; public housing data are

absent from the database. WLIHA is currently undertaking a use-restriction survey of localities in Washington that should provide for a much more comprehensive database in the near future.

WA --- Washington State Housing Finance Commission

<http://www.wshfc.org/>

Steve Walker
(206) 287-4467
swalker@wshfc.org

WSHFC collected information on subsidized housing units statewide in 2002. Over the last three years, the data have been cleaned, cross-referenced, and thoroughly error-checked, providing WSHFC with enough faith in the database to claim that it is comprehensive. Although no effort has been made to update the data since 2002, the plan is to lobby the major funders of the subsidized housing programs (HUD, Dept. of Community Trade and Economic Development, etc.) to provide annual production summaries. Eventually, preservation information may be linked with the database in order to accurately remove projects that leave the affordable housing stock.