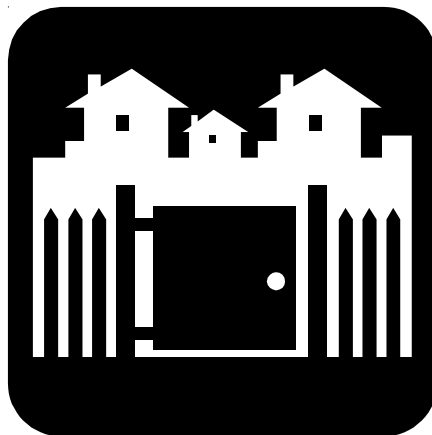


DECONSTRUCTING “DECONCENTRATION”



The NIMBY Report **March 2004**

This report is made possible through the generosity of:



DECONSTRUCTING “DECONCENTRATION”

March 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About This Issue	3
“Deconcentration” as Policy: HUD and Housing Policy in the 1990s <i>Elizabeth Julian</i>	5
Housing Vouchers Can and Should Promote Regional Mobility and Economic Integration <i>Margery Austin Turner</i>	10
Working Toward Balance: Providing Affordable Housing in One of the Nation’s Costliest Housing Markets <i>Conrad Egan</i>	14
Deconcentrating Poverty and the Race to the Bottom <i>Edward G. Goetz</i>	18
“We Already Have Our Fair Share”: Fair Housing Complaints as a Weapon in the Battle Against Affordable Housing <i>Michael Allen</i>	21
Deconcentration with a Twist: The Service Hub Concept in Shelter/Service Delivery <i>Jennifer R. Wolch</i>	24
Let My People Go: The Promise of “Deconcentration” for People with Disabilities <i>Michael Allen</i>	26
A Review of the Findings: The Deconcentration of Poverty During the 1990s <i>Irene Basloe Saraf</i>	29





About This Issue

In May 2003, housing advocates were pleasantly surprised when both the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute released studies, based on the 2000 Census, which found that concentrated poverty had decreased over the course of the 1990s. A decrease in the concentration of poverty would seem to indicate that NIMBYism may be declining.

After all, if poor people are less clustered together, then a greater proportion of poor people must be living with people who are less poor. Perhaps the statistics mean that low income housing developments are being successfully integrated into more affluent areas or poor people with other means of housing assistance, such as tenant-based vouchers, or without any housing assistance at all are finding their way into those areas.

But the implications of the deconcentration of poverty are complex for a host of reasons: the extent to which poverty, despite improvements, remains concentrated; the intersection of poverty concentration and race; the meaning of deconcentration for people with disabilities; how the goal of deconcentration may impede the development of low income housing in some communities. This issue of *The NIMBY Report* attempts to grapple with these complexities.

The Brookings and Urban studies did not provide definitive explanations—beyond general statements about macroeconomics and the boom of the 1990s—for why poverty became less concentrated. One reason may be the attention deconcentration received from HUD and Congress in the development of policy in the 1990s.

Elizabeth Julian, a HUD official during the Clinton Administration, describes how HUD came to consider deconcentration of poverty a worthy policy goal under Secretary Henry Cisneros. Even with this attention, however, HUD avoided making too direct a connection between the concentration of poverty and racial segregation. Given her experience as a civil rights lawyer fighting racial discrimination in housing, Ms. Julian brings important insights to her description of HUD's efforts.

Margery Austin Turner, a scholar at the Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing and Communities policy center and an expert on the housing voucher program,

explains the value of housing vouchers in promoting deconcentration. She also describes how vouchers fall short of their potential and how policies could be changed to enhance the opportunities and choices of voucher holders.

The on-the-ground challenge of expanding affordable housing opportunities is also described in an article by Conrad Egan. Mr. Egan—who, in addition to his role as President and CEO of the National Housing Conference, serves as Chairman of the Fairfax County Housing and Redevelopment Authority—outlines how Fairfax County has supported the development of low income housing in a costly and booming housing market.

The dark side of deconcentration is tackled by Edward Goetz, a professor at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota and author of a recent book on the topic of deconcentration, *Clearing the Way*. In Mr. Goetz's view, fears of concentrated poverty became an excuse, in some parts of greater St. Paul and Minneapolis, to reject the development of low income housing and to blame such housing for a host of social ills.

Michael Allen, Senior Staff Attorney at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and a member of the *The NIMBY Report* Advisory Board, takes on a related issue in one of his two articles. Mr. Allen discusses how fair housing laws are being commandeered to combat the siting of low income housing when neighborhoods claim they have their fair share. Providing specific examples, Mr. Allen presents the challenge of determining whether NIMBYism is at work or a neighborhood has a legitimate gripe.

Two articles consider deconcentration from the perspective of people with disabilities. Jennifer Wolch, Professor of Geography and Director of the Center for Sustainable Cities at the University of Southern California, describes efforts to rid downtown urban neighborhoods of low income housing and services for people with disabilities under the guise of deconcentration. Ms. Wolch argues that there are circumstances where concentration can be beneficial. She recommends a small-scale clustering of low income housing and the service facilities on which the residents of that housing depend.



On the flip side, Michael Allen discusses historic tendencies to create a “disabilities ghetto.” Mr. Allen describes shifts in policies and attitudes leading toward deconcentration of housing opportunities for people with disabilities.

Irene Basloe Saraf, Associate Director at the National Low Income Housing Coalition, rounds out the issue with a review of the studies that spurred on this edition of *The NIMBY Report* originally. Ms. Saraf describes the Brookings and Urban findings and their implications. While the studies’ news was heartening, questions remain about why poverty became less concentrated during the 1990s and how much the new deconcentration trend reflects the creation of more inclusive communities in this country.



“Deconcentration” as Policy: HUD and Housing Policy in the 1990s

Elizabeth Julian

Having been asked to discuss how “deconcentration” became the focus of low income and public housing policy at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) during the eight years of the Clinton Administration,¹ my initial thought was: As opposed to what? Racial segregation? Concentrated poverty? Both were arguably policies, or results of policies, practiced to some degree by the Department since its inception, and my Clinton Administration colleagues and I tried to change that. But certainly this was not the first time anyone tried to get “deconcentration” on the national housing policy agenda.

Public housing was the federal government’s response to the identified need for affordable housing for poor Americans in the late 1930s and 1940s. In passing the Housing Act of 1949, white liberals in Congress opposed an amendment that would have prohibited racial segregation and discrimination in public housing funded under the Act, arguing that the much needed housing would not be built if racial segregation were not allowed. The sponsor of the House amendment, Representative Vito Marcantonio from New York, a member of the American Labor Party, answered the liberals’ arguments by stating:

Further, to those who want to use the opportunistic argument, let me tell them that you have no right to use housing against civil rights. Housing and civil rights are an integral part of each other. Housing is advanced in the interest of the general welfare and in the interest of strengthening democracy. When you separate civil rights from housing you weaken that general welfare. You weaken the democracy you pretend to strengthen. Remember, here you launch a 40 year program whereby you deny equal opportunity in housing

to 14,000,000 American citizens and to other racial minorities. This attempt to separate civil rights from housing is dishonest political opportunism.

Nonetheless, the country made that deal back in 1949, and, with minor and ineffective exceptions, honored it for the next 40 years. The 1960s brought the civil rights movement’s victories, Executive Order 11063 (issued on November 20, 1962 and providing for equal opportunity in housing), the passage of the Fair Housing Act, and the creation of HUD. This period also brought alternatives to public housing for low income whites, with the advent of the privately owned, federally subsidized project-based developments of the Section 221d(3) and Section 236 programs, and later the Section 8 New Construction Program. While the tenant based Section 8 program established in the mid-1970s theoretically offered an opportunity for low income families to escape concentrated poverty, such an opportunity was never the reality for minority families.

If the civil rights victories of the 1960s removed official barriers to full and equal opportunity, the racial segregation and discrimination practiced against African-Americans and other people of color in virtually all aspects of public and private life in this country since its inception insured that a significantly disproportionate number of the poor continued to be minorities who already lived in racially segregated communities. As it became more difficult to segregate and isolate minority people on basis of race alone, poverty became an effective substitute.

Some people involved in housing policy during that period understood the importance of insuring access by minority families to all segments of the housing market and the dangers of isolating low income minority persons in low income minority neighborhoods. Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 specified the following goals: “The reductions of the isolation of income groups in the diversity and vitality of neighborhoods through the spatial de-concentration of housing opportunities for persons of low income and

¹ *This article reflects my perspective on the issue of deconcentration and the circumstances under which policy was made during my time during the Clinton Administration. Others no doubt will have a different perspective and could share different insights.*



the revitalization of deteriorating or deteriorated neighborhoods to attract person of higher incomes.” This mandate followed the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and the decisions in the *Gautreaux* and *Shannon* cases that questioned the legality and viability of a housing policy that did not deal directly with the effects of concentrated race and poverty.

The history of the efforts to give effect to that mandate is discussed in *Housing Desegregation and Federal Policy*, a series of essays edited by John M. Goering, one of the most knowledgeable people in the country on the history of federal housing policy as it relates for fair housing. While that story is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to the current discussion. The site and neighborhood standards developed in response to the *Shannon* decision and the *Gautreaux*-related efforts to make mobility

requirements a part of HUD’s tenant based Section 8 regulation were consistent with the 1974 Congressional goals. However, in another example of the difficulty of keeping low income housing policy and civil rights policy on the same page, those efforts were met with opposition from all political sides, were embraced ambivalently by HUD during the Carter Administration, and

effectively disappeared with the 1980 election. These earlier efforts at deconcentration failed due to concerns about threats to growing black political power in urban areas, racially motivated resistance to development of low income housing opportunities in white areas and the suburbs, and a lack of political will to follow through with policies that might effect real change in the segregated nature of American residential housing patterns.

Community development and revitalization strategies, which were more popular during this period, did not gild the ghetto nearly enough to close the gap in poverty concentration between the races. As the civil rights laws afforded housing opportunities foreclosed by segregation, people of color began to exercise their right to live where their economic status would take them, while whites continued to avoid areas where persons of color lived, regardless of economics. The total apartheid of Jim Crow was gradually replaced with

residential concentration of people of color at the intersection of race and poverty, with the attendant social and environmental problems so painfully examined by William Julius Wilson in his 1987 book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Between 1970 and 1990 concentrated poverty increased dramatically for poor people of color, and not only in federal housing programs, but in cities and neighborhoods more generally.

By the early 1990s there was a growing consensus among social scientists, policy makers, and some advocates that concentrated poverty was not a good thing for poor people or the communities in which they lived. There was also an undeniable link between concentrated poverty and race. While visiting the Department in the fall of 1993, prior to being named Deputy General Counsel for Civil Rights and Litigation

under HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, I ran into George Latimer, former mayor of St. Paul and a special advisor to the Secretary. He invited me to a lunchtime talk in the Departmental Conference Room being given by Doug Massey and Nancy Denton on their then-recent book, *American Apartheid*. I was impressed, as the authors’ presence suggested that the new Administration would be

open to dealing with the difficult issue of race and housing, particularly as it played itself out in HUD’s own housing programs.

When I officially arrived at HUD in January of 1994, I found informed concern about concentrated urban poverty prevalent among the top political appointees. There was a strong sense that cities had been victimized by urban policies that had not addressed the issue of concentrated poverty effectively, leaving individual families whose housing opportunities were limited to high poverty, minority concentrated areas. The Rosenbaum research related to the *Gautreaux* experiment was demonstrating that, indeed, low income minority families who relocated from high poverty to low poverty areas over time had improved life situations by a number of objective criteria. The “Moving to Opportunity” initiative, though cut short by Congressional appeasement of white hostility to minority families moving into white areas, continued to provide

Cities had been victimized by urban policies that had not addressed the issue of concentrated poverty effectively, leaving individual families whose housing opportunities were limited to high poverty, minority concentrated areas.



researchers with information about the relative value of such moves for the families that were able to achieve them. This, in turn, provided support for increased resources devoted to making the housing certificate and voucher programs vehicles for poverty deconcentration, if not race. The disability advocacy community was increasingly identifying their cause with that of the victims of racial segregation and arguing that housing opportunities must not be afforded in a manner that segregated people with disabilities from the mainstream.

The various agendas that would characterize the Administration, including comprehensive community planning requirements, a focus on encouraging regionalism, and the transformation of public housing through the use of the HOPE VI program, were moving ahead. There was a growing consensus that the existence of the really “bad” public housing was and would continue to be a barrier to increased funding for new public housing. The specter of large, bombed out high rises or vast barrack-style low rises housing the mostly minority, poorest of the poor, haunted low income housing advocates and the Administration as they sought to expand the quantity of low income housing. Chicago was always high on the radar, as were Boston, Newark, Kansas City, Dallas, and the portfolio of 100,000 public housing units which were generally referred to as the “worst of the worst.”

The racial segregation that had characterized public housing since its inception, coupled with the economic segregation imposed by subsequent well-meaning decision makers, had morphed into a nightmare for urban areas. The cancer of urban blight could no longer be contained within the walls of the large public housing developments that scarred the urban landscape—and, more devastatingly, scarred the lives of literally millions of minority children who were forced to grow up in increasingly deprived, violent and isolated environments. In his 1995 essay on regionalism, Secretary Cisneros asserted that “in a typical metropolitan area three out of every four poor whites live in middle-class, mostly suburban neighborhoods. By contrast, three out of four poor African American and two out of three poor Hispanics live in inner-city ‘poverty neighborhoods,’”

where at least 20 percent of the residents are poor... Highly concentrated minority poverty is urban American’s toughest challenge.”

At the same time, the Department was facing a growing number of *Gautreaux*-type lawsuits. These suits alleged that it had participated in the creation and perpetuation of racial segregation in its public housing program, that it had failed to take effective steps to eliminate the vestiges of that segregation, and that such failure was causing ongoing harm to minority families living in or in need of that housing assistance. That harm included subjecting low income minority families to a system that was both “separate” and “unequal.” Public housing developments had become institutions of concentrated poverty for minority residents, located in neighborhoods that were themselves overwhelmingly minority, high poverty, and historically victimized by discrimination and disinvestment.

The racial segregation that had characterized public housing since its inception, coupled with the economic segregation imposed by subsequent well-meaning decision makers, had morphed into a nightmare for urban areas.

Remedial actions would have to address both the separate and unequal conditions. Dealing with this litigation affirmatively meant that the Department—and the country—would have to confront the practical and political realities of providing housing to poor people of color if it could not be restricted by location to low income minority neighborhoods. Remedies

were focused on the interests of class members to be afforded housing choice, be it the choice to relocate or the choice to stay and live in an improved environment. A policy of deconcentration was obviously consistent with the effort to develop appropriate remedies in those cases.

I came to HUD with the understanding that the Department was going to seek to resolve the numerous meritorious claims pending against the Department involving public housing segregation and do so in a way that expanded opportunity and affirmatively furthered fair housing. I saw the Secretary become convinced that the only effective low income housing policy would have to address honestly and boldly the mistakes of the past, including bringing down the worst of the worst, and replacing it with housing that was more consistent with the sort of housing that people and communities wanted and needed. The intersection of these two



issues—resolution of the litigation appropriately and demolition and replacement of the worst public housing—presented an incredible opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and increase both the quality and quantity of low income housing. The extent to which that was accomplished is clearly open to debate, and probably will not be a story fully written for another decade or so. However, we continued to learn how difficult it is, even among people of good will, to resolve tensions between civil rights and housing policy.

Today the term “deconcentration” appears a number of places in the Department’s policies and programs, though any overt discussion of racial deconcentration or desegregation has been replaced by an emphasis on deconcentrating poverty alone. HOPE VI has deconcentration of poverty as one of its stated goals, but addressing the longstanding vestiges of racial segregation is not a stated goal. PHA Plans have to demonstrate how they will deconcentrate poverty in the programs they operate, but this is more focused on bringing higher income families into existing public housing developments than insuring public housing families are afforded opportunities in lower poverty areas. This “deconcentration rule,” while taking the important step of recognizing the history and reality of racial segregation in public housing, was limited in scope and was not designed to be an effective response to the problem of either economic or racial concentration where it is most severe. As HOPE VI shifted from being a housing program to being a community development program, the interests of the individuals who were the intended beneficiaries of replacement units were severely compromised in the rush to revitalization.

We learned, I believe, that effective poverty deconcentration policy must take race into account and coordinate a number of different, though not necessarily incompatible, approaches. It is not, and should not, be an “either-or” game. In a 1996 article in opposition to Secretary Cisneros’s efforts to resolve the Baltimore housing desegregation case, then Representative Robert Ehrlich (R-MD) denounced as “social

engineering” the efforts of African-American residents of public housing developments in Baltimore to redirect housing opportunities outside of the confines of high rise public housing developments in predominately black, low income neighborhoods of the City of Baltimore. He decried the efforts of HUD, under direction of Secretary Cisneros, to disperse African-American residents of public housing in Baltimore into the surrounding overwhelmingly white, middle-class suburbs, which he argued would place additional economic and social burdens on those areas. The alternative, Mr. Erlich argued, was “reclaiming and revitalizing Baltimore’s neighborhoods.” Apparently, he considered mobility strategies and revitalization strategies mutually exclusive.

The policy makers at HUD during this period disagreed and struggled to develop a comprehensive policy approach that kept civil rights policy and low income housing and community development policy on the same page. At the heart of that struggle was the recognition that concentrated poverty was about race. Significant social engineering had been required to geographically concentrate poor people of color and it would require significant social engineering to undo that concentration and its effects. Progress was made, but the tensions remain, challenging yet another generation of good people with the best of intentions to figure out how to do both.

The so-called “policy of deconcentration” is not new. It is based upon decades of data, research and experience. It is properly faulted not because racial and economic concentration is a better policy, but because comprehensive policies designed to achieve the benefits of deconcentration are seldom fully implemented. A responsible deconcentration policy is one which understands that concentrated poverty is a racial issue, and that the harm it inflicts is disproportionately visited upon poor people of color. Even today, in spite of the impressive gains between 1990 and 2000, poor whites still do not live in and suffer the disadvantages of extreme poverty neighborhoods in

The intersection of these two issues—resolution of the litigation appropriately and demolition and replacement of the worst public housing—presented an incredible opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and increase both the quality and quantity of low income housing.



anything approaching the degree to which minorities do. While the condition of concentrated poverty is lessening for all groups, according to the 2000 census, concentrated poverty is still not an equal opportunity condition. Efforts to de-concentrate poverty through mobility and redevelopment strategies must be pursued with equal vigor and resources because true choice and real equal opportunity require it.

Elizabeth Julian served at HUD during the Clinton Administration as Deputy General Counsel for Civil Rights and Litigation, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, and, in the second term, as the Secretary's Representative for the Southwest. Prior to going to HUD, she represented minority plaintiffs in litigation against the Department involving charges of racial discrimination and segregation. She is currently engaged in a private civil rights practice in Dallas, Texas working on both litigation and policy related matters in the area of housing and community development.

References

Cisneros, H.G. (1995). *Regionalism: The new geography of opportunity*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Gautreaux et al. v. Chicago Housing Authority, et al., 265 F. Supp. 582 (N.D.Ill. 1967)

Goering, J.M. (Ed.). (1986). *Housing desegregation and federal policy*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press.

Goetz, E. G. (2003). *Clearing the way: Deconcentrating the poor in urban america*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

Grant, G.F. (2001). Housing mobility and mixed-income housing: An assessment of current urban poverty deconcentration strategies. *Kennedy School Review*.

Hills v. Gautreaux et al. 425 U.S. 284 (1976)

Jargowsky, P.A. (2003, May). *Stunning progress, hidden problems: The dramatic decline of concentrated poverty in the 1990s*. (The Living Cities Census Series). Brookings Institution: Washington, D.C.

Julian, E., & Daniel, M. (1989). Separate and unequal: The root and branch of public housing segregation, *Clearinghouse*, 23, 666.

Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.

Rosenbaum, J.E. (1995). Changing the geography of opportunity by expanding residential choice: Lessons from the Gautreaux program. *Housing Policy Debate*, 6(1)

Shannon v. HUD, 364 F.2d 809 (3rd Cir. 1970)

Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.



Housing Vouchers Can and Should Promote Regional Mobility and Economic Integration

Margery Austin Turner

Historically, federally subsidized rental housing has exacerbated the concentration of poor people—especially minorities—in distressed inner-city neighborhoods. The vast majority of federally subsidized housing developments are located in central cities. And often, subsidized rental housing is clustered in the poorest and most distressed neighborhoods. The over-concentration of poverty that results from clustering subsidized housing undermines the economic and social viability of urban communities (Massey & Denton 1993; Wilson, 1987). And a growing body of social science research indicates that growing up in these high-poverty neighborhoods also undermines a child's life chances (Ellen & Turner, 1997).

As jobs—including low-skilled and entry-level jobs—have increasingly dispersed throughout the suburbs of most metro areas, the mismatch between subsidized housing locations and employment opportunities has become severe. Although some suburban communities have effectively used inclusionary zoning and other tools to build subsidized housing in job-rich areas, the political barriers are daunting and success has been limited (Burchell et al., 1994).

The federal Housing Choice Voucher program provides a potentially powerful tool for addressing the failures of past housing policies. Effectively implemented, vouchers can promote mobility and location choice helping to deconcentrate poverty and enabling poor households to find affordable housing in neighborhoods close to entry-level employment opportunities. This article focuses on the role that Housing Choice Vouchers can and should be playing and reforms needed to strengthen their performance.

The Potential of Housing Choice Vouchers

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (previously known as Section 8 certificates and vouchers) supplements rent payments for about 1.7 million low income families and individuals. Recipients rent a house or apartment in the private market and contribute about 30 percent of their incomes toward rent. The Voucher Program pays the difference, up to a locally defined

“payment standard.” To participate, families must find a house or apartment that meets the program's housing quality standards with a landlord who is willing to accept vouchers.

Nationally, the evidence is clear that this kind of “tenant-based” assistance is far less likely than public housing programs to concentrate needy households in high-poverty and high-minority neighborhoods. Only 22 percent of voucher recipients live in high-poverty neighborhoods (greater than 30 percent poor) and a majority (59 percent) live in neighborhoods that are less than 20 percent poor (Devine et al., 2003). In contrast, 54 percent of public housing residents live in high-poverty neighborhoods (Newman & Schnare, 1997).

Early in the 1990s, findings from the *Gautreaux* demonstration in Chicago brought national attention to the possibility that vouchers could help families escape from segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods. In the *Gautreaux* program, established as the result of a lawsuit, African American families who were residents of public housing or eligible to move into public housing received special-purpose housing vouchers. These vouchers could only be used to move to predominantly white or racially mixed neighborhoods. In addition to the vouchers, *Gautreaux* families received support and counseling from a non-profit organization, which helped them find suitable rental housing in white neighborhoods. Research on *Gautreaux* participants found that children of families who moved to suburban neighborhoods were much more likely to complete high school, take college-track courses, attend college, and enter the work force than children from similar families who moved to neighborhoods within the central city (Rosenbaum 1995).

These findings are being more extensively tested in HUD's Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration. MTO is a controlled, random-assignment experiment to test the effectiveness of using vouchers to help poor people move out of high-poverty subsidized developments into low-poverty neighborhoods. Early findings indicate that many MTO families were able to move to substantially healthier neighborhoods and that they feel dramatically safer and more secure as a result.



In addition, there is convincing evidence of improvements in both mental and physical health (Orr et al., 2003). Some research also suggests that young people whose families have moved to low-poverty neighborhoods may be less likely to engage in crime and other risky behaviors (Goering & Feins, 2003).

Vouchers Are Not Living Up to Their Potential

In most communities around the country, the performance of the federal Housing Choice Voucher program falls far short of its potential. As currently administered, vouchers do not provide equal access to low-poverty and low-minority neighborhoods for all poor households. Tenant-based assistance produces better locational outcomes in suburban areas than in central cities, for white recipients than for African Americans and Hispanics, and for the elderly than for non-elderly families and disabled people. For example, 25 percent of African American recipients and 28 percent of Hispanics live in high-poverty neighborhoods, compared to only eight percent of whites (Devine et al., 2003). It is important to note that tenant-based assistance still consistently outperforms public housing, even in central cities, even among African Americans and Hispanics, and even among families and disabled recipients. But it clearly has the potential to offer better locational outcomes for minority families (Turner & Williams 1998).

Because the voucher program is administered by local public housing agencies, central city recipients are generally not encouraged to search for housing regionwide. Technically, vouchers are portable—recipients can use them to move anywhere in the U.S. But the administrative hurdles can be daunting, both for housing agencies and for recipients. And few local housing agencies see it as their responsibility to gather information about affordable rental housing regionwide and help clients move to other jurisdictions (Feins et al 1997).

In hot rental markets, taking advantage of a voucher can be particularly difficult. Specifically, in communities where vacancy rates are low and rents are rising, landlords have no trouble finding tenants for units in good neighborhoods. Under these circumstances,

voucher recipients are at a real disadvantage. Many of the landlords who own good housing in desirable neighborhoods want nothing to do with the federal voucher program. They fear that low income families will make risky tenants and undesirable neighbors, or that red tape and bureaucratic hassles are inevitable (Turner, Popkin & Cunningham, 2000).

Moreover, suburban communities often oppose the arrival of voucher families from nearby cities, because of their race, their poverty, or both (Churchill, Holin, Khadduri, & Turnham, 2001). Longstanding patterns of residential segregation and housing market discrimination create barriers to housing search and neighborhood choice for minority voucher recipients (Popkin & Cunningham, 2000; Turner et al., 2002). And many families never even consider moving to a better neighborhood because they expect discrimination and prejudice to block their path.

Improving Voucher Performance

In most communities around the country, the performance of the federal Housing Choice Voucher program falls far short of its potential...And in hot rental markets, taking advantage of a voucher can be particularly difficult.

Beginning when Henry Cisneros was Secretary, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) increasingly used the voucher program as a tool to promote mobility, poverty deconcentration, and racial desegregation.

Special-purpose vouchers have been included as an important element of public housing desegregation settlements, and as a tool for relocating residents of HOPE VI developments, both temporarily and permanently. In addition, the Regional Opportunity Counseling Initiative provided funding to voucher programs in selected metro areas to develop regionwide mobility programs. These initiatives vary tremendously with respect to size, goals, and effectiveness, and as yet no systematic evaluation has been conducted to assess their performance. Nonetheless, they offer useful insights about what it takes to ensure that vouchers realize their unique potential.

Mobility counseling and assistance can help voucher recipients understand the locational options available, identify housing opportunities, and negotiate effectively with landlords. A growing body of evidence from assisted housing mobility programs across the country indicates that this kind of supplemental assistance can significantly



improve locational outcomes for voucher recipients, resulting in greater mobility to low-poverty and racially mixed neighborhoods for families who might otherwise find it difficult to move out of distressed, inner-city neighborhoods (Goering, Tebbins, & Siewert 1995; HUD 1996; Turner & Williams 1998; HUD 1999; Orr et al. 2003).

Aggressive landlord outreach, service, and incentives, though sometimes viewed as a component of mobility counseling, actually involve very different activities. Housing agencies can significantly expand the options available to voucher recipients and improve recipients' success in finding suitable housing by continuously recruiting new landlords to participate in the program, listening to landlord concerns about how the program operates, addressing red tape and other disincentives to landlord participation, and, in some cases, offering financial incentives to landlords to accept voucher recipients.

Next Steps for Federal Policy

A radical strategy for achieving the goals of mobility and choice through the federal voucher program would be to replace the current balkanized system of

administration by local housing authorities with regional administration. Bruce Katz and I have argued that the voucher program should be administered by one agency per metropolitan area (Katz & Turner 2001). This agency could be one of the local public housing agencies that currently administers the program for a single jurisdiction, or it could be a regional non-profit organization or even a for-profit business. Our proposal argues for HUD to select metropolitan administrators competitively and to compensate them based on their performance.

But short of such a radical overhaul, HUD can significantly improve the capacity of the Housing Choice Voucher Program to enhance real mobility and choice. Specifically, HUD should use its management assessment procedures to create stronger incentives for housing authorities to focus on residential mobility and locational outcomes among voucher recipients. This kind of incentive structure does not mean that every family receiving Section 8 assistance must be pressured into moving to a low-poverty neighborhood. But it should

encourage housing authorities to aggressively expand opportunities in low-poverty neighborhoods, and to provide meaningful information and encouragement to families who might be interested in moving.

In addition, regulatory and administrative barriers that now make it difficult for families to move between jurisdictions within a metropolitan housing market should be eliminated. HUD should discourage individual housing authorities within a metropolitan area from using different application forms for the Section 8 program, requiring in-person applications, or providing preferences for existing residents of the jurisdiction. HUD needs to work with housing authorities to minimize the administrative hurdles involved in portability, which often discourage families from searching outside their immediate area.

And finally, the number and scale of regional housing mobility initiatives funded by the federal government should be gradually expanded. In metropolitan areas with large concentrations of poverty and significant

barriers to mobility, additional funding may be needed over the long-term to support housing counseling and search assistance. As a general principle, this funding should go to organizations with a track record for

counseling and assisting low income families, and with the capacity to provide information and access to housing opportunities regionwide. Although these regional initiatives should enjoy considerable flexibility and discretion to design a program that responds to local circumstances, they should be held accountable for results, through a set of objective performance measures, collected and reported on a regular basis.

HUD can significantly improve the capacity of the Housing Choice Voucher Program to enhance real mobility and choice.

Margery Austin Turner directs the Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing and Communities policy center and is a nationally recognized expert on urban policy and neighborhood issues. Ms. Turner served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 through 1996, focusing HUD's research agenda on the problems of racial discrimination, concentrated poverty, and economic opportunity in America's metropolitan areas. Prior to joining the Clinton Administration at HUD, Ms. Turner directed the housing research program at the Urban Institute.



References

- Burchell, R.W. et al. (1994). *Regional housing opportunities for lower income households: A resource guide to affordable housing and regional mobility strategies*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Churchill, S., Holin, M.J., Khadduri, J. & Turnham, J.. (2001). *Strategies that enhance community relations in the tenant-based housing choice voucher program, final report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Ellen, I. G., & Turner, M. A. (1997). Does neighborhood matter? Assessing recent evidence. *Housing Policy Debate*, 8(4), 833-866.
- Devine, D. J. et al. (2003). *Housing choice voucher location patterns: Implications for participant and neighborhood welfare*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Feins, J., et al. (1997). *State and metropolitan administration of Section 8: Current models and potential resources*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates.
- Goering, J., & Feins, J. D. (Eds.). (2003). *Choosing a better life? Evaluating the moving to opportunity Social Experiment*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.
- Goering, J., Stebbins, H., & Siewert, M. (1995). *Promoting housing choice in HUD's rental assistance programs*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Katz, B. J., & Turner, M. A. (2001). Who should run the housing voucher program? A reform proposal. *Housing Policy Debate* 12(2), 239-62.
- Massey, D. S., Denton, N. (1993). *American apartheid: segregation and the making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Millennial Housing Commission. (2002). *Meeting our nation's housing challenges*. Washington, D.C.: Bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission.
- Newman, S., & Schnare, A. B. (1997). '...And a suitable living environment?': The failure of housing programs to deliver on neighborhood quality. *Housing Policy Debate*, 8(4),703-41.
- Orr, L. et al. (2003). *Moving to opportunity interim impacts evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Popkin, S. J., & Cunningham, M. K. (2000). *Searching for rental housing with Section 8 in Chicago*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Rosenbaum, J. E. (1995). Changing the geography of opportunity by expanding residential choice: Lessons from the Gautreaux program. *Housing Policy Debate* 6(1), 231-69.
- Turner, M. A. et al. (2002). *Discrimination in metropolitan housing markets: Results from phase I of HDS2000*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Turner, M. A., Popkin, S.J., & Cunningham, M. K.. (2000). *Section 8 mobility and neighborhood health*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Turner, M. A., & Wilson, C. (1998). *Affirmatively furthering fair housing: Neighborhood outcomes for tenant-based assistance in six metropolitan areas*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Turner, M. A., & Williams, K. (1998). *Housing mobility: Realizing the promise*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (1996). *Expanding housing choices for HUD-assisted families: First biennial report to Congress*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1999. *Waiting in vain: An update on America's housing crisis*. Washington, D.C.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press.



Working Toward Balance : Providing Affordable Housing in One of the Nation's Costliest Housing Markets

Conrad Egan

At first glance, Fairfax County, Virginia appears to be a prosperous and thriving community adjacent to the Nation's capital. With its median household income and median single family home value among the highest in the nation according to the 2000 Census, Fairfax County has a healthy economic base with 221 million square feet of commercial and institutional floor area (Fairfax County Department of Systems Management, 2002) and a labor force of 576,522 (Virginia Employment Commission (2003).

Dubbed a "MEGA County" (Massively Enlarged Growth Accelerated) by the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, its population at just over one million is larger than that of seven states. Its growth has been staggering, with a population increase of 200,000 since 1990 (Fairfax County Department of Systems Management, n.d.). One of the most dynamic communities in the country, Fairfax County is home to a number of leading firms in the technology and defense industries and enjoys close proximity to the historic and cultural resources of the District of Columbia, unparalleled employment opportunities, dozens of institutions of higher learning, and a tireless army of non-profit organizations and volunteers.

The strong local economy and dramatic population increase brought a set of complex paradoxes to Fairfax County: a sorely-needed labor pool, but an unprecedented demand for housing; the vibrancy of cultural diversity, but the challenge of multiple languages and expectations; a populace of both great wealth and extreme poverty; citizens with a spirit of benevolence, and those with great need. The number of jobs in Fairfax County far outstripped the number of dwellings available, and workers at all levels were forced to seek housing outside the County and commute into the County for work. County policy makers soon realized the loss of wealth that was occurring and would continue to occur if the housing shortage was not addressed. Affordable housing was of particular importance since tens of thousands of service workers were needed to support the County's economic base, and service job vacancies were becoming increasingly difficult to fill.

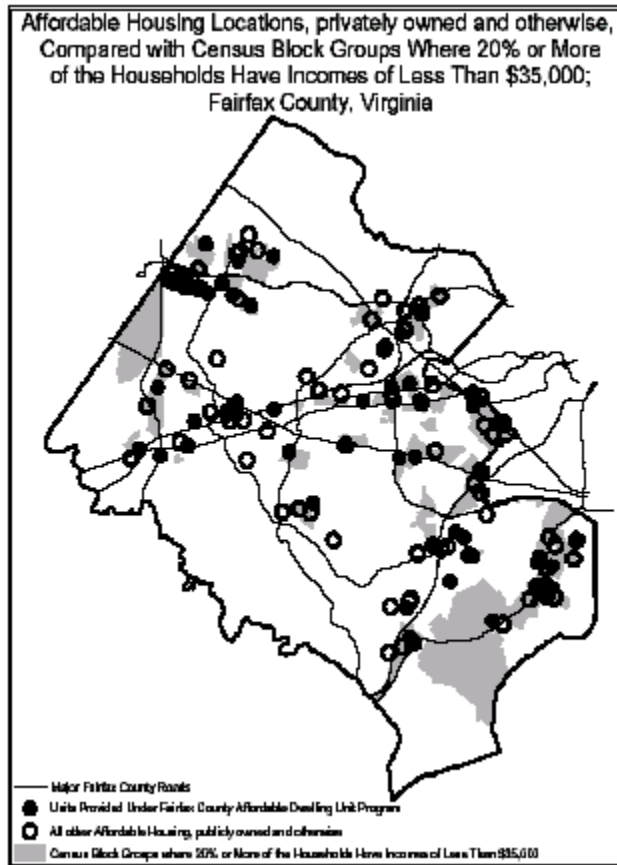
County policies were established in the County's Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Supervisors to help address the shortage of housing. These policies included encouraging the provision of affordable housing in all parts of the County; promoting the development of multifamily housing in both mixed-use centers and existing residential areas in an effort to diversify the housing stock and expand lower cost housing options; and ensuring that redevelopment of residential neighborhoods would provide affordable dwelling units or a contribution to the Fairfax County Housing Trust Fund equal to the replacement value of all affordable units displaced.

To help put the policies into effect, the County worked with its state legislature to gain permission to establish a County-wide Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Program. The Program, articulated as an ordinance within the County Code, was established in 1990 and initially provided a standard approach for developers to make a commitment at the time of rezoning to provide affordable dwelling units in exchange for an extra density of dwelling units. The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that developers experience no net economic loss as a result of providing units under the ADU Program. Over time, and with the direction of a Task Force comprised of community developers, affordable housing advocates, elected officials and staff, the Program was strengthened to its current terms. The Task Force, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, has evolved to having an ongoing consultative role in policy matters pertaining to the Affordable Dwelling Unit Program.

The ADU Program applies to sites that are the subject of a rezoning or special exception application or site plan or subdivision plat submission that yield 50 or more dwelling units, including low-rise and certain mid-rise multi-family structures that are typically five stories or less. ADUs also may be provided in developments where these criteria are not applicable, in order to take advantage of special zoning regulations that apply to properties with ADUs. In return for an increase in



density, such developments are required to provide a specified percentage of affordable units which are defined as units affordable to households whose income is 70% or less of the median income for the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area. The percentages of ADUs required are related to a certain amount of increased density. In all cases, developers are strongly encouraged to disperse ADUs among other market-rate units in the development.



Fairfax County also maintains a Housing Trust Fund, into which a developer makes a contribution for developments that are not subject to the ADU Program or for those very limited developments that are granted a modification of the ADU Program requirements. The Trust Fund has provided more than \$18 million to produce more than 1,000 units of affordable housing and it has been a powerful development catalyst. On average, for every \$1 of Housing Trust Fund money, \$7 is leveraged from outside sources to create and preserve affordable housing.

Since the ADU Program was established in 1990, over 2,000 units (including both for sale and rental units) have either been created or are in the development pipeline. These units are spread among 131 developments and they are predominantly either single family attached or

multi-family developments. Under the ADU Program, the maximum percentage of ADUs required is 12.5% of the total number of units within a development. Since the County has a strong policy of conserving neighborhoods and preventing their redevelopment, ADUs tend to occur in new developments, so the ADUs are distributed widely across the County.

In fiscal year 1995, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors allocated \$500,000 for an Employees Homeownership Assistance Program for moderate-income County and schools employees seeking to buy their first homes. To date, 26 second trust loans have been made to employees under this program. Because of the expense of living in the County, there is a high level of public support for altering the ADU Program to provide ADUs as a priority to public safety personnel.



Example of privately-owned Affordable Dwelling Unit in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Market forces such as high land values and a robust job market are producing a market for higher end residential construction. These forces, combined with the County's requirements for affordable dwelling units in new residential developments, sometimes have the result that the ADUs are located within new high-end communities that offer luxury amenities not traditionally found in market rate subdivisions.

To ensure some degree of compatibility in terms of basic design, the Program requires that the ADUs meet certain basic construction specifications for the prototype affordable housing product for both for-sale and rental units. At the same time, however, the ADU Program has also fostered a spirit of innovation in housing design and development. Since large luxury homes are a popular



product for new subdivisions, the Program was amended to include an affordable dwelling concept called a Great House.

The Great House structure has the appearance of a large luxury single family house from the outside and blends into the visual impression of the overall neighborhood. In truth, it contains two or more affordable dwellings for families who earn up to 70% of the median household income for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area.



Example of Affordable Dwelling Units for two or more families that mimic single family detached housing (“Great House”)

The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA), which administers the ADU Program for the County, also owns and manages over 1,000 public housing units. In general, the FCRHA strategy is to provide these units in developments of 30 units or less. Under the ADU Program, the FCRHA has the option to purchase up to one-third of the available ADUs and has exercised its right to purchase 40 units in eight developments scattered throughout the County for its Public Housing Program. These units are attractively designed and unrecognizable as assisted housing.

Acceptance by the community has been generally quite positive and from a management perspective there have been fewer management issues as the Public Housing residents living in the ADUs have blended well within the community. The FCRHA acquisition policy prevents purchasing more than nine units in any one development. Policy goals include: ensuring that acquired units are appropriately located, allocating scarce resources to priority investments, enhancing rental opportunities in proximity to employment centers or public transportation, and providing housing for persons with special housing needs.



Example of publicly-owned Affordable Dwelling Unit in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Policy Challenges

Among changes made to the ADU Program since its inception were attempts to offer flexibility to developers. In difficult development situations such as infill parcels, assemblage of previously developed land, or inhospitable terrain, a combination of innovation and flexibility is sometimes needed to make any development feasible. The result of the County’s attempts to offer flexibility (e.g., exemptions, modifications) is currently under review by the FCRHA to determine whether the potential supply of ADUs was adversely affected and whether more ADUs could have been created.

Another area for examination is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia to prohibit any net economic loss to developers as a result of providing ADUs. Because of this policy, Fairfax County is now challenged to incorporate ADUs into high-rise buildings (typically, five stories or more) that also have elevators and structured parking. Extensive economic modeling and discussion within the ADU Task Force occurred in recent years to determine how to make the provision of ADUs in taller buildings more economically equitable to developers. The work of the ADU Task Force seemed to show that additional density alone likely would not prevent economic loss to developers. Abatement of real estate taxes was explored, and found to be prohibited by the Commonwealth of Virginia except in extremely limited cases.

The most recent changes to the ADU Ordinance went into effect on January 31, 2004, and the Board of Supervisors is expected to turn its attention once again to the challenge of providing ADUs in taller residential structures. If this can be achieved, it would present the



opportunity of providing affordable housing around major transit centers with mixed uses to reduce the transportation cost for affordable housing residents. Fairfax County intends to explore this opportunity as fully as possible in the coming years.

Conrad Egan is the President and CEO of the National Housing Conference. Prior to being appointed to that position he served for five years as NHC's director of policy. During 2001 and 2002, Mr. Egan was on a leave of absence from NHC so that he could serve as Executive Director of the Millennial Housing Commission, established by the United States Congress to recommend ways to better support good housing for all Americans. Mr. Egan is also the chairman of the commissioners of the Fairfax, VA County Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

References

Fairfax County Department of Systems Management. (n.d.). *Economic and demographic information*. [Data file]. Available from <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/comm/demogrph/gendemo.htm>.

Fairfax County Department of Systems Management. (2002). *Nonresidential structure gross floor area*. [Data file]. Available from <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/comm/demogrph/dem/rpts/nrespd.xls>.

Virginia Employment Commission. (2004, February). *Local area unemployment statistics*. [Data file]. Available from <http://www.vec.state.va.us/vecportals/lbrmrkt/lausc/labor.cfm>.



Deconcentrating Poverty and the Race to the Bottom

Edward G. Goetz

Virtually everyone can agree that concentrated poverty is undesirable. It imposes severe costs on families who suffer from the crime and violence as well as from the degraded schools and other inferior public and private services that often characterize these neighborhoods. Concentrated poverty imposes costs on communities in the form of elevated expenditures for a more service-dependent population, while simultaneously straining revenues through the continual devaluation of property. If concentrated poverty is so destructive on an individual and community level, then it would seem clear that deconcentrating poverty is an objective worth building political support for and worth pursuing. Not necessarily.

A sustained attempt to deconcentrate poverty within the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area, described below, triggered and even widened NIMBY attitudes toward affordable housing in the region. (See Goetz, 2003, for a more detailed treatment of the issues discussed in this article). At the height of the effort to deconcentrate poverty in the region, a number of central city neighborhoods and inner ring suburbs concluded that they had, in fact, too much affordable housing and would take no more until “non-concentrated” areas took their fair share. These more affluent communities, noting the dire predictions associated with concentrated poverty, were convinced more than ever that affordable housing should be avoided. What ensued was a race to the bottom among communities in the region to off-load existing low-cost housing or avoid new affordable housing to the extent they could.

A number of factors coalesced in the early 1990s to trigger a large-scale effort to deconcentrate poverty in the Twin Cities. The region was suffering a significant spike in violent crime associated with gang and drug activity in central neighborhoods. The incidence of concentrated poverty itself had widened considerably during the 1980s. Newspaper articles and reports from civic organizations highlighted the growing economic and social disparities in the region. Then-State Senator Myron Orfield, from a district that included poverty neighborhoods in south Minneapolis, began a relentless and highly effective public education campaign with what came to be known as his “scary maps.” The maps showed concentrations of poverty, of school-children using the federal lunch program (another measure of poverty), of crime, low tax-capacity, and a

range of other factors illustrating in vivid terms the growth of areas of disadvantage in the core of the metropolitan area, spreading toward and in some cases including first ring suburbs.

Orfield’s legislation at the state house that attempted to equalize these disparities was at center-stage of regional politics from 1992 through 1995. His public education campaign convinced many people of the problems associated with concentrated poverty. Groups from central neighborhoods saw in concentrated poverty the cause of their growing problems in crime, violence and neighborhood decay. Those from the first ring suburbs recognized in Orfield’s maps a compelling explanation for the decline of their communities over the previous 10 years.

The concentrated poverty scare produced a singular response from community and political activists in the area, one probably not intended by Orfield and other advocates of deconcentration. The overriding lessons taken from the concentrated poverty scare by many in the region was roughly the following: first, having too many poor people is bad for a neighborhood and a community; second, actions that attract or anchor poor people in one place, such as the provision of social services and affordable housing, contribute to concentrated poverty and ought to be avoided; and, third, where these anchoring activities already exist in large numbers, they should be reduced (e.g., through the demolition of low-cost housing). What the concentrated poverty discourse had provided for many groups in the region was, in effect, a more acceptable rationale for NIMBYism.

Local policies and the attitudes of community groups changed accordingly. Both central cities started aggressive anti-drug programs and crime prevention programs that neighborhood groups enthusiastically endorsed. In Saint Paul, a housing inspector accompanied the police on drug raids so that units might be condemned and suspects forced to move even if no evidence of drug activity were found. The raids were highly targeted against African-Americans and other people of color; more than 90% of these raids were against non-whites, in a city that was 82% white. The city also demolished whole apartment buildings, citing concentrated poverty as a reason. In a similar fashion, Minneapolis became very aggressive in the condemnation



and demolition of low-cost housing in high-crime neighborhoods. Between 1991 and 1998, the city tore down 2,250 more units than were built during the period. For the entire decade, the city demolished nearly 5,600 housing units.

First ring suburbs pursued similar objectives. In north suburban Brooklyn Park, the city organized landlords and supported tenant-screening efforts. Several large apartment complexes were renovated for higher-income occupancy or demolished. Neighbors of one complex being considered for partial demolition and rehabilitation were canvassed by the city. Echoing the deconcentration argument, over 90% “basically said, ‘tear ‘em all down.’” Other inner-ring suburbs identified the demolition of low-cost housing as a policy objective, arguing they had too much of it. The region as a whole, despite growing by more than 350,000 people, actually lost more than 5,000 rental units between 1990 and 2000.

In a region where community politics is animated by deconcentration of poverty, renters do not fare well. The City of Minneapolis diverted millions of dollars during this period away from multi-family housing rehabilitation in core neighborhoods toward homeownership programs and toward projects in non-impacted neighborhoods. One Saint Paul community development corporation publicized the results of a community survey it conducted, in which it found that the things residents did not like about their neighborhood included “crime and disorder, *renters, other housing problems*, social characteristics and poor aesthetics...” [italics added].

In 1995, a multi-million dollar legal settlement called for the deconcentration of poverty in a north side neighborhood of Minneapolis, home to over 1,000 units of public housing. The resulting demolition of those units, the displacement of hundreds of families, the redevelopment of the 73-acre site, and the efforts to build replacement units throughout the region also exposed the divisive nature of deconcentrating poverty. In most respects, this legal settlement produced a series of actions that closely resembles what occurs in the typical federal HOPE VI public housing redevelopment project. Older, ‘dysfunctional’ public housing was demolished, the residents were displaced and dispersed, and the site was redeveloped into a lower-density, mixed-income community.

In Minneapolis, as has happened elsewhere, advocates and the low-income tenants being displaced protested their forced removal. Despite the poor conditions in the public housing projects slated for demolition, slightly more than half of the residents did not wish to move. As in most HOPE VI projects nationwide, however, the demolition and displacement of families was the one element of the project that proceeded quickly. Even in the middle of a severe affordable housing shortage, with vacancy rates at one percent, and despite community protests that temporarily halted demolition, hundreds of the city’s most affordable housing units came down.

Officials in the Twin Cities region were able to replace virtually all of the demolished public housing on a scattered site basis throughout the region, including the suburbs. This was a tremendous success that was not matched in other cities with similar settlements or HOPE VI projects. But, importantly, significant progress on the replacement housing was made only after the region had slipped into a crisis-

Deconcentration efforts may identify low-cost rental housing as a neighborhood problem, rather than a resource, putting advocates for low-income housing on the defensive.

level lack of affordable housing, when the ‘deconcentration’ rationale gave way to a more generalized need for low-cost housing in suburban areas. It was only when the development of affordable housing was de-coupled from the objective of

deconcentrating poverty that suburban communities began to make progress in developing replacement units.

Concentrated poverty, as a framework for organizing community action, is fundamentally different than previous paradigms that typically identified outside threats (e.g. red-lining by insurance and lending institutions, urban renewal, gentrification, disinvestment, insensitive public and private development schemes, etc.) to community health. The deconcentration argument, in contrast, suggests communities’ biggest problems lie within. In the Twin Cities the concentrated poverty scare oriented community activists inward, and led them to conclude that their neighborhood problems could be equated with the poor people who lived there. It is a movement that divided communities. What national crime scholar, Wesley Skogan says about anti-crime initiatives—that they can lead to “middle class residents often unit(ing) against ‘bad elements’ in their own community...”—can also be said about efforts to deconcentrate poverty. Such efforts pit one element of the community against another.

Deconcentration efforts may also identify low-cost rental housing as a neighborhood problem, rather than a resource, putting advocates for low-income housing on the defensive.

Concentrated poverty is certainly destructive to neighborhoods and families in a number of ways. Affordable housing advocates *should* include desegregation as one among their many objectives. But, whether or not to adopt the vocabulary of deconcentration that carries with it the risk of unleashing a race to the bottom, and whether or not to adopt the range of strategies associated with deconcentration, including demolition of low-cost units and the forced relocation of low-income families, are two questions that should be regarded very carefully.

Edward G. Goetz is professor and director of the Urban and Regional Planning program at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. He is the author of *Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America*, published by the Urban Institute Press in 2003. He has published several articles on the politics of affordable housing and on regional programs to disperse subsidized housing.

Reference

Goetz, E. G. (2003). *Clearing the way: Deconcentrating the poor in urban america*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.



“We Already Have Our Fair Share”: Fair Housing Complaints as a Weapon in the Battle Against Affordable Housing

Michael Allen

The rhetoric about deconcentration on the basis of income is appealing to people across the ideological spectrum. In part, it is because of such bipartisan support that the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA) and its emphasis on deconcentration was enacted. While such broad support for a policy can suggest widely shared goals, it can also demonstrate widely divergent understandings of the term deconcentration.

As with “affordable housing,” the true meaning of “deconcentration” is in the ear of the listener. A low income housing advocate may hear the term and think of mobility counseling programs that offer families a chance to get out of a disadvantaged inner city. A local elected official may think it is a way to get rid of public housing downtown and smooth the path for gentrification. To an opponent of low-cost housing, deconcentration may provide a compelling argument to limit development in a neighborhood or region of a city which, in the eyes of opponents, already has its “fair share.”¹ By themselves, each of these meanings is plausible. The fact that they may all be at cross purposes demonstrates that we must be clearer in our public discussions of language and policy direction.

Using the rhetoric of deconcentration, opponents of affordable housing have been getting more sophisticated in the tools they use to slow or stop new development. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, they mastered the use of leaflets, petitions and public testimony. During the 1990s, the trend was toward greater use of technology, as neighborhood groups amplified their messages through listserves and websites. In the early 21st century, the tool of choice seems to be aggressive use of the Fair Housing Act (FHA).

Housing providers and civil rights groups have used the FHA successfully over the past 35 years to increase

¹ *The irony, of course, is that “fair share” is such a subjective term that almost any neighborhood can claim to have achieved it, whether there is a single unit of affordable housing or thousands.*

housing opportunities for people of color and people with disabilities. (See *The NIMBY report*, Fall 2002.) Taking a page from their playbook, opponents in several states have begun to argue that placing affordable housing in disadvantaged neighborhoods is a form of race or disability discrimination. So far, such claims have been rebuffed by courts, but the delay and confusion sown by such claims is delaying the development of much needed affordable and supportive housing.

One of the most visible recent attempts by opponents to interpose claims of discrimination occurred in Minneapolis. Project for Pride in Living (PPL), a non-profit dedicated to helping low income families achieve self sufficiency, proposed to build a 20-unit supportive housing community for homeless families in which one or more members has a disability, in the Ventura Village neighborhood of the city. In August 2002, neighbors sued in federal court, claiming that the city was guilty of race discrimination for allowing PPL to build in a racially mixed neighborhood. Alleging that another supportive housing project in their neighborhood would depress property values and increase crime, the neighbors claimed that they had been discriminated against because they lived in a “predominantly non-white neighborhood,” and that “the City has forced the...Plaintiffs...to suffer the effects of increased crime and decreased property values in ways that residents of the City’s predominantly white neighborhoods do not.” The lawsuit also claimed that the prospective residents of the PPL community were discriminated against on the basis of race and disability, because the city limited their ability to “choose a dwelling in neighborhoods other than those in which the City has concentrated supportive housing.” On November 13, the court found that none of these arguments was persuasive, and denied the neighbors’ request for a preliminary injunction to stop construction. The lawsuit will now proceed toward trial, which is expected in late 2004.

In Durham, North Carolina, two African American homeowners in a community that is 90% African American, sued a developer and the city government,



alleging that they had engaged in race discrimination by locating and allowing an 88-unit, tax-credit financed, rent-to-own townhouse project in their neighborhood. The plaintiffs have been active in the formation of East Durham Fair Share, a group advocating a broader distribution of subsidized housing throughout the city. They claimed that the developer, Peter Hubicki, the city and its housing authority “intentionally maintained a policy, practice and custom that discriminated against them, as black citizens of North Carolina, on the basis of race by the placement of the Pendleton Townhome project within one-half mile of their separate residences,” in violation of the North Carolina Constitution.

As summarized in his August 14, 2003 decision dismissing the claims, Judge Howard Manning, Jr. believed plaintiffs had alleged that “saturation of minority communities with low income housing segregates and disadvantages the minority residents who live there.” Because he found that the Pendleton development “is an affordable housing complex for working moderate income families and is not the kind of project that could be classified as a concentrated low income minority housing unit,” Judge Manning determined that the city’s Housing Impact Policy, which was adopted to encourage greater dispersal of low income housing, did not apply, and that the city’s approval of Pendleton was not a violation of that policy. The plaintiffs have filed an appeal of Judge Manning’s decision; the matter will be taken up by the North Carolina Court of Appeals next year.

A newly formed neighborhood opposition group in northwest Arkansas, Citizens United for a Better Springdale (CUBS), has filed a discrimination complaint under the Fair Housing Act with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), charging that the city of Springdale uses “discriminatory zoning practices to perpetuate segregated housing patterns on the older east side of the city.” While few specifics supporting the complaint are available, CUBS president Linda Stromwall alleges in the complaint that “[i]nstead of sharing citywide its obligation to provide affordable housing, Springdale, by hiding behind its exclusive zoning practices, has placed 90 percent of its affordable and multifamily housing on the east side, while maintaining the west side for low-density, single-family zoning.”

The complaint is not specific about how such a concentration, if it existed, would violate the Fair Housing Act. “I’m not exactly sure what the complaint is alleging....I think it’s trying to say we’re trying to segregate Hispanics on the east side into high-density, low income housing,” Ernest Cate, deputy city attorney said in an interview. “If that’s the case, the facts simply do not back that up. According to the census, minorities are spread pretty evenly across the city. There may have been more recent development on the east side, but that’s because the west side is already developed,” Cate said. The city filed a response with HUD on October 10, denying the allegations and asking that the complaint be dismissed. Included in the response are 2000 census figures that indicate that Springdale’s Hispanic population is divided almost equally throughout the city. The city has also suggested that Stromwall does not have “standing” (the legal right to file a complaint) under the Fair Housing Act. The Fair Housing

Act requires HUD to conduct an investigation within 100 days and to determine whether or not reasonable cause exists to believe that discrimination has occurred.

Regardless of their eventual outcome, these cases raise interesting and difficult issues involving the concentration of

affordable housing in communities that believe they already have their fair share. When a well-to-do, predominantly white community opposes affordable housing, it is relatively easy to apply the NIMBY label, and to suggest that its intolerance is a form of discrimination. But what happens in cases such as those discussed above, when communities of color oppose such housing on the grounds that they have become “saturated” while wealthier communities have not done their fair share?

Developers of low-cost housing frequently point to the fact that land acquisition costs in middle class and wealthier neighborhoods are prohibitive, and that addressing the affordable housing crisis will require increasing the number of affordable units in already affordable neighborhoods. But pursuing this course without considering the impact on disadvantaged communities (not to mention the impact of concentration on the new low income families who will live in these

What happens when communities of color oppose affordable housing on the grounds that they have become “saturated” while wealthier communities have not done their fair share?



units) is to overlook the principle of equity behind the fair share movement. At some basic level, it is unfair to expect a handful of communities to provide all the affordable housing in a city or region.

Developers, policy makers, advocates and funders should listen carefully to the messages being sent in Minnesota, North Carolina and Arkansas. Even if these complaints are turned away by courts and administrative agencies, they remind us that our efforts to build housing for low income people must be guided by more than mere economics.

Michael Allen is a senior staff attorney and director of housing programs at the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C., where he is involved in public policy and litigation on behalf of the housing needs of people with mental disabilities. He also serves as co-director of the Building Better Communities Network (www.bettercommunities.org). He can be reached at 1101 15th Street, N.W., Suite 1212, Washington, D.C. 20005, 202-467-5730 x117, michaela@bazelon.org.

Reference

Ross, J. (Ed.) (2002, Fall). Using civil rights laws to advance affordable housing. *The NIMBY Report*.

For More Information

Minnesota Case:

Barbara McCormick, Director of Housing and Development, Project for Pride in Living. E-mail: barbara.mccormick@ppl-inc.org. Telephone: 612/874-8511. Christopher Shaheen, Esq., Dorsey & Whitney (counsel). E-mail: shaheen.christopher@dorsey.com. Telephone: 612/340-2886.

North Carolina Case:

Guy Crabtree, Esq., Pulley, Watson, King & Lischer, P.A. (counsel for Peter Hubicki). E-mail: gwc@pwkl.com. Telephone: 919/682-9691.

Arkansas Case:

Ernest Cate, Deputy City Attorney, City of Springdale. E-mail: ecate@springdaleark.org. Telephone: 479/750-8173.



Deconcentration with a Twist: The Service Hub Concept in Shelter/Service Delivery

Jennifer R. Wolch

After decades of concentrating homeless shelters and related human service facilities in areas of transitional land use on the downtown fringe, policies of deconcentration have become popular across American cities. The impulse for deconcentration is both therapeutic and expedient. Advocates have long argued against the ghettoization of impoverished, service-dependent residents in group home and SRO districts located in deteriorating downtown neighborhoods. Their rationale was that ghettoization ran counter to the goal of ‘normalization’ and integration of poor people into mainstream urban life, subjected some of our most vulnerable residents to dangerous and insalubrious treatment settings and housing locations, and forced people from all over a metropolitan region to leave their home communities in order to receive assistance.

But in an era of economic globalization and neoliberal welfare state policy, in which cities must compete fiercely for investment dollars, business travelers, tourists, and local shoppers, a new regime of “poverty management” has become common across U.S. cities. Under this regime, the more powerful engine for deconcentration has been the desire of local governments to “clean up” areas adjacent to downtown and rid them of extremely poor and visibly homeless people in order to insure that the city is attractive to the affluent. Too often, the result is local ordinances that criminalize homelessness, repeated police actions and street sweeps, demolition of encampments, closure of facilities, restrictions on facility expansions, and forced relocation of certain services to other locales.

There is the very real danger that downtown services and residential facilities will be closed or prevented from expanding to meet growing demands for services and shelter, at the same time that NIMBY forces in both inner-ring and outer suburbs block facility siting. This creates the prospect of an unending cycle of displacement or churning, from one crowded facility to another, from shelter to jail to street to sober living home, and back again. Nonetheless, many advocates have embraced deconcentration as a means to achieve their long-sought goal of a more geographically equitable

distribution of service resources. Few, however, have raised the question: what do we *lose* when services and shelter are deconcentrated?

The answer is: several things. First, when people need more than one type of service, as they often do, some concentration of facilities and programs is efficient. Concentration reduces travel time and costs, which are often physically taxing if not financially prohibitive for extremely poor or homeless individuals. Thus too much deconcentration of services can lead to inaccessibility, effectively blocking service utilization. Second, service providers located in close proximity to each other are better able to coordinate their service offerings, share information about emergent needs for assistance, and build advocacy coalitions designed to protect their interests and attract financial support. Third, extremely poor and homeless people cope with the challenges of survival by using several strategies. Adaptive strategies include cultivation of peer and homed social networks, and connection with a community of others facing similar challenges. Such networks and communities offer material, logistical, and emotional support, and their development is facilitated by some degree of concentration. Access, coordination, and social network formation are all hindered by the spatial isolation of poor people, and of service providers. Thus concentration is not an unambiguously negative geographic pattern for shelter/service resources, nor is radical deconcentration necessarily in the best interests of those reliant on services.

This mixed picture suggests the utility of a strategy of *dispersed concentration* or *small-scale service hubs*. This approach is predicated on the observation that the geographical pattern of human services can influence service delivery outcomes. Service clients frequently rely on a network of services, and when that network is highly dispersed, services become inaccessible and are less apt to be used. Also, the physical facilities that house shelter and service activities create a range of positive and negative spillover effects which extend over some geographic area, affecting clients as well as neighborhoods. Among the positive spillover effects are



the benefits that accrue to service providers in close proximity to each other, such as greater ease of inter-service coordination and referral.

By siting specific types of community-based shelter and service facilities close together, these sites become hubs that minimize user travel requirements and capture the maximum positive spillover effects, while avoiding the negative external effects of large aggregations of shelter beds and ancillary service facilities. Service hubs can be developed either within the context of new community design, or more often, by adding the basic elements of the support network onto existing urban infrastructure. In practice, service hubs should be small-scale, and artfully designed so as to seamlessly incorporate into the urban/suburban fabric—in neighborhood shopping centers, storefront offices, or run out of community facilities such as recreation centers—and thus reduce the potential for NIMBY battles.

The development of service hubs is apt to face certain obstacles. For example, most zoning ordinances do not explicitly make room for service facilities on a by-right basis. Also, because service funding typically comes from many sources and services themselves may be public, private, or nonprofit, coordination of their siting plans is difficult without a long-term vision and process of information dissemination to prospective providers about how to locate in a community. Lastly, although real or perceived spillovers from a service hub may be lower than a large-scale facility, they may still become an issue for neighbors. This problem—which is one of the most nettlesome of any challenges facing providers—may be overcome with the adoption of regional fair-share policies that insure that whereas all communities must share the burden of supporting those in need, no one community will become saturated with services and clients.

Nonetheless, the service hub concept offers the possibility of the best of both worlds: a fair distribution of service and shelter resources that does not require

people in need to leave their home communities in order to gain assistance, an accessible clustering of service facilities and programs that helps people cope and can offer more coordinated programming, and the provision of needed services while minimizing impacts on neighboring communities. This way of providing ‘help-in-place’ allows people to obtain help needed to prevent homelessness, and to retain their community ties should they temporarily lose their housing. Provisions for service hubs—just like parks, libraries, hospitals, and other socially necessary facilities—should therefore be part of every local general plan.

Jennifer S. Wolch is Professor of Geography and Director of the Center for Sustainable Cities at the University of Southern California, where she teaches courses on Los Angeles, urban social problems, and sustainable cities. Her research focuses on urban poverty, homelessness, and human service delivery. She also investigates problems of urban planning, urban open space, and human-animal relations, particularly attitudes toward animals and animal-inclusive city planning and design.

Further Reading

Dear, M., Wolch, J., & Wilson, R. (1994). *The service hub concept in human services planning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Wolch, J. (1996). “Community-Based Human Service Delivery,” *Housing Policy Debate* 7:649-672.

Wolch, J., & Dear, M. (1993). *Malign neglect: homelessness in an American city*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wolch, J., & DeVerteuil, G. (2001). New landscapes of urban poverty management. In N. Thrift and J. May (Eds.), *Time-Space* (pp. 149-168). London: Routledge.



Let My People Go: The Promise of “Deconcentration” for People with Disabilities

Michael Allen

“This is nothing but a disabilities ghetto! You have these people locked away from humanity, out of sight, where the rest of the world doesn’t have to think about their own mortality. You could’ve built this complex near civilization, or better yet, modified some existing construction. That would’ve allowed them to interact with their community.” (Eberle, n.d.).

Historically, American housing policy has not promoted housing for people with disabilities in “the American mainstream.” Over the past 30 years in particular, as people with disabilities have gradually entered the housing market, housing authorities and private developers have created thousands of apartment complexes and congregate settings that are available only to people with disabilities. They may do so out of a sincere belief that the service needs of people with disabilities are best provided in such settings, with full-time staff that provide medical, nursing or personal care services, but they do it without real reflection on how such segregated settings diminish real opportunities for community integration and economic self-sufficiency.

Some disability advocates have raised their voices in protest, and suggested that segregating people by disability is as fundamentally wrong as segregating them by race or income. The evocation of a “disabilities ghetto” suggests how closely the struggle for disability rights parallels the historic and ongoing struggles for racial and economic justice in this country. And the quotation as a whole—offered at a celebration for a housing complex built exclusively for people with disabilities—reminds us how location and tenant selection policies can have a profound effect on whether residents feel truly integrated into their surrounding community.

Beginning in the mid-1990s and culminating in passage of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) openly pursued a policy of “deconcentration” of poverty. Such efforts, designed to spread out public housing families with very low

incomes, were aimed at offering greater housing, employment and educational opportunities to those families by giving them opportunities to live with and near people with higher incomes and higher life aspirations. This article suggests that a policy of “deconcentrating” people with disabilities might deliver similar salutary effects.

HUD has framed the deconcentration debate in terms of income, but it is clear that it is also intended as a strategy to desegregate public housing. Desegregation is a term that gained currency in the African-American civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s, but it took on new meaning in the past fifteen years, as Congress broadened civil rights protections for people with disabilities. Both the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) spoke in broad and sweeping terms about bringing people with disabilities “into the American mainstream” and putting behind us the time when people with disabilities were housed in “isolated and segregated” settings. The rhetoric of “desegregation” and “integration” is alive and well in the disability rights movement, and we owe much to our brothers and sisters in the earlier civil rights struggles.

Deconcentration has a parallel significance in the disability world. When asked about their housing preferences, people with disabilities answer in much the same way as people without disabilities. (Yeich, Mowbray, Bybee et al., 1994; see also City of St. Louis, n.d., showing non-congregate housing preferences among people with disabilities). They want decent, safe and affordable housing. They want it to be both physically accessible and accessible to community services and community activities, including employment, transportation, education, health care and civic life. In short, many people with disabilities say they do not want “special needs” housing but rather housing that looks like where you and I live, and they do not want their use of health care or personal care services to define the location or appearance of their housing.

Karen Tamley, a wheelchair user and long-time advocate



for greater housing choice and self-direction for people with disabilities sums the matter up as follows:

Until people with disabilities are able to freely choose the services they need and determine where, with whom, and in which communities they will live, true integration will not be realized. If a sea change in thinking and practice is to occur, this debate must be elevated to a broader policy arena. Glimmers of hope are on the horizon. HUD seems to have heeded the outcry over mandated service requirements. One of HUD's primary disability housing programs now prohibits conditions tied to tenancy. Although this is a huge policy move in the right direction, the fact remains that countless other programs exist, funded by HUD and state dollars, that still require individuals to accept service plans as a condition of housing occupancy. Although HUD has taken a lead in shifting its policy position, a long road lies ahead for disability and fair housing advocates to ensure that others will follow. (Tamley, 2002).

Pitched battles over group homes have taken place in virtually every community in the country, and also in the halls of Congress in the 1990s, when half a dozen bills were introduced to eviscerate the disability provisions of the FHAA. Employing the rhetoric of deconcentration, that legislation would have allowed local officials to limit the number of group homes in any community through the use of spacing requirements, density limitations and maximum occupancy rules. (See historical materials available at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law's website, including Whitman & Parnas, 1999). By 1999, opposition from the entire civil rights community had convinced Congress to leave the FHAA intact, but opposition to group homes, supportive housing and other congregate settings continues throughout the country. (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2003).

If housing for people with disabilities was truly integrated throughout the community, and was not identified as "disability housing," chances are that we would spend much less time fighting against the NIMBYism of

elected officials and neighbors who resist the location of such housing in their back yards. Local elected officials have a number of tools at their disposal to achieve truly integrated housing for people with disabilities and at the same time respond to their constituents who want to keep identifiable "disability housing" out of their neighborhoods. For many urban and suburban municipalities, this win-win approach could be funded through the use of Community Development Block Grant or HOME funding to create portable housing subsidies for people with disabilities. In addition, local housing trust funds and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program can finance the creation of new multi-family units that reserve a portion of units for people with physical and mental impairments. State agencies can assist smaller communities by prioritizing state CDBG and HOME funds for development of such integrated housing.

While funding will remain an ongoing challenge, the most important barriers are attitudinal. Many government

Local elected officials have a number of tools at their disposal to achieve truly integrated housing for people with disabilities and at the same time respond to their constituents who want to keep identifiable "disability housing" out of their neighborhoods.

disability agencies continue to focus on the deficits of people with disabilities rather than their strengths. Many care providers continue to offer "one size fits all" supports rather than flexible, on-demand services tailored to the needs of each individual. Federal and state disability policy still has an institutional bias that results in far too many people with disabilities living in nursing

homes or other congregate settings because Medicaid and other benefit programs will reimburse for such care, but will not pay for the kinds of services people may need to thrive in more integrated settings. Some people with disabilities worry about the stigma and social isolation that often come along with truly integrated housing opportunities. But these barriers are surmountable, as has been shown by housing providers all over the country:

· Ohio Department of Mental Health adopted its "housing as housing" policy in 1988, declaring that "[h]ousing should be available in settings which maximize integration of mentally ill people and increase opportunities for acceptance into the community." (See Ohio Dep't of Mental Health, 1996.)



· William Malleris, a Chicago-area developer and wheelchair user completed the 48-unit Maple Court apartments in Naperville in 1996. The project, a national model, integrated 20 barrier-free units for people with disabilities with 28 apartments for people without disabilities. (See Malleris, 1999.)

· The Self-Determination Housing Project in Pennsylvania has helped to move at least 72 people out of institutional or congregate settings and into their own homes. (See Self-Determination Housing Project, n.d.)

· The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has set aside \$2 million to fund tenant-based rental vouchers for people with disabilities who are at risk of unnecessary institutionalization. (See Texas Dep't of Human and Community Affairs, n.d.)

These examples demonstrate that the knowledge is in place to develop housing for people even with the most serious impairments. It is time now to develop the political will to adopt a real and robust “deconcentration” policy for people with disabilities, a policy that returns to the original vision of the FHAA (which promised people with disabilities the opportunity to have “housing of their choice in the community”) and the ADA (which says that government sponsored housing programs should be designed in a way that people with disabilities “have the maximum opportunity to interact with people who do not have disabilities”).

References

City of St. Louis (n.d.). *St. Louis Five Year Strategy Consolidated Plan, 2000-2004*. Available at <http://stlouis.missouri.org/5yearstrategy/index.html>.

Eberle, P. (n.d.). The master archer. Retrieved January 17, 2004, from <http://members.tripod.com/guidingangel2/id20.htm>.

Malleris, W. (1999, October). *Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary*. Presented at a hearing of the Subcommittee on the Constitution on H.R. 2347. Available at <http://www.house.gov/judiciary/mall1028.htm> and describes the manner in which he developed Maple Court Apartments in Naperville, Illinois as truly integrated.

National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2003, Aug., Oct., Dec.) *The NIMBY Report*. Available at <http://www.nlihc.org/nimby/index.htm>.

Ohio Dep't of Mental Health. (1996, June). *Housing as housing*. Available at <http://www.newhousingopp.org/hah.htm>.

Self-Determination Housing Project. (n.d.). *About SDHP*. Available at <http://www.sdhp.org/aboutus.htm>.

Tamley, K. (2002, December). *Fair play on the housing front*. Paper presented at the 9th Annual Great Cities Winter Forum, Chicago, IL. Available at http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/events/gci_winterforum_site/background%20resources/fairhousing.doc.

Texas Dep't of Housing and Community Affairs. (n.d.). *Olmstead Rental Assistance*. Available at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/olmstead.htm>.

Whitman, C., & Parnas, S. (1999). *Fair housing: The siting of group homes for the disabled and children*. Washington, D.C: National League of Cities. Available at <http://www.bazelon.org/issues/housing/cpfha/>.

Yeich, S. Mowbray, C.T., Bybee, D., et al (1994). The case for a “supported housing” approach: A study of consumer housing and support preferences. *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal*, 18(2).



A Review of the Findings: The Deconcentration of Poverty During the 1990s

Irene Basloe Saraf

In May 2003, the Urban Institute (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003) and the Brookings Institution (Jargowsky, 2003) published articles describing surprising trends in the concentration of poverty over the course of the 1990s. Both articles relied on data from the 2000 Census. Both shared the overarching finding that, after two decades of increasing concentration, poverty had become less concentrated between 1990 and 2000, with a smaller share of poor people living in the very poorest neighborhoods.

This finding represents a marked change from the trends of the 1970s and 1980s. In simple terms, poverty concentration refers to the extent to which poor people are living in the same neighborhood as other poor people. Between 1970 and 1990, the concentration of poverty increased, with 16.5% of poor city dwellers living in extreme poverty tracts in 1970 and 28.5% living in such tracts in 1990 (Kasarda, 1993). The increased concentration of poverty during those decades was the subject of much attention from and consternation among academics, advocates and policymakers. As a result, deconcentrating poverty became a policy goal.

Poverty became more concentrated in the 1970s and 1980s for several reasons. The economy of the central cities weakened during those decades, as industry and jobs moved to the suburbs or overseas. This left a mismatch between jobs and people, as well as a mismatch between the skills of poor city dwellers and the jobs available (Walker & Ting, 1996). Blue collar work opportunities were moving elsewhere and white collar positions required more substantial education and skills (Walker & Ting, 1996). In addition, patterns of development in the suburbs exacerbated segregation on an economic basis, preventing poor people from moving closer to the new job centers (Jargowsky, 2003). But those people with the economic wherewithal to move away from the central cities tended to do so, including middle class people of color, who found the suburbs more accessible to them because of federal fair housing legislation and enforcement (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003).

As a result, poor people were left behind in the central cities in poor neighborhoods that were becoming

increasingly poorer and more isolated. With the departure of the middle-class, these poor neighborhoods lost the institutions (such as churches and businesses) that middle-class residents had supported and the role models and networks that middle-class residents had provided. The departure of middle-class people, both white and of color, for the suburbs left the cities with shrinking tax bases and resources. For those left behind, the isolation and concentration of poor people served to intensify poverty's effects (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003).

Over the course of the 1990s, however, the general trend towards concentration has reversed. The share of the metropolitan poor in "extreme poverty neighborhoods"—neighborhoods where the poverty rate is 40% or more—declined from 17% to 12%, putting it below 1980 levels (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003). The absolute number of people in such neighborhoods fell by 24% or by 2.5 million people and the number of neighborhoods that could be characterized as extreme poverty neighborhoods declined (Jargowsky, 2003).¹

While this decline in the concentration of poverty in the poorest neighborhoods is striking, it can be qualified in several ways. As noted, the share of poor people living in extreme poverty tracts (poverty rate of 40% or greater) declined during the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, the share of poor people in high poverty tracts (poverty rate of 30% or greater) also fell and the share of poor people in low poverty tracts (poverty rate less than 10%) remained nearly the same. But the share of poor people in the mid-range tracts—tracts with poverty rates of 10% to 20% and with poverty rates of 20% to 30%—increased (Kingsley & Pettit).

¹ It should be noted that the Brookings author and the Urban Institute authors do not use the same labels, with the Urban Institute authors defining "extreme poverty neighborhoods" as having poverty rates of 40% and higher and "high poverty neighborhoods" as neighborhoods having poverty rates of 30% and higher, while the Brookings author uses the term "high poverty neighborhoods" for neighborhoods with poverty rates of 40% and higher. This article will follow the Urban Institute terminology, even when describing the Brookings results.



In making urban-suburban comparisons, the researchers found a divergence between trends in the central cities and the suburbs. In the central cities of the 100 largest metropolitan areas, there was a decrease in the number of high poverty neighborhoods from 3,366 in 1990 to 3,231 in 2000. Meanwhile, number of high poverty tracts in the suburbs of those metro areas increased from 408 in 1980 to 772 in 2000. This represented an increase from 482,000 poor residents to 1.07 million poor residents in those tracts over those decades. Despite these increases in absolute numbers, the share of poor people living in high poverty neighborhoods declined in both the central cities and the suburbs of the 100 largest metropolitan areas (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003). One specific area of concern arising from the analysis of poverty rates across metropolitan regions is the increase in the poverty rates on the outer borders of central cities and in the inner ring suburbs (Jargowsky, 2003).

The changes in the concentration of poverty over the 1990s can also be examined through the lens of race. African-Americans were the predominant race—making up more than 60% of the population—in half of all high poverty tracts in 1980, but they were the predominant race in only 39% of all such tracts in 2000. Whites were predominant in 18% of all high poverty tracts in 1980 and in 14% of such tracts in 2000. Predominantly Latino high poverty tracts increased, however, from 13% of all high poverty tracts in 1980 to 20% in 2000. Tracts with no predominant race or ethnicity increased from 21% to 26% of all tracts over the two decades.

Despite these variations, when analyzed from the view of the percentage of poor people of each race living in extreme poverty neighborhoods, there were declines across the board (Jargowsky, 2003). These declines were especially significant for poor African-Americans and Native Americans. The chart on this page shows these changes.

The Urban Institute and Brookings Institution articles also analyzed poverty concentration on a macro level, comparing geographic regions and rural areas to

metropolitan areas. Of the four major geographic regions of the country—Northeast, Midwest, South and West—three experienced declines in the percentage of poor people living in high poverty neighborhoods, while one region had an increase. The share of poor people living in high poverty neighborhoods dropped slightly in the Northeast (from 31% in 1990 to 30% in 2000), declined significantly in the Midwest (from 36% in 1990 to 26% in 2000) and the South (from 34% in 1990 to 25% in 2000), and increased in the West (from 29% in 1990 to 36% in 2000) (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003). Los Angeles exemplified the poverty concentration trends in the West, where the increased concentration of poverty diverged markedly from other metropolitan areas. In the Los Angeles metropolitan area, the share of poor people living in extreme poverty neighborhoods increased from 9.0% in 1990 to 14.9% in 2000 (Jargowsky, 2003) and the share of poor people living in high poverty neighborhoods increased from 29% in

1990 to 36% in 2000 (Kingsley & Pettit). One explanation for this increase in concentrated poverty over the decade is the increase in the number of *barrios*, high poverty Hispanic neighborhoods (Jargowsky, 2003).

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Poor in Extreme Poverty Neighborhoods	
	1990	2000
African-American	30.4	18.6
Asian	12.7	9.8
Latino	21.5	13.8
Native American	30.6	19.5
White	7.1	5.9

What effects did the lessened concentration of poverty have on neighborhoods? High poverty neighborhoods experienced improvements on a variety of measures during the 1990s. In those neighborhoods, among people 25 years of age and older, there was a decrease in the percentage without a high school degree and an increase in the percentage with a college degree. The percentage of female-headed households declined while the percentage of women 16 years of age and older who were working increased. The percentage of people in high poverty neighborhoods on public assistance dropped from 24% in 1990 to 12% in 2000 (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003). As these statistics followed general trends, however, the gap in these measures between high poverty neighborhoods and other neighborhoods did not narrow over the decade (Kingsley & Pettit, 2003).

While the overall decline in the concentration of poverty is worth celebrating, questions and concerns remain.



The increase of concentrated poverty in the inner ring suburbs raises worries about deepening stratification within urban areas and the impact of sprawl. The deconcentration of poverty in the central cities may be cited as proof of the value of community development, showing that it is worth trying to improve conditions in poor neighborhoods. But gentrification is likely to have played a role as well, as poor neighborhoods become the targets for residential development unaffordable to poor people.

Both articles give the economic boom of the 1990s credit for the deconcentration of poverty. But additional research is needed to explain the connection between the variations and exceptions to the overarching deconcentration trend and the nuances of economic conditions in the 1990s. As the boom went bust at the beginning of this decade, it is an open question whether the trend toward deconcentration will continue or will reverse course. Given the deleterious effects of concentrated poverty, further analysis of the causes and continued tracking of the trends will be welcome.

Irene Basloe Saraf is the Associate Director of the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Endnotes

Kingsley, G. T. & Pettit, K. L. S. (2003, May). *Concentrated Poverty: A Change in Course*. (Neighborhood Change in Urban America Series). Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.

Jargowsky, P.A. (2003, May). *Stunning progress, hidden problems: The dramatic decline of concentrated poverty in the 1990s*. (The Living Cities Census Series). Brookings Institution: Washington, D.C.

Kasarda, J. D. (1993). Inner-city concentrated poverty and neighborhood distress: 1970-1990. *Housing Policy Debate*, 4(3), 254-302.

Kasarda, J. D., & Ting, K. (1996). Joblessness and poverty in America's central cities: Causes and policy prescriptions. *Housing Policy Debate*, 7(2), 387-419.





JOIN NLIHC

NLIHC is a membership organization open to individuals, organizations, corporations and government agencies. Each membership makes a difference. Our members are active in setting the Coalition's agenda and we value member input. A proven and effective way to build and maintain healthy communities is through well-informed citizens taking positive action. Membership in NLIHC assures you access to the latest information on national, state and local housing advocacy efforts, housing research and publications, and networking opportunities. Your membership enables NLIHC to continue its mission.

Benefits of Membership

- ***Memo to Members***
Members receive this much admired weekly newsletter by e-mail.
- **Calls to Action**
Members are notified through e-mail or fax notification of significant policy developments requiring constituent calls to Congress.
- ***Shelterforce* Subscription**
- **Discounted Conference Fees**
NLIHC hosts an annual policy conference and leadership reception in Washington, DC. The conference draws advocates, researchers, academics, low income individuals and government experts together to provide expertise and updates to attendees on current federal housing policy initiatives.
- **Discounted Publication Fees**
In addition to annual publications, such as *Out of Reach* and the *Advocate's Guide* members may purchase other publications produced by NLIHC at reduced rates.
- **Telephone resource referrals with linkage to state and regional networks**
- **Voting privileges in NLIHC board elections**
- **Participation in policy-setting decisions of the Coalition.**

In addition to extended benefits, such as national and regional conferences, policy papers and research publications, the NLIHC staff is available to assist members with research questions, organizing techniques and general information. If you are interested in making a difference in your community and becoming an active partner in a national network for change, join us!



National Low Income Housing Coalition Membership Form

Membership Types

Individual

- Low Income \$20
 Regular \$50
 Sustaining \$200

Nonprofit Organizations & Government Agencies

(by operating budget)

- Up to \$100,000 \$50
 \$100,000–249,000 \$100
 \$250,000–499,999 \$200
 \$500,000–999,999 \$350
 \$1,000,000–1,500,000 \$750
 over \$1,500,000 \$1000

Corporations

- Corporations \$1000

Nonprofit organizations, corporations and government agencies may list additional staff to receive *Memo to Members* on the back of the form

- I am joining NLIHC
 renewing my membership

Yes! I want to be an NLIHC member for the year ending **6/30/05** \$_____

Yes! I would like to contribute to the Scholarship Fund to support the participation of low income people in NLIHC. \$_____

Total amount enclosed: \$_____

Member Information (please print)

Name of member _____
 Primary contact person _____
 (if organizational membership)
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____
 (required to receive the newsletter)
 Congressional Dist/Rep name _____

Please contact us if you cannot receive the newsletter, Memo to Members, via email.

Payment

- Check enclosed
 Visa Mastercard American Express

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp Date _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

Please return completed form and payment to:

NLIHC
 1012 14th Street NW, Suite 610
 Washington DC 20005

202.662.1530
 202.393.1973 fax
 www.nlihc.org
 membership@nlihc.org

Dues and gifts are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code, except \$15 for production costs.



Organizational members may list additional staff to receive Memo to Members by email

Name: _____
Name: _____

Email: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Name: _____

Email: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Name: _____

Email: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Name: _____

Email: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Name: _____

Email: _____
Email: _____





NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION PUBLICATIONS CATALOG

Out of Reach: America's Housing Wage Climbs

In 2003, the national housing wage—the amount that a person working full-time had to earn per hour to be able to afford a modest two-bedroom unit—was \$15.21. For each county, state, and metropolitan region, *Out of Reach* provides data on how much a person needs to earn to afford modest rental housing. The housing wage has become a part of the housing lexicon, as advocates, legislators, and the media find *Out of Reach* an invaluable source of information about the affordable housing crisis. In addition, individuals look to *Out of Reach* to help them place their own housing situation in context.

Sept 2003
NLIHC Members \$15 All others \$25

2004 Advocates' Guide to Housing and Community Development

Whether you are a newcomer to housing policy or a seasoned advocate, the *Advocates' Guide to Housing and Community Development Policy* will help you stay on top of what's new in the world of housing. The *2004 Advocates' Guide* includes almost 60 chapters describing programs and issues from the Community Development Block Grant to YouthBuild, as well as current policy proposals including the National Housing Trust Fund. The guide represents the work of many national and local advocacy groups who have generously provided substantive information. Several appendices include information on the federal legislative process and effective lobbying strategies and tactics.

April 2004
NLIHC Members \$15 All others \$25

Changing Priorities: The Federal Budget and Housing Assistance 1976-2007

Is Congress increasing or decreasing its support for affordable housing? Look to *Changing Priorities* for the answer. The report provides an overview of HUD budget trends from 1976 through 2007 as measured in inflation-adjusted dollars. The report also looks at assisted housing as a proportion of HUD's budget authority, addresses spending trends for a number of major HUD programs, and shows who benefits from federal housing subsidies. Through graphs and text, *Changing Priorities* provides advocates with a comprehensive picture of the federal commitment to affordable housing.

August 2002
NLIHC Members \$15 All others \$20

Low Income Housing and Services Programs: Towards a New Perspective

This paper provides a historical overview of low income housing that linked with services programs, now known as *Housing Plus Services*. The paper also introduces a new phraseology and core principles for *Housing Plus Services* programs.

March 2001
NLIHC Members \$5 All others \$10

A Report on State-Funded Rental Assistance Programs: A Patchwork of Small Measures

This study is the first attempt to collect information from every state and the District of Columbia on the rental assistance programs supported solely with state or local resources. For each state's programs, the report describes the assistance provided, who is served by each program, and the funding level.

March 2001
NLIHC Members \$15 All others \$25

Scarcity and Success: Perspectives on Assisted Housing

This report consolidates what is known and not known about voucher use. In addition to synthesizing the literature on voucher use, it incorporates the results of a survey of Section 8 administrators and two meetings of voucher stakeholders. The report concludes that HUD should track program results and provide incentives to public housing authorities to improve Section 8 administration.

March 2000
NLIHC Member \$15 All others \$25

Our Website is our most up-to-date resource!

www.nlihc.org

- Current and past **Memo to Members** weekly newsletters
- Information on the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) budget
- Information on state housing coalitions
- Legislative Updates, Calls to Action and News Alerts
- Lots of links, issue papers, and information about our Board, our staff and our mission
- **New!** Local Area Low Income Housing Database
An assessment of local housing conditions from the 2000 Census.
Available at www.nlihc.org/research/lalihd/.



Sent free to NLIHC members

America's Neighbors: The Affordable Housing Crisis and the People it Affects

For decades, housing advocates have talked about the number of *households* experiencing housing problems. For the first time, a new report breaks out the number of *people* experiencing housing problems, and the results are striking. Nearly 65 million low income people - 24% of the entire U.S. population- are experiencing problems including cost burdens, substandard conditions, overcrowding, or homelessness. *America's Neighbors: The Affordable Housing Crisis and the People it Affects* uses data from the most recent American Housing Survey (2001) to paint a picture of who is impacted by the country's lack of affordable housing.

February 2004

NLIHC Members Each current membership will receive a copy in the mail.

Additional copies / All others \$10

Losing Ground in the Best of Times: Low Income Renters in the 1990s

The 1990s were a time of economic expansion but the rising tide did not lift all boats. Despite improved income and housing conditions for many Americans, housing problems became more concentrated among the lowest income rental households, and their access to affordable rental units declined. Using HUD Special Tabulations of 1990 and 2000 Census data, *Losing Ground in the Best of Times: Low Income Renters in the 1990s* examines national and state-level trends during the decade and discusses policy implications of the results.

February 2004

NLIHC Members Each current membership will receive a copy in the mail.

Additional copies / All others \$10

Order Form

Title	Quantity	Price

	total	_____

mail completed form to:

NLIHC
1012 14th Street NW,
Suite 610
Washington, DC 20005

or fax to: 202.393.1973

Name _____
Organization _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
Email _____

Check
Visa Mastercard American Express
Name on card _____
Signature _____
Credit Card Number _____
Expiration Date _____

Memo to Members

NLIHC's weekly newsletter, *Memo to Members*, is widely considered to be *the* authoritative voice on current federal housing policy. *Memo* provides up-to-date information on proposed bills and federal legislation, HUD budget reports, reports from the field, synopses of new housing research, and a weekly column by NLIHC President Sheila Crowley. *Memo* is sent to members each week by email or fax. To check your membership status and order, e-mail our membership associate at membership@nlihc.org.

The NIMBY Report

NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard – symbolizes the actions neighborhoods use to exclude certain people because they are homeless, poor, or disabled, or because of their race or ethnicity. The NIMBY Report supports inclusive communities by sharing news of the NIMBY syndrome and efforts to overcome it. Published for nearly 10 years by the American Friends Service Committee, it is now published by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, in collaboration with the Building Better Communities Network.

Spring 2001 NIMBY:

Smart Growth and Affordable Housing

Fall 2001 NIMBY: *Does Design Matter*

Spring 2002 NIMBY: *The Olmstead Factor: Integrating Housing for People with Disabilities*

Fall 2002 NIMBY: *Using Civil Rights Laws to Advance Affordable Housing*

No. 1 2003 NIMBY: *From NIMBY to YIMBY : Lessons in Yes in My Back Yard*

March 2004 NIMBY: *Deconstructing "Deconcentration"*



About The NIMBY Report

NIMBY—“Not In My Back Yard”—has become the symbol for neighborhoods that exclude certain people because they are homeless, poor, or disabled, or because of their race or ethnicity.

The NIMBY Report supports inclusive communities by sharing news of the NIMBY syndrome and efforts to overcome it. It is published by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Irene Basloe Saraf was the staff editor for this issue.

A monthly edition, prepared in collaboration with the Building Better Communities Network, is distributed as a monthly supplement to NLIHC’s weekly newsletter, *Memo to Members*. Semi-annual issue reports such as this provide in-depth analysis on specific subjects.

The NIMBY Report Advisory Board

Michael Allen

Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Building Better Communities Network
Washington, DC

Reed Colfax

Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights
Under the Law
Washington, DC

Sheila Crowley

National Low Income Housing Coalition
Washington, DC

Tim Iglesias

University of San Francisco School of Law
San Francisco, CA

Ann Norton

Housing Preservation Project
Los Alamos, NM

Jaimie Ross

1000 Friends of Florida
Tallahassee, FL

James Yagley

Housing Assistance Council
Washington, DC

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Board of Directors

Nancy Andrews, Low Income Investment Fund,
Oakland, CA

Nancy Bernstine, McAuley Institute, Silver Spring, MD
Jan Breidenbach, First Vice Chair, Southern California
Association for Non-Profit Housing, Los Angeles, CA

Patty Campbell, Michigan Resident Leadership
Network, River Rouge, MI

Donald Chamberlain, AIDS Housing of Washington,
Seattle, WA

Telissa Dowling, New Jersey Department of Community
Affairs, Resident Advisory Board, Guttenberg, NJ

Bill Faith, Chairman, Coalition on Housing and
Homelessness in Ohio, Columbus, OH

Tim Funk, Utah HUD Tenants Association, Salt Lake
City, UT

Charles Gardner, Affordable Housing Coalition of
South Carolina, Greenville, SC

Melanie Greene, Florida Housing Coalition, Sarasota, FL

Chip Halbach, Minnesota Housing Partnership,
Minneapolis, MN

Dushaw Hockett, Second Vice Chair, Center for
Community Change, Washington, DC

Lynne Ide, Secretary, Connecticut Housing Coalition,
Wethersfield, CT

Joy Johnson, Public Housing Association of Residents,
Charlottesville, VA

Blanca Juarez, Colonias Unidas, Rio Grande City, TX

Moises Loza, Treasurer, Housing Assistance Council,
Washington, DC

Tim Moran, Northgate Residents Association,
Burlington, VT

Regina Morgan, Peoria Housing Authority, Peoria, IL

George Moses, Pennsylvania Low Income Housing
Coalition, Pittsburgh, PA

Ann Norton, Housing Preservation Project, St. Paul, MN

Nicolas Retsinas, Joint Center for Housing Studies,
Harvard, Cambridge, MA

Patricia Rouse, Enterprise Foundation, Columbia, MD

Barbara Sard, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities,
Brookline, MA

Lydia Tom, Enterprise Foundation, New York, NY

Cushing Dolbeare, Founder and Chair Emeritus,
Mitchellville, MD, (Ex-officio)

Sheila Crowley, President, National Low Income
Housing Coalition, Washington, DC, (Ex-officio)





National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)
1012 Fourteenth Street NW, Suite 610, Washington, D.C. 20005
202.662.1530; Fax 202.393.1973; info@nlihc.org; www.nlihc.org

The NIMBY Report, March 2004
Deconstructing "Deconcentration"
Members : additional copies \$10
Non Member Price: \$10

