



St. Louis Regional  
Sustainable  
Communities

Housing Authorities in the St. Louis Region

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## **Introduction**

East West Gateway interviewed leaders of local housing authorities in the St. Louis region to inform the Regional Housing Assessment and Housing Plan, both required components of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. In-person interviews were conducted with leaders of seven public housing authorities. The objectives of the interviews were to: (1) understand the housing authorities' perspectives on public housing, current programs, concerns for the future, and views on sustainability in the region; (2) explore the working relationship between local governments, other organizations and housing authorities; and (3) strengthen the relationship between the Consortium Partners of the regional planning effort and the region's housing authorities. This report provides a brief overview of how housing authorities function before summarizing the responses of the interviews and providing key findings based on the interviews. These findings will be incorporated into the Housing Assessment.

## **Background**

### Role of Housing Authorities

Housing authorities (HAs) are responsible for the management and operation of their local public housing program and are funded through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The governance and programming of the HA is determined by state statute.

On-going functions include:

- Assure compliance with leases - the lease must be signed by both parties
- Set other charges (e.g., security deposit, excess utility consumption, and damages to unit)
- Perform periodic reexaminations of the family's income, at least once every 12 months
- Transfer families from one unit to another, in order to correct over/under crowding, repair or renovate a dwelling, or because of a resident's request to be transferred
- Terminate leases when necessary
- Maintain the development in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition

Housing authorities may provide other services such as homeownership opportunities for qualified families, employment training opportunities, other special training and employment programs for residents, and support programs for the elderly. However, such services require

partnerships or additional funds and are therefore infrequently administered by HAs in the region.

### Types of Housing Authorities

Housing authorities in the St. Louis region sponsor two housing programs: Low Rent Traditional Public Housing and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Low Rent Public Housing is where the authority owns, manages, and maintains the housing developments. Section 8 is the federal housing voucher Program, where eligible participants are free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. Smaller housing authorities (Alton, Granite City, Festus, Olivette, Hillsdale, Pagedale, Kirkwood, and Wellston) support only the Low Rent program, two (Franklin County and St. Charles County) offer only the Section 8 Voucher program and the larger HAs in the region offer both programs (St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, East St. Louis, Madison County, and St. Clair County).

### Eligibility Criteria

Public housing is a non-entitlement program, which means that not everyone who is eligible is guaranteed benefit. Furthermore, the eligibility criteria considers income limits based on the Area Median Income and therefore, an individual may be eligible at one Housing Authority but not another. The finance model is to ensure that individuals pay a maximum of 30 percent of their income on housing.

According to HUD, public housing (Low-Rent) is limited to low-income families and individuals. A HA determines eligibility based on: 1) annual gross income; 2) whether one qualifies as elderly, a person with a disability, or as a family; and 3) U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. HAs will deny admission to any applicant whose habits and practices may be expected to have a detrimental effect on other tenants or on the project's environment. HAs use income limits developed by HUD. HUD sets the lower income limits at 80 percent and very low-income limits at 50 percent of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which applicants choose to live.

Eligibility for a Section 8 housing voucher is determined by the HA based on the total annual gross income and family size. Vouchers are limited to US citizens and specified categories of non-citizens who have eligible immigration status. In general, the family's income may not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live. By law, a HA must provide 75 percent of its vouchers to applicants whose incomes do not exceed 30 percent of the area median income.

### Funding

Housing authorities are funded through the federal government. There are two major forms of subsidy: the operating fund and the capital fund. HAs may also seek additional funds for public housing through a competitive process. For example, there has been competitive funding for Family Self Sufficiency coordinators and Resident Opportunity and Self Sufficiency (ROSS) grants. Housing authorities may also receive special funding through special congressional earmarks.

In recent years, Congress has not provided sufficient funding for the operating fund, and therefore HAs have been funded at a percentage of the need for operating subsidies, determined by a formula. According to the National Housing Law Project, there is a national gap in funding that is estimated as high as \$32 billion.<sup>1</sup>

The National Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is an affordable housing production program intended to complement existing federal, state and local efforts to increase and preserve the supply of decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing for extremely low and very low-income households, including homeless families. Funds are allocated to states, and a broad range of organizations are eligible to apply for money from the Housing Trust Fund including local governments, housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, private developers and private lenders. For FY2011, HUD is seeking \$1 billion to fund capital investment under HTF.

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<sup>1</sup> National Housing Law Project (2012) Federal Funding for Public Housing. *National Housing Law Project Resource Center*. Accessed on 4/6/2012 from <http://www.nhlp.org/resourcecenter?tid=108>

HTF is a block grant where the federal government distributes funds to states by formula, and states have flexibility to use the funds to meet local needs in the way they determine is most effective and efficient. The grants must meet and comply with the basic requirements established under the Act to increase and preserve the supply of rental housing and to increase homeownership for extremely low and very low-income families. At least 80 percent of the funds must be used for rental housing; up to 10 percent for homeownership; and up to 10 percent for the grantee's reasonable administrative and planning costs.

HUD states that, "HTF funds may be used for the production or preservation of affordable housing through the acquisition, new construction, reconstruction, and/or rehabilitation of non-luxury housing with suitable amenities. All HTF-assisted units will be required to have a minimum affordability period of 30 years. In the first year of funding, the proposed rule requires that 100 percent of the HTF funds used to produce rental units must benefit extremely low-income families or families with incomes below the poverty line, whichever is greater."<sup>2</sup>

## **Housing Policies and Programs**

The following is a brief summary of housing policies and programs that were referenced in the interviews. A more detailed description of the policies is included in Appendix A.

### Social Services Policies

**Housing Choice Voucher Family Self Sufficiency Program:** A HUD program to facilitate resident's economic independence and self-sufficiency by creating community strategies that help voucher families obtain and maintain employment. The program involves collaboration with social services to establish a comprehensive program as well as provides the opportunity to put income increases into an interest bearing escrow account. A separate program, the public housing FSS program, is available for public housing residents.

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<sup>2</sup> HUD, (2012) Housing Trust Fund. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Accessed on 4/6/2012 from <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/htf.cfm>

**Drug Elimination Funds:** A former HUD program that provided funds for public housing authorities designated entities to develop and finance drug and drug-related crime elimination efforts in their developments. The funds supported additional, non-housing services. The funds have not been available for at least 5 years.

#### Funding and Development Policies

**HOME Funds:** The HOME program was designed and implemented in order to increase the amount of affordable housing in the United States for its citizens, especially for those that are below the national and State poverty guidelines. It is a Federal Block grant program, where states receive funding to allocate to local communities. Currently there is a threat of ceased funding for this program.

**The Replacement Housing Factor Funds:** Capital Fund Grants that are awarded to HAs for the sole purpose of developing new public housing units to replace removed units. The funds must be used in a period of up to five years.

**Section 8 Portability:** The transfer process that enables Housing Choice Voucher holders to relocate and select housing anywhere in the United States. The Housing Authority cooperates with other housing authorities in the portability process in order to further increase a participant's residential choice and mobility and encourage social and economic integration.

#### Federal Housing Initiatives

**HOPE VI:** A HUD program started in 1992 based on the concept of New Urbanism, where communities must be dense, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-accessible. Instead of high-rise apartment buildings, housing units were more commonly row houses, private houses and duplexes that encouraged direct interaction with the street. Funding for this program was awarded through a competitive grant process. St. Louis City received funding to complete a redevelopment in North City.

**Choice Neighborhoods:** Grants that will support the development of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs.

**Rural Family Development Property:** Financed through the USDA, the Rural Family Development program provides assistance for apartment living to rural Americans who cannot afford the purchase price and maintenance costs of their own individual house. The program also provides money for rental properties intended for low and moderate-income tenants.

## **Methodology**

HUD provided a list of Housing Authorities in the St. Louis eight county region. The list included the address, name and phone number of a contact for each of the 16 authorities as well as the type of program(s) administered by each (Low Rent, Section 8, or both). From this list, the respective directors were called to schedule an interview. Prior to the meeting, each director was sent a description of the planning process, objectives for the meeting, and list of questions by email (See Appendix B). In all but one of the interviews, a representative from East-West Gateway were present at the interview. The interviews lasted from 25 to 75 minutes. At the start, the interviewees were informed about the overall project and the confidential nature of their comments. Upon completion of the interviews, the interviewer wrote up the notes from each, created a table that compared the topics of interest (funding, challenges, working relationships with government, housing issues), and researched relevant housing policies and programs. This final report was authored to inform the Regional Housing Assessment and Housing Plan. A shorter brief was also produced, which serve as a summary of the project.

## **Summary of Interviews**

### Overview

Interviews were conducted with the following seven Housing Authorities: St. Louis City, Madison County, St. Louis County, St. Clair County, Kirkwood, Festus and Granite City. (See Appendix C). Sixteen housing authorities were contacted but a meeting could not be set up during the project timeline with some of the authorities. The HAs range in size and type of

services they offer. The three smaller city housing authorities manage public government subsidized housing only and are located within a larger county program. Kirkwood HA offers subsidized senior housing only. Festus HA manages a subdivision of 65 single-family houses and Granite City HA supports 361 units of public housing. The HAs have been established for at least 20 years. The larger county housing authorities<sup>3</sup> sponsor both public housing as well the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. St. Louis County has 530 housing units and 6,000 vouchers. St. Louis City owns 3,016 units and oversees 6,539 vouchers. St. Claire County has 1,065 units and 1,550 vouchers. Madison County owns 227 units and did not report the number of vouchers they oversee.

The HA directors reported that their main duties include:

- Managing the residents and maintaining the building infrastructure
- Handling the day-to-day operations of public housing
- Orchestrating new development, capitol fund improvements and rehabilitating Section 8 (HA owned) property.
- Checking the eligibility and background of clients
- Serving as landlord for the public housing properties

Housing authorities are funded solely by federal sources (HUD) along with rental payments received from occupants. The two main sources for public housing are the Capitol Improvement Fund and the operating subsidy. HUD supplies housing authorities with funds to pay the Housing Voucher subsidy, although there is a maximum number of vouchers allotted to a HA. Most of HAs did not report any plans for new developments at this time. In the past few years, four housing authorities engaged in development projects using a variety of financial strategies, including: HUD Replacement Housing Factor Funds, Low Income Housing Tax Credits (where the housing authority serves as the developer), private partnerships for mixed income property under the HOPE IV program, and stimulus funding for “green” development of 43 new multifamily units.

### Partnerships and Collaborations

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<sup>3</sup> St. Louis City will be considered a larger county housing authority.



HAs were asked about their partnerships and working relationships with the other housing authorities as well as other area services and organizations. The interviewed housing authorities vary in their collaborations and partnerships. The larger housing authorities expressed a lack of time and funding to do anything extra beyond managing the housing programs. For example, one HA reported, “Managing public housing is enough”. Additionally, some housing authorities mentioned that the different sizes and type of programming offered by other housing authorities in the Region made it difficult to collaborate. The smaller housing authorities, however, do work with one another by offering support to one another. One HA reported meeting the director of another small HA at a conference and establishing a telephone relationship. They often discuss concerns, such as funding.

All housing authorities refer clients to social services. At least one HA offers the *Housing Choice Voucher Family Self Sufficiency Program* (See Appendix A for more information). The program is intended to foster client’s economic independence and self-sufficiency. However, the HA is unable to provide the additional services necessary to help the voucher families obtain and maintain employment and the HA is not able to devote enough resources to the program in order for it to make the impact that it could. In the past, the housing authorities were able to offer some programming through the Drug Elimination Funds such as youth activities, Head Start and security. Those funds, however, have been cut and the housing authorities had to find other funding to continue the social programming or have stopped supporting them. When asked about the organizations they partner with, the HAs listed a number of social service providers that work with the same client population. The organizations include: Catholic Services, Catholic Charities, South West Illinois College, nursing schools, the Wyman Center, Kingdom House, Beyond Housing, Mid-East Area Agency on Aging and CORE.

The HAs have different relationships with local governments. The housing authorities are not fiscally tied to the county or city government but serve as quasi-governmental agencies. One HA suggested that they serve as one of the primary developers for the county and have a large impact on the housing landscape of the community. Two examples of the HA-government relationship are in St. Louis County where the County Executive appoints the director of the Housing Authority, and in St. Louis City, where the Housing Authority works closely with the city

planning department on redevelopment efforts. Three housing authorities mentioned the importance of having police departments' support for the success of their housing programs. One example is a retired police officer and marshal who is employed by the HA to serve as a liaison between public housing and the police. The officer works with residents to reduce crime, drug use, and other problems. Furthermore, housing authorities stated, "A strong working relationship with cities is very important because a municipality can virtually kill a project." Within a county, housing authorities have a different relationship with each municipality. Two directors suggested a mandatory bus ride for municipal leaders to point out the various housing projects and to reduce fragmentation.

### Challenges

Housing authorities in the region deal with many challenges. The most prominent challenge is funding. HUD has decreased both of their main public housing funds (Operating Subsidy and Capital Improvement Funds) by up to 50 percent over the past few years. Every housing authority stated the funding they receive is insufficient to cover all of the operation, maintenance, and management costs, and they are forced to dip into an already limited reserve. The HAs who used varied funding such as tax credits or competitive grants also mentioned that such sources of funding have been threatened and reduced as well.

Another common challenge is a negative community perception/stigma of public housing. Several housing authorities referenced this problem. The viewpoint "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) is seen in several ways in many municipalities including cities that fight the development of public housing projects in their jurisdiction, politicians who run on a platform of eliminating public housing, and community residents who negatively view public housing clients as "Welfare Queens". This pervasive opinion impacts the integration of the public housing clients into communities as well as influences decision makers' funding priorities.

Additionally, several housing authorities mentioned their frustration by the administrative burden imposed by HUD. Additional challenges mentioned include: environmental and financial consequences of working with the existing housing stock and what to do with dilapidated property and operating in large jurisdictions where all the many parties are not on the same page.

### Housing Issues in the Region

Housing authority directors were asked what they view as the major housing issues/challenges in their communities and what contributes to these issues. The overwhelming housing concern was the need for decent, affordable housing. The housing authorities deal every day with an abundance of needy families, made evident by extremely long or closed waiting lists. Some counties have over 6,000 individuals on their waiting list, and other counties have closed their waiting list for up to the past three years. Another issue is the disconnect between housing and services; this is seen in the lack of programming funds, and in physical proximity to assets such as transportation, job opportunity, etc. St. Clair County has separate waiting lists for each property and has observed that even if there is an available unit, it is often not at a reasonable place for a low-income family to live because it is far away from jobs, schools, and other services.

One housing authority mentioned that the Region does not think of the people, or client base, that the housing authority services and housing is considered an afterthought. One director suggested the creation of a master plan for housing in the region, noting that most of the burden falls on a few geographic centers, and subsidized housing is not adequately distributed throughout the region.

Additional housing issues mentioned include: the need for assisted living (currently seniors without means must either live in independent subsidized housing or in nursing homes), more family housing with services, assisting aging homeowners to care for their housing to maintain the integrity of the housing stock, connecting transportation with housing, and the community's negative perception of publicly supported housing. Finally, the housing authorities made a request that decision makers remember that they are out there and try to make plans and policies that support their public housing work and the population they serve.

### **Key Findings**

The following are the key findings drawn from the interviews:

***The challenges and issues differ among the housing authorities in different parts of the region.*** The housing authorities interviewed from Illinois work with a more rural and spread out population when compared to the HAs interviewed on the Missouri side of the river. The larger HAs have taken on the additional role of developer, but, similar to HUD dollars, they are at the mercy of funds and opportunities, such as LIHTC and HOME Funds, which seem to be drying up.

***The larger community's negative perspective on public housing and its clients is a major hindrance to being able to adequately provide low-income housing in the region.*** The viewpoint "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) is seen in several ways in many municipalities including cities that fight the development of public housing projects in their jurisdiction, politicians who run on a platform of eliminating public housing, and community residents who negatively view public housing clients as "Welfare Queens". Moreover, there is a negative stigma voiced by landlords, the private sector and some mayors and police departments regarding the nature of the housing authorities' clients, and their deservedness of clean and quality housing. This pervasive opinion impacts the integration of the public housing clients into communities as well as influences decision makers' funding priorities.

***Availability of low-income housing is insufficient to meet the need in the region.*** The long waiting lists indicate that more people need housing than are being served by the housing authorities, and the numbers provided by the HAs only begin to capture the need, since many of the waiting lists are closed. The housing authorities speculated what individuals and families do in the interim. They have heard of families staying in motels or in a friend's basement. HA staff expressed that they felt helpless and are only able to refer families to other housing authorities or homelessness services.

***The housing is deteriorating and funds are not adequate for maintenance of older structures.*** The housing that does exist for the clients is older and requires costly maintenance and upgrades that the HAs do not have the funds to support. HUD allocates two types of funding for public housing: funds for operation and funds for capitol improvements. Even combined with the client rent, the HAs universally articulated that there was not enough money to adequately maintain the

aging housing. Some HAs have to use the operating subsidy for building improvements and must adjust in other ways such as personnel and management costs. Furthermore, the available funds for improvements come with stipulations that make them cost ineffective or inappropriate for the HAs. For example, one county HA has units that need to be demolished, but the only funds available are *Replacement Housing Factor Funds*, which require building replacement units. These funds alone are not enough to build new infrastructure, nor do they come with additional operation costs. Finally, the HAs expressed frustration in the formula of fund allocation. The directors wished for HUD to really consider the age and size of the buildings when allocating resources and not penalize the HAs for having built up a healthy reserve. One director suggested that how they are currently running the program, “Is not a good business model. There is no thought about sustainability.”

***Housing that exists is often located in places removed from opportunity.*** The public housing in Festus is located in a subdivision community that is completely car-dependent and therefore only viable for families with cars. Some buildings in St. Louis County are located in areas disconnected from roads, and clients must walk a long distance to reach public transportation. While located close to the downtown of the city, the Kirkwood HA lacks an appropriate transportation system to meet the needs of the senior residents. Because most residents do not own cars or are unable to walk the half-mile to services, they are quite isolated by their housing circumstance. An additional example occurs in the larger county HAs with many dispersed properties. Some properties are located in undesirable locations that are far away from jobs, schools and other services; therefore, just being housed is not worth it given those limitations of the property.

Related to the disconnect of housing to necessary services, ***the system that supports the living circumstances of people in public housing is insufficient and overwhelmed by the challenge of supporting occupants for anything beyond “housing”***. Because of lack of staff and funds, the HAs are only able to manage the rent and application of the clients and does not currently engage in a program to help move the clients into self-sufficiency. The federal government has recognized the importance of adjusting the social safety net by creating opportunities for economic development and upward mobility through programs such the Housing Choice

Voucher Family Self Sufficiency Program, the Drug Elimination Funds, and the CHOICE Neighborhoods that focus on a holistic approach to social service delivery. However, all three are examples of programs well designed at the federal level, intended to be implemented at the local level but not given appropriate funding. One director remarked that HUD's programs and policies are "unfunded mandates." Another commented that the CHOICE Neighborhood grants require that the HA support services such as health, employment, and education in addition to their housing responsibilities. Instead of helping the clients to transition out of needing public housing, these programs exist as a burden on top of an already stressed system.

***The need for low-income housing is large and growing, and requires a regional response.***

One solution would be to build more units to house more people. More sustainable, though, would be to craft a system that supports movement through public housing, as individuals and families land on their feet and achieve self-sufficiency. Connecting housing to additional services is crucial but requiring it without additional funds results in the opposite effect. The HAs are unable to fully partner with other organizations, recognizing that any programming would have to come out of the partner's budget and all social services are strapped financially. Therefore, it is imperative that the Region explore different strategies to support a comprehensive program for clients in public housing. Potential opportunities exist in looking at public/private collaboration, funding from foundations, and possibly social entrepreneurship (Delancy Street Moving) models. Looking at the programming that private housing organizations run with the same cliental can also help inform practice. On a federal level, it is important to advocate for federal spending that is sustainable rather than the current practice of cuts that result in run-down infrastructure and continuous housing need.

## **Appendix A: Relevant Housing Policies and Programs**

### **Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)**

A HUD program established in 1990 by the National Affordable Housing Act, to encourage communities to develop local strategies that help voucher families obtain employment that will lead to economic independence and self-sufficiency. In this program, HAs work with welfare agencies, schools, businesses, and other local partners to develop a comprehensive program that gives participating FSS family members the skills and experience to enable them to obtain employment that pays a living wage. The program maintains the same level of subsidy while income increases by putting the increment into an escrow account. A separate program, the public housing FSS program, is available for public housing residents.

An interest-bearing FSS escrow account is established by the HA for each participating family. An escrow credit, based on increases in earned income of the family, is credited to this account by the HA during the term of the FSS contract. The HA may make a portion of this escrow account available to the family during the term of the contract to enable the family to complete an interim goal such as education. If the family completes the contract and no member of the family is receiving cash welfare assistance, the amount of the FSS account is paid to the head of the family. If the HA terminates the FSS contract, or if the family fails to complete the contract before its expiration, the family's FSS escrow funds are forfeited.

For more information, see

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/fss](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fss))

### **HOME Funds**

The HOME program is implemented through state and local governments, called participating jurisdictions or "PJs". Participating jurisdictions may be states or units of general local government, including consortia and urban counties. HOME participating jurisdictions have a great deal of flexibility in designing and managing their HOME programs. HOME grants are awarded each year to participating jurisdictions based on an allocation formula. States are automatically eligible for HOME funds. However, local jurisdictions must meet a minimum

allocation threshold in order to be a participating jurisdiction. There are over 500 participating jurisdictions. Localities, which do not receive a direct HOME allocation from HUD, may receive HOME funds through the state's HOME program.

For more information, see

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/contacts/>

### **The Replacement Housing Factor Funds (RHF)**

Capital Fund Grants that are awarded to HAs that have removed units from inventory for the sole purpose of developing new public housing units. The Capital Fund formula rule at 24 CFR 905.10(i) provides that a HA may receive RHF grants for public housing units *demolished or sold* for a period of up to five years. A HA may only be given RHF funding for public housing units that have not already been funded for replacement public housing units under public housing development, Major Reconstruction of Obsolete Public Housing (MROP), HOPE VI, or any other programs that would otherwise provide replacement housing. Section 104 D stipulates that if you had occupied housing that is demolished you have to replace it county wide

For more information, see

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/capfund/rhf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/capfund/rhf)

### **HOPE VI**

The HOPE VI Program, originally known as the Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD), was developed as a result of recommendations by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, which was charged with proposing a National Action Plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing. The [\*\*Final Report of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing\*\*](#) recommended revitalization in three general areas: physical improvements, management improvements, and social and community services to address resident needs.



As a result, HOPE VI was created by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1993 (Pub.L. 102-389), approved on October 6, 1992.

The HOPE VI program was an effort to transform public housing. The specific elements of public housing transformation that have proven key to HOPE VI include:

- Changing the physical shape of public housing
- Establishing positive incentives for resident self-sufficiency and comprehensive services that empower residents
- Lessening concentrations of poverty by placing public housing in non-poverty neighborhoods and promoting mixed-income communities
- Forging partnerships with other agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses to leverage support and resources

For more information, see

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/hope6/about](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/hope6/about)

### **Choice Neighborhoods**

Established in 2010, Choice Neighborhoods grants transform distressed neighborhoods and public and assisted projects into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs. A strong emphasis is placed on local community planning for access to high-quality educational opportunities, including early childhood education. Choice Neighborhoods grants build upon the successes of public housing transformation under HOPE VI to provide support for the preservation and rehabilitation of public and HUD-assisted housing, within the context of a broader approach to concentrated poverty. In addition to public housing authorities, the initiative will involve local governments, non-profits, and for-profit developers in undertaking comprehensive local planning with residents and the community. They are administered through a competitive process for planning and implementation grants.

For more information, see

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/cn](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn)

### **Section 8 Portability**

Portability is the transfer process that enables Housing Choice Voucher holders to relocate and select housing anywhere in the United States. The Housing Authority cooperates with other housing authorities in the portability process in order to further increase a participant's residential choice and mobility and encourage social and economic integration. The Housing Authority briefs Section 8 applicants and participants on the benefits of portability. If a Housing Authority Section 8 client chooses to move under portability, he/she must contact their assigned Advisor or Eligibility Interviewer. The HA then submits payment to the other jurisdiction.

For more information, see <http://www.hud.gov/local/shared/working/r8/ph/portability.pdf>

### **Public and Indian Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP)**

The PHDEP provides funds for public housing authorities and tribally designated housing entities to develop and finance drug and drug-related crime elimination efforts in their developments. Funds may be used for enhancing security within the developments, making physical improvements to improve security or developing and implementing prevention, intervention and treatment programs to help curtail the use of drugs in public and Indian housing. The funds have not been available for at least 5 years.

For more information, see <http://www.hud.gov/nofa/suprnofa/sprprt4g.cfm>

### **Rural Family Development property**

Financed through the USDA, the Rural Family Development program provides assistance for apartment living to rural Americans who cannot afford the purchase price and maintenance costs of their own individual house. Additionally, USDA Rural Development Housing Programs can help subsidize monthly mortgage and rental payments, limiting these costs to no more than 30

percent of the adjusted monthly income of the applicant. These subsidies can be used for the direct home ownership, rural rental and farm labor programs. The program also provides money for rental properties intended for low and moderate-income tenants. The Guaranteed Rental Housing Program is designed to increase the supply of affordable housing through partnerships between USDA Rural Development and major lending sources, as well as state and local finance agencies and bond issuers.

For more information, see

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/hi/rural%20housing%20programs.htm>

### **Rural Family Development Program**

Financed through the USDA, the Rural Family Development program provides assistance for apartment living to rural Americans who cannot afford the purchase price and maintenance costs of their own individual house. Additionally, USDA Rural Development Housing Programs can help subsidize monthly mortgage and rental payments, limiting these costs to no more than 30 percent of the adjusted monthly income of the applicant. These subsidies can be used for the direct home ownership, rural rental and farm labor programs. The program also provides money for rental properties intended for low and moderate-income tenants. The Guaranteed Rental Housing Program is designed to increase the supply of affordable housing through partnerships between USDA Rural Development and major lending sources, as well as state and local finance agencies and bond issuers.

For more information, see

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/hi/rural%20housing%20programs.htm>

## **Appendix B: Public Housing Authority Interview Protocol**

The following document was sent to Public Housing Authority staff prior to the interview.

**Public Housing Authority Interview Protocol**  
**St. Louis Regional Plan for Sustainable Development**  
**February 2012**

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### **Objective:**

The objective of the housing authority interviews is to (1) understand housing authorities' perspectives on public housing, current programs, concerns for the future, and views on sustainability in the region to inform the Regional Housing Assessment, Housing Plan and Regional Plan for Sustainable Development; (2) to explore the working relationship between local governments, other organizations and housing authorities; and (3) to strengthen the relationship between the Consortium Partners of the regional planning effort and the region's housing authorities.

### **Background:**

East West Gateway, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the St. Louis region, along with 10 Consortium Partners, was awarded a \$4.7 million grant by a partnership among the federal agencies of HUD, EPA and DOT to create a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. Part of the planning process is including the many different perspectives involved in regional sustainability, development and, generally, planning for the future of St. Louis region. This interview is to learn about the mechanics of housing authorities and the issues and concerns facing public housing authorities.

Notes will be taken during the interview, but will only be reported in the aggregate. We will not quote you without your consent. From the interviews we will look at the community specific issues, and the themes that apply to the entire region.

## **Interview questions:**

### Housing authorities duties and activities in County/Community:

- What are your primary duties?
- What projects are you currently working on?
  - o How long have these programs existed?
  - o How have these activities changed over the past 5/10 years?
  - o How do you see them changing in the future/next 5 to 10 years?

### Funding:

- What is the funding structure of your agency?
- Is funding adequate for the programs you are required to implement?
- How has funding changed over the years?

### Housing issues in the county/community:

- What are the major housing issues/challenges in your community?
- What contributes to these issues?
  - o Federal, state, local policies
  - o Funding
  - o Private development competition
  - o Social issues
  - o Economic climate
- Are these housing issues unique to the city/county?
- Are there any policies or programs that you would like to see revised, duplicated or replicated?

### Housing issues in the region:

- Do you work with other housing authorities in the region?
- If so, do they have similar issues as you? Are there region-wide issues?
- Why do you think these issues are similar/dissimilar to the issues in your city/county?  
Are their policy or program differences to which the similarities/dissimilarities can be attributed?

Partnerships/Collaborations:

- Who do you currently partner with in your community?
  - o What is the nature of those collaborations?
- What is your working relationship with the local government(s)?
  - o Do you have programs you work together on?
  - o Do you approach challenges together?
- Who do you wish to partner with? (Who is missing) or Are there others you think would be good to build partnerships with?
- What is your working relationship with other housing authorities in the region?

Other:

- What else should we know about public housing issues in the region that wasn't addressed in this interview?
- If you had a magic wand, what would you like to see happen regarding housing in the region?

If you have any questions, want more information on the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development or have any further comments, please contact us:

*Contact information removed.*