

MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY
FOR FAIR HOUSING
DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

Current Status and Initial Findings
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Foreword

HUD recently completed the enrollment and lease-up phases of the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration, a residential mobility program with the goal of reducing concentrations of poverty and moving public housing families to self-sufficiency in better neighborhoods – with safer streets, better schools, and more. Over 4,500 families have participated in MTO. *Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program: Current Status and Initial Findings* concludes that allowing residents to move from highly concentrated areas of poverty leads to wider opportunities for themselves and their children.

Beginning with the Gautreaux program in Chicago in the 1970s, voucher-based mobility programs have been implemented with varying degrees of success to help correct the effects of past housing policy, which often segregated low-income people from the opportunities of higher paying jobs, better schools, and safer neighborhoods. Mobility programs are challenging because of the difficulty of reaching out to new communities and landlords while opening up realistic choices for public housing families in these areas. It is striking and significant that, even at this early stage, the MTO program has resulted in greater access to better jobs and education than resulted from previous mobility programs.

Families appear to be adapting well to their new communities, making choices that lead to self-sufficiency. Most of the 5,000 families who originally volunteered for MTO were motivated to participate due to crime in their neighborhoods. After moving to their new neighborhoods, the adults felt safer leaving their homes and children to go to work. Many of these families had been caught in a vicious cycle – they wanted to move out of their high-poverty neighborhoods but – in many cases – feared leaving their homes to find a job that would help allow them to move out. The MTO demonstration was also successful in recruiting additional landlords, many of whom manage small-scale properties and had not previously participated in the Section 8 program.

We are a long way from helping all public housing residents to transform their lives, but the early success of the Moving to Opportunity demonstration program represents a significant step in the right direction.



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Contents

Foreword	i
Tables	iv
Charts	iv
Maps.....	v
Introduction and Overview	1
Structure of This Report.....	2
What Is MTO and Why Is It So Special?	3
MTO’s Legislative Origins.....	6
MTO Began in Spring 1994: Enrolling Families	7
How Much Funding Was Provided by Congress?	8
What Agencies Participated in MTO?.....	9
The Status of MTO Operations in Spring 1999	13
MTO Enrollment and Lease-Ups Are Complete	13
Buildup of the MTO Program Population.....	14
What Have We Already Learned From MTO?	19
Early Lessons About the Role of Local Agencies	19
Early Lessons About the Role of MTO Counseling	22
The Nature of MTO Counseling ⁶	22
The Costs of MTO Counseling.....	28
Buildings of the MTO Program Population.....	30
Early Lessons About Participating MTO Families.....	31
How Unique Are the Participating Families in MTO?	31
Early Lessons About Initial Moves through MTO.....	34
What MTO Families Have Told Us: Early Lessons.....	44
Next Steps: Tracking MTO Families and Evaluation Research.....	47
Tracking and Monitoring.....	47
The MTO Data and Tracking System.....	48
How Tracking Is Conducted	49
What Have We Learned From Tracking?.....	51
Summary: Lessons Learned.....	53
Lessons About Mobility in Local Housing Markets	53
Lessons About Landlord Recruitment in Low-Poverty Areas.....	53
Lessons About Families.....	54
MTO in the Future	54
Acknowledgments	57
Endnotes	61
References.....	63
Appendix A: Master MTO Random Assignment Tables	65
Appendix B: The Relationship of Counseling to Lease-Up Success	67

Tables

Table 1. Final Lease-Up Rates for Experimental and Section 8 Control Groups for MTO Sites	14
Table 2. MTO Final Random Assignment Totals by Year	16
Table 3. MTO Lease-Up Counts and Rates, by Group and Site	17
Table 4. MTO Counseling Costs.....	28
Table 5. Characteristics of MTO and Non-MTO Families From the Same Public Housing Developments: Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, and New York.....	31
Table 6. Who Joined MTO and Why?.....	32
Table 7. Where Did Families Initially Move Through MTO?	42
Table 8. Key Components of HUD’s MTO Research Plan	46
Table 9. Tracking Methods in MTO.....	49
Table 10. What Do We Learn From Tracking? (Current Locations of MTO Movers).....	50

Charts

Random Assignments Per Year/Cumulative Random Assignments.....	15
Buildup of the MTO Program Population.....	29
MTO Demonstration Counseling Funds and Costs.....	34

Maps

MTO Site and Site Agencies (Program Operations 1994–1999).....	11
Baltimore Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate	35
Boston Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate	36
Bronx County, New York, Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate	37
Northeast Bronx, New York, Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate	38
Chicago Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate	39
Los Angeles Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate	40

The Current Status and Initial Findings From the Moving to Opportunity Research Demonstration

Introduction and Overview

The Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration includes a rigorous, experimental research design to permit public policymakers, in Congress and at HUD, to quantitatively measure the impact of neighborhood location and amenities on very low-income, public housing families with children. The goal of HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) in designing, funding, and maintaining the MTO research program is to ensure the highest quality research and policy evidence about the effectiveness of the Section 8 program, combined with mobility counseling, in fostering deconcentration among participating families. It offers a source of critical insights about whether geographically restricted rental assistance combined with counseling provides an effective means of bringing families and children into better learning and working environments, leading to economic and social self-sufficiency.

The HUD MTO research plan includes *tracking* (following) and studying families over approximately 10 years. It offers a unique opportunity to answer fundamental policy research questions about how families manage the transition from welfare and housing assistance to employment and other forms of "self-sufficiency," in the context of the opportunity to live in more economically integrated communities.

As of March 1999, the demonstration enrollment and lease-up phase of MTO is complete. Roughly 5,000 families enrolled in the program, and more than 1,600 former public housing families are now living in private rental units as a result of their participation in MTO. Roughly half of these families moved to low-poverty communities located within the city and suburbs of the five

demonstration areas. Initial findings suggest that the demonstration appears to be having the hoped-for positive effects on families' lives, although HUD is only in the first stages of a comprehensive plan to evaluate and understand the effects of this demonstration for participating families.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report provides a brief description of the background and organization of MTO with an update on its status. The report tells the story of MTO from its legislative origins, through design and implementation, to the actual residential mobility of participating families. It concludes with evidence of the first signs that MTO is having a positive impact upon families' lives. The next section offers a discussion of the issues that resulted in congressional authorization of the demonstration and a description of the current status of the demonstration as of spring 1999. We then describe some initial lessons learned in the process of collaborating with the five public housing agencies (PHAs) and the seven nonprofit counseling agencies whose participation was essential for the operation of this initiative. In the next section we discuss some of the lessons we have learned about the role of housing counseling, which was offered to experimental group families, and about the costs of counseling in the demonstration.

In the final two sections of the report we provide a description of the geographical effects of MTO participation, including maps showing the locations to which families moved. This is followed by a brief discussion of what we have learned about the families that are participating in MTO, including the results of initial research projects funded by HUD to learn about the very first effects that MTO might have upon families. HUD's long-term research agenda will generate future reports about further impacts on the lives of participating adults and children.

What Is MTO and Why Is It So Special?

The MTO demonstration provides the first opportunity to measure definitively and understand the impacts of a change in neighborhood on the employment, income, educational achievements, and social well-being of low-income, public housing families. MTO permits HUD to test the hypothesis that escaping from troubled neighborhoods helps poor people escape poverty. Simply put, does the chance to live in safe neighborhoods with good schools measurably alter the life chances of the parents or children exposed to the opportunities found in better-off communities?

MTO was designed as a major social science improvement over earlier research that failed to address the problem of self-selection bias: that if only the most motivated families are included or selected to join a program, their experiences—including measured results or outcomes—will not be typical of the eligible population and will confound or confuse outcomes (Jencks and Mayer, 1990). If there is self-selection, it is difficult to determine whether a person's life changed for the better because of the program design (the special training or requirements of the demonstration intervention itself) or because the person or family was highly motivated. Highly motivated families might have succeeded in moving and improving their lives even without the assistance of a special demonstration program.

Virtually all previous research in this area, including the well-known research on the Gautreaux program in Chicago and other mobility programs,¹ has measured program effects by comparing the outcomes for self-selected participants who chose to move within the city with the outcomes for participants who chose to move to the suburbs. As such, this research can draw conclusions only based on self-selected participation or choices. Until MTO, it has not been possible to answer with certainty whether mobility to less-troubled neighborhoods has a positive impact of its own on educational and employment outcomes.²

MTO's unique contribution to the policy research literature solves these problems by establishing a multisite experimental (random-assignment) demonstration. It overcomes the problem of self-selection bias by randomly assigning families who *volunteered* for the MTO program to one of three groups:

- The **MTO treatment group**, which received Section 8 certificates or vouchers useable only in low-poverty areas (areas with less than 10 percent of the population below the poverty line in 1989), along with counseling and assistance in finding a private rental unit.
- The **Section 8 comparison group**, which received regular Section 8 certificates or vouchers (geographically unrestricted) and whatever briefings and assistance Section 8 certificate and voucher recipients would normally receive from the housing authority.
- The **in-place control group**, which received no certificates or vouchers but continued to receive project-based assistance.

The treatment group represents those whose choice potentially involves a move to a better neighborhood and whose behaviors and choices will demonstrate the influence of communities of opportunity. The comparison group reflects the *normal* operation of HUD's major form of housing assistance, the Section 8 rental assistance program. The in-place group represents those families that will most likely remain behind in deeply poor neighborhoods, living in project-based subsidized housing.

MTO's experimental, long-term (or longitudinal) research framework enables the Federal Government to answer definitively some fundamental policy research questions:

- What are the impacts of MTO on household location and on the housing and neighborhood conditions of participants?

- What are the impacts of a move to a low-poverty neighborhood on the employment, income, education, and social well-being of families? How quickly will these effects occur, and are they linear?
- What are the mechanisms or processes by which neighborhoods affect the lives of participating adults and children?
- What negative or positive impacts, if any, do treatment group families have on their receiving communities?

For the social science research community, MTO provides a unique basis for evaluating whether and how neighborhoods affect people's lives, especially the lives of those from deprived or concentrated-poverty communities. The research is also expected to offer important insights on how low-poverty communities or neighborhoods react to the entry of small numbers of low-income, largely minority, public housing families. These lessons are of considerable importance to HUD and to local agencies concerned with how fair housing and public housing policies can be made to work better at the local level.

In the future, participating families will be surveyed about their employment and income status, the educational status of their children, their housing and neighborhood conditions, their attitudes toward their neighborhood, their future prospects, and their overall social well-being. Differences in these areas will be examined in relation to where the families moved and where they currently are living, to determine whether neighborhood environment shapes these outcomes. There will be a final summary evaluation to determine the effects of moving to low-poverty communities on the employment, education, and other life chances of families. The experience of families receiving the *special* MTO assistance can be compared with that of families who receive the *regular* Section 8 treatment. The in-place control group is essential in order to estimate correctly the separate impacts of Section 8 rental assistance alone and MTO assistance with counseling, providing a benchmark against which the outcomes of these two groups can be measured.

MTO'S LEGISLATIVE ORIGINS

The Moving to Opportunity demonstration was authorized by Section 152 of the 1992 Housing and Community Development Act. The Act provided funding for tenant-based rental assistance and supportive counseling services to test and evaluate the effectiveness of metropolitan areawide efforts to:

Assist very low-income families with children who reside in public housing or housing receiving project-based assistance under Section 8 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1937 to move out of areas with high concentrations of persons in poverty to areas with low concentrations of such persons.

Moving to Opportunity was designed to operate in multiple metropolitan areas, to learn whether and how program operations and program effects might differ across the country. Congress established four basic rules for determining eligibility for demonstration funding.

- The demonstration was restricted by Congress to no more than six large cities with populations of at least 400,000 in metropolitan areas of at least 1.5 million people. Sixteen sites submitted applications to HUD to participate. Five sites – Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City – qualified and were selected for MTO in March 1994.
- MTO programs were established in each city as partnerships between the local PHAs and one or more local, nonprofit counseling organizations (NPOs). The PHAs administered the Section 8 rental assistance and the NPOs received funding to help pay the costs associated with counseling participating families, helping them to find appropriate units, and working with landlords to encourage their participation in the MTO program. Each local program had to provide some degree of match for the Federal counseling funds.

- The public and subsidized housing developments in these cities from which participants were drawn had to be located in neighborhoods in which at least 40 percent of the population was poor.
- To be eligible for MTO, the families living in such developments had to have at least one child under the age of 18 and also had to be income-eligible for the Section 8 program.

MTO BEGAN IN SPRING 1994: ENROLLING FAMILIES

The five sites were selected in March 1994, and in May of that year HUD sponsored a training conference for all participants. At this training, all of the agencies were provided information on operations and were required to follow the procedures spelled out in the *MTO POM*.³ The demonstration became fully operational in fall 1994, when family enrollment began.

Between 1994 and 1999, the partnerships between local agencies in the five cities successfully implemented the MTO demonstration, with the housing authorities recruiting families, determining their eligibility, and carrying out the Section 8 program administration. The NPOs provided counseling, search assistance, and support to families assigned to the MTO treatment group, and recruited landlords throughout the metropolitan areas to rent apartments or houses to these families. The counseling assistance was designed to help overcome the obstacles to searching for housing in neighborhoods unfamiliar to the families and with property owners unfamiliar with the Section 8 program.

With the cooperation of the five PHAs, eligible residents of public and assisted housing projects in the targeted, high-poverty census tracts were informed about MTO and recruited to apply. Separate waiting lists for MTO program enrollees were then established in each location. Applicants on this waiting list were invited in groups to an orientation session in which they learned about the demonstration, its experimental nature, and the fact that if they decided to participate they would be randomly assigned to one of three

groups. At this session, families who decided to join MTO provided their informed consent in writing to participation in the demonstration (including random assignment and ongoing data collection).

An extensive Participant Baseline Survey was then completed by the head of each family (the adult applying to join). Because the baseline data collection was quite lengthy and complex, trained research staff from Abt Associates Inc. assisted families in completing the questionnaire by reading questions aloud, explaining the questions if necessary, and ensuring that all questions were answered. The baseline data collection was followed by eligibility determination. The site PHAs had to verify that each family member was on the lease in a targeted development, that the family members were tenants in good standing with respect to rent payment and behavior, that the family included a child under age 18, and that the family was income-eligible for Section 8 assistance.

Families found eligible for MTO were randomly assigned using software specially designed for this demonstration. After random assignment, the families in the regular Section 8 group were invited by the PHA to attend a regular Section 8 briefing. The remaining steps in the housing search and lease-up process would be identical to that of any regular Section 8 recipient. MTO treatment group families were referred to the nonprofit counseling agency following random assignment. NPO counselors then typically conducted a needs assessment and began offering various forms of assistance to their clients, as provided in the *POM*.

HOW MUCH FUNDING WAS PROVIDED BY CONGRESS?

When MTO was authorized, Congress appropriated approximately \$70 million for approximately 1,300 Section 8 rental assistance payments for the demonstration and a modest amount of funding for housing counseling. Although Congress rescinded a second year of funding for MTO in 1995, Section 8 rental assistance resources and counseling resources increased because the Los Angeles and Boston housing authorities volunteered to add additional Section 8 certificates and vouchers from their own Section 8 programs to the

demonstration. These authorities received additional housing counseling funds from HUD to provide counseling assistance (through the NPOs) for the expanded number of families. These resources became available to demonstration households in mid-1997.⁴ The New York City Housing Authority also added additional Section 8 resources at a later time. The total (or net) number of additional Section 8 certificates and vouchers thus amounted to nearly 350, in addition to the original allocation of 1,328 for the demonstration.

MTO's Beginnings

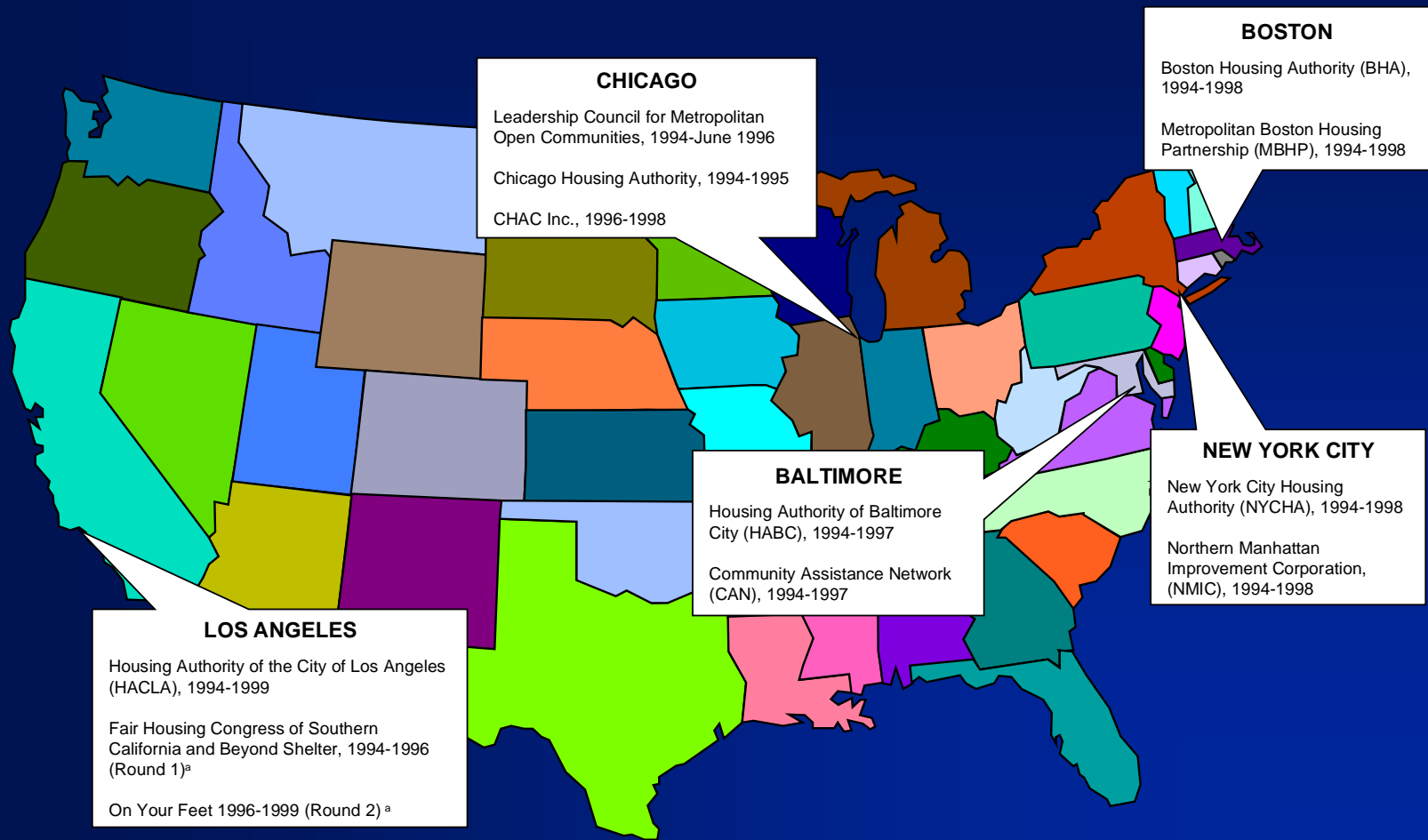
- Funded by Congress with \$70 million in Section 8 rental assistance for fiscal year 1992 (carried over to fiscal year 1993) and additional funds provided to nonprofit counseling agencies.
- Five sites were selected by HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros in March 1994 – Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York.
- Begun with a training conference in May 1994 and with family outreach starting between June and October 1994.

WHAT AGENCIES PARTICIPATED IN MTO?

The PHAs and local NPOs participating in MTO changed slightly over time. One housing authority (Chicago) went into receivership and its Section 8 program was contracted out to a private firm, CHAC, Inc. The local nonprofit agency in Chicago also withdrew and was replaced by a specially selected counseling staff within CHAC. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles worked with three NPOs, including On Your Feet, which conducted the counseling for that site's expanded program. The other organizations remained the same. The organizations involved in MTO and the timing of their involvement is shown below and in the map on page 11.

MTO Sites and Local Agencies, 1994-1999	
Baltimore	Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), 1994-1997 Community Assistance Network (CAN), 1994-1997
Boston	Boston Housing Authority (BHA), 1994-1998 Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP), 1994-1998
Chicago	Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, 1994-June 1996 Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), 1994-1995 CHAC, Inc., 1996-1998
Los Angeles	Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), 1994-1999 Fair Housing Congress of Southern California Beyond Shelter, 1994-1996 (Round 1) On Your Feet, 1996-1999 (Round 2)
New York City	New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), 1994-1998 Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC), 1994-1998

MTO Sites and Site Agencies (Program Operations 1994-1999)



^a In Los Angeles, Round 1 covers the Section 8 resources allocated by Congress. Round 2 covers the additional Section 8 vouchers allocated by HACLA.

The Status of MTO Operations in Spring 1999

MTO ENROLLMENT AND LEASE-UPS ARE COMPLETE

As of spring 1999, the MTO demonstration is complete. Some 5,301 families volunteered for the program and 4,610 families were found to be eligible and then *randomly assigned* to one of the three groups. Across the five sites, 3,170 families had a chance to move using Section 8 rental assistance through MTO. By spring 1999, more than 1,650 of these families had found new homes in rented houses or apartments using Section 8 resources under MTO. An additional 1,440 families were assigned to the in-place control group and continued to receive project-based assistance.

After the selection and training of the five sites in spring 1994, the demonstration achieved successful operation in all five metropolitan areas. The Baltimore demonstration ended operations as planned in June 1997. Two other sites—Boston and New York City—completed the final lease-up of families by September 1998, with Chicago following in October 1998. Final lease-ups in the remaining site—Los Angeles—occurred in March 1999. Except for some initial opposition in Baltimore (Newman, 1995), there have been no indications of any community concern about, or opposition to, the lease-up of rental units in low-poverty and suburban communities by MTO families in any demonstration location.

Families found eligible for MTO in each site were randomly assigned using software specially designed for this demonstration. The proportions assigned to each category, or random assignment ratios, were all initially based on evidence from the Gautreaux program that roughly one-quarter of all families assigned to the MTO treatment group would find a private rental unit to lease. Therefore, a lease-up rate of 25 percent for the treatment group was assumed.

Within one year of demonstration operations, however, it was apparent that the *success*, or lease-up rate, for treatment group families was much higher

than that of the Gautreaux program. Table 1 shows the final lease-up or success rates for each metropolitan area. In Baltimore, for example, the lease-up rate for all the families in that group was 58 percent. In Los Angeles, the rate was even higher – 62 percent. The average for the treatment group across sites was 47 percent, while it was 60 percent for the regular Section 8 group.

Table 1. Final Lease-Up Rates for Experimental and Section 8 Control Groups for MTO Sites

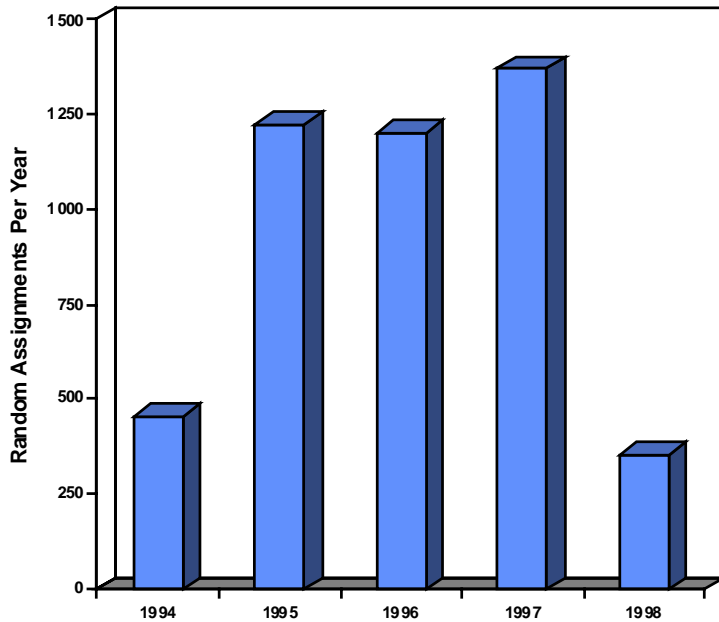
Site	Experimental Group (Percent Leased Up)	Section 8 Comparison Group (Percent Leased Up)	Dates
Baltimore	58	72	9/95–6/97
Boston	46	48	12/94–6/98
Chicago	34	66	3/95–10/98
Los Angeles	62	75	4/95–3/99
New York	45	49	4/95–6/98
All Sites	47	60	12/94–3/99

BUILDUP OF THE MTO PROGRAM POPULATION

Table 2 and the accompanying chart show the final random assignment totals for the MTO demonstration by group and by year. Altogether, 4,610 families joined MTO through the random assignment process in the 4 years of intake (from July 1994 through July 1998). More than one-quarter of the families came into the demonstration in each of the years from 1995 to 1997, with smaller numbers before and after. Due to higher than expected lease-up rates, it was necessary to adjust the random assignment ratios during program operations in order to ensure a balanced allocation of families to the three groups. As a result, more families were assigned to the MTO treatment group in the earlier part of the demonstration, while more families were assigned to the other groups later. (These changes, including the dates changes were made, are listed in appendix A.) Research findings will be weighted to compensate for ratio changes between sites and over time.

Build-up of the MTO Program Population

Random Assignments Per Year
1994 through 1998



Cumulative Random Assignments
1994 through 1998

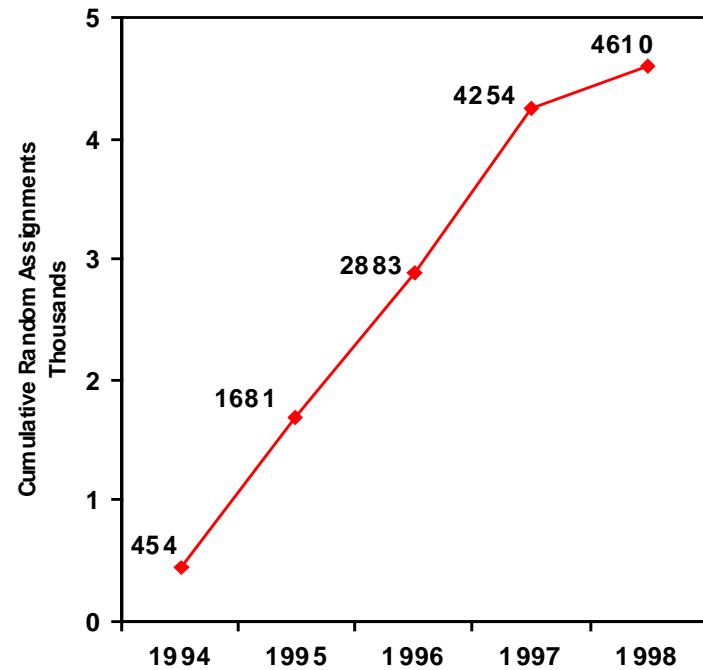


Table 2. MTO Final Random Assignment Totals by Year

Number and Share of Group Total, by Year	MTO Treatment Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-Place Control Group	Total
1994	227 (12.5%)	85 (6.3%)	142 (9.9%)	454 (9.9%)
1995	612 (33.6)	235 (17.4)	380 (26.4)	1,227 (26.6)
1996	366 (20.1)	418 (31.0)	418 (29.0)	1,202 (26.1)
1997	525 (28.9)	475 (35.2)	371 (25.8)	1,371 (29.7)
1998	90 (5.0)	137 (10.2)	129 (9.0)	356 (7.7)
Total	1,820 (100%)	1,350 (100%)	1,440 (100%)	4,610 (100%)

Table 3 shows the final lease-up figures and lease-up rates for the MTO treatment group and the regular Section 8 group in the five sites. The table indicates that the demonstration includes 860 MTO treatment group lease-ups and 816 Section 8 comparison group lease-ups. The lease-up rates range from a high of 75 percent for regular Section 8 families in Los Angeles to a low of 34 percent for Chicago’s treatment group. The average for the treatment group, 47 percent, is only 13 percentage points lower than that for the regular, Section 8 comparison group. And in Boston, the treatment group lease-up rate of 46 percent is only 2 percentage points lower than that for the regular Section 8 group.

The demonstration’s random assignment process was completed in all the sites in July 1998 and the lease-ups were completed in March 1999. Overall, the numbers of lease-ups came very close to the balanced design originally planned. The combined total for the entire demonstration is thus 1,676 Section 8 certificate and voucher recipients, as well as 1,440 in-place control group families. MTO includes approximately 350 more families receiving Section 8 assistance than the original MTO funding allocation would have produced.

Table 3. MTO Lease-Up Counts and Rates, by Group and Site

Site	MTO Experimental Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	Combined
Baltimore			
# Randomly assigned	252	188	440
# of lease-ups	146	136	282
Lease-up rates	58%	72%	64%
Boston			
# Randomly assigned	366	269	635
# of lease-ups	170	128	298
Lease-up rates	46%	48%	47%
Chicago			
# Randomly assigned	461	202	663
# of lease-ups	156	133	289
Lease-up rates	34%	66%	44%
Los Angeles			
# Randomly assigned	340	305	645
# of lease-ups	208	230	438
Lease-up rates	61%	75%	68%
New York			
# Randomly assigned	401	386	787
# of lease-ups	180	189	369
Lease-up rates	45%	49%	47%
All Sites			
# Randomly assigned	1,820	1,350	3,170
# of lease-ups	860	816	1,676
Lease-up rates	48%	60%	53%

NOTES: Exhibit does not include assignments to the in-place control group, which totaled 1,440 across the five sites. These data are unweighted. They are not adjusted for the differences in random assignment ratio among sites and over time. Such weighting will affect the balance between the groups, and it is likely that for analytic purposes the difference in numbers of lease-ups will be reduced when the final weights are calculated.

What Have We Already Learned From MTO?

During the past 5 years, a number of lessons have been learned about critical parts of the demonstration. The first set of lessons involves the characteristics and commitments made by the local agencies that were an indispensable part of implementing the demonstration from 1994 on. Another set of lessons involves the key characteristics of the housing counseling provided to the MTO treatment group families. Finally, we have learned a good deal about the participants who elected to join the MTO demonstration, about their ability to find homes in low-poverty communities, and about the early effects of these moves on their lives and those of their children. These lessons are, of course, partial and preliminary, pending the completion of the interim evaluation, which is planned to begin in early 2000.

EARLY LESSONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF LOCAL AGENCIES

In the operation of many Federal housing programs (as well as in this relatively technical, multiyear research demonstration), the cooperation of the local agencies responsible for implementation is critical. In the case of MTO, all of the site agencies (with the exception of the Chicago Housing Authority in the first stage of MTO) provided significant support for the demonstration as part of their regular Section 8 or counseling operations. The first finding is that MTO facilitated new linkages or partnerships between PHAs and NPOs that were largely effective and successful in helping families.

In some cases, agencies expended substantial resources beyond those provided under MTO to assist clients. As noted earlier, several PHAs contributed additional Section 8 certificates and vouchers to help enlarge the size of the demonstration and to help additional families. In other cases, the dedication and hard work of both PHA and NPO staff were indispensable ingredients in permitting families to realize the very difficult choice of moving from their homes in public housing or assisted housing projects to communities of opportunity.

Some counselors encountered dangerous conditions in this work. In one case in Chicago, a counselor came across a dead body in the stairwell of a public housing project as she went to visit a new MTO family. Another counselor, in Baltimore, gave a troubled mother her home phone number to ensure that when the mother faced a crisis the counselor was there to help. The client used this privilege on a number of occasions after normal business hours. PHA staff also went beyond their normal responsibilities to help individual families be able to make the move to a new home. For example, a unit inspection might be scheduled on a Saturday, if this was necessary to convince a landlord with a good unit in a low-poverty area that he could work with the Section 8 program.

Major PHA contributions included:

- **Commitment to sustain** the demonstration (especially Baltimore and Los Angeles), **assignment of highly capable Section 8 staff**, and **special efforts** at internal coordination and at cooperation with new NPO partners.
- **Addition of almost 350 vouchers and certificates** to the demonstration, an increase of 26 percent.
- **Contribution of significant matching funds** to help support NPO services (especially Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles).

The nonprofit counseling agencies also made substantial contributions to MTO. Among the most significant was the ability of the NPOs to select and train staff who could work effectively with clients who often had major personal and social needs. This included tailoring services to the educational and employment needs of each client and linking the clients to resources available in their new neighborhoods.

Even more critical to the NPOs' effectiveness was their ability to reach out to a set of landlords who often had little or no experience with the Section 8 rental assistance program or with low-income families. One rough measure of the counseling agencies' effectiveness is that—in every city—they achieved a higher level of lease-ups than those obtained in the Gautreaux program

(25 percent). The Chicago treatment group achieved a lease-up rate of 34 percent, despite problems associated with the receivership of the CHA, and the comparison group rate was 66 percent. In Boston and New York, the lease-up rates of the experimental and comparison groups were quite similar and were higher than those achieved in Chicago.

Some of the differences in lease-up rates across the five areas may be due to different conditions in the local housing markets and differences in landlords' willingness to agree to rent to former public housing residents. In many cases, the largest rental property managers in low-poverty areas were unwilling to accept any Section 8 clients.⁵ As a result, helping treatment group families typically required a time-consuming search for owners of individual single-family or smaller multifamily units. Because some MTO families are large (one couple in the demonstration had 16 children), this sometimes meant finding units of a size that is atypical even for single-family homes. In Chicago, helping clients lease-up also required counselors to convince landlords that the past administrative problems of Chicago's Section 8 program (such as delayed payments and slow housing quality inspections) were being addressed and would not apply to their units. In other cases, the landlord had to be introduced to all aspects of the Section 8 program, including its inspection and leasing requirements. The NPOs also provided support to landlords in addressing a small number of tenant-landlord disputes.

Key NPO contributions included:

- **Commitment to expanding these agencies' missions and scope** to participate in MTO, **creativity of NPO staff** at new tasks and with a new client group, and **staffing continuity** in delivering effective services for clients.
- **Support of MTO families** during the process of housing search, moving, and stabilization in their new communities.
- **Raising of matching funds** for the demonstration and also making in-kind contributions of their own to sustain MTO operations.

EARLY LESSONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF MTO COUNSELING

The main goal of the MTO counseling process was to help treatment group families make a successful move to a low-poverty neighborhood using their Section 8 rental assistance. The 1994 *POM* set four general ground rules for providing counseling:

- The level of assistance should be reasonable, using group as well as individual activities and relying in part on providing information and referral rather than offering a range of direct services.
- MTO's basic demonstration requirements should be adhered to and, when necessary, adapted to local needs and situations (subject to HUD's review and approval).
- Counseling should seek to empower participating families or build their capacity to become more independent and live on their own in a location and dwelling unit of their choosing.
- The services offered must be affordable and fit within program budgets.

THE NATURE OF MTO COUNSELING⁶

While most clients came to the MTO counseling agencies with relatively high levels of motivation to move out of public housing, they often lacked the search skills and information resources necessary to be effective in their quest for private rental housing. The core responsibilities of the counseling agencies⁷ included:

- Helping families set goals and sustain their motivation for moving to new homes.
- Guiding families on the requirements of the Section 8 program and landlords and in the selection of units.

- Assisting the families with background credit reviews.
- Recruiting landlords in low-poverty areas to participate in the Section 8 rental assistance program.
- Providing counseling on housing searches.
- Providing transportation when needed to inspect units.
- Helping to negotiate rents.
- Providing information and follow-up counseling after clients move.

The counseling programs varied to a degree from site to site, as a result of variations in housing markets and client populations as well as differences in agency philosophy and organizational background. The NPOs provided three categories of assistance to their MTO clients:

- Housing-related assistance.
- Nonhousing assistance.
- Followup support.

In each category, the agencies offered a wide range of different types of assistance. For example, *housing-related assistance* might include financial review (rent calculations, savings required for security deposit, budgeting for rent and utilities), fair housing information and/or intervention, training on client self-presentation to owners and managers, and review of location options, in addition to various services directly assisting housing searches.

Research showed that *non-housing assistance* fell into two areas: employment and training, and supportive services. *Follow-up support* was provided to family members after their moves to low-poverty neighborhoods (e.g., help with transportation and childcare issues, health referrals, and networking with other MTO families), but the NPOs also intervened with landlords, schools, and other agencies.

The MTO nonprofit counseling agencies used somewhat different strategies of what and how assistance should be offered to which clients. There were differences in counseling strategies based on different models of mobility counseling. Services varied in their breadth (i.e., the substantive range of counseling content); their intensity (i.e., the amount of staff time and resources devoted to delivering the services); and in the degree of intervention on behalf of clients.

At their core, two of the MTO counseling agencies adhered to a *case management model*, in which the counselor becomes familiar with the family's full spectrum of needs (not just housing) and coordinates the provision of services to meet most or all of those needs.⁸ The three other agencies followed a *specific services model*, in which MTO counseling helped clients develop the skills to negotiate a private market rental and the independence necessary to live on their own and make sound future choices. Other needs (such as budgeting or substance abuse treatment) were addressed primarily as they affected the family's ability to make a low-poverty move. Differing views remain about which of these models is more appropriate for mobility counseling in each site.⁹ Specific counseling agencies and staff view their differing approaches as the best means to encourage motivation, independence, and empowerment toward the long-term goal of client self-sufficiency in low-poverty communities.

In order to have a clearer understanding of what determined how counseling assisted MTO families in making a successful move to a low-poverty area, HUD requested Abt Associates, in 1996, to conduct some exploratory research on the nature and content of MTO counseling services. The first purpose was to describe the assistance provided to families, including any variations

created by the local nonprofit counseling agencies implementing the program. The next goal was to use the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the families who were to receive counseling, their background conditions and experiences at the time they joined MTO, and the level of use they made of counseling services to conduct a quantitative analysis of what were the important influences on counseling effectiveness.

This analysis was conducted to help understand what influenced or determined whether an MTO family was successful in making a move to a low-poverty area, and what role counseling played in these moves. Housing market characteristics, such as the availability of units at affordable rent levels, limited housing choices for the treatment group families in all the sites. Beyond such external factors, however, there were other influences, including clients' characteristics and perceptions. In New York City, for example, many families found their public housing units to be superior in quality to the units available on the affordable, private rental market.

A quantitative analysis was carried out using data on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the client families, their background conditions and experiences at the time they joined MTO, and their use of counseling services. By examining how these variables relate to families' success in leasing-up (moving with Section 8 assistance to low-poverty areas), we developed insights about the factors influencing whether a family was able to make use of the Section 8 certificate or voucher with assistance from the NPO. The research indicated that the housing counseling services provided to MTO treatment group families played an important part in enabling these low-income families to make successful transitions into their new neighborhoods.

The results, shown in appendix B, indicate that *the NPO counseling provided through MTO was effective in helping clients find housing and move to low-poverty areas:*

- Using the counseling helped significantly to improve a family's ability to lease-up under MTO.

- Counseling utilization was influenced by certain family characteristics, but the separate, positive impact of counseling on leasing-up remained significant even when these characteristics were taken into account.
- Some of the families' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics also influenced whether they were able to move with MTO counseling. The families' background conditions also influenced whether the families leased-up with MTO counseling.
- Site and housing market conditions also significantly affected a family's chance of leasing-up through MTO. These site effects clearly represent some combination of program features and local markets, so they should be interpreted with care.

The analytic results indicate that the counseling provided through MTO was instrumental in helping clients find housing and move to low-poverty areas and that the effectiveness of the counseling was influenced by clients' skills and their willingness to make proactive use of the services offered. The most basic quantitative finding is that *using counseling services helped to improve a family's ability to lease-up under MTO*. It is also clear that the families' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics influenced their ability to move with MTO counseling.¹⁰ Having only one child appears to have made it easier for a mother to find and lease-up a unit. A higher income appeared to reduce the chances of leasing-up. Hispanic families appeared to have a harder time finding a unit, perhaps because of language difficulties, because of the limited number of Spanish-speaking counselors available to help them, or because of their immigration status. Having a stated preference in the baseline survey for making a move to a suburban location increased the families' chances of finding an apartment.

Site and housing market conditions also significantly affected a family's chance of leasing up through MTO.¹¹ These site effects clearly represent a combination of program features and local markets and should be interpreted with caution. While counseling utilization was influenced by family and site

characteristics, the separate, positive impact of counseling on leasing-up remained significant even when these characteristics were taken into account.

Thus, the NPO counseling provided through the MTO demonstration appears effective in helping clients find their housing and move to low-poverty areas. Anecdotal evidence suggests that without the help of counselors, some heads of families would never have had the confidence and necessary guidance to move to areas of their city that many had never visited. The true impact or degree of success of these moves cannot be measured until much more time has passed. Later evaluations of MTO will examine whether the families adjust to their new environments and will determine the long-term effects of the moves on education, employment, and family well-being.

Counseling Played An Important Role in MTO

Counseling agencies took different approaches to their work in MTO:

- Some NPOs followed a case management model, while other NPOs followed a specific services model.

MTO counseling helped treatment group families find housing and move to low-poverty areas:

- Counseling helped regardless of demographic differences.
- Counseling helped regardless of site or housing market differences.
- Families that utilized more counseling (searched more with the counselor, received more leads on units from the counselors, completed other steps in the NPO program) were more likely to succeed in moving.

THE COSTS OF MTO COUNSELING

We also gathered information about the costs of the counseling services delivered during the MTO demonstration and provide a summary of those costs in table 4. Net of startup costs, the average cost to counsel each family that entered the treatment group, were \$1,455. The cost for counseling varied from a low of roughly \$1,000 for New York families to a high of \$1,847 in Baltimore. Because a substantial number (roughly half) of families that were randomly assigned into the treatment group did not find a unit and move, the average cost for each family that actually leased a unit was slightly more than \$3,000 (\$3,077). These costs varied from a low of \$2,246 to lease-up a family in New York City to a high lease-up cost of \$3,934 in Boston.

Among the major questions for the future will be to assess whether these counseling costs are offset in a statistically significant manner by reductions in the use of public funds for housing assistance and welfare payments among experimental group families. If even modest improvement in the educational and labor market engagement of participating families occurs, it can be argued that the counseling costs are justified.

Table 4. MTO Counseling Costs

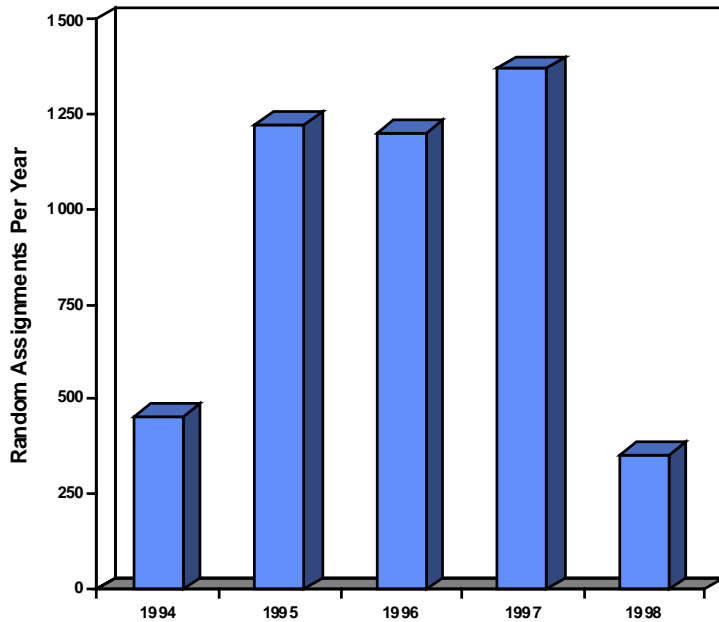
	Baltimore	Boston	Chicago	Los Angeles	New York	All Sites
Total funding for MTO counseling services	\$485,581	\$668,762	\$568,971	\$612,907	\$428,375	\$2,795,438
Percent of counseling funding from HUD	54%	84%	86%	82%	100%	81%
Other funding sources	HABC, local foundation	State and local agencies	CHA	HACLA	None	None
Estimated startup costs^a	\$20,067	\$30,842	\$40,383	\$30,915	\$24,008	\$146,215
Total number of lease-ups	146	170	156	208	180	861
Net cost per lease-up^b	\$3,188	\$3,934	\$3,388	\$2,798	\$2,246	\$3,077
Net cost to HUD per lease-up	\$1,737	\$3,315	\$2,922	\$2,297	\$2,246	\$2,505
Net cost per family counseled	\$1,847	\$1,827	\$1,144	\$1,712	\$1,008	\$1,455
Net cost to HUD per family counseled	\$1,007	\$1,540	\$987	\$1,405	\$1,008	\$1,185

a. *Implementation Assistance and Evaluation for the Moving to Opportunity Demonstration: Final Report* (Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates, April 1995), Chapter 4.

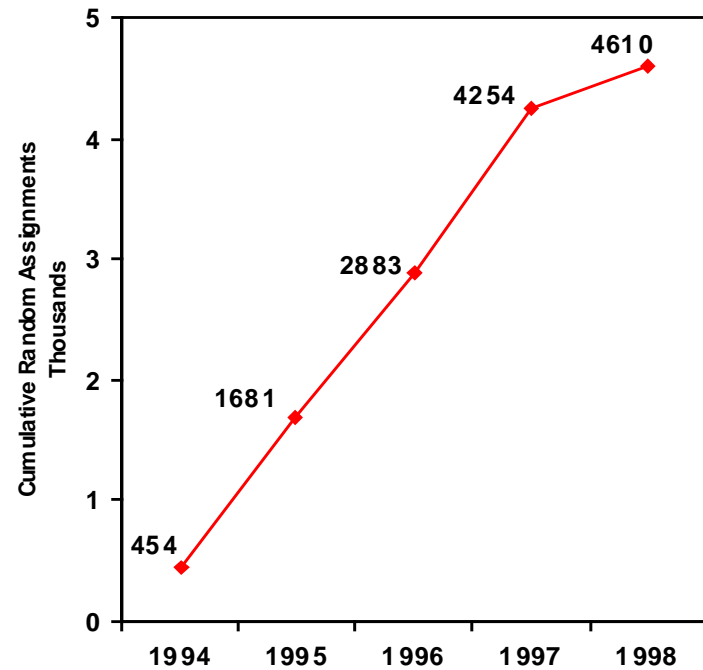
b. Net of startup costs.

Build-up of the MTO Program Population

Random Assignments Per Year
1994 through 1998



Cumulative Random Assignments
1994 through 1998



EARLY LESSONS ABOUT PARTICIPATING MTO FAMILIES

MTO's basic lessons have also included learning about what kinds of families joined the demonstration, why they elected to enroll, and whether these families are typical or representative of public housing families living in the high-poverty developments from which they were recruited. Table 5 briefly summarizes the demographic characteristics of the MTO families under the column heading "MTO Households" and also provides a comparison with families that did not enroll in the demonstration but lived in the same census tracts and projects from which the MTO families were enrolled.

HOW UNIQUE ARE THE PARTICIPATING FAMILIES IN MTO?

Are the families who elected to participate in MTO similar to or different from other public housing residents living in the same concentrated-poverty areas? A comparison of MTO enrollees and their non-MTO counterparts was conducted using baseline survey data for MTO participants and data from HUD administrative data systems for those families that did not enroll.

The descriptive statistics shown in table 5 indicate there are some statistically significant demographic differences between the public housing residents who joined MTO and those who did not. MTO households are slightly younger (35 versus 41 years old), more often female-headed, and slightly less likely to be Hispanic. They have the same median household size. MTO families are also likely to have slightly lower incomes (\$8,200 versus \$8,600 in median income), are less likely to be employed (22 versus 30 percent), and have higher participation rates in welfare programs (Aid to Families with Dependent Children and later Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). The families that elected to join MTO are thus *not* the highest-income families nor the ones with the most employment: MTO has not "creamed" from the public housing population. Instead, the program appears to have attracted a population with more young women who are family heads and a higher share of female-headed families living on welfare.

Table 5. Characteristics of MTO and Non-MTO Families From the Same Public Housing Developments: Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, and New York

	MTO Households (N=2,414)	Non-MTO Households (N=6,813)
Black non-Hispanic (%)	54	51
Hispanic (%)	39	45
Female head (%)	93	78
Mean age, head (years)	35	41
Median age, head (years)	33	39
Standard deviation	9	13
Mean no. of children under 18	2.5	2.3
Median no. of children under 18	2.0	2.0
Standard deviation	1.4	1.4
Mean household size	3.7	3.7
Median household size	3.0	3.0
Standard deviation	1.5	1.6
Percent receiving AFDC	75	51
Percent employed	22	30
Mean income	\$9,365	\$10,769
Median income	\$8,252	\$8,645
Standard deviation	\$4,810	\$7,465

NOTES: All Results, except household size, are significant at the 0.5 level. The data were taken from the June 1998 MTO data files and from HUD's Multifamily Tenant Characteristics System database for the same public housing developments in July 1996. Because data provided by the Chicago Housing Authority were judged not to be complete enough for this analysis, only the other four sites were included. In addition, data were unavailable for families from Section 8 projects, so that the non-MTO household information is only for families living in public housing developments targeted for MTO enrollment. The incomes for families from public housing were truncated by deleting households whose annual income exceeded \$50,000, and age of head of household was limited to those between ages 17 and 90.

The table shows that women of color and their children were predominant among those who joined the MTO program (MTO households), although there were a small number of whites (particularly in Boston). A modest number of two-parent families also joined the demonstration. With a mean age of 35, these were not primarily the youngest parents, although the sample does include both very young mothers and some grandmothers caring for children who are 18 years of age or younger. More than 22 percent of the families reported income from employment and more than 75 percent were primarily dependent on public assistance grants.

Central to the willingness and enthusiasm of families to volunteer for this demonstration has been their desire to escape from crime and violence that appear, based upon participants' reports, to be far higher in the public housing developments located in deeply poor areas of these five inner cities (see table 6). One important finding of the research done since 1996 is that for many of the families that have moved into low-poverty communities, their new homes have provided them with the sense of security and peace that they desired when they initially volunteered. Thus, from initial reports, the MTO demonstration appears to have delivered the notable improvement in personal safety and security that parents most wanted for themselves and their children.

Table 6. Who Joined MTO and Why?

<p>The typical family entering the MTO program consisted of a minority woman and her three children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almost two-thirds were African American, almost one-third Hispanic.• Over 90 percent were single-parent families.• Three-quarters were primarily dependent on welfare benefits for income.• Roughly 20 percent were employed at baseline. <p>The main motivations for wanting to move were crime and fear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over three-quarters of the applicants said getting away from drugs and gangs was the first or second most important reason for wanting to move, and they reported high rates of criminal victimization.• Nearly half mentioned getting a bigger or better apartment or having better schools for their children, but these were clearly less important motivating factors.
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Personal accounts provided by MTO treatment group participants suggest that this *escape* from fear and crime has a number of additional benefits for families and their children. After the move to a better community, parents have said that they now feel they have good reason to seek additional opportunities for themselves and for their children. Parents no longer are afraid to come home from work on payday, expecting gang members to steal their paychecks. Mothers tell us, in focus groups, that they no longer have to fear leaving their children at home because of the prospect of gunfire or break-ins and can look for work or training opportunities.

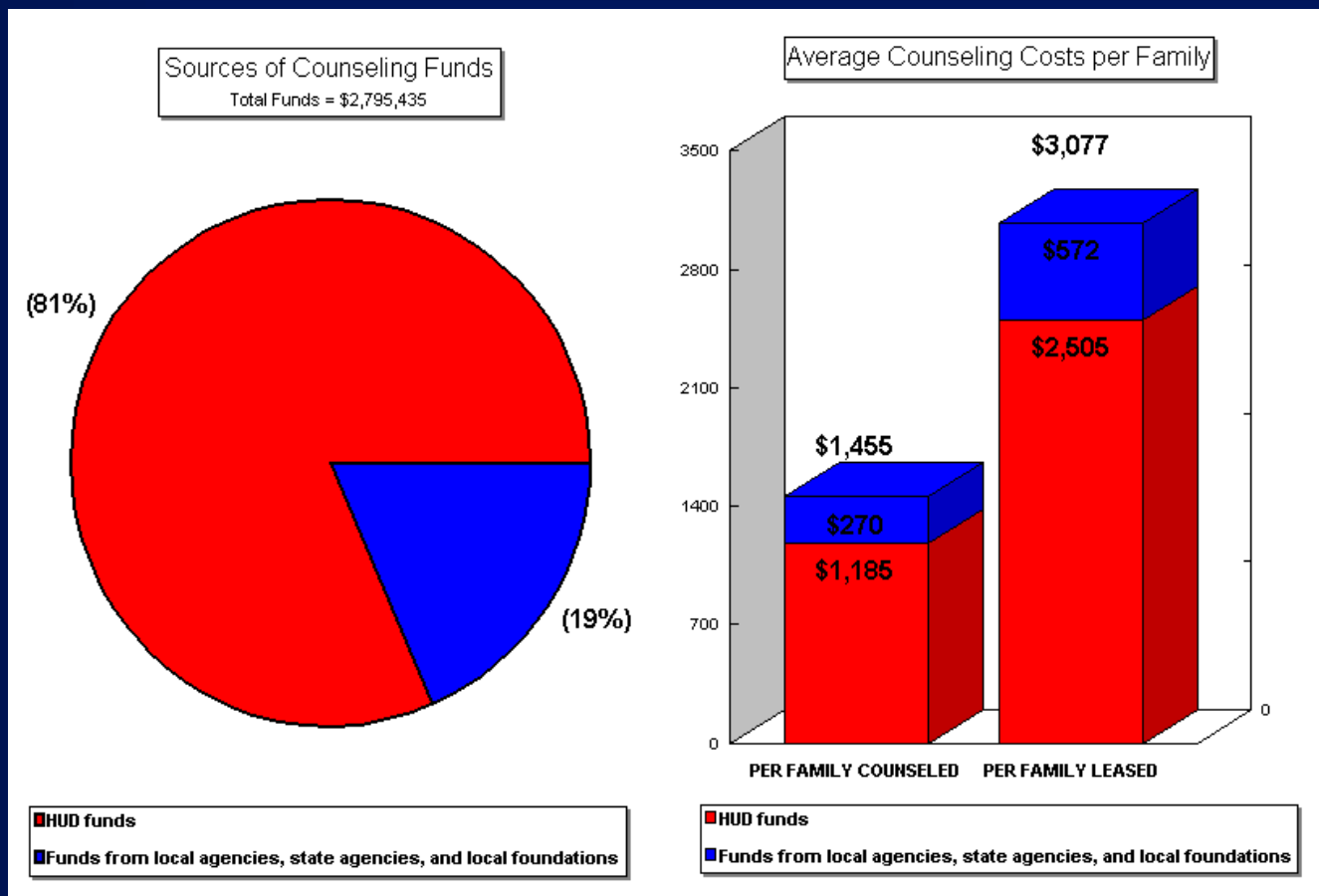
Central to this is the notable change in the way peer groups or reference groups influence the response to opportunities. Families that have moved into low-poverty areas have told us that seeing their neighbors leaving for work every day has an important effect. By contrast, in their old (high-poverty) neighborhoods, families say that their friends and peers ridiculed them for any attempt to better themselves or, in the words of one mother, for “trying to make out we are better than them” (the neighbors). MTO housing counselors from various sites have noted that peer pressure seemed to keep clients from trying to get ahead in their lives.¹²

EARLY LESSONS ABOUT INITIAL MOVES THROUGH MTO

On the following pages are color-coded maps for the five metropolitan areas within which MTO operated. These maps provide a red triangular dot for each treatment group family that moved and a blue square dot for a regular Section 8 group family’s move. The locations of the original public and assisted housing developments from which the families moved are shown in green.

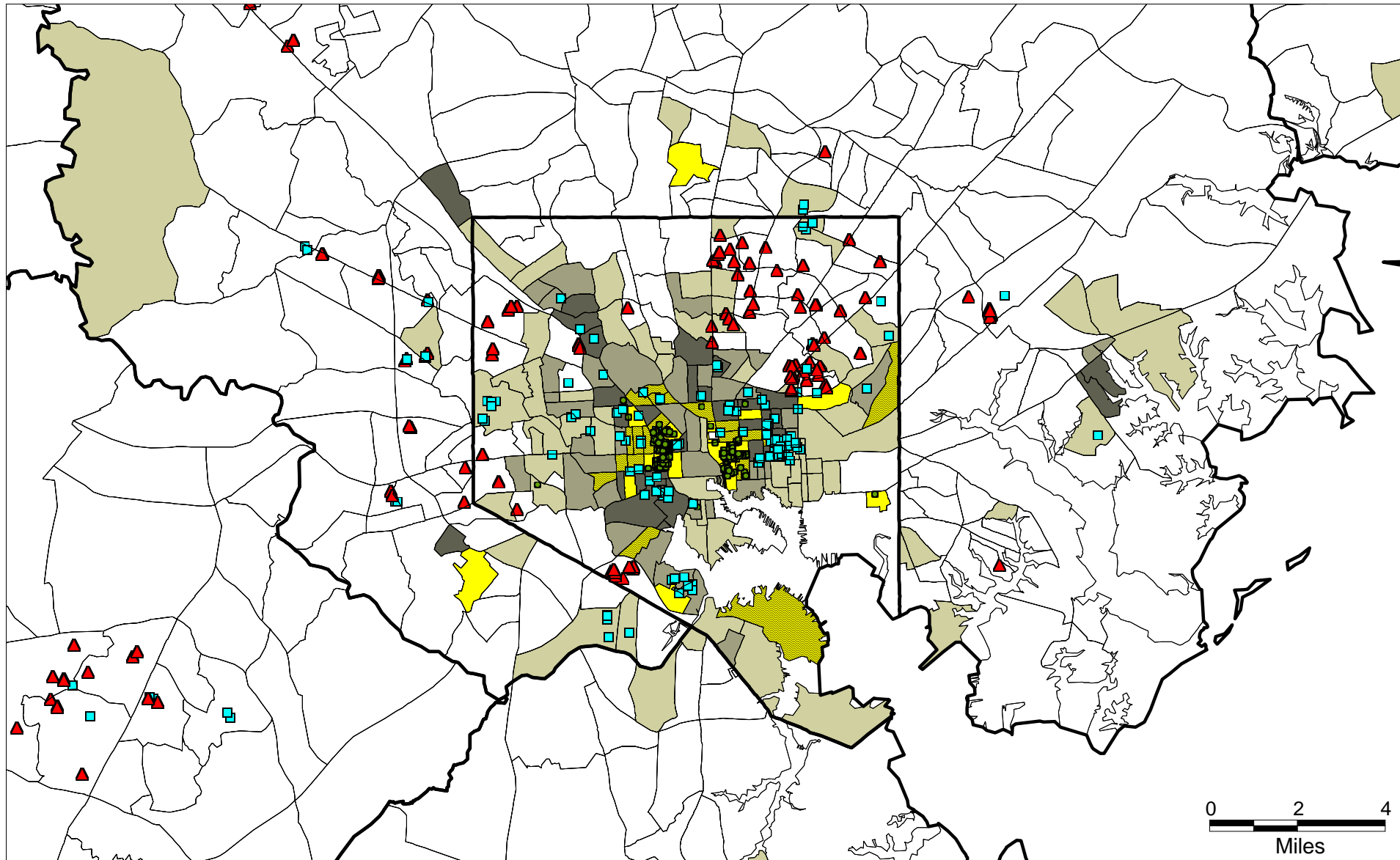
The maps show that while many Section 8 comparison group households chose apartments near the center of the city and often in close proximity to their original project homes, treatment group families were more likely to choose to be located farther from the center of the city, where there are low-poverty communities with affordable rental housing. A preliminary analysis of the move locations for families in the five demonstration cities shows interesting patterns about their destination neighborhoods. Each map of the five metropolitan areas includes a number of census tracts whose boundaries are shown in black. The number of destination tracts for the treatment and comparison group families in each area is as follows. In Baltimore, there were 56 destination tracts for the treatment group and 68 for the regular Section 8. In Boston, the treatment group selected 78 areas and the regular Section 8 group 71. In Chicago, the treatment group selected 71 areas and the treatment group 70. In Los Angeles, the treatment group found housing in 96 census tracts and the regular Section 8 group in 136 tracts. In New York, the treatment group found units in 61 and the control group in 139 tracts.

MTO Demonstration Counseling Funds and Costs

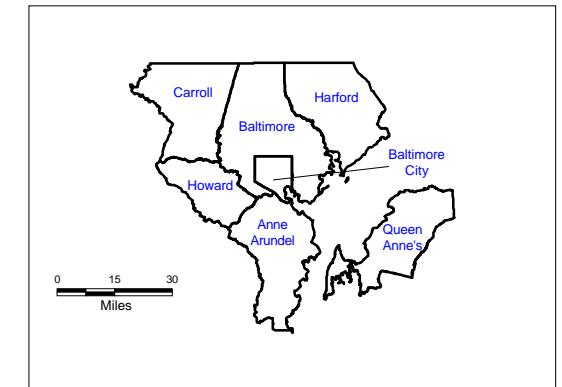


Baltimore

Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate



Baltimore, MD PMSA



The Baltimore, MD PMSA is defined by Baltimore City, and six counties, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's.

Baltimore MTO Households

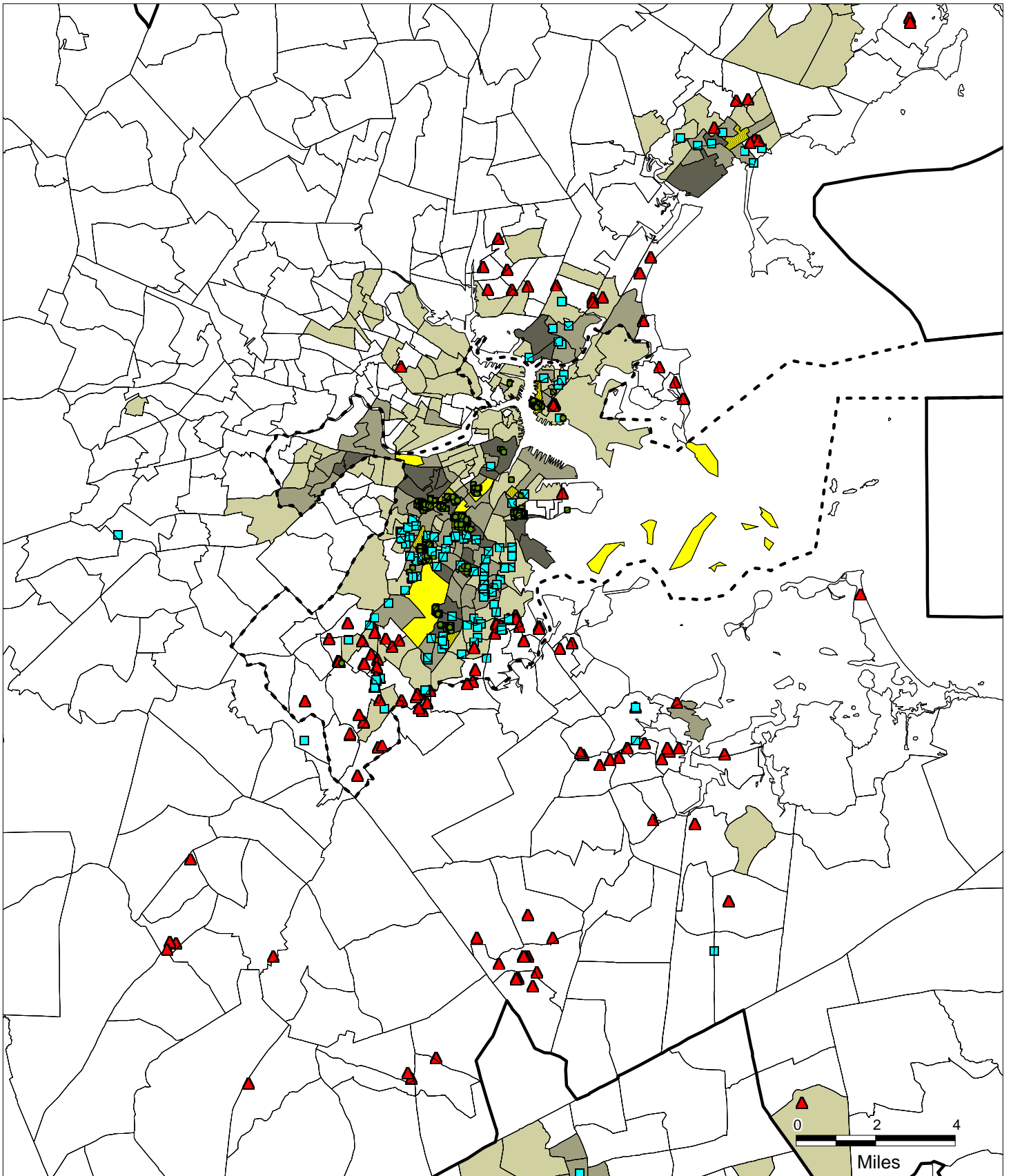
- Origin Address
- ▲ MTO Treatment Group Destination
- Section 8 Comparison Group Destination

1990 Census Tract Poverty Rate

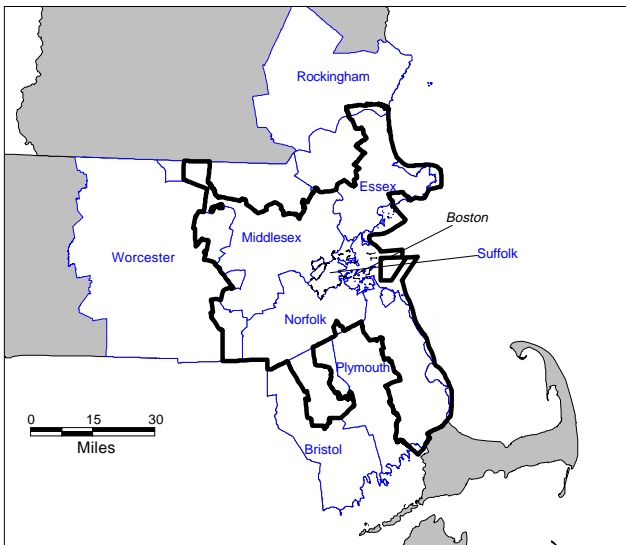
- 0 to 9.9%
- 10 to 19.9%
- 20 to 29.9%
- 30 to 39.9%
- 40 to 49.9%
- 50 to 100%

Boston

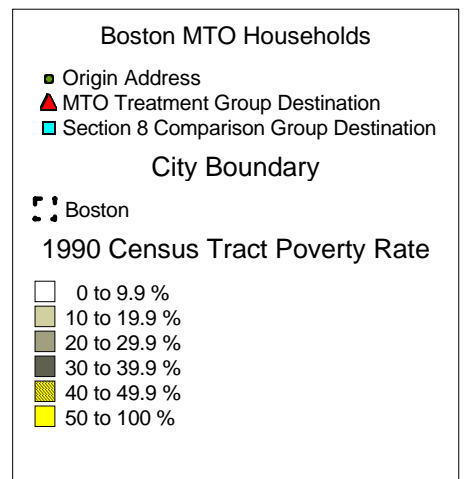
Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate



Boston, MA-NH PMSA

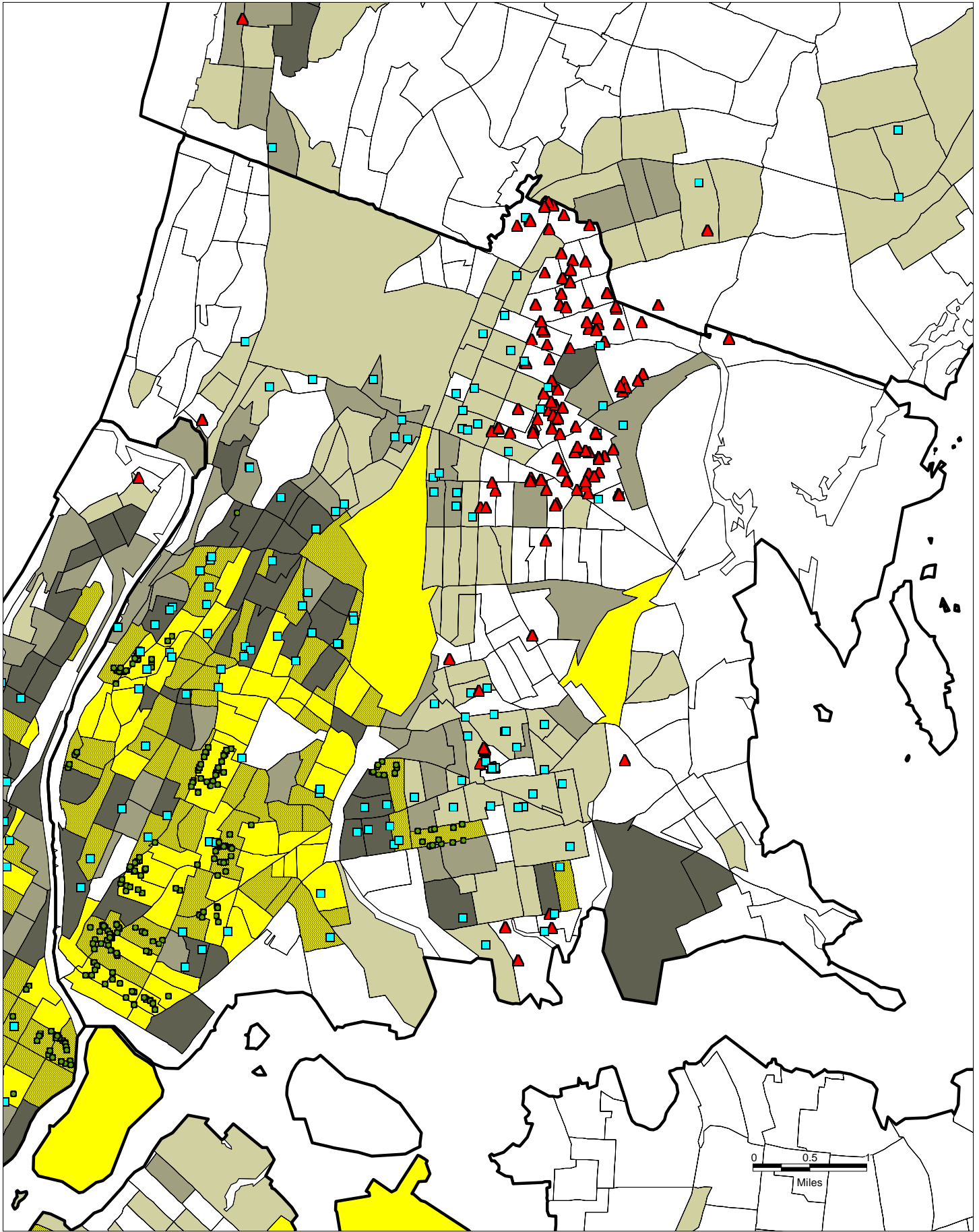


The Boston, MA-NH PMSA is defined in terms of cities and towns and includes all of Suffolk County, MA, and parts of Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Worcester Counties in MA, and part of Rockingham County, NH.

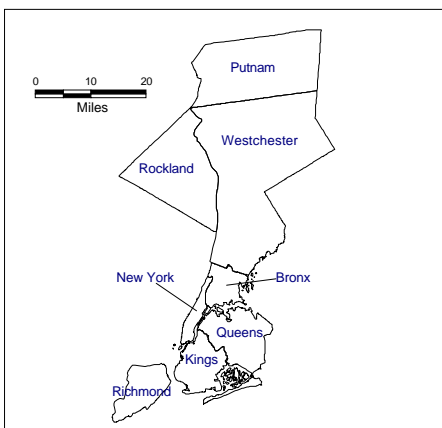


Bronx County, New York

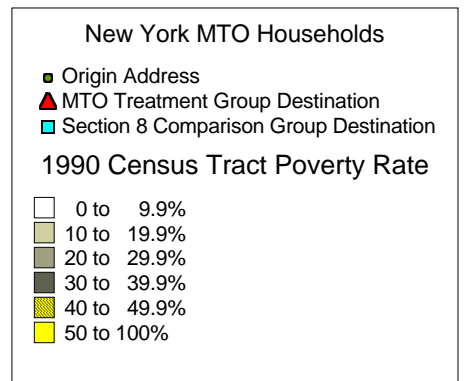
Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate



New York, NY PMSA

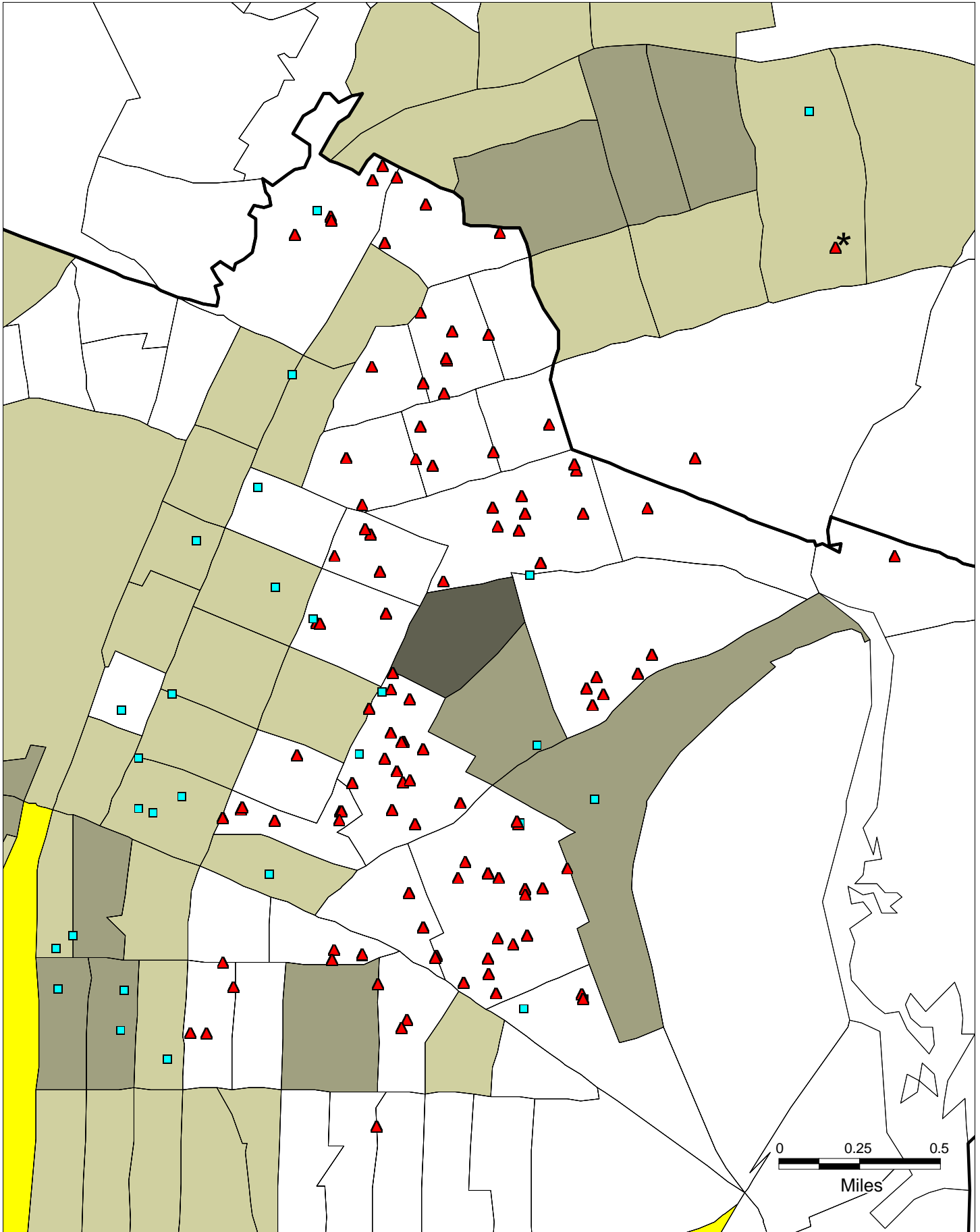


The New York, NY PMSA is defined by eight counties including Bronx, Kings, New York, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, and Westchester.



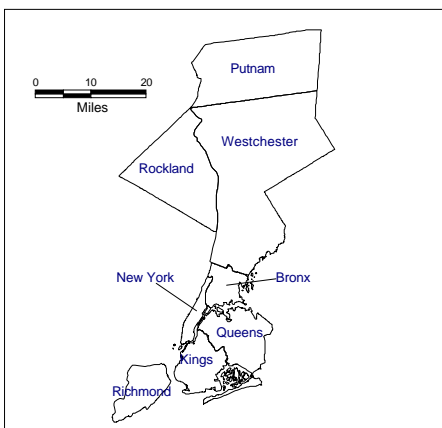
Northeast Bronx, New York

Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate

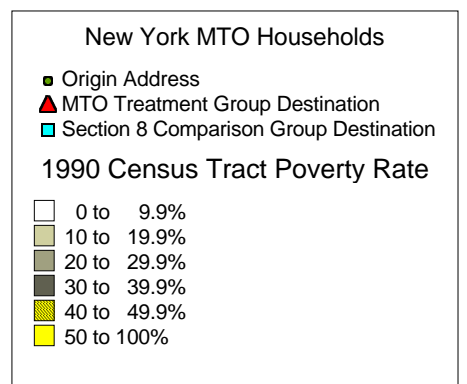


* Experimental household was granted a waiver to lease-up at this location.

New York, NY PMSA

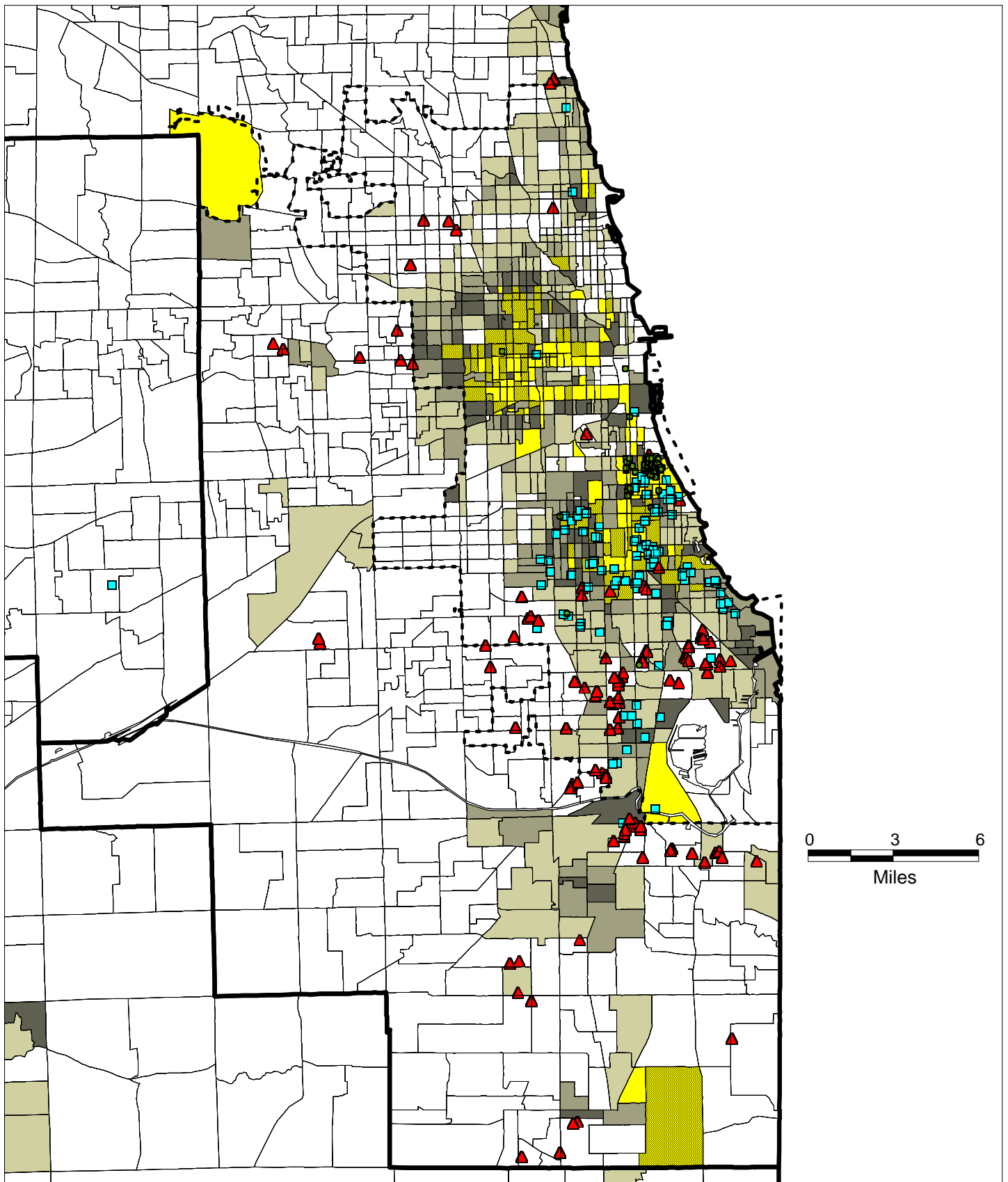


The New York, NY PMSA is defined by eight counties including Bronx, Kings, New York, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, and Westchester.

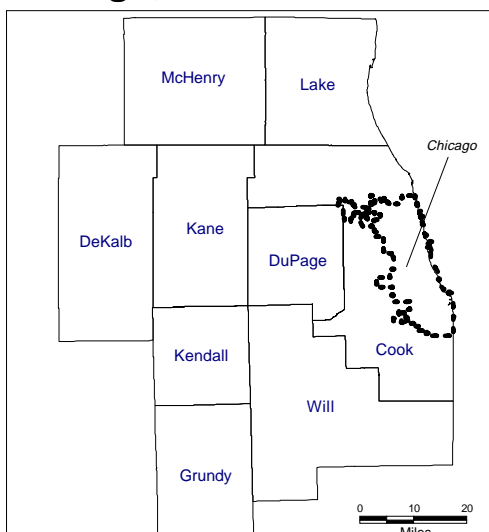


Chicago

Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate



Chicago, IL PMSA



The Chicago, IL PMSA is defined by nine counties including Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will.

Chicago MTO Households

- Origin Address
- ▲ MTO Treatment Group Destination
- Section 8 Comparison Group Destination

City Boundary

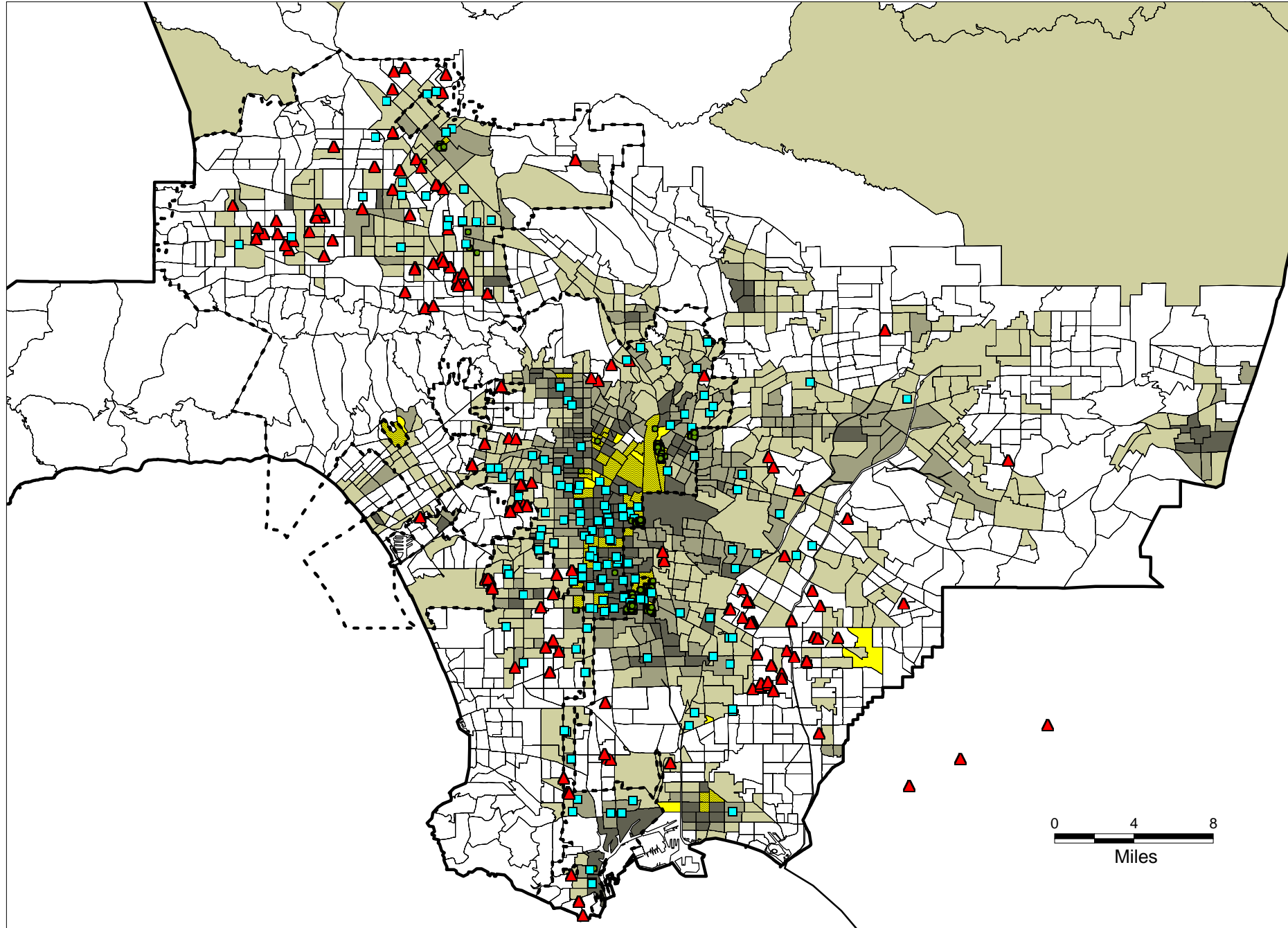
⋮ Chicago

1990 Census Tract Poverty Rate

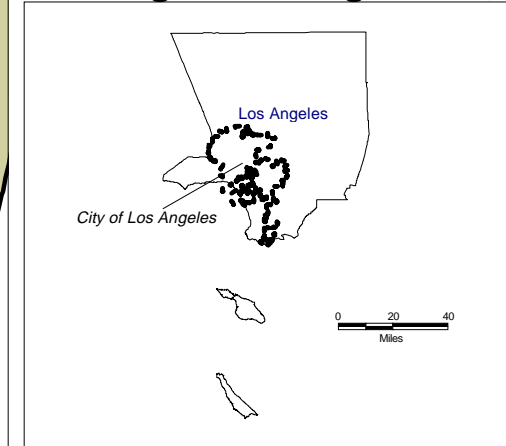
	0 to 9.9%
	10 to 19.9%
	20 to 29.9%
	30 to 39.9%
	40 to 49.9%
	50 to 100%

Los Angeles

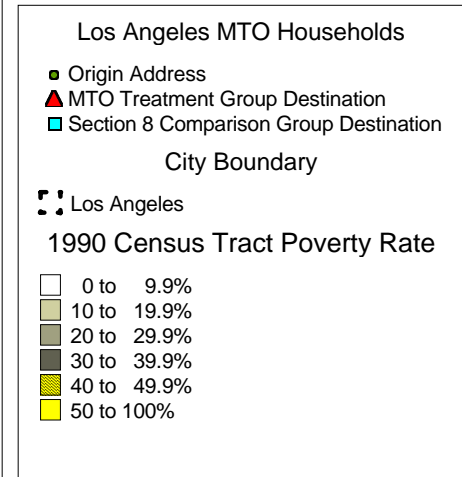
Location of MTO Treatment and Comparison Group Families by Tract Poverty Rate



Los Angeles - Long Beach, CA PMSA



The Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA is the area defined by Los Angeles County.



Due to the small overall size of the demonstration and to the variety of areas where the MTO treatment group families found homes, after they moved these families constituted extremely small proportions of the total population in the destination census tracts. For example, there were over 300,000 people living in the 56 census tracts selected by Baltimore's treatment group families; as a result, there were only 1.2 MTO families for every 1,000 households in the low-poverty census tracts (for a ratio of 1.26 MTO families per 1,000 households). The 167 Boston treatment group families made up a tiny fraction of the 171,311 total households living in Boston's destination low-poverty areas. For Boston, the ratio of .97 means there was less than 1 MTO household for each 1,000 households in the destination census tracts of that metropolitan area. In Chicago, 148 families moved to areas with a total population of more than 333,000; as a result, there were 1.2 MTO treatment group families per 1,000 households (a ratio of 1.24). In Los Angeles, the ratio was .93 (176 families in tracts totaling over 500,000 in population). In New York, 178 treatment group families moved to destination low-poverty census tracts with over 78,000 households in total; the ratio per 1,000 households was 2.27. This somewhat higher ratio (compared to other sites) resulted from the smaller number of low-poverty tracts with affordable rental housing that were available to New York families wishing to remain within the city limits. For comparison group families, the ratios ranged from .64 in Los Angeles to a high of 1.27 in Baltimore.

The data in table 7 reveal that, as the demonstration required, more than 90 percent of the treatment group families chose areas where less than 10 percent of the population lived in poverty (as measured by the 1990 Census). Roughly 80 treatment group families were living in areas with between 10 and 39 percent poverty with the bulk of them in locations close to the 10-12 percent end. The handful of remaining treatment group families moved to communities that were near the 10 percent level. Only 12 percent of the regular Section 8 group chose this kind of location. By contrast, almost three-quarters of the Section 8 group chose areas with poverty rates between 10 and 39 percent, and almost one-fifth of these families chose concentrated-poverty areas.

Table 7. Where Did Families Initially Move Through MTO?

Number of Families by Poverty Characteristics of MTO Move Locations					
Site	Group	Poverty Characteristics of Destination Locations			
		Under 10%	10–39.9%	40% or over	Total
All Sites	Treatment	743 90.5%	78 9.5%	0 0.0%	821 100.0%
	Section 8	86 11.8%	511 70.2%	131 18.0%	728 100.0%
Total		829 53.5%	589 38.0%	131 8.5%	1,549 100.0%

Source: PHA and NPO tracking logs
Sample: All MTO initial moves through June 1998.

These differences in the poverty rates of destination locations are highly significant statistically and indicate that the treatment group families, with the help of MTO counseling, selected different neighborhoods and communities than they might otherwise have chosen. This means we already know that the MTO treatment (counseling, search assistance, and location constraint) *did* make a difference in where people moved.

Where Did Families Initially Move Under MTO?

The families that leased-up in the MTO treatment group chose low-poverty locations:

- As the program required, more than 90 percent moved to areas with less than 10 percent of the population in poverty.
- The remainder were in locations close to the 10 percent level, due to site agency problems and errors in checking on potential units.

By contrast, the regular Section 8 group families moved from public housing to private housing in midrange neighborhoods:

- Almost three-quarters chose areas with poverty rates between 10 and 39 percent.
- Nearly one-fifth chose housing in high-poverty areas similar to their origin locations. In fact, 33 percent of the regular Section 8 movers in Chicago and 38 percent of those in New York chose new areas where more than 40 percent of the population lives in poverty.
- Only 12 percent chose low-poverty locations.

WHAT MTO FAMILIES HAVE TOLD US: EARLY LESSONS

Although no formal evaluation of the effects of MTO on families has yet been conducted, a number of small research projects have been completed that help shed some light on the possible impacts of MTO. HUD and Abt Associates have also undertaken a number of focus group discussions with treatment group families during the past year that help suggest the initial effects of the move to a new neighborhood.

Among the earliest findings from the small research projects funded by HUD on MTO is that the moves to low-poverty communities have significantly reduced the fear of crime that plagued virtually all of the families before they moved out of public housing. In focus groups, parents consistently reported feeling safer, including feeling comfortable for the first time in years with letting their children play outdoors and feeling they did not have to be at home all day to protect their children. Children also reported feeling safer and happier, seeing their mothers healthier and less worried. A paper by Laurence Katz, Jeffrey Kling, and Jeffrey Liebman reveals that families that moved in Boston report much lower serious and overall crime rates and also perceive their new neighborhoods as safer for themselves and their children. Research by another HUD small grant recipient, Jens Ludwig and colleagues, documents the fact that, after their moves in Baltimore, male teenagers who are part of the treatment group commit significantly fewer acts of violent crime when compared with their behavior before they moved.¹³ As the authors state: "...when we compare the prevalence for arrest for violent crime by teens in low-poverty versus high-poverty neighborhoods, the experimental estimates imply a reduction of 23 points."

One treatment group father told us that he no longer fears walking home at night on paydays, because he is now out of reach of the gangs that previously threatened him in his old neighborhood. In addition to lessened fear of crime, successful treatment group families made other adjustments to their new neighborhoods. Those families that have lived in their new neighborhoods the longest appear to be making a variety of positive adjustments. The adults with

whom we spoke, in admittedly self-selecting focus groups, reported finding better jobs and more opportunities for educational advancement. One mother in Los Angeles stated that she was now receiving \$7.00 per hour in a low-poverty community working at the same job for which she received only \$5.90 in her old neighborhood. Others have indicated that they are now able to obtain health benefits while previously their jobs lacked such benefits.

Anecdotal accounts do not, of course, substitute for the fact that, to date, there is no evidence of a systematic, significant increase in wages and benefits paid to experimental group workers. Such evidence will be sought as a key part of the forthcoming evaluation. Families in focus groups said that they see more role models of working adults in their new neighborhoods and that this encourages them to try to get work or get a better paying job. One mother remarked that she always put her car in her garage at night, so that the neighbors did not see that her car was the only one not leaving for work each morning. She was actively searching for work at the time we spoke with her.

Parents also report seeing positive changes for their children, including better and less crowded schools, teachers taking time with individual children, exposure to different cultures, and more role models of working people. Some families report more diversity among their children's friends.

Adjustment problems also have been reported. There have been some tensions with neighbors over noise, privacy issues with landlords, and lack of responsiveness by small landlords about repairs. It is difficult to judge whether these issues are typical of tenant-landlord relations in affordable housing, but some of the difficulties may be due to tenants adjusting to a new form of relationship with private-sector landlords after years or decades of experience only with public-sector (PHA) landlords. Racial harassment has been alleged in a few cases, and in one case a landlord made an improper sexual advance.

A few parents reported that their children are struggling to catch up in school. In several cases, parents have said that the local school assigned their children to a special education class when there were no other options for remedial tutoring. Children also apparently have asked for more expensive clothes and amusements like those their new classmates have, and parents have said that these are hard for them to afford. A small number of older children reportedly have returned to live in their former neighborhoods, often with relatives, but there is no indication that this has been a major practice or pattern.

Next Steps: Tracking MTO Families and Evaluation Research

Following the completion of MTO's lease-ups, the next critical step in HUD's research plan for MTO is to ensure that all participating households and individuals can be located over the next several years as we plan and then execute the evaluations of MTO outcomes. HUD's research plan or strategy for MTO includes the following seven steps, four of which are either completed or well underway:

Table 8. Key Components of HUD's MTO Research Plan

Component	Status
1. Experimental design: informed consent	Fully implemented
2. Baseline survey prior to random assignment	Fully implemented
3. Small grant pilot research	Complete
4. Panel tracking and data system maintenance	Ongoing
5. Interim evaluation	Planned/future
6. Final impact assessment	Planned/future
7. Release of public use data files	Planned/future

TRACKING AND MONITORING

The next major step in PD&R's research plan—keeping track of the participating families over a considerable period of time—is critical to the success of the planned research and evaluations. Panel attrition, or the loss of sample members, could become a major obstacle to effective research if the total sample shrinks or particular groups are lost. Such loss tends to occur when there is no regular contact with the sample members.

With the demonstration completed in all sites, the site agencies will no longer have regular, active contact with the participating families.¹⁴ HUD must be able to locate and contact everyone who participated in the demonstration, including families that were unsuccessful in using either MTO or conventional

Section 8 assistance, families that give up their assistance (and move) after one or more years, and families that break up or reconstitute themselves through divorce, remarriage, and changing child custody arrangements. Locating the members of all these families is central to HUD's ability to carefully evaluate and fully assess the impacts of these moves upon families' lives. Panel (longitudinal) tracking is the essential thread that makes the demonstration's evaluation possible.

Abt Associates was selected in 1996 to assist with the tracking and monitoring of participating families in the MTO demonstration. Abt Associates is responsible for keeping track of all treatment and control families and their members (especially as they leave HUD's programs or change locations) and for maintaining an up-to-date, automated database of names, addresses, and basic status information. Abt Associates has also been responsible for automating the baseline data, providing basic information and analysis on mobility rates and program dropouts, and linking addresses of families to census tracts and their characteristics from the 1990 census.

As part of this longitudinal tracking effort, a short survey or canvass of families was conducted in summer 1997. For the 1997 canvass, 94 percent of the families in the sample were located and 92 percent were interviewed – a high response rate for any survey. A similar tracking survey will be administered approximately once a year to ensure the completeness and integrity of the MTO panel and to ask a small number of questions about the current educational and employment situations of key family members.

THE MTO DATA AND TRACKING SYSTEM

The MTO data system has been designed to support both short-term and long-term evaluation needs. Its essential functions include:

- Providing the primary means to track the demonstration sample over the 10-year followup period.

- Linking, storing, and maintaining relevant data from the MTO demonstration, including longitudinal locating information.
- Providing efficient access to demonstration data for different points in time and for families or members.
- Identifying families (and members) in need of locating.

The system is designed for regular integration of new tracking information – from administrative sources, automated searches, tracing activities, or annual canvasses – with data collected earlier in the demonstration, so that it can always be known when and where a sample family or member was last located.

HOW TRACKING IS CONDUCTED

Site agencies tracked the families through the process of enrollment, random assignment, housing searches, and possible MTO moves. From that point on, passive tracking methods are being employed. These methods rely on a variety of automated databases to gather data on possible locations and changes in household composition. Active tracking methods are also used but are minimized to avoid burdening MTO participants and to keep them as willing members of a 10-year study panel. Table 9 summarizes how tracking is conducted for MTO.

Passive tracking is a relatively inexpensive way to generate potentially useful addresses but it cannot stand alone without active contact to confirm where sample members are living. Periodic MTO canvasses not only locate families and learn of changes in household composition but also give an opportunity to survey families on their progress. To date we have learned after 3 years of tracking activities that 30 percent of participants now live at addresses that were learned through tracking. We expect that the percentage of addresses we learn about through passive and active tracking will increase since the role of the site agencies has concluded.

Table 9. Tracking Methods in MTO

Tracking Methods	Tracking Sources
<i>Site Agency Tracking</i>	
Site agency contact with families during program period (ended March 1999 at last site)	Enrollment agreement (original address) Baseline survey (names and addresses of three contacts) PHA and NPO tracking logs (search MTO move address)
<i>Passive Tracking</i>	
Searches for address, household composition, and program status changes	PHA databases (automated extracts)
Address change searches	National Change of Address system database
Credit information searches	Three national credit bureau databases
Decedent searches	National decedent database, Bureau of Vital Statistics
<i>Active Tracking</i>	
Contact letter prior to canvass	Respondent returns (updated addresses and telephone numbers)
Phone and field locating prior to canvass	Directory assistance, reverse directories, Executive Marketing Systems, PHA records, contact persons, neighbors
MTO canvass (first one, 1997; planned for 1999, 2001, and 2002)	Direct contact with household heads
Contact letter for departed members (to be followed by departed member canvass)	Respondent returns (updated addresses and telephone numbers for departed members)

We have also been pleased at the high rate of contact we have been able to maintain with the initial families that entered the program. The MTO canvass we completed in 1997, of the first 900 families, revealed that we were able to locate 94 percent of MTO families and we completed interviews with 92 percent. There were only nine hard refusals. A second tracking survey is planned for later in 1999.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM TRACKING?

We have learned that the number of people within an MTO household is subject to change. Such changes may be due to marriage, military service, death, or other causes. In the 1997 MTO canvass, fully one-third of the households had gained or lost a member (or both) relative to baseline, including nine heads of household who had died and three who had moved to a foreign country. The relatively large number of departed members has important implications for future MTO tracking, as procedures must ensure that they can be located.

The 1997 canvass showed that 72 percent of the MTO treatment group families that had moved under MTO were still living in low-poverty locations. Very few (2.6 percent) had moved to high-poverty areas and nearly one-fourth had moved to areas that were between 10 and 40 percent poor, with the majority of these living in areas close to 11-12 percent poor. Regular Section 8 families, in contrast, were heavily (71 percent) located in areas with between 10 and 40 percent poverty with 14 percent, rather than 2.6 percent, living in 40 percent or more poor neighborhoods. Only 25 percent of regular Section 8 families found housing in low-poverty census tracts.

Table 10. What Do We Learn From Tracking? (Current Locations of MTO Movers)

Numbers of MTO Families by Poverty Characteristics of Current Locations					
Site	Group	Poverty Characteristics of Current Destination Locations			
		Under 10%	10–39.9%	40% or over	Total
All sites	Treatment	357 72.4%	123 24.9%	13 2.6%	493 100.0%
	Section 8	63 15.2%	293 70.8%	58 14.0%	414 100.0%
Total		420 46.3%	416 45.9%	71 7.8%	907 100.0%

From 1997 canvass—reflects subsequent moves.

SOURCE: 1997 MTO canvass.

SAMPLE: All MTO families randomly assigned through December 31, 1996.

NOTE: Current locations refer to the time of the 1997 canvass.

Summary: Lessons Learned

A number of lessons have been learned during the past several years, as MTO families have sought and found new homes in better-off communities.

LESSONS ABOUT MOBILITY IN LOCAL HOUSING MARKETS

- Lease-up rates for the MTO treatment group were substantially higher (47 percent) than those obtained in the Gautreaux program. As expected, in every site they were lower than the lease-up rates for the regular Section 8 group.
- The lease-up pace was slower than expected due to a number of factors, including tightening rental markets during the operations period, capacity limitations of the operating agencies, family motivation, and the greater search time required to find affordable housing in low-poverty areas.
- Despite some suburban community opposition to MTO in Baltimore County in summer 1994, the demonstration met or exceeded its lease-up goals. There was no further political opposition in low-poverty areas we are aware of, and few instances of suspected discrimination were reported.

LESSONS ABOUT LANDLORD RECRUITMENT IN LOW-POVERTY AREAS

- In every site, it was difficult to find willing landlords with large-scale holdings in low-poverty areas. The MTO nonprofit counseling agencies had to do extensive landlord outreach to small owners not familiar with Section 8, and owner recruitment typically proceeded on a unit-by-unit basis.
- A sufficient number of landlords in low-poverty areas were willing to rent to former public housing residents from deeply poor neighborhoods

based on substantial landlord outreach on behalf of the MTO treatment group. NPO support was offered to all of these landlords and played an important role in addressing a small number of tenant-landlord disputes.

LESSONS ABOUT FAMILIES

- A large enough number of public housing and Section 8 project-based families wanted to move out of their high-poverty communities to permit the enrollment and random assignment of a sufficient number of households, and the demonstration was therefore able to reach, and exceed, the targeted number of participants. More than 5,000 families volunteered to join MTO.
- Most families were initially motivated by a realistic fear of crime, a fear relieved for many who left concentrated poverty areas behind.
- After a few years, the families appear to be adapting to their new communities by learning a new set of values and choices associated with upward mobility for themselves and their families. Early research findings suggest that the move to low-poverty communities quickly results in lower levels of violent crime and lower levels of medical care needed in such areas as asthma-related complaints.

MTO IN THE FUTURE

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research is committed to taking full advantage of the opportunity presented by the MTO demonstration to measure definitively the impacts of a change in neighborhood on the employment, income, educational achievement, and social well-being of low-income families. We anticipate that our evaluation strategy will begin to yield fascinating and important results within the next year, and it will continue to be a rich source of information and insight for the next decade.

The next phase of the MTO research plan is the interim, or initial evaluation, scheduled for roughly 5 years after lease-ups began. This evaluation will offer the first systematic, comparative examination of the initial results or outcomes for the MTO treatment group, compared with both the Section 8 and in-place control groups. Participating families will be surveyed comprehensively about their circumstances several years after joining MTO, in order to measure interim impacts of receiving MTO assistance and moving to a low-poverty neighborhood.

Approximately 10 years after families first receive MTO assistance, HUD will conduct a final survey of all participating families to measure the long-term impacts of receiving MTO assistance and moving to a low-poverty neighborhood. This research will focus on changes in employment, income, and educational achievement. It will measure differences among the three randomly assigned groups and differences between families living in high-poverty and low-poverty neighborhoods.

Because of the MTO demonstration's importance for future researchers, a database will be created after the completion of the final evaluation that will provide non-individually identifiable records for use in subsequent research. It is anticipated that aggregations of geocoded tenant-level data will be made available for use by policy researchers following the completion of the final evaluation.

Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to the success of the Moving To Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program since the genesis of the program concept in the early 1990s. It is a pleasure to acknowledge their roles here.

The first thanks go to Alexander Polikoff, executive director of BPI in Chicago, for his willingness and enthusiasm in pressing HUD officials in the Administration of former HUD Secretary Jack Kemp to adopt the MTO model. The research of Professor Jim Rosenbaum and his colleagues concerning the Gautreaux program was also key in the first stages of MTO inception. Jill Khadduri and Mark Shroder, in the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) at HUD, were then instrumental in shaping the design of the demonstration as it currently exists. Maddie Hastings, formerly in the Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH), as well as Gerry Benoit and Bill Murphy in PIH, were of enormous help in making the Section 8 program and MTO work together to accomplish the demonstration's goals. Gerry Benoit, in particular, offered support and funding that were critical to the demonstration's survival. Based on their experience with the Gautreaux program, Kale Williams and Mary Davis of the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities in Chicago helped design this demonstration and get it off to a sound start at the initial training sessions.

Subsequently, former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, Assistant Secretary for PD&R Michael Stegman, and, most particularly, Margery Austin Turner, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for PD&R, played vital roles in providing the policy direction and funding support needed to get MTO moving. Marge Turner was the person most responsible for bringing MTO all the way from congressional mandate to real-world demonstration and research. Paul Leonard, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy in PD&R, was responsible for ensuring a sensible experimental design and for offering good advice throughout. HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo and Acting Assistant Secretary for

PD&R Xavier de Souza Briggs continue to provide the guidance, support, and funding needed to sustain the demonstration and keep it on the path to its final evaluation roughly 5 to 7 years from now.

Throughout the demonstration, we have all felt the great excitement of working with a demonstration whose potential for altering and improving the lives of families was so great. The families that have shared their stories with us have done the most to instill in the authors the sense that we are engaged in one of the most worthwhile projects we have ever undertaken. Our thanks, then, to the hundreds of families we have met and to the thousands that have willingly agreed to join and work with MTO.

Executives and staff of the public housing agencies and nonprofit counseling organizations in the five MTO sites are next closest to us. They were indispensable in making the operations of MTO succeed. In addition to the top leadership of these agencies, we wish to thank all of those who worked at each of the five sites for their enthusiasm, hard work, and commitment. Without you, there would be no MTO.

A number of current and former staff of Abt Associates played important parts in designing and guiding the demonstration. They included senior staff members Antony Phipps and Susan Popkin, as well as Field Manager Judith Hass. In addition, the women and men who served as Abt Associates site assistants during the 4 years of site operations not only helped with agency recordkeeping but contributed greatly to collecting the high-quality data vital to long-range evaluation of this experiment.

A penultimate word of thanks goes to all the members of the eight teams of researchers with whom we have enjoyed working over the past several years in the search for the best methods and initial findings relevant to MTO families. The colleagues with whom we have worked have been indispensable allies in making effective use of the data we have assembled and in adding new, creative,

often brilliant ways of understanding the impact that MTO has had on the lives of parents and their children.

As this is the final report for John Goering and Joan Kraft before we leave government service, we want to express our personal thanks to our colleagues at Abt Associates, who have shared with us the tasks, troubles, and excitement of making MTO succeed. Our thanks to them and to HUD for allowing us the great opportunity of seeing government at its best.

Endnotes

1. See, for example, the papers cited below by James Rosenbaum, et al., the study of the Cincinnati mobility program by Fischer (1991) and the study of the Hartford mobility program by Donovan (1993).
2. MTO also differs from Gautreaux and other predecessors in that it focuses on the poverty rates of origin and destination neighborhoods rather than their racial composition.
3. In 1993 HUD selected Abt Associates to assist in completing the experimental design, to develop demonstration procedures, and to help manage demonstration operations in the selected sites. Following the selection of five sites, Abt staff provided comprehensive training using the *MTO Program Operations Manual* in May 1994. Each site then began the process of making plans for outreach to the public housing developments targeted in the original applications from the sites to HUD.
4. The New York City Housing Authority's additional Section 8 rental assistance permitted the lease-ups there to increase from 285 families to a final total of 369. Los Angeles' program expanded by 250 families. The Boston program used 13 additional Section 8 rental units.
5. Among the MTO jurisdictions, the State of Massachusetts has a legal prohibition against discriminating against persons on the basis of their source of income (such as Section 8).
6. This research drew from different types of data from several sources. *Qualitative* data on counseling services were gathered through structured interviews with MTO counselors and managers, through in-depth review with the counselors of a small sample of each agency's client files, through observation of nonprofit organization (NPO) activities during multiple visits to the five sites, and through ongoing telephone site monitoring. *Quantitative* data on counseling were drawn from the participant tracking logs maintained by the NPOs and PHAs, and additional information was abstracted from counseling logs and case files for a subsample of MTO treatment group clients. These data were linked to data from the baseline survey that families completed at the time of their enrollment in MTO.
7. These responsibilities were set by the provisions of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and Program Guidelines for the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program, *Federal Register*, Volume 58, Number 156 (August 16, 1993), pp. 43458–43470.
8. The services might be provided directly by the NPO or indirectly by information and referral.
9. Those advocating a specific services model argued that this was the best way to foster client responsibility; they saw case management as likely to make clients dependent on NPO staff. The case management model advocates replied that low-income families had poor chances of becoming self-sufficient unless they could look at the bigger picture and work on a number of their problems simultaneously.
10. For example, combining data from all the sites, families with one child (rather than more than one) were more likely to move, as were families with lower incomes, families with the head of the household in school, and those dissatisfied with their neighborhood.

11. Taking the New York site as the basis for comparison, families in Baltimore, Boston, and Los Angeles had a greater chance of success, while those in Chicago had a lower chance.

12. William Julius Wilson (1997: 52) comments: "...where jobs are scarce, where people rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to help their friends and neighbors find jobs, and where there is a disruptive or degraded school life purporting to prepare youngsters for eventual participation in the workforce, many people eventually lose their feeling of connectedness to work in the formal economy; they no longer expect work to be a regular, and regulating force in their lives." To Wilson, the economic marginality of the poor is "cruelly reinforced ... by the conditions in the neighborhoods in which they live." (p. 54). He goes on to quote one Chicago resident who said: "I feel that if you are raised in a neighborhood and all you see is negative things, then you are going to be negative because you don't see anything positive." (p. 55). See also Massey and Denton (1993: 178-185).

13. Laurence Katz, Jeffrey Kling, and Jeffrey Liebman. *Moving to Opportunity in Boston: Early Impacts of a Housing Mobility Program*. Jens Ludwig, Greg Duncan, and P. Hirschfield, *Urban Poverty and Juvenile Crime: Evidence from a Randomized Housing-Mobility Experiment*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Public Policy Institute, 1998.

14. Of course, those families that remained in public housing, as well as the families that succeeded in using Section 8, will have contact for annual inspections and recertifications. However, contact during MTO operations was much more frequent.

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Appendix A: Master MTO Random Assignment Tables

Site	Random Assignment Ratio (MTOX:S8C:IPC) ^a	Time Period Used
Baltimore	8:3:5 3:8:5	Assignments before 2/1/96 Assignments on/after 2/1/96
Boston	8:3:5 3:6:7 8:5:3	Assignments before 3/1/96 Assignments on/after 3/1/96 but before 7/24/97 Assignments on/after 7/24/97
Chicago	8:3:5 10:3:3 6:7:3	Assignments before 11/9/96 Assignments on/after 11/9/96 but before 11/26/97 Assignments on/after 11/26/97
Los Angeles	8:3:5 4:4:6 3:7:4	Assignments before 3/20/96 Assignments on/after 3/20/96 but before 5/1/98 Assignments on/after 5/1/98
New York	8:3:5 5:7:4 3:7:6 8:4:4	Assignments before 7/24/96 Assignments on/after 7/24/96 but before 10/24/97 ^b Assignments on/after 10/23/97 but before 12/3/97 ^c Assignments on/after 12/3/97

a. MTOX=MTO experimental group; S8C=Section 8 comparison group; IPC=in-place control group.

b. For assignments on 10/23/97, only those with sequence numbers in the 2,000 range.

c. For assignments on 10/23/97, only those with sequence numbers in the 3,000 range.

Appendix B: The Relationship of Counseling to Lease-Up Success

This appendix provides technical detail on the analysis of lease-up success. It contains additional information on the sample used, as well as on the multivariate analysis. Note that this analysis must be considered preliminary, as the MTO program population was not yet complete.

THE ANALYTIC SAMPLE

The analytic sample for the multivariate analysis includes 850 families in the MTO treatment group. These are families that joined MTO relatively early (most in 1994 and 1995, although some in the first half of 1996). This sample has a higher proportion of final outcomes (lease-ups or expirations), with a greater proportion of families from Baltimore and Boston and a smaller proportion from Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. This difference reflects the heavier early activity in the Baltimore and Boston sites.

RELATIONSHIP OF COUNSELING UTILIZATION TO FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

The measures of counseling utilization bear some relationship to family characteristics and background conditions, as shown in exhibit B-1. Most of the characteristics in the exhibit have positive relationships to the utilization measures, with the exception of working for pay (fewer searches), total income (fewer searches and fewer units found by NPO), African American (fewer units found by NPO), and the Chicago site (negative on all three utilization variables).

To sort out the relative effects of family characteristics, background conditions, and counseling utilization on the ability of MTO experimental group families to lease-up with Section 8 assistance, a multivariate statistical analysis

was undertaken. In addition to the three groups of independent variables just mentioned, site dummies were also tested for inclusion as explanatory variables (with the New York site omitted, serving as the reference category). The results of this analysis are summarized in exhibit B-2.

Exhibit B-1. Relationship between Counseling Utilization Measures and Family Characteristics and Background Conditions

Number of Searches		Number of Search Units Found by NPO		Completion of NPO Counseling Program ^a	
Family Characteristic or Background Condition	Sign	Family Characteristic or Background Condition	Sign	Family Characteristic or Background Condition	Sign
In school	+	African American	-	Moved 3 times in past 5 years	+
High school education	+	White	+	Want to move to suburban neighborhood	+
Moved 3 times in past 5 years	+	Hispanic	+	Dissatisfied with current neighborhood	+
Dissatisfied with current neighborhood	+	Current housing condition (rating) ^b	+	Current housing condition (rating) ^b	+
Working for pay	-			Total Income	-
Total income	-			Credit problem identified by NPO	+
Sites:		Sites:		Sites:	
Baltimore	+	Baltimore	NS	Baltimore	NS
Boston	-	Boston	NS	Boston	NS
Chicago	NS	Chicago	-	Chicago	-
Los Angeles	NS	Los Angeles	+	Los Angeles	+
New York	NS	New York	+	New York	+

Source: NPO Participant Tracking Logs and Participant Baseline Surveys (N=850)

Sample: MTO treatment group only

Missing: 0 cases

Note: Bivariate relationships as measured by Pearson correlation coefficients. All reported relationships are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, except those marked NS (not significant)

a. Counseling program staff coded an outcome for each family, with the following options: Completed NPO program; dropped out of NPO program; no show/no contact with NPO; or ineligible. Completion of the NPO program could occur even if a lease-up did not result.

b. Ratings: Excellent=4, Good=3, Fair=2, Poor=1.

In exhibit B-2, the dependent variable for all three models is whether the family succeeded in leasing-up through MTO. Each column shows the results of the analysis when one particular counseling utilization measure is included as an explanatory variable. The three models reported each contain one of these measures. They also contain a uniform set of other independent variables. Overall, the model that includes the utilization variable for completion of the NPO's counseling program is the strongest, while the model that includes the number of search units found by the NPO is the weakest of the three. However, they do not differ greatly either in explanatory power or in the patterns of significance and magnitudes of coefficients.

Having only one child gives a family a significantly greater probability of leasing-up, while being Hispanic or having a higher income reduces the chances of leasing-up. Background conditions and experiences that help with lease-up include being dissatisfied with the current neighborhood and being in school.

Site dummies also proved to be significant in all three models. (The intercept represents the omitted site, New York.) These site dummies likely represent some combination of program features and local markets, so they should be interpreted with care. The coefficients of the Chicago dummy are negative and highly significant in all three equations, while those for Los Angeles are all positive and highly significant. The dummy variables for Baltimore and Boston also contribute explanatory power to all three models.

The significant negative coefficient for being Hispanic is of some interest. We suggest that it results primarily from the experience of Los Angeles Chicano families. PHA and NPO staff there consistently reported that it was harder to convince these clients to move. Their reluctance was based most often on fears about immigration status, given the climate of opinion in California against immigration; the subsequent withdrawal of welfare benefits even from legal immigrants would reinforce these fears. Further, the Fair Housing Congress, the

**Exhibit B–2. Factors Contributing to Success in Leasing-Up
(MTO Experimental Group Only)**

Dependent variable: Leased up (1=Yes, 0=No)

Independent Variables	Counseling Utilization Measure in Model		
	Number of Searches	Number of Search Units Found by NPO	Completion of NPO Counseling Program ^a
Intercept	2013**	2313*	–0137
Family characteristics			
Hispanic	–.0755*	–.0578	–.0420
One child	.0749+	.0787+	.0821*
Total income	–.0000069*	–.0000091**	–.0000045
Background conditions and experiences			
In school	.0658	.0870*	.1075**
Prefer to move to suburbs	.0567	.0571	.0262
Moved 3 times in 5 years	.0627	.0894	.0437
Dissatisfied with neighborhood	.0440	.0825*	.0333
Counseling utilization			
Number of searches	.1698**		
Units found by NPO		.1400**	
Client completed counseling ^a			.5510**
Site/Market			
Baltimore	.1065*	.1961**	.1732**
Boston	.1016*	.1513**	.0833**
Chicago	–.1874**	–.1362*	–.2050
Los Angeles	.2150**	.2335**	.1315**
R ²	.2923	.2199	.3590
Adjusted R ²	.2820	.2086	.3590
Number of observations	840	840	840

Source: NPO Participant Tracking Logs and Participant Baseline Surveys (N=850)

Sample: MTO experimental group only.

Missing: 10 cases (1 Baltimore, 7 Boston, 2 Los Angeles).

Statistical significance: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; + $p < .10$

a. Counseling program staff coded an outcome for each family, with the following options: completed NPO program; dropped out of NPO program; no show/no contact with NPO; or ineligible. Completion of the NPO program could occur even if a lease-up did not result.

NPO providing housing search assistance in Los Angeles, did not consistently have Spanish-speaking counselors for MTO. Both these factors could contribute to the negative effect observed here.

This multivariate analysis was preliminary for several reasons. First, the MTO program population was still growing, and many more families would complete low-poverty lease-ups with counseling agency assistance. Second, data were not available on the counseling provided by CHAC in Chicago and by On Your Feet in Los Angeles, and on associated client outcomes.