

**Highlighting New  
Poverty Research****by Rachel Garshick Kleit  
and Lynne C. Manzo**

"To Move or Not to Move:  
Relationships to Place  
and Relocation Choices  
in HOPE VI," published in  
*Housing Policy Debate*, Vol.  
17, No. 2 (2006)

Rachel Garshick Kleit is  
an Associate Professor at  
the Daniel J. Evans School  
of Public Affairs at the  
University of Washington.  
Lynne C. Manzo is an  
Associate Professor in the  
College of Architecture  
and Urban Planning at the  
University of Washington.

The West Coast Poverty  
Center's "POVERTY  
RESEARCH FLASH"  
highlights new research  
by Center faculty  
affiliates and others on  
causes, consequences,  
and effective policy  
responses to poverty,  
with an emphasis on  
changing labor markets,  
demographic shifts, family  
structure, and social and  
economic inequality. More  
information about the West  
Coast Poverty Center is  
available from our website:  
www.wcpc.washington.edu

**March 2008****To Move or Not to Move: Relationships to  
Place and Relocation Choices in HOPE VI**

**Background.** Since 1993, the HOPE (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) VI program has granted funds to redevelop existing public housing sites into mixed income housing. During redevelopment, the number of available public housing units is often reduced and residents of some targeted sites must decide whether they want to try to relocate temporarily within the housing site, move to different public housing developments, or seek housing in the private market using a housing voucher. Residents' decisions about relocation and their ability to act on those preferences may be driven by—and constrained by—personal characteristics, preferences, and needs as well as the local housing market. For those public housing residents with health problems, poor rental histories, and a lack of information about their alternatives, relocation may be particularly difficult.

**Methods.** West Coast Poverty Center affiliate Rachel Garshick Kleit and colleague Lynne C. Manzo investigate what factors influence public housing residents' preferences about relocation and whether residents actually act on those preferences. The authors combine pre-relocation interviews with 200 English and Vietnamese-speaking, non-elderly heads of households with children at the High Point HOPE VI project in Seattle with administrative data from the Seattle Housing Authority on household characteristics and relocation preferences and with data on where residents were living after the redevelopment began. They use logistic regression analyses to identify what factors contribute to public housing residents' preference to move or not and to see whether the same factors influence actual behavior.

**Findings.** Overall, a majority (60 percent) of respondents indicated an initial preference for returning to the High Point housing site after the redevelopment while the remaining respondents expressed a desire to leave. Based on the regression analysis, respondents who were older, had larger families, had undergone eviction proceedings, wanted more social stability, and expressed concern about access to services were more likely to have an initial preference for moving away from High Point.

However, initial preferences were not perfect predictors of actual behavior. Overall, roughly half of the sample moved and half remained onsite during the redevelopment or returned after completion. The majority who wanted to return to High Point or to move using a Section 8 voucher were able to act on their initial preferences (64 percent and 68 percent, respectively). In contrast, only 17 percent of residents who expressed a preference for moving into other public housing in Seattle actually did so.

The gap between initial preferences and moving outcomes suggests that public housing residents may face difficulties exercising their choices in the housing market. In particular, older respondents and respondents with larger families were less likely to translate their initial preference for moving into an actual move away from the site. As more public housing residents are affected by redevelopment under HOPE VI, public housing officials may want to pay particular attention to helping these residents achieve their housing goals.

# Poverty Research Flash

**The West Coast Poverty Center** serves as a hub for research, education, and policy analysis leading to greater understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and effective approaches to reducing it in the west coast states. The Center, located at the University of Washington, is one of three regional poverty centers funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). More information about the West Coast Poverty Center is available from our website: [www.wcpc.washington.edu](http://www.wcpc.washington.edu)

## Poverty Research Flash 2008-4

### To Move or Not to Move: Relationships to Place and Relocation Choices in HOPE VI

New research from Rachel Garshick Kleit and Lynne C. Manzo

#### Key findings:

- When asked for their preferences, 60 percent of a sample of public housing residents wanted to remain in their housing development after a substantial redevelopment of a housing site in Seattle.
- The majority surveyed were able to translate their initial preferences into actual outcomes. Roughly half of those surveyed remained onsite during the redevelopment or returned to the housing site after the redevelopment.
- Residents who were older or had larger families were less likely to move when they expressed an initial preference for moving than were younger residents and those with smaller families, suggesting that moving outcomes were driven by the opportunities and constraints that residents faced in their search for housing.

***For more information about this study, see inside.***