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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Until their demolition in the past two years, Scott Homes and Carver Homes public housing projects contained a total of 850 conventional public housing rental units. The projects were demolished as part of a HOPE VI grant which Miami Dade Housing Agency received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1999. The HOPE VI redevelopment plan was to relocate all of the existing residents, demolish all of the public housing units and rebuild a mixed income community with only eighty traditional public housing units. The relocated residents were required to either move into other public housing units or to utilize Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers to move into private rentals. Most of the relocating residents chose to use the Section 8 vouchers. The Miami Workers Center and Low Income Families Fighting Together have recently identified 187 former heads of households that were displaced from Scott-Carver Homes. These former Scott-Carver residents filled out questionnaires about their experiences after relocation, and their responses revealed serious problems with the success of the relocation effort. The findings from those questionnaires are as follows:

- All of the former residents reported that they had initially been relocated into housing after they left Scott Homes and Carver Homes.
- 63% of the residents that answered questionnaires said that they relocated using a Section 8 voucher.
- 52% of the former Scott residents that relocated with a Section 8 voucher also report losing their Section 8 voucher.
- 76% of the residents that initially relocated through Section 8 and subsequently lost their voucher also reported that they were homeless or moved in with family or friends.
- The HOPE VI plan called for the provision of support services but the vast majority of the respondents (73%) report never receiving support services from MDHA.
- At present 33% of the displaced residents who answered questionnaires reported being homeless.

These findings are based on questionnaires answered by 187 individuals who had been identified by Miami Dade Housing Agency as heads of household in Scott Homes or Carver homes. The trends detected among our sample of former residents suggests the need for changes in the HOPE VI plan and the assistance provided to the relocated households.

- 100% replacement of the demolished affordable housing stock in conjunction with better relocation and support systems.
- A Comprehensive Tracking System that ensures continual contact with Scott-Carver residents, and tracks them to their actual relocation in the newly constructed units.
- The Provision of Social Services must be fully funded and must include a coordinated approach to housing, jobs and other support services for the Scott-Carver community.
- **Resident Voice in Redevelopment**. A resident-based oversight structure with legally enforceable powers is imperative to ensure that residents and their families remain the priority in efforts to revitalize the community that they comprise.

## BACKGROUND

In 1999 the US HUD awarded a HOPE VI grant to Miami-Dade County for the redevelopment of Scott-Carver Projects in Liberty City. This committed over \$35 million in HOPE VI program funding from HUD for the purpose redeveloping 850 public housing units, improving the lives of former Scott-Carver residents and revitalizing the existing neighborhood.<sup>1</sup>

The redevelopment plan required the demolition of all 850 units. These are to be replaced with a mixed-income project, which originally provided 80 units of traditional public housing with the remainder being townhomes and single family homes.

The current HOPE VI plan calls for 411 units to be built on site; 251 are homeownership units and 160 are public housing units. The 251 homeownership units are planned as 137 townhomes and 114 single family homes—57 of these are Habitat for Humanity homes. To date only four homes have been built and sold.<sup>2</sup>

The redevelopment plan also calls for the delivery of social services and a support system to allow former residents to successfully relocate to other housing, to be self-sufficient and ultimately to achieve homeownership. These social services were particularly important for families relocating out of public housing because many, for the first time in their lives, would be renting in the private housing market using Section 8 vouchers. Section 8 vouchers allow a low income tenant to rent a reasonably priced unit from a willing private landlord. The tenant pays thirty percent of their income in rent and the County Housing Agency pays the difference.

Several programmatic rules make the Section 8 program more difficult for these households than living in public housing. First, the landlord can evict the tenant after the first year simply by giving notice. In public housing, the Housing Agency must have good cause to evict a tenant. Second, private landlords frequently require sizeable deposits (one to two months rent up front). These deposits are based on the full rent and can thus be several thousand dollars. (The median income of Scott Carver residents was reported to be \$7,238.<sup>3</sup>) Finally, if a tenant is required to move out of a unit and is unable to secure a replacement unit within 60 days they can lose their Section 8 voucher.

The Miami Dade Housing Agency HOPE VI sought to address these issues through the establishment of support services—such as education and training programs, child care services, transportation services and counseling—to help public housing residents negotiate the relocation process and obtain and retain employment. Five million dollars of the HOPE VI grant was allocated to be spent on resident support services.

However, the Miami-Dade County Inspector General's audit of one HOPE VI Program contract found that support services were not being adequately provided. The audit of the contract with H.J. Russell & Company for the delivery of "Community and Supportive Services" found that the Miami-Dade Housing Agency "has spent \$0.85 of every dollar for administrative and case management expenses

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA) Application for HOPE VI Grant, May 21, 1999; MDHA highlights and fact sheet published on the web, <a href="http://www.miamidade.gov/housing/hope6.asp">http://www.miamidade.gov/housing/hope6.asp</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Miami-Dade HOPE VI Spring 2006 newsletter, available at <a href="http://www.miamidade.gov/housing/hope6.asp">http://www.miamidade.gov/housing/hope6.asp</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The original MDHA Hope VI Grant application reports the median income of Scott-Carver residents at \$7,238 in 1999 in attachment 22.

and only \$0.15 for the supportive service providers." Though the audit focused only on one contract, the Inspector General was "disturbed" by the his finding that there was virtually no accounting of the supportive services provided to the residents and "the successes (or failures) achieved by the residents."

The questionnaires examined for this study indicate that, at least for the families questioned the relocation process, including both the Section 8 voucher program and the supportive services program failed miserably. For these families, many of whom had spent decades living in Scott Homes and Carver Homes, the HOPE VI dream became a nightmare. Instead of improving their lives, it resulted in broken families and homelessness.

#### EXISTING RESEARCH

However, little is known, nationally or locally, about the impacts of HOPE VI redevelopment on public housing residents, particularly where they move to, what help they received in their transition, and what hardships they may have experienced after being moved out of public housing. Many studies have been done on the outcome of the HOPE VI and Section 8 program, but they have focused on the small number of residents who were initially relocated and continued to receive relocation assistance. These studies do not account for the majority of displaced residents whose initial relocation assistance was discontinued shortly thereafter and whose whereabouts became unknown to local housing authorities and researchers. The national literature on HOPE VI relocation confirms that the vast majority of residents displaced under the HOPE VI program are not tracked by local housing agencies and researchers, and many residents are thereby "lost" in the process. 6

In Miami-Dade County it is not clear how many former Scott Carver residents are "lost" to the Housing Agency. A December 21 article in the Miami Herald reported that the Housing Agency "has no idea where to find 612 of the 1,178 families who were moved out of the Scott-Carver Projects." More recent information from the Housing Agency states that only 318 of the former residents are "inactive" or "not housed" by the housing agency.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The HOPE VI program does not require that low-income units be replaced on a 1-to-1 basis. Most replacement programs provide fewer units, exacerbating the shortage of affordable housing. Most studies that have tracked the outcomes of Hope VI "relocatees," for example, have been limited to very small samples, ranging from 20 to 90 families (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Salama 1999; Brooks 2005), with the exception of the HOPE VI National Panel Study, which tracked more than 700 families albeit from five different cities and eight different housing sites (Buron 2004; Harris 2004; Levy 2004; Popkin 2004). Though the studies point to several positive outcomes, they unanimously agree that the number of families who are relocated and *continue to receive relocation assistance* is very small and who also tend to be those families with higher levels of education and income. The small samples also speak to the difficulty and failure to track former displaced residents. Recent research at the Brookings Institute highlights the positive neighborhood impacts of HOPE VI redevelopment but notes that little attention and funding is devoted to tracking the residents, and strongly recommends doing so (Solomon 2005; Turbov 2005).

www.miamidadeig.org/reports/MDHA%20Audit%20rev%20readable.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Mazzella, Christopher R. Final Audit Report of MDHA's Hope VI Revitalization Program Contract No. 251 with H.J. Russell & Company for Community and Supportive Services. August 24, 2006. Program Management Services IG05-141A Miami-Dade County Inspector General. Available at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid. Parentheses added.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Rabin, Charles (2006). Displaced Residents: 'Here We Are Now'. The Miami Herald.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Miami-Dade Housing Agency electronic list of Former Scott Carver Resident identified as "Inactive/Not Housed." Received from Housing Agency on January 29, 2007.

#### THIS STUDY

As part of a 5 year long community organizing campaign to bring back all 850 low-income rentals to the area of Scott Carver Projects, the Miami Workers Center (MWC) and Low-Income Families Fighting Together (LIFFT) initiated the "Find Our People Campaign" in January 2007. The campaign focused on locating "lost" former residents of Scott Carver Projects, assessing their present housing needs, connecting them to legal services and collectively advocating for services and housing when needed.

The Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy (RISEP) collaborated with MWC and LIFFT to develop an "intake" system to collect information from the displaced residents in order to assess their present housing needs. RISEP is also partnering with the Miami Workers Center to track the residents and study their experience after relocation. This is an unprecedented effort to do what no other city has been able to do in the aftermath of HOPE VI redevelopment—track the complete population of displaced residents and gain a better understanding of the real impacts of this program on low-income communities.

This report is an opportunity to examine the early outcomes of the HOPE VI and Section 8 Rental Voucher programs in the case of Scott Carver redevelopment project. (Methods in appendix) Below we present the preliminary findings from the data collected from former residents through questionnaires and consider its implications for the future of the HOPE VI and Section 8 programs. We specifically consider where former residents moved to, what help they received in their transition, and what hardships they may have experienced after being moved out of Scott Carver Homes.

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#### **FINDINGS**

The intake process has identified 368 former residents of Scott-Carver Homes in just one and a half months of operation. However, in order to focus on those former residents most clearly eligible for relocation assistance we limited our review to those residents who had been listed as the relocated heads of households (HOH) on lists prepared by Miami Dade Housing Agency. We therefore only reviewed questionnaires completed by a person whose name was listed on the Miami Dade Housing Agency list of the 1,178 household heads who relocated from Scott Homes or Carver Homes after September 1999. The total number of heads of households (HOHs) on those lists was greater than the number of units because some larger households with two families living together (grandmother and

mother) were given the opportunity to split up on relocation and given two vouchers in order to increase their opportunity to find a suitable dwelling.

Out of the 368 total former residents identified through the intake process, 187 are HOHs whose names are listed on the Miami Dade Housing Agency list. The MDHA list classifies HOHs as housed with a Section 8 voucher or in public housing or "inactive/not housed." Of the residents that filled 136 of the former HOHs we contacted are currently housed--and 60 are not housed.

187 former Scott-Carver residents displaced by HOPE VI have been identified, 60 of whom are not housed by the Housing Agency.

# TYPE OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE RECEIVED IMMEDIATELY AFTER RELOCATION

The questionnaire requests three types of information (1) what happened to residents immediately after relocation, i.e., the type of housing assistance they initially received; (2) what type of assistance they received from the Miami Dade Housing Agency during and after their initial relocation, and (3) what their present housing situation is. The following presents the responses given by the 187 former Scott-Carver residents that moved out after HOPE VI redevelopment of Scott Carver Homes began in 1999.

Table 1
Housing Situation After Leaving Scott

section 8 rental	93	63.27%
public housing	31	21.09%
private rental	19	12.93%
homeownership	2	1.36%
living with family	2	1.36%
Total	147	100%

145 people responded to this question. 97 (66%) reported that they utilized a Section 8 voucher to pay for their apartment. 31 (21%) reported moving to public housing. 15 (10%) said they moved to a private rental. Two said that they bought a home and 2 said they ended up living with their family

#### **CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION**

By December and January of 2006 and 2007 when these surveys were completed only 33 former residents still reported living in a Section 8 rental. Thirty reported living with family, 27 said they were in public housing and 20 said they were renting in the private market. The number of homeowners grew from 2 to 4.

But the most dramatic change in the housing situation of former Scott-Carver residents was the growth of homelessness. No residents reported becoming homeless immediately after leaving Scott Carver but 21 report currently living on the streets or in a homeless

Table 2 Current Housing Situation of former Scott-Carver Heads of Households

section 8 rental	33	24.4%
living with family	30	22.2%
market rental	27	20.0%
homeless	21	15.6%
public housing	20	14.8%
homeownership	4	3.0%
Total	135	100%

shelter. Those who currently report being homeless had initially moved into a Section 8 rental (16), public housing (2) or a private rental (3) when immediately after leaving Scott Carver. These preliminary findings suggest that Section 8 voucher holders were more likely than others to become homeless.

#### EXPERIENCES AFTER LEAVING SCOTT-CARVER

When asked about their experiences in the years after leaving, respondents were able to choose more than one answer.

Of the 187 former Scott-Carver heads of households, 62 (33.2%) report having lost their Section 8 voucher since leaving Scott-Carver Homes. 44 (23.5%) moved two or more times. 28 (15%) became homeless, 14 (7.5%) were evicted from public housing, 7 (3.7%) were evicted from private housing, and 2 (1%) reported either losing their homes or getting evicted due to foreclosure. 10

Table 3
Experiences Since Initial Relocation After
Leaving Scott-Carver

Lost Section 8	62	33.2%
Moved 2 or more times	44	23.5%
Homeless	28	15.0%
Evicted from Public Apt	14	7.5%
Evicted from Private Apt	7	3.7%
Foreclosure	2	1.1%

In order to specifically consider residents' experience with the Section 8 voucher program, we also tabulate the responses reported in Table 3 for heads of households that moved into a rental unit utilizing a Section 8 voucher immediately after leaving Scott-Carver Homes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The residents of Scott-Carver Homes studied in this report moved out as early as September of 1999 and as late as 2005. Surveys were filled out between December of 2006 and February of 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Respondents were able to choose more than one answer when asked about their experiences.

Former heads of households (HOHs) that utilized a Section 8 voucher immediately after leaving Scott-Carver reported the following experiences:

Of 82 responses from HOHs: 53 (52.4%) report losing their Section 8 voucher, 11

Of 80 responses from HOHs: 29 (36.3%) report moving two or more times, 19 (23.8%) became homeless, 7 (8.8%) were evicted from public housing, 5 (6.3%) were evicted from private housing, and 1 experienced foreclosure.

Table 4
Experiences of Residents that Initially Relocated
Through Section 8 Rental Assistance

Lost Section 8	53	52.4%
Moved 2 or more times	29	36.3%
Homeless	19	23.8%
<b>Evicted from Private Apt</b>	7	8.8%
Evicted from Public Apt	5	6.3%
Foreclosure	1	1.3%

Comparing tables 3 and 4 shows that residents that were initially relocated through the Section 8 program were more likely to experience every one of the possible negative outcomes. Most significant is the increased incidence of losing a Section 8 voucher, moving two or more times, and becoming homeless.

Residents were able to choose more than one answer when asked about their experiences after leaving Scott Carver Homes. The overlap of different answers provides a more detailed understanding of their experiences. For example, of the 19 residents who moved into a Section 8 rental and who reported becoming homeless at some point, 14 also lost their Section 8 voucher. This suggests that losing the rental voucher is associated with homelessness. Thus losing one's rental voucher may be a very influential factor in the fate of relocated residents, and it is important to examine why residents lost their rental vouchers.

# REASONS MDHA TERMINATED SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

Of the 59 residents who lost their Section 8 rental voucher, 43 told us why:

12 stated that it expired because they didn't find an apartment fast enough; 9 people had no idea why their voucher was cancelled; 8 apartments that people did find did not pass the Housing Agency apartment inspection; 7 had criminal convictions and were thus no longer eligible for Section 8 vouchers; 3 individuals missed appointments with the Housing Agency; 2 lost their voucher when the building was sold or foreclosed on; and 2 said that they owed rent.

Table 5
Reasons MDHA Terminated
Section 8 Vouchers

Wasn't able to find a	
place to use voucher in	
time (expired)	12
I don't know!	9
Didn't pass inspection	8
Criminal conviction	7
Missed appointments	3
Owed rent	2
Foreclosure	2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> The difference between the number of residents that report losing their Section 8 voucher is most likely explained by some former residents obtaining a voucher after their initial relocation experience. In other words, they may not have been initially relocated to a Section 8 rental but may have obtained the voucher later and subsequently lost it. This is not certain, but seems the most plausible explanation in the absence of empirical verification.

The figures show that the overwhelming number of voucher cancellations was due to not finding an apartment in time, not passing the home inspection or for reasons unknown to residents. Though some former residents lost their voucher due to criminal convictions, these were clearly a small minority.

# SUPPORT SERVICES RECEIVED BY FORMER RESIDENTS

In addition to asking about their housing experiences, we asked former Scott-Carver residents whether they received any of the support services that were called for in the Miami-Dade HOPE VI Grant Application and the US HUD funding announcement: childcare, homeownership education and counseling, job training, employment opportunities, transportation assistance, and specialized services for senior citizens.

Though the number of responses to this question was lower, the general trend among the few that did respond was clear. The overwhelming majority of relocated residents did not receive support services under the HOPE VI program. This is not too surprising, however, in light of the Miami-Dade County Inspector General's findings that the company contracted to provide support services spent 85% of its funding on administrate costs and only 15% on service provision for residents.

Table 6 Support Services Received

None	35	
Transportation	9	
Assistance		
Education	7	
Childcare	3	
Job Training	3	
Living Wage	3	
Job	3	
Senior Services	2	

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The HOPE VI redevelopment plan for Scott-Carver Homes called for a reduction in the number of affordable rentals (leading to mass displacement), relocation of displaced residents through the Section 8 voucher program and the provision of support services to help residents achieve economic self-sufficiency and the ideal of homeownership.

The findings in this report are based on survey data collected from a small sample (187) of the overall residential population that was displaced from the Scott-Carver Homes after 1999. The findings clearly show an overwhelming lack of housing security for former residents of Scott Carver Projects after their initial relocation under the current HOPE VI plan. Aside from the dramatic displacement of the residents from Scott-Carver Homes, the housing situation of former residents deteriorated dramatically after their initial relocation through the Section 8 program. Moreover, the findings suggest that losing one's rental voucher enhances the chances of becoming homeless.

Almost 63% of former residents were initially relocated through the Section 8 voucher program and none of them were homeless. Now only 24% still live in a Section 8 rental and almost 16% are living on the streets or in a shelter. The number of former Scott-Carver residents that were living with other family members also increased substantially from 1% to 22%.

Residents reporting of their experiences after the initial relocation sheds light on possible causes of the deteriorated housing situation of former residents over the years. The available evidence points to problems with the Section 8 program. About 52% of the residents that were initially relocated through the Section 8 rental assistance subsequently lost their rental voucher. About 76% percent of former Scott-Carver residents that were initially relocated through Section 8 rental assistance and subsequently lost their voucher also reported becoming homeless or moving in with family members. In other words, the vast majority of residents that were relocated with a Section 8 voucher but later lost that voucher also became homeless.

Although the number of residents that reported why they lost their Section 8 voucher was small (45), 52.4% of these reported losing their voucher when it expired because they didn't find an apartment fast enough, because they did not pass the Housing Agency's apartment inspection, or for reasons that they are not aware of.

Finally, of the residents that responded regarding the provision of HOPE VI support services, the vast majority (72%) reported that they received no support services. Should this be the case for the rest of the population of displaced residents it would be a serious indictment of a redevelopment program that claims to bring revitalization to a neighborhood and its people.

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings in this report based on our sample of 187 displaced residents imply the need for changes in the HOPE VI plan and Section 8 program. At a minimum these findings suggest that the relocation systems for displaced residents—Section 8 vouchers and support services—are not effective. Based on these findings we recommend the following:

- 1. In conjunction with better relocation and support systems, the HOPE VI plan should aim for 100% replacement of the demolished affordable housing stock.
- 2. It should also establish and implement a comprehensive tracking system that ensures continual contact with Scott residents, and tracks them to their actual relocation in the newly constructed units. This will also allow for the Housing Agency to evaluate the redevelopment program through the experiences of residents, a task which has proved exceedingly difficult yet which is being gradually accomplished by community organizers in the area.
- 3. Furthermore, if the HOPE VI program truly intends to help revitalize the community, the provision of social services needs to be fully funded and must include a coordinated approach to housing, jobs and other support services for the Scott-Carver community.
- 4. Finally, this preliminary research has also highlighted the exclusionary nature of the HOPE VI redevelopment plan. Residents must be given a voice in the redevelopment process. A resident-based oversight structure with legally enforceable powers is imperative to ensure that residents and their families remain the priority in efforts to revitalize they community that they comprise.

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