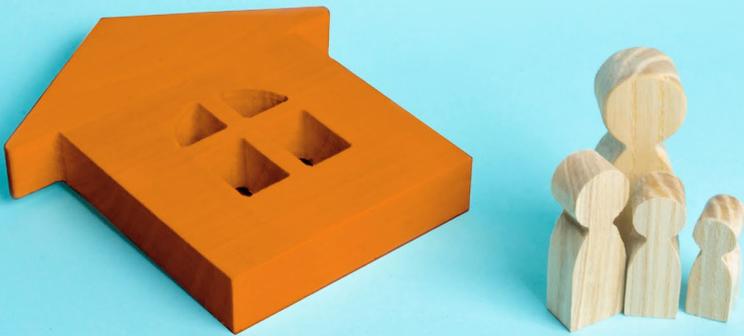


# Forced Out: The Impact of Displacement and Place on the Residents of Bethesda-Homewood Properties



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In October 2017, more than 200 residents of Bethesda-Homewood Properties — subsidized units located in several predominantly Black neighborhoods in Pittsburgh’s East End — were told that their rental subsidy would end on November 1, 2017. A federal subsidy provided to the property owner was being abated because of the owner’s repeated failure to maintain the properties. Residents were effectively forced to move because of the loss of their rental subsidy, but eligible residents would be given “voluntary relocation assistance” in the form of housing vouchers and moving cost assistance.

In some ways, housing vouchers offered opportunity for residents who moved; while the majority of Bethesda-Homewood units were in neighborhoods with relatively high gun violence and poverty, displaced residents were theoretically able to choose the location of their new homes. In reality, residents had difficulty finding landlords who would accept their housing vouchers, and the majority of displaced residents continued to live in neighborhoods with relatively high needs even after their relocation. While residents had limited geographic choice when it came to using their vouchers, most were still able to move to neighborhoods with comparatively less gun violence and good access to amenities. Half of those residents who completed our telephone survey reported feeling safer in their current neighborhood.

Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) wanted to learn more about the impact of housing displacement on residents of Bethesda-Homewood properties and use the information to inform planning for future mass displacements, which are likely to occur given our region’s affordable housing crisis, the additional strain of increased development on our affordable housing supply, and the reality that other subsidized rental properties in our region are at risk for future subsidy abatement. This information is especially important in informing racial equity strategies in our region, given that housing displacement disproportionately affects Black residents, with Bethesda-Homewood being no exception.

DHS conducted a focus group, phone surveys and data analysis to explore:<sup>1</sup>

- The demographics of Bethesda-Homewood residents
- The impact of displacement on residents, including well-being and living conditions
- Where residents moved to and how these locations fared on measures of comparative community need and gun violence
- Disruption in children's education related to moving from one community to another
- Family members' usage of public services (e.g., mental health treatment, child welfare involvement and homeless shelters) pre- and post-displacement
- Recommendations for future responses to mass displacement scenarios

## BACKGROUND

Bethesda-Homewood Properties was a scattered-site portfolio of low-income housing funded through the Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program via the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). PBRA allows for direct contracts between HUD and property owners. The Bethesda-Homewood units included multifamily apartments, townhouses and single-family homes located in the Pittsburgh neighborhoods of Homewood, Larimer, East Hills and Garfield, with 72% of households residing in Homewood South. As part of the PBRA program, the properties were subject to semi-annual inspections. In 2013 and 2014, the properties received low inspection scores, which should have triggered additional inspections and repairs by the property owner. Instead, the property owner did not make the required repairs and the properties went nearly three years without another inspection, leading HUD to eventually discontinue the subsidy in August 2017. Residents were informed of the situation in October 2017 and were told that their rental subsidy would be discontinued starting November 1, 2017.

Eligible households listed on Bethesda-Homewood leases were entitled to federal relocation assistance, which included 1) special housing choice vouchers (i.e., tenant protection vouchers) issued to the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) by HUD; 2) moving cost assistance; and 3) a list of potential properties to move to via Leumas, a HUD-contracted relocation provider. A number of residents received additional relocation assistance from Operation Better Block, and a small number of residents received assistance from Community Human Services.

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for this study was provided by The Heinz Endowments.

Funded by HUD and administered locally by public housing authorities, housing choice vouchers provide rental subsidy assistance to households based on income, but voucher holders must find a landlord willing to accept their voucher. Under HACP, voucher holders have 120 days to find a unit with a possible 30-day extension.<sup>2</sup> Some residents living in Bethesda-Homewood were residing with friends or family without being listed on the lease and were therefore not entitled to federal relocation assistance.

Real estate developer Omicelo purchased Bethesda-Homewood Properties in early 2018, with the goal of rehabbing as many units as possible.

Sections of this report discuss how Bethesda-Homewood residents were impacted by various community challenges, with an emphasis on Homewood given that the vast majority of Bethesda-Homewood residents lived in Homewood. While the challenges in Homewood are real, it is important to state that 1) Homewood's current challenges are the direct result of decades of systemic racism and disinvestment,<sup>3</sup> and 2) Homewood is far more than just its challenges. Homewood is made up of community members who are dedicated to the well-being of their neighborhood, a rich cultural heritage, a strong network of community-based organizations, and storied institutions like the Afro-American Music Institute, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh–Homewood and the National Opera House.

See **Appendix A** for more information on PBRA, housing choice vouchers and public housing.

## METHODOLOGY

This report is based on primary and secondary data. DHS used data from a focus group and telephone surveys, as well as from the Allegheny County Data Warehouse,<sup>4</sup> to examine the moving trends of Bethesda-Homewood residents, school disruptions for children, and service utilization patterns for residents. In all, DHS had found 93 (91%) of the 102 Bethesda-Homewood households in the Data Warehouse as of November 2019.

DHS conducted a geospatial analysis of moving trends to compare the locations of residents in October 2017 (when residents were still living at Bethesda-Homewood Properties) to where they were living one year and two years after. We included 70 heads of household in the geospatial analysis for November 2018 (75% of the 93 heads of household identified through our Data Warehouse) and 72 for November 2019 (77% of heads of household identified through our Data Warehouse). We were unable to confirm current addresses for many of the households who did not receive a housing choice voucher or gain access to public housing. Therefore, said households were not included in the geospatial analysis or much of the pre- and post-public services

<sup>2</sup> Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet. n.d. On HUD.gov. Retrieved from [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Blackley, K. (2015, July). Homewood Bound: How a Neighborhood Was Transformed by Disinvestment and the War on Drugs. 90.5 WESA Pittsburgh's NPR News Station; Cotter, N. (2019, November). Black communities are disproportionately hurt by gun violence. We can't ignore them. Solutions to gun violence must acknowledge racial inequities in our neighborhoods. *Public Source*.

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the Data Warehouse, see <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2018/08/13/allegheny-county-data-warehouse>

involvement analysis, both of which required post-Bethesda-Homewood addresses or exact move-in dates. DHS only has access to assisted housing data from Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) and the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP). As such, we were unable to confirm assisted housing access for any residents who may have used their housing voucher in a jurisdiction outside of ACHA's or HACP's.

DHS cross-referenced moves by census tract with our Community Need Index (CNI)<sup>5</sup> and with homicides and 911 dispatches for shots fired/reported from the Allegheny County Office of the Medical Examiner and Allegheny County Emergency Services, respectively. The CNI is an index that measures comparative need across Allegheny County census tracts. Tracts are sorted into one of five levels of need, ranging from very low need to extreme need.

Of the 108 children who were residents of Bethesda-Homewood in October 2017, 97 were matched with records in the Data Warehouse. Eighty-one children were enrolled in one of the public or charter schools for which DHS has records; records for the 2017–18 and 2018–19 school years were examined. Using enrollment and withdrawal records from schools, we examined mid-year transfers between schools and student withdrawals.

### Focus Group and Phone Survey Methods

DHS conducted a focus group of 12 randomly selected residents to inform this study, a group that was stratified on gender, voucher status and household makeup to approximate overall demographics. Additional scheduled focus groups had to be canceled because of COVID-19. We incorporated themes from focus group responses into the telephone survey tool. Thirty-four heads of household participated in the phone survey, for a response rate of 42%.<sup>6</sup> We surveyed by telephone only those heads of household who did not participate in the focus group. Survey respondents were able to skip over any given survey question if they felt as though the question was not relevant to them. As such, denominators for response rates vary depending on the question asked.

See **Appendix B** for more information about the methodology.

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<sup>5</sup> Cotter, N., Mejia, N. et al. (2021, May). The Allegheny County Community Need Index: Update for 2021 with a Focus on the Connection between Race and Community Need. *Allegheny Analytics*.

<sup>6</sup> Ninety three heads of household were found in our Data Warehouse. Twelve heads of household participated in the focus group. We attempted to contact the remaining heads of household who were found in our Data Warehouse but did not participate in the focus group (N = 81). Thirty four of those 81 responded to our survey, giving us a survey response rate of 42%.

## Limitations

Because we were unable to confirm most of the addresses for residents who did not access a housing voucher or public housing, we were unable to include these residents in much of the analysis. As a result, the bulk of our analysis speaks most accurately to Bethesda-Homewood residents who received subsidized rental assistance. While non-assisted housing residents are nearly identical to their assisted housing counterparts regarding observable characteristics such as race, gender, and income, the experiences of those who did not receive subsidized housing assistance post-Bethesda-Homewood could be markedly different than those who did.

COVID-19 was another limitation for our study. Our research team planned to do multiple focus groups, in addition to phone surveys. However, we only completed one focus group before the pandemic started. Additional focus groups planned to garner resident input on difficulty of voucher use, education disruption and the experiences of those who did not receive subsidized rental assistance post-Bethesda-Homewood. This richer detail is not part of the study because of the pandemic.

## FINDINGS

### Bethesda-Homewood Resident Demographics

Nearly all of the residents who were living in Bethesda-Homewood properties as of October 2017 — and for whom we had race data — were Black, and most of the heads of household were female.

- All but two heads of household were Black and all but one of the identified children were Black.
- Eighty-one percent (n = 75) of matched heads of household (i.e., heads of household for whom data was available in the Data Warehouse) were female.
- Fifty-eight percent (n = 54) of households had children under age 18.

While residents at Bethesda-Homewood homes were entitled to a housing choice voucher and federal relocation assistance if they were on the lease, roughly 23% (n = 21) of matched heads of household were unable to 1) successfully use or gain access to the HCV program, or 2) gain access to public housing. See **Table 1** for a summary of data about Bethesda-Homewood residents.

TABLE 1: Bethesda-Homewood Fact Sheet

UNIT AND SUBSIDY INFORMATION			
 <b>142 units</b> that included apartments, townhouses and single-family homes	 <b>\$63,174</b> in monthly subsidy through Project Based Rental Assistance as of Oct. 2017	 <b>\$8,244</b> in resident rent revenue as of Oct. 2017	 Located in Homewood, Larimer Garfield and East Hills
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD COUNT			
 <b>102</b> heads of household resided at Bethesda-Homewood as of Oct. 2017	 <b>93 of 102</b> were on Aishel Real Estate rent rolls	 <b>9 of 102</b> found via triage but not on leases	 <b>237</b> total residents
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD MATCHED IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY DATA WAREHOUSE			
 <b>93 of 102</b> heads of household matched	 <b>87 of 93</b> on rent rolls were matched	 <b>6</b> of those 9 not on the lease were matched	
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS			
 <b>81% female headed</b>	 <b>98% black</b>	 <b>58% had children</b> under 18 as of Oct. 2017	<b>Average age of 40</b> with range of 20 to 78 as of Oct. 2017
CHILDREN MATCHED IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY DATA WAREHOUSE			
 <b>108 children</b> under 18 as of Oct. 2017	 <b>97 matched</b>		
CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS			
 <b>69% female</b>	 <b>99% black</b>	<b>Average age of 9</b> with range of 0 to 17 as of Oct. 2017	
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD IN ASSISTED HOUSING			
 <b>72 (77%)</b> heads of household were active in assisted housing programs as of Nov. 2019	 <b>65 (70%)</b> were active in Housing Choice Voucher program as of Nov. 2019	 <b>7 (7%)</b> were active in Public Housing as of Nov. 2019	

### Effects of Displacement: Client Experiences

Three overarching themes emerged from the focus group and phone survey:

- 1) Residents needed more time to find new housing
- 2) Pre-move exposure to gun violence and substandard units impacted residents' post-move perceptions
- 3) Residents expressed that their post-move neighborhood had good access to amenities.

**1. Residents expressed that they needed more time.** Residents needed more time to find a housing unit, more time to use their housing voucher, and more information about units, including where to find more units in their price range. Residents needed housing search counseling and supports. Twenty-three percent of matched residents (n = 21) were unable to access or successfully use a housing choice voucher or gain access to public housing, and so were left to fend for themselves on the private market.<sup>7</sup> However, finding a unit was still very challenging for those who received and used their housing voucher.

Eighteen percent (n = 6) of respondents to the phone survey said they were not able to use their housing voucher to rent an apartment, which is close to the rate we found with matched heads of household overall. Respondent answers as to why they were not able to use or gain access to a voucher are listed in **Table 2**, below.

**TABLE 2: Respondent answers to why they did not receive or did not use a housing voucher**

Why did you not <b>receive</b> your housing voucher?	Why did you not <b>use</b> your housing voucher?
<p>“I don’t know what happened. I found my own place.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">”</p>	<p>“The time ran out on the voucher and housing money.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">”</p>
<p>“I needed to have the correct information. I thought I could get Section 8, because I was told I was low income [but didn’t meet income eligibility].”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">”</p>	<p>“I decided to make a choice and [used] housing authority [public housing] and not the voucher.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">”</p>
<p>“No idea, but I did all the footwork myself, I had to pay movers all myself, etc.”</p>	<p>“I wasn’t able to move everything because I didn’t have enough help to help me move. If I had the money, I could have paid people to move me, therefore I had to leave stuff &amp; throw away stuff and [wasn’t able to use the voucher in time].”</p>

During the focus group, participants expressed anger about the owner knowing as far back as August 2017 that the rental subsidy would be abated, residents were not told until October 2017. One woman from the focus group voiced that she had to check herself in to a residential mental health facility because of suicidal ideation resulting from the forced move. Other focus group and phone survey respondents voiced being upset that they were given so little notice and not enough time. These responses highlight the traumatic impact of the forced move on residents.

<sup>7</sup> Survey respondents were able to skip over any given survey question if they felt as though the question was not relevant to them. As such, denominators for response rates vary depending on the question asked.

Overall, residents voiced that more supports were needed to assist them through the housing search process, and 58% (n = 19) of surveyed respondents said the housing search was *very* or *extremely difficult*. Reasons for the difficulty included:

- Feeling rushed to move (81%, n = 22)
- Gathering information about units (70%, n = 19)
- Finding units in their price range (70%, n = 19)
- Gathering information about other neighborhoods (52%, n = 14)

Roughly half of respondents said that childcare access either was a *problem* or *may be a problem* in finding a unit. A similar percentage said the same about transit access.

Several residents could not find a landlord who would rent to them or could not find a unit in their price range. Others only got to successfully use their voucher toward the end of their allowable search period, and “no one accepts vouchers” was a common refrain. A few residents said that some units they saw were in worse condition than the ones they had been staying in at Bethesda-Homewood.

## **2. Pre-move exposure to gun violence and substandard units impacted residents’ post-move perceptions.**

Generally, residents expressed that they were relieved to leave their Bethesda-Homewood units because of safety concerns related to gun violence and insufficient property maintenance, but many still cited the forced move as traumatic.

Exposure to gun violence was a common experience while living at Bethesda-Homewood. The prepared focus group topics did not include any questions about gun violence, but comments regarding the profoundly traumatic experience of witnessing this type of violence were discussed at length. One woman in the focus group – who still lived in Homewood after being displaced from Bethesda-Homewood Properties – stated that she wanted to leave the neighborhood because of exposure to gun violence. “Get me out of the hood,” was a phrase she voiced to the focus group facilitators. Other focus group participants agreed, noting the ways in which the sounds of gun shots and the trauma of shootings affected their well-being.

One woman who moved to a low-poverty neighborhood in the East End with her housing voucher said she felt very comfortable there. She expressed that she worried less about her children when they played outside because gun violence was not an issue there. Another woman said, “[My unit] is so much better than the place I formerly lived. That place was overridden with rodents, and the landlord would not do anything about it. The place is all new, and the landlord is so nice.”

With some exceptions, residents in the focus group did not voice concern over leaving any of the neighborhoods that housed the Bethesda-Homewood properties, which for 81% of residents was either Homewood South or Homewood North. Gaining the ability to leave Homewood was expressed as an opportunity for most focus group participants because of the concerns around gun violence.

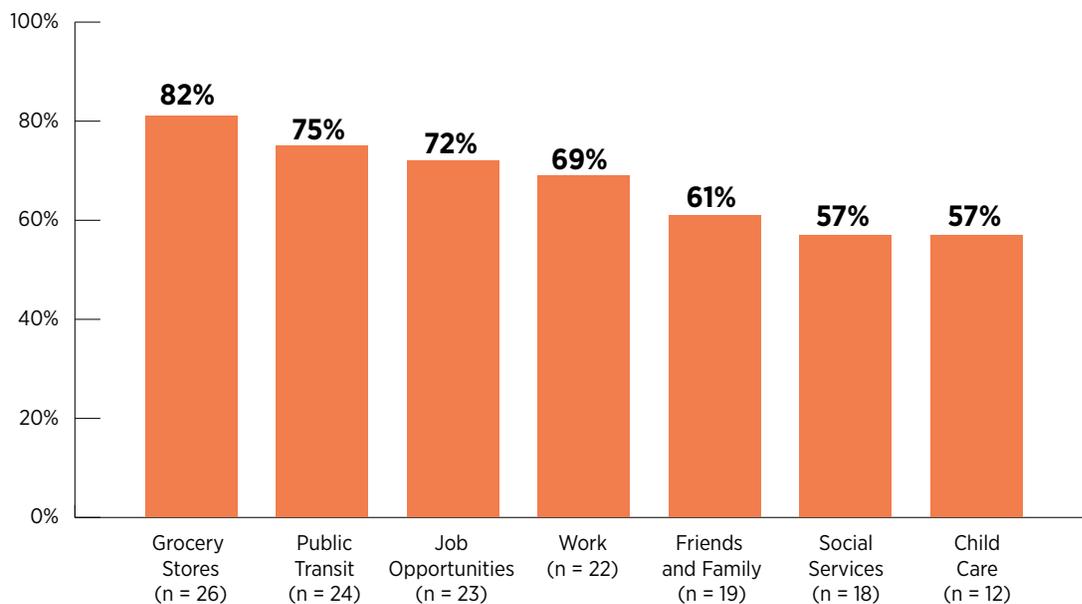
Overall, this sentiment was echoed by those who completed the telephone survey. Half of telephone survey respondents (50%, n = 16) felt their current neighborhood was safer than the one they lived in while at

Bethesda-Homewood. Thirty-one percent (n = 10) were undecided on whether their current neighborhood was safer, and 19% (n = 6) did not agree that their current neighborhood was safer. However, when asked about exposure to gun violence in their current neighborhood, 35% (n = 11) of surveyed respondents felt that their post-Bethesda-Homewood unit was in a neighborhood with *bad* or *very bad* exposure to gun violence.

While half of respondents felt that their current neighborhood was safer than their Bethesda-Homewood neighborhood, more than a third of respondents still ended up in neighborhoods with bad or very bad exposure to gun violence.

**3. Most people surveyed expressed that their post-move neighborhood was good or very good in terms of access to basic services and amenities** like grocery stores, public transit, job opportunities and childcare. **Figure 1** shows the responses by amenity.

**FIGURE 1: Percent of heads of household who said their post-move neighborhood was *good* or *very good* in terms of access to the following amenities/services**



Of note, more than 70% of respondents felt that their post-move neighborhood was good or very good regarding proximity to grocery stores, public transit, and job opportunities. However, about 19% (n = 6) of respondents said that their current neighborhood was bad or very bad regarding proximity to friends and relatives; for those respondents, moves out of Bethesda-Homewood properties may have come at the cost of feeling socially isolated from friends and family. Likewise, while the majority of respondents said that access to childcare and social services was good or very good, about 40% of respondents did not have good or very good access to these amenities in their post-Bethesda-Homewood neighborhood.

See **Appendix C** for more information on phone survey questions and responses.

## GEOGRAPHIC MOVEMENT OF RESIDENTS AND LEVELS OF COMMUNITY NEED

### Bethesda-Homewood Neighborhoods Pre-Move

Seventy two percent (n = 73) of all Bethesda-Homewood residents lived in census tracts in Homewood South as of October 2017, with the remainder of residents living in tracts in East Hills, Garfield, Homewood North and Larimer.<sup>8</sup> Except for a high-need tract in Garfield, all other census tracts where residents lived have extreme levels of need according to Allegheny County’s Community Need Index (CNI). Tracts with an extreme need designation, per DHS’s most recent iteration of the CNI,<sup>9</sup> have the highest comparative rates of family poverty, unemployment, lack of educational attainment, single parenthood and average 911 dispatches for shots fired/ reported per capita in Allegheny County, all of which are community-level factors associated with adverse long-term family outcomes related to academic achievement, income attainment, and physical and mental health.<sup>10</sup>

Except for the tract in Garfield, all census tracts where Bethesda-Homewood residents were living were among the 15 tracts in Allegheny County with the highest average rates of 911 dispatches for gunshots fired/ reported (in 2014–2018; see **Table 3**). The two tracts in Homewood South were the top two tracts in Allegheny County regarding this measure. Those two tracts, 1303 and 1304, each had an annual average of more than 30 dispatches for shots fired/ reported per 500 people. In comparison, the average rate of 911 dispatches per tract for reports of shots fired in Allegheny County was 2.6 per 500 people.

The disproportionate concentration of violence in Homewood is also revealed in homicide rates. Except for the tract in Garfield, all census tracts where Bethesda-Homewood residents were living were among the top 10% of tracts in Allegheny County with the highest average homicide rates per 500 people from 2014 through 2018, with both tracts in Homewood South taking the top two rankings for homicide rates per capita.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Homewood South and North account for 7% (N = 73) of all homicides that occurred in Allegheny County from 2011 through 2020, with tract 1303 in Homewood South having the most homicides (26) of any tract in Allegheny County during that period.

<sup>8</sup> While we did not have access to post-Bethesda-Homewood addresses for most households who did not gain access to assisted housing (which was 23% of households found in our Data Warehouse), we did have initial addresses for all Bethesda-Homewood heads of household (N = 102), regarding the addresses heads of household resided at while living at Bethesda-Homewood.

<sup>9</sup> Cotter, N., Mejia, N. et al. (2021, May).

<sup>10</sup> Chetty, R., Friedman, J., Hendren, N., Jones, M., & Porter, S. (2018). *The Opportunity Atlas*:

*Mapping the childhood roots of social mobility*. (NBER Working Paper no. 25147). National Bureau of Economic Research; Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, & Lawrence Katz. 2015. “The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment.” The National Bureau of Economic Research; Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie Jones, & Sonya R. Porter. June 2019. “Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States.” The Equality of Opportunity Project (now Opportunity Insights); Patrick Sharkey. 2010, June 29. “The Acute Effect of Local Homicides

on Children’s Cognitive Performance.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.

<sup>11</sup> Homicide data is from the Allegheny County Office of the Medical Examiner. There were 1,023 homicides in Allegheny County from 2011 through 2020. Eighty-five percent of homicides were carried out with a firearm. Black males made up 68% of all homicides, despite only making up 6% of the population in Allegheny County (according to 2019 American Community Survey five-year estimates).

**TABLE 3: Census tract locations for residents residing in Bethesda-Homewood (BH) as of October 2017, by number and percent of heads of household (HH), level of need, and average gun-related 911 dispatches per capita**

CENSUS TRACT	MUNICIPALITY	NEIGHBORHOOD	# OF BH HHS AS OF OCTOBER 2017	% OF TOTAL BH HHS AS OF OCTOBER 2017	2014-2018 LEVEL OF COMMUNITY NEED	GUN SHOTS FIRED/ REPORTED PER 500 PEOPLE (2014-2018 AVERAGE)
1,304	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood South	53	52%	Extreme Need	39
1,303	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood South	20	20%	Extreme Need	31
1,114	City of Pittsburgh	Garfield	8	8%	High Need	9
1,204	City of Pittsburgh	Larimer	6	6%	Extreme Need	18
1,306	City of Pittsburgh	East Hills	6	6%	Extreme Need	14
1,301	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood North	5	5%	Extreme Need	26
1,302	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood North	4	4%	Extreme Need	19

### Moves out of Bethesda-Homewood Properties

For households moving out of Bethesda-Homewood, the earliest move to a new home was in November 2017, and the latest among those with verified addresses was May 2019, a year and a half after residents had been informed that they were losing their rental subsidy. Only one woman remained in her Bethesda-Homewood unit as of November 2019. About a third of residents moved within the first three months after October 2017, and more than two-thirds moved within six months. The average number of days it took for Bethesda-Homewood residents to move to a new unit was 164 (about 5.5 months) and the median was 135 (about 4.5 months) when counted as the number of days after October 31, 2017.<sup>12</sup>

While living in Bethesda-Homewood units, 100% (n = 102) of residents lived in high or extreme need census tracts (as of October 2017). After moving out of Bethesda-Homewood, 69% (n = 50) of residents who were involved with the HCV program or public housing continued to live in high or extreme need tracts (as of November 2019), meaning that 31% (n = 22) of residents were able to move to *moderate, low or very low* need tracts (**Figure 2**). These figures are in line with what DHS found in a recent study of voucher holder moving patterns in Allegheny County.<sup>13</sup> Research shows that these concentrated moving patterns are largely the result of structural and individual barriers in the housing search process for voucher holders, not preference.<sup>14</sup>

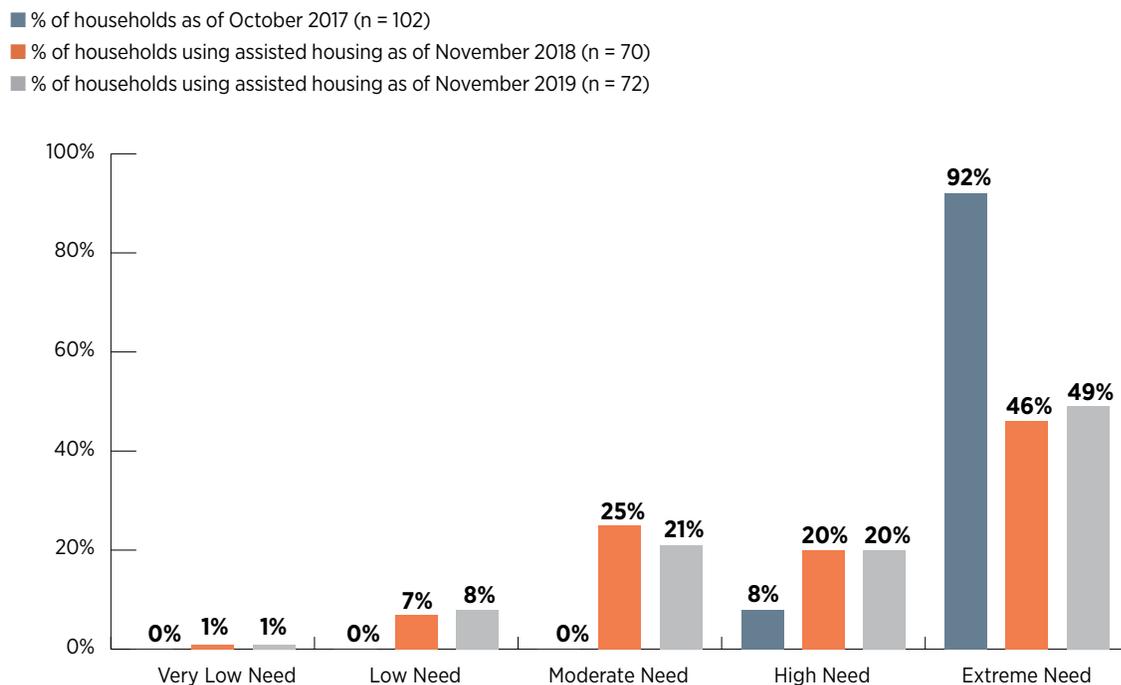
12 As noted, only those with verified addresses were included in these calculations, which was almost exclusively those who received some form of assisted housing. Seventy seven percent of heads of household who were found in our Data Warehouse gained access to assisted housing as of Nov. 2019.

13 Cotter, N., Halfhill, A., Collins, K., & Dalton, E. (2020, March). Moving to Opportunity or Disadvantage? An Analysis of Housing Choice Voucher and Rapid Rehousing Programs in Allegheny County. *Allegheny Analytics*.

14 Peter Bergman, Raj Chetty, Stefanie Deluca, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence Katz, & Christopher Palmer. 2019. "Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice."

Of those 72 former Bethesda-Homewood residents who were active in the HCV program or public housing as of November 2019 (77% of households who were found in our Data Warehouse), only 15% (n = 11) of households resided in Homewood South, and 36% (n = 26) resided in one of the original Bethesda-Homewood neighborhoods. Seventy-eight percent (n = 56) stayed in the City of Pittsburgh; of those, 80% (n = 45) stayed in East End neighborhoods, 14% (n = 8) moved to Northside neighborhoods, and 6% (n = 3) moved to neighborhoods in the South Hilltop. Twenty-two percent (n = 16) moved to the suburbs and other cities in Allegheny County. Of those who moved to areas outside of the City of Pittsburgh, 50% (n = 8) moved to Mon Valley communities and 50% (n = 8) to Penn Hills or Wilkinsburg.

**FIGURE 2: Percent of households by community need level in October 2017, November 2018 and November 2019**



*Note: Includes only those matched and with a verified address for 2018 and 2019.*

By virtue of Homewood South having both the highest average rate of gun-related 911 dispatches and homicides from 2014 through 2018, a move to any tract outside of Homewood South is a move to a tract with comparatively less gun violence. In this context, for those Bethesda-Homewood households with a housing voucher or in public housing, 84% (n = 61) lived in tracts with comparatively fewer instances of gun-related activity as of November 2019, as measured by average 911 dispatches per capita. The average count of 911 dispatches for gun violence (2014–2018) per capita for extreme need census tracts in Allegheny County is 12 per 500 people. Sixty-five percent (n = 47) of Bethesda-Homewood heads of household lived in tracts with less than that average post-Bethesda-Homewood and 39% (n = 28) lived in tracts with less than half that average post-Bethesda-Homewood.

See **Appendix E** for a table detailing which census tracts residents moved to, by level of need and average 911 dispatches for shots fired/reported per capita.

### Disruption of Education

Fifty-eight percent of Bethesda-Homewood heads of household had children under 18 as of October 2017. Seven percent (n = 6) of the 81 children who we were able to match with our public school data transferred to a new school mid-year during the 2017–2018 academic year and 5% (n = 4) of students withdrew without transferring to a new school, per our records. Ten percent (n = 8) of children found in our public-school data transferred to a new school mid-year during the 2018–2019 school year and 1% (n = 1) withdrew without transferring to a new school, per our records. A number of children transferred schools but did so during summer break, and we did not count this as a disruptive transfer. Six of the 19 telephone questionnaire respondents with children said that they had to transfer their children to a different school because of having to leave their Bethesda-Homewood unit.

The analysis did not observe any quasi-control group to assess how observed mid-year and withdrawal rates stack up against a similar population who were not forced to leave Bethesda-Homewood. In addition, school transfers could ultimately be positive, negative or neutral for students. For example, some research shows that childhood transfers to lower-poverty schools lead to significantly higher academic outcomes,<sup>15</sup> while other research shows that switching schools is associated with dropping out.<sup>16</sup>

### Service Utilization Pre- and Post-Displacement

There was very little change to service utilization for residents in the years following their moves. Overall, there was a minor increase in the utilization of mental health services for children and adults and a minor decrease in use of homeless services. For increases that did occur, we are unable to say whether these changes are the result of increased need from being displaced from Bethesda-Homewood. Increased service utilization could be the result of existing needs that were identified via interactions with agencies that interacted with residents during the move. See below for a summary of service involvement pre- and post-move.<sup>17</sup>

### Publicly Funded Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Treatment

- The percentage of heads of household involved with publicly funded mental health services increased from 14% (n = 10) to 19% (n = 14). Ten heads of households received mental health services both before and after they moved out of Bethesda-Homewood, and four new heads of household received services after they moved out of Bethesda-Homewood.
- Child involvement in mental health services saw an increase from 5% (n = 4) to 9% (n = 7). Four children received mental health services both before and after they moved out of Bethesda-Homewood, and three new children received services after they moved out.
- Involvement with drug and alcohol services remained low both pre- and post-move-in.

15 With some exceptions identified in this section, only those with verified addresses were included in the pre- and post-displacement service utilization analysis, which was almost exclusively those who received some form of assisted housing. Seventy seven percent of households found in our Data Warehouse gained access to assisted housing as of Nov. 2019.

16 Schwartz, H. (2010). "Housing Policy is School Policy: Economically Integrating Housing Promotes Academic Success in Montgomery County, Maryland." The Century Foundation, 6–7.

17 Gasper, J., Deluca, S., & Estacion, A. (2010, June). "Switching Schools: Reconsidering the Relationship Between School Mobility and High School Dropout." *The American Educational Research Journal*.

### Child Welfare

- The number of heads of household involved pre- and post-move changed from six to five. Two of those five cases were new, but three of the five cases existed both before and after moving out of Bethesda-Homewood.
- Three heads of household ceased involvement with child welfare during the year after moving into a new unit (post-Bethesda), though it is difficult to say whether the move played any role in this finding.

### Homelessness and Housing Supports

- The percentage of heads of household who received homeless prevention services decreased in the year following move-in, from 7% (n = 5) to 1% (n = 1).
- The number of children receiving preventive homeless services also decreased, from 9% (n = 7) to 3% (n = 2).

The decrease in homelessness service usage is expected; residents were at risk of being housing insecure when they learned that their rental subsidy from Bethesda-Homewood was abated. That risk decreased when residents gained access to stable housing through the voucher program or public housing.

For eligible heads of household and children with verified addresses, there was no involvement with the county's homeless system. However, there was one head of household without a verified address who was involved with emergency homelessness services in the two years after residents learned that their rental subsidy was abated.

### Public Benefits

- More than 90% of heads of household were the recipients of public benefit programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which is expected given that residents had low enough incomes to qualify for assisted housing programs.

### Allegheny County Court System

- Forty percent of all eligible heads of household with a verified address were involved in the Allegheny County court system during the year after their move. While forced displacement from Bethesda-Homewood appears to have had no real impact on these figures, the rate of court involvement is concerning since it can be a significant financial burden for low-income residents given associated costs, fees and fines.
- Court involvement was largely driven by low-level offenses (traffic and non-traffic summary offenses), followed by criminal cases heard in Magisterial District Court, adult probation, and criminal cases heard by the Court of Common Pleas (**Table 4**). Court data does not include civil cases as we are unable to match civil cases to clients in the Allegheny County Data Warehouse.

**TABLE 4: Court involvement for Bethesda-Homewood heads of household, for those with a verified address, from the year ending in the month of their first post-Bethesda move to the year following that move**

COURT CASES BY CATEGORY	# OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD WHO WERE ELIGIBLE OVER BOTH PERIODS	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD COUNT FOR PRIOR YEAR (MONTH OF MOVE IN DATE AND 11 MONTHS PREVIOUS)	PERCENT OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD FOR PRIOR YEAR (MONTH OF MOVE IN DATE AND 11 MONTHS PREVIOUS)	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD COUNT FOR YEAR AFTER MOVE (12 MONTHS AFTER MONTH OF MOVE IN DATE)	PERCENT OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD YEAR AFTER MOVE (12 MONTHS AFTER MONTH OF MOVE IN DATE)
Overall Court Involvement	72	29	40%	29	40%
Low-level Offences (Traffic + Non-Traffic Cases)	72	23	32%	23	32%
Criminal Magisterial District Cases	72	9	13%	6	8%
Adult Probation	72	5	7%	4	6%
Criminal Common Pleas Cases	72	2	3%	2	3%
Dependency Case	72	0	0%	0	0%

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lack of time to find a unit and a desire to move to safer neighborhoods were key themes that emerged from our conversations with Bethesda-Homewood residents. Research is clear that forced displacement can uproot the lives of residents, lead to psychological distress, and intensify the concentration of poor renters in high poverty neighborhoods.<sup>18</sup> Studies also show the negative impact of exposure to gun violence on the academic outcomes of children,<sup>19</sup> the physical and mental health of residents,<sup>20</sup> and on further neighborhood disinvestment and outmigration.<sup>21</sup> Additional research shows that perceptions of violence significantly increase the probability that a family will move and that residents experience decreases in perceptions of violence after moving.<sup>22</sup> All of these realities were present in our primary findings and so informed our recommendations.

18 Pushed Out: Displacement Today and Lasting Impacts (n.d.). In *Urban Displacement Project*. Retrieved from [here](#).

19 Sharkey, P. (2010, June 29). “The Acute Effect of Local Homicides on Children’s Cognitive Performance.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.

20 Smith, M. E. et al (2020, February). The impact of exposure to gun violence fatality on mental health outcomes in four urban U.S. settings. *Social Science and Medicine*.

21 Sharkey, P. (2018). *Uneasy Peace: The Great Crime Decline, the Renewal of City Life, and the Next War on Violence*. N.p.: W. W. Norton & Company.

22 Gabriel, R., Hess, C., & Crowder, K. (2021, May). “When push comes to shove: Local violence and residential mobility among residents.” *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

The key takeaways from our focus group, telephone survey, geospatial analysis, cross-program analysis and the relevant literature can be summarized by the following:

- 1) Residents need as much time as possible to find new housing, given how difficult and traumatic it can be to find a quality unit and a landlord willing to rent to them, especially in instances of forced displacement.
- 2) Gaining access to a housing voucher stabilized displaced residents and gave them comparatively more geographic choice than they had while living at Bethesda-Homewood Properties, even if most tenants still ended up in communities that have relatively high need(s). Housing vouchers allowed most residents to exercise autonomy and move to neighborhoods that were comparatively safer than the neighborhoods they lived in while at Bethesda-Homewood.
- 3) Displaced residents need intentional, personalized support to overcome systemic, programmatic and individual barriers in the housing search process that can otherwise prevent them from finding a quality unit in a neighborhood of their choosing, including those neighborhoods that have historically locked out low-income Black renters.
- 4) Bethesda-Homewood Properties' rental subsidy abatement was predictable, and mission-driven actors should identify other project-based rental assistance (PBRA) portfolios that may experience a similar outcome.

Based on these key takeaways, we recommend that the following four strategies and policies be adopted to 1) help prevent mass displacement or 2) support residents in situations where mass displacement is imminent. Our recommendations are especially relevant to rental portfolios subsidized through PBRA.

### **Strategy 1: Give residents due notice and power in cases of impending eviction or subsidy loss.**

“Due notice” is based on the premise of giving vulnerable renters time: time to find a new unit, time to organize, and time to emotionally prepare for a forced move.

States and local governments may use the sort of due notice laws found in condo conversion protections to alert residents of an eviction well before they would typically know otherwise, and right of first refusal laws can give tenants the power to purchase their rental dwelling(s) whenever the owner intends to sell. A sample of laws show that protections give residents anywhere from 90 days to three years due notice of a condo conversion, a range of time that Bethesda-Homewood residents did not have access to. Other laws state that residents who will be involuntarily displaced can be granted financial and navigation assistance for finding another rental unit. Additional laws give either individual tenants or tenant groups the right to first-purchase their building if the building is put up for sale. Right of first refusal can also be granted to a mission-driven organization or public housing authority to work on behalf of tenants to first-purchase units and maintain their affordability.<sup>23</sup>

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23 Albee, A., Johnson, R., & Lubell, J. (2015). *Preserving, Protecting, and Expanding Affordable Housing* (p. 28). Oakland, CA: ChangeLab Solutions. Retrieved from [https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Preserving\\_Affordable\\_Housing-POLICY-TOOLKIT\\_FINAL\\_20150401.pdf](https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Preserving_Affordable_Housing-POLICY-TOOLKIT_FINAL_20150401.pdf)

**Strategy 2: Centrally monitor Project-Based Rental Assistance properties.**

The abatement of Bethesda-Homewood's PBRA subsidy should not have been a surprise. The rental portfolio had failing Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) scores for years.<sup>24</sup> Though scores are publicly viewable, there does not appear to be a clear benchmark on what score triggers subsidy abatement if an owner does not address capital needs.

A central agency is needed to monitor these scores. If a PBRA portfolio is at risk of abatement, the central monitoring agency should work with HUD to identify uses of HUD Section 8(bb), which allows a current recipient of the PBRA to transfer the subsidy to another owner.<sup>25</sup>

**Strategy 3: Expand the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.**

While definite challenges exist for housing voucher holders in Allegheny County, such as low success rates<sup>26</sup> for voucher use and lack of true geographic choice,<sup>27</sup> the HCV program has been shown to stabilize low-income renters, reduce homelessness, decrease poverty, reduce overcrowding and allow families to reunite with their children. Housing vouchers give residents the autonomy and stability to escape traumatic challenges such as gun violence, substandard units, landlord issues and domestic violence, even if voucher holders make moves to units just a few blocks away in their same neighborhood.<sup>28</sup> DHS was unable to reach most of the residents who could not access or use a housing voucher, which may speak to the sort of instability that non-voucher holders faced after displacement from Bethesda-Homewood. Expanding the voucher program would better allow low-income renters to stabilize their housing situation and offer them comparatively more autonomy in finding a unit in a neighborhood that best fits their needs.

**Strategy 4: Support displaced residents through mobility counseling services.**

In cases where the loss of PBRA is unavoidable or where residents living in PBRA properties prefer to move due to concerns about unit quality, neighborhood violence or other challenges, residents should be connected to a local agency that provides mobility counseling services. These types of services would be particularly valuable to HCV program participants. While the voucher program is a crucial program in and of itself, the voucher program alone does not lead to true geographic choice without additional interventions such as mobility counseling and administrative policy changes at Public Housing Authorities.

24 The REAC is a program developed by HUD that provides independent, actionable assessments of the nation's affordable housing portfolio. Scores are determined by metrics such as physical inspections, analysis of financial soundness, and customer satisfaction surveys.

25 Section 8(bb) Preservation Tool (2017, November 20). In *HUD.gov U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development*. Retrieved August 28, 2018, from [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/housing/mfh/8bb](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/mfh/8bb)

26 The success rate is the percentage of HCV holders who receive a voucher and are able to lease up with a landlord.

27 Cotter, N., Halfhill, A., Collins, K., & Dalton, E. (2020, March).

28 Rosen, E. (2020). *The Voucher Promise: "Section 8" and the Fate of an American Neighborhood*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Mobility counseling is a collection of wraparound case management services that aim to reduce barriers in the housing search process that often prevent low-income renters from moving to lower-need areas. Mobility counseling includes: 1) pre-move counseling (e.g., information on low-poverty, well-resourced neighborhoods, neighborhood tours and credit counseling), 2) housing search assistance, 3) short-term financial assistance (e.g., assistance with security deposits, rental application fees and renters' insurance), 4) landlord recruitment via incentives like expedited inspections, sign-on bonuses and holding fees, and 5) post-move supports (e.g., connection to needed social services, social supports and tenant advocacy).

One study showed that voucher residents in Seattle/King County who received mobility counseling services were 40% more likely to move to lower-need areas.<sup>29</sup>

It is important to state that mobility counseling is an “and” solution, not an “or.” In other words, residents should have the autonomy to remain in neighborhoods that are familiar to them and move to new neighborhoods of their choosing. Place-conscious interventions that equitably address concentrated poverty, chronic disinvestment and gun violence are needed just as much as those that expand geographic choice for low-income renters.

## CONCLUSION

Forced displacement is a traumatic experience that uproots residents from their homes and communities. While the process of forced displacement can have serious consequences without the proper supports, residents able to 1) upgrade to a better maintained unit and/or 2) move to communities with comparatively less gun violence described leaving Bethesda-Homewood Properties as an opportunity that was otherwise not available to them, which was made possible by the HCV program.

The challenges that segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods like Homewood, Larimer and East Hills face are the result of decades of systemic racism, exclusion, and disinvestment. Decades of explicitly racist housing, lending and land-use policy, white flight and urban renewal, and the war on drugs made our poor Black communities vulnerable to gun violence because of the concentration of poverty, social isolation, and chronic disinvestment caused by these decisions, all of which destabilized the social fabric of these neighborhoods. Gun violence and blight cannot be discussed outside of this context.

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29 Peter Bergman, Raj Chetty, Stefanie Deluca, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence Katz & Christopher Palmer. 2019. “Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice.”

Mass displacement due to the loss of PBRA can better be prevented through centralized monitoring, planning and prevention. In cases where it is not avoidable, however, tenants should have due notice so they can have time to find a new unit, discuss individual and collective options, and emotionally prepare for the stress of a forced move. To assist displaced residents with housing search support, and other needed services, residents who are forced to move should be connected with mobility counseling services where mobility experts can work with them to find a neighborhood and unit that best suits their needs. Housing should be about choice, and we should not assume where anyone wants to live. Residents are the experts and should have the autonomy to stay or leave a given neighborhood. The right set of strategies can allow residents to do both.

## NEXT STEPS

Real-estate developer Omicelo purchased Bethesda-Homewood properties in early 2018. Omicelo is committed to rehabilitating as many units as possible. While former Bethesda-Homewood residents are not guaranteed a right to return by Omicelo, the developer will accept housing choice vouchers in the rehabilitated properties, which have been renamed Esperanza.

The Western PA Regional Data Center and CREATE Lab are in the process of creating a tool to help monitor PBRA properties and other types of affordable and income-based housing throughout Allegheny County. This database will act as a crucial monitoring system for at-risk affordable housing in Allegheny County. DHS affirms the need for a working group that will utilize the above mentioned tool to centrally monitor at-risk affordable housing in Allegheny County, and intends to play a lead role in the formation and operation of this group.

In partnership with DHS, the Allegheny County Housing Authority and the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh are poised to begin a regional housing mobility program in 2022. HUD recently selected Pittsburgh-Allegheny County as one of nine HCV Mobility Demonstration sites across the U.S.<sup>30</sup> The Demonstration provides technical assistance and funding to implement and evaluate our regional housing mobility program. The program design was informed by interviews with local housing voucher holders, fair housing advocates and mobility programs across the country, but final decisions about the services offered will be decided by HUD. The evaluation will allow us to understand whether a housing mobility program can be 1) effective in Allegheny County; 2) equally effective for White and Black voucher holders, given the unique barriers that Black voucher renters face; and 3) understand whether the program allows voucher holders to remain in low-poverty neighborhoods long term. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and The Pittsburgh Foundation have also provided financial support for the mobility program.

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30 HUD to Increase Access to Opportunity for 10,000 Residents Through New \$50M Housing Mobility Demonstration (2021, April 30). In *U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development*. Retrieved from [https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/HUD\\_No\\_21\\_076](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_21_076)

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

**Community Need Index:** DHS-developed the Community Need Index (CNI) that identifies relative need at the census tract level for all of Allegheny County using data from 2014–2018 American Community Survey estimates and 911 dispatch data from the same period. Tracts are sorted into one of five levels of need ranging from very low to extreme. The CNI assists DHS in identifying gaps between need and service delivery and is used to support geospatial analysis in this report. See a more detailed write-up in the methods section.

**Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** “The Department of Housing and Urban Development is the Federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America’s housing needs, that improve and develop the Nation’s communities, and enforce fair housing laws.”<sup>31</sup>

**Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program:** Federally funded by HUD and administered by local public housing authorities, HCV is a program that provides rental assistance to households based on income eligibility. Households pay a percentage of their gross adjusted income, with the local housing authority covering the difference between the household’s income and the payment standard paid to the landlord. Voucher holders must find a landlord on the private market who will rent to them and must agree to and abide by terms set in the lease. HUD sets the lower-income limits at 50% and very-low-income limits at 30% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which you choose to live.<sup>32</sup>

**Project-based rental assistance (PBRA):** Project-based rental assistance provides critical affordable housing stock to low-income residents across the country. This type of rental assistance allows tenants to live in an affordable unit and pay rent based upon their income. With project-based rental assistance, a private for-profit or nonprofit owner enters into a contract with HUD to provide affordable units. Units remain affordable for the length of the contract. PBRA is not operated by local public housing authorities, unlike project-based vouchers.<sup>33</sup>

**Public housing:** Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income residents, the elderly and people with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single-family houses to high-rise apartments for elderly residents. HUD sets the lower-income limits at 80% and very-low-income limits at 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which you choose to live. Residents pay a portion of their gross adjusted income or a minimum rental fee, whichever is higher. Public housing assistance is tied to units and does not travel with individual tenants.<sup>34</sup>

31 View information on HUD [here](#) via HUD’s fact sheet.

32 Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet. n.d. On HUD.gov. Retrieved from [here](#).

33 View information on PBRA [here](#) via the National Housing Law Project.

34 View information on HUD’s fact sheet for Public Housing [here](#).

## APPENDIX B

**APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY DETAIL****Client Matching**

East Liberty Development Incorporated (ELDI) obtained client-level rent roll information from Aishel Real Estate (i.e., the property managers of Bethesda-Homewood Properties) for October and November 2017. These documents were shared with DHS. In addition to obtaining rent roll information, ELDI conducted door-to-door triage to identify families living in the Bethesda-Homewood units. Rent roll data revealed that 93 families were living at Bethesda-Homewood homes and were on the lease as of October 2017. An additional nine families were not on the lease but were found to be living at Bethesda-Homewood homes via ELDI triage. As such, a total of 102 families were living at Bethesda-Homewood homes as of October 2017 with a total of at least 237 individual residents.

We used client-level demographic and address information from rent rolls for Bethesda-Homewood homes and triage information from ELDI to manually identify whether heads of household and their dependents were in the Allegheny County Data Warehouse.

Our manual matching method allowed us to identify 93 (91%) of the 102 Bethesda-Homewood families as of November 2019. Six of those nine heads of household who were not on the lease at Bethesda-Homewood (as of October 2017) were identified, and 86 of those 93 heads of household who were on the lease were identified, in our Data Warehouse. Dependents were identified as children if they were below the age of 18 as of October 31, 2017. Given this, 108 children were found to be living at Bethesda-Homewood as of October 2017 and 97 were identified as of November 2019.

**Focus Group and Phone Questionnaire**

The primary questions that motivated our qualitative study were:

- 1) How did forced displacement affect the lives of families who had to leave Bethesda-Homewood?
- 2) How did families feel about having to leave their unit and neighborhood?
- 3) How do families feel about their current unit and neighborhood?
- 4) What could have been done differently?

A focus group discussion guide was developed in part because there was little previous knowledge regarding specific contributors to forced displacement. To address the paucity of data, we used a focus group to identify key themes and to develop preliminary questions for the larger telephone survey tool. Twelve focus group participants were selected using a stratified random sample of all Bethesda-Homewood heads of households. Random selection was stratified on sex, household makeup, and housing voucher status (active or not). The research team did not stratify on race because all but one head of household is Black.

The research team was able to conduct only one 90-minute focus group in person, for which the research team created a discussion guide with open-ended questions. Two moderators co-facilitated the discussion: one with subject matter expertise from the DHS Client Experience Analytics Team and one with facilitation and community engagement expertise from DHS's Office of Equity and Engagement. The presence of an experienced Office of Equity and Engagement moderator was also considered to lessen the likelihood of biasing the discussion toward

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researchers' expectations. Both moderators were Black. We believed the presence of Black moderators would allow participants to feel comfortable and use jargon. Lastly, a housing and homelessness data analyst (who was a member of our research team) took notes from the focus group discussion.

After trained research team members coded focus group notes, themes were reviewed and interpreted by the interdisciplinary research team across several sessions. The focus groups identified several domains of potential threats to safety, including large amounts of gun violence, lack of understanding of why the Bethesda-Homewood households did not have more time to move, communication problems, difficulty in finding a new home, and anxiety when caring for school-aged children. The research team did not design any focus group prompts around exposure to gun violence, but gun violence nonetheless emerged as a core theme. The aforementioned themes were carried forward to the next phase of the study and were incorporated into the telephone survey tool, which enabled quantitative evaluation of community satisfaction.

The telephone survey tool was designed based on feedback from heads of households via themes identified from the earlier focus group qualitative analysis. Only heads of household who did not participate in the focus group were called. The research team called residences for which a phone number was available. For the phone surveys, the research team attempted to make calls for approximately two weeks, trying each selected phone number up to three times. The phone survey was administered in English and only to people over the age of 18. Thirty-four heads of household participated in the phone survey, for a response rate of 42%. Heads of household could skip questions as they felt comfortable, so the number of answers varies per question.

**Geospatial Analysis**

Addresses for heads of household were geocoded at three distinct points in time where valid addresses were available: 1) October 2017, when residents were still living at Bethesda-Homewood homes; 2) November 2018, which was roughly one year after residents were informed that their rental subsidy had been abated; and 3) November 2019, which was roughly two years after residents were informed that their rental subsidy had been abated. Client addresses in 2017 were provided by Bethesda-Homewood rent rolls. Address data for 2018 and 2019 was derived from DHS's assisted housing data (i.e., housing choice voucher and public housing data). Two heads of household who did not receive a housing choice voucher had their current address verified via a phone call.

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We used our updated version of the Community Need Index (CNI) to answer our question regarding what sort of census tracts Bethesda-Homewood residents moved to. The current CNI uses census tract- level data from 2014–2018 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates and 2014–2018 911 dispatch data. The CNI includes the following indicators:

- 1) percent of residents living below the federal poverty line
- 2) percent of working-age men unemployed or unattached to the labor force
- 3) percent of those 25 and older without at least a bachelor's degree
- 4) percent of female-led households with children
- 5) an average of 911 dispatches for gun-related violence during 2014–2018 per 500 people

Tracts are sorted into one of five levels of need ranging from very low to extreme. For a detailed write-up on the CNI and methodology, and to access our interactive Community Need Map, please go [here](#).

### Measuring Gun Violence

We measure a neighborhood's level of gun violence in terms of its rate of gunshot-related 911 dispatches. Dispatches for gunshots include both 911 calls and those that are created automatically through the City of Pittsburgh's Shot Spotter gunshot detection system. We count each census tract's number of 911 dispatches that are related to gunshots by year and average them over a period of five years. Average five-year 911 dispatches for gun violence by tract are then divided by five-year ACS population estimates and set per 500 people. Gun violence was also measured with homicide data from the Allegheny County Office of the Medical Examiner wherein we examined both cumulative homicides and average homicide rates by tract.

The measure of gunshot-related dispatches does not capture all gunshots that occur in a neighborhood. Different communities may be more or less willing to call 911 when they witness violence. Additionally, the 911 dispatch data that is used in this report covers only the 911 dispatches that are handled by Allegheny County Emergency Services (ACES). There are a few municipalities in Allegheny County that do not use ACES for their 911 dispatches, including Monroeville, Bethel Park and Upper Saint Clair.<sup>35</sup>

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35 This information comes from Allegheny County Emergency Services.

**APPENDIX B**

**Cross-Program Analysis**

This analysis examines what services and programs Bethesda-Homewood residents were involved in at two distinct periods: 1) the year prior to residents settling into their new units post-Bethesda, which is measured as the month of a family's move-in date and the 11 months before that, and 2) the 12 months after a family moved into their new unit. Verified addresses and move-in dates are for Bethesda-Homewood heads of household and children who were active in the HCV program or public housing as of November 2018 or 2019. We used the month of a family or individual's first unit post-Bethesda, not any subsequent moves. We give the total number of individuals involved in each program or service area; the number who were eligible for program involvement, given age or other restrictions on involvement, and the percentage of eligible clients who were actually involved.

We did not do cross-program analysis for individuals who did not have a verified address (except for programs related to homelessness or with the medical examiner) because a family's move-in date was used as our anchor date for the cross-program analysis. Without a verified address and move-in date, we would misconstrue pre- and post-move service involvement as it related to movement out of Bethesda-Homewood Properties.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C: PHONE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

TABLE 5: Neighborhood satisfaction survey for respondent’s current neighborhood/unit

QUESTION	VERY BAD (1)	BAD (2)	NEITHER (3)	GOOD (4)	VERY GOOD (5)	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
A. Good schools	6.25%	3.13%	34.38%	21.88%	34.38%	32
B. Public transportation	3.13%	9.38%	12.50%	28.13%	46.88%	32
C. Transportation to work	3.13%	6.25%	21.88%	28.13%	40.63%	32
D. Groceries	0.00%	9.38%	9.38%	37.50%	43.75%	32
E. Social services	0.00%	3.13%	21.88%	40.63%	34.38%	32
F. Parks and recreation facilities	6.45%	9.68%	35.48%	22.58%	25.81%	31
G. Friends and relatives	12.90%	6.45%	19.35%	35.48%	25.81%	31
H. Job opportunities	6.25%	3.13%	18.75%	43.75%	28.13%	32
I. Amount of gun violence	19.35%	16.13%	22.58%	16.13%	25.81%	31
J. Environment for children	6.45%	3.23%	22.58%	45.16%	22.58%	31
K. Child care	14.29%	0.00%	28.57%	33.33%	23.81%	21

Note: Phone questionnaire conducted with heads of household who lived at the former Bethesda-Homewood Properties and who were not part of the 12-person focus group. Questions operate on Likert scale and range from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good). Questions asked are in the context of the respondent’s current neighborhood and unit.

TABLE 6: Respondent answers to level of difficulty in finding an apartment

ANSWER	%	COUNT
Extremely difficult	45.45%	15
Very difficult	12.12%	4
Somewhat difficult	27.27%	9
A little difficult	12.12%	4
Not at all difficult	3.03%	1
Total	100%	33

TABLE 7: Respondent answers to those factors that most negatively affected the housing search process

QUESTION	YES	MAYBE	NO	TOTAL
a. Finding units in your price range	70.37%	7.41%	22.22%	27
b. Feeling rushed to move	81.48%	3.70%	14.81%	27
c. Gathering information about units	70.37%	0.00%	29.63%	27
d. Gathering information about neighborhoods	51.85%	18.52%	29.63%	27
e. Finding transportation to get to units	33.33%	18.52%	48.15%	27
f. Finding someone to take care of your child(ren) so you could visit units	27.78%	33.33%	38.89%	18

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D: SERVICE INVOLVEMENT ELIGIBILITY AND DETAIL

TABLE 8: Service and institutional involvement (mental health services, drug and alcohol services, Child Youth and Family Services (CYF), homeless prevention services and emergency homeless services) for eligible Bethesda-Homewood heads of household with verified addresses from the year ending in the month of their first post-Bethesda move to the year following that move

BETHESDA-HOMEWOOD HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD SERVICE UTILIZATION	NUMBER ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH MENTAL HEALTH	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL	# AND % OF CYF ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH HOMELESS PREVENTION AND OTHER HOUSING SERVICES	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH EMERGENCY HOMELESS SERVICES
Prior year (month of movein date and 11 months previous)	72	10 14%	3 4%	6 8%	5 7%	0 0%
Year after move (12 months after month of movein date)	72	14 9%	3 4%	5 7%	1 1%	0 0%
Number of non-duplicated heads of household involved both prior year and year after movein month	72	10 N/A	2 N/A	3 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A
Number of cases no longer active as of the year after movein month	72	0 N/A	1 N/A	3 N/A	5 N/A	0 N/A
Number of new cases as of the year after movein month	72	4 N/A	1 N/A	2 N/A	1 N/A	0 N/A

Source: Allegheny County Data Warehouse

Note: Program eligibility is based on factors like age and income, for clients found in our data warehouse.

APPENDIX D

**TABLE 9: Service and institutional involvement (mental health services, drug and alcohol services, Child Youth and Family Services (CYF), homeless prevention services and emergency homeless services) for eligible Bethesda-Homewood children with verified addresses from the year ending in the month of their first post-Bethesda move to the year following that move**

BETHESDA-HOMEWOOD CHILDREN SERVICE UTILIZATION	NUMBER ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH MENTAL HEALTH	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL	# AND % OF CYF ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH HOMELESS PREVENTION AND OTHER HOUSING SERVICES	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH EMERGENCY HOMELESS SERVICES
Prior year (month of movein date and 11 months previous)	82	4 5%	0 0%	8 10%	7 9%	0 0%
Year after move (12 months after month of movein date)	82	7 9%	1 4%	10 13%	2 2%	0 0%
Number of non-duplicated heads of household involved both prior year and year after movein month	82	4 N/A	0 N/A	6 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A
Number of cases no longer active as of the year after movein month	82	0 N/A	0 N/A	2 N/A	7 N/A	0 N/A
Number of new cases as of the year after movein month	82	3 N/A	1 N/A	4 N/A	2 N/A	0 N/A

Source: Allegheny County Data Warehouse

Note: Program eligibility is based on factors like age and income for clients found in our Data Warehouse. The number of eligible children for drug and alcohol treatment is 21 in the year prior to and including pre-move-in-date month and 26 post-move-in-date month. All other programs had a program eligibility of N = 82.

APPENDIX D

**TABLE 10: Service and institutional involvement (permanent supportive housing, the Allegheny County court system, the Allegheny County jail system, the Allegheny County medical examiner and public benefits) for eligible Bethesda-Homewood heads of household with verified addresses from the year ending in the month of their first post-Bethesda move to the year following that move**

BETHESDA-HOMEWOOD HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD SERVICE UTILIZATION	NUMBER ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH THE COURTS	# AND % ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH JAIL	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE WHO DIED	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE WITH PUBLIC BENEFITS
Prior year (month of movein date and 11 months previous)	72	0 0%	29 40%	3 4%	0 0%	69 96%
Year after move (12 months after month of movein date)	72	0 0%	29 40%	1 1%	0 0%	70 97%
Number of non-duplicated heads of household involved both prior year and year after movein month	72	0 N/A	27 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A	69 N/A
Number of cases no longer active as of the year after movein month	72	0 N/A	2 N/A	3 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A
Number of new cases as of the year after movein month	72	0 N/A	2 N/A	1 N/A	0 N/A	1 N/A

Source: Allegheny County Data Warehouse

Note: Program eligibility is based on factors like age and income for clients found in our Data Warehouse.

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**TABLE 11: Service and institutional involvement (permanent supportive housing, the Allegheny County court system, the Allegheny County jail system, the Allegheny County medical examiner and public benefits) for eligible Bethesda-Homewood children with verified addresses from the year ending in the month of their first post-Bethesda move to the year following that move**

BETHESDA-HOMEWOOD CHILDREN SERVICE UTILIZATION	NUMBER ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ELIGIBLE	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH THE COURTS	# AND % ELIGIBLE INVOLVED WITH JAIL	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE WHO DIED	# AND % OF ELIGIBLE WITH PUBLIC BENEFITS
Prior year (month of movein date and 11 months previous)	82	0 0%	4 5%	0 0%	0 0%	78 95%
Year after move (12 months after month of movein date)	82	0 0%	8 10%	0 0%	0 0%	72 88%
Number of non-duplicated heads of household involved both prior year and year after movein month	82	0 N/A	4 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A	71 N/A
Number of cases no longer active as of the year after movein month	82	0 N/A	1 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A	7 N/A
Number of new cases as of the year after movein month	82	0 N/A	5 N/A	0 N/A	0 N/A	1 N/A

Source: Allegheny County Data Warehouse

Note: Program eligibility is based on factors like age and income for clients found in our Data Warehouse. The number of eligible children for jail involvement is one in the year prior to and including move-in-date month and six for the year after move-in-date month. All other programs had a program eligibility of N = 82.

APPENDIX E

**APPENDIX E: TRACT LOCATIONS FOR BETHESDA-HOMEWOOD HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD, FOR THOSE WHO GAINED ACCESS TO A HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER OR PUBLIC HOUSING**

CENSUS TRACT	MUNICIPALITY	NEIGHBORHOOD	BH HCV HHS AS OF NOV 2018	BH HCV HHS AS OF NOV 2019	BH PUBLIC HOUSING AS OF NOV 2018 AND 2019	2014-2018 L EVEL OF COMMUNITY NEED	GUN SHOTS FIRED/ REPORTED PER 500 PEOPLE (2014-2018 AVERAGE)
1303	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood South	6	7	0	Extreme Need	31
1304	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood South	5	4	0	Extreme Need	39
1306	City of Pittsburgh	East Hills	3	4	0	Extreme Need	14
1301	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood North	2	2	3	Extreme Need	26
1302	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood North	1	2	0	Extreme Need	19
1204	City of Pittsburgh	Larimer	1	2	0	Extreme Need	18
5619	City of Pittsburgh	Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar	2	2	0	Extreme Need	10
1207	City of Pittsburgh	Homewood West	1	1	0	Extreme Need	21
1203	City of Pittsburgh	Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar	1	1	0	Extreme Need	14
3001	City of Pittsburgh	Knoxville	1	1	0	Extreme Need	12
4838	Homestead	N/A	1	1	0	Extreme Need	11
2507	City of Pittsburgh	California Kirkbride	1	1	0	Extreme Need	8
5623	City of Pittsburgh	Glen Hazel/Hazelwood	1	1	0	Extreme Need	7
4869	Duquesne	N/A	1	1	0	Extreme Need	6
305	City of Pittsburgh	Crawford-Roberts	1	1	0	Extreme Need	5
509	City of Pittsburgh	Bedford Dwellings	0	0	2	Extreme Need	7
2614	City of Pittsburgh	Perry South	3	3	0	High Need	10
5612	Wilksburg	N/A	2	2	0	High Need	9
2615	City of Pittsburgh	Perry South	1	1	0	High Need	11
1803	City of Pittsburgh	Allentown	1	1	0	High Need	9
1114	City of Pittsburgh	Garfield	0	1	0	High Need	9
1017	City of Pittsburgh	Garfield	1	1	0	High Need	7
5153	Swissvale	N/A	0	1	0	High Need	5
1115	City of Pittsburgh	East Liberty	1	1	0	High Need	5
5629	City of Pittsburgh	Hays/Hazelwood	1	1	0	High Need	5
4994	Glassport	N/A	1	1	0	High Need	2
2715	City of Pittsburgh	Marshall-Shadeland	1	0	0	High Need	8
2022	City of Pittsburgh	Sheraden	1	0	0	High Need	6

APPENDIX E

CENSUS TRACT	MUNICIPALITY	NEIGHBORHOOD	BH HCV HHS AS OF NOV 2018	BH HCV HHS AS OF NOV 2019	BH PUBLIC HOUSING AS OF NOV 2018 AND 2019	2014-2018 LEVEL OF COMMUNITY NEED	GUN SHOTS FIRED/ REPORTED PER 500 PEOPLE (2014-2018 AVERAGE)
409	City of Pittsburgh	South Oakland	0	0	1	High Need	1
1102	City of Pittsburgh	Highland Park	3	3	0	Low Need	2
1405	City of Pittsburgh	Point Breeze North	1	1	0	Low Need	5
1706	City of Pittsburgh	Southside Slopes	0	1	0	Low Need	4
1005	City of Pittsburgh	Stanton Heights	1	1	0	Low Need	2
5041	North Versailles	N/A	4	4	0	Moderate Need	0
5614	Wilkinsburg	N/A	3	3	0	Moderate Need	6
1113	City of Pittsburgh	East Liberty	4	2	0	Moderate Need	5
5232	Penn Hills	N/A	2	2	0	Moderate Need	4
2708	City of Pittsburgh	Brighton Heights	2	2	0	Moderate Need	2
5615	Wilkinsburg	N/A	1	1	0	Moderate Need	8
2602	City of Pittsburgh	Perry North	1	1	0	Moderate Need	4
1414	City of Pittsburgh	Squirrel Hill South	0	0	1	Very low Need	1