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**MTO:
Moving To Opportunity
for Fair Housing
Demonstration**

**Program Operations
Manual (Revised)**

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DISCLAIMER

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MTO MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY FOR FAIR HOUSING DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM OPERATIONS MANUAL

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CHAPTER ONE

MTO DEMONSTRATION OVERVIEW

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RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION

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CHAPTER ONE

MTO DEMONSTRATION OVERVIEW

As part of its overall mission *to help people create communities of opportunity*, the Department of Housing Urban Development is committed to the principal of reducing spatial separations by race and income that characterize American urban areas. This will require substantially reducing racial and economic barriers to residential mobility and enhancing the ability of minorities to choose where they live, through a combination of vigorous enforcement of federal fair housing laws and creative metropolitan-wide housing and community development strategies.

—Adapted from *Performance Agreement between the President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry G. Cisneros.*

INTRODUCTION

The Moving to Opportunity For Fair Housing (MTO) Demonstration program is intended to help low-income families now living in public housing or project-based Section 8 housing move out of high-poverty areas of large central cities and gain *access to better housing, education, and employment opportunities in low-poverty neighborhoods*. The demonstration combines Section 8 rental assistance with intensive housing search and counseling services, in order to ease families' relocation to low-poverty communities and help them become self-sufficient.

Demonstration Rationale

MTO is modeled on remedial programs of the past two decades in which federal courts have required HUD to provide funding for rental assistance and housing counseling services to reduce racial segregation in publicly assisted housing. These programs enable families to move to neighborhoods that are not racially segregated. The best known of them is the Gautreaux program in Chicago that has been underway for over 17 years. Other jurisdictions in which court-ordered or voluntary programs have been established include Boston, Cincinnati, Hartford, Memphis, and Dallas. Studies of these programs indicate positive results for many families with respect to improvements in housing, educational attainment of children, employment and income.

MTO is about giving people a chance to make a better life for themselves and their children.

However, these studies are unable to prove whether program impacts were the result of the program design and services offered, the locational characteristics of communities chosen by the families, or the special characteristics of the enrolled families themselves. Consequently, Congress has requested that the MTO demonstration answer this question through a careful,

comparative evaluation of program impacts among MTO families that move to low-poverty neighborhoods with the outcomes for two other similar groups of households: (a) families that move to private housing with only Section 8 assistance, and (b) families that continue to live in public housing or project-based Section 8 developments. By these comparisons, over the 10-year term of the demonstration HUD seeks to determine the long-term benefits and costs of MTO relative to current Section 8 and public housing programs, and to make recommendations to the Congress with respect to program expansion or design changes.

Program authorization

The Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing (MTO) demonstration was authorized in Section 152 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (see Appendix A), which set the following parameters for the program:

Program eligibility

- *Eligible families* are very low-income families with children now living in public housing or project-based Section 8-assisted housing located in areas with **high concentrations of poverty** (where 40 percent or more of people in the census tract have incomes below the official poverty level).

Participating cities

- Of the 21 cities eligible to participate in MTO, five cities have been selected by competitive procurement for the demonstration. They are **Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York.**

Local programs

- Local programs are created via grants and contracts between the Secretary of HUD and
nonprofit organizations (NPOs) to provide counseling and services in connection with the demonstration; and
public housing agencies (PHAs) to administer the Section 8 rental assistance.

Funding

- The NPOs receive partial federal funding for MTO to help pay for the costs associated with counseling participating families, assisting them in finding appropriate units, and working with landlords (to encourage their renting units to families in the MTO program). Local programs have matched federal counseling funds with funds from state or local public or private sources.

- PHAs receive administrative funds for the increased number of Section 8 certificates or vouchers made available through the MTO program. Some of these funds may be disbursed as "Preliminary Administrative fees" to cover the cost of planning MTO and account for differences from the regular Section 8 program (for example, outreach, waiting lists, different intake procedures, tracking and reporting systems, and developing relations with the NPO).

Short-term results

In the short term, the demonstration will compare the costs and service differences between the MTO program and the routine implementation of the Section 8 tenant-based rental assistance program. HUD is particularly interested in short-term "process" outcomes with respect to successful lease-up rates in low-poverty areas, spatial disposition and neighborhood choices, and rent levels and housing characteristics. **HUD will report to Congress biennially** on the effectiveness of the demonstration, including a report on who is served, the level of counseling and types of services provided, and updates on the employment records of families assisted under the program.

Interim evaluation

HUD plans to survey all participating MTO families after five years to measure interim impacts of receiving MTO assistance and moving to low-poverty neighborhoods. These evaluations will assess, among other factors, the status and attitudes of participants and differences among families living in high-poverty and low-poverty neighborhoods.

Long-term evaluation

In the long term, HUD will assess the housing, educational, and employment outcomes of families assisted through MTO relative to those of families receiving project-based Section 8 or public housing assistance. Current plans call for including 1,800 families in a three-way experimental design, which makes up the research component of the demonstration. A final report to Congress on program outcomes is due in 2004.

Program resources

Section 8 rental assistance for the MTO demonstration was approved at \$20 million for FY 92 and \$50 million for FY 93. In addition, up to \$500,000 was set aside for counseling grants. These funds are assisting approximately 1,300 low-income families at the five HUD-selected sites. In addition, the PHAs in three cities (Los Angeles, Boston, and New York) have decided to set aside certificates and vouchers from their own Section 8 ACCs to expand the MTO demonstration. Support for NPO

MTO is different from earlier programs in several important ways...

MTO focuses on...

- Low-poverty destinations
- A broad range of families chosen by lottery
- Extensive collaboration between PHAs and NPOs
- Careful experimental design

activities to assist additional families is coming from the housing authorities and HUD.

The MTO demonstration differs from its predecessor programs in four essential ways. First, in contrast to other mobility programs that help families move to areas with low minority concentrations, MTO focuses on moving participants to areas of *low poverty*. These areas are defined as census tracts where fewer than 10 percent of the people had incomes below the poverty level in 1989, as measured by the 1990 Census.

Second, the MTO demonstration is designed to serve a broad range of families, including those who may have difficulty making moves, notably larger families and those without automobiles.

Third, the Section 8 certificates and vouchers are allocated to the central city PHAs for the MTO demonstration; in some other mobility programs, Section 8 assistance has been administered by the organizations that provide housing counseling services. The MTO demonstration requires collaboration between a *housing authority* to administer the Section 8 assistance and a *nonprofit agency* to provide housing counseling, assist families in finding units, and work to develop landlord support for the program.

Finally, the careful experimental design underlying the demonstration will permit answering questions about program impacts that previous studies were unable to address.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS ABOUT MTO

The MTO demonstration is designed to let HUD answer three different sets of questions about the impact of neighborhood on social and economic opportunity:

- (a) What are the impacts of MTO on families' locational choices, and on the housing and neighborhood conditions of families moving to low-poverty neighborhoods?
- (b) What are the impacts of moves to low-poverty neighborhoods on employment, income, education, and social well-being?
- (c) What is the long-term effect of MTO counseling services on improving the social and economic well-being of MTO families?

Rationale for the research design

Because Congress has mandated HUD to answer these key research questions, there are certain requirements for how the MTO demonstration will operate. These requirements add up to the research design or "*experimental design*" that will allow HUD to answer Congress's questions with confidence ten years from now in 2004. Abt Associates has helped HUD plan and implement the demonstration in accordance with the research design.

There are three significant features of the research design that have shaped the plans for the demonstration and affect MTO program operations. These features are the creation of *three groups* of enrolled families, the use of *random assignment* to place eligible families in the groups, and the requirement to *maintain records and collect data* about the participants and the program.

Research design features

Three groups. The experimental design involves creating three randomly selected groups from the families enrolled in MTO:

- **the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**, which receives certificates or vouchers useable only in low-poverty areas (less than 10 percent of population below the poverty line in 1989), along with counseling and assistance in finding a private unit to lease;
- **the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP**, which receives regular Section 8 certificates or vouchers (geographically unrestricted) and ordinary briefings and assistance from the PHA; and
- **the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP**, which receives no certificates or vouchers, but continues to receive project-based assistance.

The randomly assigned control group receiving no certificates or vouchers is essential in order to estimate correctly the separate impacts of Section 8 rental assistance by itself and MTO assistance with counseling. The control group provides a benchmark against which the outcomes of the two other groups can be measured.

Random assignment

Keeping the groups separate—The PHAs and NPOs running the MTO program must carefully record the group assignment of each family and make sure that the family is treated according to the assignment. This means that families cannot change groups or be offered a certificate or voucher or counseling opportunity not meant for their group.

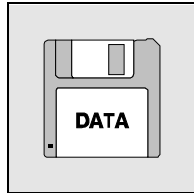
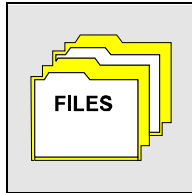
The families joining MTO must be randomly assigned to one of these groups. **Random assignment** means that no family (and no staff member) can choose who gets into which of the three groups. Random assignment is very fair (particularly when resources are limited) and also assures that similar families are found in each of the three groups.

Abt Associates is assisting each site with **computer software and procedures** designed to make sure that every family joining MTO has the same chance of getting a certificate or voucher. (See Chapter 8 for further discussion).

The table below summarizes how many families may have to be enrolled and assigned to each of the three groups. There must be enough families to lease up all the certificates and vouchers in the MTO allocation at least once, with roughly equal numbers leased in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP. ***It is likely to take nearly 4,500 families to do this, based on success rates in prior mobility programs and the recent experience of the PHAs with their regular Section 8 programs.*** Through careful program management, however, individual sites may be able to arrive at the same number of leased-up families (1,328) with far fewer enrollees than projected here (with additional savings in time and cost). Indeed, the actual experience of some site agencies has exceeded the original expectations. Revised goals have been developed for some sites. Agencies should contact their Abt project monitor for updated figures.

Enrollment Goals for 3 Groups	MTO Experimental Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-Place Control Group	Total
Families enrolled and randomly assigned	2,220	828	1,388	4,436
Families leased up	666	662	N/A	1,328

Record-keeping and data collection



At each step, PHAs and NPOs are required to keep records to document how the demonstration is being implemented and who is being assisted. *Program-level forms* are to be used by the PHAs and NPOs to record information about landlord outreach, participant progress through program steps, and costs of MTO operations. *Participant-level forms* are to be used by the PHAs and NPOs to record information about the families and about counseling contacts between the NPO staff and the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.

Information regarding data collection forms and procedures can be found throughout this manual. Record-keeping and data collection are highlighted in a box below each chapter Table of Contents. In each discussion, the text explains how the forms are used during program operations. The forms themselves are all contained in the appendices in this manual. The symbol **[file folders]** indicates sections on record-keeping and data collection. The symbol **[diskette]** labels sections about submitting data to Abt Associates or HUD.

MTO PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Given the research requirements of the MTO demonstration, it is crucial that PHAs and NPOs follow the operational procedures outlined in this manual. Some amount of variation is natural and reflects, for example, the different backgrounds of the agencies and local housing market conditions. Limitations on basic procedures, schedules, budgets, and levels of service must be followed, though, in order to compare outcomes among the five demonstration sites and perform the evaluations mandated by Congress.

MTO program operations unfold in a sequence of steps that bring families into the program and help them move to opportunity. The steps include:

Outreach to secure families' (and landlords') participation in the program;

Preliminary application and creation of a waiting list to provide a fair and unbiased way to offer enrollment to a limited number of interested, eligible families;

Intake (eligibility determination, enrollment, baseline survey, and random assignment) to provide families with full information about the demonstration and secure their commitment to the program, to verify their eligibility, to

secure unbiased information about the families, and to randomly assign them to the three groups;

- **Section 8 briefing and issuance of certificates and vouchers** (to provide all families receiving certificates or vouchers with the normal information package and PHA presentation describing Section 8 requirements and procedures, and to refer MTO experimental families to the nonprofit organization for further search assistance and counseling support;
- **Initial counseling** to work with families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP on defining their housing needs and preferences, cleaning up credit or other problems, and preparing to look for housing in low-poverty areas;
- **Additional search assistance** to identify and offer tours in low-poverty areas, search for available units, inspect units and negotiate leases with willing landlords;
- **Inspection and lease approval** to assure that the units selected by the families meet program standards with respect to housing quality, rental terms, and (for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families), location in a low-poverty census tract; and
- **Move-in and occupancy** during which MTO families will continue to receive counseling assistance and follow-up support to assure a successful transition to the new home and neighborhood.

The parallel steps for participating families and site agencies are show in Exhibit 1-1.

**Exhibit 1-1
MTO Demonstration Steps for Participating Families and Agencies**

Step	Family Actions	Agency Actions	Start/End
OUTREACH	Find out about MTO through mailings and information meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Contact owners/managers of targeted developments for cooperation 2) Conduct family outreach through mailings and information meetings 	<p><i>Start:</i> Initial contact made with owners/managers, pre-application developed</p> <p><i>End:</i> Last information meeting, or application deadline</p>
PRE-APPLICATION AND WAITING LIST	Fill out a pre-application for MTO and turn it in by the deadline date	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pre-screen for eligibility, with help of managers 2) Gather all eligible applications submitted by deadline 3) Form MTO waiting list 4) Notify families of waiting list position 	<p><i>Start:</i> Pre-applications are pre-screened for eligibility by managers</p> <p><i>End:</i> Families notified of waiting list position, first group invited to file full applications (date and time)</p>
INTAKE (ELIGIBILITY, ENROLLMENT, BASELINE SURVEY, RANDOM ASSIGNMENT)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Come to the PHA to fill out a full Section 8 application 2) Submit all papers needed to establish eligibility 3) Sign the MTO Enrollment Agreement 4) Complete the Participant Baseline Survey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bring in groups of applicants from top of MTO waiting list for application-taking 2) Collect forms and signatures required for income verification and other eligibility checks 3) Provide MTO program explanation and answer applicant questions 4) Assist families completing baseline surveys 5) Complete eligibility determination 6) Complete HUD Form 50058 7) Conduct random assignment of eligible families to 3 groups 8) Notify families of eligibility outcome and assignment 9) Issue first invitations to briefings 	<p><i>Start:</i> First families brought in for application-taking</p> <p><i>End:</i> Briefing dates set (separate for MTO experimental group and Section 8 comparison group); families invited to briefings</p>

MTO Program Operations Manual...

Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration

OVERVIEW

Step	Family Actions	Agency Actions	Start/End
BRIEFING AND ISSUANCE	<i>(MTO experimental group and Section 8 comparison group only)</i> Attend Section 8 briefing and receive certificate or voucher	<i>(MTO experimental group and Section 8 comparison group only)</i> 1) Brief groups separately 2) Provide required information and materials 3) Issue Section 8 certificates and vouchers 4) Refer MTO experimental group to NPO	<i>Start:</i> Section 8 briefing conducted for MTO family <i>End:</i> Certificate or voucher issued; referrals made to NPO
INITIAL COUNSELING	<i>(MTO experimental group only)</i> Attend group session held by the NPO, cooperate with credit and house-keeping checks, receive individual counseling	1) Hold group session for MTO families 2) Collect forms, signatures for credit checks 3) Make home visits, assess family needs 4) Deliver individual counseling	<i>Start:</i> Family invited to meeting at NPO <i>End:</i> Family ready to search for housing
ADDITIONAL SEARCH ASSISTANCE	<i>(MTO experimental group only)</i> Identify desired low-poverty areas, search for available units, find a place with a willing landlord	1) Conduct landlord outreach in low-poverty areas 2) Identify available rental units 3) Assist family's search with transportation, landlord introductions 4) Help family negotiate for apartment (rent, repairs if needed)	<i>Start:</i> Contacts with rental housing owners and managers in metro area <i>End:</i> Family finds a unit to rent with Section 8 assistance
INSPECTION AND LEASE-UP	<i>(MTO experimental group and Section 8 comparison group only)</i> Contact PHA, submit request for lease approval, get apartment inspected, sign lease	1) Determine agency with jurisdiction over family's unit (city or suburban) 2) Process Request for Lease Approval, conduct Housing Quality Standards inspection (approve repairs), approve rent 3) Execute lease	<i>Start:</i> Request For Lease Approval submitted <i>End:</i> Lease executed
MOVE-IN, OCCUPANCY, AND FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT	<i>(MTO experimental group only)</i> Arrange for utilities and furnishings, move, become familiar with new area	1) Help with moving arrangements 2) Maintain contact with family after move, provide support and troubleshooting in new area 3) Recontact family at first two lease renewals	<i>Start:</i> Moving plans made <i>End:</i> Family renews lease and begins third year occupancy

Purpose and Organization of the Program Operations Manual

The *Program Operations Manual* follows the basic program steps...

- *Outreach*
- *Preliminary Applications and Waiting List*
- *Intake (Eligibility, Enrollment, Baseline Survey and Random Assignment)*
- *Section 8 Briefing and Issuance*
- *Initial Counseling*
- *Additional Search Assistance*
- *Housing Inspection and Lease Approval*
- *Move-In, Occupancy, and Follow-up Support*

This *Program Operations Manual* (POM) is aimed at helping the site agencies implement the MTO demonstration according to program requirements. It is intended to meet five specific objectives:

- As an *operations manual*, it describes the required procedures to be observed by agencies in implementing the demonstration in the five sites. It is organized for easy use, following the sequence of activities to be undertaken;
- As a *training guide*, it provides the basic curriculum for training NPO and PHA staff to run the demonstration;
- As a *technical assistance (TA) manual*, it is available to NPOs and PHAs in making decisions and resolving operational issues during the demonstration;
- As a *reference manual*, it documents the design and operation of the demonstration as it actually unfolds in the field; and
- As a *guidebook for monitoring* implementation, it establishes the framework for oversight by HUD and specifies the content and process of monitoring that will take place during the demonstration.

Given the special nature of MTO as a one-time demonstration, performance standards and guidelines may change as unforeseen issues are identified and resolved. Updates are made to the **POM** and distributed to the sites as needed. The manual is essential for assuring that the evaluation goals of the demonstration are achieved, that program requirements are fulfilled, and that implementation procedures are thoroughly documented. The manual can also be helpful in training future staff.

Finally, the issues and procedures addressed in the **POM** should also prove useful for similar programs that may be modeled on MTO in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

**MTO PROGRAM STRUCTURE, ROLES
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

CHAPTER TWO: CONTENTS

MTO PROGRAM STRUCTURE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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CHAPTER TWO

MTO PROGRAM STRUCTURE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This chapter of the **MTO Program Operations Manual** provides a summary of the program structure of the demonstration and describes the principal actors involved with reference to their primary roles and responsibilities. The chapter emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining effective communications and cooperative working relations among PHAs, NPOs, HUD, and the families enrolled in the demonstration. It also points out the value of implementing a consistent approach to the collection information about the program and its participants.

INTRODUCTION

The two principal organizations responsible for MTO in each of the five demonstration cities are the public housing authorities (PHAs) and the nonprofit organizations (NPOs) selected to run the demonstration. The other principal demonstration actors include:

Eligible families who are enrolled in the demonstration and assigned to one of the three demonstration groups;

HUD/Central (primarily the Office of Public and Indian Housing and the Office of Policy Development and Research);

HUD Field Offices in each site (processing of annual contributions contracts and grant agreements, review of amended Section 8 administrative plans, monitoring and support); and

Abt Associates Inc. (for research design, implementation planning, preparation of this operations manual, training, technical assistance, and program monitoring).

The relationships among these organizations and individuals is depicted on the next page in *Exhibit 2-1*.



FIGURE 2-1 HERE (1 page)

**NOFA REQUIREMENTS
AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

**PHA and NPO roles
and responsibilities**

The NOFA and Program Guidelines for the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration require the joint participation of a local Public Housing Authority (PHA) and a nonprofit organization (NPO) at each of the demonstration sites. The NOFA outlines the responsibilities that these two key agencies will assume.

PHA responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the PHA are:

- To conduct *outreach* to low-income families who are living in project-based Section 8 or public housing projects in designated high-poverty census tracts;
- To conduct *preliminary screening* of families who are interested in applying for the MTO program to determine their eligibility;
- To develop a *separate waiting list* according to Section 8 program regulations and the NOFA;
- To conduct *intake and certify incomes* for families who appear to be eligible for the program and choose to apply;
- To *enroll the required number of eligible families* in the program and *carry out random assignment* to one of three groups;
- To conduct *Section 8 briefings* and provide other search assistance usually provided to Section 8 recipients;
- To perform *housing quality inspections and review and approve leases*;
- To collect *program family and cost data* in support of the demonstration; and
- To *report to HUD* biennially on the progress of the MTO demonstration.

NPO responsibilities

The NPO's primary responsibilities are:

- To help MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families set goals and develop or sustain the *motivation for moving* to new homes;
- To give *guidance to families* in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP on the requirements of landlords and the selection of units;
- To *recruit landlords* willing to provide housing to MTO families in low-poverty census tracts, particularly landlords who manage more than 500 units and units with three or more bedrooms;
- To conduct a *group briefing* for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, at which time information about landlords is presented and role-playing sessions are held to help families learn effective ways to present themselves to landlords;
- To provide *individual counseling on housing search* in low-poverty census tracts to MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families;
- To perform *credit checks* on families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (to facilitate landlord acceptance);
- To conduct *home visits* of MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families to observe their treatment of the property and provide individual counseling on relocation to low-poverty neighborhoods;
- To help MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families in their search for housing by providing *transportation assistance* to low-poverty census tracts and assisting families in inspecting possible units;
- To *negotiate rents* with landlords and share favorable information about MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families with landlords;

- To provide *information and follow-up counseling* to families as they adjust to their new homes, including visiting each MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP family within 90 days of a move and holding meetings with groups of families who have moved to the same area;
- To contact MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families by mail approximately 120 days before each of the first two annual reexaminations and HQS inspections to offer *follow-up assistance*; and
- To collect *participant, program and cost data* in support of the demonstration and periodically report to HUD about the MTO program.

Responsibilities of HUD's contractors

The NOFA demonstration permits HUD to contract with an "independent third party" to perform the following kinds of tasks:

- design the procedures for random assignment of families who participate in the program;
- complete a handbook of MTO procedures;
- train MTO agencies to carry out various services;
- assist PHAs in revising their administrative plans and equal opportunity housing plans as necessary;
- conduct a process and short-term outcome evaluation of the program.
- conduct a mid-term or long-term evaluation of the program's impacts on participating families.

Abt Associates is HUD's contractor to assist with implementing the Moving to Opportunity demonstration. Abt Associates will be providing support and assistance to the site agencies and monitoring their progress for the full period of program operations.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF

There are four essential elements to each local MTO program.

LOCAL PROGRAMS

Four essential elements...

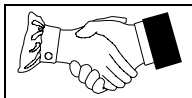
- Motivating families
- Supporting family mobility
- Providing appropriate levels of service
- Working as a team

First, both the PHA and the NPO must seek to motivate all the families receiving Section 8 assistance to use that assistance. In particular, the NPO should provide *motivational support* to the MTO experimental group families, whose moves to low-poverty areas are certainly more difficult to make.

Second, both the PHA and the NPO must be able to *support families' moves* to affordable housing in low-poverty neighborhoods. This means that organizations must be able to identify and secure the participation of landlords in the private housing market and to help families take advantage of these opportunities.

Third, the nonprofit organizations must be able to provide an efficient and *policy-relevant level of service* that is both sufficient to help families take advantage of their housing opportunities and economically feasible (i.e. within the budgets approved by HUD).

Cooperation and communication



The fourth requirement is that the local nonprofit organization and the public housing authority *work as a team* to carry out the program. In specifying the types of agencies that will participate in the program and their key roles and responsibilities, the NOFA does not provide a model for local program organization or suggest what other types of agencies or individuals need to be involved. Nevertheless, inherent in the program guidelines is the message that *cooperation and communication* among PHAs, NPOs, and other agencies will be essential to the program's success.

The organizational structure of local MTO programs will vary from one site to the next. However, the cooperative model shown in Exhibit 2-1 provides a frame of reference for relations among the various agencies involved. As this exhibit shows, the two key agencies that are participating in the MTO program—the public housing authority and the nonprofit organization—each respond to HUD via agreements and contracts, and at the same time assign key staff who make up the "MTO team." They are supported by staff from their own agencies, by HUD-funded training and technical assistance (Abt Associates Inc.) and, in some cases, by an MTO Advisory Board. Having created this partnership, the "MTO team" must build effective relations with participants, with landlords, and with representatives from the political jurisdictions where participants may move.

What will running MTO mean for the PHAs at the 5 sites?

PHA staffing

Internal PHA coordination

- **Application/Waiting List**
- **Public housing management**
- **Public housing information systems**
- **Section 8 processing**
- **Section 8 information systems**
- **Administration/finance**

In the case of the PHA, key staff that are appointed to the program are typically from the office that manages the Section 8 program. They require support from other offices within the PHA, including the application/intake office, the conventional public housing office, the office that handles management information systems, and the Executive Director’s office. PHAs will also have to establish effective communications with the managers and resident advisory councils of the developments targeted for outreach.

The PHAs involved in the demonstration are all very large agencies, so effective communication and coordination among PHA staff—particularly those responsible for Section 8 and conventional public housing—is vital and cannot be taken for granted. Because each office tends to maintain its own procedures and sources of information, it may take extra effort to ensure that staff from the different offices are fully involved with and informed about MTO procedures, particularly outreach, preliminary screening, income certification, random assignment, and participant tracking.

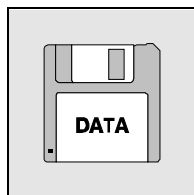
The nonprofit organizations in the five MTO sites are all more likely than the PHAs to make staffing changes. The NPOs need to rely on both existing and newly hired staff to implement MTO. The number of new staff needed varies from site to site. One NPO planned to hire a project manager and three to four counselors, depending on the size of the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. Another NPO began the program with a supervisor and just one counselor, then added staff as the caseload grew.

NPO staffing

Experienced supervisory staff should be responsible for program management and for coordinating with the PHA. But the NPO is likely to *hire new staff* to take on specific MTO tasks, such as conducting landlord outreach, counseling families, or assisting in search activities. Qualities to look for in recruiting staff for the demonstration include:

- Core belief in the program, particularly in the value of moves for access to new opportunities;
- Strong belief in the ability of low-income families to take charge of their own lives and change them for the better, with adequate support and assistance;
- Capacity to build rapport with participating families;
- (For counselors) experience in counseling families from similar backgrounds and/or in similar programs;
- Good written skills for record-keeping and tracking;
- Knowledge of the metropolitan area in both geographical and socioeconomic terms;
- Possession of a working car and valid driver's license.

Joint responsibilities for record-keeping and data collection



The MTO demonstration requires both the PHAs and NPOs to undertake special record-keeping and data collection activities. *The site agencies have the primary responsibility for collecting, maintaining, and submitting data to Abt Associates.* The data are sent to Abt Associates for receipt and review. Abt Associates will be responsible for maintaining all data related to the demonstration through the end of 1998.

MTO Site Assistants

To assist the PHAs and NPOs with the record-keeping and data collection for the MTO program, Abt Associates provides each site with an assistant who is available during the enrollment period of the demonstration. The site assistant's job is to:

- assist the PHA and NPO as they set up record-keeping systems for MTO;
- administer baseline surveys to participants as they are enrolled in the demonstration with help from PHA staff;

- assist the PHA in carrying out random assignment procedures;
- ensure that all participants get into the PHA tracking system;
- ensure that all MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP participants get into the NPO tracking system;
- help the PHA and NPO with monthly data submissions; and
- provide other MTO program-related assistance to site agencies, on an as-needed basis.

For part of the demonstration, the MTO site assistant will be available on a full-time basis. S/he will be available on a part-time basis for the balance of the enrollment period during the demonstration.

Abt Associates Inc.

The site assistants are hired by and report to HUD's contractor for demonstration support, Abt Associates Inc. Overall, Abt Associates' role over the first months of the demonstration was to assist in planning and implementing MTO and to develop a framework for evaluating and reporting on the demonstration. Among Abt's initial responsibilities were:

- developing forms and procedures so that standardized information can be collected across sites about participants;
- developing training materials (including this manual) and providing training on demonstration operations; and
- designing and implementing a three-way random assignment mechanism that will assign participants to one of three groups.

Abt Associates' ongoing responsibilities include:

- providing data collection assistance, technical assistance, and monitoring to local sites, to ensure that the

demonstration is implemented in an effective and standardized manner;

- collecting information necessary for long-term tracking of the MTO participants; and
- designing and maintaining an MTO data system to make the demonstration data accessible for research and policy.

MTO Advisory Board

Some sites are supported by a locally created MTO Advisory Board. At one site, this Advisory Board consists of NPO and PHA representatives as well as political leaders from city and suburban jurisdictions, representatives from fair housing organizations, landlord and tenant representatives, and consultants. The Board plans to meet regularly throughout the demonstration, serving as a source of decision-making assistance to address program issues, and as a vehicle for creating community-wide support for MTO program.

One important role that an Advisory Board can play is to create linkages with individuals and agencies that may help ensure the success of the program. This can be accomplished by inviting key individuals to sit on the Board as well as by asking Board members to advise their colleagues about the MTO program.

Community linkages

The types of individuals and agencies with whom linkages need to be developed are varied and include:

- the project-based Section 8 landlords with whom the PHAs must work to identify eligible families;
- landlords and landlord groups with available affordable housing in low-poverty areas;
- representatives from social service agencies in the communities where participants move, that can be targeted for referral assistance; and
- PHAs in jurisdictions where MTO families may move outside the city.

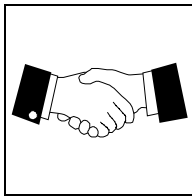
The last of these organizations is particularly important because of the need to be able to meet Section 8 program requirements

for portability, inspections, requests for lease approvals, and tracking of MTO participants in multiple jurisdictions. ***Successful ongoing relationships with suburban PHAs are essential to the long-term success of the program.***

INTEGRATING PHA AND NPO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Coordination and communication among the PHAs, NPOs, and other agencies is essential to effective implementation of the MTO program. In developing such linkages, it should be recognized that the missions and operating styles of PHAs and NPOs are likely to differ. Because of the number of participants involved, PHAs may be required to focus on meeting the processing requirements of their programs. Nonprofits, on the other hand, may tend to focus on building the motivation, skills, and knowledge needed to achieve family goals. These two management styles must not be allowed to counteract each other; rather they are mutually supportive of the overall goals of MTO.

**PHAs and NPOs:
Partners in managing MTO**



In MTO, the different styles of PHAs and NPOs must connect through a joint commitment to the principles underlying the program and the recognition that they are equal partners in *managing* the development and implementation of the program. This partnership may already exist as the result of prior cooperation or joint responsibility for the MTO application. If so, the implementation strategies already reflect the perspectives and interests of both agencies.

Even without a collaborative application effort, however, effective joint management can be achieved through regular contact among key program staff and meeting to update staff about recent events. Jointly held meetings can be particularly important in providing a forum for discussing and resolving implementation problems. Initially, these meetings may need to be held weekly. As the demonstration progresses, bi-weekly or monthly meetings may be sufficient.

Overlap in PHA/NPO responsibilities

In addition to sharing overall program management responsibilities, there are specific activities where the work of the PHAs and NPOs overlap. These activities require coordination between PHA and NPO staff.

Collaborating on outreach

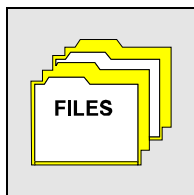
As described in the NOFA, the PHAs and NPOs each have primary areas of responsibility. Yet, there are areas where

collaboration is useful or even essential. For example, while the PHA is primarily responsible for outreach to low-income families that may be eligible for the program, the NPOs and PHAs should work together to develop the "outreach message" and to support each other in making presentations to eligible families and other interested groups.

There are two important reasons for collaborating on outreach. First, the information that is provided to participants about the program should be consistent and complete, beginning with their first introduction to MTO. By working together to develop the informational package about the program, PHA and NPO staff can be assured that they agree on the message they want to send and that they are speaking in a single voice so as not to confuse participants.

Second, the outreach message will be very influential in determining whether and how potential participants respond to the program. As discussed in the next chapter, this message needs to be carefully constructed so that participants are fully informed and not confused by the possibilities that the MTO program presents. The combined efforts of the PHA and NPO are necessary to assure that participants are fully informed of their options and responsibilities.

Coordinating record-keeping



Another important area for collaboration is participant record-keeping. While PHAs and NPOs each have their own intake systems, it is important to remember that PHAs conduct intake *first*. NPOs and PHAs need to work together to ensure that participant tracking procedures are integrated, that a family's designation in one of the three groups is consistently maintained, and that systems are set up for sharing information about MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families between the two agencies. The site assistant can help in this regard.

Other important areas for coordination include:

- Landlord outreach
- Section 8 briefing
- Motivational counseling
- Fair housing and equal opportunity protection
- Unit inspection and lease-up.

It is particularly important for the success of this demonstration that PHA and NPO staff be sensitive to, and alert HUD and Abt Associates promptly about any problems that families may have in using the assistance provided under MTO.

See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of interagency coordination methods.

**Establishing models for
NPO/PHA relations**

This manual can suggest areas and methods of cooperation between PHAs and NPOs, but the participating agencies are the ones to build the relationships that will result in successful moves for participating families. Collaborative efforts between the PHAs and NPOs at the 5 demonstration sites will form the basis for developing a model set of procedures that will support the development of future mobility programs in other jurisdictions.

**PREPARING FOR THE DEMONSTRATION
 MONITORING CHECKLIST AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

Task/Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Rtdg Lms
Designate or hire MTO program manager/coordinator				
Assign or hire MTO program operations staff				
Assign or hire MTO progrma support staff (recordkeeping, data entry)				
Provide training to operations and support staff after national training conference, with introduction to <i>MTO Program Operations Manual</i>				
Introduce staff to their counterparts in the other site agency (PHA or NPO)				

Performance standards:

- a) Clear lines of authority and supervision
- b) Clear staff responsibilities
- c) Adequate staff skills, plus sufficient training and support
- d) Open internal & external lines of communications

CHAPTER THREE
FAMILY OUTREACH

CHAPTER THREE: CONTENTS

FAMILY OUTREACH

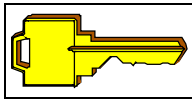
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RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION

Site agencies should maintain a file of outreach materials and a schedule of outreach events to document this effort. No other special record-keeping is required for family outreach.

CHAPTER THREE FAMILY OUTREACH

The purpose of family outreach in the MTO demonstration is to *identify, contact, and inform eligible families about the Moving To Opportunity for Fair Housing demonstration*. The process begins with notifying prospective families in the targeted developments about the program and encouraging them to register their names on the waiting list. The outreach process ends when the registration or pre-application deadline passes and the waiting list is closed.



In their grant applications for MTO, participating agencies identified thousands of families likely to be eligible within the high-poverty census tracts they had targeted for the demonstration. The outreach message is the families' first information about MTO, shaping their interest and understanding and whether they will respond. The outreach process in each site is the link between the pool of all eligible families and the set of families that can actually take advantage of the opportunities MTO offers. Therefore, *family outreach is key to:*

- having enough interested families to bring into the program and enough (in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP) to lease up all the certificates and vouchers;
- having enough interested families to bring into the program on a timetable matching the PHAs' target leasing schedules; and
- having a family population in the MTO demonstration that is reasonably typical of the developments from which the eligible population was drawn.

Estimate of eligible families

MTO Site	Number of Targeted Tracts	Estimate of Eligible Families
Baltimore	5	2,300
Boston	9	4,500
Chicago*	3	2,415
Los Angeles	8	3,990
New York*	3	2,430

*Targeting in some sites has expanded since the demonstration began.

Source: MTO funding applications.

Who is eligible?

For this program, "a family with children" means that it must have at least one "minor" as defined by the local jurisdiction, or one member under the age of 18.

Families must meet five basic criteria in order to be eligible for MTO:

- They must have one or more children
- They must have very low incomes
- They must be tenants in public housing or project-based Section 8-assisted housing in the targeted census tracts
- All family members must be listed on the lease
- They must be willing to move to low-poverty census tracts.

In addition, the families must be fully eligible for the Section 8 program.

There is no such thing as perfect outreach

Moving to Opportunity is not for everyone, and there is no expectation that every eligible family should apply. The

outreach campaigns designed by the PHAs and NPOs at each site should be considered highly successful if:

- *All* families that are potentially eligible are given *full information* about the program and an *equal chance* to apply in accordance with Section 8 regulations and MTO NOFA requirements;
- *Ineligible households* are discouraged from applying, and those that do apply for the program are kept to a minimum number, so as not to raise false hopes or waste time and program resources.

Implications for the research agenda

The outreach process is particularly important for the success of the research component of MTO, because in each site outreach will determine who applies to (and is accepted for) the program. Outreach influences the composition of the enrolled pool of households whose choices and behavior will determine the final outcomes upon which reports and recommendations to HUD and the Congress will be based. Therefore, the research agenda provides another reason for making the outreach process both highly targeted and inclusive: to learn as much as possible from the MTO demonstration, the outreach process should seek to inform all families who might in any way be interested in considering moving to opportunity. (A paper describing HUD's long-term research strategy for MTO is available on request from M. Turner, Office of Policy Development and Research.)

Outreach must assure that MTO is equally open to all eligible families in the designated high-poverty census tracts. This requires, for example, that mailing lists for contacting households be up to date, that all families be given the same information, and that families in all eligible projects in the targeted areas have an equal opportunity to attend information sessions.

Targeting high-poverty census tracts

The high-poverty census tracts from which families are invited to apply for MTO were chosen as part of the grant application. Estimates of response to outreach range from 50 to 90 percent of eligible families. However, there is some possibility that the targeted areas may not generate sufficient numbers of eligible applications to supply the total number of enrolled families required. In such cases, PHAs must be prepared to identify and *target additional high-poverty census tracts* from which eligible households may be drawn to complete the enrollment process. In some sites, additional areas have been chosen already. (HUD's approval may be required for the expanded targeting.)

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PHA role and responsibility



According to the *NOFA and Program Guidelines* for the MTO demonstration, outreach to eligible families is primarily the responsibility of the PHAs. PHAs are required to:

- conduct *special outreach efforts* at all public housing and project-based Section 8 housing in the designated high-poverty census tracts;
- explain the *eligibility requirements* for the MTO program, the number of MTO rental vouchers and certificates available, and the application and selection procedures;
- comply with the requirements of the PHA's *equal opportunity housing plans and all fair housing laws* during the implementation of the program;
- establish an *application deadline* for families who want to participate in the MTO demonstration; and



- create a separate waiting list for MTO (discussed further in Chapter 7).

NPO role



The NOFA does not require nonprofit agencies to take direct responsibility for family outreach in MTO. However, the nonprofits are expected to play a very important role in *encouraging eligible families to apply* and helping to make them fully *aware of the benefits and opportunities* they will have in moving to new neighborhoods. The prospect of moving away from a known environment can be daunting, but these feelings **can** be overcome. At the same time, for certain families, moving to a new place may not be in the family’s best interest. MTO is not for everyone.

The nonprofit agency **can** be very helpful to prospective applicants by assisting them to see the broadest possible picture of their prospects, the drawbacks, and the responsibilities at the beginning of the program. This is most readily done in group information meetings where families have a chance to hear directly from both of the agencies responsible for the program.

For this reason it is *important that PHAs and NPOs together develop the outreach message and methods*, so that the right information gets delivered to the widest possible audience of eligible families as soon as possible. A positive message from the PHA and the NPO may also help to soften any negative images that PHA and Section 8 tenants may have of the housing authority. This will encourage greater participation.

**RECOMMENDED
OUTREACH METHODS**

Family outreach in most sites should make use of five principal methods:

- *Notices or letters from the PHA* alone or included in monthly rent statements (mailing lists to be provided by the PHA and the managers of project-based Section 8 housing);

See the sample outreach flyer at the end of this chapter.

- *Group information sessions* conducted by PHAs and NPOs to present essential program information and answer questions about the program.
- *Presentations to resident advisory councils*, other tenant groups, and manager of project-based Section 8 housing, to gain their support and answer questions.
- *Flyers, posters, or leaflets* distributed in projects/buildings where eligible families live;
- *Word-of-mouth* (tenants talking among themselves and prospective applicants calling to ask about the program).

In public housing developments, it is well known that "the word" spreads fast. It can often be distorted by rumor, gossip and misinformation. For this reason it is critical that all program information be controlled, coordinated, and disseminated by the PHA and NPO in a timely fashion. Most PHAs agree that it is *not a good idea to conduct generalized outreach through the public media* because of the extra calls that might be generated from ineligible households in non-targeted tracts asking for more information about the program, and because of the potential for the uncontrolled spread of misleading information. *Newsletters may be a special exception if they can be targeted specifically to eligible developments.*

Identify one central source of MTO information

Although there should be opportunities for most eligible families to attend a group information meeting at their development or nearby, *the outreach materials also need to offer one telephone number to contact for program information.* The PHA is probably better equipped to handle the phone inquiries than the NPO in most sites. Giving this job to the PHA is also a safer way to proceed from the research standpoint (so that families not selected

for Section 8 certificates or vouchers do not have direct contact with the NPO).

Special considerations

There are three particular concerns that agencies must address in conducting a successful outreach campaign:

- a) That **multiple sources** of information about MTO are available throughout the outreach period;
- b) That **versions** of the outreach messages are available to non-English speaking minorities; and
- c) That **tenant organizations**, resident advisory councils, and building managers are fully informed of program procedures and requirements as early as possible in the outreach period.

Working with site managers

Cooperating site managers may provide the main means for securing *up-to-date tenant lists* and verifying the *preliminary eligibility* of applicants. The support of these individuals is also needed to help the PHA prescreen applicants during and after the outreach period (see Chapter 7).

Application deadlines

The NOFA requires PHAs to establish an **application deadline** for registering families that wish to participate. The deadline serves three purposes:

- 1. To encourage people to apply quickly;
- 2. To give all eligible households an equal chance to be considered for the program; and
- 3. To draw the outreach period to a close.

During the application period, families should still have ample opportunity to ask questions about the program, to have their questions addressed, and to submit the basic



information required for applying for the program (see Chapter 7). Several sites have kept the outreach period short (about three weeks) in order to *reduce the number of contacts from ineligible households* (from non-targeted tracts/developments) and to limit the period of concentrated outreach effort.

Set the deadline ahead of time and show it on all outreach materials

It is important that the eligible families be clearly informed of how long a time they have to apply for MTO and when the applications must be turned in. In group meetings and presentations about MTO, there should also be a reminder about the deadline. Finally, at the development managers' offices and wherever else registration forms or pre-applications can be submitted, there should be signs posted with reminders of the deadline date.

Involvement of development managers requires a double deadline

Chapter 7 discusses further how to design a pre-application and how the process of preliminary eligibility screening can be organized. Sites using PHA or Section 8 project-based management staff to do preliminary checking must be sure:

- to inform these staff fully about the deadline for family registration or pre-applications; and
- to be clear about how much additional time they have to complete the preliminary checking and turn in the forms to the PHA central office.

SUMMARY: FAMILY OUTREACH

Both the PHA and the NPO can contribute to the outreach task by developing materials, by helping get lists of eligible families, and by holding informational meetings.

Actions for outreach to eligible families

- 1) Jointly develop encouraging and attractive outreach materials for families in clear, simple language with translations for non-english-speaking people.
- 2) Hold a meeting for PHA managers and owners/managers of Section 8 project-based housing

in targeted areas, to gain their cooperation in reaching tenants with the outreach message (and later in preliminary eligibility checking).

- 3) Have staff of the PHA and NPO together conduct informational meetings for interested families on site.

PHA Resources/Actions

Use internal records to identify and reach eligible families.

Enlist development managers and other site staff in outreach campaign.

Use appropriate space in public housing developments to hold meetings, and assign staff to conduct meetings with NPO participation.

NPO Resources/Actions

Use contacts with owners/managers of project-based Section 8 housing to obtain tenant lists for outreach mailings.

Participate with PHA staff in joint presentations.

Assign staff to conduct informational meetings in conjunction with PHAs, to encourage interest and participation.

Desired Results

All families that may be eligible hear about MTO and have the opportunity to learn more and apply.

All families can understand the message and can ask questions of PHA or NPO staff members who are familiar with MTO.

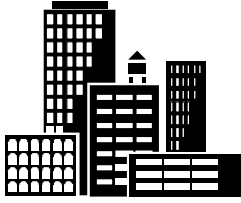
More families are encouraged to consider participating in MTO, because the message is encouraging and attractive.

OUTREACH TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

Task/Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Develop a plan for family outreach, determine information resources, assign staff.				
Develop encouraging and attractive outreach materials for eligible families. Translate into other languages.				
Obtain tenant lists for <i>all</i> public housing and Section 8 project-based housing in targeted high-poverty tracts.				
Provide background materials on MTO to managers of <i>all</i> public housing and Section 8 project-based housing.				
Develop pre-application for MTO, if desired, for use in constructing special waiting list.				
Obtain cooperation of managers for <i>all</i> public housing & section 8 project-based housing for inquiries, applications, and preliminary eligibility.				
Provide instructions to managers in handling pre-applications and forwarding them to the PHA.				
Notify all potentially eligible families of MTO demonstration and their chance to apply.				
Conduct information meetings (program benefits, key facts, common questions, application procedures, collection (pre-applications). Translation as needed.				

Performance standards:

- a) Cooperation of owners/managers of *all* targeted developments in contacting tenants (or other means of contacting *all* eligible families by mail)
- b) Clear, attractive, accessible outreach materials
- c) Using multiple outreach modes to reach full population
- d) Full manager assistance in handling (pre-)applications
- e) Good attendance at information meetings



LOOKING TO MAKE A MOVE?

WANT TO MAKE THE BEST MOVE FOR YOUR FAMILY'S FUTURE?

The _____ (PHA Name) _____ is able to offer Section 8 certificates and vouchers to residents of public housing (and certain Section 8 developments) under a new program called **MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY (MTO)**. MTO will provide Section 8 housing assistance (which pays part of your rent for an apartment leased from a private landlord) to about 285 families in this area. *It could be you!*

MTO will offer special help to some of the families, so that they can move to better neighborhoods where there is not so much poverty. Other families will be able to move wherever they choose, as long as they find a willing landlord and an apartment that qualifies for Section 8.

There are special requirements for joining MTO...

You must be *willing to move*.

Your family members must all be *legal residents* in one of the public housing Section 8 project-based developments: (List Developments) _____.

You must have a *child under 18* (or under the age of legal majority) in your family.

You must meet *Section 8 income limits* and any other Section 8 requirements of the _____ (PHA name) _____.

GREATER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES...MORE JOB CHOICE AND HIGHER EARNINGS...GREATER PERSONAL SAFETY...these are gains that families have made from programs like MTO in the past.

Find out today what MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY can mean for your family. Call (staff member name) at (PHA Name), xxx-xxxx for information on how to apply for MTO.

MTO Application Deadline: _____

CHAPTER FOUR
LANDLORD OUTREACH

CHAPTER FOUR: CONTENTS

LANDLORD OUTREACH

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CHAPTER FOUR

LANDLORD OUTREACH

The purpose of landlord outreach in the MTO demonstration is to *identify, contact, and solicit the participation of landlords and multi-family property managers who can provide access to dwelling units meeting Section 8 standards in properties located in low-poverty census tracts*. For the MTO demonstration, landlord outreach is primarily the responsibility of the nonprofit organization because it is an essential element of helping MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families find and move to acceptable housing in unfamiliar, low-poverty neighborhoods in the city or surrounding communities.

The process of landlord outreach begins at the same time as family outreach, and continues until the end of lease-up, when all households in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUPS have occupied their initial units in low-poverty or other areas.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

NPO role and responsibility



According to the *NOFA and Program Guidelines* for the MTO demonstration, landlord outreach will include the following responsibilities:

- The NPO must aggressively recruit *unit owners* willing to provide housing to MTO families in low-poverty census tracts throughout the metropolitan area.
- The NPO must also contact other *managers of property* in low-poverty census tracts throughout the metropolitan area who are interested in renting to project-based Section 8-assisted tenants.
- The NPO must observe all applicable provisions of the Equal Opportunity Housing Plan of the local Section 8 program which includes actions
 - (1) to further affirmatively *national fair housing policies pursuant* to the Fair Housing Act by promoting a wider choice of housing opportunities for minorities and female-headed households;
 - (2) to achieve participation by owners of units of *suitable price and quality* located outside census tracts of high-poverty or minority concentrations.

Landlord recruitment should recognize the diversity of housing:

- **locations**
- **prices**
- **quality**
- **size**
- **accessibility**
- **amenities**

- The NPO should carry out landlord outreach using a *variety of methods* including recruitment in person, by telephone, in writing, at meetings of landlord associations, by special brochures, and by other economically feasible means.
- The NPO should make *special efforts* to obtain the participation of large owners and managers who control *more than 500 units*, and of owners and managers of units with *3 or more bedrooms*.
- In recruiting such owners and managers, the NPO should evaluate whether the units will meet *Section 8 housing quality standards*.
- Recruitment of landlords needs to be an *ongoing process* used to identify housing units that assisted families might wish to rent. NPOs shall devote staff resources to landlord *recruitment throughout the course of the demonstration*.

It makes good business sense

Negative stereotypes of inner city families are not hard to find. Landlord outreach is about overcoming negative stereotypes by appealing to good business sense.

The owners and managers MTO needs to recruit also need MTO. They are in the business of rental housing, and that business requires keeping units occupied and the rents coming in. *The NPO is offering the landlord an opportunity that makes sense in business terms:* the opportunity to lease to tenants who will pay regular rent (partially guaranteed by the HAP payment from the PHA), who will have the support of the nonprofit agency for long-term stability, and who—if they have credit problems or family problems—are dealing with those problems directly, as a means of offering their children a better life.

Improving the odds for success...

The NOFA mandate to recruit landlords and property managers willing to rent acceptable units in low-poverty neighborhoods to MTO households is a challenging assignment for at least three reasons. First, families need help finding units. Without successful landlord recruitment and search assistance, enrolled families are likely to have considerable difficulty securing units that meet Section 8 requirements in low-poverty neighborhoods. It was originally estimated that success rates in MTO sites would

Abt Associates monitors lease-up rates closely to help NPOs gauge the success of their landlord recruitment efforts.

approximate those of the Gautreaux program in Chicago; roughly one in three enrolled MTO families would be likely to lease an acceptable unit that meet Section 8 requirements in a low-poverty neighborhood. The experience of some sites has been different, with MTO families leasing up at a higher rate than originally anticipated. Aggressive landlord recruitment does improve the odds in the families' favor.

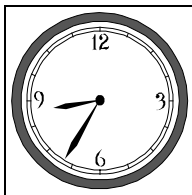
The NPO as intermediary...

Second, landlord recruitment is challenging because it places the nonprofit organization in an *intermediary role* between landlord and tenant—a role that has to acknowledge and deal with the rights and responsibilities of both parties in order to be successful. This may conflict with the NPO's usual role as tenant advocate, especially in situations requiring decisive action (such as anti-discrimination activities, consumer protection or lease negotiations). But it offers an opportunity as well—bringing together two parties so both can benefit.

The NPO must seek every opportunity to convey to prospective landlords the MTO family's capabilities and motivation to succeed. Part of that message will be based on...

- sharing information about program requirements with respect to *housekeeping skills and furnishings*;
- Explaining the procedures used to check credit, and to clear up credit problems before families start looking; and
- Providing information about other counseling assistance offered to families to prepare them for moving to new neighborhoods.

Time for success...



Third, the landlord recruitment process requires *time to build an effective relationship based on communication and trust* between landlords and the NPO (if it does not already exist). The placement of a happy and successful family can substantially reduce the time required for future placements. However, NPOs may have little time to build these long-term bridges with new landlords, especially if the enrollment targets are to be met within a limited lease-up period. According to Gautreaux program staff, some MTO families are likely to require far more than the 120 days allowed for finding acceptable units in the Section 8

The Leadership Council in Chicago put a great deal of effort over a period of 17 years into developing what they consider to be an adequate listing of landlords and units, together with local housing and labor market information for the benefit of Gautreaux families. In sites where MTO is new, such information will not be developed overnight, despite its importance to the success of the program.

program. This puts additional pressure on NPO staff to find as many units as soon as possible for enrolled families to visit and consider.

There may be more problems or sticky points when a landlord is new to the Section 8 program. This does not reflect on the MTO tenant so much as on the requirements associated with federal housing assistance payments. The NPO can help the owner or manager see the distinction and reassure him/her that many landlords have been working successfully with Section 8 for years, to their financial benefit.

As outlined below, the successful implementation of landlord recruitment requires a broad range of skills in *quiet diplomacy, marketing, and public relations*, together with an effective knowledge of local real estate markets. These must be brought to bear at the beginning of the demonstration and applied consistently throughout the enrollment period.

Quiet diplomacy, marketing, and public relations...

Linking the long-term interests of very low-income MTO families with the short-term economic concerns of landlords is usually not possible in the glare of the public spotlight. Landlord outreach is best done quietly and steadily, using the targeted methods described later in this chapter.

Quiet diplomacy is particularly wise when recruiting landlords in suburban communities that have their own public housing authorities. Here, the PHAs may feel that the MTO program is competing for promising units or reducing the opportunities for their own certificate- and voucher-holders to succeed in leasing up. Building support among these agencies is discussed in Chapter 6 and should be tried before landlord recruitment is targeted in these areas.

ADDING NEW LANDLORDS

One of the requirements of the research design for evaluating MTO's impacts is that there must be enough "separation" in locational choices among MTO experimental and Section 8 comparison households to draw meaningful conclusions about the nature and magnitude of program effects. *Contrasts in locational outcomes between MTO and Section 8 are likely to be more pronounced if nonprofit agencies are successful in recruiting landlords and property managers that do not normally make*

Ensuring the diversity of placements

units available to households with Section 8 certificates and vouchers.

The NPOs are expected to encourage MTO families to search for new homes in places where their chances for better housing and increased education and employment opportunities are greatest. Such locations may be very different from the destinations of typical recent movers from high-poverty census tracts. But those destinations may exert a strong attraction for MTO families because of the familiarity and safety of traditional migration patterns. Reinforcing typical movement patterns by recruiting landlords in these areas for MTO families can undermine both the research requirement of the demonstration—to maximize locational distinctions—and the long-term goal of prior court-ordered mobility programs *not to reproduce patterns of racial and economic segregation in a new location*. It can also undermine HUD's goal of reducing the spatial isolation of low-income and minority families.

For these reasons, it is very important that the NPOs maximize the diversity of placements through aggressive and persistent landlord outreach in a wide variety of low-poverty neighborhoods. NPOs may want to consider avoiding the clustering of MTO units in the same building or on the same block. However, there may be no quotas or fixed limits imposed by the MTO program on the locational choices of the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, as long as those locations meet the low-poverty requirement.

**RECOMMENDED
LANDLORD
OUTREACH METHODS**

The NOFA is clear about who to contact (owners and managers of large numbers of units, owners of units with 3 or more bedrooms). It also specifies the means by which landlords should be contacted (in writing, in person, by telephone, and at association meetings). Beyond these methods, the NPOs may want to assure that one or more of the following additional procedures are implemented (provided there is sufficient budget to undertake them):

- *Seeking out landlords with a prior reputation for community involvement* and civic commitment, especially those on the boards of civil rights or fair housing organizations;

In cities like Los Angeles, "apartment fairs" have been used as successful tools for generating interest in the Section 8 program among landlords. With sufficient notice, HUD/Central may be able to help in such efforts.

- Seeking real estate brokers with 1- to 4-family units available for rent;
- *Networking* through personal contacts with established owners and real estate organizations in the multifamily sector, to uncover potential vacancies and to update listings of units in new or existing developments;
- *Joining property management associations and attending seminars* on property management issues (especially where information about Section 8 opportunities for owners are discussed);
- *Soliciting opportunities to make presentations at property owner and manager meetings* about the needs of MTO families and the opportunities presented by the program;
- Establishing and continually *updating the agency's database* on the ownership, facilities, rent levels and vacancies of multifamily rental properties in different parts of the metropolitan area, using local real estate journals and newspapers; and
- Sending out a *newsletter* to prospective landlords highlighting progress under the program and citing individual success stories. Such a newsletter could be prepared and circulated by an MTO Advisory Board, if one is set up for the demonstration.

The necessity of targeting in landlord outreach...

Landlord recruitment for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families does not have to be accomplished all at once. Lease-up will occur over a number of months.

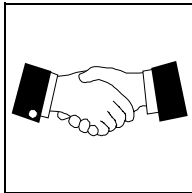
It is physically and financially impossible for one nonprofit agency to be everywhere at once and to pursue landlord support in all parts of the metropolitan area simultaneously. One solution to this dilemma is to recruit large landlords and property managers at their home base. They can then disseminate positive information about MTO throughout their properties or among their clients and at the same time inform the nonprofit about particular vacancies or buildings that may be opening up in the near future.

A second solution is to *target particular neighborhoods* or communities that seem most likely to meet the needs and interests of MTO families coming into the program. Such

communities warrant detailed research with respect to prospective landlords, vacancies, turnover, rent levels, absorption of new properties, and other rental market and neighborhood information (housing and population characteristics). Clearly, information about schools, transportation facilities and job opportunities is very important.

One of the first steps here is to focus only on those properties or parts of the neighborhood that are located in eligible low-poverty tracts, and where rent levels are well within the reach of typical MTO families. Of course, the point made earlier about *ensuring the diversity of placements* should not be forgotten.

LINKAGES WITH PHAS



The public housing authorities in each MTO site also do some recruiting of new landlords for Section 8. Over time, they have developed substantial listings of properties where Section 8 certificates and vouchers are accepted and the rent levels for given unit sizes are appropriate. This is true both for the PHA in the central city, and the PHAs in surrounding jurisdictions where MTO families may move. These suburban Section 8 programs may be willing to share their available apartment listings with the NPO, especially if it might result in a new portability unit (for a neighboring jurisdiction), or keeping a Section 8 certificate or voucher in the city (in the case of the origin PHA).

When property listings are shared, it is particularly important to know the *date of the listing* and the *frequency of updates*. Rental market opportunities grow old and useless very quickly, so the methods used to update the lists are important pieces of information.

FOLLOW-UP WITH LANDLORDS

Landlord outreach does not end with an available unit being offered to an MTO family. Rather, the relationship with landlords has to reflect a process of constant renewal...

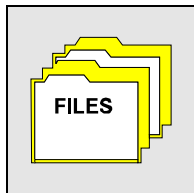
- To assure that the requirements of the lease are being observed (on both sides) and that both parties are happy;
- To secure information about the landlord's other properties that may have units coming available;

- To re-introduce MTO after a turnover in property management or ownership.
- To intervene, if necessary, and resolve issues that may be creating problems for either the landlord or the tenant.
- To take specific action on behalf of the MTO tenant if their rights have been denied or ignored.

These points are discussed in Chapter 14, follow-up support.

**RECORD-KEEPING
REQUIREMENTS FOR
LANDLORD OUTREACH**

The NPOs conducting landlord recruitment must record their contacts with owners, managers, and their associations or organizations using the Landlord/Landlord Group Outreach Log. The form is contained in Appendix B, along with instructions for completing and submitting it. The NPOs should also keep confidential all information about landlords cooperating with the program. (See Chapter 8 for full discussion.)



The log requires the NPO to record the names and addresses of landlords contacted, the types of units under their control or management, whether the landlord has accepted Section 8 previously, and the outcome of the outreach effort. For landlord groups, the NPO staff member doing landlord outreach needs to record the name of the group, size of its membership, geographic area represented, outreach method, and results.

The log has been designed to be useful for staff working on this task, to serve as a summary and a basis for reporting program activity. The logs will be collected and used to document the efforts made by all the sites to recruit landlords in low-poverty areas. As with many of the data collection forms required for the MTO demonstration, a photocopy of the complete log should be made at the end of each month of the intake period and submitted to Abt Associates. (Abt Associates will receive and review data from the MTO demonstration throughout the demonstration period.)

**SUMMARY: LANDLORD
OUTREACH**

The landlord outreach responsibility assigned to the nonprofit organizations in the demonstration is a critical one, since this outreach should be a major source of rental units that can be leased by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families. Despite the sensitivity of this work and the need for quiet diplomacy, there are a number of approaches that have proven useful in prior

mobility programs and that can be adapted to the needs of the different MTO sites.

Inter-agency activities for landlord outreach

The MTO NOFA gives nonprofit agencies prime responsibility for outreach to owners and managers of prospective rental property. However, these landlord outreach efforts can be strengthened if both agencies work together.

PHA Resources/Actions

- Use internal records to identify prospective landlords.
- Contact other PHAs for information about properties in other jurisdictions.
- Network with NPOs in developing landlord contacts and market data.

NPO Resources/Actions

- Assign staff to landlord outreach as a continuing commitment.
- Network with property owners and managers in the metro area.
- Contact fair housing and other organizations for rental unit information.
- Gather detailed market and community information.

Desired Results

- More units are available to MTO families in city and suburban areas.
- There is more widespread understanding of Section 8 and better general access for certificate- and voucher-holders.
- Vacant rental units are identified in areas that are attractive for MTO families.

LANDLORD OUTREACH

Task/ Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Develop a plan for landlord outreach, determine information resources, assign staff				
Develop MTO materials for landlords; review/revise existing material for landlords on Section 8 program				
Contact major organizations of rental housing owners and managers, make presentations and provide written information on MTO, use newsletter or mailing list				
Contact suburban PHAs, fair housing organizations, and other sources of landlord contacts outside the city				
Let property owners currently participating in leased housing programs know that MTO can be a source of tenants for their properties in other neighborhoods				
Put extra effort into landlord outreach in low-poverty areas with good transportation, employment, schools, and day care—areas that are attractive for MTO families				

Performance standards:

- a)
- b)
- c)

CHAPTER FIVE
INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

CHAPTER FIVE: CONTENTS

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

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RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION

There are no special record-keeping or data collection requirements associated with Inter-Agency Coordination.

CHAPTER FIVE INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

This chapter discusses a variety of ways in which the public housing agencies and nonprofits running the MTO program in each city can *help each other* make the demonstration work. Even where there are clear, separate responsibilities of the PHA and NPO, there may also be resources available from the other agency that will smooth the way or lighten the load.

WHAT KINDS OF ENTITIES ARE THE MTO SITE AGENCIES?

PHAs and NPOs are...

PHAs and NPOs are different types of organizations, with different strengths, orientations, and resources. Public housing agencies are agencies that specialize in the highly regulated business of providing housing assistance to low-income households. They are created under the laws of their particular states, and some states (California, New York, Massachusetts) have their own housing programs that PHAs also administer.

A big-city PHA is multifaceted...

PHAs—especially large PHAs in large cities—tend to run a variety of housing programs. These may include both federal and state public housing, both federal and state tenant-based rental assistance, various kinds of development programs to create affordable housing, and specialized programs for special-needs populations. Each program comes with its own set of administrative, operational, and fiscal requirements. One PHA strength is the ability to organize the resulting complexity of tasks and timetables.

Large property manager

PHAs are used to running several kinds of "businesses" at once. ***The PHAs in the MTO sites are all very large landlords, responsible for the management and maintenance of thousands of public housing units*** in numerous developments all across the city. As housing managers, they handle everything from screening prospective residents to repairing leaking faucets, mowing grass, and purchasing toilet paper for public facilities in their developments. They are responsible for the ordinary preparation of vacant units for new residents and for the repair of all sorts of wear and tear and damage.

Modernization and redevelopment

A second business that has expanded greatly for PHAs in the last 15 years is *housing modernization*. PHAs have become responsible for renovating (or even redeveloping) substantial portions of their public housing stock, which has suffered through a

combination of aging, hard use, deferred maintenance due to underfunding, and (in some places) outright neglect. Modernization involves PHAs in planning, design, construction management, and working with residents on all phases of these projects.

Social service provider

A third business in which PHAs have become more involved recently is *social service provision*. The ordinary operating subsidy funds that HUD provides for federal public housing cover the management of applicants and residents and bricks-and-mortar. Special funding under the old Comprehensive Improvements Assistance Program (CIAP) and regular funding under the new Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP) are directed primarily to housing modernization. *Social service funding to PHAs has been largely a matter of special grants*, to support PHA efforts at helping a very disadvantaged resident population deal with a variety of problems (e.g. physical or mental illnesses, adult illiteracy, teen pregnancy, family dysfunction, substance abuse).

The housing authorities have also sought for their tenants *a share of the services made available through nonprofits that work generally with the low-income population*. It is in this connection that some PHAs already have experience working with NPOs, and visa versa.

Security

Finally, a fourth business that has grown all too fast for the PHAs is *security*. In the past decade, the level of illegal drug activity has risen rapidly in all major U.S. cities, and many also have active street gangs with some involvement in drug traffic. Public housing developments have become a particular focal point for drug activity and the violence it generates. Some of the PHAs in the MTO sites are struggling for basic control of their developments, in an effort to maintain public order and some semblance of a decent living environment for residents.

Identify the informal team at the PHA involved with MTO

For the PHAs, the MTO demonstration will largely involve the parts of the agency that administer project-based Section 8 housing and other tenant-based rental assistance programs. But there are many ways in which MTO implementation can be helped by PHA staff working in public housing management and other facets of agency operation. *The supervisor in charge of MTO for the PHA should identify who else in that agency needs to be kept informed and involved during the demonstration.*

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN MTO

The nonprofit agencies in MTO are smaller, more service-oriented organizations

It is harder to generalize about the NPOs in the five MTO cities than it is about the PHAs. The nonprofit agencies that teamed up on the winning applications (with multiple NPOs in some cases) are a varied group:



- *neighborhood advocacy and community organizing* are the core missions of two organizations;
- *fair housing, with a metropolitan focus*, is the special focus of two other NPOs;
- two NPOs deliver *services to homeless families*, including housing placement and transitional support;
- one NPO is a county-wide community action agency operating *multiple service programs for low-income people*.

The nonprofits have close community ties

The community-based nonprofits draw important strengths from their closeness to the residents of their city neighborhoods. Through board representation and membership, residents express their goals and shape the objectives and programs of the NPOs. As a result, the organizations are expert *at involving and helping empower low-income people to have more control over their lives*.

The nonprofits are part of extensive provider or advocacy networks

Through their work with low-income populations and their work on particular issues, nonprofits come into contact with other agencies doing similar work. There are both formal and informal networks of nonprofits in fair housing, homeless services provision, community development, tenant advocacy, and other related fields. Such networks provide member NPOs with support, information-sharing, allies for political action, and sources of referrals for clients. *Their networks are a significant asset for the NPOs in the MTO demonstration.*

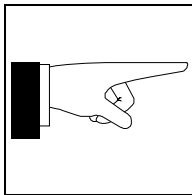
Differences from PHAs...

There are some common themes that make these nonprofit organizations different from the PHAs. They are more closely focused on *providing social services*, they typically view themselves as *advocates for their clients*, and they tend to be less

...and similarities

bound by regulations and procedures in how they carry out their programs.

Even so, *there are also commonalities with the PHAs.* A number of the nonprofits have recently been running federal programs with plenty of rules and reporting requirements. Some of them have worked closely with government agencies—in some cases with the PHAs—and have learned that these agencies have effective bureaucrats and administrators who share their goals and can do what needs to be done.



Most of all, within even the largest and most bureaucratic PHA, there are people with:

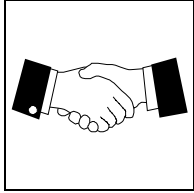
- the same commitment to providing needy people with quality services
- the same concern for listening to how clients define their own needs and goals
- the same care for doing the job right.

People to people, the PHA and NPO at each MTO site will thus find many shared views and many ways to work together.

MAIN MECHANISMS FOR WORKING TOGETHER ON MTO

There are five main mechanisms that the PHAs and NPOs can use to work together on the Moving to Opportunity demonstration. They are:

- 1) planning jointly, in an ongoing process
- 2) creating an advisory board
- 3) jointly developing program materials
- 4) regularly sharing information
- 5) jointly conducting some program activities.



Throughout the chapters of this manual, there are places where suggestions are made about using one or more of these mechanisms of cooperation. Their point may be to give the participants more information and support, to accomplish program goals (e.g. enroll a certain number of families), or to make the process go more smoothly. Here are some examples.

Planning jointly, in an ongoing process

—The PHA and NPO need to plan together the scheduling of *informational meetings for family outreach*.

—The NPO and PHA need to *plan for the flow of families into the MTO program*, including the schedule of intake visits (for enrollment and eligibility determination), the schedule of Section 8 briefings, and the resulting flow of MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families to the NPO.

Creating an advisory board (Optional)

—*Each agency can extend the invitation within its own networks*, inviting representatives from as many of these categories as possible: local elected officials and political figures; fair housing groups in city and suburbs; tenant organizations in public housing and Section 8 project-based housing; community development corporations (CDCs) and other community-based groups and institutions in city neighborhoods; social service agencies in city and suburbs; metropolitan planning agencies or other regional public and private bodies.

Jointly developing program materials

—The PHA and NPO can develop a fact sheet or press release and *jointly* respond to media requests for information, interviews, etc.

—The NPO and PHA can develop encouraging and attractive outreach materials for families, in clear and simple language. Be sure to translate for non-English-speaking populations.

—The PHA and NPO can jointly develop an invitation for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families to attend a special, separate Section 8 briefing. Enclose this invitation (for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families only) in the notification the PHA sends out concerning eligibility and assignment.

Regularly sharing information

—The NPO can alert the PHA to actions by suburban PHAs that may challenge the eligibility of MTO families.

—As the PHA receives HUD notices or other Section 8-related materials, it can keep NPO staff up-to-date on changes that may affect how the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP is assisted.

Jointly conducting some program activities

—Both the PHA and the NPO can contribute to the family outreach task by developing materials, by helping get access to lists of eligible families, and by holding joint informational meetings.

—The PHA and NPO can hold a meeting together for PHA managers and owners/managers of Section 8 project-based housing in targeted areas, to gain their cooperation in reaching tenants with the outreach message.

SUMMARY: INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

These are only a few of the ways that inter-agency cooperation and coordination can contribute to the success of the MTO demonstration. Exhibit 5-1 summarizes how the five mechanisms for coordination can be applied to the main demonstration tasks. Very specific ideas and recommendations are found at the end of most chapters about how this demonstration can be more effective through the combined efforts of the site agencies, working together.

Exhibit 5-1
Summary of Ways that PHAs and NPOs Can Cooperate on MTO

	Joint Planning Process	MTO Advisory Board	Joint Materials Development	Information- Sharing	Joint Program Activities
Participant outreach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Landlord outreach		✓		✓	
Building support/public relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre-application and waiting list			✓	✓	
Intake	✓			✓	✓
Briefing and issuance			✓	✓	✓
Initial counseling				✓	
Additional search assistance				✓	
Inspection and lease-up			✓	✓	
Move-in and occupancy		✓		✓	
Tracking participants and providing on-going support	✓	✓		✓	

Interagency Coordination

Task/ Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Develop a fact sheet or press release and <i>jointly</i> respond to media requests for information, interviews, etc.				
Pool PHA and NPO resources for family outreach				
Pool PHA and NPO resources for landlord outreach				
Jointly address local concerns and build support or acceptance for MTO				

Performance standards:

- a) Both agencies contribute to demonstration planning and trouble-shooting
- b) Agencies develop easy communication and resolve problems at staff level without need for formal intervention of supervisory personnel
- c) Each agency provides input and support for demonstration tasks where other agency has prime responsibility

CHAPTER SIX
PUBLIC RELATIONS

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

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RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION

PHAs and NPOs should maintain a file for *public relations* documentation, including fact sheets, press releases, press clippings, and other related items. There are no other special record-keeping or data collection requirements regarding public relations.

CHAPTER SIX

PUBLIC RELATIONS

This chapter presents recommended approaches and suggested guidelines for managing public relations for the MTO demonstration. The purpose of public relations activities in MTO is to assure that:

- *the support of key public officials and institutions is secured for the duration of the demonstration;*
- *accurate information on MTO progress and methods is provided in an appropriate and timely manner; and*
- *media attention and politics are not permitted to undermine demonstration objectives.*

Public relations can also help agencies gain cooperation from the owners or managers of Section 8 project-based developments in the targeted areas, and from landlords in low-poverty areas, but it cannot take the place of direct contact with these groups.

POINTS OF VIEW ON MTO

Emphasize Choice and Opportunity

The first step in developing a public relations strategy for MTO is to recognize the variety of opinions that may influence acceptance of the program. Site agencies need to anticipate, before the program actually begins, that there may be different points of view about whether Moving to Opportunity is a good program. It may not seem likely that anyone will publicly oppose helping poor families with children get access to greater opportunities for education and employment. *In fact, choice and opportunity for families are key points to convey in public relations activities.*

But there are points of view both within and outside the city that may lead to criticism and opposition to MTO. Because of this, public relations is a task that starts early and keeps on going.

THE TIMING OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Lay the groundwork before MTO starts...

The time to start preparing for publicity and laying the groundwork for positive coverage of MTO is before the family outreach begins.

...but don't encourage early coverage

On the other hand, all the sites are working to target family outreach very closely. General press coverage of MTO and the opportunities it offers, if it appears during the outreach period, may work against agency efforts to limit ineligible responses.

The ideal timing from the standpoint of program administration would be to have positive publicity after the MTO waiting list is

closed but during the intake period. Positive stories would then serve to encourage participation by families and landlords. However, from the standpoint of the press, that's not when the news is new! *So site agencies cannot count on controlling or delaying coverage to meet their own schedules.*

The main point is to be prepared

Some steps the site agencies can take to be prepared—and to help ensure positive coverage—are described below. If the PHAs and NPOs are ready for publicity and have laid the groundwork with a variety of contacts, they have made a good start on the public relations front.

BUILDING SUPPORT

For the Moving to Opportunity demonstration, agencies need to build support or acceptance among a variety of local groups, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Some first steps were taken in all the MTO sites, when letters of support from the mayor and other local agencies were gathered for the funding application. The NPOs' efforts to raise matching funds also brought local foundations and others into the picture.

Take the initiative ahead of time

There are a number of *other useful steps to take*, as agencies prepare to start site operations and **before** going public with outreach (or before a new round of outreach):

- 1) Create a local advisory board for MTO, with representatives from as many of the different categories as possible (again, see chapter 5).
- 2) Develop a fact sheet or press release that can be used to handle media requests and can also serve to inform other groups. (There are detailed suggestions later in this chapter.)
- 3) Build support with personal contacts **before** dealing with the press. Identify likely supporters and give them background information. Identify likely opponents and make clear to them what the potential benefits are of MTO; at least, give them the facts.
- 4) Respond to media requests for information or interviews with the fact sheet and with an emphasis on increasing choice and opportunity for poor families.

5) Make sure city officials (Mayor’s Office, City Council, and administrative agencies) know about MTO and have the fact sheet on the demonstration available. Update them from time to time on the progress.

6) Make sure tenant and community organizations in the targeted neighborhoods know about MTO and understand its size (small) and its benefits (choice for families with children, frees up apartments for others in need).

DEALING WITH THE PRESS

The coverage for MTO in the *general press* will be more satisfactory if the site agencies take the initiative and go beyond preparing a press release or fact sheet. When the start of family outreach has been scheduled, but *before* it begins, *identify and contact particular reporters* on urban affairs and race relations, who have more interest and background relevant to this demonstration. Take the time to brief them and discuss MTO nationally and locally. Try to meet with editorial boards to do the same. The resulting coverage will be more thoughtful and complete.

The press can work for you or against you. It’s worth the effort to get them on your side.

Take the initiative with the *specialty press for the real estate industry*. Identify specific reporters to contact, and brief them. Provide the fact sheet, too. Agencies want this effort to influence the coverage of MTO and also to help with landlord outreach. Don’t forget to include reports for the real estate sections of the local newspapers; they are often read in the whole metropolitan area.

Be sure to contact the *minority press and/or community newspapers in minority neighborhoods*. Again, try to work with a specific reporter and give him/her the full background on MTO. Emphasize the themes of choice and opportunity for poor families.

At the same time, don’t forget that MTO is a very small program. Fewer than 300 families will move, as a result of the demonstration, in any one city. In dealing with the press, the limited size of MTO is a good rationale for down-playing the coverage.

SUGGESTED CONTENTS OF THE MTO FACT SHEET

- a national demonstration program, started by Congress, being tried out in five cities around the country

See HUD's information circular, "The Facts About Moving to Opportunity" at the end of this chapter.

- a fairly small program locally, with openings for only (number) families to get Section 8 rental housing assistance
- eligible families must already live in public housing or project-based Section 8 developments
- targeted high-poverty census tracts (areas from which families will be drawn)
- how Section 8 works (existing apartments, private landlords get to screen tenants as much as they usually would, families get to choose where to live by searching for available units, apartments must meet quality standards)
- two agencies jointly administering MTO (PHA and NPO)
- Person(s) to contact for further information

SPECIAL EFFORTS FOR SUBURBAN AREAS

It is worth planning some special efforts to build support in suburban areas, before enrolled families start their searches. The most important step is to *find supportive people in these communities* who can be identified in an article or who can be contacted by a local reporter. Be sure to get permission to use their names as leads for the press. As the program continues, maintain these contacts and keep them informed of MTO's progress.

At the start of the Gautreaux Program, the Leadership Council in Chicago got 12 suburban mayors to sign a letter in support of the program. This letter was circulated to all local officials in the whole Chicago area. If MTO agencies are able to get a similar letter signed, it should emphasize a) choice and opportunity for families; b) existing housing, no new development; and c) private landlords still screen their tenants.

Suburban housing authorities will become directly involved in MTO when families begin searching in their areas and wish to lease up there. To build support and reduce opposition, the PHA may want to contact the local chapter of NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Rehabilitation Officials), which often has active membership from smaller authorities. The chapter may have a newsletter where an article could be published. Staff from the PHA or NPO might want to come and talk to a chapter meeting.

It is worth researching the trade associations to which suburban rental housing owners and managers belong. There may be more than one such group in the metropolitan area. For building support, and as a prelude to landlord outreach, it is worthwhile contacting the staff or newsletter editor of these associations and briefing them on MTO. Again, be sure to emphasize a) choice and opportunity for families; b) existing housing, no new development; and c) private landlords still screen their tenants. Do not forget that information about cooperating landlords is confidential. You can reassure owners and managers that their participation is a private business matter. (See Chapter 8 for a full discussion of confidentiality protections.)

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

The details of building support and handling public relations will be different in each site. But there are some ground rules that should be observed everywhere.

Be clear on the meaning of a *demonstration program*—explain that the PHA and NPO are helping the federal government determine whether MTO is a workable program and how much it helps poor families.

Be frank about possible differing points of view on MTO. Emphasize that this kind of program is not a substitute for efforts to help city neighborhoods or for other means of helping families in need.

Be sure to *describe local plans for MTO without inviting interference* in how the program is being run. It is difficult to deal with the press and with eligible families at the same time.

Be as open as possible to inquiries about MTO. Return phone calls from reporters or outside organizations promptly, and answer questions readily. Avoid the perception that you are holding back information or hiding aspects of the demonstration.

Protect the privacy of the families participating in MTO. Do not give out names to the press without prior agreement, nor introduce reporters to participants without clearing this in advance. (Prior written agreement is the best way.) Even when there is a wonderful success story you would like to publicize, don't assume the family feels the same way: **BE SURE TO ASK.**

ANTICIPATING PROBLEMS

The following list identifies possible problems and ideas about how to handle them.

Issues about the fairness of the waiting list lottery—conduct the lottery that orders the MTO waiting list as a public event (e.g. at a meeting of the PHA's Board). Invite tenant representatives to witness it.

Issues about the fairness of random assignment and one group not getting Section 8—be clear that your MTO program is part of an effort to test a new program. Random assignment and the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP are necessary for learning whether MTO "works."

There is a public attack on MTO, especially from a neighborhood point of view—mobilize the supporters you've talked to already, respond quickly to the attack, repeat the facts, emphasize choice and opportunity.

Something negative happens to an MTO family—if there is an incident of harassment or violence against an MTO family, you must immediately mobilize support for them, both legally (including HUD, the U.S. Attorney and the FBI) and morally (from local fair housing and religious organizations). You must also be sure there is publicity with the facts of what happened and how it is being handled.

Something negative is done by an MTO family—if there is publicity about a family skipping rent or causing damage or being involved in a crime, be prepared to talk about the range of experiences of MTO families. You can regret that this happened but still indicate it is not typical of the experiences in the program.

Public Relations

Task/ Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Make sure city officials (Mayor's Office, City Council, and administrative agencies) know about MTO and have the fact sheet on the demonstration available				
Make sure tenant and community organizations and other institutions in the targeted neighborhoods know about MTO and understand its size (small) and its benefits (choice for families with children, frees up apartments for others in need).				
Be sure to respond promptly to public criticism or targeting of MTO in the press or at meetings				
Be careful to assure the privacy of all families participating in MTO (e.g., do not reveal names for press contact without prior permission)				

Performance standards:

- a)
- b)
- c)

The Facts about... Moving to Opportunity

A 2-page doc from PD&R at HUD

CHAPTER SEVEN

PRE-APPLICATION AND WAITING LIST

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PRE-APPLICATION AND WAITING LIST

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CHAPTER SEVEN

PRE-APPLICATION AND WAITING LIST

This chapter covers the steps MTO demonstration site agencies need to take to form a pool of eligible, interested families and to create a separate MTO program waiting list. These steps involve the regular requirements of the Section 8 certificate and voucher programs and other requirements special to the MTO demonstration. This phase of the demonstration begins with collecting the pre-applications filled out by interested families. It ends with notifying families of their waiting list positions and inviting the first group of families to file full Section 8 applications.

The results of outreach

The site agencies have notified all the families that may be eligible for MTO because they live in public housing or project-based Section 8 housing in the targeted high-poverty census tracts. They have made sure to provide the families with ways to find out more about the program, including:

- holding public information sessions at the public housing developments;
- providing site managers with a fact sheet or other materials answering basic questions about MTO; and
- providing a phone number interested people can call to ask questions about the program.

See Chapter 3 for more about family outreach.

Now the PHA must provide a way for the families to indicate they are interested in applying for MTO, **by developing the pre-application or registration form**. This form collects just enough information from each family to allow the PHA to do some preliminary eligibility checking and to place the family's name on an MTO waiting list.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MTO requirements set by the NOFA must be met in all sites. The NOFA's provisions concerning the pre-application and waiting list step are the following:

- "Only families living in public housing projects or projects receiving Section 8 project-based assistance within the census tract(s) designated by the PHA will be eligible for assistance under the demonstration." (NOFA, p. 43458)

- "Families in Assisted Housing. All very low-income families with children who reside in designated high-poverty census tracts in public housing or in housing projects with one or more units of Section 8 project—based assistance and who are willing to move to low-poverty areas are eligible to apply for assistance under MTO." (NOFA, Definitions, p. 43459)
- "A PHA selected for the MTO Demonstration must establish an application deadline for families who want to participate in the MTO Demonstration. Applications received by the deadline will be assigned a position on a separate waiting list based on a random assignment using a lottery. The separate waiting list will be maintained throughout the term of the demonstration to provide a list of eligible families that would receive rental assistance if an MTO rental voucher or rental certificate is available to be re-issued" (NOFA, p. 43459).
- "In some cases, families who are eligible to participate in the MTO demonstration program may be on both the regular Section 8 waiting list and the special MTO waiting list. If such families decline to participate in the MTO demonstration, the families will retain their position on the regular Section 8 waiting list and may receive rental assistance in accordance with normal program procedures" (NOFA, p. 43460).

If a family that is on the Section 8 waiting list is selected for MTO and uses their certificate or voucher to lease a new unit, they will be dropped from the regular Section 8 waiting list.

In addition, the regulations of the Section 8 program govern the PHA's actions in taking pre-applications and making preliminary eligibility checks before a waiting list is formed.

MAKING PRELIMINARY ELIGIBILITY CHECKS

Preliminary eligibility checking is a way to cut down on the number of ineligible families put on the MTO waiting list and processed later for Section 8 eligibility. Because the families eligible for MTO are already receiving housing assistance—either as public housing tenants or as tenants in Section 8 project-based housing—there are some preliminary checks that can be done fairly easily to confirm some aspects of MTO eligibility. It is important to do these checks early, to reduce the amount of effort spent on ineligible applicants.

Items to check early

The following eligibility criteria can be checked early, using the pre-application or registration form:

- 1) Does the family live in public or assisted housing?
- 2) Is the family the legal lease-holder (are all the members listed on the lease) for the current assisted housing unit?
- 3) Is this assisted housing in the targeted census tracts?
- 4) Does the family include at least one child?

In addition to these eligibility factors, the pre-application should contain the information needed to enter the family onto a waiting list. This would usually consist of:

- Name of applicant (head of household)
- Social security number or other unique identifier
- Address
- Family size and composition (members' names, ages, and sexes)
- Race and ethnicity of applicant (for FH&EO purposes)
- Contact information.

There are other eligibility criteria for Section 8 that will not be checked at this stage. Full eligibility determination happens in the MTO intake step, described in Chapter 8.

Site managers make the preliminary eligibility checks

The person in the best position to make the check on the pre-application information is the family's current site manager. The manager has access to tenant income and family composition data, knows about the family's rent-paying record, and is usually aware of any difficulties with the family in terms of behavior or relations with neighbors. The manager can verify some information needed for the PHA's standard Section 8 eligibility processing. Any additional information provided by the manager of an MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP family should be forwarded to the NPO after enrollement.

There are only a few developments in each city being targeted by MTO. The effort to inform the owners or managers and enlist their support for MTO (discussed in Chapter 3 in connection with family outreach) must also include information and instructions on handling pre-applications.

Exhibit 7-1 shows the Boston MTO pre-application as currently drafted. Once the applicant has completed the simple form and submitted it at an informational meeting or to the management office by the program deadline, the manager can check the information against his/her records and fill out and sign the bottom. *The PHAs need to tell managers how and when to forward the forms to the Section 8 department.*

What if a family re-applies for MTO?

As the MTO demonstration continues, a number of sites are doing additional family outreach and taking more pre-applications or applications to add to the MTO waiting list. Some families already enrolled in the MTO program may apply again, hoping for another chance to obtain a Section 8 certificate or voucher. *If the site PHA's rules or practices ordinarily allow an applicant who has failed to lease up under Section 8 to apply again and be added to the waiting list, that same rule should apply for MTO.*

It should be noted, however, that a family's random assignment will not change over the course of the demonstration. Thus, a family who is initially assigned to the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP cannot expect to receive a different assignment by applying again for the program. Any families inquiring about reapplying should be advised of this, so that they understand it will not get them a different assignment. However, those in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP or the Section 8 COMPARISON GROUP *can* get another certificate or voucher by reapplying, as long as the PHA's ordinary administrative practices would allow this.

Taking full applications instead of pre-applications or registrations

Some PHAs in MTO sites may prefer to have families interested in the program fill out the complete Section 8 application rather than a brief pre-application. As long as it includes at least the data items listed above, there is no problem in using a full, standard application. But this will be harder for the applicants and probably require more staff time to help them complete the forms. *And it is important that interested families not have to make a special, additional visit to complete the applications. Each additional step required will lead to the loss of some interested families, and this will make it more difficult to meet MTO enrollment goals.*

Exhibit 7-1 (1 page)

Boston Housing Authority/Metro Boston Housing Partnership
Preliminary Application Form

MTO ENROLLMENT GOALS

Because housing assistance is always a scarce resource, PHAs are used to having far more applicants than can ever be served. They tend not to worry about creating enough interest in a program, or about losing families during the steps of application processing. For the MTO demonstration, *a different point of view will probably be helpful*. And doing outreach is absolutely vital.

MTO will need to enroll a substantial number of families

None of the five MTO sites has a huge pool of potentially eligible families in the targeted high-poverty census tracts. The demonstration will probably need to attract a substantial portion of the eligible population—*perhaps as much as one out of every three families*—in order to succeed in using all the certificates or vouchers and providing sufficient numbers to answer the research questions posed by Congress.

Why are the enrollment goals so high?

The number of families needed for MTO in each city is far greater than the number of certificates or vouchers allocated to the particular PHA. This is true for two reasons:

- not every family initially receiving a voucher or certificate will succeed in leasing up; and
- some of the interested families will be randomly assigned to the in-place control group and never be offered a certificate or voucher through the demonstration.

Leasing up may be quite hard for the families that are required to move to low-poverty areas, even with the counseling and support they can get from the NPO. In fact, it may take 3 or 4 experimental group families getting a certificate or voucher before one of the families succeeds in finding a unit and renting it with Section 8 assistance.

Exhibit 7-2 shows the number of families you may need to enroll in MTO in your site. These figures are not enrollment *limits*; in fact, some sites may have to go higher. But sites achieving higher lease-up rates than expected will need to enroll fewer families.

The figures vary from city to city because they are based in part on each site's recent experience with success rates (lease-up

Exhibit 7-2
Site-by-Site MTO Enrollment Goals¹

Baltimore	Experimental (MTO) Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-place Control Group	Total
Families randomly assigned	429	155	269	853
Families leased up	143	142	N/A	285
Boston	Experimental (MTO) Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-place Control Group	Total
Families randomly assigned	429	155	269	853
Families leased up	143	142	N/A	285
Chicago	Experimental (MTO) Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-place Control Group	Total
Families randomly assigned	520	200	325	1,045
Families leased up	143	142	N/A	285
Los Angeles	Experimental (MTO) Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-place Control Group	Total
Families randomly assigned	284	110	178	572
Families leased up	94	94	N/A	188
New York City	Experimental (MTO) Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-place Control Group	Total
Families randomly assigned	558	208	347	1,113
Families leased up	143	142	N/A	285
Five sites,	Experimental (MTO) Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-place Control Group	Total
Families randomly assigned	2,220	828	1,388	4,436
Families leased up	666	662	N/A	1,328

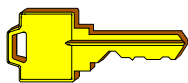
Enrollment needed:	
Baltimore	853
Boston	853
Chicago	1,045
Los Angeles	572
New York	1,113

rates) under the regular Section 8 program. In Baltimore and Boston, virtually every family issued a certificate or voucher has been finding a unit and using their rental assistance. Therefore, the Baltimore and Boston enrollment goals are somewhat lower than the goals for other sites. New York and Chicago, on the other hand, have relatively difficult markets and more families failing to lease up. Therefore, the enrollment goals for these sites are somewhat higher.

The actual experience of some site agencies has exceeded the original expectations for MTO. Revised goals have been developed for some sites. Agencies should contact their Abt project monitor for updated figures, including figures for the expanded programs in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York. ***Remember, the figures presented here are the numbers of families likely to be needed in order to lease up all the Section 8 resources coming through the MTO demonstration.***

What is striking about the enrollment goals for all sites is how much higher they are than the numbers of certificates and vouchers allocated to the PHAs for MTO. You must be prepared to attract a large volume of families to the demonstration, lose some families at the pre-application stage (due to ineligibility) and others at eligibility determination, lose some families who do not search or can't find a suitable unit, and still have enough families enrolled to lease up all the certificates and vouchers. Of course, you will not have to do full eligibility determination on all of them at once. But your separate MTO waiting list must contain enough names to last through the issuance and reissuance of these certificates and vouchers, until HUD releases the PHAs from this requirement.

KEY SECTION 8 REQUIREMENTS



Before forming the waiting list...

There are a number of Section 8 program requirements that are vital whenever a waiting list is formed for a new program. These requirements essentially concern completeness and fairness in letting potential recipients know about the opportunity, in letting them know the outcome of key processing steps, and in giving them a chance to question adverse decisions.

Before a PHA can close application-taking for MTO and move to form the waiting list, these requirements must be met:

- Efforts must have been made to inform *all* potentially eligible families about MTO.
- Opportunities to learn about the program and to apply must be made available without regard to age, race, sex, color, religion, disability, ethnicity, or familial status.
- The deadline for submitting applications, and the places to submit them, must have been clearly indicated through the outreach efforts.
- The PHA must have gathered pre-applications from all collection points and ensured that managers have checked and signed each one.
- If the manager's checking has indicated the applicant is not eligible for Section 8 or MTO (e.g., is not income-eligible, does not live in the targeted development), the applicant must be informed of this outcome and given an opportunity to correct or respond to the finding. (See page 3-2 for MTO eligibility criteria.)

POSSIBLE ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

As a first step, check the PHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan for guidance on changes in household composition before and after receiving a certificate or voucher.

Household composition—There is no requirement that the composition of the family applying for MTO be the same as the family currently occupying the public housing or Section 8 project-based housing unit. An adult child of the tenant-of-record can apply with his/her own children. The tenant-of-record can make a separate application if he/she also has at least one child under 18. *However, the same family member should not appear on more than one application.*

This means that the current public housing or Section 8 project-based unit may remain occupied even if the applicant is successful under MTO, because part of the household can remain behind. It means that separate applications for MTO may be filed by members of a single household. However, if one of these applications is successful and the other is not, the household cannot recombine under the successful one. That would be too great an opportunity to increase the chances of "winning" under MTO by filing extra applications.



PHA

Criminal records checking—Some PHAs in the MTO demonstration sites have indicated that they conduct checks for criminal record (violent or drug-related crime) as part of Section 8 eligibility processing. The regulations permit this for MTO, as well. However, like all other eligibility checks, this check must be performed on *all* applicants for the program. Also, like full income verification, criminal records checking is not likely to occur at the time of pre-application processing but later (during MTO intake).

NPO

NPOs should be aware of whether either the issuing PHA or a prospective receiving PHA will be performing criminal records checks. Even where background checks are not a condition of program eligibility, NPOs may want to ask the family ahead of time whether any members have legal issues or criminal records likely to create a problem for them in moving to another community.

Repeat applicants for MTO—Families who have previously enrolled in MTO and are applying again may be placed on the waiting list, as long as the PHA’s general practice is to allow families to reapply for Section 8 if they have previously been unable to use a certificate or voucher to lease up. However, *it is essential that the PHA staff identify and "flag" these repeat pre-applications*, because they will be processed differently later.

ESTABLISHING THE MTO WAITING LIST

All MTO pre-applications received by the official deadline and not screened out on the basis of the factors listed earlier in this chapter need to be placed by the PHA on a *separate waiting list for the demonstration program*. Making a separate waiting list generally involves entering certain data items (especially name, social security number or other identifier, and address) into the computer system, along with the number of bedrooms (BR size) required for the family based on the members listed on the pre-application. ***No federal preferences apply*** to the order of the MTO waiting list.

WAITING LIST LOTTERY NOW... (RANDOM ASSIGNMENT LATER)

Once all the pre-applications are entered, the lottery to form the waiting list is conducted. ***This is different from random assignment, which sorts the eligible families into three groups later on, after enrollment in MTO.*** (Random assignment is described in Chapter 8.)

The PHA runs computer waiting list software to put the pre-applications in random order. It is more usual in housing authorities for waiting lists to be formed in chronological order—based on the date and time the family applied. However, some PHAs instead use an open enrollment period procedure, followed by random ordering of the application pool. The random order gives each application an equal chance of coming out on top of the list.

Waiting list reports

The PHA should run its standard reports on the size and composition of the MTO waiting list and keep these reports on file for program documentation.

Notification of families

The result of this process is a single waiting list for the certificates and vouchers allocated to the MTO program. (The Section 8 conforming rule prohibits basing admission on family or unit size [24 CFR 982.204(d)].) As with any waiting list, *the PHA needs to notify each family of the results*, including whether they appear to be eligible (on a preliminary basis) and what position their application occupies on the list. When the notification goes out, it can tell the families at the top of the list that they should come to the PHA for an intake visit to file a full application.

THE MTO ENROLLMENT PERIOD

The time period for outreach, collecting pre-applications, and forming the MTO waiting list should be fairly short (no more than 4 weeks). A short time helps to focus outreach more closely on the eligible population in the targeted census tracts. A short time also allows the PHA and NPO to make a strong effort at outreach and application-taking, to create a sufficient waiting list for the duration of the demonstration, and then turn their attention to enrolling families. However, some sites have repeated family outreach to provide enough families for full lease-up or for the expanded programs in New York, Los Angeles, and Boston.

Once the waiting list is formed, it will serve as the source of families throughout the *enrollment period*. By enrollment period, we mean the time it takes the PHAs and NPOs to bring families off the waiting list, through full eligibility checking (income certification and related verification), into the program (signed Enrollment Agreement and completed baseline survey), through random assignment, and through issuance of the certificate or voucher for the families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL and SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUPS.



While the time from outreach to waiting list is fairly short, the enrollment period is likely to extend over a number of months. Eligibility processing takes time, and so does searching for an apartment to rent. If a family fails to find a unit, the certificate or voucher needs to be reissued to another family off the separate waiting list. The enrollment period continues until all the certificates or vouchers allocated to the PHA under the MTO demonstration are leased up at least once. The remaining tasks in enrollment are discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 8).

The actual enrollment period is defined as the amount of time needed to enroll enough families in MTO so that 1,328 families lease-up and move with the demonstration certificates and vouchers. This is how the sample of families to be followed over the 10-year period gets set. For demonstration purposes, the PHAs need to continue to use the waiting list for re-issuing these certificates and vouchers until HUD releases them from the obligation. This is likely to be a period of several years.

**SUMMARY:
PRE-APPLICATION AND
WAITING LIST**

In connection with planning the outreach and informational meetings for MTO, the PHA and NPO need to design a pre-application form that will allow preliminary eligibility checking to be done. The procedures and reasons for the checking must be provided to the managers of the targeted public housing and Section 8 project-based developments. The PHA needs to indicate the method and deadline for managers to forward the pre-applications to the office responsible for creating the waiting list.

Waiting list procedures for MTO are largely defined by the regular Section 8 program requirements. However, MTO needs to have a separate waiting list, and federal preferences do not need to be applied. Instead, all applicants that pass the preliminary eligibility screening are randomly ordered into a waiting list from which families can be called in for program enrollment (detailed in Chapter 8).

**Actions for pre-application
and waiting list**

- 1) Design a pre-application or registration form to support preliminary eligibility checking.
- 2) Provide explanation and instructions to site managers so that they can check certain eligibility factors.

- 3) Be sure that site managers know when and how to turn in the pre-applications to meet the PHA's deadline.
- 4) Establish a separate MTO waiting list of all families that pass the preliminary eligibility checks. Randomly order the waiting list (assign positions on it by lottery).
- 5) Notify the families of their waiting list position, and invite those at the top of the list to a scheduled intake visit.

PHA Resources/Actions

Plan the pre-application process.

Inform the responsible staff in public housing management of their preliminary eligibility checking responsibilities.

Work with site managers in the targeted developments on pre-application processing.

Gather all pre-applications submitted by the deadline.

Form the MTO waiting list and notify all pre-applicant families of their waiting list position or their ineligibility for MTO.

NPO Resources/Actions

Help plan the pre-application process.

Inform the responsible staff in private Section 8 housing management of their preliminary eligibility checking responsibilities.

Work with private managers of the targeted Section 8 project-based developments on pre-application processing.

Desired Results

Families have a simple form to complete in order to indicate their interest in applying for MTO.

Managers of all targeted developments carry out the preliminary checks and forward pre-applications in a timely manner.

Preliminary eligibility checking cuts down on the number of extra (ineligible) families for whom waiting list and Section 8 application-taking and processing must be done.

The separate MTO waiting list is created efficiently, and the families are quickly notified of their waiting list position and the next step (applying for Section 8).

CHAPTER EIGHT
INTAKE

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONTENTS

INTAKE

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CHAPTER EIGHT INTAKE

The intake phase for the Moving to Opportunity demonstration program involves a complex set of procedures. *It begins* when families from the MTO waiting list are brought in to complete an application. *It ends* when eligible families who have been randomly assigned to one of the groups that will receive rental assistance are invited in for the Section 8 briefing. Along the way, the intake phase involves a number of important paperwork, record-keeping, and data collection tasks for the PHA and the NPO.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Moving to Opportunity NOFA sets the following requirements for PHAs with regard to intake:

- PHAs must *follow all Section 8 requirements and procedures* for verifying the eligibility of families for the MTO program.
- PHAs must *cooperate with special record-keeping and data collection requirements* of the demonstration during enrollment (as well as at other points).
- The demonstration's research design requires the *random assignment of eligible families*.

The information presented in this chapter supplements the NOFA by providing further instructions regarding MTO intake procedures. These procedures were developed after consultation with the five demonstration sites. However, *intake is one step where the participating PHAs are likely to have to alter their regular procedures for the MTO demonstration*.

INTAKE TASKS

The intake process is primarily the responsibility of the PHA, although the NPO can play a role. The six tasks that make up the intake process are:

- **The Intake Visit:** Small groups of families from the top of the MTO waiting list attend a scheduled visit at the PHA. At this time, formal Section 8 applications are taken. The applicants are advised of program requirements and of the different groups to which they may be assigned. They read and sign the *Enrollment Agreement* and (if they are willing to join) complete

the *Participant Baseline Survey* with help from the site assistant and from PHA staff.

- **Processing Applications:** The PHA processes the application and performs *full eligibility determination*. Eligible families are now MTO participants. Ineligible families are notified (under Section 8 requirements) and are dropped from the program.
- **Random Assignment:** The PHA or NPO randomly assigns participants to one of three groups using random assignment software provided by Abt Associates.
- **Participant Notification:** The PHA notifies participants of the outcome of random assignment. The families assigned to the in-place control group have now completed their initial contact with MTO; they will be recontacted again, in the future, only for survey purposes. Families assigned to either the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP or the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP are informed about the date of the next Section 8 briefing for their group.
- **PHA Participant Tracking:** The PHA sets up its system for tracking participants through the demonstration. The tracking system must be designed to follow families in all three demonstration groups.
- **NPO Notification and Tracking:** The PHA provides the names of experimental group participants to the NPO. The NPO sets up its own tracking system for these families.

These tasks in the intake process are each discussed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

TASK #1—THE INTAKE VISIT

Scheduling Visits

The PHA advises families at the top of the MTO waiting list that they should come to the PHA to begin the intake process. As with ordinary Section 8 processing, the families should be asked to bring with them any documents that will be necessary to verify eligibility for the program. *The PHA invites a small group of*



families to come at the same time, so that between 6 and 12 are there together for an intake visit.

When they are invited, the families should be advised that the visit could last up to three hours, because during this visit the following will occur:

- a) the family will be told about the MTO demonstration program requirements and given an opportunity to ask questions;
- b) the applicant will be asked to read and sign the MTO **Enrollment Agreement**;
- c) a formal application for the Section 8 program will be taken, and eligibility will be reviewed;
- d) the applicant will complete the MTO Participant Baseline Survey.

Although it should not be required, the PHA may want to suggest that small children be left at home—if at all possible—during the intake visit.

Why small groups for the intake visit?

Inviting small groups of families to an MTO intake visit is important for two reasons: because of the way the baseline survey needs to be administered, and because during the early months of intake, it will be necessary for the PHA to process a substantial number of applications in a relatively short period of time.

However, most of the PHAs in the five MTO sites generally conduct application-taking for the Section 8 program on an individual basis. The number of families that can be invited at one time may depend on the number of intake workers that the PHA can commit to a particular intake session. In general, it is recommended that the PHA schedule enough families so that between 6 and 12 applicants actually attend each group intake session. If larger groups can be handled (with sufficient staff), fewer intake visits will need to be held.

Planning for the intake visit—suggested resources

PHA staff will need to *plan ahead so that staff and space are available for the intake visits*. First, the PHA will need to have available at least half as many intake workers as it has families for any particular session. Thus, if the PHA schedules

appointments for eight families at 10 A.M. on Monday morning, four intake workers will need to be available to take applications.

Second, the site assistant must know about and be available to staff every intake visit.

Third, at least one additional PHA staff member should be assigned these three important tasks:

- 1) briefly explaining the MTO program to the families at the start of the visit and answering their questions;
- 2) helping the site assistant distribute and collect the **Enrollment Agreements**; and
- 3) assisting with the Baseline Survey once the **Enrollment Agreement** has been signed.

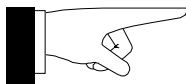
Fourth, the PHA will need to arrange to have a room available, with chairs and desks (or clip-boards), for the applicants to use during the introductory briefing and while completing the baseline surveys. This is in addition to the private spaces for the intake workers to meet with the families for application-taking.

Suggested format

The intake workers will work with half the families while the other half do the baseline surveys; then the groups can switch. Otherwise, even more staff will be needed.

Introductory group briefing—What the families need to hear

At the start of the intake visit, a PHA staff member will review with the families (in a group setting) the program information that was provided at outreach. In particular, it is important to *remind the families who are called in from the waiting list that:*



- MTO is a special demonstration program, different in some ways from regular Section 8;
- not everyone who applies and is found eligible for the MTO program will receive a Section 8 certificate or voucher. ***This will be determined by chance (randomly), but at least two out of every three eligible families WILL be offered Section 8;***

HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros is making a video about MTO to show families at the intake visit. You'll find the script at the end of this chapter.

- their current housing will not be affected if they are not offered assistance or if they decide not to participate in the MTO program;
- they will be asked to fill out a survey today which asks questions about themselves and the people who live with them;
- they may be asked several years from now to answer another MTO survey; and
- if they receive Section 8 assistance under MTO, there may be rules about where they can move and counseling offered to help with finding an apartment and making the move.

The PHA staff should then encourage questions about the program, so that the rules are clear. *This session will take anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. Families will need to decide at this point if they wish to go forward with the application.*

The Enrollment Agreement

A copy of the MTO **Enrollment Agreement** is included as Appendix D of this manual. This form *must* be used in all five sites. **Families must sign the agreement to join MTO.** The PHA staff should see that the families read the first page of the Agreement. If anyone has language or literacy problems, the staff person or site assistant should read it to them.

The **Enrollment Agreement**, which is the basis for *informed consent* to join the MTO demonstration, explains the program's requirements and the family's responsibilities in the program.

Privacy Protections in the Enrollment Agreement

The privacy or confidentiality of information gathered as part of the MTO demonstration is essential for its effective administration. The assurance of confidentiality contained in the MTO Enrollment Agreement is among the key protections for applicants and program participants from any use of personal information other than for HUD-approved research purposes. All information that is critical to protecting the privacy of families assisted under MTO or who are participants in MTO is to be kept private except as may be required by law. The PHAs and NPOs administering the MTO demonstration must be careful to protect the privacy of enrolled families and to make sure that information

obtained in the process of eligibility determination or counseling is not released to any outside parties. *"Private" or "confidential" means not to be released in any form that allows individuals to be identified.*

It is possible that enrolled families who succeed in moving through the MTO program will be among the only recipients of housing assistance in their new locations. The site agencies, both PHAs and NPOs, must help assure that this fact is kept confidential. The privacy protection therefore extends to the prospective and actual locations participants consider in searching for housing and to the actual units they select, as well as to the identity of landlords cooperating with the program. Neither MTO PHAs nor NPOs may therefore release the names of such landlords or distribute any list of program participants or landlords for general or public use.

PHA/NPO Responsibilities
and Privacy Coverage

Confidentiality or privacy protection has two aspects for the site agencies: *physical security* of records and information (keeping them in a locking cabinet or a private office) and *limited access* (making sure that only HUD-approved PHA, NPO, or Contractor staff who are involved with MTO and need to have the information for the program can use it).

The items covered by this protection, and to be handled in the manner just described, include (but are not limited to):

- information collected from applicants, participants (including family members), landlords, or others in the course of MTO demonstration operations;
- PHA and NPO records of activities involving applicants, participants (including family members), and landlords;
- names or other identifiers of applicants, participants (including family members), and landlords;
- addresses or locations of applicants, participants (including family members), or landlords.

Signing the Enrollment
Agreement

Once the family reads the form, they may check one of two boxes which will indicate whether they DO or DO NOT want to apply for Section 8 assistance under the MTO program. The

family then signs and dates the form. Families that do not wish to join MTO can now leave.

If the PHA has done more than one round of family outreach for MTO, there may be families signing the Enrollment Agreement who have already been enrolled in MTO from the initial waiting list. These families should be informed that *they may join the program again but will not receive a new random assignment*; they will be assigned to the same group as before. If they have applied again in the hopes of receiving a Section 8 certificate or voucher this time (unlike the first time when they were assigned to the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP), knowing this may discourage them from signing the Enrollment Agreement again.

Application-taking and eligibility review

Following completion of the **Enrollment Agreement** half the families can be assigned an intake worker who will help them complete the standard application for the Section 8 program. Standard PHA procedures for application-taking and eligibility review apply. Additional eligibility requirements for MTO will also be checked again. (They were initially checked at the pre-application stage.) This will probably take about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

PHA staff review the Enrollment Agreement

As part of application-taking, the back of the **Enrollment Agreement** must be completed by the intake worker, who should note:

- whether the applicant is currently living in public housing or project-based Section 8 housing;
- the name of the development and the census tract where the applicant currently lives (census tract to be checked against maps or lists from MTO funding applications);
- whether the applicant's name is on the lease.

If the family has moved since the date of the initial application, it is extremely important for PHA staff to verify that the applicant is still living in public housing or project-based Section 8 housing in a targeted census tract. *The family is not eligible if the members are no longer on the lease of a public housing or Section 8 project-based unit in a location targeted by MTO.*

The intake worker may determine during the initial interview that the applicant is not eligible for the MTO program. For example, the household may not be a family with children (family with children is defined as a household unit with children *under* 18 at the time of application) or may not live in one of the developments targeted for the program.

If the intake worker makes this determination during the interview, part B of the **Enrollment Agreement**, "Outcome of Participant's Application" should be completed. The intake worker checks the Ineligible box and indicates the reason why the family is not program-eligible.

In most cases, final eligibility cannot be determined during the interview because of normal processing time for income verification. Therefore, the second section of the **Enrollment Agreement** probably cannot be completed until the PHA has finished its review and final eligibility is determined. Once a determination is made, the intake worker will complete Part B, Outcome of Participant's Application.

The **Enrollment Agreements** form the basis of the tracking system for MTO. They should be used to a) remove from the waiting list families who decided not to join; b) record reasons for ineligibility; and c) provide the names for the tracking system. Therefore, it is important that the **Enrollment Agreements** be collected as they are completed. Once the information on them has been used to make entries, the **Enrollment Agreements** should go to the staff member maintaining the tracking system. After families have been entered in the tracking system (described later in this chapter), the **Enrollment Agreements** need to be photocopied and sent to Abt Associates.

The Participant Baseline Survey

While some families are completing applications, others will be completing the Participant Baseline Survey. The purpose of the survey is to gather information about the participants and their families at the start of the program for the research needed to assess MTO's impact. **Remember—only families who have decided to join MTO should complete a survey and all families joining MTO for the first time must do so.** However, families applying again after earlier enrollment in MTO do not need to complete another baseline survey.

The Baseline Survey...

- **must be completed by all who want to join MTO**
- **must be completed after the Enrollment Agreement**
- **must be completed before random assignment**

Completing the baseline

The survey is conducted in a group setting and will be supervised by the MTO site assistant. A member of the PHA staff should be available to help the site assistant if there are more than 6 families filling out the survey at one time. English and Spanish versions of the survey will be available to participants.

The baseline survey is divided into two parts. First, the families are given a questionnaire *to complete themselves as it is being read aloud to them by the site assistant*. In this "chant and check" survey process, the site assistant will read a question and then the possible responses; the participants will mark their answers to that question. Once all the participants have answered the question, the site assistant will go on to read the next question. This part of the questionnaire should take 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

Questions in the first part of the survey cover the following topics:

- housing information
- neighborhood information
- neighbors (social network and social supports)
- employment history
- receipt of benefits
- parent involvement with children's schooling
- contact information.

The second part of the survey collects demographic information about every member of the participant's household. The site assistant will explain the three types of forms that are in this section, but the forms cannot be read aloud to the respondents (because their families differ in membership). The site assistant will stay in the room to answer questions while this part of the survey is being completed; a PHA staff member should also be there to help.

The forms for the second part of the baseline include:

- a *Household Information* form with information for every member of the participant’s household
- an *Adult Information* form with information for every person in the household who is 18 years or older
- two *Child Information* forms, one for children ages 6 to 17 and another for children 5 and under.

The second part of the Participant Baseline Survey will take anywhere from 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete, depending on the size of the family. Once the forms are completed by participants and checked by the site assistant, the participants are ready for the intake workers. (The surveys will be collected by the site assistants and sent to Abt Associates.)

Switching the families

As some families finish the Participant Baseline Survey (and it is checked by the site assistant), and as other families finish their application interview, the families switch places. ***Before a family leaves the PHA office, a staff member should be sure that forms for both parts of the intake session have been completed.***

TASK #2— APPLICATION PROCESSING AND FINAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the intake visit is over, the PHA follows its standard Section 8 procedures for certifying income and determining eligibility. *Many of the applicants are already tenants in public housing, and some will have been recertified quite recently. To facilitate the eligibility processing, the PHAs may well be able to rely on existing public housing records and data systems to confirm eligibility.*

HUD Form 50058 (Items 1-15 only) must be completed for every MTO family determined eligible for Section 8. (See Appendix E.)

While PHA staff are checking eligibility, they can also verify rent paying status. This is part of the required credit check, and the information can be passed to the NPO for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families.

As part of processing the application, PHAs should fill out HUD Form 50058 for each family that is determined eligible. If an existing 50058 form is not available for updating, or if the applicant is not the current head of household or leaseholder, a new form must be completed at this time by the Section 8 staff. Items 1 to 15 must be completed for every MTO applicant

determined eligible for Section 8. This is different from the usual procedure, in which the form is not completed unless and until a family leases up under Section 8. (Do not forget to mark No Preference in Item 15c, and also complete Item 15l—Project No. for public housing residents.)

Paper copies of the Form 50058 will need to be provided to the NPO for the families in the MTO experimental group. In addition, *forms for the families in all three groups must be submitted to Abt Associates.* (Further discussions will be held with each PHA on the format for transmitting this information.)

TASK #3—RANDOM ASSIGNMENT OF ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

Random Assignment—What it Does

A finding of eligibility means that the family can be randomly assigned to one of the three MTO groups. These groups are:

- **the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**, whose members receive certificates or vouchers good only in low-poverty census tracts, with counseling and support from the NPO;
- **the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP**, whose members receive ordinary certificates or vouchers and ordinary help from the PHA; and
- **the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP**, whose members do not receive a certificate or voucher but stay in their current (assisted) units.

RANDOM ASSIGNMENT CAN ONLY TAKE PLACE AFTER A FAMILY HAS SIGNED THE ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT TO JOIN MTO, HAS COMPLETED THE PARTICIPANT BASELINE SURVEY, AND HAS BEEN DETERMINED FULLY ELIGIBLE FOR SECTION 8 BY THE PHA. ALL THREE OF THESE CONDITIONS MUST BE MET BEFORE RANDOM ASSIGNMENT.

Abt Associates has developed a software package, to be installed on an IBM-compatible personal computer, that will enable the PHA to do random assignment. Once the software is installed, the site assistant and PHA staff will be trained to run the program.

As MTO families are determined eligible, the site assistant or PHA staff member will enter the Social Security number or alien registration number, full name, and date of birth of the participant to be randomly assigned. The software will show on the screen the family's assignment. If assigning to the MTO experimental

group or Section 8 comparison group, the screen will also show whether the family is to be given a certificate or a voucher.

Random Assignment—How it Works

The random assignment software will also produce a listing with the names of the participants and their assignments. This report can be run daily or cumulatively and printed in different orders. PHA or NPO record-keeping on random assignment should include maintaining a full series of random assignment reports. In addition, copies of the computerized file must be sent regularly to Abt Associates.

Random Assignment and Repeat Applicants

A family that has re-applied for MTO after previous enrollment, and that has been found eligible again on the basis of current information, should not be processed through the random assignment software a second time. *A family's group assignment can never change;* it is always the same as before. It is critical that PHA staff and the site assistant be sure to identify repeat applicants and record their initial assignment (date and group) on the current paperwork in the applicant folder. Be sure to watch for families who may have enrolled under another member's Social Security Number the first time.

The Timing of Random Assignment

The site agencies need to work together closely so that eligibility determination and random assignment are paced to keep the counseling staff caseloads the size the local NPO desires. In some sites, the PHAs invited large numbers of families from the waiting list for enrollment in a relatively short period of time. A substantial number of families were determined eligible and randomly assigned. But because random assignment was done too quickly, families assigned to the MTO experimental group stacked up waiting for counseling. This caused problems for both participants and staff.

If the NPO already has a substantial caseload and cannot readily absorb the number of families likely to be assigned to the MTO experimental group, *the PHA and site assistant should delay random assignment.* Moving too quickly through random assignment can have two negative consequences:

- families in the MTO experimental group wait for Section 8 and counseling while those in the comparison group get their certificates or vouchers right away.

- families who wait for NPO services may lose interest in MTO, or may be unable to take advantage of the program when the services are finally offered.

If random assignment needs to be delayed, the PHAs should also make sure to delay eligibility processing. That way, there will not be a need to redo the eligibility determination if 120 days elapse. When there is a delay, the PHA staff or site assistant should try to make sure that a family is still interested in MTO before proceeding with random assignment, because an uninterested family does no good for itself or the demonstration. By delaying the eligibility processing, the PHA will have fresh contact with the family, and the family can choose not to complete the process (thus withdrawing from MTO before random assignment).

TASK #4— NOTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

The families can now be notified of the outcome of their applications. As required for Section 8, this notification should be in writing. The letter should include the following information:

- **For families who are found to be ineligible for the MTO program,** the letter should indicate the reason why they are ineligible. They should also be advised that their current housing benefits will not be affected.
- **For families who are assigned to the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP,** the letter should indicate that the family was eligible and joined the MTO program but was not selected to receive a Section 8 certificate or voucher. These families should be advised that they will continue to receive their current housing assistance and that they may be asked to participate in future surveys as part of the MTO program.
- **For families who are assigned to the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP and the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP,** the notification letter should offer congratulations and welcome them to the program. These families should be advised that they will be receiving a Section 8 certificate or voucher (according to which type of resource was randomly assigned). The letter

should also give a date for the Section 8 briefing. Be sure that separate briefings are scheduled for the two groups (see further discussion in Chapter 9).

For families already (previously) enrolled in MTO, the notification letter should indicate that the group assignment remains the same. Those assigned to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and the Section 8 COMPARISON GROUP should be advised that they will be receiving a certificate or voucher (as previously assigned) and give the date of the Section 8 briefing. From this point on, there is no difference in process for a family repeating the NPO counseling and trying again to move to a low-poverty area.

TASK #5—SETTING UP A PARTICIPANT TRACKING SYSTEM AT THE PHA



In order to track the progress of those families receiving Section 8 assistance through the MTO demonstration, the PHA and NPO will need to set up a participant tracking system. *This tracking system should include all families assigned to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP.* The tracking system also records the assignment of in-place control group families, but no further active contact is required for this group by the PHA.

The tracking information is used by Abt Associates and HUD to monitor the progress of the demonstration. For example, the tracking system provides (weekly or monthly) the number of families participating in the program, the number who have leased units, and the group to which these families belong. One of the roles of the site assistant is to assist in setting up and maintaining the participant tracking system at the PHA and the NPO.

The MTO tracking system should use the log forms shown in Appendix F. The PHAs can record information about participants using paper copies of these forms. However, if the PHAs have existing software that enables them to record the information electronically, Abt Associates will work with the agency to arrive at a compatible electronic format.

There are three separate tracking logs, one for each of the demonstration groups. To avoid confusion, separate logs should

be maintained. For all three groups, PHA staff should record the name and social security number of participants as they are enrolled in the program. PHA staff should also record the date the **Enrollment Agreement** was signed, the date the Baseline Participant Survey was completed, and the outcome of random assignment.

For MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP families only, the PHA should record the date a certificate or voucher is issued and any dates for search extension and expiration of the certificate or voucher. Once a participant in these groups finds a unit, the dates for the housing quality standards inspection, lease approval, and move-in are noted.

Tracking the in-place control group

Tracking the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP members will not require special data collection by the PHA after the random assignment is recorded. It will be accomplished using extracts made by the PHA or project-based Section 8 managers from the electronic Form 50058 files they maintain for periodic submission to HUD. These files will be submitted to Abt Associates for use in updating demonstration records.

The PHAs will need to keep all participant tracking logs up-to-date as intake occurs. They will be photocopied at the end of each month and submitted to Abt Associates until the end of demonstration operations.

TASK #6—NOTIFYING THE NPO AND SETTING UP THE TRACKING SYSTEM FOR MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP MEMBERS

Each PHA in the MTO demonstration must notify the NPO of the names of all families assigned to the experimental group. To do this, PHA staff can photocopy the experimental group participant tracking logs on a weekly basis, as names are added. The NPOs can use the PHA information to set up their own tracking systems. If the two agencies have compatible software, electronic files can be transferred easily. (Abt Associates can help work out these details.)

At this time, the PHA should also forward paper copies of the HUD Form 50058 for each MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP family to the NPO.

The participant tracking form the NPOs use is shown in Appendix F. This form, to be maintained by staff of the NPOs,

applies only to MTO experimental group participants. It is used to record the dates and results of NPO-related activities. These include a credit check, a visit to the participant's home, and accompanied visits to inspect up to three prospective units. When the participant finds a unit, the unit address and neighborhood are recorded, along with the date of a follow-up visit by NPO staff. The NPO tracking system is discussed further in Chapter 12.

A FINAL NOTE

PHAs (and HUD Field Office staff) should be aware that no interim use of vouchers or certificates is permitted under the MTO Demonstration. MTO certificates and vouchers may *only* be used for families enrolled through the process described in this chapter. Further, rapid changes have been occurring in the statutes and regulations governing the Section 8 program over the past year and a half. It is important to keep abreast of program changes. Any issues about how these changes specifically affect MTO should be brought to the attention of the Abt Associates monitor for the site.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY:
INTAKE**

The intake process for the MTO demonstration is complex, because it serves both research and program purposes by:

- Providing complete program information and obtaining families' informed consent to join MTO;
- verify full eligibility;
- gathering participant baseline data;
- randomly assigning families among the three groups;
- notifying families; and
- establishing the participant tracking system.

Any issues about adapting a PHA's procedures to meet these requirements should be raised and discussed during training and/or with Abt Associates staff.

**Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program
VIDEO SCRIPT FOR HENRY CISNEROS, SECRETARY OF HUD**

Hello. I am Henry Cisneros, the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development of the United States. You are entering today into a great experiment, and we are grateful for your participation.

The Federal government has many programs that are meant to help families. Sometimes they do. Unfortunately, sometimes they fail to help anybody. Sometimes it seems at first that they are helping, but it turns out that the families had plenty of strengths and would have done very well anyhow, and the money that the government spent was wasted.

The Congress has given HUD money that can be used for Section 8 assistance to families who live in certain housing developments. We do not have nearly enough money to give certificates or vouchers to everyone. Also, we want to try a new plan, which has seemed to work very well in certain cities, in which some certificates or vouchers can not be used in certain places, where there is too much poverty already.

We want to be fair in deciding how to give out the limited amount of money we have. We also want to make sure that when we try to find out whether these programs work, we aren't trying to compare apples and oranges. So your application will go into a lottery just like many states have—or just like a bingo game. Today, we are going to ask you some questions about your family. Later on, you will find out whether or not you have gotten a certificate or voucher in the lottery, and whether there are any special conditions on it.

From time to time, people from HUD will come to you later on and ask you a few more questions about how your family is doing, so we can see whether these housing programs helped your family.

I make you two promises. First, the lottery will be fair. Your family has the very same chance to obtain a certificate or voucher as anybody else who applied. Second, every answer that you give in the special questionnaire today, and every answer you give later on when we come back to you, will be kept confidential. We are only asking you about your family to find out how these different programs work. Your answers will not be used to enforce any laws or regulations against you, and they will not be shared with anybody except scientists who will use them to study government programs.

Thank you again.

(A Spanish version will also be recorded.)

INTAKE

Task/ Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Staff assignments for intake processing set at start of outreach			Y / N	
Staff fully trained in intake procedures (6 steps)			Y / N	
Procedures for family notification & enrollment visit set up			Y / N	
Intake visit/Section 8 application procedures implemented;			Y / N	
Procedures for group enrollment sessions set up including Enrollment Agreement for all participant families			Y / N	
Baseline survey conducted (PHA support available)			Y / N	
Eligibility review & income certification procedures implemented in accordance w/ Section 8 requirements			Y / N	
Random assignment procedures properly set up and implemented			Y / N	
Participants notified (by mail) of group assignment; staff trained to deal with issues/questions			Y / N	
Participant tracking mechanism set up & implemented			Y / N	
Procedures for notifying NPO of experimental families & transfer of data set up & implemented (including 50058)			Y / N	

Performance standards:

- a) HA staff intake assignments (roles & responsibilities) well defined at start of outreach
- b) Staff fully trained to implement intake process & address participant questions;
- c) Enrollment and random assignment procedures are clear, thorough and cannot be manipulated for benefit of particular families
- d) All enrollment targets are realistic, and contingency procedures are established & approved

CHAPTER NINE
BRIEFING AND ISSUANCE

CHAPTER NINE: CONTENTS

BRIEFING AND ISSUANCE

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RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION

Site agencies should maintain full *documentation* of briefing materials and content. There are no other special record-keeping or data collection requirements related to briefing and issuance.

CHAPTER NINE BRIEFING AND ISSUANCE

This chapter discusses the Section 8 briefing and the issuance of certificates and vouchers to MTO program families. Its purpose is not to tell PHAs how to manage these functions, since they have long experience in meeting Section 8 requirements. But the chapter *does* provide some background for the nonprofit site agencies, and it highlights places where the demonstration requirements must be carefully connected with ordinary Section 8 operations.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The *NOFA and Program Guidelines* for the Moving to Opportunity demonstration set some core requirements related to the briefing of the families assigned to receive certificates or vouchers. First, the NOFA details what should be in the rental voucher or rental certificate packet (and implicitly what should be covered in the briefing):

In the briefing packet...

"The PHA must assure that each family selected for MTO receives a rental voucher or rental certificate holder's packet. The packet must contain:

PHAs are now required to explain portability during the Section 8 briefing and to point out the advantages of moving to areas that are not high-poverty census tracts.

-See Section 8 Certificate and Voucher Programs Conforming Rule

- (a) Request for Lease Approval;
- (b) Required Lease Provisions and Prohibited Lease Provisions;
- (c) Information on Lead-Based Paint hazards;
- (d) Forms for inspection of housing units;
- (e) *Fair Housing: It's your Right* (HUD-1260-FHEO) dated July 1990, or the Spanish translation thereof (HUD-1260-1-FHEO SPAN) dated September 1991, as appropriate;
- (f) Information about total tenant payment or the family's portion of the rent to owner and the fair market rent or payment standard appropriate for the family size and composition;
- (g) The schedule of allowances for utilities and other services;
- (h) Such other items as HUD may subsequently determine are needed." (NOFA, p. 43459)

Content of the briefings...

Second, the NOFA describes the briefings that are to be conducted for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families—the families that will receive NPO counseling and assistance in finding a unit to rent in a low-poverty census tract. The NOFA

indicates that PHAs and NPOs are jointly responsible for these briefings:

"The families selected for participation in the experimental group will receive guidance from the NPO in selecting a suitable unit. *The PHA and NPO shall inform the family of its responsibilities and the responsibilities of the owner. This guidance in addition to the housing counseling services shall include:*

- (a) Family and owner responsibilities under the lease and assistance contract;
- (b) Applicable housing quality standards and procedures for compliance with those standards;
- (c) Significant aspects of applicable State and local landlord-tenant laws;
- (d) Significant aspects of Federal, State, and local fair housing laws;
- (e) Applicable fair market rents or payment standards, determination of total tenant payment and establishment of housing assistance payments." (NOFA Attachment 1, p.43465)

**SECTION 8 BRIEFINGS—
PURPOSE AND
ORGANIZATION**

The purpose of the Section 8 briefing is to provide families with information about how the program works and to issue the certificate or voucher to the family. Briefings in the MTO demonstration will not differ much from regular Section 8 briefings for the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP families; in fact, *they are meant to be the same as ordinary PHA practice.* For the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, the briefing must be modified in certain ways.

Remember that some enrolled families at each site will be assigned to the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP. This group does not receive any tenant-based rental assistance, so this group does not get invited to attend a Section 8 briefing. However, there is no change in their status as recipients of project-based housing assistance.

Voucher and certificate briefings are typically held separately, so that participants are not confused by the differences between the two programs. Even though HUD is working to reduce the differences between the voucher and certificate programs, there

is still a need to hold separate briefings because of the differences that remain.

Briefing sessions at large PHAs are generally held in groups. Typical practice in the five MTO sites varies from 10 to 60 attending. When group sessions are held, time is usually set aside for one-on-one meetings with a staff member to address individual questions and issue the certificate or voucher.

MTO requirements in organizing briefings

For MTO, there are *two critical requirements* regarding the organization of the Section 8 briefings:

- *Separate briefings must be held for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families and for the families in the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP.* No family can be allowed to attend the wrong briefing. This is because the NPO staff will have a role in briefing the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, and also because there are important differences in what the groups need to learn at the briefing.
- *Random assignment will control which families are issued certificates and which are issued vouchers.* (The Los Angeles MTO site is being allocated vouchers only; all other sites are receiving a mix of certificates and vouchers.)

Prepare for four separate types of briefings:

- **MTO Certificates**
- **MTO Vouchers**
- **Section 8 Certificates**
- **Section 8 Vouchers**

As a result of these requirements, you need to run *four kinds of briefing sessions*:

- 1) MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families with certificates
- 2) MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families with vouchers
- 3) SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP families with certificates
- 4) SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP families with vouchers.

You should also have a way to check that the people arriving for a briefing reach the correct briefing room for their group.

WHAT THE BRIEFINGS DO—DIFFERENCES BY GROUP

The MTO briefings should provide all the families assigned to receive a rental certificate or voucher with the same program information and materials as any other Section 8 participant. They should always address fair housing issues and help searchers recognize discrimination if it occurs. The NOFA requirements listed at the beginning of this chapter indicate the information and materials to be covered.

Special emphasis for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families...

A standard outline for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP briefing is included at the end of this chapter.

The briefings for the experimental group need to have a special emphasis, however. They should focus on the leasing of units in low-poverty areas and on the help the NPO will provide to find the right place for each family. Thus, the PHA and NPO may want to conduct the briefings for these families jointly. ***Remember—this is the only mandatory counseling contact for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families.***

The families enrolling in MTO will have been given a full explanation about the program earlier, before they sign up, including the fact that some of the vouchers and certificates will only be good in low-poverty areas. Even so, the impact of this may really not come through to them until the briefings for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, when they will hear that *their own* choices are limited in this way. As a result, the briefing will be even more important than usual for motivating the families to use their rental assistance.

Involving the NPO in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP briefings

Consider using a video on the Gautreaux Program, produced for 60 Minutes for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP briefing.

The involvement of the NPO can help to motivate the families. If the NPO staff member can offer examples of the support the agency will provide and talk about the successes for recent families, the challenge for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families will seem less daunting. The goal is to make these families feel they have a special opportunity, not a limitation. Therefore, ***cooperation between PHA and NPO staff on the briefings is vital to starting MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families on the road to successful moves.***

To prepare for these joint briefings, NPO staff can attend regular Section 8 briefings in advance so that they understand the context and the usual content. You may also want to develop an expanded briefing packet for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, so that materials about the NPO and about the MTO program are included. ***Be sure to label these packets clearly, so***

they will not accidentally be offered to families from the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP.

Maintaining NPO involvement in the briefings

It will take some scheduling coordination to make sure that the briefings for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families are consistently delivered with the participation of NPO staff. The nonprofit should be kept up-to-date on the flow of enrollment and on the scheduling of each group for briefing. Staff from the two site agencies should be in regular, close communication about this task.

USE OF SECTION 8 LANDLORD LISTS

Housing authorities are now required to provide at the briefing a list of landlords or other parties known to the housing authority who may be willing to lease a unit to the family or help the family find a unit. NPOs should work with PHAs to develop lists for MTO families searching in low-poverty neighborhoods. In preparing such lists, the following guidelines should apply:

- 1) Lists should be maintained by neighborhood. That is, each neighborhood should have a separate list.
- 2) Lists should be distributed after participants have had a chance to learn about the relevant neighborhoods in the metropolitan area and discuss them with NPO staff.
- 3) Lists should not look too official. For example, they should not be on PHA (or NPO) letterhead. It will be obvious to NPO staff that the specific brokering/advocacy function of NPOs with respect to credit history, housekeeping, and other evidence of good conduct as a tenant is not served by just giving out a list. This, however, may not be obvious to tenants or landlords. It is important to avoid diluting the effect of this service.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
IN ISSUING CERTIFICATES
AND VOUCHERS UNDER MTO**

**Making the MTO certificates
and vouchers identifiable**



It may be useful—for administrative purposes—to *make the MTO certificates and vouchers issued to experimental group families easily identifiable* by all Section 8 staff. The simplest way to do this is to print them on a specific color paper. Seeing this color should help alert all staff (particularly those handling Requests for Lease Approval) that the location of the proposed unit needs to be checked to be sure it is in a low-poverty census tract. Of course, the PHA may also want to assign a specific block of numbers for all the MTO certificates and vouchers.

**Switching between certificates and
vouchers (except Los Angeles)**

**Families in the
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP
that switch a voucher for
a certificate (or vice versa)
must still move to low-
poverty census tracts to
use the assistance.**

The families that are randomly assigned to either the MTO experimental group or the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP are also being randomly assigned one form of rental assistance—either a certificate or a voucher. Section 8 program rules do say, however, that a participant can ask for the other type of assistance. If such a request is made, and the PHA has the other type available, the family has the right to switch. For the MTO demonstration, *switches should be kept to a minimum*, so that the proportion of certificates in each randomly assigned group remains at about one-third, with vouchers at about two-thirds.

To issue or not to issue...

In Chicago’s Gautreaux program, the participants were given more time to search than the 120-day maximum for a Section 8 voucher or certificate (with extensions). The way this was handled was that the certificates were not actually issued until the family was close to leasing up.

For the MTO demonstration, the HUD Section 8 program office in Washington is willing to allow PHAs to delay issuance of certificates and vouchers to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families for *up to 60 days*, so that families may have more time to search and/or solve problems that may prevent them from using the certificate or voucher.

Delaying issuance can give these families up to 180 days to search. Families in the MTO experimental group can work with



the NPO staff for up to two months and then determine whether to take the certificate or voucher. Or the family can decide a move is not right for them at this time and turn down the Section 8 assistance.

Each site must establish a procedure for delayed issuance.

In either case, each PHA should develop a standard procedure with the NPO for deciding whether to delay issuance of the certificate or voucher for particular families. If so, the PHA should provide families with a "Letter of Intent" to issue the certificate or voucher. A sample Letter of Intent is provided at the end of this chapter.

The PHA and NPO should also consider whether delayed issuance may be useful for a particular category of families (for example, those needing 4 bedroom apartments or larger). The site agencies can decide to delay issuance for some, but not all, MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, as long as a Letter of Intent is provided to them (for the initial two-month period).

Drawbacks to delaying issuance

Despite these possible benefits, delaying issuance of certificates and vouchers will make MTO more complex to administer for both PHAs and NPOs. It will be harder to know whether enrollment goals are being met. It will give the NPO staff more responsibility for working with the families to decide whether they are ready to move. And families who wish to search earlier will need some form of proof that they *will* be getting Section 8 assistance (a Letter of Intent).

Re-issuing an MTO certificate or voucher

The NOFA is quite clear that the resources allocated to the PHA for the MTO demonstration may only be used for this program. When an MTO certificate or voucher is returned (whether by a family unable to lease up, by a suburban PHA absorbing the family, or by a family leaving housing assistance in the future), the PHA must turn to its special MTO waiting list for an eligible family. During the course of the MTO *research* (until all certificates and vouchers have been leased-up once), random assignment is also required. Thus, the family receiving the returned certificate or voucher may not be in the same group as the family returning it, but *must* be in the MTO experimental or SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY:
BRIEFING AND ISSUANCE**

Section 8 briefings for the MTO demonstration need to cover the same ground as all regular Section 8 briefings. But there are

some special requirements in MTO about how the briefings should be organized. Also, the PHA and NPO may want to conduct jointly the briefings for MTO experimental group families.

Action items for the Section 8 briefing

- 1) PHAs and NPOs develop a briefing package together for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, with additional materials and information on the NPO.
- 2) Conduct the briefings with both PHA and NPO staff for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, so that those attending receive motivational and support messages from the very start.
- 3) Plan how to make MTO certificates and vouchers readily identifiable.

PHA Resources/Actions

Thoroughly go over the briefing contents and materials with NPO staff, so that they are fully aware of Section 8 requirements.

Provide space and time for briefings, with careful separation of the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP from the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP.

Provide opportunities for NPO staff to play a role in the briefings for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families.

NPO Resources/Actions

Attend one or more PHA briefings, to become familiar with standard procedures.

Work with PHA staff how to conduct briefings together for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families.

Develop and provide materials for the briefing packet specific to MTO, such as fair market rent schedules for other parts of the metropolitan area.

Desired Results

All families receiving Section 8 certificates or vouchers have a comprehensive introduction to the program.

Families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP receive a standard briefing across the five sites.

Families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP are introduced to NPO staff right away and made aware of the available assistance.

Standard Outline for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP Briefing

Part I (PHA): SECTION 8 Requirements (Certificate OR Voucher)

Renting a unit in the private market:

- Family and Landlord responsibilities
- Significant aspects of applicable landlord-tenant law

Rents and payment levels:

- Applicable fair market rents or payment standards
- Determination of total tenant payment and housing assistance payment
- Schedule for utility allowances and other services

Searching for an apartment:

- Time allowed, extensions
- Portability
- Applicable federal, state and local fair housing laws
- What to do if you encounter discrimination
- Applicable housing quality standards, how to meet them
- Lead-based paint
- Keep in touch with the PHA during your search

Finding an apartment:

- Inspections
- Request for Lease Approval
- Prohibited lease provisions

Continuing in the Section 8 program:

- Fraud
- Recertification and reinspection

Part II (NPO): Special segment for the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Introducing the NPO:

- Counseling availability and purpose
- Steps in working with the counselor
- Other assistance offered (unit identification, transportation, etc.)

Moving to low-poverty areas:

- Definition of low-poverty census tracts, location limits of certificates/vouchers
- Advantages of living in low-poverty areas—MOTIVATIONAL DISCUSSION
- Range of possible choices inside and outside city (local maps)¹
- General discussion of information sources for wider search
- Portability discussion (more detail)
- Fair housing discussion (greater depth—challenges of wider search)

Next steps in Moving to Opportunity:

- First contact with the NPO counselor
- Letters of intent issued (delayed issuance of certificates/vouchers explained)

¹ Landlord or development lists for low-poverty areas should not be distributed until participants have had a chance to learn about possible neighborhoods and have expressed their own preference for one or more of them. This should wait until after the home visit (see *POM*, p. 9-5).

Letter of Intent Certificate from the NYC Housing Authority
and
Letter of Intent Voucher from the NYC Housing Authority

SECTION 8 BRIEFING

Task/ Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Standard Section 8 briefing materials prepared and available			Y / N	
Staff assignments/training for briefing completed			Y / N	
Mechanisms for participation of NPO defined & implemented			Y / N	
Separate briefings for certificate & voucher families; and for experimental and Section 8 comparison group families			Y / N	
Procedures (colors) for identifying & separating folders for Experimental & Section 8 comparison group families in place			Y / N	
Procedures for standard issuance of certificates/vouchers to Section 8 comparison group implemented;			Y / N	
Procedures for (delayed) issuance of certificate/vouchers to experimental families set up			Y / N	
Procedures for re-issuance of certificate/voucher in place when family unable to lease up.			Y / N	
			Y / N	
			Y / N	
			Y / N	

Performance standards:

- a) All families receiving Section 8 certificates or vouchers have a comprehensive introduction to the program.
- b) Families in the experimental group are introduced to NPO staff right away and made aware of the available assistance.
- c) NPO staff have chance to outline counseling program, and begin setting up home visits
- d) All briefing groups (Exp cert/Exp vouch/Comp cert/ Comp vou

Interim Notice PIH 94-12 from HUD (6 pages)

CHAPTER TEN
HOME VISITS, HOUSEKEEPING AND CREDIT CHECKS
(MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)

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CHAPTER TEN

HOME VISITS, HOUSEKEEPING AND CREDIT CHECKS (MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)

This chapter presents requirements and recommended approaches for preliminary counseling visits with *families enrolled in the MTO experimental group*. After the Section 8 briefing, preliminary contacts with the families can take a variety of forms, including home visits, one-on-one counseling sessions, or group counseling sessions to talk about search opportunities and to outline the kinds of support to be provided. The purpose of these first contacts outside of the Section 8 program is:

- to build and sustain the motivation of families to succeed in finding new homes and to become self-reliant in moving to new communities;
- to provide families with (any additional) information they might need, or answer questions they might have about the NPO's counseling services;
- to gather accurate information about the family's particular needs for assistance and plan a program of support through search and lease-up; and
- to conduct the housekeeping and credit checks required by the MTO NOFA.
- to identify problems that will clearly prevent families from taking advantage of the opportunities offered.

This step in the counseling program begins after the Section 8 briefing and ends with the actual start of counseling and search assistance. *Materials in this chapter refer only to the families assigned to the MTO experimental group.*

INTRODUCTION

After the Section 8 briefing, families will have a much greater sense of what their options are. They may also feel overwhelmed by all they have to think about and do. Excitement built up through the Section 8 briefing can dwindle rapidly in the face of day-to-day problems, especially with the thought of having to leave a support network of family and friends.

Mixed feelings are natural...

The NPO's initial contacts with families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP should therefore seek to reduce their anxiety and uncertainty by personalizing the counseling process, dealing with the family's immediate concerns or problems, and moving quickly to set up a plan of action to resolve them. These activities will include *home visits* to assess family needs and conduct housekeeping checks, and *credit checks* from the office.

After the Section 8 briefing

At a minimum, the Section 8 briefing will already have provided MTO EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES with information about:

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- How the Section 8 program works, and tenants' rights and responsibilities under the program, PLUS a voucher or certificate holder's packet (see Chapter 9);
- Special requirements of the MTO demonstration about moving to low-poverty census tracts;
- How to recognize and deal with discrimination in housing search;
- Housing quality standards and housing inspection methods; and
- Issuance of the certificates or vouchers (and/or any special procedures that may be required to extend the time limits for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families).

With the assistance of NPO counselors, families will also have a better understanding of the opportunities and options available to MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families regarding housing search and locational choices, and how their counseling program will unfold. Arrangements for home visits and credit checks may already have been initiated at this point.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

In addition to the normal Section 8 briefing requirements, the *NOFA and Program Guidelines* require the NPO to carry out a credit check on MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, to visit the family in their home for individual counseling and a housekeeping check, and (optionally) to obtain a letter of reference from the current landlord.

Credit checks

According to Item 7 in Attachment 1 of the NOFA,

NPOs must perform credit checks on MTO families selected for the experimental group. Owners of rental property in low-poverty census tracts will generally do credit checks in any case. The purpose of the MTO credit check is to avoid the landlord having to do the check, thereby saving the assisted family time and often money. If the credit history is unfavorable, NPOs may suggest ways to cure the credit problem. When the landlord recruitment effort described above leads to the

identification of potential low-poverty census tract units, the NPO is not obligated to show them to a family, with a credit history that is not acceptable to most property owners, although the EXPERIMENTAL GROUP family always has the right to seek a unit of its choice in low-poverty census tracts.

Housekeeping checks

Item 8 in Attachment 1 of the NOFA specifies that

...NPOs shall visit applicant families in their homes, to...(a) observe the family's treatment of the rental property it currently occupies.... The reason for the housekeeping check is that a small minority of assisted family heads have grown up in dysfunctional families in which they never learned housekeeping skills. When they lease a unit in a low-poverty census tract, this frequently leads to early termination of the lease by the landlord because of lease violations. If the family's treatment of its current unit would not be acceptable to most private landlords in low-poverty census tracts, the NPO shall inform the family of the areas of deficiency and offer to schedule a return visit in which improvement could be demonstrated. It shall also inform the family that without improvement, its chances of successfully leasing a unit in a low-poverty census tract are not good. When the landlord recruitment effort described above leads to the identification of potential low-poverty census tract units, the NPO is not obligated to show them to families with housekeeping standards that are not acceptable to most property owners, although the family always has the right to seek a unit of its choice in low-poverty census tracts.

Letter of reference

Item 4 in Attachment 1 of the NOFA specifies that

If a family is selected for the EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, the NPO may require the family to submit a letter from the current landlord about the family's tenancy history, and a general letter of reference.

GROUND RULES FOR HOME VISITS



In addition to meeting NOFA requirements, there are three good reasons for doing a home visit:

1. It gives the NPO counselor a chance to *obtain personal information* about the family in a private setting, and to meet various members of the family;
2. It provides an opportunity for the NPO to assess directly the personal *resources, needs and goals* of the family that will affect the chances of success under MTO;
3. It gives the family a chance to get to know and feel comfortable with the program and counselor by asking questions one-on-one that they may not have raised in the Section 8 briefing.

Access, authorization, and safety

Home visit security

- early morning visits work well
- escorts may be advisable in some locations

It is very important that NPO staff set up adequate home visit procedures with the PHA and with Resident Advisory Councils (tenant councils) for particular developments well in advance of the first visits. The purpose of these procedures is more than courtesy. PHA administrators and managers of many developments have concerns about the safety of visitors and residents. They will probably require that certain practices be observed—for example, when home visits should be conducted, who should conduct them, and who should be notified.

The same kinds of procedures need to be worked out with the owners or managers of targeted project-based Section 8 developments and with any organizations in these sites. NPOs should definitely work out these arrangements with the appropriate parties ahead of time, to assure that NPO staff have proper access and authorization for the visits and that all necessary precautions are taken.

Family needs assessment

When an individual family is randomly assigned to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, some information about that family will be provided to the NPO on the HUD Form 50058 and in other contents of the PHA's file. Additional information may also be obtained at the Section 8 briefing regarding personal concerns, search preferences, transportation problems, etc. The NPO now has an initial base of information that can be useful in adapting

Moving out of high-poverty, troubled neighborhoods may, by itself, do a great deal to address the needs identified in the initial assessment.

Counselors should try to identify serious problems as soon as possible and let the PHA know if issuance of the voucher or certificate is likely to be delayed the full 60 days.

the counseling support and referral services to the needs of the specific family.

This background information, however, is not likely to show either the family's strengths or the particular problems they may face in being able to take advantage of the certificate or voucher and move to a new unit in low-poverty neighborhood. One of the first steps in setting up the counseling program for a family is to *identify the family's strengths, special achievements, experiences, and abilities*. These are what they can build on for the future.

Another early step is to *identify the immediate issues* that must be addressed before beginning the search process. These may include:

- Family problems (such as medical problems, family instability, alcohol or drug abuse);
- Housekeeping practices and furnishings; and/or
- Income and credit problems.

During the visit with the family in their current home, the counselor should seek to identify these kinds of problems, and to help the family develop ways to deal with them as effectively as possible so that they don't interfere with or undermine the family's move to a new unit. *If there are serious problems* that present immediate threats to the family and their participation in MTO, *the goal should be first to stabilize the situation* (directly or through referral) and then to develop with the family a plan for dealing with each issue identified.

NPOs are not obligated to provide services to all families assigned to the MTO experimental group. The decision as to which families merit such assistance must be made on a case by case basis. Among the factors that can be included in reaching this decision are the following:

1. The NPO is not obligated to provide counseling services or show a unit to a family, including a family with a credit

history that is not acceptable to most property owners. The experimental group family always has the right to seek a unit of its own choice in a low-poverty census tract.

2. The NPO is not obligated to provide counseling services or to show units to families with housekeeping standards that are not acceptable to most property owners.
3. The NPO will be permitted to withhold or withdraw counseling services from families who choose not to comply with the goals and objectives of their plan for addressing family needs. It is possible that a single family member may have a need or problem (e.g., addiction) that must be addressed or the stability of the entire family may be threatened. Until these needs are addressed to the satisfaction of the NPO, no further counseling or assistance need be provided.

Housekeeping checks

The purpose of doing housekeeping checks for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families is not only to ensure that the head of household observes basic housekeeping procedures such as cleanliness and safety for the family, but also to check that the household has a minimum level of furnishings and furniture to move into a new unit. (If not, the NPO may be able to help locate sources of furnishings for a new apartment.) Housekeeping checks can also uncover difficulties the family may have caring for children or elderly members of the family, or in using certain facilities.

The housekeeping check should assure that the family has a minimum level of competence in maintaining a clean and safe environment and is prepared for the responsibility of tenancy in the private housing market. The counselor needs to see that the family is likely to meet normal lease requirements for keeping the unit in good condition and not creating problems for neighbors. If these conditions are not present, NPO staff may want to set up a plan for helping the family to acquire basic housekeeping skills before starting the search for a new unit. However, it is finally the family's choice whether to postpone the search or go ahead with it.

CREDIT CHECKS

Experience with the Gautreaux program in Chicago has shown

that credit checks are helpful in two ways. They are useful both in convincing landlords to participate and in helping families clear up credit problems and set up realistic budgets for the future. If they have not already done so, *it is recommended that the nonprofit agencies set up their own credit reporting system* (using TRW or another national network), rather than relying on requests to outside service providers. (More details are given later in this chapter.)

Most prospective landlords will conduct their own credit checks anyway. It is helpful knowing beforehand what they will find and developing a strategy for dealing with serious credit problems prior to search. This strategy should be the first part of helping families set up a realistic budget that takes into account their resources and required expenses.

**Credit reports are not
black and white**

Most low-income families do have credit problems, or at least credit histories that indicate problems in the past. The question is usually not whether families have unpaid bills, but rather how serious the credit problems are, and whether they have affected rent payments. Landlords in low-poverty neighborhoods do not always insist that families have clean credit reports before agreeing to accept them as tenants; however, they are more likely to agree if the family brings up the credit problem with a plan to handle it already worked out.

The point of the credit check is to *identify the serious problems and to develop a program for dealing with them* before the family spends a lot of time and effort looking for a new home—and perhaps before getting into even more serious financial difficulty later on.

It may take some time to work out these difficulties. There may be some families whose problems are so severe that they will be unable to take advantage of the certificate or voucher at all. For the majority, however, the sooner major credit problems are addressed, the sooner a family will be able to negotiate a lease.

The NPO is not obligated to provide counseling services or to show units to any household which it determines cannot satisfactorily negotiate a lease and achieve viable tenancy in a low-poverty area.

Levels of credit reports

Several levels of service are usually available from national credit agencies, with reports costing from \$12 to \$50 each. The more extensive reports are frequently recommended because they identify not only current liabilities and overdue payments but also whether the individual has previously been evicted for violation of a lease or has had personal property—such as a car—repossessed (in California, "unlawful detainer" reports). Agencies can also rent a terminal from the credit services for a monthly fee and obtain reports at lower cost per case.

When to do credit checks

Agencies may want to consider doing credit checks on families immediately after the Section 8 briefing so that counselors can know *what a family's financial situation is before conducting the home visit*. The details of working out credit problems may have to wait until subsequent meetings with the family at the agency. However, it is usually better knowing about potential problems up front, rather than waiting to find out about them later. *This "early warning" procedure will require getting credit report releases from families at the Section 8 briefing, if the home visit will be the next contact with the family.*

MANAGER REFERRALS

Positive referral letters from the manager of the development where the family now lives can provide important support for a family seeking a new unit in the private market. The PHA's staff can help the NPO obtain such letters from public housing site managers, although an alternative approach may be needed if one manager has dozens of letters requested.

Agencies will want to assure that the letter is positive and the manager supports the goals of MTO. It does not make sense to ask for a letter of referral from a person who does not want a family to leave the property, or who has other problems with the family. Cordial contacts between agency staff and managers of the development can be very helpful in identifying a family's particular strengths and weaknesses before they begin the search process.

Maintaining the family's motivation to succeed

After the Section 8 briefing, it is crucial that the NPOs not allow too long a period of time to elapse before the home visit or a one-on-one counseling session. The reason is that families may lose their enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment to the idea of moving. The home visit is a chance for the agency to under-

stand more completely "where a family is coming from" in terms of its needs, resources, and goals. The counselor can begin to define a plan for dealing with specific difficulties and barriers that may stand in a family's way.

**SUMMARY: HOME VISITS,
HOUSEKEEPING AND
CREDIT CHECKS**

MTO nonprofit agencies should conduct home visits with EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families as soon as possible after the Section 8 briefing, in order to sustain the family's motivation and commitment to the program. The visit should include a preliminary needs assessment (needs, resources, goals); discussion of credit and financial situation (preliminary budget); and house-keeping checks. Counseling staff should address the family's immediate concerns first, and lay out a plan for next steps.

**Action items for family
needs assessment**

1. Plan for the prompt transfer of family information from PHA to NPO, so that NPO staff have background data before the first visit;
2. Make arrangements for NPO staff access to the public housing developments and private Section 8 developments for home visits and individual counseling (arrange security precautions as needed);
3. Complete credit checks before the home visit to focus on most serious problems first;
4. Follow a standardized procedure for assessing needs so as not to forget details, but be willing to listen to and address the family's most important concerns.
5. The needs assessment can also help identify families for whom a move to a low-poverty neighborhood at this time would be inappropriate.
6. Be sure to record the dates of the home visit and credit check in the Participant Tracking Log. Counselors will also want to keep separate, detailed files about each client family.



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PHA Resources/Actions

Maintain the system and procedures for transferring family data (tracking log and Form 50058) to the NPO.

Keep NPO staff informed of security and access arrangements in the developments.

Maintain liaison with managers and tenant organizations regarding site visits by NPO.

Encourage housing managers to prepare letters of reference for NPO families.

NPO Resources/Actions

Follow through on security and access arrangements in developments.

Carry out credit checks as soon as possible after Section 8 briefing.

Carry out home visits as soon as possible (including needs assessment, housekeeping and credit checks), and record results of visit in detail.

Record the dates of home visits and credit check in the Participant Tracking Log.

Schedule next meeting (group/individual).

Secure family's commitment to next steps, and make appropriate arrangements.

Desired Results

NPO staff are familiar with basic facts about the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families in advance and have access (with appropriate security precautions) to the targeted developments for home visits.

NPO staff carry out home visits, providing motivational support to families and securing basic information for needs assessments.

NPO staff can perform credit and housekeeping checks to identify/resolve problems and prepare families for search. NPO staff maintain records of results in a standardized format, the Participant Tracking Log.

HOME VISITS, HOUSEKEEPING AND CREDIT CHECKS

Task/ Activity	Priority	Assigned	Complete (Y/N)	Pending Items
Home visit schedules set up during S8 Briefing			Y / N	
Mechanism established with HA/managers to assure access, authorization & security of NPO staff for home visit			Y / N	
NPO staff have standardized procedure for assessing family needs, resources & goals under MTO			Y / N	
Mechanism set up to conduct credit checks & share results with family at home visit (or office)			Y / N	
Procedures for conducting home visit established			Y / N	
NPO staff trained in conducting home visits & counseling families on immediate steps to be taken before beginning search			Y / N	
Staff trained in procedures for complete documentation of results of the home visit			Y / N	
Procedures & instructions completed for securing letters of recommendation from PH managers			Y / N	
			Y / N	

Performance standards:

- a) NPO staff are familiar with basic facts about ***experimental group*** families in advance, and have access (with appropriate security precautions) to the targeted developments for home visits.
- b) NPO staff carry out home visits, providing motivational support to families and securing basic information for needs assessment;
- c) NPO staff perform credit and housekeeping checks to identify/resolve problems and prepare families for search; staff maintain detain records of results in a standardized format.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

**PROVIDING INITIAL COUNSELING SERVICES
(MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)**

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONTENTS

**PROVIDING INITIAL COUNSELING SERVICES
(MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)**

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

PROVIDING INITIAL COUNSELING SERVICES (MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)

This chapter presents requirements and recommended approaches for providing initial counseling services to families enrolled in the MTO experimental group. After the Section 8 briefing, NPO staff should plan on starting the counseling process with their first contact with the family—presumably the home visit (Chapter 10). As a result of that visit, counselors will have a much clearer understanding of the needs, resources, and aspirations of the family and will be able to establish an individualized plan to help the family find and move to a new unit in a low-poverty neighborhood. MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families are not required, however, to work with NPOs in order to use their certificate or voucher.

The chapter considers two forms of counseling (individual and group sessions). It covers five topic areas that map the sequence of choices families must make in finding acceptable units. These are: *providing motivational support, preparing for search, assistance in finding units, presentations to landlords, and unit selection.* Subsequent chapters cover additional search assistance (Chapter 12) and follow-up assistance after the move (Chapter 14). The intent is not to mandate a particular format or content for counseling, but rather to suggest an appropriate range of counseling options and opportunities. The overall goal is to assist families during the search process, with an emphasis on helping them build their own independence and self-sufficiency.

INTRODUCTION

For the EXPERIMENTAL GROUP of families in the MTO demonstration, the primary objective of counseling is to help them find and move into satisfactory dwellings in low-poverty census tracts. Counseling support can be provided in individual or group settings, and usually comprises four types of assistance:

- *Motivational support* (maintaining the family's commitment to moving and to achieving their goals);
- *Building skills* (e.g. budgeting, housing search, dwelling unit inspections, and dealing with landlords);
- *Providing information* (e.g. available units and potential neighborhoods, neighborhood features, transportation options, school and job opportunities); and
- *Direct assistance or intervention* (e.g. accompanied visits to units, family advocacy, anti-discrimination services, lease negotiations).

Not a counseling curriculum...

The nonprofit organizations responsible for MTO have been selected because they have the capacity, the experience, and the commitment necessary to deliver the counseling called for in the demonstration. For this reason, this chapter does not attempt to detail the precise content of counseling services. It assumes that the NPOs have already developed appropriate content and methods for counseling families in the areas required by the NOFA and recommended here.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING COUNSELING SERVICES

The *NOFA and Program Guidelines* for the MTO demonstration program require that...



A family assigned to the 'experimental group' will receive *extensive housing counseling services* from the non-profit organization (NPO) to assist the family in obtaining housing in low-poverty areas.

The NOFA specifies five general areas in which nonprofit agencies should be prepared to provide counseling assistance to MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families. They are:

- Budgeting assistance (required for voucher families)
- Housing search strategies
- Direct search assistance
- Tenant advocacy
- Adjusting to new environments.

Budgeting assistance

If an assisted family receives a *rental voucher*, the NOFA requires that

...the NPO shall point out to the family the amount of rent and utilities it will be able to afford from month to month, and shall offer to help the family draw up a monthly budget for the purpose of estimating the maximum feasible rent to owner [sic] for that family.

Housing search

The NOFA requires the NPO to provide

...individual counseling on housing search in low-poverty census tracts to the families selected for the experimental group with sensitivity to the special needs of the individual families.

In addition, Item 5 of Attachment 1 of the NOFA emphasizes the importance of housing search strategies with the desired result that "most placements occur through *individual housing search by assisted families*, rather than through the organized landlord recruitment effort." It also specifies that

NPOs shall give families *maps showing low-poverty neighborhoods* of the metropolitan area. To the extent practicable, such neighborhoods shall be both inside and outside census tracts of minority concentration.

NPOs shall also describe in detail *effective housing search strategies* [such as ads in neighborhood newspapers and notices on bulletin boards in village halls], and warns against *ineffective search strategies* [such as telephone shopping, because landlords may then screen on accent or grammar, or starting off interviews with 'Do you accept Section 8?'].

Finally, with respect to search strategies, the NOFA adds that

...the NPO staff shall be well informed about (a) public transportation routes, (b) public school systems, (c) hospital and public health clinic locations, (d) new industrial and major retail facilities, or other potential employment centers.

Dealing with landlords

In addition, the NOFA states that "the NPO must also give guidance to the families on the *requirements of unit owners* and conduct *role-playing sessions* in which families learn effective ways to present themselves to the unit owners."

AFTER THE HOME VISIT

Both the timing and content of counseling services offered to MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families will be affected by the results of the home visit. Some families may be very enthusiastic and fully prepared to take advantage of the assistance available to them. In addition, they may have few credit or housekeeping problems to prevent them from starting search immediately. Others may not be ready to look because they require motivational support or direct assistance in solving credit or other family problems before they can begin looking.

A delay in issuance of the voucher or certificate does not mean stopping the housing counseling or search process.

For families with serious problems in these areas, NPO counselors may in fact recommend to the PHA postponing issuance of the voucher or certificate for a period of up to 60 days while these problems are resolved. Thereafter, the normal 120 day time constraints will apply. Counselors should determine as soon as possible whether families will require this additional time, and let the PHA know immediately.

COUNSELING MODES

The NOFA refers to two basic modes of counseling for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families: individual and group sessions. *Individual counseling sessions* can occur as part of the home visit, as part of the accompanied visits to available units, or in other (unspecified) meetings to address specific needs.

Group sessions can begin with the Section 8 briefing, and go on to include sessions dealing with housing search strategies, unit inspections, leases, moving, etc. Each format has its strengths, drawbacks and attendant costs. Agencies are permitted considerable latitude to determine what they consider to be the best mix of group and individual formats for their typical MTO clients, within the parameters of their approved program budgets.

GROUND RULES FOR COUNSELING

There are three ground rules that bind the NPOs in this demonstration to a common counseling framework:

- (a) *The level of assistance must be reasonable and within the realm of public policy options*—that is, NPOs should not attempt to solve all of the family's problems directly, but should count on providing information and referral resources the family can use to address other (non-housing) issues.

- (b) *Services offered must fit within program budgets.* Efforts to motivate families and overcome barriers to search have to be economically feasible, and the MTO demonstration recognizes that not all families can be successfully placed with the amount of resources available per case in the NPO budgets.

The starting point is that MTO EXPERIMENTAL FAMILIES should have access to at least the same services offered regular Section 8 families.

- (c) Any counseling approach should seek to build the capacity of enrolled families to become independent and survive on their own in a location and dwelling unit of their own choosing.

In setting up their programs, NPOs should develop a balanced approach with respect to the levels of service to be offered to individual families. There are three important distinctions to be made relative to this issue:

Levels of service provided

- Breadth of services, describing the substantive range of counseling content;
Intensity of services, describing the amount of staff time and resources used in delivering the assistance; and
Degree of advocacy, describing the extent to which counseling staff intervene on behalf of the family to bring about desired results.

Breadth or range of services

The ground rules above suggest that the range of services offered directly by NPOs should be related to issues of housing and neighborhood choice. Other services—for example, job development or legal services—should be handled through information and referral.

Intensity of services

NPO counselors should be careful to assess each family's situation and adjust the assistance offered according to the family's needs and their ability and commitment to use the voucher or certificate in low-poverty areas.

Second, the appropriate intensity of services for individual families is likely to be determined by both family needs and by budget and time constraints. NPOs should not allow staff to become so involved with particular families that there is little time left to work with enrolled families who require less individualized support. NPOs must monitor and balance both service intensity and the build-up of placements so that the enrollment targets outlined above in Chapter 7 are met within the time and budget constraints of the program.

Third, there are clearly times when the direct involvement of counselors will be necessary—for example, accompanied visits, dealing with discrimination in search, negotiating leases (Chapter 12). Part of this issue about intensity of services revolves around the professional styles and orientations of the site agencies involved. As noted before, several NPOs in the five sites are deeply committed to intensive casework methods in providing



services to their clientele. Other agencies with community action and fair housing orientations tend to favor counseling approaches aimed at building motivation, skills, and knowledge toward the level of competence required to achieve family goals.

Degree of advocacy

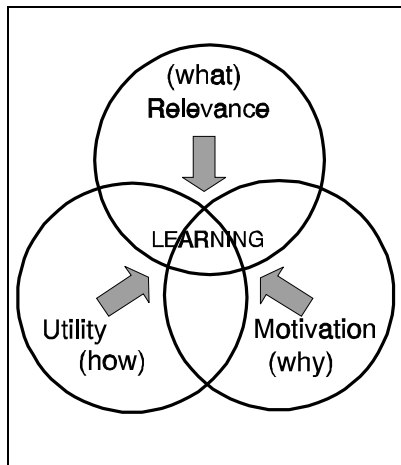
Despite these differing professional styles, it is important that NPO counselors seek every opportunity to build the self-reliance of families by acting as advocates only where essential, and by avoiding the creation of dependency relationships that result from doing everything *for* the family.

TYPES OF COUNSELING ASSISTANCE

Within the requirements of the NOFA and the above ground rules on level of services, there are five topics of counseling that may be useful in supporting a family's choice of a new home. They are: motivational support, preparing for search, assistance finding a unit, presentations to landlords, and selecting units.

Motivational support

From their very first contact with MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, NPO counseling staff will need to help families maintain a consistent and high level of enthusiasm and commitment to the program—regardless of the specific services offered. For many families, the possibility of moving to a new environment will be sufficient to energize their activities and strengthen their resolve. However, other families may be more timid about learning new skills (like finding available units and dealing with prospective landlords), or looking for units in unfamiliar locations (perhaps without the assistance or psychological support of family or friends).



Motivation...one of the three keys to learning.

Keys to maintaining a family's motivation to succeed include:

- Reminding the families of the *real advantages and opportunities* available with a move to private housing in low-poverty neighborhoods (access to better schools, wider job opportunities, quieter and safer streets, better housing);
- *Focusing on (and rewarding) small successes*—for example dealing with credit problems, setting up a realistic budget, making arrangements for transportation and child care, deciding where to look;

MTO is all about empowering families to make it on their own. Good referrals can help make that possible.

- *Addressing fears directly*, discussing them thoroughly;
- *Strengthening the family's sense of self-reliance* by assuring them they have (or can acquire) the skills and knowledge to succeed; that they can help themselves by assuming responsibility for the process and the outcomes;
- Assuring the family that they have the *continuing and active support* not only of the counselor and other NPO staff, but also of an array of service providers (referral resources) available to solve particular problems.

The families in MTO need to understand that they are the ones ultimately responsible for the choices they make, and for the positive (or negative) consequences of those choices. Agencies should seek to convince families that their successes will not be a matter of luck, but of commitment, motivation and follow-through. The entire counseling process should be aimed at making that happen.

Preparing for search

Before looking, families should have a good sense of...

- size of unit needed
- family budget (including rent & utilities)
- transportation needs
- school needs
- shopping needs
- medical needs
- support services
- employment prospects
- recreation needs
- personal preferences (pets, music, friends)

Before a family actually goes out to look at units, it is usually helpful for counselors to assure that those members of the family who will be making the decision have a clear understanding of what they are looking for and why. At this point, the MTO program requirements will have been addressed as part of the Section 8 briefing (Chapter 9). The family's particular needs, resources and goals were already reviewed as part of the home visit, along with any personal issues that might create barriers to a successful search experience (such as credit, housekeeping, or social problems).

Family Budgets

NPO counselors will want to emphasize the need to start saving for the move right away. Families in Section 8 are now required to pay a full security deposit, although this can be a point of negotiation between a tenant and property owner. Other up-front expenses can include moving van rental and deposits for telephone or utilities.

For the long-term, NPO counseling staff will want to help *all families* (not just those with vouchers) set up a budget that balances their regular income with their fixed and variable



expenses. Families need to know what they can afford for rent and how their locational choices may influence the family budget (e.g. higher or lower transportation costs, or child care expenses). The counselor's approach should be sensitive to the fact that most families have been surviving for some time with minimal resources, and may have limited choices regarding food, shelter, clothing, school supplies, laundry, telephone, debt payments and other basics. An early goal should be to help families stabilize both their income and their expenses, so that they can begin to plan for the future.

Where to begin looking...

Not all low-poverty areas have good schools, affordable housing, adequate transportation, or access to job opportunities. It is the counselor's job to help families find those that do.

Pre-search counseling can be very useful to MTO families in helping them identify the low-poverty neighborhoods or communities where their needs and goals are most likely to be met. ***Families can look in any low-poverty location inside or outside the city.*** Maps showing the areas that meet this criterion should be presented as early as possible, perhaps even in the Section 8 briefing. If there are areas the NPO wants to recommend, especially for maintaining diversity of placements, the families should be told they do have the freedom to search and move elsewhere if they wish.

Counselors should also help families understand that ***low-poverty census tract boundaries do not necessarily conform to local definitions of neighborhoods.*** Their certificates or vouchers may be used in particular parts of a neighborhood but not in others, depending upon how the census tract boundaries are drawn. Counselors will have to be able to point out these distinctions, and verify the census tract locations of particular addresses.

At the same time, it is very important that counselors emphasize the following point: just because a neighborhood or community has been designated as low-poverty does not mean that the neighborhood is desirable nor that the family's needs or aspiration regarding schools, employment opportunities, neighborhood quality, and the like will automatically be met. ***One of the chief forms of assistance offered by the NPO lies in helping families sort out what neighborhoods are most likely to meet their requirements and to increase their housing, educational and employment opportunities.***

Common sense requires that counselors always ask the question, "What is best for the family?"

The sorting out process begins by providing families with concrete information about particular communities. This information should highlight the communities' most important features—affordable rental housing, schools, transportation, health resources, community services, access to jobs—so that MTO families will have some information on which to base their choice of places to start.

Information and referral resources

Depending upon the particular NPO, agency staff should be prepared to provide referral assistance to families for dealing with particular issues that may have to be addressed before they begin looking for housing. For example, a family might need legal help to resolve a domestic dispute so that they don't carry it with them to the new home. Or a family member may want to find out about transferring from current job training or educational programs to other locations, so they will not lose momentum or resources after moving to another area.

ASSISTANCE IN FINDING UNITS

There are three primary ways in which NPOs can help families find dwelling units. In order of increasing family self-reliance (and decreasing NPO costs), they are:

- Accompanied tours of neighborhoods and units;
- Providing lists of available units; and
- Teaching families how to find units for themselves.

Under appropriate conditions, NPO staff will want to use all three methods. The NPO is required to offer families the opportunity to visit up to three units under the first method (except where there are credit or housekeeping problems or where special needs are difficult to meet).

Accompanied tours of neighborhoods and inspections of units

By the time families are ready to begin looking for new units, NPO staff will already have been actively recruiting landlords to make vacant units available to MTO families. (See Chapter 4). The lists of vacant units and landlord contacts generated from this process are a resource that can reduce considerably the time and energy that families spend in the search process—especially if NPO staff have had a chance to check the units ahead of time for acceptability under Section 8 and MTO requirements.

To enhance housing choice, it is crucial to find units in as wide a variety of locations as possible.

In addition to finding landlords with available units, NPO staff can target particular neighborhoods where education and job opportunities are greatest for MTO families. Another advantage is that counselors can be available to provide immediate support in discussions with managers or landlords, or helping families evaluate units for affordability and housing quality standards.

The risk of this approach is that families' locational preferences may not correspond to the neighborhoods with available units and expanded opportunities. Given the requirement that NPOs maximize the choices available for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, it is crucial that appropriate units be sought in as wide a variety of locations as possible. Another risk is that the NPO can become so active in the decision-making process that a family becomes increasingly dependent on the counselor to intervene. These two extremes should be avoided, particularly the latter, because the goal is to increase a family's self-sufficiency, not reduce it.

Providing lists of available units

In addition to accompanying MTO families on neighborhood tours and inspections of units, NPO counselors can also *provide lists of available units* (or apartment complexes that may have vacancies) to the families, and follow up to see whether any of the units were attractive. Under this method, families may have considerable flexibility in scheduling visits to units and in neighborhood choice. However, counselors may lose the opportunity to help families sort out units and neighborhoods, and to build the search skills of the family.

The advantage here is that the family assumes the initiative for making appointments, checking out units and following up with the landlord, with the occasional support or intervention of the counselor as necessary. Such autonomy may be unusual among families with no prior experience in housing search, but it will be more readily attainable if the family has learned from the initial (accompanied) tours.

The disadvantage of this approach lies in the risk that a family may be unsuccessful in screening units on the phone and may waste time visiting inappropriate units because they didn't ask the right questions. Without help, families may also wind up selecting a unit which seems affordable and well located, only to find out too late about additional charges or canceled bus routes.

A third risk is that families themselves get screened out by landlords or building managers using accent, grammar or telephone number prefix cues. With adequate preparation, however, counselors can minimize these risks considerably.

Finally, NPOs are likely to find that listings of (apartment complexes with) available units become stale very quickly and require constant updating to be of use. Lists that identify larger properties are more likely to reveal vacancies month after month, though not the same ones.

Teaching families how to search

Ultimately, teaching families how to search on their own is the most desirable track for the counseling, because it frees families to take full responsibility for their choices. Of course, families need to acquire the skills necessary to protect their own interests and to achieve their housing goals now and in the future. Counseling directed at building search skills should include how to use specific information sources, how to get information about neighborhood or community facilities and services, and how to set up (and keep) appointments for visiting units.

Presentations to landlords

NPOs have a *very important dual role* to play in helping MTO families secure appropriate units. First, through the process of recruiting landlords, they can *prepare the way for families* by convincing the owners of prospective units that they can work with Section 8 and that committed, stable MTO families will be an asset to the property. (See Chapter 4). A key purpose of recruitment is not just to find units but also to create a positive, receptive atmosphere for MTO families when they apply and if they move in.

Second, it is very important that NPO counseling staff ensure that *MTO families are well prepared to present themselves* in the most positive light to property managers or landlords. Role play simulations in group counseling sessions should be aimed at developing these skills, and should be used to complement individual sessions in which counselors help family members acquire the self-confidence they need to apply for units they want to rent.

**MAINTAINING
CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is vital that NPO staff be careful to maintain the privacy of MTO families during the counseling process. (Landlords also have privacy protections, as described in Chapter 8.) Families

working with counselors should feel comfortable that personal information is safe from disclosure to landlords or other outside the program.

DWELLING UNIT SELECTION

Moving to Opportunity is a program about expanding the housing and neighborhood choices of low-income families. An important component of counseling, therefore, is to assure that families have the skills to take advantage of available opportunities. This, in turn, means a family must know how to satisfy two sets of constraints that will apply in their choice of a unit:

- *Program constraints* (rent amount, housing quality standards, lease provisions, location in a low-poverty census tract);
- *Family needs and preferences* (number of rooms, housing costs relative to the family budget, neighborhood facilities, schools, transportation, etc.); and

In dealing with the first set of constraints, MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families will be attending the Section 8 briefing and other group presentations, and will receive written materials summarizing and clarifying program requirements. In addition they will have the individualized help of their counselors to find and select units that meet all program requirements.

With regard to needs and preferences, NPO counselors should help the family develop their own (realistic) list, and then follow through to assure that the list is used as a basis for actually selecting the unit. Counselors should recognize that needs and preferences can come into sharper focus, and may change during the search process.

Evaluating the trade-offs

Both of these conditions create a trade-off between spending a lot of time and effort to find a place that meets all program requirements and family needs, and moving too soon to a unit that reduces choice and opportunity. Obviously, choosing a particular unit in one location means that other—perhaps better—choices are ruled out.

Counselors must therefore be prepared to help families assess the tradeoffs involved in the choices they make, and not to either rush or delay their decision. Families may not take the time to

search in a variety of locations, if they feel "pushed" by their circumstances or the Section 8 time limit to take one of the first units they see. Such moves could undermine the value of the MTO program for expanding opportunity, because they rule out other moves that may be better for the family.

The key is for the family to maintain a sense of purpose but not rush the decision. This can be especially hard when affordable rental units are spread across a broad range of neighborhoods. The NPO's experience in the rental market should help families gain a sense of their options and what they can really expect to find.

COUNSELING RECORD-KEEPING

There are two elements of required record-keeping for the NPOs as they provide initial counseling services to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families. NPO counselors need to maintain records of client contacts, and the NPO must keep up-to-date the NPO Participant Tracking Form. These requirements are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

SUMMARY: PROVIDING INITIAL COUNSELING SERVICES

Beginning with the home visit, MTO counselors should help families layout an individualized plan for finding and selecting acceptable units in low-poverty neighborhoods. First steps include identifying families needs, resources and aspirations; and addressing immediate problems that may keep a family from searching effectively.

Action items for the NPO

- 1) Encourage and motivate families throughout the search process by getting them to recognize their own strengths and helping them acquire new skills and knowledge.
- 2) Use both group and individual counseling sessions to build search skill (e.g. budgeting, housing search, dwelling unit inspections, dealing with landlords).
- 3) Use accompanied visits to available units to build self-reliance and practice unit inspection and presentation skills.
- 4) Develop and share with families comprehensive sources of information that will enable them to consider the broadest possible range of housing and neighborhood choices.

5) Help families learn what the market is like and how quickly they may need to act to rent a unit.

PHA Resources/Actions

Provide NPOs with background/ application information about enrolled families;

Share information about available Section 8 units with NPO;

Maintain regular contacts with NPOs regarding progress of families in search;

Provide updated materials on program requirements and guidelines for Section 8.

NPO Resources/Actions

Evaluate needs, resources, aspirations of families in an open, supportive format;

Build motivation and self-reliance;

Broaden locational choices by enhancing skills and knowledge (not "doing for");

Build presentation skills of families through awareness of what makes a good tenant;

Keep records on the counseling provided to families;

Maintain the NPO participant tracking log for families referred to the NPO.

Desired Results

Families know what they need and want to attain in moving to a new home; they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to do so.

NPO staff introduce families to a range of housing and neighborhood opportunities, providing them with the skills to evaluate and choose.

NPO staff provide group and individualized assistance to families to motivate, support, and inform them about their housing choices, recognizing the tradeoffs among program constraints, family needs, and market realities.

CHAPTER TWELVE

ADDITIONAL SEARCH ASSISTANCE
(MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)

CHAPTER TWELVE: CONTENTS

ADDITIONAL SEARCH ASSISTANCE (MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ONLY)

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CHAPTER TWELVE

ADDITIONAL SEARCH ASSISTANCE

For most of the housing counseling services provided in the MTO demonstration, the NPOs should play a "supportive" rather than a "directive" role in helping families to find and select units that meet their needs and satisfy program requirements. There are some MTO activities, however, that will require more active involvement on the part of counseling staff during a family's search for a unit. These include organizing and conducting visits to three prospective units (per family), tenant advocacy to present a family's case to owners or managers, dealing with discrimination, and negotiating leases. This chapter reviews program data collection requirements and recommended approaches for undertaking these tasks. It also outlines program requirements for documenting the type and level of counseling assistance provided to each household. *The materials in this chapter apply only to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families.*

INTRODUCTION

Whatever the enthusiasm and commitment of enrolled MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, it will be necessary for NPO counselors to intervene in the search process from time to time and to take action on behalf of particular families. Intervention may involve providing direct search assistance, presenting families to prospective landlords (tenant advocacy), resolving discrimination complaints during search, and negotiating leases.

It is crucial for the success of the demonstration that NPO counselors (and on-site assistants) inform Abt Associates and HUD if there are any significant problems affecting the families' use of Section 8 assistance in any low-poverty community.

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Direct search assistance

The MTO NOFA states that "...the NPO must assist the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families in their search for housing. For example, the NPO staff must provide transportation to low-poverty census tracts for a tour and a search for available units, and must assist the families in the preliminary inspection of potential units." It goes on to require the NPO to...

"...show no more than three units in low-poverty census tracts to the assisted family that are appropriate for the needs and objectives described by the family during the home visit, subject to the exceptions for credit history and housekeeping [noted previously]. The NPO shall drive the family head to the unit in question, pointing out

community features and facilities as relevant, and introducing the family head to the landlord.

The NOFA acknowledges that the NPOs may not be able to identify three appropriate units for each family, and that NPOs may also not be able to locate appropriate units for large families or families with other special needs or objectives.

Tenant advocacy

The NOFA Attachment 1 states that

"the NPO shall share such favorable information as it has accumulated about the assisted family with property owners identified either by the family or by the landlord recruitment effort, including but not limited to favorable letters of reference, credit history, and the result of the home visit, with the object of speeding up the landlord's screening decision. NPOs shall also help to negotiate rents within the fair market rent/payment standard and rent reasonableness limits. The NPO shall warn a landlord that an outstanding housing quality standards violation will prevent the PHA's approval of the unit until the violations are corrected.

Discrimination in search

The NOFA Attachment 1 also requires the NPO to...

... report every complaint of discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, age or familial status arising from this demonstration to the appropriate HUD Regional/Field Office or to a state or local agency, as appropriate.

DIRECT SEARCH ASSISTANCE

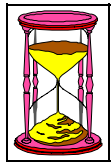
Every accompanied tour of a neighborhood and visit to a unit is an opportunity to build the skills, knowledge and motivation of the family to do it by themselves in the future.

By the time families actually start looking for a new place to live, the NPO counselors should already have provided them with information about communities and neighborhoods where they have a good chance of meeting their housing needs and other aspirations. Families should also have received group and individual counseling in effective search strategies and applying for units (landlord presentations), with practice sessions based around **role play simulations**.

When a family is prepared to begin searching, NPO counselors must identify and show at least **three available units that are affordable and meet family needs**. Within the ultimate goal of placing families in acceptable units, there are actually three additional purposes for these visits:

- To teach families about the *process of evaluating neighborhoods* (what to look for and how to find out about schools, transportation, shopping, etc.);
- To give them *practice in introducing themselves* and speaking comfortably with property managers or owners;
- To give them experience in *inspecting and evaluating dwelling units*.

Don't waste time showing families units and neighborhoods that won't interest them...



Showing units is time consuming and can be very hard to schedule. Most families will require *transportation assistance*, and NPO staff should plan on driving families around selected neighborhoods with their own or the family's vehicle. The logistics of these arrangements will be more efficient and productive if counselors have consulted beforehand with families regarding their neighborhood preferences, the rent they can afford, and the types of units they are seeking. It makes no sense to show families units they cannot afford or that they are not going to want to rent for other reasons.

Large families

Several mobility programs have acknowledged the difficulty of placing large families—those needing three or more bedrooms. This difficulty may stem not only from a relative shortage of units of this size in the rental sector, but also from rent levels for these units being higher than the maximum allowable or exception rent permitted by the Section 8 program.

The solution to this problem is likely to lie in finding *larger units in older one- to four-family buildings*. Landlord recruitment in this market sector requires more time, but it is essential to meet the needs of large families. Working with real estate brokers may also help in locating larger units.

Teenage children

MTO families and NPO counselors may encounter resistance when seeking units for families with teenage children—particularly among owners who have no prior experience with Section 8. Discrimination against families with children is illegal everywhere. At the same time, owners and managers of units in low-poverty neighborhoods may have a fear that prior or current gang membership of one or more teenage family members increases the risk of problems with other tenants, abuse of the property, or actual danger.

In the home visit, NPO counselors must find out whether any members of the family are (or were) members of a gang; and whether that affiliation is likely to create any problems for the family in a new dwelling. If gang membership remains a problem, counselors should help families deal with this issue before the family moves to a new unit.

TENANT ADVOCACY

In addition to anti-discrimination services, there are three occasions during the search process where NPO counselors can be particularly helpful in placing a family in a new unit by acting as the tenant's advocate:

- **Introductions** (telling a prospective owner/manager about the good qualities of a family and their interest in a vacancy, then introducing them at the first visit);
- **Application** for the unit (when a family would like to rent a particular unit, and is prepared to make a deposit, or sign the lease); and
- **Lease Negotiations.**

Introductions

A successful placement will hinge first on the *positive attitude* that the counselor has been able to create in recruiting the landlord to participate in MTO. In addition, the counselor should actively promote the *qualities and strengths of the particular family* to whom the counselor is showing a particular unit. This is especially important when the family member being shown the unit is timid or uncomfortable dealing directly with the owner/manager.

Applying for the unit

A family's application to rent a particular unit triggers a whole series of events leading up to the signing of the lease and the move. These may include getting a verbal commitment from the manager/owner, making a deposit to secure the unit, checking references, confirming or negotiating terms of the proposed lease, PHA unit inspection and review and approval of the lease (Chapter 13), maintenance and repairs to meet HQS, final inspections, and signing of the lease.

Securing acceptance of a family's application may require the active intervention of the counselor to convince the owner/manager *of the advantages and merits of having the*

Acceptance of the family's application is easier when the owner/manager is fully informed about Section 8 and MTO...

family as a tenant. Not only is a vacant unit being transformed into a steady source of revenue, but also the landlord knows of the family's commitment to the program, of the counseling they have received, and that they have someone to call in case problems arise.

The other steps after acceptance may require either the support or the direct intervention of the counselor to assure that they are completed properly. This is much more easily accomplished if the owner or manager of the property is fully informed of Section 8 procedures ahead of time and knows that the counselor will be helping the family in the process.

DISCRIMINATION IN SEARCH

The primary areas of discriminatory practice in search are:
denial of access (discouraging applications);
denial of availability;
asking different terms and conditions;
geographical steering.

State and federal laws make it illegal for owners and managers of rental property to deny a prospective renter a housing unit because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, age or familial status. State and local ordinances may also prohibit discrimination on the basis of military discharge, source of income, or other factors.

The first step in helping families deal with discrimination is giving them full information. The Section 8 briefing will provide all families receiving a certificate or voucher with a summary of their rights to choose a dwelling unit in any neighborhood within or outside of the central city. (For MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, units must be located in low-poverty areas in order for them to use the certificate or voucher.). *The briefing should outline all federal, state, and local laws prohibiting discrimination in the rental housing market, as well as the remedies available and procedures to be followed in the event discrimination is encountered.* (See Chapter 9).

Having this information does not guarantee that MTO families will not encounter discrimination, or that if they are discriminated against, they will choose to take action to counteract it. NPO staff should encourage families to contact them as soon as they feel they may have been discriminated against (even if they are unsure or finally decide not to file a complaint). Counseling staff should assure that families are prepared to:

- avoid direct confrontation with the landlord, manager or real estate agent (being careful not to make threats of suit or reveal suspicions of discrimination); and

- contact their counselors right away about the event with detailed information about the place, time, and people involved, and on what basis they suspect discrimination occurred.

After reviewing this information, counseling staff should seek the assistance of an experienced and able fair housing agency to clarify with the family what additional information may be necessary and what next steps may be indicated in the particular situation. Steps that a fair housing agency may take include:

- contacting the landlord or manager, to clarify the situation;
- providing additional help to investigate the complaint with testers or checkers;
- seeking conciliation through direct negotiations with the landlord or manager;
- filing a formal complaint with the appropriate federal, state or local agency; or
- getting the help of an attorney to file a suit in federal court.

NPOs are required to report all complaints of discrimination to the state or local enforcement agencies or directly to HUD. Above all, families should be made to feel that they have someone to turn to right away in dealing with a particular incident, and that if they were denied their rights, there are many positive courses of action that can be taken.

**DATA COLLECTION
REQUIREMENTS FOR
COUNSELING**

As mentioned briefly in Chapter 11, NPO counselors will need to maintain two very important records for each family enrolled in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP:

- The ***Participant Counseling Log*** and
- The ***Participant Tracking Form***.

Both should be useful for the NPO's demonstration management. Both are essential for the research about demonstration results.

Participant Counseling Logs

As part of MTO reporting requirements, HUD must inform Congress about the type and level of counseling that is provided to MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families. To do this, it is necessary for the NPOs' counselors to record all of their individual contacts with participants. If participants attend any group counseling sessions, these should be noted as well. If notes are kept in other places (such as on counselors' pocket calendars or on sign-in sheets for group sessions), ***the information must be transferred to the counseling logs.***

A model participant counseling log is shown in Appendix G. A separate log must be kept for each participant. The log is used to record the name and social security number of the participant and the following information for each contact with the counselor:

- the duration of the contact;
- whether the contact was in-person or by telephone;
- the reason for the contact, e.g., assistance in searching, resolving a credit problems;
- the outcome or next steps that will be taken;
- If a referral is made to another agency, the name of the agency and the reason for the referral.

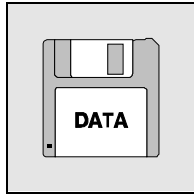
Visits to other agencies (via referral) do not need to be recorded.

NPOs may use their own forms to record this information, provided that the same information is collected. NPOs will be asked to submit copies of the counseling logs at the end of the intake period and one year later.

NPO Participant Tracking Forms

In addition to the ***participant counseling logs***, some information about counseling activities must also be recorded on the NPO participant tracking forms. The initial set-up of these forms was discussed in Chapter 8, and the actual forms are in Appendix F.

The system for tracking participants is set up when the PHA provides a list of MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP participants to the NPO. Initially, the NPO records the name and social security



number of the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families. Thereafter, the dates and outcomes of key steps in the counseling process are recorded for each family. These include:

- the date of an initial group meeting with the NPO;
- the date and outcome of the credit check;
- the date and outcome of the home visit;
- the dates and outcomes of accompanied visits to prospective units;
- the outcome of the housing search, including the address and neighborhood of the unit that is leased; the move-in dates;
- the dates of follow-up visits by the NPO.

By recording this information, NPO staff will be able to identify quickly the status of a MTO family at any point in time. NPO managers will be able to monitor participant flow, work load, and progress in meeting the lease-up goal. In addition, the tracking information will allow HUD to determine how long it takes for families to move through the MTO program and the outcomes for participants at each of the demonstration sites.

For families who were unsuccessful in leasing up on the first try and have re-applied to MTO, special instructions apply regarding the tracking forms. First, the NPO should set up a new record or line in the tracking log for the family. In the comment section, the new record should show that this is a "re-issue" family. The old record (line) should also include a note in the comment section regarding the family's re-entry into the program. Each entry should contain a reference to the other line number.

The NPOs will need to provide updated participant tracking logs to Abt Associates at end of each month for the entire period of MTO program operations.

SUMMARY: ADDITIONAL SEARCH ASSISTANCE

MTO counselors should be prepared to play an active role in helping families with the search process in at least four areas: (a) conducting neighborhood or community tours and visits to three available units; (b) acting as an advocate for families in

Action items for search assistance

presentations to owners/managers; (c) facilitating the redress of complaints of discrimination; and (d) reviewing and negotiating leases.

1) Plan for visiting units as soon as the family is ready, in order to maintain motivation and momentum.

2) Make logistical arrangements with families and unit owners ahead of time, to avoid last minute problems/cancellations;

3) Treat each event or activity as an opportunity to teach the family how to protect themselves and get what they want.

4) Plan to "facilitate" not to "impose;" bringing families together with owners/managers is a chance to meet the needs of both parties.

PHA Resources/Actions

Provide NPO counselors with materials and training in lease review and inspection procedures;

Keep NPO staff up-to-date about available units in low-poverty neighborhoods;

Address and follow up on NPO questions about leases and inspections;

Maintain effective communications with PHAs in surrounding jurisdictions.

NPO Resources/Actions

Maintain regular contacts with owners/managers recruited for MTO;

Maximizes family choices by showing units in variety of neighborhoods and communities (consistent with the needs/resources of family);

Anticipate and address problems landlords may have with a particular family before application for a unit;

Broaden the search for large units;
Deal with discrimination in search in accordance with standard procedures;

Make sure families clearly understand each step in the process.

Desired Results

NPO counselors use each neighborhood tour and unit visit as an opportunity to build the self-confidence, capabilities, and resolve of families to become self-sufficient.

MTO families find, apply for, and get the best possible units in the best possible locations consistent with their resources, needs, and aspirations.

NPO counselors intervene primarily as facilitators, advocates, and problem solvers to *support* families' search for acceptable units, not as agents acting in place of the families.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DWELLING UNIT INSPECTION AND LEASE APPROVAL

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DWELLING UNIT INSPECTION AND LEASE APPROVAL

As MTO families with Section 8 certificates and vouchers find units to rent, both the PHA and NPO have roles to play in carrying out the tasks connected with dwelling unit inspection and approval. This chapter deals with the process that begins when a family—whether on its own or with NPO help—is ready to request inspection and lease approval for a rental unit. The process ends when the lease is executed (or when the unit cannot be approved and the family must start to search again). *Materials in this chapter apply to both the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP and the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP.*

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

There is little attention paid directly to this step in the MTO NOFA. The program guidelines specify that "Inspection of the unit for compliance with the housing quality standards of section 8, and execution of assistance contracts with owners, will be the responsibility of the PHA" (NOFA Attachment 1, p. 43466).

Attachment 1 also indicates that "NPOs shall also help to negotiate rents within the fair market rent/payment standard and rent reasonableness limits. The NPO shall warn a landlord that an outstanding housing quality standards violation will prevent the PHA's approval of the unit until the violations are corrected."

BACKGROUND: CORE SECTION 8 REQUIREMENTS FOR DWELLING UNIT INSPECTION AND APPROVAL

Core requirements

The core requirements for the Section 8 program around unit approval and lease-up are:

- arrangements for *portability* of the Section 8 assistance, if the apartment is outside the PHA's jurisdiction. (This may mean that a different PHA does all the subsequent tasks);
- *inspection of the unit* to make sure it meets the program's Housing Quality Standards (HQS);
- for rental certificates, testing of the proposed unit rent for "*rent reasonableness*." PHAs may also apply a rent reasonableness test for vouchers, where the market is not functioning normally or the family is not able to

negotiate a reasonable rent on its own. But this is not required.

- PHA *negotiation of the lease terms* with the landlord, if necessary (plus NPO assistance with lease negotiations for MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families);
- final *calculation of the family contribution* and the balance the PHA will pay to the landlord for rent;
- execution of the *lease and the contract documents* for the Housing Assistance Payments from PHA to landlord.

Purpose of the inspection and rent reasonableness requirements

The purpose of the Housing Quality Standards is to ensure that families assisted by Section 8 are getting decent, safe, and sanitary housing. The "rent reasonableness" determination assures that a fair rent is paid for units assisted in the program and that Section 8 does not contribute to increasing rents in the community. In both the certificate and voucher programs, the PHAs are required to help the participant negotiate a reasonable rent, if the participant requests the help.

SPECIAL MTO REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALIFYING AND PROCESSING SECTION 8 UNITS

In many ways, there will be little different about unit inspection and lease approval for the MTO families who find apartments with their Section 8 certificates or vouchers. However, here are a few important factors to consider when planning and implementing MTO.

Qualifying the units

- 1) For MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, ***the PHA must check that proposed units are in low-poverty census tracts.***
- 2) The NPOs are required to provide assistance to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families in checking that apartments meet HQS and in negotiating rents with the landlord. The PHA must still inspect and determine rent reasonableness, but *some potential problems may already have been resolved*, with the NPO's help, before the request for lease approval is made.
- 3) Units in low-poverty areas may more often require *exception rents*, and exception rents are limited to 20 percent of any

specific increment of units. PHAs need to examine the rents in low-poverty areas and be prepared to seek HUD authorization if extra case-by-case or locality- or area-wide exceptions are needed.

Processing the units

4) Because the families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP are being assisted by the NPOs in finding housing in low-poverty areas, *portability may come into play for a considerable number of these units.*

5) Units found by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families in low-poverty areas of the city may require extra attention and *speed in processing*, because affordable units in these areas are harder to find and tend to be in greater demand.

6) *The landlords for units found by MTO families are more likely to be new to the Section 8 program.* Despite the outreach and efforts of the NPO, PHA staff should expect that they may need to explain more to the landlords and even convince them to go through with the lease-up under Section 8.

UNIT INSPECTIONS

A rental unit must pass Section 8 Housing Quality Standards in order to be leased under the program. The PHA staff play the main role in meeting this requirement, but NPO staff will be able to assist families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP to determine whether units that interest them are likely to meet HQS.

In preparing for the demonstration, PHA inspectors should work with NPO staff to introduce and explain the HQS. If there are additional inspection standards, because of local or state codes, these should also be explained. For the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, the NPO counselors can then help the families evaluate the condition of units they see during their search for a new unit. *This does not take the place of the Section 8 inspection, but it can have two benefits:*

- it can help the family be objective about the quality of the unit; and
- it can help alert the family and NPO counselor that repairs will probably need to be negotiated with the landlord.

Once a family with a certificate or a voucher has chosen a unit and filled out the Request for Lease Approval, the PHA inspection process begins. Often, a first inspection will indicate that minor repairs are needed. If so, there must be a return inspection to verify the repairs before the lease can be approved. *This can cause delays in lease-up and occupancy.*

Owners and managers familiar with Section 8 will be used to this process. But landlords newly recruited for the MTO demonstration may not be happy with it. They may believe the repairs (and expense) would not be required for a different tenant, and they may fear the loss of a month's rent (or even more) due to the delays in re-inspection and approval.

For the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families, NPO staff may be able to help by:

- 1) letting the PHA's MTO staff know when a unit is in danger of being lost due to delays; and
- 2) working with the landlord to minimize the reluctance and the delay.

BUT the best help for this type of problem comes ahead of time. If the counselor and family have looked over the unit for HQS, the landlord may be willing to do repairs in advance and thus avoid the problem of repeat inspections altogether.

PORTABILITY AND THE MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY DEMONSTRATION

Background—what is this thing called portability?

Certificates and vouchers can now be used across the United States. With only a few exceptions, a family can move across the state or across the country and continue to receive Section 8 benefits. This greatly expands the range of housing choice for MTO families.

"Portability" is the term used to describe the complex administrative arrangements that allow holders of Section 8 certificates and vouchers to move outside the jurisdiction of the PHA that issued the certificates or vouchers. Even though Section 8 is a federal program, it is most often administered

through agencies—public housing authorities— that are creations of state law. These agencies are established with a specific geographical territory, most often a single city or town (although sometimes a group of cities or towns, a county or several counties). Whatever the PHA’s jurisdiction, *there are parts of the metropolitan areas in all the MTO sites that are outside the jurisdiction of the PHAs administering the MTO program.*

Why is portability so complicated?

Portability is complicated both *for the families* seeking housing and *for the PHAs* administering the rental assistance. As a result, portability is also complicated *for the NPOs* helping the families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP!

There are several reasons why portability is so complex:

- ***Which PHA?*** Most metropolitan areas have a considerable number of small PHAs, and it may not be obvious which PHA has jurisdiction when a unit is found outside the city limits.
- ***Whose responsibility?*** In a portability situation, the PHA that issued the certificate or voucher and the PHA with jurisdiction over the proposed unit both have some responsibilities in the transaction. The two agencies split the administrative fee paid by HUD.
- ***Whose decision?*** In a portability situation, the PHA that issued the certificate or voucher and the PHA with jurisdiction over the proposed unit *both* have some control over the transaction. For example, they may both determine eligibility.
- ***How long can this go on?*** In a portability situation, the PHA that issued the certificate or voucher continues to bill HUD for the rental assistance funds. The PHA with jurisdiction over the unit makes the Housing Assistance Payments to the landlord, and does the inspections, annual recertifications, and lease renewals. This PHA bills the other for the HAP payments and a share of the administrative fee *for as long as the participant continues to rent the unit under Section 8.*

In the case of swaps of MTO vouchers or certificates, HUD must be able to track both the portability family as well as the "new" family that receives the returned voucher or certificate.

IMPLICATIONS OF PORTABILITY FOR MTO

More agencies

To swap or not to swap? Rather than set up this complicated and potentially long-lasting relationship, the PHA with jurisdiction over the proposed unit can choose to "absorb" the certificate or voucher, as long as it has one of its own certificates or vouchers available to offer. The family is then given a local certificate or voucher and returns their original one to the city PHA. Absorption is also called "swapping."

Portability has several significant implications for the MTO demonstration. These will be encountered no matter whether it is an MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP family or a SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP family that finds an apartment outside the jurisdiction of the site PHA.

First, portability brings additional agencies into the picture for providing housing assistance to families in the demonstration. These agencies need to be informed about MTO and their support gained, if possible.

Different requirements

In cases where occupancy standards for sending and receiving PHAs differ, the receiving PHA's standards govern. However, the receiving PHA must treat "portability" and "non-portability" units the same way.

Second, the suburban PHAs may have some differences in their Section 8 programs that can cause problems for MTO families. In particular, these PHAs may have additional eligibility requirements or different occupancy standards. Under Section 8 regulations, a PHA has the right to refuse lease approval on specific grounds, which include some related to the family's prior rent payment history and to criminal history. Even if the city PHA does not determine eligibility for Section 8 on these criteria, the suburban PHA may apply them to incoming certificate -or voucher-holders.

Some suburban PHAs may also use different rules to establish the size of the certificate or voucher for a family. If an MTO family only qualifies for a smaller unit (for example, 2 BR instead of 3 BR), this reduces the amount of help the family can get in paying the rent.

Need to re-issue certificate or voucher

Third, if an MTO family finds a unit in another jurisdiction and the PHA there absorbs the certificate or voucher, the MTO certificate or voucher is released to the city PHA for re-issue. Under MTO program guidelines, the certificate or voucher can

MTO Program Operations Manual...

Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration

DWELLING UNIT INSPECTION AND
LEASE APPROVAL

HUD takes violations of its portability regulations seriously, and considers them a factor in ranking the capacity of a PHA to administer its rental assistance program. If NPO staff believe that a receiving PHA is being deliberately obstructive to portability by central-city families, without any basis in HUD regulations, it should put its experience in writing for the benefit of the HUD State or Area Office for that metropolitan area.

only be offered to a family off the separate MTO waiting list (until HUD releases the PHA from this obligation).

Fourth, when a suburban PHA absorbs the family, for purposes of MTO enrollment (which requires that all the certificates and vouchers in the demonstration be leased up at least once for the research sample), *the original certificate or voucher is not leased up*. Thus, another family needs to be enrolled, randomly assigned to the MTO experimental or the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP, receive the certificate or voucher, and search for a unit to lease under Section 8.

Fifth, even when a MTO family gives up the central city certificate or voucher in exchange for the suburban one, *the family is still part of the demonstration and needs to be tracked* for research purposes (as long as the family was part of the initial enrollment with random assignment).

Need to track families

Recent changes to portability

Recent changes to the Section 8 program are designed to reconcile differences between certificates and vouchers, as well as to simplify portability. The HUD Notice included at the end of this chapter provides a mandatory Family Portability Information Form for PHAs to use when a family moves under portability. It also specifies the exact documentation that is required between the initial and the receiving PHA.

LEASING UP AND PARTICIPANT TRACKING

When a unit is leased up under MTO—whether the family is in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP or the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP—it is vital that the event get recorded in the participant tracking log. The necessary log entries include:

- Unit address, census tract, telephone number and location type (NPO log)
- Date of HQS inspection (PHA log)
- Date of lease approval (PHA log)
- Move-in date (both logs).

NPO role

The NPO staff have been maintaining the log for the families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. They record the address and census tract of the leased unit, new telephone number, and the move-in date. They should also alert PHA staff about likely portability or swapping cases, although the paperwork still needs to come from the receiving PHA. *The more information the NPO counselors can provide on the lease-up to the PHA, the stronger will be this first link in what may become a chain of moves for the family during the ten-year MTO demonstration.*

SUBSEQUENT MOVES BY MTO FAMILIES

Because the intake period for MTO has lasted longer than expected, the PHAs and NPOs are maintaining tracking forms for families who have been in MTO more than a year. As a result, subsequent moves under Section 8 may occur, and site agency staff should record these in the tracking logs. In all the logs, the "Additional Comments" field should be used for noting later moves.

PHA responsibility

The final responsibility for tracking MTO families who move with Section 8 resources lies with the PHA. Chapter 14 of this manual provides a full discussion of the tracking system for all enrolled families.

SUMMARY: DWELLING UNIT INSPECTION AND LEASE APPROVAL

This chapter has presented information about the tasks involved for the PHA in inspecting dwelling units for the MTO families and approving the unit leases. It pointed out some important differences the MTO demonstration may make to ordinary inspection and lease processing. It also looked closely at portability, which is likely to be a bigger factor in administering Section 8 assistance for MTO families because of the program's emphasis on moving to low-poverty areas.

As families with certificates or vouchers identify units they wish to rent, both the PHA and NPO need to play a role in assuring that the unit is appropriate, that the family can qualify for it, and that necessary administrative arrangements are made in a timely manner.

PHA Resources/Actions

Help introduce or update NPO staff on the Housing Quality Standards and on the reasonable rent levels in different parts of the local area.

Check that units selected by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families are in low-poverty census tracts.

Discuss eligibility issues with suburban PHAs and bring the issues to HUD if necessary.

Recognize that units found by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families in low-poverty areas of the city may require extra attention and speed in processing, because affordable units in these areas are rarer.

Identify resources and procedures so that PHA staff can determine whether units selected by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families are located in low-poverty census tracts.

Help make sure that MTO families that move inside the city are not lost to the tracking system.

NPO Resources/Actions

Alert the PHA to actions by suburban PHAs that may challenge the eligibility of MTO families.

Help families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP negotiate the approval of units in suburban jurisdictions, including portability paperwork.

Help facilitate paperwork movement between city and suburban PHAs.

Identify resources and procedures so that NPO staff can determine whether units selected by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families are located in low-poverty census tracts.

Help make sure that MTO families that move outside the city are not lost to the tracking system.

Desired Results

Suburban PHAs cannot block the movement of MTO families without just cause.

MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families know *early* if a unit that interests them does not qualify as being in a low-poverty census tract.

MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families do not lose prospective units due to slow response from the PHA on inspection or lease negotiation.

The tracking system gets complete information on initial moves with Section 8 certificates and vouchers.

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Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration

DWELLING UNIT INSPECTION AND
LEASE APPROVAL

HUD Notice PIH 95-56 goes here (5 pages)
Form HUD-52665 (4 pages)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT AND
TRACKING PARTICIPANTS**

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT AND TRACKING PARTICIPANTS

This chapter focuses on the MTO demonstration activities to provide follow-up support to the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families that move to low-poverty areas with the assistance of the NPOs. This step in MTO services begins after the family's move and continues until the first two lease-date anniversaries have passed.

Tracking participants is necessary so that the NPOs can maintain contact with the families after they move. More broadly, tracking participants is a central part of the statutory mandate for determining the effects of MTO over a ten-year period. *The materials about tracking in this chapter apply to all three groups of families enrolled in the demonstration.*

NOFA REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

NPO Follow-up and reporting

The MTO NOFA indicates that: "*The NPO must provide information and counseling to the families as they adjust to their new environment.* A description of services required to be provided by NPOs is included as Attachment 1 to this NOFA. The NPOs must periodically report directly to HUD with copies of the information to the PHAs" (NOFA, p. 43460)

Attachment 1 to the MTO NOFA provides the following further detailed guidelines:

"The NPO shall contact each assisted experimental group family in a low-poverty census tract within 90 days of the beginning of the lease term. The NPO shall offer such additional counseling and/or referral as will aid in assuring a satisfactory adjustment to the new environment. Families shall be assured of the *availability of a supportive services counselor to help them if problems relating to their placement arise.* Two frequent problems are: (1) Delays in transferring paperwork from one public assistance office to another, which may lead to income support checks not coming on time; (2) unexpectedly high utility hookup deposits. NPOs shall ensure that their staff are familiar with prevailing local solutions to these and other common move-in problems.

From time to time the NPO shall sponsor *meetings of assisted families who live in the same area, to discuss*

common problems (e.g., child care, transportation) and facilitate their solution.

The NPO shall also contact, by mail, the owner or manager of the unit in which an assisted family is placed and *assure the owner or manager of the availability of a supportive services counselor to help with problems that may arise in the family's adjustment to the new environment.* Counseling and/or referral to appropriate public or private agencies involved with employment, education, health, and social services shall be provided by the NPO to assisted families or owners or managers who request assistance, in consultation with the appropriate PHA.

The NPO shall *contact assisted families by mail* approximately 120 days before each of the first two annual re-examinations and HQS inspections for their units to offer assistance.

The NPO shall *report every complaint of discrimination* on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, age or familial status arising from this demonstration to the appropriate HUD Regional/Field Office or to a state or local agency, as appropriate."

Record-keeping and data collection

"Collection and maintenance of data are required for biennial interim reports and a ten-year final evaluation report to Congress mandated by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. Applicants [for MTO funding] must cooperate by keeping records for this demonstration. The type of records required will be specified by HUD" (NOFA, p. 43459)

**FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT TO
MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP
FAMILIES**

The follow-up support that NPOs provide to the families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP has four main components:

- providing *stabilization assistance* for the families in their new homes and neighborhoods;
- creating a *support network* for assisted families in the same local area;

- *contacting the owners/managers* of housing occupied by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families to offer help with resolution of any problems;
- offering assistance to the families at the time of the first two *lease renewals*.

In all aspects of providing follow-up support, NPO staff need to be conscious of the possibility that the family is encountering discrimination. Help for family members dealing with discriminatory treatment can take a variety of forms, but it is important that NPO staff remind them of their rights and assist them in reporting or filing complaints with the appropriate agencies. (A more detailed discussion is found later in this chapter.)

STABILIZATION ASSISTANCE

Offer continuity of assistance for families

As NPO staff work with the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families during the search and help them prepare for moving, they should take the opportunity to remind the families—from time to time—that the assistance does not end on move-in day. At the same time, families should be gently urged to stay in touch with their counselors. *DO* indicate what kinds of help can be offered, but *DON'T* give the sense of heavy monitoring. Sending a congratulatory postcard to the family at the new address is one way to use the light touch for staying in contact. If return receipt is requested, and the card comes back from the post office, the NPO will have some warning that all may not have gone smoothly with the move.

Don't wait 90 days to get in touch!

Although the NOFA requirement is for the NPO counselor to contact the family within 90 days of the new unit lease date, the experience of the Gautreaux program and of several participating PHAs suggests *contact right around the planned move-in date*. This a time when significant problems—such as a forgotten utility hook-up or a broken-down moving truck—may arise. It may also be a time for cold feet about the whole move and all the changes it will bring.

The PHAs report that sometimes Section 8 certificate- or voucher-holders go through the whole process of finding a unit and getting the lease approved, but then never move into the new apartment. Such an outcome is not impossible with MTO

families, despite the assistance they have received from the NPO. *NPO staff are not responsible for making sure the moves happen, but they **can** provide support at this critical point.*

Types of stabilization assistance

There are a number of areas where assistance from the NPO can make a real difference to the family's stabilization in the new home and neighborhood. In some cases, the NPO counselor can provide direct help. In others, *the NPOs need to use their networks and make referrals to local social service providers.*

Types of assistance that may be needed include:

- Setting up budget plans for utilities
- Dealing with benefit transfers
- Enrolling children in school/day care/after-school programs
- Making transportation arrangements, especially if the family has members with special needs.

Keep the emphasis on self-help and moving toward self-sufficiency

There are many other areas where a family may appreciate help from the NPO counselor after a move to a low-poverty area. For example, the family may need to access other kinds of services in the local area, or may want to take advantage quickly of town resources such as youth recreation programs. It is appropriate for the NPO to provide referrals and local directories for these types of services: adult ed/GED; substance abuse treatment; medical, dental, or mental health treatment; employment and training programs; and parenting support programs.

Even though NPO staff may be able to offer more assistance, *getting to know the local area and locating other resources is really the family's own responsibility.* It is important for counselors to keep the emphasis on self-help and to encourage exploration and initiative on the part of family members. This is vital to the family's successful long-run adjustment to the changes resulting from the move.

A SUPPORT NETWORK

The MTO NOFA indicates that the NPO is required to sponsor occasional meetings of assisted families in the same area, to discuss common problems and help find solutions. This may not be an easy mandate to fulfill.

What the families have in common

There are certainly some problems and experiences that are likely to be shared by the MTO families moving from assisted housing in central city neighborhoods. Dealing with private landlords,

with the schools, with local merchants, with police and other local agencies—there may be difficulties in any of these areas that others can sympathize with and suggest ways to handle. Families can provide each other with information on local resources, reducing their dependence on the NPO's help.

Certainly, if there are *patterns of unpleasant or negative treatment*—such as store clerks hovering when black teenagers come to shop, or police stopping family members to ask their business—a support group can help identify them and consider ways to bring about a change. The linkages the NPOs developed with people and organizations in suburban communities can be a real asset in addressing this kind of problem.

But don't forget about privacy and choice

It may be clear to you, the NPO counselor, that a particular family could benefit greatly from attending a workshop or support group in the local area. However, it is very important to allow families privacy, if they do not want to be recognized as Section 8 recipients or as recent arrivals from public housing. Names and phone numbers of MTO families in the local area should not be circulated without each family's permission; no one should be pressured to join a support group.

Incentives for families to participate

Still, there are incentives you can offer to get more participation in support activities after MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families have made their moves. *Activities for the children, free food or pot-luck, and a casual format are all more likely to attract people than a meeting or workshop.* A picnic in a public park or a visit for pre-schoolers to the public library are casual events that can put adults at ease and make them more comfortable talking about their experiences. While NPO staff will probably need to arrange the first get-togethers, there may be families who will keep the ball rolling.

LANDLORD FOLLOW-UP

What is being offered?

The NOFA requires the NPOs to contact the owners or managers of the units selected by MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families. This contact is to happen by mail, and the timing is open. The purpose is to *assure the owner or manager that the counselor will remain available to the family to help with any problems that arise during adjustment to the new neighborhood.*

Handle with care!

NPO staff need to be thoughtful about how they want to handle this follow-up landlord contact and also consider *when* the contact should be made. Here are two different possibilities:

1) The letter can thank the landlord for agreeing to participate in Section 8 and MTO. It can be sent at the time of lease approval and indicate that the NPO's support will continue to be available to the family after move-in. It can also provide a counselor's name the landlord can call to discuss any problems the family may be having.

2) The letter can inquire about how the family is doing. In this case, the letter would be sent a short time after move-in (4 to 6 weeks at the most). Again, it should indicate that the NPO's support is still available to the family and provide a counselor's name the landlord can call to discuss any problems the family may be having.

Which approach is preferable? The first one seems to be a logical extension of landlord outreach and the NPO's role in search and lease-up. It also avoids any implication that the family may be having or causing problems. Thus, the first one is far more tactful.

But the second approach may be more effective. Because the letter arrives after the family has been there a few weeks, the landlord may be more likely to respond and take advantage of the NPO's assistance in dealing with a problem.

Avoiding labelling the resident

As the NPO staff work out the agency's approach to these landlord contacts, one point is very important. ***Be sure to avoid implying to the landlord that the MTO family is likely to cause trouble or labelling the family in any way that may have negative effects.*** If there has been vandalism and the source is unknown, the last thing the NPO wants to do is to suggest that the NPO family is involved!

**LEASE RENEWALS FOR MTO
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP
FAMILIES**

Required contacts

There are required contacts between the NPO and the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families at the time of the first two lease renewals. These mail contacts need to be initiated 3 to 4 months prior to the anniversary date of the family's move to the low-poverty area. Their purpose is to assist the family with the lease

renewal process and to help them deal with any problems that arise.

Issues that can arise

There are three main types of issues that can arise for the families at the time of lease renewal. *These issues are no different for MTO participants than for other Section 8 families, but they **are** different from the public housing experience many MTO families had prior to the move.*

1) There may be issues about *whether the unit still meets Housing Quality Standards* and about wear and tear or damage that has occurred during the year.

2) *The owner may request a rent increase.* This may affect the family's rent directly, if they are leased up with a voucher and the rent is at or above the payment standard. Even with a certificate, the PHA needs to approve a rent increase as reasonable.

3) *The owner may decide not to renew the lease,* either for cause (some problem with the tenancy) or due to personal or business reasons. Section 8 has complex rules governing non-renewal of leases.

Steps in lease renewal

Even without any of these problems, a series of steps must be completed to renew the lease: unit re-inspection, reexamination of income, and amending the current lease and HAP contract. Some families may simply need help going through this process with the owner and the PHA.

Assistance to be offered

The assistance the NPO can offer to a family at the time of lease renewal does not differ from what has been offered before in MTO. Help with understanding the process, help scheduling the steps, or help negotiating with the owner can all be provided. If requested by the family, an NPO staff member can work with the PHA to deal with problems. *However, the emphasis by this time should certainly be on self-help more than on advocacy.*

If the family wants to move...

It is also possible that the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP family will decide to move rather than renew the lease. *In the MTO demonstration, there are no limitations on subsequent moves after one year.* The families can move elsewhere in the new

neighborhood, to a different new area, or back to the city neighborhoods they left.

The NPO is not responsible for assisting the families with these moves, but the NPO should also not intervene to prevent them.

What the NPO *should* do about a subsequent move is to try to keep in touch with the family and to let the PHA know immediately where the family has moved. This is part of the tracking responsibilities associated with MTO as a demonstration program.

**DEALING WITH
DISCRIMINATION**

Chapter 12 discussed discrimination during housing search and identified ways the NPO can and should help families deal with any unfair treatment they encounter. Once the families are in their new homes, one important aspect of follow-up support from the NPO concerns encounters with bias and discrimination in the new neighborhoods and communities.

It is the experience of existing programs that discrimination is not frequent but it does occur, usually in the form of name-calling on a playground, or excessive attention by police or security guards to minority young people. Whether the discriminatory treatment is based on race or ethnicity, disability, age, sex, or familial status, it should be considered unacceptable and dealt with promptly.

Helping sort out what's going on

One of the first types of assistance the NPO staff can provide for families encountering bias or discrimination after their moves is to help them sort out the situation. This means talking about what happened, who was involved, how it felt, whether it was repeated, why it smelled of bias. Such discussion is usually not easy. It should be a little easier in MTO because of the pre-existing relationship with the counselor. It may also be somewhat easier if this discussion takes place in the context of an ongoing support group (as described earlier in this chapter).

**Using local resources for
addressing bias and discrimination**

Apart from formal action (discussed below), there are a number of approaches to consider, in dealing with bias and illegal discrimination, that draw on local resources in the new neighborhood or community. If incidents occur at school, in stores or malls, or with police, the responsible official—principal, manager, police chief—should be informed by the family, with the counselor's presence and support, and asked to correct the situation. The contacts the NPO made when researching low-

poverty areas—contacts like local affirmative action officers, human rights or fair housing committees, interfaith councils, or concerned private citizens—can be informed about the problem and asked for their suggestions. If there is an organization of rental owners/managers that the NPO has worked with for landlord outreach, this organization may be able to help mediate a difficult situation involving one of its members.

Consideration should also be given to raising the issue in the local newspaper, but it is particularly important to get local advice on who should approach the paper and how to handle it. Adverse publicity is the last thing needed when bias or discrimination are suspected.

Formal interventions/formal complaints

Anyone encountering discrimination has a variety of legal protections and some choice of legal recourse. As with housing search, discrimination encountered in renewing a lease is prohibited under federal law, and also under state and/or local laws in many places. Remember that, if an MTO family has moved to a suburban community, that community's local statutes or ordinances (not the laws of the central city) would be applicable.

All the nonprofit agencies participating in the MTO demonstration need to train their staff in the full set of legal recourses available to clients who encounter illegal discrimination. The primary focus of this training is likely to be housing search (as discussed in Chapter 12), but attention should be given to a broader range of issues as more families lease up and the NPO's activity shifts toward more follow-up support.

A lawsuit may be filed...

For suspected fair housing violations and violations of federal civil rights, the family has the right to file a lawsuit in federal court. This must be done within 180 days of the incident. *The NPO counselor should assist the family in writing down what happened and in seeking expert advice.* The less time elapses between an incident and the written account, the more credible this evidence will be. The NPO should then refer the family to a legal assistance program or agency for advice about whether to proceed by filing a lawsuit.

...and an administrative complaint

Apart from a lawsuit, the NPO can help the family (or provide a

may also be appropriate

referral for help) to *file a complaint* with HUD or the correct state or local agency with jurisdiction over the issue (which may not necessarily relate to fair housing). Each NPO participating in the MTO demonstration should be sure it has explanatory materials and a referral/resource list on hand, so that action can be taken quickly if and when discrimination occurs. Because of the NPO's role in follow-up support for the families that have moved to low-poverty areas, the materials and referrals should go beyond housing-related rights and recourses.

TRACKING PARTICIPANTS IN ALL THREE MTO GROUPS

Relationship of tracking to follow-up support

The first parts of this chapter concerned providing follow-up services to families in the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. The NPO's ability to deliver those services depends on tracking the families—knowing where they are or at least how to contact them. Suggestions for short-term follow-up, around the time of the move and during the next few months, included:

- Making sure the families know the NPO will help them if they keep in touch;
- Sending a congratulatory postcard at the time of the move;
- Getting the family involved with a local support network; and
- Contacting the landlord shortly after the move.

Why long-term tracking?

When Congress created the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing demonstration program, it set a ten-year time frame for determining whether this program is effective in improving educational and economic opportunities for the participating families. Answering the question of program effectiveness requires knowing how the lives of the MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP families differed (as a result of their program participation) from the lives of the families in the SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP and those in the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP. ***Thus, tracking needs to be done for all families randomly assigned to any of the three groups.***

Establishing the basis for

MTO is a mobility program. It offers families in two of the three

long-term tracking

groups Section 8 assistance for moving from their current housing. *In the five sites, over 1,300 families will move as a result of the demonstration's first round.* Some of these moves will be close by, others farther away. In all cases, however, it is vital that the PHAs and NPOs gather information about the moves as the start of a long-term tracking system.

The initial moves will be comparatively easy to track, through Section 8 processing. The PHAs are responsible for providing information on the initial moves to Abt Associates, which is creating the tracking system. Some further moves may be recorded in the tracking forms, as long as the intake period continues. Subsequent data submissions will draw from the PHAs' computerized Section 8 data systems, to minimize burden on the agencies. By placing a flag on the data records of the families participating in MTO, periodic checks can be made for changes in status.

Tracking the families who stay in public housing and project-based Section 8 developments

The same general approach will be used to establish tracking for the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP families. Many or most of these families will be current public housing residents. Placing a flag on their data records and making periodic checks for status changes (especially terminations) will be the initial tracking mechanism for these non-movers. Similar tracking for residents of project-based Section 8 housing assigned to the IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP will be put in place with the cooperation of the landlords.

Naturally, the "in-place" families are not going to stay in one place forever. It is very likely—especially over a ten-year period—that some of these families will move, be evicted, or otherwise leave project-based assistance. Abt Associates, which has been selected by HUD to maintain contact (so that families can be re-interviewed some years after the baseline survey), will be making recommendations about how to track these families. Abt will also be carrying out the tracking plan, once it is developed.

Exhibit 14-1 summarizes the responsibilities of various agencies for tracking MTO participants. It shows the key steps that the PHAs and NPOs need to take for participant tracking. It also shows the roles of the Section 8 project owners and of the receiving PHAs when families move outside the central city.

MTO Program Operations Manual...

Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration

PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT
AND TRACKING PARTICIPANTS

Precise details of data extracts and transfers to Abt Associates will be worked out with the site agencies during the early months of MTO program operations.

Exhibit 14-1
Summary of Participant Tracking Responsibilities,
By Agency

Agency	MTO Experimental Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-Place Control Group
PHA	1) Establishes tracking log; 2) Makes entries up to certificate/ voucher issuance; 3) <i>Transfers family information to NPO;</i> 4) Records lease-up or expiration of certificate/ voucher; 5) For leased-up families, makes monthly extracts from Section 8 data system (working with other PHA if portability situation) for submission to Abt; 4) Checks monthly extracts for family status changes (annual and interim recertifications, terminations); 5) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt; 6) Notifies NPO of subsequent changes during first two years after lease-up	1) Establishes tracking log; 2) Makes entries up to certificate/ voucher issuance; 3) Records lease-up or expiration of certificate/ voucher; 4) For leased-up families, makes monthly extracts from Section 8 data system for submission to Abt; 4) Checks monthly extracts for family status changes (annual and interim recertifications, terminations); 5) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt.	1) Establishes tracking log; 2) Flags in-place control group families in PH data system; 3) Makes monthly extracts from PH data system for submission to Abt; 4) Checks monthly extracts for family status changes (annual and interim recertifications, terminations); 5) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt; 6) <i>Especially notes switch to Section 8 or other tenant-based assistance</i>
NPO	1) Receives log from PHA with new entries and steps up to certificate/issuance; 2) Adds new entries to NPO log; 3) Primary responsibility for maintaining tracking log during search and through follow-up visit (90 days after lease-up); 4) Makes entries for credit check, home visit, counseling and referrals, unit visits, search outcome; 5) For families finding units in other jurisdictions, notifies PHA of receiving PHA plus HQS inspection date, lease approval date, and move-in date	N/A	N/A

Agency	MTO Experimental Group	Section 8 Comparison Group	In-Place Control Group
Project-Based Section 8 Landlords	N/A	N/A	1) Flags MTO in-place control group families in data system or tenant records, placing notification request in file; 2) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt; 3) <i>Especially notes switch to Section 8 or other tenant-based assistance;</i> 4) If family moves, sends pre-printed notification card with date and any forwarding address.
Other Agencies	For families moving to other jurisdictions— 1) <i>Receiving PHAs in portability situation:</i> notify originating PHA promptly of annual recertifications and lease renewals, moves, other changes in status; 2) <i>Receiving PHAs in swap (absorption) situation:</i> flag MTO participant records in Section 8 data systems; 3) Check flagged records for family status changes (annual recertifications and lease renewals, moves, terminations); 4) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt.	For families moving to other jurisdictions— 1) <i>Receiving PHAs in portability situation:</i> notify originating PHA promptly of annual recertifications, changes in status; 2) <i>Receiving PHAs in swap (absorption) situation:</i> flag MTO participant records in Section 8 data systems; 3) Check flagged records for family status changes (annual and interim recertifications, terminations); 4) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt.	For families moving with housing assistance to other jurisdictions— 1) <i>Receiving PHAs in portability situation:</i> notify originating PHA promptly of annual recertifications, changes in status; 2) <i>Receiving PHAs in swap (absorption) situation:</i> flag MTO participant records in Section 8 data systems; 3) Check flagged records for family status changes (annual and interim recertifications, terminations); 4) Generates Form 50058 for all status changes, for submission to Abt.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

**REPORTING DEMONSTRATION COSTS
AND
SUMMARY OF RECORD-KEEPING AND
DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS**

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: CONTENTS

REPORTING DEMONSTRATION COSTS AND SUMMARY OF RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

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All materials in this chapter concern record-keeping and data collection.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

REPORTING DEMONSTRATION COSTS AND SUMMARY OF RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

This chapter introduces the data collection requirement concerning agency costs for operating the MTO demonstration. Both the PHA and the NPO are responsible for maintaining and reporting data on program costs, as mandated by the statute that created MTO. The chapter also summarizes the full set of record-keeping and data collection requirements for the demonstration.

STATUTORY AND NOFA REQUIREMENTS

In authorizing the MTO program, Congress directed HUD to prepare biennial reports on the demonstration, including the level of counseling and other types of services provided and *the costs of providing such counseling and services*. Congress also asked HUD to compare and contrast the costs associated with implementing the MTO program with the routine costs of the Section 8 tenant-based rental assistance program.

While the NOFA is silent on the subject of collecting information about program costs, it does indicate that PHAs and NPOs are required to comply with MTO reporting requirements. Reporting on program expenditures is the final area of data collection that will be required of the agencies in the demonstration.

Collecting cost information can be a tedious process. However, it is important to keep in mind how useful cost data can be at both the local and federal level. While other data collection will provide information about the type of counseling and services offered to participants, cost data will provide information about *the level of service* necessary to assist participants in making such significant changes in their lives. This level of service may be a key factor in determining family success in the program as well as the overall success of MTO at the demonstration sites. Thus, from a policy perspective, it is critical to have information about the cost of operating MTO programs.

REQUIRED RECORD-KEEPING ON PROGRAM COSTS

In order to track the costs of operating the MTO demonstration, PHAs and NPOs must keep records on:

- the *amount of time that staff devote* to MTO activities;

- the *other direct costs* associated with the program, such as rent, telephone, travel, and duplication.

Labor hours and costs

Labor costs will make up by far the largest portion of the costs for running the demonstration. For most months, the information to be collected is total labor hours and costs. For two months only, more detailed hours (by specific activity) need to be collected. MTO program managers should plan to integrate the procedures for recording labor hours spent on MTO with the agency's regular procedures for staff time sheets.

Keeping records for PHA staff time

PHA staff should keep records on the amount of time they devote to the MTO program overall. This includes specific activities such as outreach, intake steps beyond regular Section 8 processing, random assignment, record-keeping, and demonstration management.

Keeping records for NPO staff time

For the NPOs, staff will need to record the amount of time devoted to activities like group briefings, individual counseling, landlord outreach, search assistance, and demonstration management and record-keeping. As with the PHAs, labor hours need to be tracked not only for the NPO staff working full-time or directly on MTO, but also for other staff contributing to demonstration operations.

Full-time or part-time, assigned to MTO or not...

If staff members are assigned to MTO full-time, the cost tracking will be fairly easy for them. But staff working part-time on MTO—as well as staff in other parts of the PHA or NPO that contribute to MTO operations (e.g. data processing or information system staff on the public housing side of the PHA or a community organizer in another part of the NPO)—also need to be included in the cost tracking.

PROGRAM COST FORMS

Two types of forms have been developed to assist PHAs and NPOs in tracking demonstration costs: the Monthly Program Costs Forms and the Monthly Labor Costs Forms. (See Appendix G.) While the PHA and NPO versions of these forms differ somewhat, both are designed to collect basically the same information.

Total program costs (monthly) include...

The first type of cost form—the *Monthly Program Costs Form*—must be completed each month by each agency participating in the MTO demonstration. PHA and NPO staff

should record the total monthly expenditures for labor that month. *To obtain an accurate monthly labor cost figure, staff assigned to MTO will need to keep daily records of the total amount of time they devote to MTO activities.* Staff simply keep a record of how much time they spend on MTO each day. It is important that all staff working on MTO record their total time each day, but it is not necessary to record the time devoted to particular activities.

Labor costs...

Whenever time sheets are submitted, these MTO time totals should be collected. At the end of the month, these records should be given to the person responsible for completing the cost form, to calculate the total labor expenditures for the month. The total labor costs for the month are computed by calculating direct labor expenditures (hours multiplied times pay rates) and adding fringe benefits and overhead costs. (Directions are provided with the forms.)

...and non-labor costs

Non-labor costs must also be recorded on the Monthly Program Cost Forms. These include expenditures such as consultant fees, rent for any additional office space, telephone, postage, program advertising, printing and duplication. *Each site agency must be sure to track all such expenditures specifically for the MTO demonstration.*

Sources of funds

Lastly, the Monthly Program Cost Form requires the PHAs and NPOs to report the sources of funds used to pay for MTO activities. For the PHA, there is a category for activities that were paid for out of Section 8 administrative funds as well as an "other funds" category. Main sources of other funds are listed at the bottom of the form.

For the NPO, funding sources include the federal (HUD) MTO grant funds and local matching funds. In-kind contributions should also be noted.

**Detailed labor costs
(two months only)**

The second cost form is for detailed labor cost reporting. The *Monthly Labor Costs Form* requires the PHAs and NPOs to track and record, for each staff person who is working on the demonstration, the types of activities they undertook in a given month, the number of hours spent working on each activity, and the staff member's hourly rate.

In order to report this information, *each staff member working on MTO needs to keep a daily log* of the number of hours devoted to MTO and amount of *time spent on each particular type of activity*. The daily log should be coordinated with regular time sheets at collected at the same intervals. At the end of the month, this information must be tabulated by the staff person responsible for completing the form. For each staff member working on MTO, the number of hours spent on each activity is recorded on the Monthly Labor Costs Form. The person completing the form then totals the number of hours devoted by each staff member per month and the total labor cost for each staff member that month.

To minimize the burden on PHAs and NPOs, *information on staff hours by activity will be collected for just two one-month periods during the demonstration intake period*. Site staff will be advised by Abt Associates—well in advance—of the two months that have been selected for collection of this information.

Submission of cost data

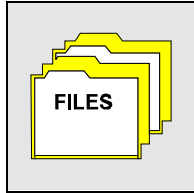
Once the PHA and NPO Monthly Labor Costs Form and the Monthly Program Costs Form are completed, they should be photocopied and sent to Abt Associates. Abt staff can answer questions about completing the forms.

SUMMARY OF RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION REQUIRED FOR THE MTO DEMONSTRATION

The Moving To Opportunity demonstration requires a substantial amount of record-keeping and data collection on the part of the site agencies. These activities begin during intake and continue through the enrollment period and beyond, spanning the entire two years of the demonstration's first round. As described in Chapter 8, during the enrollment period a *site assistant* will be available at each of the demonstration sites to help PHAs and NPOs in setting up record-keeping systems and collecting participant data. Abt Associates' staff are also available during this period to assist site agencies in developing reporting procedures.

There are also important privacy protections and confidentiality requirements covering MTO record-keeping and data collection. The range of items protected is discussed in Chapter 8.

The exhibits at the end of this chapter present an overview and summary of the data collection requirements of the demonstration. Exhibit 15-1 shows how the record-keeping



requirements are linked to the key steps of MTO operations and the "flow" of data from agency or participant to HUD. In general, beginning at the intake stage and through the enrollment period, both PHAs and NPOs can expect to make monthly submissions of tracking data files and/or forms to Abt Associates.

Abt Associates has the initial responsibility for identifying data omissions or problems, but the site agencies are responsible for correcting these problems once they are revealed. Abt Associates staff—including the local site assistant and the monitoring staff in Cambridge and Bethesda—will assist PHA and NPO staff in meeting the demonstration’s data quality standards.

Exhibit 15-2 shows the forms and tracking data that are required, who is responsible for the data collection, and when these forms or data sets should be collected and submitted. The exhibit also shows where information about each form or data set can be found in this manual.

Basic data collection and record-keeping requirements

For PHAs



First, PHAs will need to submit three forms for each participant: an Enrollment Agreement, a Participant Baseline Survey, and a HUD Form 50058.

Second, over the course of the enrollment period, PHAs will need to maintain and update the information required on the participant tracking log for each participant.

Third, monthly updates on participants from the public housing and Section 8 data systems will be needed during the enrollment period and beyond.

Finally, PHAs will need to complete and submit the program cost forms monthly during the first year of the enrollment period.

For NPOs



First, the NPOs will set up the landlord outreach log, updates to be reported monthly.

Second, for each MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP participant, the NPOs will need to set up a log which records information on counseling contacts, to be submitted to Abt Associates at the end of the enrollment period and one year later. These logs may also be used by the site assistant during the enrollment period.

Third, the NPOs must set up a participant tracking system and make reports monthly during the enrollment period regarding the status of each MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP participant.

Finally, the NPO will need to complete and submit program costs forms monthly during the first year of the enrollment period.

Choice of paper forms or data systems

It should be kept in mind that agencies have two options in setting up and maintaining the participant tracking systems and the participant counseling log. They may use the paper forms that have been developed, or they modify their own management information system to include the information that is required for demonstration reporting. In the latter case, consultations between the agency and Abt Associates staff are essential to ensure adherence to the reporting requirements and to achieve success in electronic data transfer.

**Exhibit 15-2: SUMMARY OF MTO DEMONSTRATION RECORD-KEEPING
AND DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS**

Form/File	Responsible Agency(ies)	Completed by or on Behalf of:	Frequency of Collection	Reported to Abt/HUD	Covered in Chapter	Located in Appendix
Landlord Outreach Log	NPO	N/A	Ongoing during enrollment period	Monthly updates	4	B
Enrollment Agreement	PHA*	All three groups	One-time	New forms submitted weekly	8	D
Participant Baseline Survey	PHA*	All three groups	One-time	New forms submitted weekly	8	D
HUD Form 50058	PHA	All three groups	One-time	New forms submitted weekly	8	E
PHA Participant Tracking Forms —Initial Set-up, all groups —Continuation, MTO Experimental Group —Continuation, Section 8 Comparison Group	PHA NPO PHA	All three groups MTO experimental group Section 8 comparison group	Ongoing during enrollment period	Monthly updates	8 13 13	F
NPO Participant Tracking Form —Initial set-up, MTO experimental group —Continuation, MTO experimental group	NPO NPO	MTO experimental group	Ongoing during enrollment period	Monthly updates	8 10	F
Participant Counseling Log	NPO	MTO experimental group	Ongoing during enrollment period	End of enrollment period and one year later	10	G
PHA Monthly Labor Costs, Program Costs	PHA	N/A	Program Costs: Monthly during enrollment period Labor Costs: For two months of the enrollment period	Monthly	15	H
NPO Monthly Labor Costs, Program Costs	NPO	N/A	Program Costs: Monthly during enrollment period Labor Costs: For two months of the enrollment period	Monthly	15	H
Monthly extracts and 50058s from PH data system	PHA	In-place control group	Monthly	Monthly updates	14	N/A
Monthly extracts and 50058s from Section 8 data system	PHA	MTO experimental group Section 8 comparison group	Monthly	Monthly updates	14	N/A
Monthly extracts and 50058s from Section 8 data systems	Receiving PHAs**	MTO experimental group Section 8 comparison group	Monthly	Monthly updates	14	N/A

* With site assistant support

** Under portability

Exhibit 15-1: MTO Record-Keeping Requirements & Data Flow Chart 2 pages

APPENDIX A

Federal Register/vol. 58, No. 156, pgs. 43458-43470

SEC. 152. Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing

SEC. 153. Directive to further Fair Housing Objectives under Certificate
and Voucher Programs

APPENDIX B

Nonprofit Name: _____

Landlord Outreach Log¹

Date of Initial Contact	Landlord Name and Address	Outreach Method <i>(check one)</i>	Size of Units Available for MTO <i>(check all that apply)</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> telephone <input type="checkbox"/> in-person visit <input type="checkbox"/> landlord briefing <input type="checkbox"/> other, specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 bedroom <input type="checkbox"/> 2 bedroom <input type="checkbox"/> 3+ bedroom
Number of Units Managed _____		Has landlord accepted Section 8 previously? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Landlord Reaction to Program <i>(check one)</i>	Neighborhoods Where Potential MTO Units are Located	Results/Follow-up Action ²
<input type="checkbox"/> very interested <input type="checkbox"/> interested <input type="checkbox"/> noncommittal <input type="checkbox"/> not interested		

¹ Complete one sheet for each landlord contacted.

² Record initial visit, as well as dates and outcomes for follow-up activities.

Nonprofit Name: _____

Landlord Group Outreach Log¹

Date of Initial Contact	Landlord Group Name	Contact Person and Phone Number
Outreach Method (<i>check one</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> telephone <input type="checkbox"/> in-person visit <input type="checkbox"/> landlord briefing <input type="checkbox"/> other, specify _____		Number of Members <input type="checkbox"/> < 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-100 <input type="checkbox"/> over 100

Geographic Area the Group Represents	Results/Follow-up Action ²

¹ Complete one sheet for each landlord contacted.

² Record initial visit, as well as dates and outcomes for follow-up activities.

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Pre-Enrollment Data Collection

There are *no standardized data collection forms* that must be completed by participants prior to their enrollment in the MTO program. However, in order to determine whether families in public housing and Section 8 developments in selected census tracts are eligible for and interested in the MTO program, PHAs will need to collect some preliminary information. This information is for local program needs only and will not be reported to HUD or Abt Associates.

Most PHAs have indicated that they will use a preliminary application form to collect initial information about eligibility and interest in the program. Some will adapt an existing housing application form; others will develop a form just for the MTO program. A draft preliminary application form that has been developed for the Boston MTO program is shown in Chapter 7.

While the content of the forms will vary from site to site, the following information should be requested:

- the full name of the head of household;
- the head's social security or alien registration number;
- street address, including apartment number;
- daytime telephone number;
- sex (male or female)
- for **each person** who is living with the household head:
 - full name
 - relationship to the head (sister, niece, daughter)
 - sex (male or female)
 - social security or alien registration number.

The application should also request the applicant to certify (by signing and dating the application form):

- that the applicant is the legal head of household and the leaseholder at the address reported on the form; and
- that the applicant understands that 1) if they participate in the program there may be restrictions on where they can move, and 2) they may be provided with housing counseling to help them in the move.

With this information, the PHA will be able to determine whether the applicant meets the program's basic eligibility criteria:

- residence in a Section 8 or public housing development in a targeted census tract;
- family with children who are less than 18 years of age.

APPENDIX D

Appendix D

Participant Level Forms for the Enrollment

There are two forms that need to be completed by participants as part of enrolling in the Moving to Opportunity Program. These are the MTO Enrollment Agreement and the MTO Participant Baseline Survey. (A copy of the Enrollment Agreement is included in this appendix.)

The MTO Enrollment Agreement

Who fills out: The MTO Enrollment Agreement is completed at the time that a family visits the PHA for a scheduled appointment to review eligibility. Following a review of the program rules and requirements, the applicant will be given the MTO Participant Enrollment Agreement to complete. The form should be read aloud by the MTO site assistant or by a PHA staff member. Staff should be available to assist the applicants in completing the form if necessary. The second page of the form will be completed solely by the PHA intake worker.

Why form is needed:

The Enrollment Agreement is the basis of informed consent. It is necessary because applicants must fully understand the program and willingly consent to be part of the demonstration.

Content of forms:

The first page of the Agreement requests the following information:

- whether the applicant is interested in participating in the MTO program
- signature of the applicant and the date of the signature
- printing of the full name
- social security number
- date of birth

The second page of the Agreement requires the PHA intake worker to give the following information on the applicant's housing status:

- current address of applicant and telephone number
- census tract of current unit
- whether or not current lease is in applicant's name

The form also requires the PHA to provide the following information after all documents have been checked, income certification is completed, and the applicant is determined eligible for the program.

- date of pre-application
- date of eligibility determination
- if eligible, outcome of random assignment
- if eligible, type of assistance
- if not eligible, the reason why
- reason why eligible applicant declined to participate

Reporting

Requirements: Once the Enrollment Agreement is completed, a copy should be sent to Abt Associates. Initially, copies of Enrollment Agreements will be sent weekly; the PHAs will be notified when they may begin to submit Enrollment Agreements less frequently. The original of the Enrollment Agreement is used to update the PHA waiting list, and enter the names of eligible families for random assignment and future tracking. Once these activities have been completed, a copy of the Enrollment Agreement for each MTO Experimental Group Member is forwarded to the NPO. The original Enrollment Agreement should be filed at the PHA.

The MTO Participant Baseline Survey

Who fills out: The MTO Participant Baseline Survey is completed by the applicant after the applicant has signed the Enrollment Agreement. The survey is self-administered; however, the MTO site assistant will be available to read the survey aloud and to answer questions. The survey will be completed by every applicant regardless of whether the applicant will be assigned to the experimental or the control groups.

Why form is needed:

The Participant Baseline Survey provides information necessary for an evaluation of the long-term effects of the program. The questions are focused on developing information that can help explain outcomes, data on particular characteristics or experiences of families that will help to explain why the program ultimately affected them as it did.

Proposed

content of forms: The first part of the survey asks questions concerning the following topics:

- Housing Information
- Neighborhood
- Neighbors
- Employment Training and Experience
- Benefits Information
- Outlook
- School
- Contact Information

The second part of the survey collects demographic information about each member of the household. The cover sheet requests the following information concerning the members of the family:

- their last name, first name, and middle name
- birth date
- sex
- race
- ethnicity

The second sheet asks for the following information concerning the adult members of the household:

- their last name and first name
- their relationship to the participant
- whether or not they are attending school
- whether or not they have graduated from high school or have a GED
- their work status
- their marital status
- the number of children they have
- the year their first child was born

The final two forms are surveys which ask for more information about the children in the household. The form for children between 6 and 18 asks for information regarding:

- school attendance and performance
- child care
- general health and behavior

The form for children 5 and younger asks for information regarding:

- pre-school attendance
- child care
- activities you do with your child
- general health and behavior

Reporting

Requirements: The forms will be collected by the site assistants at the end of each survey administration and returned to Abt Associates.

APPENDIX E

Appendix E

HUD Form 50058

Who fills out: The PHA must complete and submit the first page of a HUD Form 50058 for each family that submits an application for the MTO program. If an existing 50058 form is not available for updating, a new form must be completed. A fully completed 50058 is submitted for families who lease up.

Why form is needed:

Form provides essential demographic information about the participant household which is needed for long-term tracking and evaluation purposes. This information is also useful to the NPO as they begin the counseling process with MTO experimental group families.

Contents of form:

A copy of HUD Form 50058 is attached.

Reporting

requirements: For each family, the first page of the 50058 form must be completed and submitted as part of the intake visit. The rest of the form must be completed and submitted after lease-up has occurred for the family. Further discussions will be held with each PHA regarding a format for transmitting this data.

For families in the MTO experimental group, a paper copy of the 50058 should also be provided to the NPO.

Form HUD-50058-A (6/93) goes here (3 pages)

APPENDIX F

Appendix F

Program Level Tracking Forms

The Participant Tracking Forms for the PHA (A copy of the form is attached to this appendix.)

Who fills out:

The PHA will record this information.

Why form is needed:

Tracking logs provide a mechanism for monitoring the progress of participants from enrollment through lease-up of a new unit. In lieu of using a paper form, PHAs may use their own management information systems to track this information as long as a standardized reporting format has been approved by Abt Associates and HUD.

Content of forms:

There are three different Participant Tracking Forms to be use specifically with each type of group.

For the Experimental Group, the four page form asks for the following information:

- name of participant
- social security number
- date of pre-application
- date enrollment form, baseline survey, and HUD 50058 were completed
- date of random assignment
- type of assistance and a place to note if there is a change in assistance
- date notified of application outcome
- date of Section 8 Briefing by PHA
- date of referral to NPO
- date of issuance of the certificate or voucher
- date of certificate or voucher extension
- if unsuccessful, final expiration date
- if successful, date of HQS inspection
- if successful, date of lease approval
- if successful, date of move-in
- if successful, name, address, and id number of receiving PHA
- status of certificate or voucher (portability)
- additional comments
- outcome

For the Section 8 Comparison Group, the five page form asks for the following information:

- name of participant
- social security number
- date of pre-application
- date enrollment form, baseline survey, and HUD 50058 were completed
- date of random assignment
- type of assistance and a place to note if there is a change in assistance
- date notified of application outcome
- date of Section 8 Briefing by PHA
- date of issuance of the certificate or voucher
- date of certificate or voucher extension
- if unsuccessful, final expiration date
- if successful, date of HQS inspection
- if successful, date of lease approval
- if successful, date of move-in
- if successful, name, address, and id number of receiving PHA
- status of certificate or voucher (portability)
- if successful, new unit address
- census tract
- telephone number
- location type
- additional comments
- outcome

For the In-Place Control Group, the one page form asks for the following information:

- name of participant
- social security number
- date of pre-application
- date enrollment form, baseline survey, and HUD 50058 were completed
- date of random assignment
- date notified of application outcome

Reporting

Requirements: Tracking information will be submitted each month to Abt Associates until the PHA is notified differently.

The Participant Tracking Forms for the NPO (A copy of the form is attached to this appendix.)

Who fills out: The NPO will record this information.

Why form is needed:

Tracking logs provide a mechanism for monitoring the progress of participants from enrollment through lease-up of a new unit. In lieu of using a paper form, NPOs may use their own management information systems to track this information as long as a standardized reporting format has been approved by Abt Associates and HUD.

Content of forms:

There is a seven page Participant Tracking Form to be use by the NPO. The NPO is only responsible for tracking the Experimental Group. The form asks for the following information:

- name of participant
- social security number
- date of initial meeting with NPO
- date credit check was obtained
- result of the credit check
- counselor comments
- date of initial home visit
- result of the home visit
- counselor comments
- listing of other needs identified by counselor and household which will be addressed
- date of visit to the prospective unit #1
- address of prospective unit #1
- census tract where unit #1 is located
- indicate how the unit #1 was located
- result of the visit to unit #1
- address of prospective unit #2
- census tract where unit #2 is located
- indicate how the unit #2 was located
- result of the visit to unit #2
- address of prospective unit #3
- census tract where unit #3 is located
- indicate how the unit #3 was located
- result of the visit to unit #3
- if successful, chosen unit address and neighborhood
- census tract where chosen unit is located
- move-in date
- date of NPO follow-up contact
- if unsuccessful, date dropped out of the program
- for all participants, comments regarding outcome

Reporting

Requirements: Tracking information will be submitted each month to Abt Associates.

PHA Name _____

**PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM:
IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP**

ENROLLMENT						
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Date of Pre-Application ³	Date Enrollment Form/Baseline Survey/ HUD Form 50058 Completed	Date of Random Assignment	Date Notified of Application Outcome
First Name	Last Name					
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /

³ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

PHA Name _____

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 1
MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

ENROLLMENT			Intake					
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Date of Pre-Application ⁴	Date Enrollment Form/Baseline Survey/ HUD 50058 Completed	Date of Random Assignment	Type of Assistance	Check here if assistance type ² is changed	Date Notified of Application Outcome
First Name	Last Name							
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /

⁴ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² For example, a family who is assigned a voucher may request and receive a certificate instead.

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 2
MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

			Intake		Search		
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Date of Section 8 Briefing by PHA ¹	Date of Referral to NPO	Date of Issuance/ Certificate or Voucher	Date of Certificate/ Voucher Extension ²	<i>Unsuccessful</i>
First Name	Last Name						Final Expiration Date
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /

¹ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² If an automatic extension is used, please place the date of certificate/voucher issuance in this column.

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 3
MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

			INSPECTION/MOVE-IN										
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	<u>Successful</u>										Status of CV ²
First Name	Last Name		Date of HQS Inspection ¹	Date of Lease Approval	Date of Move-in	Receiving PHA (if Portability)						ID Number	
						Name	Street Address	City	State	Zip			
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /								
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /								
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /								
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /								
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /								

¹ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² Indicate whether the receiving PHA will be: billing your agency for the certificate or voucher (write "B"), or whether it will be absorbing or swapping one of its own certificates or vouchers (write "A"). If portability is not involved, write "N/A."

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 4
MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

ALL PARTICIPANTS				
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Additional Comments (Please note any additional moves)	Outcome 1=Leased Up 2=Expired 3=Never Issued 4=Ineligible
First Name	Last Name			
		- -		
		- -		
		- -		
		- -		
		- -		

PHA Name _____

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 1
SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP

ENROLLMENT			Intake						
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Date of Pre-Application ¹	Date Enrollment Form/Baseline Survey/HUD 50058 Completed	Date of Random Assignment	Type of Assistance	Check here if assistance type ² is changed	Date Notified of Application Outcome	Date of Section 8 Briefing By PHA
First Name	Last Name								
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Voucher		/ /	/ /

¹ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² For example, a family who is assigned a voucher may request and receive a certificate instead.

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 2
SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP

			Search		
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Date of Issuance/ Certificate or Voucher ¹	Date of Certificate/ Voucher Extension ²	<i>Unsuccessful</i>
First Name	Last Name				Final Expiration Date
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /

¹ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² If automatic extension is used, please place the date of the certificate/voucher issuance in this column.

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 3
SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP

			INSPECTION/MOVE-IN									
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Date of HQS Inspection ¹	Date of Lease Approval	Date of Move-in	<u>Successful</u>						Status of CV ²
First Name	Last Name					Receiving PHA						
						Name	Street Address	City	State	Zip	ID Number	
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /							
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /							
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /							
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /							
		- -	/ /	/ /	/ /							

¹ Report all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² Indicate whether the receiving PHA will be: billing your agency for the certificate or voucher (write "B"), or whether it will be absorbing or swapping one of its own certificates or vouchers (write "A"). If portability is not involved, write "N/A."

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 4
SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP

Name of Participant	Social Security #	<u>Successful</u> New Unit Address						
		Street	City	State	Zip	Census Tract	Telephone (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Location Type (1=Origin City 2=PMSA of origin city 3=Outside PMSA of origin city/Other)
	- -							
	- -							
	- -							
	- -							
	- -							

PHA PARTICIPANT TRACKING FORM: PAGE 5
SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP

ALL PARTICIPANTS				
Name of Participant		Social Security No.	Additional Comments (Please note any additional moves)	Outcome 1=Leased Up 2=Expired 3=Never Issued 4=Ineligible
First Name	Last Name			
		- -		
		- -		
		- -		
		- -		
		- -		

APPENDIX G

Appendix G

Participant Level Counseling Form

The Participant/Counseling Log (A copy of the form is attached to this appendix.)

Who fills out: The Participant/Counseling Log will be used to record counseling activities performed by the NPO staff with the experimental group participants. NPO staff will be asked to record contacts with each participant as well as the purpose and duration of the contact.

Why form is needed: The Counseling Log will allow HUD to review the level of counseling that is given throughout the demonstration. The Log will also allow HUD to review the types of counseling that were needed and the duration of the counseling. Since this information may currently be tracked by the NPO, the NPO may substitute its own forms for the Counseling Log as long as the same information is being tracked.

Content of forms: The Counseling Log, which is maintained for each participant, asks for the following information:

- participant's name
- participant's social security number
- date of visit for counseling
- duration of the contact
- whether the contact was in-person or by telephone
- reason for the contact
- outcome and/or next step

Reporting Requirements: These forms will be submitted to HUD at the in of the intake year and then again one year later.

Participant Counseling Log

Participant Name: _____

Social Security No. : _____ - _____ - _____

Date: ___/___/___ ¹ Duration of Contact: ___ minutes ___ In-person ___ Telephone
Reason for Contact: _____
Outcome/Next Step: ² _____

Date: ___/___/___ Duration of Contact: ___ minutes ___ In-person ___ Telephone
Reason for Contact: ² _____
Outcome/Next Step: _____

Date: ___/___/___ Duration of Contact: ___ minutes ___ In-person ___ Telephone
Reason for Contact: ² _____
Outcome/Next Step: _____

¹ Record all dates as month/day/year. For example, May 1, 1994 would be recorded as 05/01/94.

² If referral was made, please indicate to what agency the participant was referred and for what purpose.

APPENDIX H

Appendix H

Program Level Costs Forms

The Program Costs Forms for the PHA

Who fills out: The PHA's Program Costs Forms will be used to document the staff costs associated with the MTO program, as well as other non-labor costs and sources of program funding. All PHA staff who are involved in the program will be required to keep a daily record of the number of hours they devote to MTO. One PHA staff person should collect this information monthly and take responsibility for completing the forms.

Why form is needed: HUD is required to identify the costs associated with the operation of the MTO demonstration in biennial reports to Congress; therefore, it is necessary that monthly program costs be tracked.

Content of forms: There are two forms: a PHA Monthly Program Costs Form and a PHA Monthly Labor Costs Form. The first form -- the PHA Monthly Program Costs Form -- is completed at the end of each month and asks for the following information:

- PHA name
- month and year for which the form is completed
- the monthly expenditures for labor and other non-labor items

The PHA Monthly Labor Costs Form, which must be completed for just two months of the intake period, requests the following information:

- PHA name
- month and year for which the form is completed
- name of the staff assigned to MTO
- MTO activities undertaken this month by each staff member
- for each staff member, number of hours worked this month per activity
- hourly rate of the staff member
- total number of hours this month for the staff member
- total labor cost this month for the staff member

During the two months that this information is collected staff assigned to MTO will need to keep a daily record of the amount of time they devote to various MTO activities, in addition to their overall time commitment to the program.

Reporting requirements:

The PHA Monthly Costs Form is used for two one-month periods during intake, and is returned to Abt Associates at the end of each of those months. PHAs will be advised as to which months the Monthly Costs Form is used. The PHA Monthly Program Costs form is completed and submitted monthly.

The Program Costs Forms for the NPO

Who fills out:

The NPO Program Costs Forms are used to document the staff costs associated with counseling MTO participants, the cost of conducting credit checks, identifying housing units, recruiting and working with landlords, as well as general program administration. All NPO staff who are involved in the program will be required to keep a daily record of the number of hours they devote to MTO. One NPO staff person should collect this information monthly and assume responsibility for completing the forms.

Why form is needed:

HUD is required to identify the costs associated with the operation of the MTO demonstration in biennial reports to Congress; therefore, it is necessary that monthly program costs be tracked.

Content of forms:

There are two forms: a NPO Monthly Program Costs Form and a NPO Monthly Labor Costs Form. The first form -- the NPO Monthly Program Costs Form -- is completed at the end of each month asks for the following information:

- NPO name
- month and year for which the form is completed
- the monthly expenditures for labor and non-labor items
- the amount of Federal Grant Funds expended this month
- the amount of local matching funds expended this month
- listing of the types and approximate dollar value of in-kind contributions

The NPO Monthly Labor Costs Form, which must be completed for just two months of the intake period, requests the following information:

- NPO name
- month and year for which the form is completed
- name of the staff assigned to MTO
- MTO activities undertaken this month by each staff member
- for each staff member, number of hours worked this month per activity
- hourly rate of the staff member
- total number of hours this month for the staff member
- total labor cost this month for the staff member

During the two months that this information is collected staff assigned to MTO

will need to keep a daily record of the amount of time they devote to various MTO activities, in addition to their overall time commitment to the program.

**Reporting
requirements:**

The NPO Monthly Costs Form is used for two one-month periods during intake, and is returned to Abt Associates at the end of each of those months. NPOs will be advised as to which months the Monthly Costs Form is used. The NPO Monthly Program Costs form is completed and submitted monthly.