There are many reasons to expect that the population of public housing residents who move into mixed-income developments will be substantially different from those who do not. Our interviews revealed both similarities and differences between the two groups.

We compared our sample of movers (former public housing residents) at Jazz to a baseline comparison group of non-movers from the general Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) population. By analyzing which public residents chose to return and were able to meet the stringent screening criteria, we were able to determine the similarities and differences between movers and non-movers.

For the analysis in this highlight, the 23 former public housing residents who moved to Jazz were compared with 69 public housing residents who expressed an interest in but did not move to Jazz.

**Similarities**

Reflecting the relatively homogeneous composition of the overall public housing population in Chicago, the two groups shared the following characteristics; they are:

- almost exclusively female;
- almost all African American;
- around 50 years old on average;
- parents—half of each group has children;
- single—less than 10% of each group is married.

**Differences**

Compared to non-movers, movers had:
- more employment, education, and income
- smaller households
- longer time in CHA (almost half for their entire lives)
- substantially better self-reported physical and mental health.

**Number One**

### KEY FINDINGS

**Compared to non-movers, movers had:**
- more employment, education, and income
- smaller households
- longer time in CHA (almost half for their entire lives)
- substantially better self-reported physical and mental health.

**Movers**

- Almost 75%
- 83% high school grads
- $25,200 mean income
- Almost 50% for entire lives
- Less than 20% fair/poor physical health
- Less than 5% poor mental/emotional health

**Non-movers**

- Just over one-third
- 30% high school grads
- $11,900 mean income
- Less than one-third for entire lives
- Almost 40% fair/poor physical health
- About 30% poor mental/emotional health

* Difference is statistically significant
Even when units have been offered to them, some public housing residents elect not to accept a mixed-income development unit. Reasons for their lack of interest:

- reluctance to move again, once settled in a new location;
- concerns about the new developments, including the small sizes of the units and unfinished construction;
- stringent monitoring in the new developments;
- stigma of being a former public housing resident in a mixed-income setting;
- desire to maintain the flexibility of a housing choice voucher that can be used to make multiple moves, even out-of-state;
- smaller one- and two-bedroom units might make them less attractive or even infeasible to families with large households.

**Expected benefits of living around higher-income neighbors**

Whereas almost 70% of the non-movers told us they thought there would be a benefit to living around more affluent neighbors in a mixed-income development, only about 40% of the movers expressed the same opinion.

A possible explanation of this counter-intuitive finding is that the movers are “higher functioning,” to use the description shared with us by a social service provider at the development. They apparently felt they had less to gain from higher-income neighbors than did the non-movers.

**Why residents choose not to return**

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