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Do Federally Assisted Households Have Access to High Performing Public Schools?

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
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Prepared by Ingrid Gould Ellen
and
Keren Mertens Horn

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Introduction

A family's housing unit provides more than simply shelter. It also provides a set of neighborhood amenities and a package of local public services, including, most critically, a local school. Yet housing and education policymakers rarely coordinate their efforts, and there has been little examination of the schools that voucher holders or other assisted households actually reach. In this project we describe the elementary schools nearest to households receiving four different forms of housing assistance in the country as a whole, in each of the 50 states, and in the 100 largest metropolitan areas. We compare the characteristics of these schools to those accessible to other comparable households. We pay particular attention to whether voucher holders are able to reach neighborhoods with higher performing schools than other low-income households in the same geographic area.

In brief, we find that assisted households as a whole are more likely to live near low-performing schools than other households. Surprisingly, Housing Choice Voucher holders do not generally live near higher performing schools than households receiving other forms of housing assistance, even though the voucher program was created, in part, to help low-income households reach a broader range of neighborhoods and schools. While voucher holders typically live near schools that are higher performing than those nearest to public housing tenants, they also typically live near schools that are slightly lower performing than those nearest to households living in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and Project-based Section 8 developments and lower performing than those nearest to other poor households.

Our analysis is based on the most recent available data from 2008-09, which means that the data do not take into account the efforts of HUD and state housing agencies to improve the operation of their housing programs over the past four years. The data will also not reflect the full impacts of the recession and housing crisis on subsidized housing location patterns. We are looking forward to comparing this baseline data with 2012 data when they become available.

BACKGROUND

Roughly one in four eligible households in the United States receives a housing subsidy from the federal government.[1] These subsidies come in many different forms, but in this report we focus on the four programs that constitute the overwhelming majority of federal assistance: Public Housing; Project-based Section 8; Low Income Housing Tax Credits; and Housing Choice Vouchers. The programs collectively serve millions of households around the country.

* Roughly 1.2 million households (including more than 360,000 households with children under the age of 18) live in traditional public housing, which is owned and operated by local government authorities around the country.
* Another 1.5 million households live in privately owned housing that is subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The largest of these programs is the Project-based Section 8 program, which provides homes for about 1.2 million households and approximately 400,000 households with children.
* The largest current low-income housing production program is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, which now houses roughly 2.5 million households.[2] The LIHTC provides a dollar-for-dollar federal tax reduction to investors who provide equity contributions to

1 See Ingrid Gould Ellen, "Rental Housing Policy in the United States: Key Facts and Critical Trade-Offs," Presentation at a White House convening, *The Next Generation Housing Policy: Convening on Rental Housing,* October 13th, 2010. http://furmancenter.org/inthenews/testimonies/

2 There is no nationally available information on the tenants living in LIHTC developments, but we assume that housing units with at least two bedrooms house families with children. Using this proxy, we estimate that the LIHTC program houses about 900,000 households with children nationally.

develop affordable rental housing through the program.

* Finally, the federal government provides tenant-based subsidies through the Housing Choice Voucher program, which currently serves over 2 million households, including over 1.2 million households with children and over 2.5 million children under the age of eighteen.[3]

In our analysis we describe the schools near households with children living in these four types of assisted housing, and compare them to those near other low-income households with children, for the nation as whole, the 50 states separately, and the 100 largest metropolitan areas. We pay particular attention to whether Housing Choice Voucher holders are able to use their more flexible form of assistance to reach neighborhoods with higher performing schools. We also examine whether outcomes vary for households of different races – focusing specifically on the voucher program.

Methodology

Our research involves two basic tasks: (1) identifying the schools accessible to assisted households and other comparable households in the relevant geographic area; and (2) comparing the characteristics and performance of those schools.

LINKING ASSISTED HOUSEHOLDS TO SCHOOLS

Although we do not have access to school zone boundaries for every area in the country, we are able to identify the district elementary school nearest to each assisted household with school-age children. While the nearest school within a district will not always be the household's zoned school, our analysis suggests that it is in most cases and certainly provides a good proxy for the educational opportunities available to that household.[4] For unassisted households, we are able to match them to the elementary school nearest to the central point ("centroid") of the census tract in which they live.

We use this method to identify the schools accessible to four types of assisted households with children:[5] voucher holders with children, households with children living in public housing, households with children living in Project-based Section 8 developments, and households living in LIHTC units with at least two bedrooms. We compare the characteristics of schools nearest to these groups to the characteristics of schools nearest to the larger population of households with children, to renter households with children, and to households with children living below the poverty line.

To approximate the characteristics of the schools nearest to these larger groups, we use census tract data from the American Community Survey (ACS). From the ACS, we draw counts of all households with children, renter households with children, households with children living below the poverty line, and households with children by race living in each census tract. We then link every household group within a census tract to the elementary school nearest to the centroid of that tract.

3 The assistance provided by vouchers is substantial. Based on income, the median voucher household with children earns approximately $13,000 annually, has a family size of 4, and lives in a unit that rents at $1,000 per month. For this family, the voucher is equivalent to an increase in post-tax income of approximately $8,000 annually, increasing their income by 60 percent. We seek to evaluate whether households are able to use this form of assistance to reach neighborhoods with higher performing schools.

4 In another analysis, we found that for 74 percent of all HUD assisted households in New York City, the nearest school within the community school district is in fact their zoned school (Ellen and Horn, 2012). In smaller school districts (many of which have only one or a few elementary schools), the nearest school within the school district is even more likely to be the zoned school. In some districts, students may choose from a number of different schools outside their local zone, although this is more common for students attending middle schools and high schools.

5 We define households with children as households with persons under the age of 18.

CREATING MEASURES OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Experts in the field of education continue to debate the best way to evaluate the performance of public schools. Ideally, we would like to evaluate schools on their ability to improve students' future employment outcomes, their earnings potential, or maybe even their future happiness or life satisfaction. We would like to identify which schools, if any, play a role in decreasing the likelihood that a child will turn to a life of crime or rely on public assistance. It is extremely rare, however, to have access to such long-term measures; moreover, it is not practical to wait many years to learn how a school is performing.

For the most part, researchers and policymakers have instead assessed schools by the test scores of their students, as these scores are easy to measure and give real-time feedback.[6] Additionally, there exists some evidence that mean performance on standardized tests captures an important dimension of school quality. For example, Chetty et al.[7] find evidence that attending a kindergarten class with higher achieving peers can improve test scores throughout elementary school and boost earnings later in life. Although test scores are clearly imperfect, they are often the most salient pieces of information that households have on their local school as well as the most widely available measure of performance. Therefore, we rely on test scores as our key measure of school performance throughout the analysis.

For these measures to be comparable across states and metropolitan areas, we have to grapple with the great variation in standardized tests used across states. To address this variation, we create a measure of school performance using the percentile rank for each school within every state based on student proficiency rates in math and English language arts. To provide a broader picture of the schools, we supplement these test score data with the share of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch. We also report on the share black and Hispanic on the individual metropolitan area tables provided in Appendix B.[8]

We describe the medians of these measures for schools nearest to all our categories of households. We also report on the share of households in each group whose nearest elementary school is above the state median with respect to test scores and the share whose nearest school is ranked in the bottom 10th percentile of the state distribution in terms of test scores. Additionally, we report the share of households in each group whose nearest school has fewer than 20 percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch and the share whose nearest school has more than 80 percent eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Finally, for voucher holders, we look at outcomes separately by household race.

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6 For some examples see Koretz, Daniel, Sheila Barron, Karen J. Mitchell, and Brian M. Stecher. 1996. "The Perceived Effects of the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System." Rand Monograph Report MR-792-PCT/FF, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, CA; Jacob, Brian A. 2005. "Accountability, Incentives and Behavior: The Impact of High Stakes Testing in the Chicago Public Schools." Journal of Public Economics 89(5–6): 761–96; Cullen, Julie B. and Randall Reback. 2006. "Tinkering Toward Accolades: School Gaming under a Performance Accountability System." In ed. Michael Baye and John Maxwell, Improving School Accountability, Advances in Applied Microeconomics, 14: 1-34; Sanbonmatsu L, Kling, J.R., Duncan, G.J., and Brooks-Gunn, J. 2006. "Neighborhoods and Academic Achievement: Results from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment." Journal of Human Resources, 41(4): 649-691; DeLuca, Stephanie and Peter Rosenblatt. 2010. "Does Moving To Better Neighborhoods Lead to Better Schooling Opportunities? Parental School Choice in an Experimental Housing Voucher Program." Teachers College Record, 112(5): 1443-91; Harris, S. 2011. Value-added Measures in Education. Boston: Harvard University Press.

7 Chetty R., Friedman, J.N., Hilger N., Saez E., Schanzenback, D.W. and Yagan D. 2010. "How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings: Evidence from Project STAR." NBER Working Paper, 16381.

8 Comparisons between the racial composition of schools nearest to assisted households and schools nearest to other households is not meaningful at the national level because they may simply capture differences between the racial composition of population in the regions of the country where assisted households are more concentrated and that of other regions. This is true for percent of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch as well, but the variation in poverty across states and metropolitan areas is not as great as the variation in racial composition.

In Appendix A, we present tables for each of the 50 states. In Appendix B, we show tables for each of the largest 100 metropolitan areas. For the metropolitan area tables, we rely on rankings of schools within the metropolitan area.

Data

This analysis relies on a variety of different large data sources, which have been brought together for the first time, making it possible to explore the characteristics of schools available to assisted households with children. We have access to a national file of subsidized housing tenants in 2008 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which provides the residential address of all assisted households, other than LIHTC tenants, as well as the income, race, and composition of each household. We then supplement these datasets with HUD's publicly available Low Income Housing Tax Credits dataset, which includes the address of every LIHTC development placed in service by 2009.

To measure the performance of each school, we have data from the Department of Education that provide the proficiency rates in math and English for students in all public schools in the country for the 2008-2009 school year. We also take advantage of the Common Core of Data (a product of the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics) for additional school characteristics, including measures of school-level poverty rates (specifically the share of students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch) and racial composition, as well as the location of each elementary school.

Analysis

NATIONWIDE RESULTS

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present our comparisons of assisted households with children to other households with children in the general population for the United States. (We replicate these tables in the appendices for each of the 50 states and each of the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the country.) Table 1 shows the median characteristics of schools nearest to assisted households and other households with children. We see that recipients of all four major types of federal housing assistance generally have access to an elementary school that ranks quite low within their state. The median state test score ranking for elementary schools nearest to public housing tenants is the 19th percentile. In other words, the school nearest to half of public housing tenants ranks at or

Table 1. Median Characteristics of Schools Nearest to Assisted Households and Other Households with Children

USA	Proficiency Percentile Rank Math/ELA	% Free/Reduced Price Lunch
Housing Choice Voucher Households	26	74.1%
Public Housing	19	82.1%
Project Based Section 8	28	68.6%
LIHTC**	31	67.1%
All Households	53	45.9%
All Renters	37	66.8%
Poor Households	30	73.1%

** To proxy for units with children, all units with fewer than 2 bedrooms are removed

below the 19th percentile of public schools in their state. For voucher holders with children, the median state ranking of their nearest school is the 26th percentile. While this ranking is somewhat higher, it is still well below their state's median. The median ranking of the schools nearest to tenants in Project-based Section 8 developments is the 28th percentile; while the median ranking of the schools nearest to LIHTC tenants is the 31st percentile.

The bottom rows of the table show how assisted households with children fare in comparison to a wider range of households, most of whom are not living in subsidized housing. (Note that as these comparison groups are constructed from census data, they include voucher holders as well as other households with housing assistance; differences between these groups are thus biased downwards to some degree). The median school nearest to public housing residents is significantly lower performing than the median schools nearest to all households, to renters, and even to households living below the poverty line. Public housing residents also live near schools that have significantly higher poverty rates, again, even in comparison to those near to households with incomes below the poverty line.

The schools nearest to voucher households and tenants of Project-based Section 8 developments have median performance levels higher than those nearest to public housing tenants, but their nearest schools are still ranked below the median school nearest to households living below the poverty line. These unfavorable comparisons are troubling, as one would assume, at least in the case of vouchers, that the additional income should provide low-income households with sufficient resources to improve on (or at least match) the residential outcomes of other households living in poverty. The one assisted group that is able to reach schools that appear more advantaged than those accessible to poor households is tenants living in tax credit developments. The median school near tenants living in LIHTC developments is ranked slightly higher and has a lower poverty rate than the median school nearest to poor households. Still, the median school nearest to LIHTC tenants is ranked below the median school nearest to renters as a whole.

Table 2 reveals more about the distribution of households with children across schools, by reporting on the share of households who live near schools that are ranked in the top 50th percentile and the bottom 10th percentile with respect to test scores as well as the share of households who live near schools that have shares of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch of below 20 percent and above 80 percent. We again find very similar patterns. About a third of Public Housing and Project-based Section 8 tenants live near schools that are ranked in the bottom 10th percentile based on performance. About a quarter of Housing Choice Voucher holders and 23 percent of LIHTC tenants live near schools performing at this low level. Looking at the households who live near schools ranked at or above the median, we find that many more LIHTC tenants are able to reach high performing schools. One third of LIHTC tenants live near high performing schools, in comparison to just 25 percent of tenants living in Project-based Section 8 developments, 26 percent of voucher holders, and 19 percent of public housing tenants. The contrasts are perhaps even more striking when we consider the share of tenants who live nearest to a school in which more than 80 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Just over a third of LIHTC tenants live nearest to such a high-poverty school, as compared to 41 percent of Housing Choice Voucher holders and 53 percent of public housing tenants.

FURTHER EXPLORATION OF SCHOOL LOCATION OUTCOMES FOR THE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Our analysis shows that Housing Choice Voucher tenants live, on average, near lower performing and lower-income schools than tenants in Project Based Section 8 or LIHTC developments. This is something of a puzzle, as voucher holders are able to choose where they use their subsidy. Thus, one would

Table 2. Distribution of Households with Children Across Schools, by School Characteristics

USA	Share with Nearest School			
	Ranked in Bottom 10th Percentile	Ranked in Top 50th Percentile	Over 80% FRPL*	Below 20% FRPL*
Housing Choice Voucher Households	24.9%	25.9%	41.1%	7.0%
Public Housing	32.5%	19.4%	53.3%	5.7%
Project Based Section 8	30.3%	24.5%	41.6%	8.3%
LIHTC**	23.2%	33.0%	34.1%	10.3%
All Households	10.4%	52.8%	20.1%	25.1%
All Renters	17.2%	37.8%	34.0%	12.8%
Poor Households	21.6%	31.6%	40.6%	10.2%

* FRPL (Free/Reduced Price Lunch)

** To proxy for units with children, all units with fewer than 2 bedrooms are removed

expect that, among all four groups, voucher holders would be more likely to reach better schools than other poor households. It may be that voucher holders simply find very few affordable housing options in neighborhoods with high performing schools, or that information gaps are preventing them from finding those that exist, or that administrative constraints in the voucher program make it difficult to cross into higher performing school districts. Another potential reason why voucher holders may end up near more disadvantaged schools than the broader set of poor households is that voucher holders are more likely to be non-white; and in general non-white students tend to have access to lower performing schools, given patterns of residential discrimination and segregation. Although residents of other assisted housing developments are also more likely to be minorities, they are not tasked with finding their own rental units. Therefore in Table 3, we look separately at outcomes for voucher holders who are white, black, and Hispanic.

We find wide disparities in the performance of schools near voucher households with children of different races and ethnicities.[9] The median school nearest to white voucher holders is ranked 20 percentile points higher than that of the median school nearest to black voucher holders and 15 percentile points higher than that of the median school nearest to Hispanic voucher holders. The differences in terms of poverty rates are striking, with the median percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch varying from 57 percent for schools nearest to white voucher holders to 81 and 80 percent for schools nearest to black and Hispanic voucher households, respectively.

When comparing outcomes between racial groups for the population at large, we find that even greater differences emerge. The median school nearest to white households with children is ranked 41 percentile points higher than that of the median school nearest to black households with children and 31 percentile

9 For ease of exposition, we refer to racial groups, rather than both racial and ethnic groups.

Table 3. Median Characteristics of Schools Nearest to Housing Choice Voucher Households and Other Households with Children, by Race		
USA	Proficiency Percentile Rank Math/ELA	% Free/Reduced Price Lunch
White Housing Choice Voucher Households	40	56.6%
Black Housing Choice Voucher Households	20	80.7%
Hispanic Housing Choice Voucher Households	25	79.8%
All White Households	65	31.9%
All Black Households	24	76.5%
All Hispanic Households	34	74.0%
Poor White Households	47	51.6%
Poor Black Households	17	83.3%
Poor Hispanic Households	27	81.5%

points higher than the median school nearest to Hispanic households with children. When focusing on the differences in school performance between voucher holders with children of a given race and all households with children of that same race, the differences are narrower for all minority groups. For the full population we saw a gap of 27 percentile points between voucher holders and all households with children. When focusing on differences within racial groups, we see a gap of 4 percentile points for black households and 9 percentile points for Hispanic households. When comparing voucher holder outcomes to only poor households of the same race, the gaps are even narrower. For black households, the gap actually reverses, with the median school nearest to black voucher holders ranked three percentile points higher than the median school nearest to poor black households. For Hispanic households, the gap narrows from 9 percentile points to 2 percentile points, though poor Hispanic households still live near higher performing schools than Hispanic voucher households. We see similar patterns for the other school indicators.

Thus, our analysis confirms that one reason why voucher holders experience much worse outcomes than the population at large is that they are more likely to be non-white, though this does not account for the entire gap in school performance between voucher holders and the general population.

DIFFERENCES ACROSS METROPOLITAN AREAS

When analyzing outcomes for each of the metropolitan areas, we find tremendous variation across areas and regions in the access that assisted households have to high performing schools. We include the tables for each state and for each of the 100 largest metropolitan area in the Appendix of this report.

Rather than describing the differences between each state and metropolitan area, we summarize the variation with the histograms in Figures 1 through 4, which show the distribution of the median performance of schools nearest assisted households in each program in each metropolitan area. We see significant variation across metropolitan areas for recipients of all four types of housing assistance. For Housing Choice Vouchers we see that, for the majority of metropolitan areas, the median school nearest to voucher holders is ranked between the 12th and the 36th percentile, but with an overall range that extends up to the 56th percentile. For

public housing tenants we see an even wider distribution, with a significant clustering between the 6th and 18th percentiles. For Project-based Section 8 developments we see that, in the majority of metropolitan areas, the median schools ranked between the 10th and 30th percentiles, slightly lower than voucher households and higher than public housing. Finally, for LIHTC developments we see clustering at higher percentiles of performance, between the 20th and 40th percentiles, and a range that extends from the very lowest performing schools up to those ranked at the 65th percentile.

Figure 4. Distribution of MSAs by Median Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Housing Choice Voucher Holders

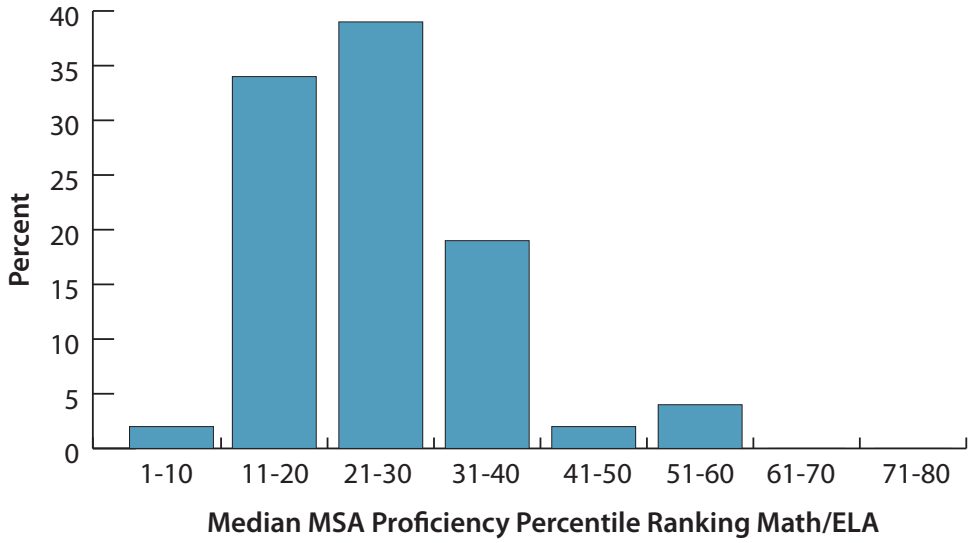


Figure 5. Distribution of MSAs by Median Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Public Housing Tenants

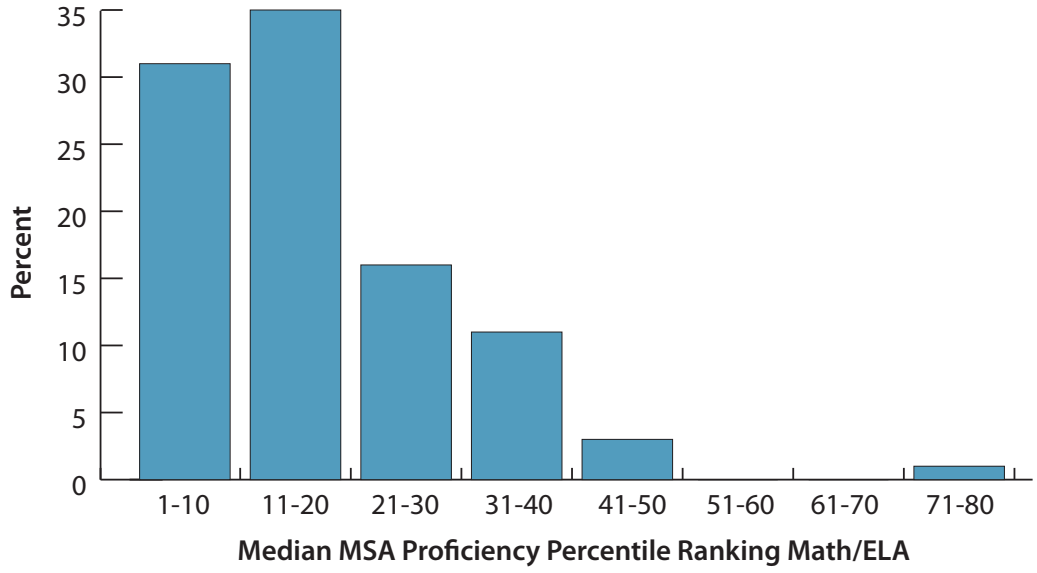


Figure 6. Distribution of MSAs by Median Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Project-Based Section 8 Tenants

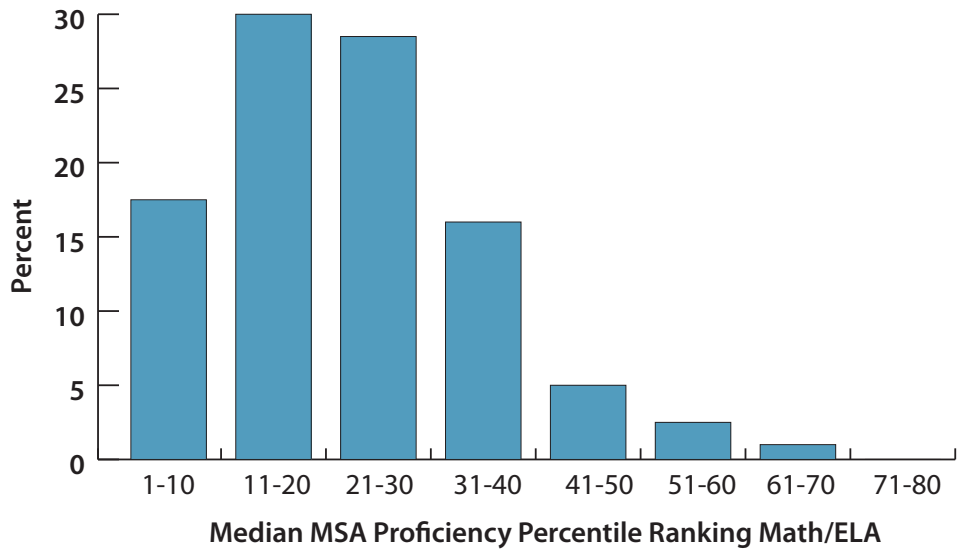
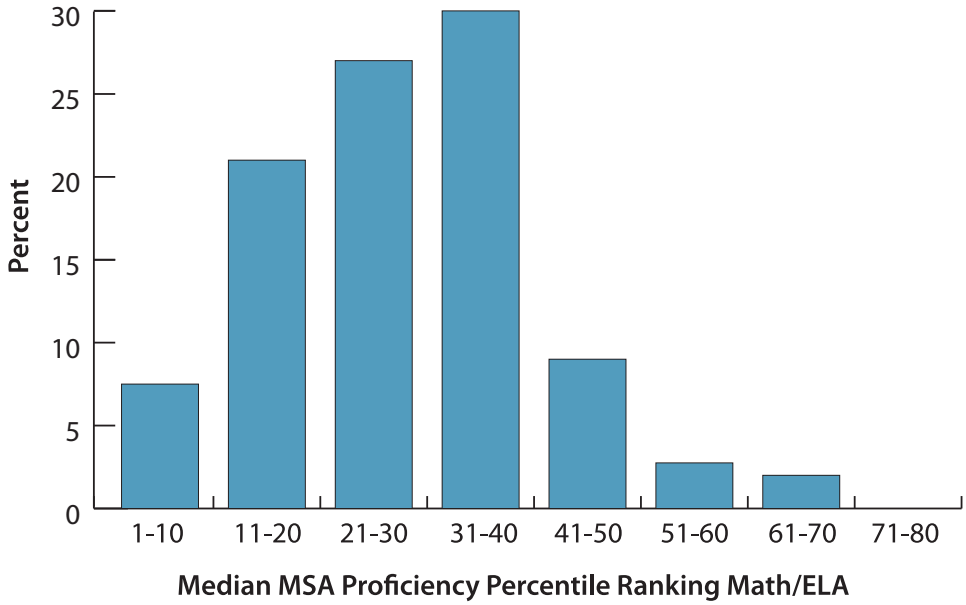


Figure 7. Distribution of MSAs by Median Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Low Income Housing Tax Credit Tenants



Tables 4 through 7 rank the 100 largest metropolitan areas based on the median performance ranking of the schools nearest to the assisted households within their area. In general, the list shows that assisted households tend to live near relatively higher performing schools in metropolitan areas that are smaller, are located in the South or the West, have larger Hispanic populations, are less racially segregated, and house fewer Public Housing Authorities, for all four program types. Additional work is needed to fully understand these relationships, however.

TABLE 4: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Housing Choice Voucher Holders

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
1	El Paso, TX	54
2	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	53
3	Omaha, NE-IA	52
4	Bakersfield, CA	51
5	Colorado Springs, CO	46
6	Stockton-Lodi, CA	42
7	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	40
8	Columbia, SC	39
9	Albuquerque, NM	38
9	Memphis, TN-AR-MS	38
9	Oklahoma City, OK	38
12	San Antonio, TX	37
12	San Francisco, CA	37
14	Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	35
15	Mobile, AL	34
15	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA	34
17	San Jose, CA	33
18	Las Vegas, NV-AZ	32
18	New Orleans, LA	32
20	Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	31
20	Oakland, CA	31
20	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	31
20	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre--Hazleton, PA	31
20	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	31
20	Tucson, AZ	31
26	Houston, TX	30
26	Norfolk-Va Beach-Newport News, VA-NC	30
26	Tacoma, WA	30
26	Ventura, CA	30
26	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	30
26	Wilmington-Newark, DE-MD	30
32	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA	29
32	Dayton-Springfield, OH	29
32	Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	29
32	Miami, FL	29
32	Richmond-Petersburg, VA	29
37	Dallas, TX	28
37	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	28
39	Jersey City, NJ	27
39	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	27
39	Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT	27
42	Austin-San Marcos, TX	26
42	Denver, CO	26
42	San Diego, CA	26
45	Gary, IN	25
45	Jacksonville, FL	25
47	Baton Rouge, LA	24
47	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	24
47	Fresno, CA	24
47	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	24
47	Sacramento, CA	24
47	Tulsa, OK	24
53	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR	23.5
54	Akron, OH	23
54	Atlanta, GA	23
54	Baltimore, MD	23
54	Orange County, CA	23
58	Birmingham, AL	22

TABLE 4: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Housing Choice Voucher Holders

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
58	Detroit, MI	22
58	Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	22
58	Knoxville, TN	22
62	Columbus, OH	21
62	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	21
62	Orlando, FL	21
65	Greensboro--Winston-Salem--Hi Pt, NC	20
65	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV	20
67	Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH	19
67	Fort Lauderdale, FL	19
67	Kansas City, MO-KS	19
67	Nashville, TN	19
67	Nassau-Suffolk, NY	19
72	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	18
72	Louisville, KY-IN	18
74	New York, NY	17
74	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	17
74	Pittsburgh, PA	17
74	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	17
78	Boston, MA-NH	16
78	Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI	16
78	Indianapolis, IN	16
78	Rochester, NY	16
78	Springfield, MA	16
78	Wichita, KS	16
84	Bergen-Passaic, NJ	15
85	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	14
86	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	13
86	Chicago, IL	13
86	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	13
86	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	13
86	St. Louis, MO-IL	13
91	Ann Arbor, MI	12
91	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	12
91	Newark, NJ	12
91	Syracuse, NY	12
91	Toledo, OH	12
91	Youngstown-Warren, OH	12
97	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	11
97	New Haven-Meriden, CT	11
99	Hartford, CT	10
100	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ	6

TABLE 5: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Public Housing Tenants

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking	MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
1	Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	75	30	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	21
2	St. Louis, MO-IL	50	30	Colorado Springs, CO	21
3	Mobile, AL	41	30	Birmingham, AL	21
3	Albuquerque, NM	41	30	Bakersfield, CA	21
5	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	40	34	Pittsburgh, PA	20
6	Columbia, SC	36	34	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	20
7	San Diego, CA	34	34	Oakland, CA	20
8	Tulsa, OK	33	34	New Orleans, LA	20
8	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	33	38	Knoxville, TN	19
8	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA	33	38	Gary, IN	19
8	Omaha, NE-IA	33	38	Baton Rouge, LA	19
12	Scranton–Wilkes-Barre–Hazleton, PA	31	41	Toledo, OH	18
12	Louisville, KY-IN	31	41	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	18
12	Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	31	41	Orlando, FL	18
12	El Paso, TX	31	41	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	18
12	Atlanta, GA	31	41	Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	18
17	Tucson, AZ	30	41	Fresno, CA	18
18	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	29	47	Akron, OH	17
19	Jacksonville, FL	28	48	Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT	16
20	Kansas City, MO-KS	27	49	San Francisco, CA	15
20	Jersey City, NJ	27	49	Norfolk-Va Beach-Newport News, VA-NC	15
22	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	26	49	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	15
22	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	26	52	Youngstown-Warren, OH	14
22	Nassau-Suffolk, NY	26	52	New York, NY	14
25	Tacoma, WA	25	52	Dayton-Springfield, OH	14
26	Richmond-Petersburg, VA	24	52	Baltimore, MD	14
26	Memphis, TN-AR-MS	24	56	Wichita, KS	13
28	Miami, FL	22	56	Fort Lauderdale, FL	13
28	Detroit, MI	22	56	Dallas, TX	13

TABLE 5: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Public Housing Tenants

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
56	Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH	13
56	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	13
61	Stockton-Lodi, CA	12
61	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	12
61	San Jose, CA	12
61	San Antonio, TX	12
65	New Haven-Meriden, CT	11
65	Denver, CO	11
65	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA	11
65	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	11
69	Wilmington-Newark, DE-MD	10
69	Sacramento, CA	10
69	Nashville, TN	10
69	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	10
69	Houston, TX	10
69	Hartford, CT	10
69	Greensboro–Winston-Salem–Hi Pt, NC	10
69	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	10
77	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR	9
77	Columbus, OH	9
77	Chicago, IL	9
77	Austin-San Marcos, TX	9
81	Ventura, CA	8
81	Springfield, MA	8
81	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	8
84	Rochester, NY	7
84	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	7
84	Oklahoma City, OK	7
84	Las Vegas, NV-AZ	7
84	Boston, MA-NH	7
89	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ	6
89	Bergen-Passaic, NJ	6
91	Newark, NJ	5
91	Indianapolis, IN	5
93	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	4
93	Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	4
93	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	4
96	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV	3
96	Syracuse, NY	3
96	Ann Arbor, MI	3
99	Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI	2

TABLE 6: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Project-Based Section 8 Tenants

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
1	Orange County, CA	66
2	El Paso, TX	58
3	Stockton-Lodi, CA	53
4	Omaha, NE-IA	52
5	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	48
6	Wilmington-Newark, DE-MD	44
6	New Orleans, LA	44
8	Wichita, KS	42
9	Greensboro–Winston-Salem–Hi Pt, NC	41
10	Columbia, SC	40
10	Albuquerque, NM	40
12	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	36
13	Kansas City, MO-KS	35
14	Mobile, AL	34
15	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	33
15	St. Louis, MO-IL	33
15	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	33
15	Oklahoma City, OK	33
15	Norfolk-Va Beach-Newport News, VA-NC	33
15	Memphis, TN-AR-MS	33
21	Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	32
21	Fresno, CA	32
21	Baton Rouge, LA	32
24	Louisville, KY-IN	31
24	Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	31
26	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	30
26	San Antonio, TX	30
28	Tucson, AZ	29
28	San Diego, CA	29
28	Akron, OH	29
31	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	28
31	Las Vegas, NV-AZ	28
31	Detroit, MI	28
34	Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	27
34	Tulsa, OK	27
34	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	27
34	Gary, IN	27
34	Dayton-Springfield, OH	27
39	Ventura, CA	26
39	Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT	26
39	Pittsburgh, PA	26
42	Tacoma, WA	25
42	Richmond-Petersburg, VA	25
42	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA	25
45	Jersey City, NJ	24
46	San Jose, CA	23
46	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	23
46	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR	23
46	Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI	23
46	Baltimore, MD	23
46	Bakersfield, CA	23
52	Indianapolis, IN	22
52	Houston, TX	22
54	Miami, FL	19
54	Atlanta, GA	19
56	Denver, CO	18
56	Birmingham, AL	18
56	Austin-San Marcos, TX	18
59	Springfield, MA	17
59	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	17
59	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	17

TABLE 6: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Project-Based Section 8 Tenants

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
59	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	17
59	Jacksonville, FL	17
64	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	16
64	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	16
66	Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	15
67	Youngstown-Warren, OH	14
67	Sacramento, CA	14
67	New York, NY	14
67	Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH	14
67	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA	14
72	Nashville, TN	13
72	Knoxville, TN	13
72	Colorado Springs, CO	13
72	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	13
72	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	13
77	Toledo, OH	12
77	Rochester, NY	12
77	Oakland, CA	12
77	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	12
81	Scranton–Wilkes-Barre–Hazleton, PA	11
81	Columbus, OH	11
81	Chicago, IL	11
84	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV	9
84	San Francisco, CA	9
84	Hartford, CT	9
84	Dallas, TX	9
88	Orlando, FL	6
88	Boston, MA-NH	6
90	Newark, NJ	5
90	Ann Arbor, MI	5
90	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	5
93	Syracuse, NY	4
93	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	4
93	Fort Lauderdale, FL	4
96	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	3
97	New Haven-Meriden, CT	2
97	Nassau-Suffolk, NY	2
97	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ	2
100	Bergen-Passaic, NJ	1

TABLE 7: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Low Income Housing Tax Credit Tenants

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
1	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ	66
2	Mobile, AL	64
3	Ventura, CA	58
4	Tulsa, OK	55
5	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	52
6	El Paso, TX	51
7	Oklahoma City, OK	48
7	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	48
9	Tacoma, WA	47
9	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	47
9	Baton Rouge, LA	47
12	Colorado Springs, CO	46
13	Jacksonville, FL	43
14	Stockton-Lodi, CA	42
14	Nashville, TN	42
16	Albuquerque, NM	40
17	Rochester, NY	39
18	Sacramento, CA	38
18	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	38
20	San Antonio, TX	37
21	Norfolk-Va Beach-Newport News, VA-NC	36
21	Dayton-Springfield, OH	36
21	Columbia, SC	36
24	Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	35
24	San Diego, CA	35
24	Kansas City, MO-KS	35
27	Wilmington-Newark, DE-MD	34
27	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV	34
27	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA	34
27	Birmingham, AL	34
27	Austin-San Marcos, TX	34
32	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	33
32	Omaha, NE-IA	33
32	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	33
32	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	33
32	Memphis, TN-AR-MS	33
32	Denver, CO	33
38	Richmond-Petersburg, VA	32
38	Miami, FL	32
38	Ann Arbor, MI	32
41	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	31
41	Orange County, CA	31
41	Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	31
41	Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	31
41	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	31
46	Tucson, AZ	30
46	New Orleans, LA	30
46	Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	30
49	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	29
49	Baltimore, MD	29
51	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	28
51	Houston, TX	28
51	Dallas, TX	28
51	Columbus, OH	28
55	San Jose, CA	27
55	Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT	27
55	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR	27
55	Gary, IN	27

TABLE 7: 100 Largest MSAs – Median Proficiency Percentile Rank of Schools Closest to Low Income Housing Tax Credit Tenants

MSA Ranking	MSA Name	Proficiency Percentile Ranking
55	Bakersfield, CA	27
60	Wichita, KS	26
61	Louisville, KY-IN	25
62	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	24
63	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	23
63	Indianapolis, IN	23
63	Greensboro–Winston-Salem–Hi Pt, NC	23
66	San Francisco, CA	22
66	Oakland, CA	22
68	Nassau-Suffolk, NY	21.5
69	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	21
69	Orlando, FL	21
69	Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI	21
69	Detroit, MI	21
73	Pittsburgh, PA	20
73	Hartford, CT	20
75	Fresno, CA	19
75	Atlanta, GA	19
77	St. Louis, MO-IL	18
77	Fort Lauderdale, FL	18
77	Akron, OH	18
80	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	17
80	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA	17
82	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	15
82	New York, NY	15
82	New Haven-Meriden, CT	15
85	Springfield, MA	13
85	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	13
87	Toledo, OH	12
87	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	12
87	Las Vegas, NV-AZ	12
87	Chicago, IL	12
91	Knoxville, TN	11
91	Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH	11
91	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	11
94	Youngstown-Warren, OH	10
95	Jersey City, NJ	9
96	Syracuse, NY	7
97	Newark, NJ	6
97	Boston, MA-NH	6
99	Bergen-Passaic, NJ	3
100	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre--Hazleton, PA	1

Conclusion

Existing research on the residential outcomes of assisted households finds that on average assisted households live in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Newman and Schnare, 1997; Pendall, 2000; Freeman, 2003; Galvez, 2011). This analysis pushes the question a step further and probes whether housing assistance has the potential to break the cycle of poverty through breaking the link between poor households and low performing schools. Unfortunately we find that this does not generally appear to be the case; though we find some metropolitan areas where assisted households are living near relatively high performing schools relative to other households in the same metropolitan area. These metropolitan areas tend to be located in the South and West, and to have both smaller populations and lower levels of racial segregation.

We find that voucher holders and public housing residents tend to live in neighborhoods with lower performing schools than renters and other poor households. This is surprising, at least for the voucher program, given that Housing Choice Vouchers have the potential to allow low-income families to reach neighborhoods and schools that are of higher quality than those accessed by other poor households. Looking at subgroups within the voucher population, we find some variations in these outcomes, with non-white voucher holders attending lower performing schools than white voucher holders.

Unlike place-based subsidized housing, vouchers have great potential to enable households to move to neighborhoods with better schools. Yet our research suggests that most voucher holders are not doing so. More work is necessary to uncover how housing assistance can better help low income households reach neighborhoods with higher performing schools.

Appendix A: State-by-state tables

Appendix B: Metropolitan area tables

Appendix C: National distributions of family units by school performance

Appendix D: Top 100 MSAs – percentile rankings for each housing program

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