

HOPE VI Limited Success, Overall Bust

A new report from HUD's Office of Policy Development & Research, compiled by a Case Western University research team, shows the \$6 billion spent on the HOPE VI produced a mixed bag of results and a net loss of public housing units. The study excoriates HUD for failure to carefully monitor the program and keep adequate records of its activities.

The program launched in 1992, although formal legislation authorizing its application wasn't approved until 1998. Rushed into existence to test HUD's new theories of New Urbanism and Defensible Space, HOPE VI was meant to revitalize the nation's worst public housing projects -- primarily inner-city crime-ridden, high-rise tenements -- by eliminating them and replacing them with mixed-income townhouse style neighborhoods.

The national action plan operated under a variety of grants targeting neighborhood planning, public housing demolition and revitalization, and the Main Street program, primarily the urban renewal effort initiated in the 1960s.

Former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros HOPE VI the last gasp for public housing. By the end of the program in 2005, the country had a net loss of public housing units.

The study -- *HOPE VI Data Compilation & Analysis* -- is the first attempt at forging a comprehensive review of the program after research tailed off in 2004. Most of the studies focused on single HOPE VI sites or a select subset of sites. The report covers all 260 revitalization grants awarded between 1993-2014, totaling more than \$6.1 billion.

Researchers found that HOPE VI production focused primarily on public housing and Section 8 rental housing instead of giving at least equal prominence to production of market rate rental and homeownership units.

HOPE VI began phasing out during the second George W. Bush administration; no money has been budgeted since FY 2010. The 15-year active life of the program resulted in the demolition of 96,200 public housing units and the production of 107,800 new or renovated housing units, with only 56,800 units set aside for returning or new public housing tenants.

"Clearly, a major program shortcoming was the limited proportion of original residents who benefited from the new, higher quality housing and living environments," The study explains. "While some proportion of the non-returners possibly used the relocation opportunity for upward mobility to a low-poverty neighborhood, the literature suggests mixed results for those who did not return and for voucher holders in general."

Info: See the report at www.cdpublications.com/docs/9036

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