



National Center for Health in Public Housing

A project of  NORTH AMERICAN
MANAGEMENT



Demographic Facts Residents Living in Public Housing

The following demographic information was obtained from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Resident Characteristics Report as of January 31, 2019.¹

General Information

- Across the nation there are over 1.8 million residents living in public housing, and another 4.5 million residents living in Section 8 Housing.
- About 828,662 residents between the ages of 18 and 61 (46%) live in public housing, with a little over 2 million (46%) living in Section 8 housing.
- The average household size for residents of public housing is 2.1 people and 2.3 for residents of Section 8 housing.
- Over 52% of residents remain in public housing more than 5 years and nearly 57% of residents remain in Section 8 housing for more than 5 years as well.

Families with Children

- Approximately 665,607 children (ages 0-17) live in public housing representing 36% of residents living in public housing. Approximately 2 million children live in Section 8 housing representing 42% of residents living in Section 8 housing.
- 34% of public housing and 39% of Section 8 housing households are female headed with children.

Seniors

- Nearly 315,123 or 17% of residents in public housing are seniors (age 62 and above), and approximately 572,022 or 11% of residents of Section 8 housing are seniors.

People with Disabilities

- 21% of public housing and 28% of Section 8 housing households include a member who is disabled. (Should we add all different groups?)

Income

- Social Security payments are the primary source of income for approximately 56% of seniors in public housing and 58% of seniors living in Section 8 housing.
- The primary source of income for 34% of public housing resident households and 35% of residents of Section 8 housing is through wages. However, despite the efforts of this working population more than 21% of public housing residents and half of residents of Section 8 housing fall into HUD's "Very Low Income" category, with an income of less than 50% of the national median.
- The average annual household income of a household for residents of public housing is \$15,152 and \$14,606 for households in Section 8 Housing. This falls well below the federal poverty line, which in 2018 for a household of two was \$16,460, and for a household of three was \$20,780.

Health Status

- Residents face several barriers to health. For example, safety concerns cause residents to spend more time indoors, reducing activity levels, and amplifying obesity and related issues.² Additionally, where public housing is typically located in isolated areas, poor access to healthcare,³ social services and high-quality fresh foods are contributors to substandard health.

Population Distribution

The following chart shows Housing Authorities across the country with the largest number of public housing and Section 8 units. This gives an estimate of locations with the largest number of public housing and Section 8 residents.⁴

	Housing Authority Name	Public Housing Units	Section 8 Units
1	New York City Housing Authority	171,123	97,375
2	Puerto Rico Public Housing Administration	53,748	32,858
3	Chicago Housing Authority	16,688	51,430
4	Philadelphia Housing Authority	13,208	19,888
5	Boston Housing Authority	10,346	14,191
8	Miami-Dade Housing Authority	9,576	12,217
6	Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority	9,210	14,772
9	D.C. Housing Authority	8,513	14,190
11	Newark Housing Authority	7,713	6,725
7	Housing Authority of Baltimore City	7,648	19,284
13	Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles	6,941	46,605
14	Minneapolis Public Housing Authority	6,245	5,139
12	San Antonio Housing Authority	6,137	13,259
15	Seattle Housing Authority	6,034	10,236
17	Birmingham Housing Authority	4,738	5,309
10	Atlanta Housing Authority	3,749	19,611
20	Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh	3,251	7,335
16	Memphis Housing Authority	2,916	7,531
19	San Francisco Housing Authority	2,276	9,826
18	Housing Authority of New Orleans	2,174	17,706

¹U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Resident Characteristic Report available at: <https://pic.hud.gov/pic/RCRPublic/rcrmain.asp>

²Carlos A. Manjarrez, Susan J. Popkin & Elizabeth Guernsey, Poor Health: Adding Insult to Injury for HOPE VI Families, The Urban Institute, Brief No. 5, June 2007, 3.

³Kathie Culhand-Pera, MD, Dillard Ellmore, DO, & Lois A. Wessel, RN, CFNP, Primary Care in Public Housing: Voices of Clinicians, Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved No. 18, November 2007, 4.

⁴U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Public Housing Agency Profiles available at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/systems/pic/haprofiles/index.cfm>

Disclaimer

The National Center for Health in Public Housing (NCHPH), a project of North American Management, is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U30CS09734, a National Training and Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement (NCA) for \$608,000 and is 100% financed by this grant. This information or content and conclusions are those of the authors and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.