

**HOW HOUSING MATTERS TO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
RESEARCH COMPETITION
2008 GRANTEES**

Boston Medical Center/Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP)

Principal Investigator: Kirsten Levy (klevy@bu.edu)

<http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/page/home>

Using pediatric clinical data from five participating acute care facilities, supplemented by demographic and socioeconomic data from intake interviews, this study is testing the hypothesis that housing insecurity, defined as crowding or doubling up or multiple moves within a calendar year, is associated with poorer health outcomes for children under three years of age. Should variations in the stability of young children's early housing experiences explain variations in health outcomes health, such scientifically-based information could help strengthen the policy case for affordable housing.

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City

Principal Investigator: Teresa Lynch (tlynch@icic.org)

<http://www.icic.org/site/pp.aspx?c=fnJNKPNhFiG&b=3416281>

This project assesses the contributions of the construction, housing, and real estate (CHRE) cluster to inner city, central city, and regional economies, and evaluates private sector strategies and public policies that would strengthen CHRE activity in ways that would expand business and employment opportunities for inner-city populations. A substantial body of employment-related housing research focuses on labor market dynamics and the impacts of housing assistance on recipients' work effort, while this project attempts to create evidence to support an economic competitiveness case for affordable housing.

Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City/Department of Housing Preservation and Development

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<http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/home/home.shtml>

This grant would enable the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development to develop a multi-year panel study of how subsidized rental housing affects household health outcomes and children's educational progress. The research design would have three distinguishing features to enhance policy relevance: (i) a lottery process for allocating units to eligible households mimics random assignment experiment with carefully defined treatment and control groups; (ii) because New York City policy requires 50 percent of units in a project to be allocated to residents of the same neighborhood in which the housing is located, the research may be able to disentangle housing from neighborhood effects; and (iii) due to high housing

costs, the City's subsidized housing programs are targeted to a much wider range of incomes and neighborhoods than in most other places, this study would enable sensitivity analysis of the social impacts of affordable housing with respect to income.

Northwestern University

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This study is using survey research and scientific measurement of health biomarkers to measure the health impacts of Section 8 housing vouchers on public housing residents participating in HUD's Moving to Opportunity (MTO) experiment. More rigorous estimates of potential health effects of housing assistance is directly relevant to a wide range of housing policy questions, and to broader efforts to improve the health outcomes of low-income families living in some of the nation's most disadvantaged urban communities.

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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The study uses survey-based and ethnographic methods to explore how inner-city landlords in Milwaukee use and abuse eviction as a management tool, and the impact of forced mobility on the social and economic lives of low-income families. While the research literature on eviction pays little attention to what happens to people after they lose their houses, this study uses mixed methods to explore whether and how eviction may contribute to the perpetuation of urban poverty.

Wayne State University

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Using a natural experiment-type research design, this study will quantify how various conditions in the surrounding neighborhood affect independently a variety of outcomes for low-income individuals who resided in public housing for a substantial period of time during childhood. It will also probe causal pathways through which neighborhood conditions or environments might cause these outcomes. Assumptions about the degree to which neighborhoods affect the life chances of disadvantaged families are present in all assisted housing programs, and research that attempts to measure and explain the mechanisms through which those effects may be transmitted from neighborhoods to residents would provide important insights to policymakers.

Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

Principal Investigator: Doug Massey (dmassey@princeton.edu)

<http://wws.princeton.edu/research/>

This study of neighborhood effects, which grows out of the widely known Mount Laurel exclusionary zoning decisions of the New Jersey Supreme Court, overcomes a methodological challenge inherent in the use of cross-sectional data that makes it difficult to determine whether poor people move to poor places, or poor places make people poor. It does so through the use of a longitudinal research design that tracks individuals over time. Rigorous studies of the effectiveness of regulatory reforms in expanding housing opportunities that in turn may improve the life chances of families would be directly relevant to a wide range of housing policy and program design issues.