

# Building Mixed-Income Communities: Jazz on the Boulevard Case Study

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

NUMBER ONE

### MOVERS VERSUS NON-MOVERS: WHO ARE THEY?



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.*

### 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.

### Study overview

THE JAZZ ON THE BOULEVARD CASE STUDY IS DOCUMENTING A NEW MIXED-INCOME DEVELOPMENT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO BEING BUILT AS PART OF THE CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY (CHA) PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION.

THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM AT JAZZ IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE THRUSH COMPANY, HEARTLAND HOUSING, AND GRANITE DEVELOPMENT. THE SERVICE PROVIDER IS HEARTLAND HUMAN CARE SERVICES.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED WITH 46 RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS AT THE DEVELOPMENT, REPRESENTING ALMOST HALF OF THE CURRENT POPULATION, AS WELL AS 69 PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS WHO HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN MOVING TO A MIXED-INCOME DEVELOPMENT BUT DID NOT MOVE TO JAZZ.

THE CASE STUDY ALSO INCLUDES INTERVIEWS WITH DEVELOPMENT TEAMS AND THEIR PARTNERS AND OBSERVATIONS OF MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.

FOR PAPERS AND MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THIS AND OTHER MIXED-INCOME DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, GO TO [HTTP://MSASS.CASE.EDU/FACULTY/MJOSEPH/INDEX.HTML](http://msass.case.edu/faculty/mjoseph/index.html).

### Differences

	<b>Movers</b>	<b>Non-movers</b>
<b>Currently employed*</b>	Almost 75%	Just over one-third
<b>Education*</b>	83% high school grads	30% high school grads
<b>Income*</b>	\$25,200 mean income	\$11,900 mean income
<b>Years in public housing</b>	Almost 50% for entire lives	Less than one-third for entire lives
<b>Household size*</b>	1-2	2-4
<b>Health (self-reported)*</b>	Less than 20% fair/poor physical health	Almost 40% fair/poor physical health
<b>Mental/emotional health (self-reported)*</b>	Less than 5% poor mental/emotional health	About 30% poor mental/emotional health

\* *Difference is statistically significant*

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## Screening criteria for public housing residents to qualify for Jazz include:

- \* at least 30 hours of employment per week
- \* lease compliance in current unit
- \* no unpaid utility bills or rent
- \* no recent criminal convictions
- \* passing a drug test

LESS THAN 5%  
OF MOVERS  
REPORTED BEING  
IN POOR MENTAL  
OR EMOTIONAL  
HEALTH  
COMPARED WITH  
ABOUT 30% OF  
NON-MOVERS.



## Why residents choose not to return

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.

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## Research Highlights series

This Highlights series explores the early experiences of residents of all income levels who have moved into Jazz on the Boulevard:

1. **Movers versus non-movers: Who are they?**
2. The resident population at Jazz.
3. Understanding the choice to live at Jazz.
4. Resident perspectives on mixed-income development.
5. Early resident experiences: General satisfaction.

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