

Housing Choice in Crisis

Report Summary

- *Housing Choice in Crisis* is an investigation of discrimination against Housing Choice Voucher holders in the greater New Orleans rental housing market.
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) is commonly known as “Section 8.”
- HCVP is designed to provide low-income residents with more housing choices, that might ultimately help **to de-concentrate poverty and better integrate neighborhoods**.
- Under the HCVP, voucher holders secure rental housing from private housing providers and contribute up to thirty (30) percent of their income to cover the cost of rent. Local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) manage the HCVP and pay the difference between thirty (30) percent of a voucher holder’s income and the Fair Market Rent (FMR). Eligible households generally must have incomes that fall below fifty (50) percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Landlords denied voucher holders the opportunity to rent units **eighty-two percent (82%)** of the time, either by outright refusal to accept vouchers or by the addition of insurmountable requirements for voucher holders making it impossible for voucher holders to rent units.
- The data demonstrates that the alarming rate of discrimination against voucher holders is driven by two primary causes: discrimination against and stereotypes of low-income, African Americans and dysfunctional administration of the HCVP.
- As federal and regional housing policy increasingly relies upon the voucher program as a solution to our affordable housing needs, it is critical that we confront prejudice harbored against voucher holders and rectify the dysfunctional administration of the program. Confronting the problem of extensive discrimination against voucher holders will require a coordinated effort among public and private actors.