

**THE IMPACT OF THE LOS ANGELES  
MOVING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM  
ON RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY,  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
CHARACTERISTICS, AND EARLY  
CHILD AND PARENT OUTCOMES**

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**The Impact of the Los Angeles Moving to Opportunity Program on Residential Mobility,  
Neighborhood Characteristics, and Early Child and Parent Outcomes**

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## **Abstract**

This study provides an evaluation of the early impacts of the Los Angeles site of the Moving to Opportunity program (MTO). It finds that both MTO and Section 8 groups moved to neighborhoods with much higher socioeconomic levels than the Control group. While on average, MTO and Section 8 neighborhoods were often similar, the MTO group was both more likely to move to low-poverty neighborhoods (58% vs 1%) and more likely to remain in a high-poverty neighborhoods (32% vs 17%) than the Section 8 group. Both MTO and Section 8 groups achieved substantial reductions in neighborhood crime rates and substantial increases in perceived neighborhood safety levels relative to the Control group. In addition, parents in both treatment groups report increases in hours and earnings, increases in utilization of center based child care, and reductions in hospital emergency care. With respect to social capital the evidence is mixed. Parents in both treatment groups report reductions in church activity and are somewhat less likely to have friends and family in their neighborhood than the Control group. However, these parents are no less likely to be involved in their children's activities, and their children are just as likely to have friends in the neighborhood.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the critical issues in the design of housing assistance programs is how to promote the economic and social integration of the poor. Although only a minority of the poor live in urban areas with a high concentration of poverty<sup>1</sup>, the concentration of the poor in high poverty neighborhoods can be particularly harmful because it isolates the poor from mainstream economic activity, and it limits their access to critical necessities, such as good schools, safe streets, and decent jobs. Academic research has shown that growing up in a high poverty neighborhood is correlated with longer-term child outcomes such as high school dropout rates, teen-pregnancy, and welfare dependence.<sup>2</sup> More recently, research on the Chicago Gautreaux housing mobility program provides confirmation that neighborhood quality has an important influence on both child and parent well-being.<sup>3</sup>

Many federal housing assistance programs have contributed to the concentration of the poor in high poverty neighborhoods. Historically, federally subsidized housing projects have been located in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. The Section 8 Voucher and Certificate programs have been much more successful in integrating low income families into higher income areas, but Section 8 recipients still remain in areas with above average poverty rates.<sup>4</sup>

To address these concerns, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has initiated a housing voucher demonstration program, the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program, to help families from high poverty areas to relocate to low poverty neighborhoods. Under this program, families are drawn from public housing projects in the poorest neighborhoods of five cities.<sup>5</sup> They are randomly assigned to one of three groups. The MTO Group receives a housing voucher that they can use only if they move to a low-poverty neighborhood (defined to be a census tract in which fewer than 10% of the population is poor). In addition, they receive supportive services to help them to find an apartment and to adjust to their new neighborhood. The Section 8 Group receives no additional supportive services, but they receive a Section 8 housing voucher that they can use in any neighborhood. Finally, the Control Group does not receive a housing voucher, but may continue to live in public housing.

The MTO program offers the opportunity to test two critical questions. The first is whether a program which offers a combination of financial incentives and supportive services can increase the number of housing voucher recipients that move to (and remain in) low poverty neighborhoods. For this to happen, the program must overcome any participant resistance to moving to a low poverty neighborhood. In addition, program participants must be able to locate housing in low-poverty neighborhoods. This may be difficult if rent levels in low poverty neighborhoods are substantially higher than Section 8 voucher rent limits or if landlords in low poverty neighborhoods are unwilling to rent to Section 8 recipients.

The MTO program will also make it possible to analyze the impact of neighborhood characteristics on the well-being of parents and children. This program offers a unique opportunity to isolate the true effect of neighborhood characteristics from unmeasured child and family characteristics that are correlated with neighborhood quality, because it randomly assigns families to each of the three treatment groups. The program design includes a 10-year follow-up, which will make it possible to evaluate both short and long-term impacts of neighborhood on family well-being.

This paper evaluates the early impacts of the MTO program on 285 families who entered the Los Angeles site of the MTO experiment between 3/10/95 and 12/18/96. This paper examines the impacts of the program on residential mobility and neighborhood characteristics. In addition, it examines the short-term impact of the program on measures of parent and child well-being, such as perceived neighborhood safety level, participation in employment, education, and extracurricular activities, and the extent of their social integration within the neighborhood.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **The MTO Program**

The MTO program is a demonstration project intended to help families from public housing projects to move from public housing to low-poverty neighborhoods. The population eligible for this program consists of very low income families with children living in public housing projects with census tract poverty rates over 40%. Families learn about the program through a series of outreach efforts conducted in public housing projects in designated high poverty areas. When families apply for the program, they complete a baseline survey that provides detailed information on initial family and housing characteristics. After the family is determined to be eligible for the program, they are randomly assigned to either the MTO group, the Section 8 group or the Control group.

Families in the MTO Group receive a housing voucher that is redeemable only if they move to a census tract with a poverty rate below 10%. Families in the MTO group have approximately 150 days to locate housing before their voucher expires.<sup>6</sup> MTO participants must remain in a low poverty neighborhood for up to one year; after this period, they may move anywhere and continue to receive the voucher.

Until October 1996, two non-profit organizations provided services to help families in the MTO group locate housing and to make the transition to a low-poverty neighborhoods. The Fair Housing Congress of the City of Los Angeles helped MTO participants with the housing search process, by recruiting land-lords willing to rent to MTO participants, by providing information on housing search techniques, and by driving participants to visit up to three apartments in low poverty neighborhoods. A second organization, Beyond Shelter, helped families to adjust to their new neighborhood, by conducting workshops on financial management<sup>7</sup> and on child development, by providing families with furniture and appliances for their new apartment, and by helping families to access important resources in their new

community.<sup>8</sup> Effective in October of 1996, the responsibilities of these two organizations were consolidated, and were taken over by On Your Feet, a non-profit organization in the Los Angeles Area.

Families in the Section 8 Group receive a housing voucher that they can use in any neighborhood. These families do not receive additional supportive services, but can use standard information sources available to all Section 8 recipients, such as the listings of apartment vacancies at the local housing authority. Section 8 families have up to 120 days to locate housing before their voucher expires.

Both families in the Section 8 and the MTO group receive a voucher which entitled them to an amount equal to the difference between the fair market rent<sup>9</sup> in the area minus the families' expected rental contribution (or 30% of countable income). If the landlord charges an amount for rent which is above the fair-market rent level, families can make up the difference with out of pocket contributions.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, families in the Control Group do not receive a voucher or any additional program services, but they can continue to remain in public housing. They also can continue to apply for housing assistance outside of the MTO program. However, given the long waiting line for Section 8 housing vouchers in Los Angeles, it is unlikely that many could obtain a voucher outside of the MTO program.<sup>11</sup>

## **The Survey Design**

This analysis is based upon a sample of all MTO and Section 8 families that entered the Los Angeles Moving to Opportunity Program between 3/10/1995 and 4/24/1996. Most of the information on initial family characteristics is drawn from a baseline survey administered when families applied to enter the program. This survey contains extensive information on family demographic characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, neighborhood preferences, and work and educational activities.

Information on program outcomes was collected through a follow-up phone survey. The survey was approximately 25 minutes in length, and was conducted in both English and Spanish. Families were given a \$20.00 payment for completing the survey. Information on the phone numbers of

the respondent and of three personal contacts likely to know respondent's location was obtained from the initial application for the MTO program. In addition, the local housing authority and the local non-profit organizations provided several updates on respondent addresses and phone numbers.<sup>12</sup>

Interviews were completed over the phone between September and December of 1996 for an initial sample of families which entered the program between 3/10/1995 and 4/24/1996. If families could not be reached by telephone, local interviewers were sent to their homes to try to conduct the survey in person. These interviewers were very successful in locating families, because they were entrepreneurial about asking neighbors, and in some cases other MTO participants, about the location of the respondent.

An additional set of interviews was conducted between August 1997 and October 1997 for families that entered the program between 4/24/1996 and 12/18/1996. Due to resource limitations, these families were contacted by phone only. Members of the Control group were excluded from this sample, because it was much more difficult to obtain updated contact information for this group.<sup>13</sup>

Table 1 shows the total number of families that completed the survey. As shown, for the initial sample of 259 families, 245 (95%) families were located and interviews were completed with 238 (92%).<sup>14</sup> The second sample, which was conducted by phone only, had a much lower response rate. Of the 95 families in this sample, 48 were contacted by phone and 47 were interviewed. For the combined sample, 285 of 354 interviews were completed for a response rate of 81%. This reflects a response rate of 88% for the MTO group, 65% for the Section 8 group, and 81% for the Control group.

[Insert Table 1 About Here]

To test whether the different interviewing protocols caused the two samples to differ, the mean baseline characteristics of MTO and Section 8 group participants in each sample were compared. This comparison did not find significant differences between the two samples on the basis of the age, high school/GED completion rates, training activity, or AFDC reciprocity rates of the head of the household. However, it did find that the second sample had a higher proportion of blacks (54% vs 32%), never



married household heads (58% vs 34%), and household heads that were employed at the baseline (41% vs 23%). Despite these differences, most of the results that follow are not sensitive to the inclusion of the second sample in the analysis. For key cases where they differ, the analysis includes a discussion of how the results would change if the second sample was excluded.

## **THE MTO PROGRAM AND HOUSING SEARCH ACTIVITY**

Two key features of the MTO program may promote mobility to low-poverty neighborhoods. First, families are required to move to a low-poverty neighborhood to qualify for a housing voucher. This requirement may encourage some families to move to a low-poverty neighborhood who otherwise would have preferred to move elsewhere. Second, the program offers extensive housing search and relocation services. These services may help participants to overcome barriers to moving to low poverty neighborhoods, such as limited information about low-poverty neighborhoods, land-lord resistance to renting to low-income populations, or lack of accessible transportation.

This section provides information on how the low-poverty requirement and MTO supportive services affect housing search activity and program satisfaction. This will provide some clues as to how each of these two factors may have affected mobility into low-poverty neighborhoods.

### **The role of Supportive Services**

To test whether MTO respondents had any contact with low poverty neighborhoods prior to implementation of the MTO program, all movers in the sample were asked how familiar they were with their neighborhood before they began looking for housing. These results, shown in Table 2, indicate that MTO respondents had substantially less information about their neighborhoods than either the Section 8 or the Control group: over 76% of movers in the MTO group reported that they were unfamiliar with their neighborhood before they started to look for housing, compared to 53% of Section 8 recipients and 8% of Control group participants. This suggests that MTO supportive services have the potential to play

an important role in increasing the information available to MTO participants about housing options in low-poverty neighborhoods.

[Insert Table 2 about here.]

Table 2 also provides information on the extent to which members of the MTO group utilized MTO referral services to locate housing. As shown, nearly 80% of MTO respondents reported that they used a referral by a MTO counselor to look for housing. In addition, MTO respondents were most likely to indicate that their most useful method of finding housing was MTO referral services. Of all MTO respondents who used at least one search method, 44% said that a referral by a MTO housing counselor was their most useful method of finding housing.

Finally, Table 2 provides information on the intensity of housing search activity for each of the three groups in the experiment. As shown, the level of search activity of the MTO group was comparable to that of the Section 8 group, and was substantially higher than that of the control group. Ninety-one percent of MTO, 93% of Section 8 and 62% of Control group respondents reported that they had looked for a different place to live since entering the program; and 87% of MTO, 93% of Section 8, and 45% of Control families reported that they had visited at least one apartment. Among those who visited at least one apartment, the MTO group visited an average of 6.9 apartments<sup>15</sup>, compared to 6.6 for the Section 8 and 4.0 for the Control group. Despite the roughly comparable levels of search activity for the MTO and the Section 8 groups, the MTO group was somewhat less likely than the Section 8 group to find a qualified apartment: 81% of MTO respondents reported that they found a place that would have qualified for the housing voucher, compared to 93% of Section 8 respondents. This suggests that, even with additional program services, it may be more difficult for families in the MTO group to locate housing which meets program requirements.

Table 3 provides information on the satisfaction of MTO respondents with the services provided by the MTO program. As shown, MTO respondents had high levels of reported satisfaction with program services. Eighty-four percent reported that the program was either very helpful or somewhat

helpful in helping them to find a place to live that qualified for the MTO voucher. In addition, 58% reported that the program was helpful or somewhat helpful to them in saving money to pay for the costs of moving, 47% reported that the program was very helpful or somewhat helpful in getting together furniture and appliances for their new home, and 61% reported that the program was very helpful or somewhat helpful to them in accessing services in their new neighborhood.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

### **The Role of the Low-Poverty Requirement**

To assess whether the low-poverty neighborhood requirement had a large impact on the housing location decisions of the MTO group, MTO respondents who moved were asked where they would have moved if they could have moved anywhere and still received the voucher.<sup>16</sup> As shown in Table 2, 47% said that they would have moved to their current neighborhood, 5% said they would move to someplace near their original neighborhood, and 48% said they would move someplace else. This suggests that the low-poverty requirement may have played a critical role in encouraging families to move to a low-poverty neighborhood.

Table 2 indicates the extent to which MTO families anticipate that they will remain in their housing after their first year in the program. As shown, a large share of the MTO group indicated that they were likely to move in the next year, suggesting that there is some risk that the impacts of the MTO program will attenuate once MTO families are not constrained by the program to remain in low-poverty neighborhoods. However, it is important to note that these families were not any more likely to move than families in the Section 8 group--61% of the MTO group and 62% of the Section 8 group reported that they were either very likely or somewhat likely to move in the next year. In addition, many MTO families who do decide to move may remain in relatively low poverty neighborhoods.

### **Conclusions**

Taken together, these results suggest that both the low poverty requirement and MTO supportive services may have played critical roles in helping MTO families to locate in low-poverty neighborhoods.

MTO respondents reported that they had limited prior information about the neighborhoods that they moved into, suggesting that lack of information may pose a significant barrier to mobility into low poverty neighborhoods. In addition, MTO respondents reported high levels of utilization of MTO referral services, and high levels of satisfaction with MTO supportive services. However, a large share of MTO respondents also indicated that they would not have moved to their current neighborhood, if not constrained by the low-poverty requirement. Further demonstrations which test the impact of the low poverty requirement and MTO supportive services separately, would make it possible to more conclusively determine the relative magnitude of the impact of each of these two components of the MTO program on mobility into low-poverty neighborhoods.

## **RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY RATES**

### **Estimates of Mobility Rates**

Table 4 presents estimates of mobility rates for each of the three groups in the MTO experiment. The first section reports estimates for the initial sample of families randomly assigned between 3/10/1995 and 4/24/1996. The results indicate that mobility rates for the initial sample were substantially higher for both the MTO and Section 8 groups than the control group, with higher mobility rates for the Section 8 than the MTO group. Sixty percent of the MTO group reported that they had moved since entering the program, compared to 80% of the Section 8 group and 17% of the control group. To test the sensitivity of these estimates to non-response bias, the second line of this section presents estimates which assume that all nonrespondents have moved unless interviewers could verify that they were still at their original address.<sup>17</sup> This approach does not have a large impact on the estimated mobility rates for the MTO and Section 8 groups, but it does increase the estimated mobility rate for the Control group from 17% to 27%.

The second section of this table presents estimates for the sample of families who entered the program between 4/24/1995 and 12/18/1996. As shown, mobility rates of the MTO group are higher for this sample, and are now comparable to those of the Section 8 group: 79% of MTO and 77% of Section 8 respondents reported that they had moved since they entered the program. Because of the much higher non-response rate for this sample, these estimates are much more sensitive to the method of dealing with nonrespondents. Estimates which impute mobility rates for non-respondents based upon patterns in the initial sample produce mobility rates of 81% for the MTO group and 88% for the Section 8 group.<sup>18</sup> While the estimated mobility rate is now higher for the Section 8 than for the MTO group, the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant.

The final section of this table presents estimates for the combined sample. Under uncorrected estimates, the mobility rate is 64% for the MTO group, 80% for the Section 8 group and 17% for the Control group. Under estimates which adjust for non-response bias, the estimated mobility rate is 67% for the MTO group, 85% for the Section 8 group, and 27% for the Control group. For both these estimates, the difference between the MTO group and the Section 8 group is statistically significant at the 5% confidence level.

Taken together these estimates confirm that both the Section 8 and the MTO programs have been effective in increasing residential mobility rates of program participants above those of the Control group. The MTO program has been somewhat less effective than the Section 8 group in promoting mobility; however, there is some evidence that these differences have decreased over time. This may reflect the fact that the MTO program has become more effective as it has become more fully operational. In addition, it may reflect the change in the non-profit organizations responsible for implementing the program, effective in October of 1996.

### **Determinants of Mobility**

For both the MTO group and for the pooled sample of all families, a statistical analysis was conducted to identify family and neighborhood characteristics which are associated with housing mobility. The analysis included a number of factors which may influence the net costs and benefits to the family of moving to a new neighborhood.

This analysis failed to find evidence that factors typically thought to affect housing mobility were related to the probability of moving. In particular, even though it may be difficult for large families to locate housing which qualifies for the voucher, this analysis found no evidence that families with large numbers of children were less likely to move than other families. There was also little evidence that families were less likely to move if they had strong ties to their current neighborhood (i.e. they had friends or family in the neighborhood). Finally, there was little evidence that families with very positive attitudes towards moving to neighborhoods with high income levels &/or a high concentration of whites were more likely to move.

Key factors which were found to be related to mobility for the combined sample include:

- *Age*: The analysis found evidence that younger household heads were more likely to move. The estimates imply that the probability of moving within six months was 27 percentage points higher for families with a head under age 30, and 23 percentage points higher for families with a head age 30-39, than for comparable families with a head over age 50.
- *Victimization Status*: The analysis found that households in which a household member was beaten or assaulted in the last 6 months were more likely to move. The estimates suggest that these families were 18 percentage points more likely to move within six months than comparable families that have not been subjected to violence.
- *Initial Housing Quality*: The analysis found that families who said that their original housing unit was in excellent or good conditions were less likely to move than comparable families who said their housing was in poor or fair condition. The estimates suggest that living in a housing unit in

excellent or good condition decreased the probability that a family will move within six months by 12 percentage points.

Key factors found to be related to mobility for the MTO sample only include:

- *Marital Status*: For the MTO sample, the analysis found evidence that households with a never married head were more likely to move. The estimates imply that a household with a never married head was 21 percentage points more likely to move than an otherwise comparable households.
- *Initial Housing Quality*: The analysis found that initial housing quality was negatively related to the probability of moving. Families in the MTO group who said that their housing was in excellent or good shape were estimated to be 19 percentage points less likely to move within six months than otherwise comparable families.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS**

### **Geographic Location**

Figures 1a through 1c show the location of families at the time of the follow-up survey, by census tract poverty rate.<sup>19</sup> The dark gray areas in the map are areas with census tract poverty rates above 40%: they are the areas from which eligible MTO participants were drawn. The light gray areas are census tracts with poverty rates below 10% poverty; MTO families must locate in one of these areas to redeem their housing voucher. Finally, the dark black areas dots represent the lc of each respondent at the time of the follow-up survey.

Figure 1a shows that although MTO families were drawn from a relatively limited number of neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty, they were widely dispersed throughout the Los Angeles area at the time of the follow-up survey. In addition, comparing Figure 1a, to Figures 1b and 1c, reveals that both Section 8 and Control group families were more narrowly concentrated than MTO families, and that they tended to locate in areas with higher poverty rates.

Figures 2a to 2c show the final locations for each group, by the proportion of blacks in each census tract. Figures 3a to 3c show similar figures, by the proportion of Hispanics. These figures clearly illustrate that blacks are much more geographically concentrated in the Los Angeles area than are Hispanics. One important implication of this is that families who comply with MTO program requirements will almost always move to neighborhoods with very low concentrations of blacks; although they need not move to neighborhoods with low concentrations of Hispanics.

### **Neighborhood Socioeconomic Characteristics**

Table 5 presents information on neighborhood demographic and economic characteristics at the time of the follow-up survey. These estimates are based upon geocoded information on the address of each family at the time of the follow up survey, as well as data from the 1990 Census on census tract characteristics.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

As shown, the MTO program clearly has been successful in meeting its stated goal of increasing the proportion of families moving to low-poverty neighborhoods: 58% of MTO respondents moved to a census tract with poverty rates below 10.5% compared to only 1% of Section 8 and 1% of Control group respondents. However, since the Section 8 group was more likely to move than the MTO group, the Section 8 group was more likely to move out of high poverty neighborhoods: 83% of Section 8 participants moved out of census tracts with poverty rates over 40.5%, compared to 68% of Controls. This suggests that, while the MTO program may be more effective than the Section 8 program in moving families into very high income neighborhoods, the Section 8 program may be more effective in ensuring that families can escape neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty.

As shown in the remainder of Table 5, both the MTO and Section 8 groups lived in neighborhoods with significantly higher socioeconomic levels at the time of the follow-up survey than did the Control group. Both MTO and Section 8 groups lived in neighborhoods with less poverty and with a



higher share of the population above twice the poverty line. In addition, both groups lived in neighborhoods with higher levels of education and employment, with lower rates of public assistance receipt, with higher owner occupancy rates, and with higher housing values than the Control group.

Comparing the MTO and the Section 8 groups, the MTO group appears to have achieved improvements in neighborhood socioeconomic characteristics only on the basis of indicators which are sensitive to the upper tail of the distribution. Thus, while MTO neighborhoods had significantly higher shares of the population with college degrees or with incomes above twice the poverty line, both MTO and Section 8 neighborhoods were much more comparable on the basis of the incidence of poverty, high school graduation, employment, and public assistance receipt.

The most striking difference between MTO and Section 8 neighborhoods, however, is their racial and ethnic composition. MTO families moved to neighborhoods with much higher proportions of non-Hispanic whites and much lower proportions of Hispanics and non-Hispanic blacks than either the Section 8 or the Control groups. In contrast, Section 8 neighborhoods were much more comparable to those of the Control on the basis of race and ethnicity.

## **CRIME RATES AND PERCEIVED NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY**

### **Crime Rates**

One of the critical goals of most families who entered the MTO program was to achieve a higher level of safety. At the time they applied for the program, 59% of families in the sample said that getting away from drugs and gangs was their main reason for entering the program.<sup>20</sup> These families also reported high rates of victimization by crime: 11% reported that someone in their household had been stabbed or shot in the past 6 months, 23% reported that a household member had been beaten or assaulted, 29% reported that a household member had been threatened with a knife or a gun, and 46% reported that someone had tried to break into their home. Given these extreme levels of violent crime,

neighborhood safety is arguably one of the most important metrics of the impact of the program on family well-being.

Table 6 shows mean crime rates by treatment group at the baseline and at the time of the follow-up survey.<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, there are few significant differences at baseline between the groups. There are, however, striking differences in crime rates between the two treatment groups and the control group. Respondents in the combined MTO and Section 8 treatment group lived in census tracts nearly with 67% as many burglaries as respondents in the Control group. Murder rates in the combined groups were 45% of the rates found in control tracts. Both rape and assault rates in the combined treatment groups were just over half of the rates found in control tracts. Only one indicator shows a higher incidence of crime for respondents in the two treatment groups compared with respondents in the control group--respondents in the MTO group live in census tracts with significantly higher theft rates than the Control group.

These results confirm that being in the MTO or Section 8 group includes an “automatic” benefit of living in census tracts which, on average, have lower rates of crimes including burglary, murder, rape, and aggravated assault, and total crime than control group tracts. Surprisingly, however, there is little evidence that average crime rates are statistically lower in MTO census tracts than they are in Section 8 census tracts. This reflects the much lower rate of mobility for MTO than for Section 8 group families. If we were to adjust for these differences in mobility rates by comparing movers in each group, we would find that MTO movers have much lower rates of violent crime (murder, rape, and assault) than movers in the Section 8 group.

### **Perceptions of Neighborhood Safety**

Actual crime rates may not be as important in the lives of respondents as perceptions of crime. Prior victimization, knowledge of others’ victimization, or even hearsay about criminal activities is likely to wield greater influence than published reports. In the telephone interviews we asked respondents how

safe they thought their neighborhood was at night. Respondents were also asked how much of a problem they thought drug dealers and gangs were in their neighborhood.<sup>22</sup>

Table 7 shows that MTO and Section 8 respondents are more likely than Control respondents to report that their neighborhood is very safe and less likely to report that it is very unsafe. Twenty two percent of respondents in the combined treatment group report that their neighborhood is very safe (as compared with only 10% of respondents in the Control group), and only 17 percent report that their neighborhood is very unsafe (as compared with 52% of the Control group). Comparing the two treatment groups with one another, MTO respondents are significantly more likely than Section 8 respondents to report their neighborhood as both very safe and very unsafe. Twenty eight percent of MTO respondents indicate that their neighborhood is very safe (as compared to 7% of the Section 8 group), and 20% of MTO respondents indicate that their neighborhood is very unsafe ( as compared to 10% of Section 8 respondents.) These results are consistent with those discussed before: MTO families are both more likely to move to neighborhoods with very low crime rates, and they are more likely to remain in neighborhoods with very high crime rates, because they have lower rates of mobility than the Section 8 group. In contrast, Section 8 respondents are more likely to move out of very unsafe neighborhood although their destinations neighborhoods may not be quite as safe as those of the MTO group.

Respondents in the MTO group are more likely to report drug dealers and gangs as not a problem at all than either respondents in the Section 8 or control groups. For example, 46 percent of respondents in the MTO group report that drug dealers and gangs are not a problem compared with 34 percent of respondents in the Section 8 group and 13 percent of respondents in the control group

## **PARENTS' ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Besides living in a safer environment, we might expect MTO and Section 8 respondents to have more employment opportunities and greater access to community services than respondents in the

Control group. At the same time, we also might expect the two treatment groups have less *social capital* than the Control group, since moving almost always breaks old social ties and since it takes time to develop new ties. We were particularly concerned that MTO respondents might have trouble making friends in their new communities because of the small proportion of poor families and because of the lack of racial diversity. To examine these issues, we asked respondents a number of questions about their employment, use of community services, and participation in voluntary organizations, including children's schools. We also asked about the availability of family and friends. Table 8 reports the results for the indicators of community resources and Table 9 reports the results for indicators of social capital.

### ***Employment and Education***

Respondents were asked several questions about their employment, including whether they worked, the number of hours they worked and their total earnings.<sup>23</sup> Just over a quarter of all respondents work for pay. Those who are employed, on average, work just over 30 hours per week and earn just under \$200 per week. There are no significant differences in employment rates among MTO, Section 8 and Control group respondents. In contrast, there are notable differences in hours worked and these differences are statistically significant.<sup>24</sup> On average, MTO respondents work about 33 hours per week, Section 8 respondents work 37 hours per week and Control group respondents work 27 hours per week. The absolute differences in weekly income are also large and in the expected directions, although they are not statistically significant.

### ***Child Care***

Quality child care is an important community resource, especially for single mothers and low income families. Not only does the availability of child-care affect whether or not a parent works, it also affect the child's health and school readiness. Respondents were asked about their utilization of child care and the type of child-care they used.<sup>25</sup> Only 142 respondents said that they had a child under age 5, and

just under 40 percent of respondents indicated that they had a regular source of child care. Of those with regular arrangements, about one third of parents take their children to child care centers, just under 10 percent take their children to Head Start programs, just under one half rely on relatives to provide child care, and just under 20 percent rely on non-relatives for regular child care. Our estimates suggest that both the MTO and Section 8 groups are significantly less likely to use non-relative care than the Control group (6% MTO, 15% Section 8, and 50% Control Group). In addition, MTO families are more likely to use child care centers and to participate in Head Start programs than either of the other groups. Although these differences are not statistically significant, they are in the expected direction. If we combine center based care and Head Start, which are generally believed to be superior forms of care, the differences between MTO families and the control families are statistically significant.

### *Medical Care*

Another important community service is medical care. Not only is access to health care a valuable resource, but the location at which care is provided also matters. It is well known that low income families are much more likely than middle income families to use hospital emergency rooms as their main source of medical care, a practice that is both costly for providers and time consuming for patients.<sup>26</sup>

Almost 90 percent of all respondents reported that they had a regular place for medical care, although Control group respondents were somewhat more likely to answer yes to this question than MTO respondents. Looking at where respondents are likely to receive care suggests that MTO and Section 8 respondents are more likely to go doctors' offices, whereas Control group respondents are more likely to go to hospitals. Only the latter difference is statistically significant.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Participation in Community Organizations***

We also asked respondents several questions about their involvement in community organizations such as churches, children's schools, and other organizations.<sup>28</sup> These activities are commonly taken as indicators of social capital insofar as they provide residents with information and emotional support while, at the same time, reinforcing social norms. Parents' connections with teachers and schools are particularly important and are thought to affect children's educational achievement.

Well over half of all respondents in the survey belong to a church. Of these, nearly 80 percent go to church frequently (at least once a week). As shown in Table 9, respondents in both the Section 8 and the MTO groups are less likely to belong to a church than respondents in the Control group (54% MTO, 46% Section 8, and 65% Control). MTO and Section 8 respondents also report that they attend church less frequently than the Control group. Note that MTO families are much more likely than the other two groups to attend church in their old neighborhood (16% MTO, 3% Section 8, and 1% Control). These differences suggest that MTO respondents face some barriers to becoming integrated in their new communities, especially in religious organizations which tend to be more intimate than schools or other voluntary organizations.

Between one half and three fifths of respondents report attending events at their child's school. MTO and Section 8 families are just as likely to be involved in their child's school as Control families which is somewhat surprising, given that the families in the treatment group are much more likely to have moved in the past year. Finally, about 6% of respondents belong to "other organizations" and, as in the case of schools, there are no differences between the experimental and control groups.

### ***Friends and Family***

A final set of questions asked about access to family and friends.<sup>29</sup> Again, we were concerned that respondents in the treatment groups might have fewer friends and family in their current neighborhoods than respondents in the Control group because of greater residential mobility among the

former. Just over half of all respondents in the survey reported having friends in their neighborhoods, and less than a third report having family. As expected, respondents in both the MTO and Section 8 groups are less likely than respondents in the Control group to live near friends or family. Although the difference in friends is not statistically significant, the disparity between the point estimates is quite large and in the expected direction. Control group respondents are nearly twice as likely as MTO and Section 8 respondents to report having friends in their neighborhood. The same pattern appears for family members, although in this case the difference is statistically significant at the .05 level using a one-tailed test.

### *Summary*

In summary, differences in community resources show some early signs of success among respondents in both treatment groups, as compared to controls, both in terms of employment opportunities and access to quality community services. Respondents in both treatment groups report more hours of work and higher earnings than respondents in the control group, and MTO parents report more use of center-based child care and Head Start programs which are generally held to be superior to other types of child care. Experimental families are less likely than the Control group to receive medical care in hospital emergency rooms, and MTO families are more likely to receive care in doctor's offices. Again, these patterns are commonly associated with higher quality care.

With respect to social connections and social capital, the evidence is mixed. On the one hand, MTO and Section 8 groups are just as involved as Control group in their children's school activities, and they are just as likely to belong to "other organizations" – both positive signs. On the other hand, the treatment groups appear to have fewer friends and family in their neighborhood and they also report slightly lower levels of church membership and attendance. Overall, treatments groups are doing better than we might have expected, both in terms of connecting to local institutions and making friends in their new neighborhoods. Finally, comparing MTO to Section 8 families, it does not appear that requiring

families to move to a low poverty neighborhood reduces the overall level of social involvement among these families. Of course, as we have seen before, mobility is lower among MTO families and therefore the movers may be selective of the families most able to adapt.

## **CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES**

### **Elementary Age Children: 6-11**

During the telephone interview, we selected up to two focal children from two age groups (6-11 and 12-17). We asked respondents a number of questions about the activities and friendships of these children. The survey included specific questions about the focal child's participation in after school activities, after school supervision, and friends. Table 10 shows mean differences in outcomes for children aged 6 to 11, and Table 11 shows mean differences in outcomes for children aged 12 to 17.

#### *After school activities*

Parents were asked about their child's participation in activities after school and during the summer. We report information on whether they child participated in any activity, the total number of activities, and specific activities.<sup>30</sup> Just over three quarters of all 6 to 11 year olds participate in at least one of the specified activities. On average, children participate in 1.7 of the 7 listed activities. More specifically, over a quarter of all 6 to 11 year olds participate in art related activities, 38 percent engage in sports, just over a quarter participate in tutoring, just under a third participate in religious groups, 19 percent attend camp, and 17 percent are involved in some other activity.

Children in MTO families are somewhat less likely to participate in any activity and they appear to participate in fewer activities overall than children in Section 8 families or Control families. These differences are not statistically significant, but the difference in total activities is rather large (1.5 for MTO, 2.0 for Section 8, and 2.0 for Controls). The pattern is the same for most of the individual



activities, although art classes is the only domain in which the difference between the MTO children and the other children is statistically significant.

The fact that children in MTO families participate in fewer activities may be due to the fact that their families are facing much more severe financial pressures as a result of their move. When families move through the MTO or Section 8 program, their expenditures are likely to increase because their monthly out of pocket contributions to rent may increase.<sup>31</sup> In addition, these families must make large up-front payments for the security deposit and the first month's rent. To the extent that rental costs are higher in the neighborhoods into which MTO families move, these families may be more financially constrained than Section 8 or Control families. Thus, even though the costs of participating in these activities may seem modest, they may not be affordable to MTO families.

### *After school supervision*

Parental supervision is an important determinant of children's success in school. It also reduces the risk that children will become involved in delinquent behavior. To learn more about how the experiment affects children's supervision, parents were asked if their children were supervised after school and where they were supervised.<sup>32</sup>

Nearly all parents report that their children are supervised after school. Of those who are supervised, about 72 percent are supervised at home and about 26 percent are supervised at some other place. There is no evidence that children in the MTO or Section 8 groups are more or less likely than Control children to be supervised after school or to be supervised at home.

### *Friends*

In order to find out if children were adjusting to their new neighborhoods, parents were asked, "How many friends does your child have in this neighborhood?" According to parents, almost all children aged 6 to 11 have at least one friend in the neighborhood, and over half of all children have many friends

(3 or more). Although the same proportion of children in all three groups report having at least one friend in the neighborhood, children in the two treatment groups, and especially children in the Section 8 group, have fewer friends than children in the Control group. Although the latter difference is not statistically significant, the gap in the point estimates is quite large (37% for Section 8, 54% for MTO, and 69% for Control group).

Finally, in order to find out if parents were becoming acquainted with other parents in their neighborhoods, we asked them, “Generally speaking, how often do you talk to the parents of (your child’s) friends? Would you say: once a week or more, several times a month, once a month, less than once a month, or never?” Communication with other parents is another indicator of social capital, which, as noted earlier, is related to children’s school achievement. Although over three quarters of parents report that they talk with the parents of the focal child’s friends, less than 40 percent of parents report that they talk frequently (once a week or more). Despite the fact that the differences are not statistically significant, the point estimates suggest that, if anything, parents in the two treatment groups are somewhat *more* likely to talk frequently with other parents than parents in the control group (39% for MTO, 48% for Section 8, and 31% for Controls). These results are consistent with the qualitative interviews we conducted with a few selected families. These interviews suggested that having a child in elementary school actually facilitated parents’ becoming involved in their new neighborhoods.

## **Adolescent Children**

### ***After school activities***

Eighty four percent of all 12 to 17 year olds participate in at least one of the specified activities. On average, children participate in 1.76 of the 7 listed activities. More specifically, 21 percent all 12 to 17 year olds participate in art related activities, 54 percent engage in sports, exactly a quarter participate in tutoring, just over 1 percent are involved in military activities, one third participate in religious groups, 18 percent attend camp, and 14 percent are involved in some other activity.

There is much more heterogeneity in participation rates between groups for 12 to 17 year old children in comparison with children 6 to 11. For example, children in the control group are more likely than children in the other two groups to participate in sports, military, camp, and other activities, whereas children in the MTO group are more likely to participate in school tutoring and religious activities, and children in the Section 8 group are more likely to participate in art. The only differences that are statistically significant are the differences in tutoring and military activities (which are significant for the MTO – Control comparison and the combined group – Control comparison, using a one-tailed test).

Finally, parents of children age 15 and older were asked about their child's work activities.<sup>33</sup> These comparisons reveal that children in the MTO group and Section 8 groups are *less* likely to earn money than children in the control group (34% for MTO, 27% for Section 8, and 20% for Controls).

### ***After school supervision***

Although not quite as universal as after school supervision among 6 to 11 year olds, more than nine tenths of children aged 12 to 17 are supervised after school. Moreover, there are no important differences between children in the three groups. These numbers may strike the reader as extremely high. However, recall that all of the parents who signed up for the HUD experiment were very concerned about safety and were accustomed to keeping their children in the house and off the streets. Children in both treatment groups combined are somewhat less likely than children in the control group to be supervised at home, which suggests that their parents may be willing to give them more freedom in their new neighborhoods. [This difference is significant at the .10 level, using a one-tailed test.]

### ***Friends***

According to parents, four fifths of children aged 12 to 17 have at least one friend in their neighborhood and over half of all children have many friends (3 or more). For this group of older children, there is little evidence that children in the MTO and Section 8 groups have fewer friends in the

neighborhood than children in the control groups. Eighty one percent of children in the MTO group have at least one friend in the neighborhood compared with 77 percent of children in the Section 8 group, and 80 percent of children in the control group. Just over half of children in the MTO group have 3 or more friends, compared with only 38 percent of children in the Section 8 group and 56 percent of children in the control group.

Parents of children aged 12 to 17 talk to other parents even more frequently than parents of children aged 6 to 11.<sup>34</sup> Although over 68 percent of parents report that they talk to parents of the focal child's friends, only 31 percent of parents talk to other parents frequently (once a week or more). Very similar proportions of parents in each group report that they talk with other parents (71% MTO, 62% Section 8, and 67% Control) and that they talk with other parents frequently (28% MTO, 38% Section 8 and 31% Control).

### ***Summary***

The major substantive finding in Tables 10 and 11 is that the children in the experimental groups are doing well, despite the fact that many of them are having to adjust to a new neighborhood. They are not isolated and they appear to be making new friends in their new neighborhoods. This finding holds for adolescents as well as elementary age children which also is surprising, given that younger children are expected to adjust more easily to a move than adolescents. Although there is some evidence that children in the two treatment groups may be experiencing a small deficit in total activities, as compared with control children, the differences are small and are likely to be temporary. The fact that parents are establishing contact with other parents in the neighborhood is also a good sign and, when considered along with the estimates presented in Table 9, suggests that residential mobility does not necessarily result in a major loss of social capital, at least for this population of families.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although it is still too early to assess the long term effects of the *Moving To Opportunity Program*, the results presented above point to several tentative conclusions:

First, both MTO and Section 8 groups had substantially higher mobility rates than Controls. MTO mobility rates were lower than Section 8 group mobility rates, indicating that the more stringent requirements associated with the MTO voucher may discourage some MTO families from moving. However, there is some evidence that MTO mobility rates relative to the Section 8 group have improved, as the program has become more fully operational. Overall, 67% of MTO families moved, compared to 85% of Section 8 and 27% of Control group families.

Second, both the MTO and the Section 8 group moved to neighborhoods with substantially lower poverty rates and higher socioeconomic levels than the Control group. While on average, MTO and Section 8 neighborhoods are similar on a number of dimensions, there are important distributional differences. This is because the MTO program was both more successful than the Section 8 program in moving families to very low poverty neighborhoods and less successful in moving families out of very high poverty neighborhoods. At the time of the follow-up survey, 58% of the MTO group lived in low poverty neighborhoods, compared to only 1% of both the Section 8 and the Control groups. By contrast, 32% of MTO families remained in very high poverty neighborhoods, compared to 17% of Section 8 and 80% of the Control group.

Third, both MTO and Section 8 groups achieved notable reductions in neighborhood crime rates and increases in perceived neighborhood safety. At the time of the follow-up survey, neighborhood violent crime rates for the combined MTO and Section 8 sample were between 45% and 67% of those for the Control group. In addition, parents in the two treatment groups were much less likely than parents in the Control group to report that their neighborhood was very unsafe (20% MTO, 10% Section 8, and 52% Controls). Since most parents claimed that getting out of violent neighborhoods was the

main reason that they participated in the MTO program, the fact that they succeeded in this area must be given a great deal of weight in assessing the success of the program.

Fourth, parents in the MTO and Section 8 groups showed gains in employment as well as in access to community resources. Both treatment groups worked more hours and report higher earnings than control families. Similarly, the two treatments groups were less likely to use non-relative child care (which is usually regarded as an inferior form of care), and MTO parents were more likely to use center-based care or Head Start programs (which are regarded as superior forms of care). Finally, both treatment groups were less likely than Controls to seek medical care in a hospital emergency room.

Fifth, with respect to social connections or *social capital*, the evidence is mixed. On the one hand, parents in the treatment groups do appear to have lost some types of social capital. They were less likely than Control group parents to belong to a church and to attend church regularly, and they were less likely to have many friends and relatives in their neighborhood. Nevertheless, parents in the two treatment groups were just as likely as the control group to be involved in their children's school activities and to know the parents of their children's friends. Moreover, they were not totally without family and friends, even though their absolute numbers are lower than those of Control group families.

Finally, children in MTO and Section 8 families appear to be doing quite well overall, despite the fact that many of them have been relocated. While they participated in fewer activities, they are not isolated and they appear to be making new friends. Moreover this is some evidence that teenagers in the treatment groups were getting more help with their school work and, at the same time, were being allowed more freedom in the hours after school than teenager in the Control group. The difference here is probably due to the fact that their parents felt safer in their new neighborhoods and less fearful that their children will be harmed if they are allowed to be outside after school.

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## **Appendix A:**

### **Analysis of the Determinants of Housing Mobility**

In order to determine which attributes of respondents and respondents neighborhoods are most highly correlated with residential mobility, Appendix Table 1 produces estimates from a model of the monthly probability of moving based upon the Cox (Cox 1972) proportional hazard model. This model has the advantage that it can account for the fact that families were contacted for the follow-up survey at different lengths of time after entering the program. Estimates for the entire sample are produced in the second through fourth columns, while estimates for the MTO group only are presented in the fifth through seventh columns of Appendix Table 1.

Key controls included in the analysis include the race, age, and marital status of the household head, the number of children in the household, and whether the household has a car that runs. The analysis also includes two potential indicators of the respondent's attitudes towards moving to a low-poverty neighborhood—whether they would feel “very good” if most of their children's classmates were white, and whether they would feel “very good” if most of their neighbors earned more money than them. Finally, the analysis includes characteristics of the respondent's initial housing situation, including the physical condition of the apartment, the perceived neighborhood safety level, the incidence of violent victimization of family members in the last six months, and the presence of friends or family in the neighborhood.

As shown, in both column 3 and column 4, the MTO and the Section 8 variables are large and highly significant, confirming the finding from Table 4 that mobility rates were much higher for the MTO and Section 8 groups than for the control group. In addition, the interaction between the MTO group and the Sample 2 indicator is also statistically significant, indicating that the probability of moving was higher for MTO families in the first than in the second sample. These estimates imply that an MTO participant in the initial sample with average characteristics has a 41% probability of moving within six



months after entering the program, compared to 67% for the Section 8 group and 9% for the Control group; while MTO participants from the second sample had a 62% probability of moving compared to 65% for the Section 8 group.<sup>35</sup> The point estimates for the coefficients on these variables do not change substantially from the third to the fourth columns, suggesting that the inclusion of additional control variables did not substantially affect the measured effect of the treatment variables.

Of the control variables included in the combined model, only three are statistically significant. First, the coefficients on age less than 30 and age 30-39 are positive and statistically significant, suggesting that younger household heads are more likely to move. Evaluated at the sample means, the point estimates correspond to a 27 percentage point increase in the probability of moving within six months for household heads under age 30, and a 22 percent increase in the move probability for household heads age 30-39 relative household heads over age 50. Second, the coefficient on whether a household member was beaten or assaulted in the last 6 months is also positive and statistically significant, suggesting that families which have been victimized by violence are much more likely to move. Evaluated at sample means, the point estimates suggest that these families are 18 percentage points more likely to move within six months than families that have not been subjected to violence. Finally, the coefficient on an indicator that the original housing unit is in excellent or good condition is significant and negative, with point estimates suggesting a 12 percentage point reduction in the six month move probability.

Given the relatively small size of the sample included in the analysis, it is possible that there is enough information in the data to separately identify the impacts of each of these control variables. For this reason, the second column enters each set of control variables separately with only the treatment group and the sample group controls. As shown, for the most part, most of the control variables remain insignificant when they are entered separately. The one exception to this is that the coefficient on never married becomes positive and statistically significant. The point estimates are consistent with a 10

percentage point higher 6-month move probability for households with a never married head, than for other households.

For the estimates from the combined model for the MTO group alone, the coefficient on the sample 2 indicator is positive and significant, suggesting as before that the mobility rate was higher for MTO families in the second than in the initial sample. In addition, the coefficient on never married is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that MTO households with a never married head are more likely to move than other families. Finally, the coefficient on the indicator for whether the apartment is in excellent or good condition is negative and significant, suggesting a reduced probability of moving for families with higher initial housing quality.

When the control variables are entered separately, the age variables become statistically significant. In addition, the coefficient on family in the neighborhood becomes positive and statistically significant, suggesting that households with family in their original neighborhood were actually more likely to move than other households.

While both of these sets of results do point to some important indicators that are correlated with successful mobility, such as marital status, age, prior victimization rates, and initial housing quality, they fail to confirm that other important variables are associated with mobility. In particular, there is no evidence that families with large numbers of children, or that families with neighborhood ties to friends and family are any less likely to move than other families. In addition, there is also little evidence that families with very positive attitudes towards moving to neighborhoods with high income levels &/or a high concentration of whites are more likely to move.

[Insert Appendix Table A1 here]

## ENDNOTES

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1. (Jargowsky 1997) estimates that 12% of the poor lived in urban census tracts with poverty rates of 40% or more.
  2. See (Jargowsky 1997) for a review of this literature.
  3. See (Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991) and (Rosenbaum et al. 1993).
  4. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1997) makes it possible for the first time to determine the neighborhood characteristics of all federally subsidized housing units. This study found that public housing units in 1997 had an average neighborhood poverty rate (determined from the 1990 Census) of 37%; while all units subsidized by Section 8 Vouchers and Certificates had an average poverty rate of 20%. This compares to the national poverty rate from the 1990 Census of 13%.
  5. These cities are Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles.
  6. Families in the MTO group had 60 days from the date that the voucher was issued, plus an additional 60 day extension to locate housing before their voucher expired. In addition, the local housing authority delayed issuance of the voucher until thirty days after the family entered the program, effectively increasing the time that families could look for housing to 150 days. By contrast, families in the Section 8 group had 120 days (60 days plus one 60 day extension) because the housing authority did not delay issuing the section 8 voucher for this group.
  7. This seminar was critical because moving costs could be substantial. In addition to paying for the costs of moving, MTO (and Section 8) participants could be required to pay a security deposit and first month's rent at the unsubsidized rate. In addition, participants were be liable for any rental amount which exceeded the amount reimbursed by the voucher.
  8. Some examples include: convincing a school to set up home-schooling for a 10-year old child who was expelled from school, convincing an uncooperative school office to enroll a Hispanic student, helping a client to get transferred from one welfare office to another, and helping a parent to locate ESL training resources.
  9. The fair market rent is established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is intended to reflect local rental costs. The fair market rent for a three bedroom apartment in Los Angeles was equal to \$854 in 1996.
  10. Los Angeles was the only one of five sites to receive vouchers only (the other sites received a combination of vouchers and certificates). Under the Section 8 voucher program, land-lords may charge an amount above the fair market rent, to be made up by family out-of-pocket contributions. Under the certificate program, land-lords may not charge a rental amount above the fair market rent.
  11. Staff from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles report that the Section 8 program currently has a waiting list of 82,000. The waiting list last opened in 1989-90 and is not anticipated to re-open until 2005.

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12. In addition, a letter was sent to families informing them about the survey and asking them to contact a 1-800 number to complete the survey. This did not succeed in eliciting many responses.

13. Because most Section 8 and MTO families remain in subsidized housing when they move, the housing authority can obtain up-to-date information on the phone numbers and addresses for families in the two treatment groups. By contrast, the housing authority has no way of tracking families who move out of public housing to non-subsidized housing.

14. In addition, it was possible to verify whether a family had moved in 98% of all cases, since interviewers went to the homes of respondents who could not be reached over the phone.

15. This large number of visits clearly indicates that respondents were able to arrange housing visits without the help of MTO counselors, since MTO counselors escorted respondents on at most three visits to look for housing.

16. The question was, “As you probably know, the Moving to Opportunity program is designed to help people move to areas where there are low levels of poverty. If you could have moved anywhere, and not just to a low poverty neighborhood would you have moved to: the neighborhood where you live now, some place near the neighborhood you lived in when you enrolled in MTO, or some place else?”

17. Interviewers were able to verify whether a family was still at their original address (and thus whether they had moved) for 98% of all cases. It is likely that the remaining 2% had moved as well.

18. These estimates assume that families in each treatment group in the second sample that were not located by phone had the same probability of moving as families that were not located by phone in the first sample, plus an adjustment to account for the increase in the probability of moving for families contacted by phone from the initial to the second sample. Mobility rates for the initial sample are based on estimates which assume that all non-respondents had moved unless they were verified to have remained at their original address.

19. The graphs in this section are based upon the initial sample only.

20. Families were asked “What is the main reason you want to move? “better schools for my children, to be near my job, to have better transportation, to get a job, to get away from drugs and gangs, to get a bigger or better apartment, to be near my family, other, or I don’t want to move”. The second most frequent response was better schools for my children (21%).

21. Crime rates are constructed for each census tract using Los Angeles Police Department published crime statistics from 1995. Census tract level crime rates are weighted using 1990 census tract population. All addresses were confirmed during the telephone survey.

22. The question on safety read, “How safe are the streets near the apartment or house at night? Would you say they are: very safe, safe, unsafe, or very unsafe?” This question was asked once of all movers during the follow up survey, and once for families who did not move during the original baseline survey. The question on drug dealers and gangs read, “How bad of a problem are drug dealers and gangs in this neighborhood? Would you say they are: a big problem, a small problem, or no problem at all?” This question was asked once of all movers during the follow up survey. The families who did not move were asked “In your neighborhood, how bad of a problem is drug dealers or users?” during the original baseline survey.

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23. First, respondents were asked, “During most of last week, were you working for pay?” Then they were asked “How much do you usually earn?” and “How many hours do you usually work in a week?” Finally, they were asked “Did you take any classes or participate in any training programs during the past month?”

24. These results are similar for an analysis which includes only the initial sample of cases.

25. The questions were, “Do you have someone else care for (name(s) of child(ren) aged 5 or younger) on a regular basis?” If the respondent answered yes, s/he was asked “What type of care do you use? Child care center/ preschool, Head Start program, relative, baby-sitter who is not a relative, or other.”

26. Questions were, “Do you have a place where you usually take your children for medical care?” If the respondent answered yes, s/he was asked “Is this a private doctor’s office, a hospital outpatient room, a health clinic, or some other place?” and the distance of the place from her/his current home.

27. This result is sensitive to the inclusion of the second sample in the analysis. If the second sample is excluded from the analysis, MTO respondents are still less likely than the Control group to use hospital care (9% MTO vs 13% Control), but this difference is not statistically significant. Most of the other results in this section are sensitive to the exclusion of the second sample.

28. Respondents were asked: “Last Spring did you attend any kind of program at your children’s school, such as a PTA meeting or a special program for parents or anything like that?” They also were asked “Do you belong to a church or other religious organization?” If the answer was yes, they were asked a series of follow up questions about the location of the church, and how often they attended services. Finally, they were asked, “Do you belong to any groups or organizations (other than your church)?”

29. Respondents were asked: “How many of your friends currently live in this neighborhood? Would you say: none, a few, or many?” “How many of your family members currently live in this neighborhood? Would you say: None, a few, or many?”

30. Respondents were asked, “During the past 6 months, did (insert child’s name) participate in any of the following activities after school or in the summer? Art, music, band or drama lessons or clubs; sports lessons or sports teams, including swimming; Scouts, Big Brothers or Big Sisters, or Boys and Girls clubs; academic courses, tutoring or literacy training; military training, such as Junior ROTC; religious activities supervised by an adult; camp or other supervised recreation; some other supervised activity?”

31. Families in both the Section 8 and the MTO groups must pay a specified fraction of their income towards rent; while the housing authority will pay the remainder up to a maximum amount specified by the “fair market rent” in the area. However, if the rent for an apartment exceed the maximum voucher amount, families may make up the difference with their own contributions.

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32. The questions read: “After school, is (insert child’s name) usually supervised by an adult, that is, someone 18 years of age or older?” Then the respondent was asked “After school, where does (insert child’s name) usually go? Would you say: home, or somewhere else?”

33. The question reads, “During the past month, did (insert child’s name) do anything to earn money, such as baby-sit, help out with yard work, or have a part-time job?”

34. These groups are not mutually exclusive. Some parents have focal children in each age group.

35. Note that these estimates do not adjust for non-response bias, and thus may tend to overstate MTO mobility rates relative to Section 8 and Control group families.