

How Public Housing Authorities are **Addressing Equity**

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How Public Housing Authorities are Addressing Equity

Public housing authorities (PHAs) serve some of the most vulnerable people in their community—people who face greater rates of health challenges¹, barriers to work², and who have lower levels of educational attainment³ compared to their low-income unassisted peers. The housing assistance and services PHAs offer can provide these families with additional financial stability⁴, a healthier living situation⁵, and connections to supportive services.⁶ As a result, families residing in publicly supported homes experience health outcome improvements⁷ and their children have greater earnings potential in adulthood compared to their low-income unassisted peers.⁸ Access to affordable housing and long-term individualized supportive services can be the catalyst able-bodied working-age families need to work toward economic independence.⁹

However, some groups have historically faced greater challenges accessing housing assistance¹⁰, relocating to areas with more opportunities¹¹, finding homes and services that can accommodate their needs¹², and dealing with wider gaps in health, education, and income compared to their peers.¹³ Many of these disparities are rooted in discriminatory housing policies that began in the twentieth century and limited families of color from accessing credit to purchase a home¹⁴ or moving into certain neighborhoods and properties.¹⁵ Compounding these barriers to housing stability and wealth generation, community development policies segregated neighborhoods¹⁶ and deprived them of adequate schools, investment, and transit access.¹⁷ While the 1968 Fair Housing Act prohibited housing discrimination based on race, national origin, disability status, and gender, discrimination and the

impacts of discriminatory housing policies and practices persist today.¹⁸ Progress dismantling the impact of these policies are impeded by ‘race-neutral’ policies that continue to perpetuate segregation and disinvestment in poor neighborhoods.¹⁹

Promoting equitable outcomes and addressing these disparities often requires collaboration between local governments that establish zoning ordinances, housing providers that build and administer affordable homes, service providers that organize programs that combat disparities, federal agencies that develop regulations that center equity, and Congress that establishes legislation and appropriates funding to support equitable initiatives. PHAs play an important role in this framework by administering 3.6 million affordable rental homes through the public housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs and assisting the most vulnerable families in their community. The families PHAs assist typically pay 30% of their income toward rent. Seventy-six percent of the families assisted by PHAs earn extremely low-incomes (below 30% of the Area Median Income).²⁰

Many housing authorities are working to address the disparities and promote equitable outcomes for client groups across their community through the policies they develop to administer, build, and preserve affordable housing and the services they provide to their clients. The strategies they pursue to expand equity may differ based on the needs within their community, the local policy and historical environment, access to funding, and availability of partners. Equity is defined as “fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people” by Code for America.²¹ Equity can also involve identifying and eliminating barriers that prevent certain groups from achieving positive outcomes. With a national survey, this study documents the wide range of initiatives 83 PHAs across the country are engaged in to improve equity in their community.



Key Findings

Survey findings shed light on the equity challenges clients who receive housing assistance face, the frequency of PHA equity initiatives, the staffing and funding capacity for these initiatives, and the barriers that limit or discourage PHAs from establishing or expanding equity initiatives. Among the 83 PHAs that responded to the survey:

- 1 Over half believe that certain client groups who receive housing assistance have a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes. Over half of these agencies believe that individuals with mental health challenges and formerly incarcerated individuals have a more difficult time achieving successful benchmarks.
- 2 Stereotypes and a need for more supportive services were the most common reasons PHA staff observed disparities in outcomes across client groups.
- 3 Nearly two-thirds of PHAs evaluate differences by client groups; however, most of these evaluations are from informal observations.
- 4 While only 20% of PHAs reported that they have implemented an initiative to increase equity among the clients they serve, more than 4 out of 5 adopted a strategy to help clients achieve successful outcomes. Over half of these agencies reported developing additional services and partnerships, recruiting and educating landlords, revising their policies, and conducting additional staff training to promote equitable outcomes. It is likely that these policies and practices can contribute to equitable outcomes among PHA clients.
- 5 Fifty-four percent of PHAs surveyed are interested in furthering their equity initiatives. Over half mentioned that training for their staff (77%), resources to create strategies (68%), funding (60%), and training for their board (54%) could help them do this work.
- 6 Forty-one percent of PHAs have strategies in place to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among staff. These agencies reported adopting hiring practices to promote diverse candidates to apply (71%), DEI staff training (46%), and adding principles of DEI to the agency's strategic plan (43%).

Introduction

Discriminatory housing policies lead to disparate outcomes in health²², education, wealth²³, and community access²⁴ for people of color that persist today.²⁵ In the first half of the twentieth century, the Federal Housing Administration refused to insure mortgages if they were purchased by Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, or Asian families and encouraged homeowners to adopt racial-restrictive covenants, which prohibited homes from being sold to non-white families.²⁶ This limited credit and neighborhood access for families of color, perpetuating segregation and suppressing home values and wealth generation.²⁷ While discrimination based on race was later outlawed, mortgage lenders continue to deny mortgages to people of color at

higher rates, suggesting that racial discrimination persists.²⁸ At the same time, many highways were purposely constructed to separate Black and white neighborhoods²⁹, real estate agents steered Black families away from white neighborhoods³⁰, and many public housing properties were legally segregated by race.³¹

The 1968 Fair Housing Act banned overt housing discrimination, but zoning laws, biases, community attitudes toward affordable housing, and funding-selection criteria continue to hinder equitable affordable housing siting outcomes, reinforce segregation, and limit housing access.³² Studies suggest that property managers continue to discriminate based on race³³, country of origin³⁴, gender identity³⁵, and sexual orientation³⁶.

Opposition to affordable housing continues to be linked to perceptions of race, ethnicity, class, and country of origin among anticipated residents of affordable housing, which can lead to development in poorer neighborhoods with the least resistance.³⁷ Racial segregation is strongly correlated to low-density zoning policies, suggesting housing policies continue to perpetuate segregation and limit neighborhood access³⁸, which contributes to worse health, wealth, employment, and educational outcomes among people of color.³⁹ Housing providers who seek to build affordable housing across diverse and opportunity-rich communities are often tasked with marketing, negotiating, and litigating to address public opinions and overcome zoning requirements.⁴⁰ Community opposition to affordable housing, exclusionary zoning laws, and funding criteria may impede PHAs from building in areas with good schools, jobs, and transportation access.

Further compounding these challenges, the current financing mechanisms and site-selection criteria for affordable homes newly built using LIHTC and national Housing Trust Fund dollars can incentivize development in neighborhoods with high poverty rates and concentrations of people of color.⁴¹ As a result of these policies, school districts with at least one public housing or LIHTC property have larger shares of Black, Hispanic, and low-income students.⁴² LIHTC properties also tend to be sited in neighborhoods with low housing costs and high concentrations of minority-headed households.⁴³

Discrimination from property managers, a lack of tenant protections established by policymakers, and inadequate payment standards set by HUD can make it more challenging for certain groups to find a landlord willing to accept an HCV. These vouchers, administered by PHAs, are used by low-income families to pay a portion of their rent for a modest apartment in the private market. Families have at least 60 days to find a landlord who will accept their voucher for an apartment that passes a physical inspection and has a rent below the Fair Market Rent for the area as established by HUD. Voucher holders, particularly those living in tight housing markets who have large families and accessibility needs, have trouble finding a landlord that will accept their voucher, so many PHAs extend the search time as permitted by HUD. Up until 2023, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) standards established by HUD used data that lagged behind the market and did not account for the ask-

ing rent for current home seekers, which can be significantly greater than the average overall rents paid.⁴⁴ Inaccurate FMR payment standards can discourage landlords who would otherwise be willing to accept a voucher and make it more difficult for families to use their voucher, particularly in low-poverty neighborhoods. Additionally, only one-third of voucher holders live in areas that are protected by SOI discrimination laws⁴⁵, which prohibit landlords from discriminating against tenants with HCVs. Voucher usage is between four to 11 percentage points lower and is more likely to be clustered in high-poverty areas among PHAs based in communities without SOI discrimination laws.⁴⁶ However, even PHAs located in areas with SOI discrimination laws in place may have difficulty finding landlords willing to put up with the administrative tasks necessary to accept a voucher, particularly in tight rental markets.

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offering a menu of strategies PHAs can
implement to promote equity.



These conditions can make it challenging for PHAs to equitably serve their communities absent policy intervention and adequate funding. Only one out of four families eligible for housing assistance programs receives it, and funding shortfalls pressure PHAs to make difficult tradeoffs. Absent adequate funding, PHAs must often choose between using their public housing operating fund, capital fund, and Section 8 administrative fees to finance supportive services, build and administer housing in costlier low-poverty neighborhoods, maintain or expand the number of families who receive assistance, and other local goals.⁴⁷ Further compounding these challenges, the operating and administrative funds PHAs receive to administer their public housing and HCV programs are often prorated, which can further diminish PHAs' capacity to monitor disparities in outcomes and develop and implement strategies to address them.⁴⁸

Funding for service coordination targeted to clients at public and affordable housing properties is also inadequately and inconsistently funded.⁴⁹ People living in publicly assisted homes

often face greater barriers in health⁵⁰, employment⁵¹, and educational attainment⁵² compared to their low-income unassisted peers and may need additional supportive services to achieve economic independence. Federally funded programs, such as Resident Opportunities and Self Sufficiency-Service Coordinator program (ROSS-SC), Jobs Plus, and Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program, can position PHAs to provide additional services and support to their clients; however, these programs are often targeted to a select handful of PHAs. Only 10% of PHAs receive ROSS-SC grants⁵³, 20% receive FSS grants⁵⁴, and 1% receive Jobs Plus grants.⁵⁵ Even among PHAs that receive one of these grants, funding is often insufficient to meet client needs. Service coordinators working for PHAs that receive ROSS-SC grants often report helping clients with needs beyond what their job description calls for, having large caseloads, and reinventing service models and community partnerships from the ground up. Many service coordinators also report that insufficient local transit, childcare, and community resources can prevent them from meeting the needs of their clients.⁵⁶





Despite these challenges, many PHAs are reviewing how their agency operations, service provisions, and investment strategies can be tailored to work toward more equitable outcomes for their residents. The strategies implemented by PHAs often differ depending on local community needs and the availability of funding and partners. For example, Seattle Housing Authority (WA) created a racial social justice toolkit that prompts employees to proactively consider the racial and social implications of their day-to-day decisions.⁵⁷ The Durham Housing Authority (NC) partnered with Duke University School of Nursing to provide health services to public housing residents, evaluate the impact of health programs and policies, and examine the effects of evictions on the health of former public housing residents.⁵⁸ The Housing Authority of New Orleans (LA) expanded equitable access to housing assistance among people re-entering the community from prisons and jails by revising their admissions criteria to conduct an individualized review of each applicant, limiting tenant screening to certain criminal convictions, and defining look-back periods when screening tenants.⁵⁹ New York City Housing Authority (NY), Rockford Housing Authority (IL), Philadelphia Housing Authority (PA), and Denver Housing Authority (CO) partnered with researchers to evaluate differences in needs and outcomes across the populations they serve to promote equitable outcomes.⁶⁰

Some housing providers are also implementing population-based housing programs, such as those targeted toward LGBTQ populations,⁶¹ to achieve more effective and equitable outcomes for these groups. Community development organizations also played a pivotal role in addressing the disparate impact the pandemic had on residents in their communities by conducting targeted outreach, filling in gaps to target disadvantaged groups, and leveraging partnerships to meet outstanding needs.⁶²

While this study seeks to examine the steps PHAs are taking to improve equity in their client outcomes, dismantling the long-term impact of discriminatory housing policies and building communities in which all clients thrive requires collaboration and support from multiple partners. The impact of PHA strategies to improve equity are dependent on zoning and other policies established by local governments, funding availability from HUD and other community sources, the availability and capacity of non-profit service providers, appropriations from Congress, and feedback from the residents themselves about the community they would like to create.

Methodology

While PHAs have long been engaged with equity initiatives, previous research has only documented case studies of specific initiatives implemented by PHAs. PAHRC developed a survey to provide a national snapshot of PHA equity initiatives in collaboration with the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA), Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA), National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), and the MTW Collaborative. Three agencies were interviewed to collect feedback on the survey instrument. The survey explores the general challenges PHA clients face and the strategies PHAs are pursuing to improve equitable outcomes in their communities, among their clients, and in their organizations (see Attachment A).

The data presented in this report were collected from a survey sent to housing agencies' operating units in the HCV and public housing programs in three waves between March and June 2022. The survey was also shared via Twitter, LinkedIn, and in PHADA, CLPHA, and NAHRO newsletters to boost the response rate. Responses were de-duplicated if multiple people from the same housing authority answered. In total, survey responses from 83 agencies are included in this analysis. Housing agencies in US territories were excluded.

A random sample, representing 50% of PHAs that mentioned that they did not have equity initiatives in place, was selected for a web scan performed by PAHRC staff in January 2023. PAHRC staff reviewed the website and most recent annual plan and five-year plan for 23 PHAs selected for the web scan. Staff reviewed this material for mentions of diversity, equity, inclusion, targeted resident services, and development strategies to ascertain whether the PHA has implemented any strategy to advance equity.

The next phase of this report will compile case studies of PHAs that have developed specific strategies to improve equity within their community.

Limitations

Survey respondents (n=83) represent 2% of all PHAs and administer 174,629 public housing and voucher units, representing 5% of this housing stock, respectively. Respondents tended to be larger in size. There were slightly more responses from agencies from the West and Northeast than are represented in the population at large. Fewer responses were collected from agencies located in the South and from agencies with less than 100 units than are represented in the population at large. The respondents of this survey were self-selected, rather than a representative sample of PHAs across the country. It is unknown whether the PHAs that responded to this survey have a higher, comparable, or lower rate of equity initiative adoption compared to the population at large. This suggests that the findings of this survey may not be representative of PHAs at large. Instead, these findings reflect the challenges, experiences, and aspirations for equity initiatives of nearly the 90 PHAs that responded to this survey.

Additionally, the survey didn't collect detailed information about PHAs' equity initiatives and instead provided a high-level snapshot. It is possible that PHAs define equity initiatives implemented within their organization differently than as defined in the survey. More in-depth surveys and interviews with PHAs could examine the barriers and catalysts that influence equity initiatives, how these policies and programs are structured, and key partners to pursuing this work.

Results

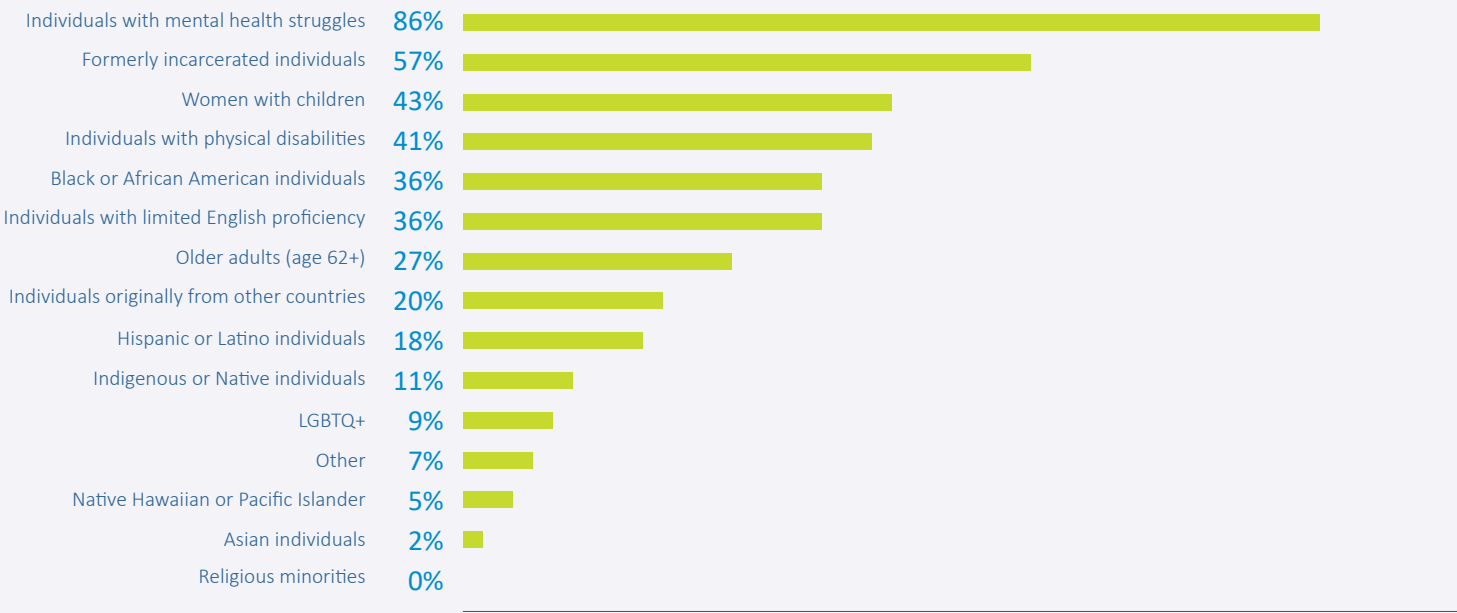
Differences in Client Outcomes

Over half of PHAs that completed the survey reported that certain client groups receiving housing assistance have a more difficult time than other client groups achieving successful outcomes. These successful outcomes can include, but are not limited to, leasing units, accessing services, finding a job, and accessing housing assistance. An additional 19% were not sure if any of their client groups experienced more difficulty achieving their desired outcome. The most common client groups

PHAs perceive have a more difficult time reaching successful benchmarks include individuals with mental health challenges (86%), formerly incarcerated individuals (57%), women with children (43%), individuals with physical disabilities (41%), Black or African American individuals (36%), and individuals with limited English proficiency (36%) (Figure 1). Fewer PHA staff believed that individuals originally from other countries (20%), Hispanic or Latino individuals (18%), indigenous individuals (11%), LGBTQ+ individuals (9%), native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5%), or Asian individuals (2%) had a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes compared to other client groups.

Figure 1: Individuals with mental health challenges are the most common client group PHAs believe have a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes

Percent of PHAs that report client group has a more difficult time experiencing successful outcomes



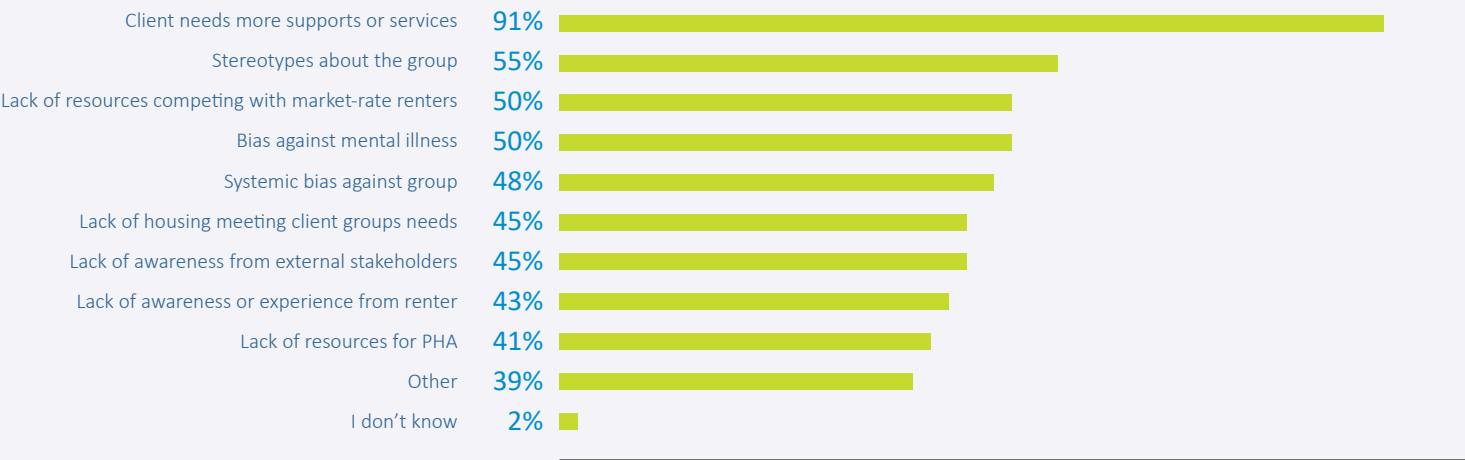
PAHRC tabulation of PHA survey. Only includes PHAs that reported client groups receiving housing assistance from their agency have a more difficult time than other groups achieving successful outcomes (n=44).

The most common reasons agency staff believed these client groups have a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes was that clients need more supports or services (91%), stereotypes about the group (55%), lack of resources to compete with market-rate renters (50%), and bias against mental illness (50%) (Figure 2). These responses were reported by more than half of the agencies that responded to the survey.

Respondents also reported that systemic bias against the group (48%), a lack of housing meeting the needs of the client (45%), lack of awareness from external stakeholders (45%), lack of awareness or experience from renters (43%), lack of resources for PHA (41%), and a lack of housing choice in desired neighborhood (39%).

Figure 2: A need for more supportive services and stereotypes were the most common reasons PHA staff believe some of their client groups have a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes

Percent of PHA reporting why certain client groups have a more difficult time experiencing successful outcomes



PAHRC survey of PHAs. Only includes PHAs that reported client groups receiving housing assistance from their agency have a more difficult time than other groups achieving successful outcomes (n=44).

Evaluating Differences in Client Outcomes

Nearly two-thirds of PHAs that responded to the survey reported that they evaluate differences across at least one outcome among the client groups they serve. PHAs generally evaluate these differences informally by sharing differences internally amongst staff (47%) and by requesting partners to informally share their observations (22%). Fourteen percent of agencies that responded to the survey reported having robust evaluation practices and mentioned that their staff or their partners analyze data on outcomes by client group. Only 20% of PHAs reported that their staff formally collect data on outcomes by client group.

Among PHAs that mentioned evaluating differences by client group, the most common metric evaluated was lease up (63%), housing access (60%), employment (42%), and service access (40%). Fewer agencies also reported evaluating program exit (29%), health (29%), education (23%), broadband access (20%), and neighborhood mobility (17%) by client group.

A third of PHAs reported that they do not evaluate differences in outcomes by group, either formally or informally. The most common reason mentioned for not evaluating differences by client group was a lack of capacity or resources to collect this

data (56%), a lack of client groups represented among the agency (28%), and the belief that clients seem to face similar challenges (28%).

Strategies to Improve Client Outcomes

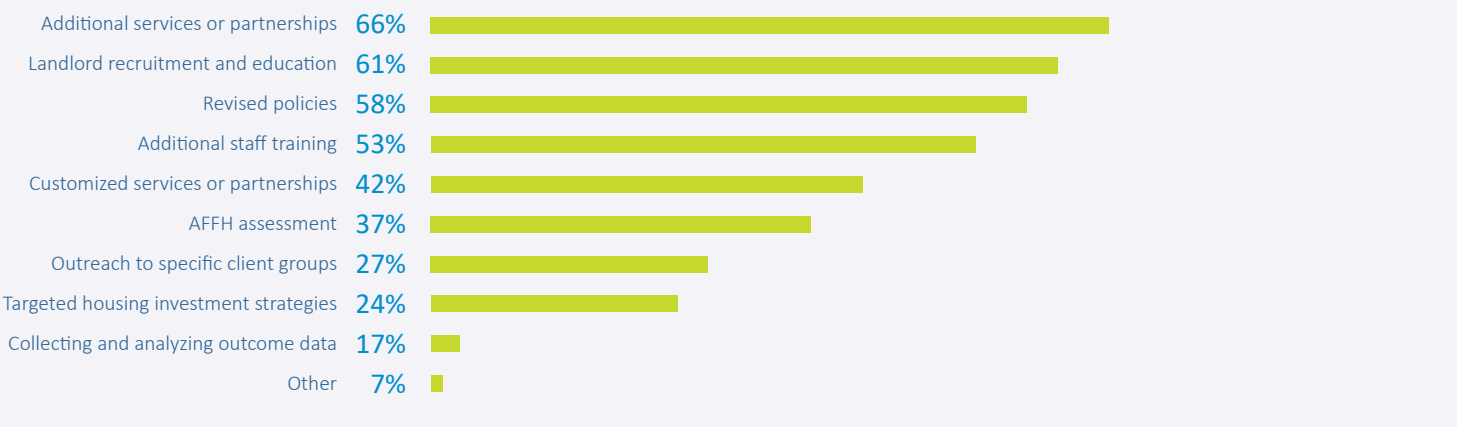
More than 4 out of 5 PHAs reported implementing a strategy to help residents achieve successful outcomes. Among these agencies, the most common strategies implemented were additional services and partnerships (66%), landlord recruitment and education (61%), revised policies (58%), and additional staff training (53%) (Figure 3). Agencies also reported developing customized services or partnerships (42%), completing an Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) assessment (37%), outreach to specific client groups (27%), implementing targeted affordable housing investment strategies (24%), and collecting and analyzing data to support decision making (17%).

“ ”

More than 4 out of 5 PHAs reported implementing a strategy to help residents achieve successful outcomes.

Figure 3: The most common strategies implemented by PHAs to improve client outcomes were additional services or partnership, landlord recruitment and education, and revised policies.

Percent of PHAs implementing strategies to improve client outcomes



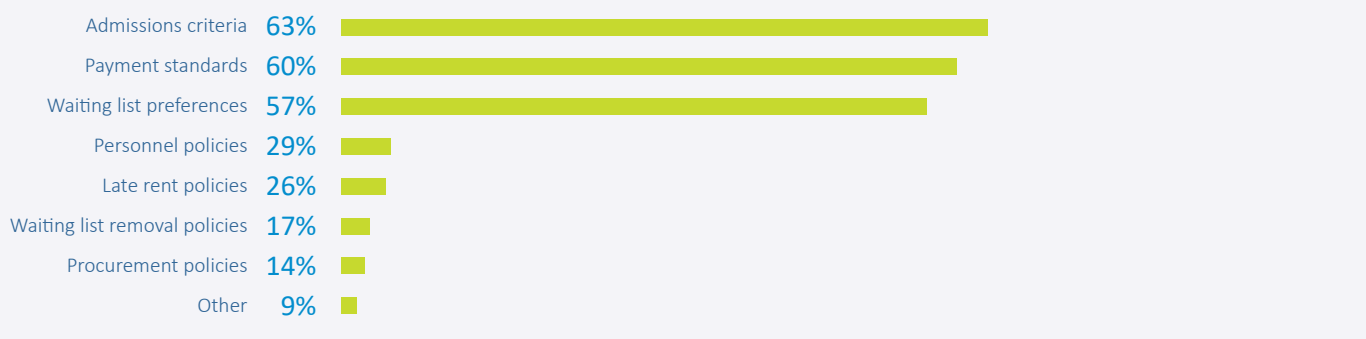
PAHRC tabulation of PHA survey. Only includes PHAs that reported implementing a strategy to improve client outcomes (n=59).

PHAs that mentioned revising their policies to improve resident outcomes most commonly reported updating their admissions criteria (63%), payment standards (60%), and waiting list preferences (57%) (Figure 4). Payment standard adjustments can include adopting Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) or revising rents within 90% to 110% of the FMRs established by HUD to expand affordable housing access or choice. A

smaller portion of PHAs also reported updating their personnel policies (29%), late rent policies (26%), waiting list removal policies (17%), and procurement policies (14%) to improve outcomes among their clients. A couple of agencies also mentioned changing their over-housing and pet policies to support these goals.

Figure 4: The most common policies revised by PHAs to improve resident outcomes were admission criteria, payment standards, and waiting list preferences.

Percent of PHAs that revised a policy to improve client outcomes



PAHRC tabulation of PHA survey. Only includes PHAs that reported revising a policy to improve client outcomes (n=35). Payment standards can include adopting Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) or establishing rents between 90% and 110% FMR.

Procurement

Over half (53%) of PHAs surveyed consider socio-demographic characteristics when selecting vendors. More than a third (39%) do not consider socio-demographic characteristics when selecting vendors. The remaining nine percent are not sure whether their agency considers these characteristics when selecting vendors.

The most common reason reported for not considering socio-demographic characteristics as a vendor selection criterion was that the community is not diverse (35%), followed by there being few vendors that meet their needs and also differ

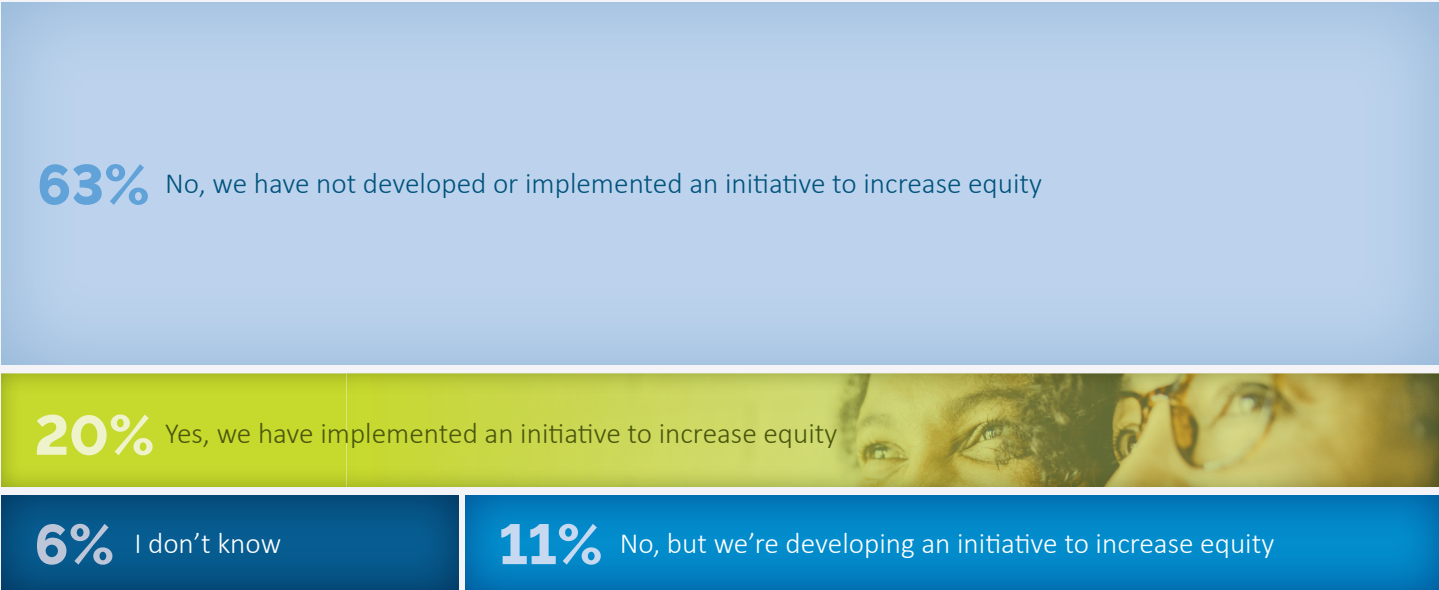
on these characteristics (27%), and a lack of capacity to implement this practice (23%).

Equity Initiatives

While a majority of PHAs mentioned implementing a strategy to help residents achieve successful outcomes, only 20% reported that they have implemented an initiative to increase equity (Figure 5). An additional 11% mentioned that they are developing an initiative to increase equity. Nearly two-thirds said they have not developed or implemented an initiative to increase equity.

Figure 5: While a majority of PHAs mentioned implementing a strategy to help residents achieve successful outcomes, only 20% believed that they have implemented an initiative to increase equity

Percent of PHAs with an equity initiative to improve successful outcomes among client groups



PAHRC tabulation of PHA survey (n=71).

The areas typically addressed by these equity initiatives include housing access (71%), employment (71%), eviction prevention (64%), service access (57%), and education (50%). These initiatives were frequently implemented with support from a service partnership (85%), a dedicated staff person (69%), and agency-wide policies (54%). Some agencies also reported leveraging grant or philanthropic funding (38%), a

HUD program (28%), state or local funding (38%), a budget line item (31%), unrestricted income or savings (23%), and a public entity partnership to implement the initiative.

Nine out of 10 agencies with equity initiatives mentioned that executive management support was the most helpful aspect in the agency's effort to develop and implement such initiatives.

Agencies also reported that support from their board (67%) and their partners (57%) was influential. Some PHAs also mentioned that staff training (43%), clients making this work a priority (38%), funding opportunities (38%), in-kind support from partners (38%), and flexibilities through the MTW program or HUD waivers (33%) have helped them implement equity strategies.

Over two-thirds of agencies with equity initiatives mentioned that additional services or partnerships (86%) and customized services or partnerships (64%) were included in their equity strategy. Fifty-seven percent of agencies also included outreach to specific client groups, landlord recruitment and education, and additional staff training as part of their equity strategy. Some also mentioned completing an AFFH assessment (43%), revising policies (43%), targeting affordable housing investment strategies (36%), and collecting and analyzing outcome data to support decision making (29%).

Classifying Equity Initiatives

Even though 83% of PHAs that responded to the survey mentioned that they implemented a strategy to help residents achieve successful outcomes, only 20% reported that they have an initiative to increase equity. While the survey didn't capture what drove this disparity, it is possible this difference could be due to how PHAs define equity or what they consider to be an initiative. PHAs may thoughtfully administer services and implement waiting lists, admission, and payment standard policies designed to improve resident outcomes, but they may not consider this to be part of a coordinated equity initiative. PHAs may also believe the policies and programs they develop to improve resident outcomes may not be widespread, comprehensive, or targeted enough to be considered an equity initiative. Others may consider this work to be a fulfillment of their fair housing obligations required through the Fair Housing Act, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), or Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act, rather than an additional equity initiative. Alternatively, these efforts could be coordinated by

another staff member at the agency and not part of day-to-day operations. While few agencies believed they implemented an equity initiative, it does not mean that any of the policies and programs they develop do not support equitable outcomes. Future research should explore how PHAs define equity and incorporate it into the development of their policies and programs.

The data gathered during the web scan lends support to some of these hypotheses. A mission or vision statement mentioning diversity, equity, inclusion, or eliminating discrimination was present in 17% of the 23 PHAs chosen for the web scan that stated they did not have equity initiatives in place. Additionally, 26% of the mission statements mentioned resident resources or services. Taken together, this suggests that advancing equity is still a driving factor for these agencies. Further, 21% of these PHAs included a goal in their five-year plan or on their website that includes an activity advancing diversity, equity, or inclusion at their agency. Fifty-two percent mentioned a goal or activity providing targeted assistance to a targeted tenant group, such as people experiencing homelessness, veterans, children in foster care, or people with disabilities, suggesting many of these PHAs have are working to address disparities these groups face. Additionally, 22% mentioned a goal to de-concentrate poverty and 65% mentioned offering services to their clients, which could advance equitable outcomes. Taken together, this suggests that many PHAs are engaged in activities that can advance equitable outcomes, even if there isn't a formal equity initiative in place.

Prospective Equity Initiatives

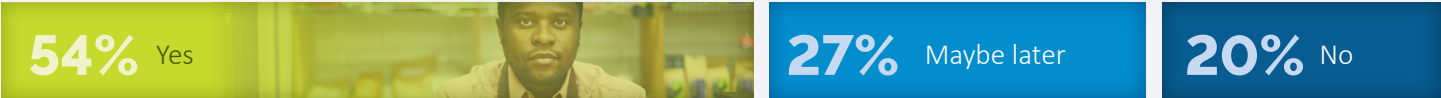
Over half (54%) of PHAs that replied to the survey mentioned that their agency is interested in furthering its equity initiatives. An additional 27% stated that they might be interested in furthering their equity initiatives. Only one-fifth of agencies were not interested in furthering these initiatives (see Figure 6).



Many PHAs are engaged in activities that can advance equitable outcomes, even if there isn't a formal equity initiative in place.

Figure 6: Over half of PHAs surveyed are interested in furthering their equity initiatives

Percent of PHAs replying to whether they would like to further their equity initiatives



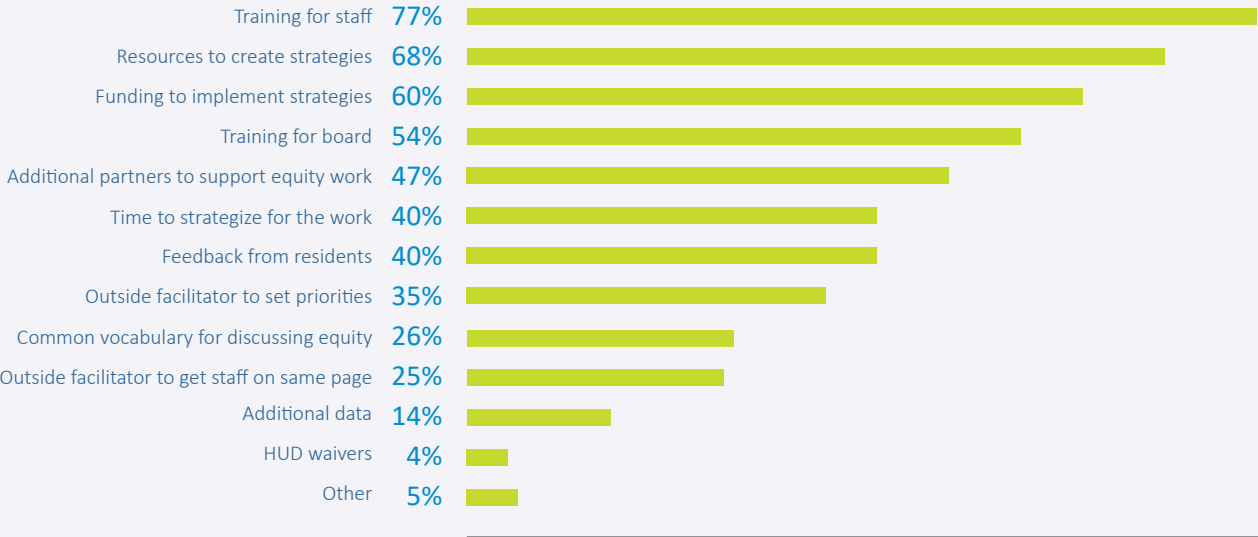
PAHRC tabulation of PHA survey (n=71).

Over half of PHAs interested in furthering their equity initiatives believed that training for staff (77%), resources to create strategies (68%), funding (60%), and training for their board (54%) would help them do this work (Figure 7). Agencies also mentioned that additional partners to support equity work (47%), time to strategize (40%), feedback from residents

(40%), and an outside facilitator to set priorities for this work (35%) could position them to expand their equity initiatives. Less commonly, staff also reported that common vocabulary for discussing equity (26%), an outside facilitator to get staff and the board on the same page (25%), additional data (14%), and HUD waivers (4%) were needed to support this work.

Figure 7: PHAs commonly mentioned that training for staff, resources to create strategies, and funding to implement them are needed to further their equity initiatives

Percent of PHAs that mentioned which resource would help them further their equity initiatives



PAHRC tabulation of PHA survey. Includes PHAs that mentioned they would like to further their equity initiatives (n=57).

Challenges to Developing Client Equity Initiatives

Focusing on housing (42%), a lack of time (38%), and a lack of resources (33%) were the most common reasons agencies

reported for not developing or implementing an initiative to increase equity. PHAs that choose to focus on housing may prioritize their limited resources to expand access to affordable housing to more families in their community rather than provide supportive services or target the most vulnerable, and

thus may not believe they are implementing an equity initiative. Others may have a preconceived idea regarding what an equity initiative is, and may not consider smaller administrative and policy decisions to be an equity initiative. Some agencies also reported that their client pool is not diverse (18%), that they feel it is illegal to provide different resources to different groups (11%), a lack of resident interest (11%), and that they feel it is not ethical to provide different resources to different groups (9%).

Internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts

Forty-one percent of PHAs that responded to the survey said that their agency has efforts in place to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among staff. The most common strategy mentioned was hiring practices to promote diverse candidates to apply (71%), followed by DEI staff training (46%), and adding

principles of DEI to the agency’s strategic plan (43%). Some agencies also reported adding principles of DEI to their mission or vision (26%), designating a staff member devoted fully to DEI (18%), incorporating principles of DEI to performance reviews (14%), and establishing mentorships to retain diverse staff (14%).

Implications

These findings suggest that many PHAs could benefit from additional support from Congress, HUD, their local governments, and their community partners to help guide and deepen the impact of their policies and programs to promote equitable outcomes. This section describes how support for evaluating outcome disparities, identifying best practices, and funding can bolster PHA-led equity efforts (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Ways Congress, HUD, and Local Governments Can Support PHA Equity Initiatives

	Strategy	Impact
Congress	Increase funding for housing-based self-sufficiency and supportive service programs	Positions PHAs to address educational, health, and wealth disparities influenced by discriminatory housing policies and practices
	Increase funding for affordable housing construction and preservation programs	Allows PHAs to assist more families in need and ensure apartments are habitable
	Increase funding for housing counseling	Equips PHAs to help voucher holders from a variety of backgrounds find a landlord willing to accept their voucher in an apartment and community that meets their needs
HUD	Continue to leverage private data when calculating Fair Market Rents so that payment standards reflect the current rental market	Expands the number of apartments and neighborhoods voucher holders can move to
	Provide best practices and case studies on how PHAs can implement equity initiatives in practice	Helps PHAs overcome barriers to implement an equity strategy in their community
	Help PHAs evaluate disparities in outcomes using administrative data	Informs PHAs where opportunities to improve equity exist and supplements staff capacity
Local Governments	Adopt inclusionary zoning policies to make it easier for PHAs to build affordable housing across a wide range of neighborhoods	Positions PHAs to build affordable housing in a wider variety of neighborhoods to promote housing choice
	Collaborate with PHAs on Fair Housing assessments	Helps PHAs develop and implement an equity strategy
	Increase funding for housing-based supportive services, affordable housing preservation and construction, and housing counseling	Equips PHAs to address disparate outcomes and expand affordable housing access to underserved groups



Support Evaluating Outcome Disparities

Evaluating disparities in service access and outcomes across client groups can help housing practitioners and policymakers better understand the specific challenges certain populations face, which will help them develop policies and programs to promote more equitable outcomes.⁶³ While most PHAs that responded to the survey indicated that they evaluate outcome differences across the client groups they serve, most of these observations were anecdotal. PHAs that are committed to promoting equitable outcomes across their resident populations can begin quantifying whether disparities exist by partnering with research institutions to examine trends in housing lease up, income, and housing exits across race, ethnicity, gender, age, and disability status using data they already provide to HUD. Capacity to research outcomes across groups will likely be a challenge for many PHAs, however, particularly if they are smaller or do not have a partner in their community to collaborate on this research. PHAs will need additional funding to expand these evaluations and will need to participate in these assessments with their local government and other community stakeholders.

To further support PHAs that have limited research capacity, HUD and research institutions should continue to evaluate outcomes across client groups nationwide. The most common reason PHAs reported not engaging in an equity initiative is that they chose to focus on housing. This suggests many PHAs may choose to prioritize their limited resources on

helping more families, expanding affordable housing access, and maintaining their housing stock, rather than evaluating and addressing disparate outcomes across client groups. To fill these gaps, HUD and research institutions should examine whether policies and programs are designed to successfully promote equitable outcomes. These research efforts should examine best practices on policies and programs empirically demonstrated to uplift underrepresented or underserved client groups and funding to implement supportive services and other practices that expand access to affordable housing across diverse communities.

Identification of Best Practices

80% of PHAs surveyed implemented a strategy to help residents achieve successful outcomes, only 20% reported that they have implemented an initiative to increase equity. Over half of PHAs surveyed mentioned that their agency is interested in furthering their equity initiatives, while an additional 27% are considering it. Over two thirds of these agencies mentioned that training for staff and resources to support their equity initiatives could position them to expand their equity work. This suggests that PHAs may need more insight regarding best practices they can implement to promote equity. Figure 9 includes a list of tools that provide models for local governments to identify equity issues and develop and implement strategies to address them.

Figure 9: Guides to Expand Equity in Government Agencies

Guide	Description
Racial Equity Toolkit <i>Housing Development Consortium</i>	Provides a background on racial equity, describes tools to identify racial equity issues in housing organizations, and describes ways to create and implement a plan for change. ⁶⁴
Inclusive Processes to Advance Racial Equity in Housing Recovery: A Guide for Cities during the Covid19 Pandemic <i>Policy Link</i>	Outlines how government agencies can design processes and boost capacity for racial equity with a focus on the pandemic response. ⁶⁵
An Affordable Home on Reentry <i>National Housing Law Project</i>	Describes strategies PHAs can pursue to update their admissions policies to promote equity for formerly incarcerated individuals. ⁶⁶
Racial Equity Toolkit: Applying a Racial Equity Lens to your Organization <i>Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity</i>	Provides standards for local governments on how to identify racial equity issues, develop a plan to address challenges and improvements, and implement plans to improve racial equity. ⁶⁷
Racial Equity Brief <i>Local Housing Solutions</i>	Describes policies and strategies communities can implement to promote racial equity by addressing segregation, promoting access to neighborhood opportunity, and reducing housing discrimination. ⁶⁸
Connecticut Rapid Re-Housing Project <i>Guidelines for Landlords</i>	Partnership to house people who are facing homelessness because of domestic violence.
NYC's Housing Plan for LGBTQ+ Communities <i>Policy Guidelines</i>	Provides guidelines on articulating new metrics and developing housing policy to meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

The accompanying resource, [PHA-Led Policies and Practices that Promote Equity](#), includes an overview of strategies PHAs can adopt to advance equitable outcomes through their policies and practices based on a review of best practices cited in guidebooks, toolkits, and research. The resource describes approaches PHAs can implement to more effectively serve underrepresented or disadvantaged client groups through their waiting list, admissions, tenant screening, occupancy, payment standards, personnel, and procurement policies. It also describes steps PHAs can take to reach client groups with disparate outcomes by conducting evaluations, promoting inclusivity, targeting service offerings, revitalizing neighborhoods, expanding access to affordable homes, recruiting landlords, boosting accessibility, and training.

More research on the guiding principles is still needed, however, to describe how PHAs implement these policies and programs to advance equity in practice. Many of the proposed strategies, such as offering housing counseling services, connecting families to supportive services, and boosting accessibility, require additional funding, which can limit PHAs from adopting these practices. Other approaches, such as loosening tenant screening criteria to expand access to housing assistance among people with criminal records, may face community opposition, impact insurance, and spark concerns about resident safety. Additionally, the ability of PHAs to reach these goals may be impeded by external policies. For instance, inadequate FMRs could make it more challenging for voucher holders of color to move to opportunity neighborhoods even if payment standards are updated. Furthermore, exclusionary zoning laws could make it costlier to build affordable housing in opportunity-rich areas. Insufficient funding, along with limitations of state and local policies can also impede PHAs from fully implementing strategies to boost equitable outcomes. For instance, research suggests that while increasing payment

standards in neighborhoods of opportunity can make these areas more accessible to voucher holders, a lack of source of income discrimination laws, a lack of transportation, and difficulty locating a landlord willing to accept the voucher may inhibit people of color from using a voucher to move to these neighborhoods.⁶⁹ Additionally, PHAs can only increase payment standards up to 110% beyond the area Fair Market Rent (FMR) without HUD approval. Multiple evaluations find that FMRs established by HUD often lag behind current market conditions, requiring PHAs to conduct costly market evaluations to justify rent increases that enable voucher holders to locate rental homes.⁷⁰ Finally, pursuing policies and practices aimed at expanding equitable outcomes may impede other goals established by HUD, the community, or PHAs themselves. For instance, expanding access to affordable housing in opportunity-rich areas could be costlier, which can limit PHAs from expanding the number of households they assist absent additional funding. Case studies that describe the considerations, obstacles, and catalysts experienced by PHAs that were successful at can help other agencies learn how their peers implemented equity strategies in an environment with limited resources and external pressures.⁷¹

Funding

Two of the most common reasons PHA staff mentioned for not implementing equity initiatives were a lack of time and resources to support these efforts. PHAs have been historically subject to chronic funding shortfalls to administer their public housing and voucher programs. Between 2004 and 2019, administrative fee payments provided by HUD to housing authorities to administer HCVs was prorated. On average, PHAs received only 83% of the funding they are eligible for—and need—to administer their voucher program.⁷² This can restrict agency's capacity to improve program operations and implement equity initiatives, such as landlord recruitment, resident outreach, and additional service delivery. PHAs operating funds to administering public housing are also consistently subject to funding prorations⁷³, which further limit them from administering supportive services and implementing initiatives to meet equity goals. Additionally, very few PHAs receive grants from HUD through the ROSS-SC, Jobs Plus, and FSS program to fund service coordinator and resident services programs. Instead, PHAs rely on in-kind support from non-prof-

it service providers and funding from private companies, foundations, and state and local programs to fill funding gaps to finance their resident services programs and boost outcomes among their clients.⁷⁴ Reliance on external funding and partnerships could create inequitable outcomes across PHAs located in low- versus high-resource jurisdictions. Further, PHAs generally have limited flexibility regarding how they can use their funding, which can prevent them from investing in the programs their clients need the most. Additional funding is also needed to better position PHAs to build affordable housing in opportunity rich neighborhoods, to provide programs and service coordination to clients who face compounding challenges, and to promote integration.

Conclusion

Policies and programs that affirmatively address disparities and the impact of discriminatory housing practices are essential to supporting underserved and underrepresented groups. Implementing strategies that help dismantle the impact of housing policies and practices that discriminate against or disparately affect people of color relies on partnership and support from local governments, affordable housing providers (including PHAs), Congress, HUD, service providers, and community members. This study explored the roles PHAs are playing to advance equitable outcomes among the most vulnerable members of the communities they serve across the country.

Until now, we did not have a large-scale understanding of the extent of PHA equity initiatives or the hurdles. This study finds that the majority of PHAs surveyed developed additional services and partnerships, recruited and educated landlords, revised their policies, and trained staff to help their clients achieve successful outcomes. Two out of 5 PHAs surveyed also mentioned implementing strategies to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among staff, such as adopting hiring practices that encourage diverse candidates to apply, DEI staff training, and adding principles of DEI to the agency's strategic plan. While most PHAs surveyed reported that they do not currently have an equity initiative in place, it is likely that the policies and programs established by PHAs to help their clients achieve successful outcomes could support equity in their community. This suggests that these organizations may need

more examples from their peers on the policies and practices they can implement to uplift underserved and underrepresented client groups.

These findings also identify future avenues of research that would help PHAs evaluate outcomes across groups and establish effective strategies to improve equity. This study documented the general policies and practices that 83 PHAs, which administer 5% of public housing and HCVs have implemented to help their clients achieve successful outcomes. Future studies by HUD could continue cataloging these efforts across additional PHAs to gain more insight into equity strategies. Case studies that describe the strategies PHAs have implemented to assist underserved and underrepresented groups and how they overcame policy, partnership, and funding constraints are needed to help PHAs structure these initiatives. These case studies can be used to disseminate best practices PHAs can

follow to develop an equity strategy given the needs and conditions within their community. Additionally, more research is needed to explore how housing lease up, access to opportunity-rich areas, income gains, and housing exits vary by race, ethnicity, and gender. These insights can be used to identify cities that are closing achievement gaps and to pinpoint strategies and service-delivery pathways that effectively uplift underrepresented or underserved groups. Conversely, these studies can be used to pinpoint cities where additional policies, initiatives, or other forms of assistance may be needed to help client groups that are experiencing challenges to upward mobility. To effectively improve equitable outcomes, PHAs will need additional funding from Congress so that they can provide services targeted towards underserved or marginalized groups, expand housing choice, and reach populations with greater barriers to upward mobility that are costlier to assist.



“ ”

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Attachment A – PHA Equity Survey

About the Survey

The [Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation \(PAHRC\)](#), the [Council of Large Public Housing Authorities \(CLPHA\)](#), the [Public Housing Authorities Directors Association \(PHADA\)](#), the [National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials \(NAHRO\)](#), and the [MTW Collaborative](#) kindly ask you to take part in a brief 11 to 20 question survey on the differences in difficulties client groups receiving housing assistance at your agency face and strategies your agency is pursuing to improve client outcomes.

This survey is part of a larger initiative exploring strategies housing agencies are engaging in to improve equitable outcomes for their clients. If your agency is not currently pursuing an equity initiative, we still encourage you to take the survey to understand the factors that are keeping your agency engaging in this work. If you are unsure how to answer a question, you can leave it blank. If multiple staff at your agency are involved in equity initiatives, each staff member can respond to the survey based on their own experience.

Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be used to build knowledge on how housing agencies are working to improve outcomes for residents and the tools needed to support these initiatives. You may contact [Kelly McElwain](#) with any questions or additional feedback. We thank you for your time.

About Your Agency

Please begin by providing information about you and your agency.

Throughout the survey we have provided tooltips that contain definitions for terms that may be unfamiliar. To use tool tips, hover your mouse over the hyperlinked text or click and the tool tip will appear.

Try this one out: [Tip](#)

1) Please enter your contact information. This information will only be used to clarify any responses. Data from your organization will not be identifiable.

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Public Housing Authority Name*: _____

Email Address: _____

PHA Code (ex. AK001): _____

Client Groups and Outcomes

We would like you to think about the various socio-demographic groups represented among your agency's clients receiving housing assistance and the differences in difficulties they face. These client groups can include, but are not limited to, persons of color, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, older adults, and women with children.

2) Do any [client groups](#) receiving housing assistance from your agency have a more difficult time than other client groups achieving successful [outcomes](#)? *

() Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Display if Q2-3: Yes

3) In your experience, which of these client groups at your agency have a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes than other client groups? Select all that apply.

These client groups may overlap with one another.

- ☐ Black or African American individuals
- ☐ Indigenous or Native individuals
- ☐ Asian individuals
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander individuals
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino individuals
- ☐ Individuals originally from other countries
- ☐ Individuals with limited English proficiency
- ☐ Individuals with physical disabilities
- ☐ Individuals with mental health struggles
- ☐ Women with children
- ☐ Older adults (age 62+)
- ☐ LGBTQ+
- ☐ Formerly incarcerated individuals
- ☐ Religious minorities
- ☐ Other: _____

4) In your opinion, why might these client groups have a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Client needs more supports or services
- ☐ Lack of awareness or experience from renter
- ☐ Lack of resources needed to compete with market-rate renters
- ☐ Lack of housing choice in desired neighborhood
- ☐ Lack of housing meeting client groups needs
- ☐ Lack of resources for PHA
- ☐ Lack of awareness from external stakeholders like landlords
- ☐ Bias against mental illness
- ☐ Stereotypes about the group
- ☐ Systemic bias against group
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't know

5) How does your agency evaluate differences achieving successful outcomes by client group? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Our staff informally share observed differences by client group internally
- ☐ Our staff formally collect data on outcomes by client group
- ☐ Our staff analyze data on outcomes by client group
- ☐ Our staff review research from other agencies on outcomes by client group
- ☐ Our partner(s) informally share observed differences by client group with our staff
- ☐ Our partner(s) formally collect data on outcomes by client group
- ☐ Our partner(s) analyze data on outcomes data by client group

☐ Other: _____

☐ We do not evaluate differences achieving outcomes by client group

Display Q6 if Q5= We do not evaluate differences achieving outcomes by client group

6) In your opinion, why doesn't your agency evaluate outcomes by client group? Select all that apply.

☐ We do not have many different client groups

☐ We do not have the capacity to collect this data

☐ Our clients seem to face similar challenges reaching outcomes

☐ We do not have the time or resources to do so

☐ We do not feel that it is necessary to measure outcomes or challenges by group

☐ Our board does not think this is a priority

☐ Other: _____

Display if Q8 if Q5 is not We do not evaluate differences achieving outcomes by client group

7) Which of the following outcomes does your agency or your partner(s) evaluate by client group? Select all that apply.

☐ Housing access

☐ Lease up

☐ Neighborhood mobility

☐ Program exit

☐ Employment

☐ Service access

☐ Health

☐ Education

☐ Broadband access

☐ Other outcomes: _____

Client Equity Initiatives

Now we would like you to think about any initiative(s) your agency has implemented to help client groups if they are having a more difficult time achieving successful outcomes. This may be a part of a formal [Diversity Equity](#) and [Inclusion](#) (DEI) strategy or it may be singular efforts.

8) Has your agency implemented any of the following strategies to help residents achieve successful outcomes? Select all that apply.*

☐ Additional services or partnerships

☐ Customized services or partnerships

☐ Revised policies (e.g.-admissions criteria, SAFMR, [procurement](#).)

☐ Targeted affordable housing investment strategies

☐ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) assessment

☐ Outreach to specific client groups

☐ Landlord recruitment and education

☐ Collecting and analyzing outcome data to support decision making

☐ Additional staff training

☐ Other: _____

☐ I'm not sure if we have pursued any of these strategies

☐ We have not pursued any of these strategies

Display Q9 if Q8= Revised policies (e.g.-admissions criteria, SAFMR, procurement)

9) Which of the following policies has your agency revised to improve resident outcomes? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Waiting list preferences
- ☐ Waiting list removal policies
- ☐ Admissions criteria
- ☐ Payment standards (e.g. SAFMR)
- ☐ Late rent policies
- ☐ Procurement policies
- ☐ Personnel policies
- ☐ Other: _____

10) Does your agency have any [equity initiative\(s\)](#) in place to improve successful outcomes among client groups that you serve?

- ☐ Yes, we have implemented an initiative to increase equity
- ☐ No, but we are developing an initiative to increase equity
- ☐ No, we have not developed or implemented an initiative to increase equity
- ☐ I don't know

Display Q11 if Q10= No, we have not developed or implemented an initiative to increase equity

11) In your opinion, why hasn't your agency implemented an equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ We have not had time to develop these initiatives
- ☐ We do not have the resources to provide what these groups need
- ☐ We do not feel it is ethical to provide different resources to different groups
- ☐ We do not feel it is legal to provide different resources to different groups
- ☐ Our main focus is housing
- ☐ Our board does not think this work is a priority
- ☐ Our client pool is not diverse
- ☐ Lack of data to support decision making
- ☐ Lack of resident interest
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Outcomes are equitable across client groups
- ☐ I don't know

Display Q12-15 if Q10= Yes, we have implemented an initiative to increase equity

12) Which areas are addressed by your agency's equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Housing access
- ☐ Eviction prevention
- ☐ Neighborhood mobility
- ☐ Economic mobility

- ☐ Asset building
- ☐ Program exit
- ☐ Service access
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Broadband access
- ☐ Research partnership(s)
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't know

13) Which resources does your agency use to implement its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ A dedicated staff person
- ☐ Service partnership(s)
- ☐ Grant or philanthropic funding
- ☐ A HUD program
- ☐ Unrestricted income or savings
- ☐ State or local funding
- ☐ Budget line item
- ☐ Public entity partnership(s)
- ☐ Agency wide policies (e.g. admissions criteria)
- ☐ Other: _____

14) Which of the following have been the most helpful to your agency's effort to develop or implement its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ It is a priority of our executive management
- ☐ It is a priority of our board
- ☐ It is a priority for our partners
- ☐ It is a priority of our clients
- ☐ Funding opportunities
- ☐ In kind support from our partner(s)
- ☐ Data to evaluate differences across client groups
- ☐ We trained our staff on issues related to client equity
- ☐ We engaged an external facilitator to ensure staff were on the same page
- ☐ We hired an outside organization to facilitate this work
- ☐ Flexibilities through MTW program or HUD waivers
- ☐ Other: _____

15) Has your agency implemented any of the following strategies as part of its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Additional services or partnerships
- ☐ Customized services or partnerships
- ☐ Revised policies (e.g.-admissions criteria, SAFMR, procurement)
- ☐ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) assessment
- ☐ Targeted affordable housing investment strategies
- ☐ Outreach to specific client groups
- ☐ Landlord recruitment and education
- ☐ Collecting and analyzing outcome data to support decision making

- ☐ Additional staff training
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I'm not sure if we have pursued any strategies to increase equity
- ☐ We have not yet pursued any strategies to increase equity

Display Q16-18 if Q10= No, but we are developing an initiative to increase equity

16) Which areas would your agency like to address through its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Housing access
- ☐ Eviction prevention
- ☐ Neighborhood mobility
- ☐ Economic mobility
- ☐ Asset building
- ☐ Program exit
- ☐ Service access
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Broadband access
- ☐ Research partnership(s)
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't know

17) Which resources is your agency considering to use to implement its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ A dedicated staff person
- ☐ Service partnership(s)
- ☐ Grant or philanthropic funding
- ☐ A HUD program
- ☐ Unrestricted income or savings
- ☐ State or local funding
- ☐ Budget line item
- ☐ Public entity partnership(s)
- ☐ Agency wide policies (e.g. admissions criteria)
- ☐ Other: _____

18) Which strategies would your agency like to implement as part of its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Additional services or partnerships
- ☐ Customized services or partnerships
- ☐ Revised policies (e.g.-admissions criteria, SAFMR, procurement)
- ☐ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) assessment
- ☐ Targeted affordable housing investment strategies
- ☐ Outreach to specific client groups
- ☐ Landlord recruitment and education
- ☐ Collecting and analyzing outcome data to support decision making
- ☐ Additional staff training

☐ Other: _____

☐ I'm not sure if we have pursued any strategies to increase equity

☐ We have not yet pursued any strategies to increase equity

19) Does your agency consider socio-demographic characteristics when selecting vendors?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

Display Q20 if Q19=No

20) Why doesn't your agency consider socio-demographic characteristics when selecting vendors?

☐ Our community is not diverse

☐ There are few vendors that meet our needs and also differ on these characteristics

☐ We do not have the staff capacity to implement this practice

☐ This practice does not match our vendor selection strategy

☐ State laws prevent our agency from doing this

☐ Advice of counsel

☐ Other: _____

21) Is your agency interested in furthering its equity initiative(s)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe later

Display Q21 if Q20= Yes or Maybe later

22) Which of the following aids could help your agency further its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

☐ Outside facilitator to set priorities for the work

☐ Additional partners to support our equity work

☐ Common vocabulary for discussing equity among stakeholders

☐ Training for staff

☐ Training for board

☐ Outside facilitator to get staff and board on same page

☐ Time to strategize for the work

☐ Resources to create strategies

☐ Funding to implement strategies

☐ Feedback from residents

☐ Additional data

☐ HUD waivers: _____

☐ Other: _____

Display Q23 if Q22= Additional data

23) What data-related outputs could help your agency further its equity initiative(s)? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Data on outcomes
- ☐ Data on outcomes by socio-demographic groups
- ☐ Data on the difficulties associated with achieving outcomes
- ☐ Data on the difficulties associated with achieving outcomes by socio-demographic group
- ☐ A framework to compare outcomes by group
- ☐ A framework to compare process data by group
- ☐ Other- Write In: _____

Internal DEI Efforts

Now we would like you to think about any efforts your agency has in place aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion among your staff. These may be part of a formal [Diversity Equity](#) and [Inclusion](#) (DEI) strategy or it may be singular efforts.

24) Does your agency have any efforts in place specifically aimed at promoting diversity, equity and inclusion among your organizational structure or staff?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Display Q25 if Q24=Yes

25) Which of the following efforts has your agency undertaken to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in your organization? Select all that apply.

- ☐ We have a staff member devoted fully to DEI
- ☐ We have added principles of DEI to our mission or vision
- ☐ We have added principles of DEI to our strategic plan
- ☐ Our staff undergo regular DEI training
- ☐ Our board undergoes regular DEI training
- ☐ Principles of DEI are included in our staff performance evaluations
- ☐ We have mentoring practices in place targeted to retain diverse staff
- ☐ We have changed our recruiting practices
- ☐ We have hiring practices in place to encourage diverse candidates to apply
- ☐ Other: _____

26) Please tell us anything else regarding your agency's DEI efforts, both internally and among your clients.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your responses will help us document strategies housing agencies are engaging in to improve equitable outcomes for their clients. For more information about this survey and how the results will be used, please contact [Kelly McElwain](#).

Glossary

Term	Definition
Client groups	These client groups can include, but are not limited to, persons of color, women with children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and/or LGBTQ+ individuals.
Outcomes	Outcomes can come from staff observations and can include leasing up units, accessing services, becoming employed, and exiting assistance
Diversity	Diversity is the practice of including people from a range of communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs.
Equity	Equity is fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the advancement of some groups.
Inclusion	Inclusion is the practice of creating places in which any individual feels welcomed, respected, supported, valued, and able to fully participate.
Procurement	Procurement is the process of purchasing goods and services.
Equity initiative	Equity initiatives can include adopting policies, programs, and practices that eliminate barriers and promote opportunity and advancement for all people.

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How Public Housing Authorities are Addressing Equity

Kelly McElwain, MPP / Eric Brushett, MSAE