

Technical Note Series

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Public Housing Authorities: An Analysis of Practices and Resources for Serving Persons with Disabilities

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We also thank Gail Monahan, Executive Director of the Alachua County Housing Authority and President of the Florida Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials for her support of this project. Her willingness to make contact with her fellow executive directors to facilitate the survey response process was the key to our obtaining the cooperation of so many of Florida's public housing authorities.

The contributions of two groups must also be mentioned. We thank all of the cross-disabilities professionals who worked with us to develop the survey that resulted in this report. Finally, we thank those public housing authority professionals who took the time to respond to our survey.

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY DECEMBER 2003 REVISION

This report has been revised to reflect additional information regarding Fair Share vouchers and their role as part of federal housing policy over the period 1975 through 2003. Please see pages 19 through 21 for a discussion of Fair Share vouchers and their use in Florida.

We have also added a set of summary tables. These summaries appear as Appendix D, which begins on page 49 of this report.

Housing policy issues related to serving low-income households that include one or more persons with disabilities are particularly complex. This report may be viewed as a first effort in exploring how persons with disabilities are served through public programs in Florida. Readers who wish to comment or make suggestions for future research are encouraged to contact us at (800) 259-5705 or through email to Anne Lockwood Williamson at arwill@ufl.edu.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing that is affordable to low-income households that include a person with a disability is a scarce resource. Florida's public housing authorities serve many low-income persons with disabilities through the housing units they operate and through the administration of the Section 8 (Housing Choice) Voucher program. The Section 8 Voucher program allows income-qualified households to access private sector housing, with the voucher providing all or part of the tenant's rental payments, depending upon household income.

As part of the Shimberg Center's on-going effort to serve the public through dissemination of research and housing and demographic data, the Center surveyed Florida's public housing authorities to gain perspective on how much of their resources currently serve persons with disabilities and how they perform outreach and other functions that support the quality of life for households that include a person with a disability. The report that follows gives a detailed analysis of the survey results, including an overview of the most promising practices various public housing authorities use in order to reach and serve persons with disabilities.

Thanks in great part to the cooperation of the Florida Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, more than 50 percent of Florida's public housing authorities responded to our survey. The responding authorities operate more than 60 percent of the public housing units in this state and are diverse in terms of geographic location and size. Therefore, it is likely that our results are representative of public housing authorities throughout the state.

Highlights of survey findings include:

1. Public housing authorities use a substantial portion of their resources to serve households that include persons with disabilities. Forty percent or more of housing units operated by authorities serve households that include a person with a disability. Results are similar for Section 8 vouchers. It is likely that both programs allocate more than 40 percent of their resources to serve persons with disabilities, as some persons who are classified as having a disability status under the Social Security Supplemental Income and Disability Income programs may choose not to reveal their status to housing administrators.
2. Section 8 voucher utilization rates are typically high. Most respondents reported utilization rates of 95 percent or more.
3. Waiting lists for housing resources can be long. Public housing authorities operate using federally appropriated funds made available to them through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In many areas, the available resources are not adequate to serve all eligible households.
4. Many public housing authorities compete for additional vouchers through the federal Fair Share and Mainstream Voucher programs. National competition for these resources is stiff, and slightly less than half of those authorities that apply are awarded additional vouchers. In addition, the number of vouchers awarded is typically low when compared to need within a local area.
5. Many rural public housing authorities, as well as larger, more urban authorities, have been successful in developing outreach and service programs for persons with disabilities.

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PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES: AN ANALYSIS OF PRACTICES AND RESOURCES FOR SERVING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

The Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing at the University of Florida (Shimberg) conducted a survey of public housing authorities (PHAs) between March and July 2003 to accomplish two objectives: (1) to analyze PHA resources for persons with disabilities in Florida; and (2) to highlight promising practices among public housing authorities in reaching and assisting persons with disabilities in obtaining safe, decent and affordable housing.

Some public housing authorities operate actual units of housing, as well as administer Section 8 vouchers.¹ Other public housing authorities administer only vouchers. In addition, a few nonprofit organizations in Florida are empowered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer Section 8 vouchers. These organizations were included in our survey and are counted in our totals as public housing authorities.

Project Background

This project arose from working sessions with professionals throughout the state of Florida who provide services to individuals with disabilities or other special needs, as well as some professionals who deliver housing services or provide technical assistance to those who do. We sought the input of the members of this cross-disabilities working group to determine what types of research would assist them most as they work to serve those who have special needs in our state. In addition to this survey of public

housing authorities, the Shimberg Center will be providing specially cross-tabulated Census data on low-income households that include persons with disabilities by county and by Metropolitan Statistical Area in late 2003.

Why PHA Resources Are Important to Persons with Disabilities

Public housing authorities have served the neediest citizens in our state for more than 60 years. Unlike most other government-funded rental housing programs, PHA resources—both public housing units and vouchers—most frequently serve those in the extremely low-income group.² Persons with disabilities frequently fall into this income group, because their ability to earn income may be severely hampered by their disability status.

When persons with disabilities are tenants in public housing units or recipients of vouchers administered by public housing authorities, they are guaranteed that they will pay no more than 30 percent of their income for housing. This can be a significant factor in a household's ability to meet other necessary expenses. When low-income persons with disabilities must seek market rate housing without a voucher or when they live in federally funded developments that do not cap rents at no more than 30 percent of household income, their ability to meet their other needs may be constrained.

How This Report Is Organized

This report is organized into five major sections. In Section I, we explain how we developed and administered the survey and how we analyzed responses. In Section II, we present survey results that focus on issues related only to those PHAs that operate

¹ Although Section 8 vouchers and certificates have been combined to create the Housing Choice Voucher program, we use the term Section 8 for vouchers throughout this paper, because it is still the term most frequently used by housing professionals and the public.

housing units. In Section III, we present survey results that relate to Section 8 voucher administration. Section IV focuses on survey questions about how PHAs deliver housing and other services in their local area. Survey results are presented throughout the paper in tabular form. Each table denotes how it is linked to specific survey question numbers.

Finally, Section V highlights promising practices reported by PHAs for serving the housing needs of Floridians with disabilities. These promising practices are likely to be only a sampling of promising practices by PHAs around the state. We highlight them here in order to facilitate sharing innovations among PHAs so that public housing professionals can support one another's efforts to serve households that have persons with disabilities. We also share them in the hopes that others who provide housing and services outside the PHA system may also find ideas that will help them innovate in their own communities.

Section I: Survey Development, Administration, and Analysis

How We Developed and Administered the Survey

Shimberg developed the survey instrument (Appendix B) with input from professionals throughout the state who provide services or housing to special needs populations. We also sought feedback and cooperation from the Florida Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (FAHRO) through their president, Gail Monahan of the Alachua County Housing Authority. Ms. Monahan facilitated the survey process by distributing the survey via facsimile and by sending a follow up memorandum further

² The federal definition for "extremely low income" is housing income at or below 30 percent of HUD-defined area median income. Programs such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit primarily serve households in the 60 percent of area median income category.

encouraging local participation in the survey. The FAHRO follow-up memorandum is reproduced in Appendix C.

Shimberg followed up with local PHAs via telephone calls at regular intervals. As of July 15, 2003, 55 survey responses were received. After taking into consideration some consolidations in operations among smaller PHAs, there are 109 operating PHAs in Florida. This means that more than 50 percent of Florida's PHAs responded to our survey. Responses came from PHAs in diverse parts of the state with wide ranges in organizational capacity and financial resources. The diversity among respondents allows us to gain a reasonably clear picture of what resources may be available for persons with disabilities through public authorities in Florida and identify promising practices among PHAs for reaching out to and assisting persons with disabilities with their housing needs.

How We Analyzed Survey Responses

Recognizing that PHAs of different sizes may face different challenges in terms of staff and other resources, we have analyzed survey responses by categorizing PHAs in two steps: First, we determined whether the PHA operated housing units or administered vouchers only. Second, we categorized them according to size as shown below:

- *Large* PHAs serve 1,000 or more households, either through operation of public housing units, administration of Section 8 vouchers, or a combination of both. In general, these PHAs are located in larger urban areas throughout Florida.

- *Medium* PHAs serve between 200 and 1,000 households, either through operation of public housing units, administration of Section 8 vouchers, or a combination of both. These PHAs represent diverse local areas within the state. Some are located in larger urban areas, some are in smaller cities, and some have responsibilities that include rural areas.
- *Small* PHAs serve fewer than 200 households, either through operation of public housing units, administration of Section 8 vouchers, or a combination of both. Most of these PHAs are in smaller local jurisdictions, but some are in areas adjacent to or within urban areas. One respondent in this category is a nonprofit organization that operates in an urban environment and is authorized by HUD to administer vouchers.

When analyzing how persons with disabilities are served by Florida's public housing authorities, it is important to keep in mind that some PHAs have policies that prohibit staff from asking about disability status. Therefore, the information they have available on residents with disabilities or voucher holders may understate the number of households with persons with disabilities they actually serve. Some PHAs may use tenants' or voucher holders' status as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) recipients as a proxy for direct knowledge of disability status within a household. Where appropriate, we have added the SSI/SSDI category to our analysis.

Tables 1a, 1b, and 1c show survey respondents categorized respectively as large, medium, or small. There were 14 respondents in the large category, 24 respondents in the medium category, and 17 respondents in the small category.

**Table 1a. Large PHAs: Public Housing Units and Section 8 Vouchers
(Questions 1-2)**

PHA Name	Public Housing Units	Section 8 Vouchers	Total
Miami-Dade	10,923	12,622	23,545
Jacksonville	2,757	6,690	9,447
Broward	776	4,747	5,523
Orlando	1,395	2,699	4,094
Brevard ³	1,323	2,061	3,384
Pinellas	595	2,737	3,332
Fort Lauderdale	787	1,800	2,587
Tallahassee	641	1,868	2,509
Hillsborough	0	1,821	1,821
Lakeland	368	1,243	1,611
Clearwater	545	1,056	1,601
Fort Pierce	822	709	1,531
NW Florida Regional	370	821	1,191
Orange	0	1,173	1,173
Total	21,302	42,047	63,349

³ Brevard, Cocoa, and Melbourne PHAs have consolidated their operations.

**Table 1b. Medium PHAs: Public Housing Units and Section 8 Vouchers
(Questions 1-2)**

PHA Name	Public Housing Units	Section 8 Vouchers	Total
Panama City	450	418	868
Manatee	80	707	787
Deland	200	549	749
Osceola	0	727	727
Boca Raton	95	571	666
Titusville	255	400	655
Deerfield Beach	196	441	637
Area Housing Commission	603	0	603
Pahokee	515	38	553
City of Bradenton	0	519	519
Crestview	273	197	470
Plant City	200	187	387
Milton	89	292	381
Walton	0	364	364
Lee	142	211	353
Volusia	0	322	322
Lake Wales	240	72	312
Hernando	0	285	285
Bradenton	199	80	279
Lake	0	271	271
Wakulla	0	250	250
Tarpon Springs	225	0	225
Avon Park	154	49	203
Marianna	80	120	200
Total	3,996	7,070	11,066

**Table 1c. Small PHAs: Public Housing Units and Section 8 Vouchers
(Questions 1-2)**

PHA Name	Public Housing Units	Section 8 Vouchers	Total
Holmes	0	194	194
Green Cove Springs	0	173	173
Winter Park	171	0	171
Seminole	30	134	164
Boley	0	150	150
Sumter	0	132	132
Jefferson	0	129	129
Brooksville	126	0	126
Union	122	0	122
Arcadia	122	0	122
Niceville	111	0	111
Citrus	0	101	101
Chipley	88	0	88
Columbia	80	0	80
Eustis	60	0	60
DeFuniak	50	0	50
Venice	50	0	50
Total	1,010	1,013	2,023

Section II: Survey Results for Operation of Public Housing Units

In Section II, we present results from survey questions that focused on the operation of public housing units. Survey respondents operate a total of 25,209 units of public housing. This represents more than 60 percent of the public housing units operated in Florida, based upon data supplied by HUD's Jacksonville and Miami regional offices.⁴

Use of Set-Aside Units (Question 1). We asked PHAs that operate public housing units to tell us about any set-asides they may have for persons with disabilities and/or elderly residents. (For the purpose of this research, we define elderly as age 62 or above.) Results should be interpreted by keeping in mind that set-asides may have been reduced or eliminated in recent years due to concerns regarding Fair Housing compliance issues.

As shown in Table 2, relatively few units are set-aside for persons with disabilities under the age of 62. Only four PHAs reported designating such a set-aside category. Twenty PHAs reported setting aside a total of 2,030 units for persons with disabilities of any age. Overall, slightly more than eight percent of the public housing units in our survey responses were reserved for households that include persons with disabilities. Results must be interpreted by keeping in mind that persons with disabilities may be served in units that have not been set-aside for this purpose. *See Table 4 for a presentation of the **actual** number of identified residents with disabilities who live in public housing units operated by survey respondents.*

⁴ HUD regional offices supplied information to the authors that indicated there are currently 41,355 public housing units in operation in Florida.

Table 2. Public Housing Units Reserved for Persons with Disabilities and Families⁵ Survey (Question 1)

PHA Name	Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities	Elderly/ Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities	Elderly	Families	Total ⁶
Large PHAs					
Miami-Dade	N/A	N/A	4,792	6,131	10,923
Jacksonville	0	638	193	1,926	2,757
Orlando	0	191	40	1,164	1,395
Brevard	0	304	260	759	1,323
Fort Pierce	N/A	22	288	512	822
Fort Lauderdale	28	N/A	210	549	787
Broward	0	200	0	576	776
Tallahassee	N/A	66	N/A	575	641
Pinellas	0	210	0	385	595
Clearwater	0	0	200	345	545
NW Florida Regional	14	69	14	273	370
Lakeland	0	4	33	331	368
Medium PHAs					
Area Housing Commission	0	25	0	578	603
Pahokee	0	0	0	515	515
Panama City	0	47	0	403	450
Crestview	0	0	50	223	273
Titusville	0	0	120	135	255
Lake Wales	0	4	0	236	240
Tarpon Springs	0	95	0	130	225
Plant City	0	0	0	200	200
Deland	0	0	12	188	200
Bradenton	5	0	19	175	199
Deerfield Beach	0	0	100	96	196
Avon Park	0	50	0	104	154
Lee	21	11	0	110	142
Boca Raton	0	0	0	95	95
Milton	0	5	0	84	89
Manatee	0	10	0	70	80
Marianna	0	0	0	80	80
Small PHAs					
Winter Park	0	66	0	105	171
Brooksville	0	2	36	88	126
Union	0	13	0	109	122
Arcadia	0	0	0	122	122
Niceville	0	6	0	105	111
Chipley	0	0	0	88	88
Columbia	N/A	20	N/A	60	80
Eustis	0	0	0	60	60
DeFuniak	0	0	0	50	50
Venice	N/A	8	N/A	42	50
Seminole	0	0	0	30	30
Total Units	68	2,066	6,367	17,807	26,308

⁵ Non-elderly is defined as persons under 62 years of age, while elderly is defined as those age 62 or above.

⁶ In a few instances, the number of set-aside and family units reported did not tally with the total number of units reported by a PHA. In these cases, we adjusted the number of family units so that the total units would be equal to that reported by the respondent.

Table 3 gives an overview of how public housing unit set-asides are distributed among persons with disabilities, the elderly and families in responding PHAs categorized by size.⁷

Table 3. Distribution of Public Housing Unit by Category (Question 1)

PHA Size	Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities	Elderly/ Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities	Elderly	Families
Large	42	1,704	6,030	13,526
Medium	26	247	301	3,422
Small	0	115	36	859

Persons with Disabilities Household Residence in PHA Units (Questions 7-

9). We asked PHAs about the number of households with at least one member with disabilities living in public housing units. Because some PHAs have policies that prohibit staff from asking if householders do or do not have a disability, some responded to our question regarding residents with disabilities by reference to tenants’ status as recipients of either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).⁸ In addition, it is likely that some public housing residents with disabilities are not reflected in these data because they do not disclose their disabled status to PHA staff and do not receive SSI/SSDI.

Table 4 summarizes survey responses regarding public housing unit occupants with disabilities by age (under 62 or 62 and older) and by occupant status as recipient of either SSI or SSDI benefits. PHAs responding to our survey serve more persons with disabilities under the age of 62 with public housing units than persons with disabilities

⁷ Some survey respondents did not provide information on their disabled residents.

⁸ Note that what distinguishes SSI from SSDI is whether the individual has worked in recent years, except in the instance of minor children.

age 62 and older. Using the number of households served in public housing units that were specifically identified as including persons with disabilities as the basis for analysis, nearly 40 percent of the units provided by respondents house persons with disabilities. In reality, this proportion is likely higher than 40 percent, as some persons with disabilities may not be identified by PHAs for reasons of policy or through tenant preferences to retain their privacy with regard to their disability status.

Table 4. Housing Units Occupied by Households including One or More Persons with Disabilities Under 62, Age 62 and Older, and SSI/SSDI Recipients (Questions 7-9)

PHA Size	Under Age 62		Age 62 & Over		SSI/SSDI	
	Total Units	Average Number of Units	Total Units	Average Number of Units	Total Units	Average Number of Units
Large	5,498	458	3,234	270	6,605	550
Medium	553	35	381	24	1,107	69
Small	130	12	39	4	241	30

Waiting Lists and Preferences for Persons with Disabilities (Questions 13 and 15). Most PHAs reported waiting lists for residency in public housing units. Some PHAs give persons with disabilities waiting list priority for public housing units. Of those PHAs that responded to this question, 10 percent of small PHAs, 25 percent of medium PHAs, and 42 percent of large PHAs reported giving persons with disabilities waiting list priority. Table 5 summarizes these responses.

Table 5. Average Number of Applicants on PHA Public Housing Waiting List and Priority for Persons with Disabilities (Questions 13 & 15)

PHA Size	Average Number of Applicants on Waiting List	Priority for Persons with Disabilities	No Priority for Persons with Disabilities
Large	3,954	42%	58%
Medium	146	25%	75%
Small	41	10%	90%

Information on the number of applicants on waiting lists categorized by size of PHA is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. PHAs by Number of Applicants on Waiting List for Public Housing Units (Question 13)

	0-49 Applicants	50-99 Applicants	100-249 Applicants	250-499 Applicants	500-999 Applicants	1,000 or More Applicants
Large			Lakeland NW Florida Regional Tallahassee	Broward Clearwater Fort Pierce	Brevard Fort Lauderdale	Jacksonville Orlando Miami-Dade Pinellas
Medium	Avon Park Marianna	Boca Raton Lake Wales Milton Panama	Area Housing Commission Bradenton Deland Lee Pahokee Plant City Tarpon Springs Titusville	Deerfield Manatee		
Small	Arcadia Brooksville Chipley Columbia DeFuniak Eustis Union Venice	Niceville Seminole	Winter Park			

Section III: Survey Results for Section 8 Voucher Administration

In Section III we present responses to survey questions that focused upon administration of Section 8 vouchers. Section 8 vouchers may be administered by either PHAs that operate housing units or by PHAs that focus solely upon the administration of vouchers. Some nonprofits empowered by HUD to provide vouchers for special needs populations were included in this category.

Number of Section 8 Vouchers and Utilization Rate (Questions 2 and 3). We asked PHAs to tell us about the number of Section 8 vouchers they administer and their utilization rate. Tables 7a through 7c give details about the number of Section 8 vouchers each respondent administers, as well as their reported utilization rate. It is important to note that the utilization rate is a snapshot taken at a specific moment, and it may vary over time.

Certain factors may influence Section 8 voucher utilization rates. Among these factors are:

- Lack of units in local market that meet HUD standards for occupancy. This can be a critical issue in rural areas, where substandard units may be the only rentals available. Rural PHAs may be particularly challenged in assisting voucher holders to find housing acceptable under HUD Section 8 standards.
- Lack of rental units that meet HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) requirements. In some areas—particularly high-cost urban areas of the state—local FMRs may be too far below the rents that private sector landlords can expect to obtain from unassisted households. Therefore, PHAs in these areas may experience

diminished utilization rates, since voucher holders have difficulty finding a unit meeting FMR requirements.

Forty-one PHAs gave responses to our question regarding their Section 8 utilization rate. Of those that responded to this question, 34 reported a utilization rate of at least 95 percent. The group with 95 percent or better utilization represents nearly 83 percent of the responses we received regarding voucher utilization.

Table 7a. Section 8 Vouchers and Utilization Rates Reported by Large PHAs (Questions 2-3)

PHA Name	Section 8 Vouchers	Utilization Rates
Miami-Dade	12,622	96%
Jacksonville	6,690	114%
Broward	4,747	100%
Pinellas	2,737	96%
Orlando	2,699	94%
Brevard ⁹	2,061	70%
Tallahassee	1,868	98%
Hillsborough	1,821	91%
Fort Lauderdale	1,800	104%
Lakeland	1,243	110%
Orange	1,173	N/A
Clearwater	1,056	100%
NW Florida Regional	821	98%
Fort Pierce	709	100%
Total	42,047	

⁹ Brevard, Cocoa, and Melbourne PHAs have consolidated their operations.

**Table 7b. Section 8 Vouchers and Utilization Rates Reported by Medium PHAs
(Questions 2-3)**

PHA Name	Section 8 Vouchers	Utilization Rates
Osceola	727	100%
Manatee	707	99%
Boca Raton	571	99%
Deland	549	96%
City of Bradenton	519	100%
Deerfield Beach	441	92%
Panama City	418	100%
Titusville	400	110%
Walton	364	99%
Volusia	322	N/A
Milton	292	98%
Hernando	285	90%
Lake	271	100%
Wakulla	250	74%
Lee	211	96%
Crestview	197	100%
Plant City	187	100%
Marianna	120	99%
Bradenton	80	100%
Lake Wales	72	95%
Avon Park	49	100%
Pahokee	38	N/A
Total	7,070	

Table 7c. Section 8 Vouchers and Utilization Rates Reported by Small PHAs (Questions 2-3)

PHA Name	Section 8 Vouchers	Utilization Rates
Holmes	194	98%
Green Cove Springs	173	97%
Boley	150	100%
Seminole	134	99%
Sumter	132	100%
Jefferson	129	100%
Citrus	101	100%
Total	1,013	

Number of Vouchers Reserved for Persons with Disabilities (Question 2).

We asked PHAs to tell us the number of Section 8 vouchers they reserve for persons with disabilities. Their responses are summarized in Table 8. These responses should be interpreted with care, as concerns with fair housing issues may have led organizations away from employing any type of preferences in the allocation of Section 8 vouchers.

Table 8. Section 8 Vouchers Reserved for Persons with Disabilities (Question 2)

PHA Name	Vouchers for Persons with Disabilities
Large	
Broward	652
Miami-Dade	365
Orlando	300
Jacksonville	100
Hillsborough	100
Pinellas	28
Lakeland	25
Clearwater	19
Orange	19
Brevard ¹⁰	0
Fort Lauderdale	0
Tallahassee	0
Fort Pierce	0
NW Florida Regional	0
Medium	
Manatee	134
Marianna	0
Boca Raton	75
Titusville	75
Deerfield Beach	64
Pahokee	0
DeLand	0
Osceola	0
Panama City	0
City of Bradenton	0
Crestview	0
Plant City	0
Walton	0
Lee	0
Volusia	0
Lake Wales	0
Hernando	0
Bradenton	0
Lake	0
Wakulla	0
Tarpon Springs	0
Milton	0
Avon Park	0
Small	
Boley	150
Green Cove Springs	0
Holmes	0
Seminole	0
Sumter	0
Jefferson	0
Citrus	0
Total	2,203

¹⁰ Brevard, Cocoa, and Melbourne PHAs have consolidated their operations.

HUD Fair Share Housing Application (Question 4). Between 1975 and 1994, HUD made Fair Share vouchers available to public housing authorities through a competitive process that did not include incentives to provide additional vouchers to persons with disabilities. No federal funding was available for additional Fair Share vouchers for federal fiscal years between 1995 and 1999 and for federal fiscal year 2003.

For federal fiscal years 2000 through 2002 (three years), funding for Fair Share vouchers was re-introduced. For this three-year period, the HUD competitive process awarded additional points to applications from PHAs that committed to use at least 15 percent of their Fair Share award from that year to serve households that included persons with disabilities. Further points were available to PHAs that pledged to use an additional three (3) percent of their Fair Share award to serve households covered by a Medicaid Home and Community Based Services waiver under Section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act.¹¹

Because Fair Share vouchers were available to PHAs for a period of 20 years without scoring criteria associated with service to persons with disabilities, it is important to interpret the survey results for this question with care. Only those Fair Share vouchers awarded during federal fiscal years 2000 through 2002 have a specific federal public policy purpose with regarding to serving households that include persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, our survey was not constructed to distinguish between Fair Share vouchers obtained through competition in the early years (1975 through 1994) and those obtained between federal fiscal year 2000 and 2002. Therefore, it is difficult

¹¹ Readers may wish to view the language associated with these selection criteria in the February 22, 2002 *Federal Register*. See in particular pages 8432 and 8433 of Volume 67, No. 36.

to draw conclusions regarding how PHAs have used their Fair Share allocations to meet public policy goals with regarding to serving persons with disabilities.

It is also important to keep in mind that the application process is highly competitive, and many PHAs that apply do not receive an allocation. We asked PHAs to tell us whether they applied for additional vouchers under the Fair Share program, and if so, whether their application was successful. In Florida, 26 of our survey respondents indicated that they applied for these vouchers. Slightly less than half of those who applied were awarded Fair Share Vouchers by HUD. Further, we asked successful applicants to tell us how many additional vouchers they received and the number of these vouchers that they reserved for use by persons with disabilities. Their responses are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. PHA Applications to HUD Fair Share Housing Program (Question 4)

PHA Name	Did Not Apply	Applied & Did Not Receive	Applied & Received	Total Received	Reserved for Persons with Disabilities	Reserved for Persons with Disabilities with Medicaid, Home & Community Waivers
Large						
Miami-Dade			1	600	90	75
Jacksonville			1	190	29	0
Broward			1	989	203	30
Orlando		1				
Brevard ¹²	1					
Pinellas	1					
Fort Lauderdale		1				
Tallahassee			1	200	100	0
Hillsborough		1				
Lakeland		1				
Clearwater			1	125	19	0
Fort Pierce	1					
NW Florida Regional	1					
Orange			1	105	16	3
Medium						
Panama City		1				
Manatee		1				
Deland			1	549	0	0
Osceola	1					
Boca Raton			1	50	0	0
Titusville		1				
Deerfield Beach			1	66	10	0
Pahokee		1				
City of Bradenton		1				
Crestview		1				
Plant City			1	15	N/A	0
Milton	1					
Walton	1					
Lee			1	53	13	3
Volusia		1				
Lake Wales	1					
Hernando		1				
Bradenton	1					
Lake	1					
Wakulla	1					
Avon Park		1				
Marianna	1					
Small						
Holmes	1					
Green Cove Springs	1					
Seminole	1					
Boley	1					
Sumter		1				
Jefferson	1					
Citrus			1	9	0	0
Total	17	14	12	2,951	480	111

¹² Brevard, Cocoa, and Melbourne PHAs have consolidated their operations.

HUD Mainstream Voucher Application (Question 5). HUD makes available a limited number of Mainstream vouchers intended to serve persons with disabilities. PHAs must compete for these vouchers. We asked PHAs to tell us whether they applied for vouchers. If they applied and received vouchers under the Mainstream program, we asked them how many vouchers HUD awarded them. Table 10 shows PHA responses related to Mainstream vouchers.

Table 10. PHA Applications to HUD Mainstream Voucher Program (Question 5)

PHA Name	Did Not Apply	Applied & Did Not Receive	Applied & Received	Total Received
Miami-Dade			1	75
Jacksonville	1			
Broward			1	75
Orlando			1	100
Brevard ¹³	1			
Pinellas	1			
Fort Lauderdale		1		
Tallahassee			1	75
Hillsborough			1	100
Lakeland		1		
Clearwater	1			
Fort Pierce	1			
NW Florida Regional	1			
Orange		1		
Medium				
Panama City	1			
Manatee	1			
Deland	1			
Osceola	1			
Boca Raton			1	75
Titusville	1			
Deerfield Beach	1			
Pahokee		1		
City of Bradenton	1			
Crestview	1			
Plant City	1			
Milton	1			
Walton	1			
Lee	1			
Volusia	1			
Lake Wales	1			
Hernando		1		
Bradenton	1			
Lake	1			
Wakulla			1	10
Avon Park		1		
Marianna	1			
Small				
Holmes	1			
Green Cove Springs		1		
Seminole	1			
Boley			1	150
Sumter		1		
Jefferson	1			
Citrus	1			
Eustis		1		
Total	27	9	8	660

¹³ Brevard, Cocoa, and Melbourne PHAs have consolidated their operations.

The survey results reflect the fact that competition for the Mainstream vouchers is very stiff. HUD awarded Mainstream vouchers to less than 50 percent of the PHAs in our survey that applied for them.

Use of Vouchers by Persons with Disabilities (Questions 10-12). We asked PHAs to tell us how many vouchers they have provided that serve households with one or more persons with disabilities. We asked them to identify the number of such households with members under the age of 62 and age 62 and older. Federal law prevents staff from asking about tenant and prospective tenant disability status, so this information may only be known for those instances in which a tenant identifies himself as having a disability. Some PHAs use tenant-reported receipt of SSI/SSDI benefits as a way of approximating the number of persons with disabilities they serve; we have included those figures in Table 11.

Table 11. Section 8 Vouchers by Households including One or More Persons with Disabilities Under 62, Age 62 and Older, and SSI/SSDI Recipients (Questions 10-12)

PHA SIZE	Under Age 62		Age 62 & Over		SSI/SSDI	
	Total Vouchers	Average Number of Units	Total Vouchers	Average Number of Units	Total Vouchers	Average Number of Units
Large	12,033	926	3,930	302	12,971	927
Medium	1,311	73	730	41	2,392	133
Small	327	65	96	19	335	84

Section 8 Waiting Lists and Priority for Persons with Disabilities (Questions 14-15). We asked PHAs about the size of their waiting list for Section 8 vouchers. We also asked whether they offer any priority to applicants with a disability. Their responses are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Average Number of Applicants on Section 8 Waiting Lists and Priority for Persons with Disabilities (Question 14-15)

PHA Size	Applicants	Priority for Persons with Disabilities	No Priority for Persons with Disabilities
Large	5,297	57%	43%
Medium ¹⁴	238	30%	70%
Small	152	43%	57%

Number of Section 8 Applicants on Waiting List (Question 14). We asked PHAs about the number of applicants they have on waiting lists for Section 8 vouchers. Their responses are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. PHA by Number of Applicants on Waiting List for Section 8 Vouchers (Question 14)

	0-49 Applicants	50-99 Applicants	100-249 Applicants	250-499 Applicants	500-999 Applicants	1,000 or More Applicants
Large				Broward Lakeland	Clearwater Fort Pierce NW Florida Regional	Miami-Dade Fort Lauderdale Hillsborough Jacksonville Orange Orlando Pinellas Tallahassee
Medium	Avon Park	Bradenton Marianna Osceola Pahokee Milton	Crestview Deerfield Lee Milton Pahokee Plant City Titusville Wakulla Walton	Boca Raton Deland Hernando Lake Wales Panama City Manatee Volusia		City of Bradenton
Small	Citrus Holmes	Jefferson	Boley Green Cove Springs Sumter		Seminole	

¹⁴ Lake County is in the process of revising its waiting list.

Section IV: How PHAs Deliver Housing Services

Section IV of this report focuses upon how public housing authorities deliver housing services. Information in this section relates to how PHAs communicate with the general public and with persons with disabilities. It also relates to how PHAs assist voucher holders—those without disabilities or those with disabilities—in shopping for housing. It also presents information related to physical modifications for tenants with disabilities, as well as services made available to tenants with disabilities. We have constructed the survey response tables in this section so that to the greatest extent possible, the practices reported by PHAs are reflected in their own words.

As with all survey results, it is important to interpret our findings with care. PHAs that responded to our survey ranged in size from rural authorities operating 50 units of housing to the largest urban authority, which operates nearly 11,000 public housing units and administers nearly 13,000 Section 8 vouchers. Clearly, the PHAs that responded to our survey have diverse sets of resources available to help them serve the public. These resources are not only their own staff and fiscal capacities, but also the local level of activity on the part of social service agencies and community-based organizations that may be willing to partner with PHAs in providing housing, transportation, and supportive service needs that are essential to citizens with disabilities.

How PHAs Communicate Waiting List Openings to the Public (Question 16). We asked PHAs how they communicate their waiting list openings to the general public. Their responses to this open-ended question are shown in Table 14. Note that

many PHAs noted more than one method for communicating with the public regarding waiting lists.

Table 14. PHA Communications of Openings on Waiting List to General Public (Question 16)

Communication¹⁵	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
Newspaper or Legal Ad	12	16	11	39
Public Notices ¹⁶	3	7	8	18
Social Service Agencies	4	4	5	13
Radio	4	2	3	9
Advertise in Media	1	1	2	4
Wait List Stays Open	0	4	1	5
Internet	2	1	1	4
Target Minorities	3	1	0	4
Word of Mouth	1	2	1	4
Phone Call	2	1	0	3
Other Area Agencies/Services	1	1	2	4
Church	1	1	0	2
Post Notice in PHA Office	2	0	0	2
TV	2	0	0	2
Wait List Opens Once a Week	0	1	0	1
Wait List Opens Once a Month	0	0	1	1
Walk-Ins	0	0	1	1
Date & Time (continuously open on first come, first served basis)	0	1	0	1
Other PHAs	0	1	0	1
Referrals	0	1	0	1
Mail	0	0	1	1
Newsletter	1	0	0	1

Special Methods for Assisting Persons with Disabilities in Learning About Waiting List Openings and in Making Application for Housing Resources

(Question 17). We asked PHAs about special methods they may have for assisting persons with disabilities in learning about waiting list openings for public housing units or Section 8 vouchers. We also asked them if they have special methods for assisting persons with disabilities in making application for housing resources. Their responses are shown in Table 15. Note that PHAs may have reported multiple methods for

¹⁵ PHAs may have indicated multiple methods for communicating waiting list openings to the public.

communicating with persons with disabilities about waiting list openings and applications for public housing or vouchers.

Table 15. PHA Special Measures to Assist Persons with Disabilities in Learning About Waiting List Openings and Applying for Openings (Question 17)

Measures ¹⁷	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
No Additional Assistance	1	11	7	19
Social Service Agencies	9	5	3	17
Alternative Application Process ¹⁸	5	3	4	12
Agencies for Persons with Disabilities	5	3	1	9
Hearing Impaired Services	4	1	3	8
Home Visit	1	0	1	2
Vision Impaired Services	1	0	1	2
Accommodate Requests	2	0	0	2
Other PHAs	1	1	0	2
ADA Guidelines	1	1	0	2
Website	1	0	1	2
Elderly/Retirement Complexes	0	1	1	2
Interpreter	0	1	1	2
Elder Services	0	1	0	1
Apartment Complexes	0	1	0	1
Phone Call	0	1	0	1
Newspaper	0	1	0	1
Post notice at HRS	0	0	1	1
Any Necessary ¹⁹	0	0	1	1
Transportation	0	0	1	1

Methods for Contacting General Public When a Housing Unit or Section 8

Voucher Becomes Available (Question 18). We asked PHAs to tell us how they make contact with members of the general public who have applied for either public housing units or Section 8 vouchers when a unit or voucher becomes available for them. PHA responses are summarized in Table 16.

¹⁶ Public notices include distributing flyers, displaying posters, and posting bulletin board notices throughout the community.

¹⁷ Note that PHAs may have multiple methods through which they assist persons with disabilities in learning about waiting list openings and in applying for Section 8 vouchers or units.

¹⁸ Alternative application services were reported to include such measures as hotline, mail, telephone, and contact through social service agencies and community organizations that serve the disabled or elderly.

¹⁹ One small PHA noted that it takes “any action necessary” to assist persons with disabilities learn about waiting list openings and make application.

Table 16. PHA Methods of Contacting General Public When Section 8 Voucher or Unit is Available (Question 18)

Method²⁰	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
Mail	14	23	16	53
Phone Call	4	14	15	33
2 nd Contact Attempt	1	0	1	2
Fax	0	1	0	1
Orientation Appointment	0	1	1	2

Special Methods for Contacting Persons with Disabilities When a Housing Unit or Section 8 Voucher Becomes Available (Question 19). We asked PHAs to tell us about any special methods they may use to make contact with applicants with disabilities for public housing units or Section 8 vouchers when a unit or voucher becomes available for them. Their responses are shown in Table 17. Note that PHAs may use multiple methods for making contact with persons with disabilities.

²⁰ Note that PHAs may use multiple methods for making contact when a Section 8 voucher or unit becomes available to an applicant.

Table 17. PHA Special Methods of Contacting Persons with Disabilities When a Housing Unit or Section 8 Voucher Becomes Available for Them (Question 19)

Method ²¹	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
No Additional Assistance	5	16	9	30
Transportation	3	1	2	6
Mail	4	3	0	7
Home Visit	2	2	2	6
Other Services & Agencies	1	1	2	4
Social Services	2	0	1	3
Referrals	1	0	2	3
Elder Services	0	1	1	2
Any Necessary ²²	0	0	2	2
Per Client Request	3	0	0	3
Phone Call	0	2	0	2
Reference Contact	1	0	1	2
Translator	1	1	0	2
Hearing Impaired Services	1	1	0	2
Advocacy or Support Groups	1	1	0	2
Personal Contact	0	1	0	1
Help with Paperwork	1	0	0	1
Newspaper	0	1	0	1
View Apartment	0	0	1	1
Flyers	0	1	0	1
Landlord	0	0	1	1

PHA Assistance in Shopping for Housing (Question 20). We asked PHAs what assistance they offer Section 8 voucher holders in shopping for housing in which they can use their voucher. The responses to this question are shown in Table 18. A large majority (84 percent) of those responding to this question indicated some form of assistance is offered Section 8 voucher holders in shopping for housing.

²¹ One or more methods may be used by any given PHA for communicating with disabled applicants once a Section 8 voucher or unit becomes available for them.

²² One small PHA noted that it takes “any action necessary” to reach disabled applicants when a Section 8 voucher or unit becomes available. Among the actions they noted are contacting service providers for persons with disabilities who may assist, providing van service to the PHA to complete necessary paperwork, and providing a reader for the blind.

Table 18. PHA Assisting Voucher Holders Shopping for Units by Size (Question 20)

PHA Size	Yes	No
Large	14	0
Medium	18	4
Small	4	3
Total	36	7
Percent	84%	16%

Types of Assistance Offered General Public in Shopping for Housing in Which to Use Section 8 Vouchers (Question 20). We asked PHAs about the ways in which they assist members of the general public who are Section 8 voucher holders shop for housing in which they can use their voucher. Their responses are shown in Table 19. Note that PHAs may use more than one method for assisting voucher holders in their search for housing.

Table 19. Types of Assistance PHA Provides General Public Voucher Holders in Shopping for Housing (Question 20)

Type of Assistance ²³	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
Landlord Listings	9	15	4	28
Available (Suitable) Apartment List	5	4	0	9
No Additional Assistance	0	4	3	7
Real Estate Property Listings	1	5	1	7
Pictures of Apartments	1	1	1	3
Rent Ads	0	1	1	2
Seminar	1	1	0	2
Social Support or Counseling Services	1	1	0	2
Transportation	1	1	0	2
Low-Income Complex Listings	0	2	0	2
Apartment's Dimensions	0	1	1	2
Required Briefing	0	1	1	2
Inspect Potential Landlord Listing	1	0	0	1
Make Phone Calls	0	0	1	1
Transmit Documents	0	0	1	1
Help Find Employment	0	0	1	1
Apartment Locator Service	1	1	0	2
Landlord Advocacy	1	0	0	1
Contact Welfare Agencies to Help with Deposits	1	0	0	1
Orientation Handbook	1	0	0	1
Contact Other PHAs	0	1	0	1
Networking	0	1	0	1
Any Necessary	0	0	1	1
Coordinate Appointments	0	0	1	1

Types of Assistance Offered Section 8 Voucher Holders with Disabilities in Shopping for Housing (Question 20). We asked PHAs about assistance they offer voucher holders with disabilities in shopping for housing in which they can use their vouchers. Table 20 shows their responses to this question. Note that PHAs may use several methods for assisting voucher holders with disabilities with their search for housing.

²³ PHA responses may include one or more types of assistance offered to the general public voucher holders.

Table 20. Types of Additional Assistance PHAs Provide Voucher Holders with Disabilities in Shopping for Units (Question 20)

Type of Assistance ²⁴	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
No Additional Assistance	1	15	13	29
List or Help Find Accessible Units	7	3	3	13
Transportation	2	0	2	4
Other Contacts	1	1	1	3
Social Service Agencies	2	1	0	3
Unit Dimensions	2	0	0	2
Contact Landlords	1	1	0	2
Extra Time to Shop	0	1	0	1
Full Service	0	0	2	2
Voucher Portable Immediately	0	1	0	1
Contact Other PHAs	0	1	0	1
Mobility Counseling	1	0	0	1
Help with Personal Needs by Request	0	1	0	1
Internet Access	1	0	0	1
Referrals	0	1	0	1

Physical Modifications for Tenants With Disabilities (Question 21). We asked PHAs to tell us about physical modifications they offer for tenants with disabilities. Their responses are reflected in Table 21. As with our other service-oriented questions, this was an open-ended question. To the greatest extent possible, responses are given in the respondents' own words. Note that individual PHAs may have indicated multiple modifications in their survey response.

²⁴ Multiple types of assistance may be offered by the same PHA.

Table 21. PHA Physical Modifications for Tenants with Disabilities (Question 21)

Type of Modification ²⁵	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
No Additional Modifications (includes Section 8-only PHAs)	0	8	9	17
Ramp Access	7	4	2	13
Grab Bars	6	3	1	10
Modify Bathroom	2	7	1	10
Modify Kitchen	3	3	1	7
Total	2	3	1	6
Accommodate Requests	2	1	2	5
Emergency Call System	1	2	0	3
Follow ADA Guidelines ²⁶	1	2	0	3
Handrails	0	3	0	3
Modify Cabinets	2	1	1	4
Accommodate Requests as Affordable	0	1	1	2
Retrofit for Hearing Impaired	1	1	0	2
Widen Doorways	2	0	0	2
Barrier Removal	1	0	0	1
Handicap Parking	1	0	0	1
Retrofit for Vision Impaired	0	1	0	1
Modify Shelving	1	0	0	1
Modify Light Switches	1	0	0	1
Modify Door Handles	1	0	0	1
Braille	1	0	0	1
Follow Sec. 504 Guidelines ²⁷	0	1	0	1
HUD Guidelines	0	0	1	1
Any to Aid Applicant in Full Usage	0	0	1	1
Accommodate Requests as Necessary	0	1	0	1
Referrals	1	0	0	1
Other	1	0	0	1

Services for Tenants with Disabilities (Question 22). We asked PHAs to tell us about services they offer their tenants with disabilities. This was an open-ended question, and Table 22 reflects respondents' descriptions of these services in their own words. Note that PHAs frequently offer multiple services to persons with disabilities.

²⁵ PHA responses may include more than one type of modification.

²⁶ This respondent indicated that they follow guidelines set forth by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

²⁷ This respondent indicated that they follow guidelines under Section 504. Section 504 is a segment of civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability status for any program operated with federal funds.

Table 22. PHA Services for Tenants with Disabilities (Question 22)

Services²⁸	Number of Large PHAs	Number of Medium PHAs	Number of Small PHAs	Total
No Additional Services	4	19	10	33
Miscellaneous Services ²⁹	6	0	0	6
Referrals	3	0	3	6
Transportation	2	0	0	2
Home Visits	2	0	0	2
In Home Assistance	1	0	0	1
ADA Guidelines	0	0	1	1
Services As Requested	0	0	1	1
Situation of Individual	0	1	0	1
Elder Site Participation	0	0	1	1
Minor Maintenance	0	0	1	1
Add Physical Modifications	0	0	1	1
Neighborhood Watch	0	1	0	1
Case Management	1	0	0	1
Mental Health Counseling	1	0	0	1
End of Life Counseling	1	0	0	1
Deliver Notices & Forms	1	0	0	1
Homeless Transition Services ³⁰	1	0	0	1
Wellness Center	1	0	0	1
Nursing Visits	1	0	0	1
Full Service ³¹	0	1	0	1
DHS Referral	1	0	0	1

Use of Project-Based Section 8 Vouchers (Question 6). We asked PHAs whether they currently use project-based Section 8 vouchers or whether they plan to use them in the future. The use of project-based vouchers has implications for a local area’s ability to create new or substantially rehabilitated housing that can serve extremely low-income households. PHAs in a number of states have dedicated a portion of their vouchers to project-based assistance that makes nonprofit development of housing for special needs populations financially feasible.

²⁸ Note that survey responses indicated that PHAs may offer multiple services to tenants with disabilities.

²⁹ Miscellaneous services were reported by one PHA that provides services for all residents in which disabled may take part. Another PHA offers a Resident Opportunities department that assists with various services. In addition, one PHA offers home visits, cleaning services and referrals for other services.

³⁰ One large PHA reported working with a faith-based organization to assist persons transferring from a homeless shelter via project-based Section 8 vouchers.

Three Florida public housing authorities currently make use of project-based vouchers. They include one medium-sized PHA and two large PHAs. A number of PHAs also indicated that they were planning to use project-based vouchers in the future. They include one small PHA and four large PHAs.

³¹ The response noting “full service” indicates that counseling, exercise, social activities, and life management skills services are offered.

Section V: Promising Practices for Serving Persons with Disabilities

Section V is devoted to sharing information about some of the most promising practices respondents engage in as they serve persons with disabilities and their households. Although the list of practices that appear below are likely to be only a sample of promising practices among PHAs in Florida, we hope that identifying them will help to share the experience of public housing professionals with all who work to serve the housing and service needs of persons with disabilities.

Public housing authorities of every size and in every part of the state are reflected in the promising practices we have highlighted in this report. All of the large PHAs (14) that responded to our survey engaged in one or more of these practices, while most of the medium PHAs also did (18 of 24). More than 80 percent of small PHAs (14 of 17) that responded to this survey are represented on this list of promising practices. Given the resource constraints that all public housing authorities face, it is particularly noteworthy to see so many small authorities represented on this list.

Navigating Through the Application Process

Public housing authorities use various strategies that assist people with disabilities in learning about and applying for housing resources. They also use a number of strategies for contacting individuals once they are selected for a public housing unit or Section 8 voucher. Here are some of the promising practices for communication and application processes reported by our respondents:

- **Networking to serve persons with disabilities.** Networking with social service agencies, community-based organizations, and other PHAs helps PHAs communicate about upcoming waiting list openings, application processes, and

the availability of a public housing unit or voucher for an applicant with a disability.

- **Alternative application processes.** Alternative application processes may include use of a hotline or other telephone application process, applications by mail, personal assistance with completing the application, or making a home visit to an applicant with a disability.
- **Hearing or vision impaired services.** These services adapt the housing selection process to persons with disabilities' specific needs through TDD relay systems, the participation of interpretive signers for hearing-impaired individuals, the use of Braille aids, or other services specified in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.
- **Transportation.** Some PHAs provide transportation as necessary throughout the application and waiting list processes.
- **Accommodate Client Requests.** Some PHAs indicated that they will accommodate client requests or take any action necessary to facilitate the communication and application processes for persons with disabilities. This practice indicates the intent to work flexibly with persons with disabilities in an effort to meet their needs.

Once Housing Resources are Available

Once housing resources are available for the applicant with a disability, the PHA may engage in a number of activities designed to assist them with their transition. Many of these activities are primarily geared toward use of the Section 8 voucher.

- **Transportation.** Some PHAs provide transportation for persons with disabilities as they search for housing in which to use their voucher.
- **Networking with local resources.** As with the initial communication and application processes, continued networking with social service agencies and community-based organizations may assist persons with disabilities seek and successfully transition into housing, once it becomes available.
- **Mobility counseling.** Some PHAs provide mobility counseling for persons with disabilities.
- **Help in finding accessible units.** Some PHAs provide listings or other assistance in finding accessible units for voucher holders.
- **Information on apartment unit dimensions.** Some PHAs provide voucher holders with information on unit dimensions. This allows the voucher holder to determine if hallways, bathrooms, and kitchen areas are sized so that they accommodate wheelchairs or other assistive devices.
- **Landlord contacts.** Some PHAs make contact with landlords on behalf of voucher holders with a disability.
- **Extra time to shop.** In recognition of the fact that persons with disabilities may have difficulty finding an accessible housing opportunity in which they can use

their vouchers, some PHAs allow them extra time to shop for housing once a voucher has been allocated to them.

- **Help with personal needs by request.** This practice allows the PHA to tailor its assistance to persons with disabilities' specific needs.
- **Immediate Section 8 portability.** When PHAs make Section 8 vouchers immediately portable for persons with disabilities, that increases the likelihood the individual will be able to find housing that meets their needs within a reasonable time frame.

Physical Modifications

This section primarily applies to public housing authorities that operate their own housing units. A majority of PHAs indicated that they provide ramp access, grab bars, or modifications to bathrooms or kitchens. Other modifications noted by our respondents included:

- **Total modification.** Some PHAs indicated that they would totally modify, accommodate requests, or make any modification short of extensive rehabilitation of the unit in order to provide full usage of the unit for persons with disabilities.
- **Emergency call system.** Some PHAs offer tenants with disabilities emergency call systems.
- **Retrofitting for hearing or vision impaired.** Some PHAs retrofit units with appropriate adaptations to features such as doorbells, fire alarms, and thermostats so that hearing or vision-impaired individuals are accommodated.

- **Modifications to shelving, light switches, and door handles.** Some PHAs modify the height of shelving and/or light switches to accommodate special needs. They may also install special door handles that are more accessible to persons with disabilities than standard door handles.
- **Other modifications.** Some PHAs modify cabinets, provide handrails, widen doorways, remove barriers, and create conveniently located handicapped parking for tenants with disabilities.

Services for Persons with Disabilities

PHAs noted that they provide a number of unique services for individuals with disabilities. Some of these services are provided directly by the PHAs, while others are services that are provided through community partnerships with various organizations.

- Wellness centers or nursing visits
- Referrals to Department of Health and Human Services or other area agencies
- Neighborhood watch
- Case management
- Mental health or end of life counseling
- Homeless transition services
- Delivering notices and forms directly to clients
- Resident Opportunities program
- In-home assistance or home visits
- Transportation services
- Minor maintenance or cleaning services

- Accommodate requests from persons with disabilities
- Partnerships with Elder Site activities
- Full-service concept, which includes counseling, exercise, social activities, and life management skills.

A large majority of public housing authorities are serving individuals with disabilities in ways that can be characterized as promising practices. By communicating these practices in this report, we hope to facilitate further innovation and collaboration among PHAs, other housing organizations, service providers, and special needs advocates.

Use of Project-Based Section 8 Vouchers

Three of Florida's PHAs currently make use of project-based Section 8 vouchers. Further, one small PHA and four large PHAs indicated that they plan to use project-based vouchers in the future. When used by a nonprofit organization with additional subsidy layers, these vouchers can make additional housing resources available that would otherwise be financially infeasible.

APPENDIX A

Public Housing Authority Survey Respondents

LARGE PHAs	MEDIUM PHAs	SMALL PHAs
Miami-Dade	Panama City	Holmes
Jacksonville	Manatee	Green Cove Springs
Broward	Deland	Winter Park
Orlando	Osceola	Seminole
Brevard	Boca Raton	Boley
Pinellas	Titusville	Sumter
Fort Lauderdale	Deerfield Beach	Jefferson
Tallassee	Area Housing	Brooksville
Hillsborough	Commission	Union
Lakeland	City of Bradenton	Arcadia
Clearwater	Crestview	Niceville
Fort Pierce	Plant City	Citrus
NW Florida Regional	Walton	Chipley
Orange	Lee	Columbia
	Volusia	Eustis
	Lake Wales	DeFuniak
	Hernando	Venice
	Bradenton	
	Lake	
	Wakulla	
	Tarpon Springs	
	Avon Park	
	Marianna	

APPENDIX B

Survey of Public Housing Authorities Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing

The Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing at the University of Florida is surveying the public housing authorities in Florida to find out more about your housing options for people with disabilities. We are especially interested in best practices that could help other PHAs to serve people with disabilities.

We will use the information to develop a report on public housing resources for persons with disabilities in Florida. We will distribute the report to the public in hard copies and via our Web site.

Please complete the survey and fax it to the Shimberg Center at (352) 392-4364 by March 31, 2003. We expect that the survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete. If you have questions, please call Anne Lockwood Williamson at (352) 273-1170.

The first set of questions asks about the overall number of public housing units and Section 8 vouchers you offer.

1. How many public housing units does the agency have in the following categories?

- Total units _____
- Reserved for elderly only _____
- Reserved for disabled, non-elderly only _____
- Reserved for either elderly or disabled, non-elderly _____

Reserved for families _____

2. How many Section 8 vouchers does the agency have at this time in the following categories?

- Total _____
- Reserved for disabled _____

3. What is your current Section 8 utilization rate? _____%

The next few questions refer to special aspects of the Section 8 voucher program that your PHA might use.

4. Has your PHA applied for vouchers through HUD's Fair Share Housing Program? (yes/no)

- If yes, did you receive Fair Share vouchers? (yes/no)

If yes,

- How many total Fair Share vouchers do you have? _____
- How many or what percentage of these vouchers are reserved for households with disabilities, if any? _____
- How many or what percentage are reserved for people with disabilities with Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers, if any? _____

5. Has your PHA applied for vouchers through HUD's Mainstream Program? (yes/no)

- If yes, did you receive Mainstream vouchers? (yes/no)
- If yes, how many total Mainstream vouchers do you have? _____

6. Has your PHA "project-based" any portion of its Section 8 vouchers? (yes/no)

- If yes, please describe the projects that have received project-based assistance (how many projects; number of units; developed by PHA, non-profit, or private developer; focus on elderly, disabled, or other target populations)
- If no, do you have any plans to do so? (yes/no)
- If yes, what types of projects will receive project-based assistance?

The next few questions ask about the actual percentage of public housing units and vouchers used by persons or households with disabilities:

7. How many public housing units are occupied by households including one or more disabled persons under age 62? _____
8. How many public housing units are occupied by households including one or more disabled persons age 62 or older? _____
9. How many public housing units are occupied by households including one or more SSI or SSDI recipients? (These stand for Supplemental Security Income and Supplemental Security Disability Income) _____
10. How many current Section 8 voucher users are households including one or more disabled persons under age 62? _____
11. How many current voucher users are households including one or more disabled persons age 62 or older? _____
12. How many current vouchers users are households including SSI or SSDI recipients? _____

The next set of questions deals with your public housing and Section 8 waiting list and pre-occupancy procedures.

13. How many people are on your public housing unit waiting list? _____
14. How many people are on your Section 8 waiting list? _____
15. Do you offer a preference for persons with disabilities on your public housing waiting list, Section 8 waiting list, or both? _____
16. Please describe how you communicate openings on your waiting list to the general public.
17. Please describe any special measures you take to assist people with disabilities in learning about waiting list openings and applying for spots (e.g. a bulletin to providers of services for persons with disabilities, van service to the PHA office to fill out the form, providing a reader for blind applicants)
18. How do you contact people on the waiting list who have been selected for a unit or voucher?

19. Please describe any special measures you take to contact people with disabilities about their selection (e.g. sending a van so tenant can view a public housing unit).

20. Do you assist voucher holders in shopping for units? (yes/no)

If yes:

- What kinds of assistance do you provide to voucher holders in general?
- Please describe any special measures you take to assist people with disabilities in finding units with a Section 8 voucher.

The final questions deal with your accommodations and services for tenants with disabilities.

21. What physical modifications does the PHA offer in housing units for disabled persons (e.g. grab bars in bathrooms)?

22. What services does the PHA offer for public housing tenants with disabilities (e.g. on-site mental health counseling)?

23. Can you list for me or send a list of the public housing developments with some or all units reserved for disabilities? We would like to know the names and addresses of the complexes, numbers of units, and any features or services for persons with disabilities.

We will be developing a report based on all of the responses we receive. Would you like to receive a copy when it is finished? (yes/no)

Thank you very much for your time in completing this survey.



APPENDIX C

ALACHUA COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
703 NE FIRST STREET
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32601
(352) 372-2549 · FAX (352) 373-4097
E-MAIL · ACHA@FDT.NET

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

MEMORANDUM

TO: FAHRO Executive Directors
FROM: Gail Monahan, President
DATE: May 27, 2003
SUBJECT: Shimberg Center PHA Survey

As you may be aware, the Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing at the University of Florida is in the process of concluding a survey of public housing authorities. The survey has a particular focus on how we serve special needs households, and we hope that the results will be helpful in identifying best practices among Florida's PHAs, as well as some of the challenges we face.

Participation by all of Florida's PHAs—regardless of size—is important so that information reported will be accurate. If you have not already done so, please respond to the Shimberg Center via fax to (352) 392-4364. It is important that they receive your response no later than Friday, May 30th.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Ginger Battista at (352) 273-1196 or Anne Lockwood Williamson at (352) 273-1170.

Thanks very much for your participation.

APPENDIX D

Public Housing Authorities: An Analysis of Practices and Resources for Serving Persons with Disabilities

Summary Tables

Summary Table 1. PHAs Surveyed: Public Housing Units and Section 8 Vouchers

PHA SIZE	PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS	SECTION 8 VOUCHERS	TOTAL
Large PHAs (14)	21,302	42,047	63,349
Medium PHAs (24)	3,996	7,070	11,066
Small PHAs (17)	1,010	1,013	2,023
Total Units	26,308	50,130	76,438

APPENDIX D (continued)

NOTE TO READERS: Summary Tables 2a, 2b, and 3 should be read and interpreted together. Federal law prohibits public housing authorities from asking persons whether they have a disability. Therefore, some households may include a person with a disability but not appear as part of the responses in Summary Tables 2a and 2b.

Table 3 provides information on households that include one or more persons who receive SSI or SSDI income. A high proportion of these households will include a person with a disability. Therefore, the number of public housing units and vouchers that serve households that include a person with a disability are likely to be higher than the numbers reported in Summary Tables 2a and 2b.

Summary Table 2a. Housing Units and Vouchers Used by Households including One or More Persons with Disabilities Under 62 and Age 62 and Older

PHA SIZE	PHA UNITS: UNDER AGE 62	VOUCHERS: UNDER AGE 62	PHA UNITS: AGE 62 & OVER	VOUCHERS: AGE 62 & OVER
Large	5,498 (26%)	12,033 (29%)	3,234 (15%)	3,930 (9%)
Medium	553 (14%)	1,311 (19%)	381 (10%)	730 (10%)
Small	130 (13%)	327 (32%)	39 (4%)	96 (9%)
Total	6,181 (23%)	13,671 (27%)	3,654 (14%)	4,756 (9%)

Summary Table 2b. Housing Units and Vouchers Used by Households including One or More Persons with Disabilities

PHA SIZE	PHA UNITS	VOUCHERS
Large	8,732(41%)	15,963 (38%)
Medium	934 (23%)	2,041 (29%)
Small	169 (17%)	423 (42%)
Total	9,835 (37%)	18,427 (37%)

Summary Table 3. Housing Units and Vouchers Used by Households including One or More SSI/SSDI Recipients

PHA SIZE	PHA UNITS	VOUCHERS
Large	6,605 (31%)	12,971 (31%)
Medium	1,107 (28%)	2,392 (34%)
Small	241 (24%)	335 (33%)
Total	7,953 (30%)	15,698 (31%)

APPENDIX D (continued)

Summary Table 4. PHA Applications to HUD Mainstream Voucher Program

PHA Size	Did Not Apply	Applied & Did Not Receive	Applied & Received	Percentage of Applying PHAs Receiving Vouchers	Total Vouchers Received
Large	6	3	5	63%	425
Medium	17	3	2	40%	85
Small	4	3	1	25%	150
Total	27	9	8	47%	660

Summary Table 5. Waiting Lists and Priority for Persons with Disabilities

PHA SIZE	PERCENTAGE GIVING PUBLIC HOUSING WAITING LIST PRIORITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	PERCENTAGE GIVING VOUCHER WAITING LIST PRIORITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Large	42%	57%
Medium	25%	30%
Small	10%	43%

Summary Table 6. Units and Vouchers Reserved for Persons with Disabilities

PHA SIZE	PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS RESERVED FOR NON-ELDERLY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ONLY	PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS RESERVED FOR ELDERLY OR NON-ELDERLY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	VOUCHERS RESERVED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Large	42 (.2%)	1704 (8%)	1608 (4%)
Medium	26 (.7%)	247 (6%)	348 (7%)
Small	0 (0%)	115 (11%)	150 (15%)
Total	68 (.3%)	2066 (8%)	2203 (4%)