

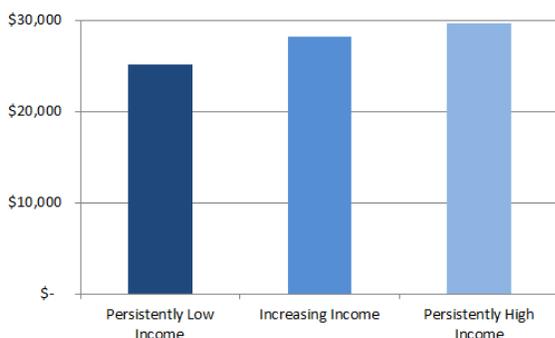
Abt Associates’ report, conducted in partnership with the Furman Center at NYU and to be released in the spring of 2015, used both quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine how the socioeconomic makeup of neighborhoods surrounding New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments and recent changes in that makeup affect public housing residents’ quality of life.

Prior research has resulted in mixed findings on the effects of neighborhood change for low-income individuals. In the 1990s the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration project found no statistically significant effects on socioeconomic or educational outcomes. However, a recent follow-up evaluation found differences in outcomes related to the age at which children move to higher-income neighborhoods, with impacts on college attendance and earnings for children who moved before age 13.¹

In this study, Abt finds statistically significant differences in earnings for NYCHA residents living in different neighborhood types. Annual household earnings average \$4,500 higher for public housing residents in persistently high-income neighborhoods as compared to persistently low-income neighborhoods. Earnings are \$3,000 higher for those in increasing income neighborhoods. Moreover, these findings are not attributable to any selection bias of residents choosing to live in either persistently high or low income neighborhoods.

Simultaneously the qualitative analysis, which engaged NYCHA residents as key research partners, found several cross-cutting themes regarding neighborhood effects. While some NYCHA residents in persistently high and increasing income neighborhoods appreciate recent improvements to neighborhood parks and transit, they feel private market housing residents—and not NYCHA residents—are the impetus for and primary beneficiaries of the changes.

Median Earned Household Income for NYCHA Residents by Neighborhood Type

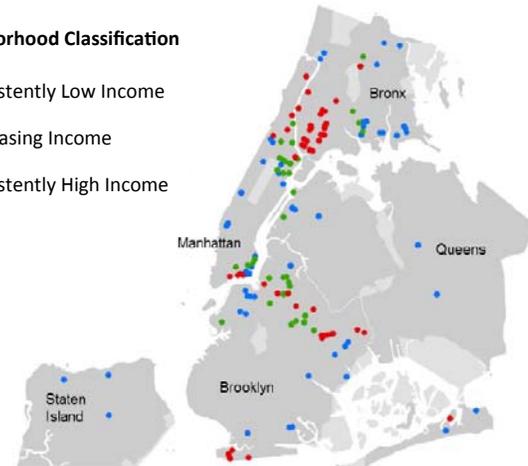


Neighborhood Classifications

Map of NYCHA developments in citywide quantitative analysis by surrounding neighborhood classification

Neighborhood Classification

- Persistently Low Income
- Increasing Income
- Persistently High Income



Source: Forthcoming Abt Associates Report “The Effect of Neighborhood Change on NYCHA Residents”

Neighborhoods surrounding NYCHA developments were separated into three different classifications.² These classifications compared neighborhood household incomes to the NYC median in 1990 (\$51,898), 2000 (\$53,427), and 2010 (\$50,256).³

- **Persistently low-income** neighborhoods are those with average household income below the NYC median in 1990, 2000, and 2010
- **Increasing income** neighborhoods are those with average household income below the median in either 1990 or 2000 but above the city median in 2010
- **Persistently high-income** neighborhoods are those with average household incomes above city median in each of the three years

Notes:

²In unclassified neighborhoods, NYCHA units made up fewer than 70% of units in the block group. For these developments, neighborhood indicators could not be adequately distinguished from NYCHA resident outcomes.

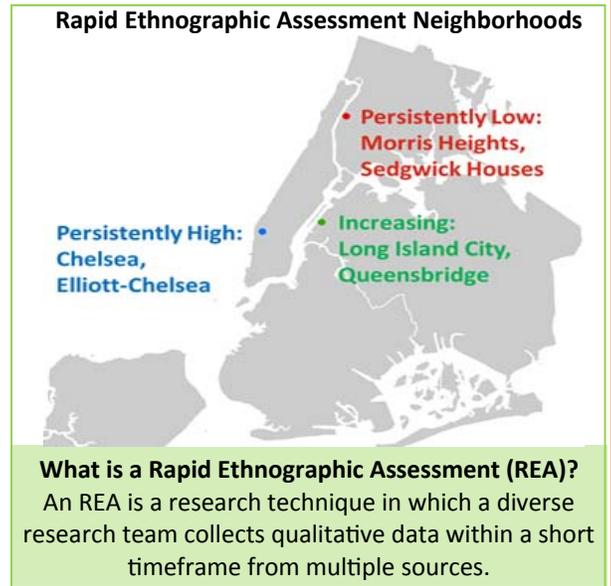
³The NYC-wide median income is used for comparison as an intuitive reference resulting in comparably sized groups of neighborhood types. The evaluators used average incomes for classifications as the surrounding neighborhood average can be calculated by combining data from the multiple census block groups.

CEO evaluates programs implemented in partnership with City agencies and releases an annual Poverty Measure Report with detailed insights into the scope of poverty and impact of public policy across NYC. This report marks the first time CEO has sought to answer a stand-alone research question.

¹Sources: Sanbonmatsu et al.’s National Bureau of Economic Research 2011 *Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program: Final Impacts Evaluation* and Chetty et al.’s Harvard University 2015 *The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment*.

Methodology:

The qualitative portion of this study was conducted as community-based participatory research—leveraging the perspectives of community members and engaging them as key research partners. Abt Associates partnered with three community-based organizations (CBOs) to hire NYCHA residents as Community Ethnographers (CEs) in neighborhoods representing each of the classifications from the quantitative analysis: Bronx-Works in Morris Heights (a persistently low-income neighborhood), Urban Upbound in Long Island City (an increasing-income neighborhood), and Hudson Guild in Chelsea (a persistently high-income neighborhood). The CEs in each location collaborated with the Abt team to conduct Rapid Ethnographic Assessments (REAs) of these neighborhoods, bringing their personal histories, connections, and understanding of their neighborhood to the research and adding vital perspectives that shaped the research throughout the project.



REAs By the Numbers:	3	7	42	6	10	23
	Neighborhood Walking Tours	Photo-based neighborhood amenity inventories	Instances of public space observation and on-the-spot interviews	Focus groups of NYCHA residents and other community members	Key stakeholder interviews	NYCHA household interviews

Key Findings:

Neighborhood Experiences

- Two-thirds of NYCHA residents live in public housing developments surrounded by either increasing or persistently high-income neighborhoods.
- The NYCHA campus was residents' primary reference point for "community" within the neighborhood.
- NYCHA residents in LIC and Chelsea report feeling disparities with their surrounding neighborhoods that affect connectivity.

Public Safety

- Developments surrounded by persistently high-income neighborhoods have lower violent crime rates (5.7 violent crimes per 1,000 residents) than those surrounded by persistently low-income neighborhoods (8.3 violent crimes per 1,000 residents).
- Crime remains a pressing concern, particularly for residents of Queensbridge Houses. Residents expressed appreciation for the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, newly launched in July 2014, which aims to reduce violence in and around NYCHA developments.

Education

- Developments in persistently high-income neighborhoods are zoned for public elementary schools with higher standardized test scores than developments in persistently low-income neighborhoods; 72% of NYCHA households in low-income neighborhoods are zoned for schools in the bottom quartile for math proficiency (cf. 41% for those in high-income neighborhoods).
- Among public elementary and middle school students living in NYCHA housing, those living in developments surrounded by persistently high—and increasing—income neighborhoods score higher on standardized math and reading tests.

Employment and Training

- NYCHA residents in all 3 neighborhoods report frustration by lack of local job opportunities.
- Residents report a lack of opportunities for young people, especially of enrichment and skill-building programs.

Affordability

- Price and quality of groceries a common problem.
- Residents and stakeholders expressed a strong need for community organizations and improved retail but were pessimistic that resources will be available for them.
- For NYCHA residents in Chelsea, rising costs for goods and services in the surrounding neighborhood can feel like pressure to leave even when rents remain affordable.