An evaluation of the Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling housing mobility program

Carlos G. Moreno

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AN EVALUATION OF THE INLAND EMPIRE REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY COUNSELING HOUSING MOBILITY PROGRAM

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

By
Carlos G. Moreno
June 2000
AN EVALUATION OF THE INLAND EMPIRE REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY
COUNSELING HOUSING MOBILITY PROGRAM

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Counseling Program
ABSTRACT

In order to remedy complaints filed against the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) relative to the agency's failure to provide opportunities for self-sufficiency to Section 8 tenants, HUD has developed several housing mobility programs. One type of program is the Regional Opportunity Counseling program. Local housing authorities, in collaboration with non-profit organizations, have utilized this program in order to address the needs of Section 8 tenants residing in their service areas.

The Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling (IEROC) housing mobility program provides services to Section 8 rental assistance tenants desiring to relocate from high poverty to low poverty areas within Riverside County. The purpose of this exploratory research was to determine if services provided by the IEROC Program assisted tenants in securing suitable housing in low poverty areas and in remaining in their new neighborhoods. A random sample of relocated tenants in Riverside County were interviewed regarding their level of satisfaction with the services provided by the IEROC Program. Both qualitative and quantitative data was obtained during structured face to
face interviews and telephone interviews with members of the sample group. A sample of landlords participating in the program was also surveyed to determine if they were satisfied with the potential tenants referred to them by the IEROC Program and with services provided to them, the landlords, by the program. The implications for social work practice is that this research attempted to identify the scope and nature of assistance needed by Section 8 rental assistance tenants striving to obtain improved housing opportunities and gain self-sufficiency.
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To Margaret Spencer, Suzanne Haigh, Paula Jones, and Carol Skinner - thank you for your continuous support and encouragement. To my best friend, Leonard Femons, thanks for helping me prioritize my goals and encouraging me to persevere during difficult times.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the early 1980's, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) implemented a series of housing mobility programs in order to assist low-income poor families obtain suitable housing in low poverty neighborhoods. This occurred in response to numerous lawsuits and complaints of systematic discrimination and segregation filed against HUD by advocates for Section 8 tenants. The programs developed were identified as Section 8 rental assistance mobility programs. These programs were designed to broaden the scope of housing alternatives and to encourage Section 8 tenants to explore the possibility of obtaining housing in the private sector as opposed to public housing. Instead of providing housing developers subsidies as an incentive to build housing for the poor, which in many cases eventually become tenements (housing projects), the government chose to issue rental certificates and vouchers to Section 8 tenants (Varady & Walker, 1999). These vouchers and certificates could be used for obtaining housing in the private sector instead of strictly in public housing. This was determined to be a way of lessening the possibility of these tenants selecting housing located in areas plagued
with poverty and also as a way to reduce the concentration of inner city poverty. According to Cisneros (1996), "the most extreme poverty in America is now found in geographically isolated, economically oppressed, and racially segregated inner cities and older declining suburbs. Inner cities have become warehouses of America's poorest citizens."

In those areas with established concentrations of low-income housing tenements, a myriad of social conditions exists that allows poverty to proliferate. High unemployment rates, rampant crime, and inadequate educational opportunities for children are very prevalent in these areas. For the most part, families are held hostage in their neighborhoods due to the scarcity of resources and limited opportunities available to escape the cycle of poverty. Conditions endemic to urban clusters of poverty make it virtually impossible for families residing in these areas to obtain self-sufficiency (Cisneros, 1996; Turner, 1998).

Critics of the Section 8 rental assistance program have consistently accused HUD of purposely stratifying people based on their income and race. Among the programs that were developed to ameliorate the issues of stratification and inadequate access to housing in low poverty neighborhoods
are the following: (1) programs established and funded by the settlement of litigation against HUD by individual housing authorities nationwide, (2) Moving to Opportunity Programs (MOP)—a research program that studied the effects of moving low income tenants to low poverty communities, (3) Vacancy Consolidation programs—an assistance program for tenants who were forced to move due to the demolition of buildings where they resided, (4) Regional Opportunity Counseling (ROC) programs—programs that promote collaboration between regional entities to provide access to improved housing for Section 8 tenants, and (5) other programs developed by local housing authorities without any funding or oversight by HUD (Turner & Williams, 1998).

Problem Focus

This study was exploratory in nature and aimed at determining which services provided by the IEROC program assisted the tenants in securing their housing and helped them remain in their residence and in the new neighborhood. The study also attempted to determine if services being provided to participating landlords helped increase landlord and tenant participation in the program. The results of this research study will also provide data that may be used by the IEROC Program administrators as part of a comprehensive.
program evaluation of the overall program.

Section 8 tenants who relocated to low poverty areas in Riverside County and who were able to remain in their residence for a minimum of one year were interviewed for this research study. The services which the IEROC Program provided Section 8 tenants who chose to participate in the program included the following: (1) notification and eligibility determination, (2) home visits and screening, (3) Section 8 and mobility program briefings, (4) housing search assistance, (5) landlord outreach, (6) assistance with negotiations and paperwork, (7) pre-move and post-move assistance and counseling, and (8) initial transportation to homes available as rental units. Other services provided by the IEROC Program included case management services that helped tenants address health, educational, and employment issues. A very important goal of the program was to assist families in accessing other services that could strengthen their chances of obtaining family empowerment and eventual self-sufficiency.

Among the services provided to the landlords by the IEROC Program were the following: (1) educating the landlords about the Section 8 program, (2) pre-screening of prospective tenants (3) mediating disputes between the
landlord and tenant, (4) providing follow up services to ensure that the tenant and landlord have established a good working relationship, and (5) visiting the tenants to ensure that the property is being appropriately maintained.

The data used to analyze the effectiveness of the services provided by the IEROC Program to Section 8 tenants was obtained through face to face interviews held with the tenants in their homes or through telephone interviews. The tenants were given the opportunity to choose the method (home visit or telephone interview) by which he/she was interviewed. The family member designated on the Section 8 program application form as the head of the household was the person interviewed for this study. Section 8 certificates and vouchers are typically issued to head of households. A random sample was obtained from the program database that contained the names of tenants that relocated to low poverty areas in Riverside County and who had maintained their residences for a minimum of one year. The study sample was representative of the ethnic/racial composition of the IEROC Program caseload.

The data utilized to ascertain the landlords' level of satisfaction with the services provided to them by the IEROC Program was obtained through mail surveys.
The results and findings of this research study may change social work practice in the agency administering the program, or in general, by bringing attention to the plight of Section 8 tenants and by reinforcing the importance of involving the tenant in his/her case plan. Another implication for social work practice is that the research may provide a conceptual framework of the nature and scope of services that Section 8 tenants need in order to transition successfully into non-rental assistance lifestyles. The IEROC Program strongly encourages tenants to exercise their right to self-determination by facilitating choice making and nurturing empowerment. The program guides the tenants as they make informed and meaningful decisions about their futures. Participation in the program is strictly voluntary and Section 8 tenants are not penalized or ostracized for choosing not to participate. Section 8 tenants are not denied or disqualified from receiving rental assistance as a result of refusing to utilize IEROC Program services.

A second benefit derived from this study is educating and elucidating the general public and critics of rental and mobility assistance program about their shortsightedness. It is not uncommon for critics of these programs to generalize
that people residing in poverty-stricken areas choose to live in these areas and do not aspire to improve their environment or quality of life. Regardless of what critics claim, residential location has a direct and significant impact on the availability of jobs, educational opportunities, access to health care, and other issues that can affect an individual's ability to improve their living conditions and obtain self-sufficiency (Cisneros, 1996; Himelfarb, 1997; Ladd & Ludwig, 1997; Turner, 1998). With the implementation of Welfare to Work programs and the cutting back in social welfare programs for the poor, it is only a matter of time before Section 8 rental assistance is seen as just another social welfare program that needs to be revamped or totally eliminated. Should this occur, a disproportionate number of low-income and/or poor families will find themselves facing a multiplicity of factors contributing to their plight and one less resource available to help them obtain self-sufficiency and escape the cycle of poverty.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Section 8 tenant rental assistance program was established by the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act. The program's goal was to assist low income families obtain "decent, safe, and sanitary private-market housing units" (Cage, 1994). A careful review of federal housing policy, including the Section 8 program, indicated that historically this policy has contributed to the increase and concentration of poverty that exists in many of America's urban areas. Moving low-income families out of these areas through Section 8 rental assistance and mobility programs in order to de-concentrate poverty is not the answer; however, it may be a step in the right direction. The Clinton administration firmly supports the Section 8 program and housing mobility programs. The administration considers these programs to be a form of social justice for the poor (Himelfarb, 1997).

In a recent study of housing mobility, Hanley, et al. (1994) discovered that there have been no comprehensive or systematic analyses of the mobility experience as it relates to the Section 8 program and affordable housing initiatives. As stated previously, the IEROC Program is relatively new and a comprehensive evaluation of the program has not been
conducted.

Issues related to Section 8 tenants such as homelessness, soaring unemployment rates, high crime rates, excessive poverty rates, increasing numbers of single parent (usually female) head of households, inadequate access to health services, poor nutrition, and low academic school performance for children attending schools in high poverty neighborhoods, just to name a few, have been previously studied from several perspectives. The IEROC Program has not had an opportunity to fully examine how the issues noted above affect the program's clientele -- Section 8 relocated tenants and their families. There is an increasing amount of evidence obtained from social science research that suggests that housing mobility can significantly improve the quality of life for poor people (Cisneros, 1996; Himelfarb, 1997; Ladd & Ludwig, 1997; Turner, 1998).

Section 8 tenants are usually minority low-income and/or poor families. Low income and poor people living in concentrated areas of poverty have been the subject of studies conducted by researchers from several academic disciplines. Previous research on HUD's Experimental Housing Allowance Program revealed that without special counseling regarding mobility, Section 8 tenants usually did not move
far from their neighborhoods nor sought to improve their living conditions (Stebbins & Siewart, 1995; Varady and Walker, 1999). Other research revealed that while both liberals and conservatives support moving disadvantaged families into the private housing sector, these same individuals are reluctant to support moving families into racially and economically diverse neighborhoods (Ladd & Ludwig, 1997; Sowell, 1997). Briggs, Darden, and Aidala (1999) conducted a study that was supported by The Ford Foundation and HUD. The study determined that the success of mobility and desegregation programs depends on the local residents of the neighborhoods, and most importantly their community leaders, choosing the type of future they want for themselves and their willingness to accommodate change.

A variety of theories have emerged as a result of previous studies and research conducted on low income poor people. These theories may also apply to Section 8 tenants. There are those researchers that utilize the equilibrium theory to explain why concentrated areas of poverty maintain their homeostasis. Homeostasis is maintained in poverty stricken neighborhoods when poor people fill the voids (available housing) that are created by individuals who have left high poverty areas and relocated to low poverty areas.
Thus high poverty areas, operating as systems, maintain their equilibrium when the cycle of poverty continues unimpaired and unbroken (Applebaum, 1970). This also results in the propagation of residentially segregated areas where change is oftentimes unwelcome and undesired. A culture of poverty persists within these areas with its own set of rules that are used to organize, understand, and rationalize the view of the world and interpret reality. It is important that advocates for Section 8 and housing mobility programs examine whether relocated tenants will be able to view and accept their new environment, as well as adapt to it, with a world view that is different from the one to which they were previously accustomed. A second issue that warrants consideration is whether any changes occurring in low poverty neighborhoods due to the presence of relocated Section 8 tenants can be eventually reconciled so that the neighborhoods can revert back to their own original homeostatic state.

Research conducted by Rosenbaum, Popkin, Kaufman, and Rusin (1991) indicated that a majority of whites support the concept of racial integration 'in principle' but have resisted governmental intervention in promoting integration. One primary concern voiced by opponents of government
imposed integration is that their neighborhoods would decline and deteriorate due to the presence of low-income tenants. They further state that the stability of their neighborhoods will be jeopardized due to low-income tenants transmitting social problems common to low income neighborhoods into their neighborhoods (Hanley, et al., 1994; Himelfarb, 1997). Incidents of harassment and violence against Section 8 tenants have been used as forms of retaliation by non-accepting neighbors. One theory that could be used to guide a study focusing on harassment, intimidation, and non-acceptance of relocated tenants is the social support network theory.

The social support theory operates on the premise that having a social network system available may "provide the individual with the emotional, tangible, or informational support necessary to resolve or eliminate psychosocial problems" caused by external factors such as harassment (Auslander and Litwin, p. 308). A comprehensive IEROC Program evaluation should contain a component that would attempt to measure the amount of support the tenants received or are in need of receiving in order for them to maintain their relocation to unfamiliar and in some instances non-accepting neighborhoods. Emotional or social
support could be obtained from friendly and accepting neighbors within the new neighborhood, other tenants relocated to the same or immediate neighborhoods, friends and family members residing in their former neighborhoods, or from IEROC staff members assigned to their case. According to Auslander and Litwin (1987), the benefits derived from belonging to a social network may assist individuals in maintaining a healthy and positive attitude towards different populations and vicissitudinal situations that they may encounter in unfamiliar surroundings and within a different cultural context.

The strengths perspective theory is another theory that can be utilized to study low-income and poor people, as well as Section 8 tenants. This theory emphasizes the need to focus on a person's individual strengths, rather than on their weaknesses, when providing assistance to Section 8 tenants. The person's strengths should be nurtured so that they can be used as coping mechanisms and as incentives to persevere in difficult situations such as non-accepting neighborhoods. If possible, a comprehensive program evaluation of housing mobility programs should determine whether the individual(s) who coordinated the relocation effort relied on the tenants' strengths in order to convince
and encourage them to relocate and remain in their new neighborhoods. It should also be determined to what extent is it necessary to continue nurturing the tenants' strengths once the relocation process has been completed.

The empowerment theory operates under the premise that society has failed to meet the needs of some of its members; therefore, those individuals whose needs were not met must be engaged into action to reduce powerlessness (Crewe, 1994). By engaging Section 8 tenants in each step of the mobility process, including allowing them to select the home to which they will be relocated, the tenants are able to regain some of the power they believe they have lost in other areas of their lives. The more choices that tenants are allowed to make during the mobility process the more empowered they perceive themselves. Empowerment is essential and fundamental to becoming self-sufficient, which is one of the desired end results of the IEROC housing mobility program.

The debate over the merits of having Section 8 housing mobility programs will surely continue as other social programs are scrutinized for effectiveness. Nonetheless, housing mobility programs are currently receiving bipartisan support from several legislators (Cisneros, 1996; Himelfarb,
According to Turner and Williams (1998), it is imperative that these programs provide concrete evidence that they are having significant, positive, long term, and measurable effects on the population that they are serving. Mobility initiatives such as the IEROC Program are responsible for demonstrating to the media and to policy makers that desired results have been obtained. ROC programs are responsible for developing and maintaining performance measurements and accountability in order to monitor their successes or failures. Mobility programs are designed to empower families to make choices about their future and the future of their children. When analyzing the benefits of these programs, it would be beneficial to measure individual empowerment; however, this may not be possible. Turner and Williams (1998) believe that developing and operationalizing measures for empowerment is extremely difficult to accomplish.

The literature review indicates that relocating Section 8 families from high poverty to low poverty areas may help these families as they attempt to become self-sufficient. Providing these families services such as those offered by the IEROC Program may help Section 8 tenants overcome some of the barriers that hinder their ability to obtain suitable
housing, gain economic independence, and cast off the negative stigmatization attached to Section 8 tenants. The data obtained from this research study should support the theory that the quality of life for Section 8 tenants who have relocated to low poverty area will improve as compared to the quality of life in their former neighborhoods.
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the service delivery system of the local Regional Opportunity Counseling housing mobility program known as the Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling (IEROC) Program. This program is tasked with providing services to Section 8 rental assistance tenants residing in Riverside County and San Bernardino County which will assist them in obtaining and sustaining housing in low poverty neighborhoods. Due to the fairly recent implementation of the program in San Bernardino County, an evaluation of services being provided to Section 8 tenants in that county was not conducted at this time.

The IEROC Program is also tasked with recruiting landlords who own or manage rental properties in low poverty areas and who had been reluctant in the past to rent their rental units to Section 8 tenants. By increasing the number of landlords who are willing to rent to Section 8 tenants, program administrators hope to increase the number of rental units available for prospective IEROC tenants.

It was important to evaluate the program in Riverside County at this time because the program is still relatively
new, having been in existence for approximately two years. The program administrators were interested in determining if the services provided by the program have helped Section 8 tenants relocate successfully and adjust satisfactorily to their new environment. It is important to understand the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the program in order to abandon those strategies and/or services that may not be yielding desired results. The research study was also aimed at identifying services that may need enhancement, refinement, or expansion so that other Section 8 tenants interested in relocating to low poverty areas may utilize these services more effectively. Data obtained as a result of this study can also be used as a guideline for improving and implementing the service delivery system in San Bernardino County. Another purpose of this study was to obtain data that could be used while conducting a comprehensive program evaluation of the IEROC Program.

A second reason for studying the effectiveness of the IEROC program at this time was because successful housing mobility opportunities are contingent on the establishing of effective partnerships within the receiving communities as well as with local social services organizations. These organizations may have resources available that could
supplement the needs of relocated Section 8 tenants.
Regional and local ROC programs are strongly urged by HUD to develop collaborative partnerships with other resources in the community in order to strengthen the voice of those individuals trapped by poverty and segregation (Turner & Williams, 1998).

The research methodology for this study was directed towards developing new theories about Section 8 relocated tenants. This researcher attempted to conduct the research without relying on preconceived notions and ideas that could influence data gathering and interpretation. The data collection process was designed to produce systematic and reliable data, utilizing the exploratory, one-group post-test only design. One item in the research questionnaire asked the research subjects to recall and rate the quality of life in their former neighborhoods. A second question asked the subjects to rate the quality of life in their new neighborhoods. The first question required a retrospective response which could be considered to approximate pre-test, post-test difference. The primary unit of analysis for the study was the IEROC Program tenant participant because the relocated tenant provided the information needed to determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the
services provided by the IEROC Program. The landlords participating in the study were a secondary unit of analysis because the information they provided was used as supplemental data.

Research Question

The research question for this study was defined as follows: Have the IEROC Program services provided to Section 8 tenants helped them relocate from high poverty areas to low poverty areas? The study will also examine whether those tenants who have relocated successfully have been able to remain in their new neighborhood. As previously noted, landlords participating in the program were also surveyed; however, the data they supplied was used to supplement the data obtained from the tenants participating in the program. The primary focus of the study was on tenant satisfaction levels, not on landlord satisfaction. The research question focused on and explored a subject matter that little is known about--relocated Section 8 tenants residing in Riverside County. The data obtained in this study may spark interest in further research that could generate other useful data pertaining to Section 8 tenants, the IEROC Program, and other housing mobility programs.
Sampling

The research population consisted of 15 Section 8 tenants who had participated in the IEROC Program and were considered to be on the active case management caseload. The tenants must have relocated to low poverty neighborhoods within Riverside County and must have remained in their rental unit for at least one year. Low poverty areas versus high poverty areas were determined by official census tract information provided by the Economic Development Agency of Riverside County. The sample consisted of five tenants from each of the following racial/ethnic groups: (1) Caucasian/White, (2) Hispanic/Latino, and (3) Black/African American. A fourth category that would have included tenants from other racial/ethnic groups such as Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, etc., was not used due to the low number of eligible program participants in that group. A stratified random sample was used in this research study.

The sampling strategy had inherent limitations in that the desired sample group for each of the three racial Black/African American tenants were over-represented on the program caseload and Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native American, etc., were significantly under represented. A second limitation was that some members of the sample group
were not receptive to being interviewed for a variety of reasons. The reasons ranged from being "too busy" to "feeling ill". Some tenant research subjects did not respond to repeated telephone calls requesting that they contact this researcher in order to schedule an interview. In order to obtain an acceptable research sample, the stratified random sampling process was utilized until each group contained the desired number (five) of research subjects.

Five landlords who had rented housing in Riverside County to Section 8 IEROC Program participants were randomly selected as research subjects for this study. The data obtained from these research subjects was used to supplement the data obtained from the tenant research subjects.

Instruments and Data Collection

The measuring instruments used for this research study consisted of two questionnaires, one for the tenant research subjects and second one for the landlord research subjects. The questions contained in each of the questionnaires were tailored specifically for each of the two respondent groups. Section 8 tenant research subjects responded verbally during a visit to their residences or during telephone contact. Tenant research subjects were asked to respond to a survey questionnaire that contained 12 close-ended questions and 11
open-ended questions (Appendix A). A Likert scale containing six response choices was utilized for the closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions were used in order to give the research subjects an opportunity to provide information that was not elicited through the structured (closed-ended) interview questions. Prior to interviewing the tenant research subjects, a letter was mailed to them in advance informing them that they had been selected to participate in the research sample. The letter also informed them that they had a choice to be interviewed at their home, by telephone, or to decline to participate in the research study (Appendix B). A subsequent telephone call was placed in order to schedule a home visit or to conduct the telephone interview at that time. Research tenant subject responses were manually recorded on a standardized interview form. A Debriefing Statement was provided to all tenant research subjects who participated in the research study (Appendix C).

Landlord research participants responded to a mail survey that consisted of five close-ended questions. A Likert scale with six response choices was utilized for the close-ended questions. The questionnaire form contained an "Additional comments" section for landlords to include any
additional information that they considered to be important but was not addressed in the close-ended questions (Appendix D). A letter was attached to the questionnaire informing the landlords that they could decline to participate in the study (Appendix E). The landlords' responses were recorded by the landlords on their questionnaire forms. The landlords were instructed to mail the questionnaire back to the IEROC Program office. A self-addressed stamped envelope was attached to the questionnaire to facilitate the return of the questionnaire.

The two measuring instruments used for this research study contained content validity in that the questionnaires were composed of questions that addressed the variables of interest. The primary variable under consideration for this study was the level of satisfaction that IEROC Program relocated tenants obtained as a result of receiving services from the IEROC program. The content validity was enhanced by having two IEROC staff members who are program experts review the questions that were included in the questionnaire. Both the qualitative and quantitative sections of the questionnaires were consistent in addressing the variables that were being studied.

The research study was conducted in a culturally
sensitive manner. The majority of questions in the questionnaires were worded in simple language so that they could be easily understood by both tenant and landlord respondents. Research subjects who requested to be interviewed in Spanish were accommodated.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

The primary dependent variable for this research study was the level of IEROC Program participant satisfaction with the services provided by the IEROC Program. A secondary dependent variable was the level of landlord satisfaction with the services provided to them by the IEROC program. The only independent variable in this study was "time". This variable was studied as it pertained to the relocated tenants' quality of life prior to their relocation and after their relocation. The following outcomes were studied in relationship to their impact on the primary dependent variable: (1) written information provided, (2) verbal information provided, (3) explanations provided, (4) assigned case manager, (5) case manager assistance, (6) pre-move counseling, (7) post-move counseling, (8) housing obtained, (9) new neighborhood, (10) acceptance into the neighborhood, (11) quality of life in the former neighborhood, and (12) quality of life in the new
neighborhood. The outcomes studied in relationship to the secondary dependent variable were the following: (1) written information provided, (2) verbal information provided, (3) referral of prospective tenants, (4) assistance provided by IEROC staff members concerning tenants, and (5) overall services provided by the IEROC program.

IEROC tenant satisfaction, an ordinal measurement, was measured using a six point Likert scale. "Very Satisfied" was the category at one end of the satisfaction continuum; "Very Unsatisfied" was the category at the opposite end of the continuum. Numbers were assigned to each response category contained in the Likert scale. The content analysis of the open-ended questions was conducted by grouping the responses according to shared themes or similar categories. The number of similar responses in each category were then counted.
RESULTS

Demographic Description of Sample

The research sample consisted of 15 heads of households who had participated in the IEROC Program for a minimum of one year, and had been relocated to low poverty neighborhoods within Riverside County. Five of these heads of households were of Black/African American descent, five were of Hispanic/Latino descent, and the last five were of Caucasian/White descent. Two out of the 15 heads of households were male although gender was not considered to be a relevant variable for this study. Two heads of households were interviewed in Spanish at their request. The primary language of the respondents was not considered to be a relevant variable for this study.

Eleven tenant subjects were interviewed in their homes and four subjects were interviewed by telephone. The tenant research subjects were asked to respond to each of the 12 close-ended questions contained in the interview questionnaire. The response options were contained on a Likert scale developed for this study. The options available for the closed-ended questions were as follows: (6) Very Satisfied, (5) Satisfied, (4) Somewhat Satisfied, (3) Somewhat Dissatisfied, (2) Dissatisfied, and (1) Very
Dissatisfied. For the open-ended questions, the subjects were allowed to respond utilizing a word, phrase, sentence, or elaborate further if necessary.

Landlord research subjects were asked to respond to five closed-ended questions contained in a questionnaire that was mailed to them. The Likert scale developed for the tenant responses was also utilized for landlord responses. The landlords' questionnaires also had a section labeled "Additional comments" which they could use to include other information.

Frequency distributions were generated to provide descriptive statistics, including univariate statistics, for the quantitative data obtained from the tenant research subjects (Table 1 and Figure 1). Table 1 reports the standard deviations and mean scores for the outcomes measured in questions one through twelve. Figure 1 is a box plot of the tenants' level of satisfaction with the outcomes measured in questions one through ten. Comparing the tenants' quality of life in their former neighborhoods and the tenants' quality of life in their new neighborhoods was accomplished by using a repeated measures t-test. The magnitude of the difference in responses to questions eleven
and twelve are reflected and graphically compared in Figure 2.

The qualitative data was summarized in order to categorize subject responses into groups of common themes. Regarding the landlord data obtained for this study, the data collection process utilized for the research tenants was also used for the collection of landlord data. Four out of five landlords returned their questionnaires for this study.

Table 1: Frequency Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanations</td>
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<td>Pre-Move Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Move Counseling</td>
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<td>1.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Into Neighborhood</td>
<td>5.0667</td>
<td>0.5936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1

Levels of Satisfaction
Figure 2. Pre-Moved and Post-Move Satisfaction
Tenant Research Subjects Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from questions one through twelve of the tenant research questionnaires indicated that a majority of relocated Section 8 IEROC Program participants were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the services that they obtained from the program (Table 2). At the same time, there were a few research findings that warrant attention. One service, post-move counseling, received a few (two) low ratings. One respondent stated that he/she was Very Dissatisfied with the neighborhood in which his/her new rental home was located. A very interesting finding was that nine research tenant subjects stated that they were Very Dissatisfied with the quality of life in their former neighborhoods. These same nine tenants stated that they were Very Satisfied with the quality of life in the new neighborhoods to which they had been relocated.
An analysis for the quality of life questions (numbers eleven and twelve) was obtained by a repeated measures t-test. The following statistics were obtained: mean difference=3.667; correlated t=-8.472; p<.001.

**Tenant Survey Response Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Statistically</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Case Mgr.</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Manager Asst.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Move</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Move</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life (Former Nbrhood)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life (New Nbrhood)</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the following eleven open-ended questions, the responses provided by the research subjects were grouped into the top three categories that share common themes. A statistical analysis of the data was not conducted.

**Question One:** What services provided to you by the IEROC program do you feel helped you the most in relocating?
Responses - (a) 53% responded that the advocacy by the case manager with the landlord, (b) 33% responded the selection of housing made available, and © 14% responded the assistance with paperwork related to relocating.

Question Two: What service provided to you by the program do you feel helped you the least in relocating or had minimal impact on your relocation efforts? Responses - 67% of the research subjects stated that they did not have a response to this question. It is this researcher's opinion that this question was not worded correctly and should have been deleted from the research questionnaire. 33% of the respondents stated that they could not give an opinion regarding services that they had not utilized.

Question Three: What can the IEROC program do to improve the services it provided you? Responses - (a) 47% responded that no improvements were needed in any of the services, (b) 33% responded that assistance should be available to help them obtain the rental security deposit needed in order to relocate, and © 20% responded that case managers should "check out" the homes and neighborhoods before referring the clients to certain areas of Riverside County.
Question Four: What more do you think your IEROC case manager should have done to help you relocate? Responses - (a) 87% responded that their assigned case manager had helped them with every aspect of the relocation process and therefore they were unable to respond to this question and (b) 13% responded that their case manager should have provided them assistance in obtaining their rental security deposit.

Question Five: Has your participation in the IEROC Program made a difference in the tenant-landlord relationship that you may have with your current landlord? If it has, how? 73% subjects responded "Yes" and 27% responded "No". Responses - (a) 60% responded that a friendlier relationship existed between tenant and landlord, (b) 20% responded that a "more trusting" relationship existed between them and the with landlord, and (3) 20% responded that the landlord was more attentive to the tenants' concerns regarding the rental unit.

Question Six: Is the crime rate in your new neighborhood higher, lower or about the same as in your previous neighborhood? Responses - 80% of the subjects responded that the crime rate was lower, 13% responded higher, and 7% responded about the same.
Question Seven: If you have children attending school, are the schools in your new neighborhood better, worse, or about the same as in your previous neighborhood? Responses - 73% of the subjects responded better, 13% responded about the same, and 7% did not have a response.

Question Eight: Is your new neighborhood more ethnically diverse, less ethnically diverse, or about the same as in your previous neighborhood? Responses - 60% of the subjects responded more diverse, 20% responded less diverse, and 20% responded about the same.

Question Nine: Are the opportunities for employment in your new neighborhood better, worse, or about the same as in your new neighborhood? Responses - 60% of the subjects responded better, 7% responded worse, and 33% responded about the same.

Question Ten: How is the quality of life in your new neighborhood different from the quality of life in your former neighborhood? Responses - (a) 74% of the subjects responded that they were residing in a "better living environment" i.e., lower crime, better schools, less traffic, etc., (b) 13% responded that they were in contact with nicer people/neighbors, and (3) 13% responded that they
were living in a "better and safer atmosphere".

Question Eleven: How can the IEROC Program, as a whole, be improved to better serve those Section 8 tenants desiring to relocate from a high poverty area to a low poverty area? Responses - (a) 80% responded that there was a need for more publicity about the program, (b) 20% responded that more outreach to other Section 8 tenants was needed, and (3) 20% responded that a better screening process for prospective IEROC clients should be developed.

Landlord Research Subjects Data Analysis

Question One: How satisfied are you with the written information provided to you by IEROC representatives prior to utilizing the IEROC Program? 75% responded Very Satisfied and 25% responded Satisfied.

Question Two: How satisfied are you with the verbal information provided to you by IEROC representatives during landlord briefing session? 75% responded Very Satisfied and 25% responded Satisfied.

Question Three: How satisfied are you with the prospective tenants referred to you by IEROC staff members? 25% responded Very Satisfied and 75% responded Satisfied.

Question Four: How satisfied are you with the assistance provided to you when contacting IEROC staff
members to address concerns pertaining to tenants participating in the IEROC Program? 50% responded Very Satisfied and 50% responded Satisfied.

Question Five: How satisfied are you with the overall services provided to you by the IEROC staff members? 75% responded Very Satisfied and 25% responded Satisfied.
DISCUSSION

The findings of this research study revealed that the services being provided to Section 8 tenants by the IEROC Program have helped them relocate successfully from high poverty areas to low poverty areas. Since all the tenant research subjects were required to have lived in their residences for a minimum of one year, it can be surmised that Section 8 tenants have been able to sustain the housing they obtained with assistance from the IEROC Program. However, it was difficult to determine whether the tenants remained in their housing as a result of receiving follow-up services, such as post-move counseling, from IEROC staff members after the relocation process. A few of the tenants responded that they had not received post-move counseling and were surprised that someone associated with the program, this researcher, was contacting them. They further stated no one had contacted them for over one year.

Although the majority of tenant research tenants rated very highly the outcomes and services that they received from the IEROC Program, there were a few services that received low ratings. For example, and as previously mentioned, the post-move counseling service was rated Somewhat Dissatisfied by two tenants and Dissatisfied by one
tenant. The implications of these low ratings may be that some relocated tenants need specialized follow-up counseling to help them transition into new neighborhoods. A second implication may be that the tenants have become dependent on their assigned case manager and are reluctant to begin the process leading to self-sufficiency.

Another tenant responded that he/she was Very Dissatisfied with the new neighborhood in which his/her home was located. This tenant may not have realized that the neighborhood was considered to be a low poverty area regardless of the physical appearance of the neighborhood. It is also possible that some tenants may have unrealistic expectations regarding the areas to which they will be relocated.

The landlord data revealed that landlords were more receptive to accepting Section 8 tenants if the prospective tenants were participating in the IEROC Program. The services that the landlords mentioned as being the most helpful were the professionalism of the program staff members and the advocacy services available for them and the tenants.

The data obtained in this research study answered the primary research question and the secondary question. The
tenant research subjects responded that overall they were satisfied with the services provided to them by the IEROC Program and that the services helped them relocate from high poverty to low poverty neighborhoods. The landlords also responded that the services provided to them and to Section 8 tenants assisted the tenants in presenting themselves as desirable tenants.

This researcher had originally planned to obtain research data to determine if the IEROC Program had established effective partnerships with other social services agencies in Riverside County. HUD requires that Regional Opportunity Counseling programs link Section 8 tenants to other community resources that may help them achieve self-sufficiency. Due to confidentiality agreements that exist between Section 8 tenants and agencies that provide services to them, this area of interest was not pursued.
CONCLUSIONS

This research study revealed that it is possible for disenfranchised and marginalized populations, including Section 8 tenants, to overcome barriers that prevent them from becoming productive members of society. The sample sizes used for this study were small; however, the content validity of the measuring instruments may allow this researcher to generalize the research findings to other Section 8 IEROC Program tenant participants and landlords. Further research is warranted in order to study other outcomes that are associated with Section 8 tenants.

One interesting outcome that emerged during the study, and which was not intended to be an outcome of interest, was employment. Every tenant selected for the research sample was unemployed prior to participating in the IEROC Program and relocating to low poverty neighborhoods. One year later, and during the time that they were interviewed for this study, all research tenants were gainfully employment. It would be interesting to determine whether the relocation process helped raise the tenants' self esteem and thereby helped them pursue employment with a more positive attitude and more effective employment seeking strategies. Another factor that might have contributed to the tenants securing
employment was the implementation of Welfare to Work initiatives which limit the time period that families can receive governmental assistance commonly referred to as "welfare". A third factor to consider is whether relocating Section 8 tenants to neighborhoods where they perceive their quality of life to have improved provided them more opportunities for obtaining employment. The repeated measures analysis indicated that all of the research tenant participants stated that they were either Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the quality of life in their new neighborhoods. Further research may provide more insight into the relationships that may exist among the following three variables: employment, quality of life, and self-sufficiency.

The results of this study have provided a brief glimpse into the lives of Section 8 tenants who were determined to move to low poverty neighborhoods where opportunities for self-sufficiency may be available. One implication for social work practice is that some Section 8 tenants who desire to move to low poverty neighborhoods face legal and practical dilemmas, such as bad credit histories, criminal histories, and negative stereotypes that interfere with their ability to compete for suitable housing in low poverty
areas. Social workers can help these tenants by advocating on their behalf and linking them to community resources that will assist them in gaining self-sufficiency.
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR IEROC PROGRAM EVALUATION

Please respond to the following questions in the following manner:

6 = Very Satisfied
5 = Satisfied
4 = Somewhat Satisfied
3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
1 = Very Dissatisfied

1. How satisfied are you with the written information provided to you before choosing to participate in the IEROC program?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

2. How satisfied are you with the verbal information provided to you before choosing to participate in the IEROC program?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

3. How satisfied are you with explanations provided to you by IEROC staff in response to questions you may have had regarding services provided by the program?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

4. How satisfied are you with the individual assigned to you as the IEROC program case manager?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

5. How satisfied are you with the assistance provided to you by your assigned case manager?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

6. How satisfied are you with the pre-move counseling services provided to you by your assigned case manager?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

7. How satisfied are you with the post-move counseling services provided to you by your assigned case manager?

   6  5  4  3  2  1

8. How satisfied are you with the housing you obtained as a result of services provided to you by the IEROC program?

   6  5  4  3  2  1
9. How satisfied are you with the neighborhood in which your current home is located?
   6  5  4  3  2  1

10. How satisfied are you regarding your acceptance into the neighborhood by your neighbors?
    6  5  4  3  2  1

11. How satisfied were you with the overall quality of life in your former neighborhood?
    6  5  4  3  2  1

12. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of life in your new neighborhood?
    6  5  4  3  2  1

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What service provided to you by the IEROC program do you feel helped you the most in relocating?

2. What service provided to you by the program do you feel helped you the least in relocating or had minimal impact on your relocation efforts?

3. What can the IEROC program do to improve the services it provided you?

4. What more do you think your IEROC case manager should have done to help you relocate?

5. Has your participation in the IEROC program made a difference in the tenant-landlord? If it has, how?

6. Is the crime rate in your new neighborhood higher, lower, or about the same as in your previous neighborhood?

7. If you have children attending school, are the schools in your new neighborhood better, worse, or about the same as in your previous neighborhood?

8. Is your new neighborhood more ethnically diverse, less ethnically diverse, or about the same as in your previous neighborhood?

9. Are the opportunities for employment in your new neighborhood better, worse, or about the same as in your new neighborhood?

10. How is the quality of life in your new neighborhood different from the quality of life in your former neighborhood?

11. How can the IEROC program, as a whole, be improved to better serve those Sections 8 tenants desiring to relocate from a high poverty area to a low poverty area?
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF STAFF PARTICIPATION

Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling Program

A collaborative effort to increase affordable housing between
Housing Authority of the County of Riverside ▼ Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino ▼ Upland Housing Authority

600 N. Arrowhead Avenue, #100
San Bernardino, CA 92401
(909) 387-1122

Date

Dear IEROC Participant:

This letter is to inform you that you have been randomly selected to participate in a research study conducted by Carlos G. Moreno, a staff member of the IEROC program. Mr. Moreno is conducting a program evaluation of the IEROC program as part of a research project. The research has been approved by the Department of Social Work Subcommittee of the California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board. You are under no obligation to participate, although your participation would be deeply appreciated. If you decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the research study at anytime during the research process.

We would like to assure you that any information you provide Mr. Moreno will be kept in the strictest confidence. At no time will your identity be revealed to other IEROC staff members or any other agencies. Should you choose not to participate, this will not affect your status as an IEROC client or as a Section 8 rental assistance recipient. Any questions or concerns that you may have about the research can be directed to Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 880-5507. Mr. Moreno will be contacting you in the very near future to set up an interview with you. The interview process should not take longer than one hour. Mr. Moreno is willing to meet with you at your convenience, including on Saturdays and Sundays.

The IEROC program staff members would like to express their gratitude in advance for choosing to participate in this very important research project. The information you supply Mr. Moreno will assist us in providing you and other IEROC program participants the highest level of services which you are entitled to receive.

Sincerely yours;

Ocilla Wilson
IEROC Program Director
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling Program
A collaborative Effort to Increase Affordable Housing Between
Housing Authority of the County of Riverside ▼ Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino ▼ Upland Housing Authority

600 N. Arrowhead Avenue, #100
San Bernardino, CA 92401
(909) 387-1122

Volunteer Center of Greater Riverside
2060 University Avenue, Room 200
Riverside, CA 92507
(909) 686-4402 • FAX (909) 781-2737

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

You have participated in a research study. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the services that have been provided to you by the IEROC Program. The information that you have provided will be handled in the strictest of confidence. Your responses to the interview questions will not affect your status as an IEROC client nor will it affect your Section 8 rental assistance. If you have any questions or concerns at this time about any aspect of this research study, please discuss them with the research interviewer prior to his departure from your home.

Should you have any questions regarding the research after the interviewer has left your home, please do not hesitate to contact Ofelia Wilson, IEROC Program Director, at (909) 686-4402 or Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 880-5507.

Again, should you have any questions regarding your participation in the study, please contact Ms. Wilson or Dr. Riggs at the numbers noted above. Thank you for participating in the research study. Your input is sincerely appreciated.
APPENDIX D: LANDLORD SERVICE EVALUATION SURVEY

Please respond to the following questions by drawing a circle around the answer that best describes your level of satisfaction with the service provided to you by the IEROC program.

6 = Very Satisfied
5 = Satisfied
4 = Somewhat Satisfied
3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
1 = Very Dissatisfied

1. How satisfied are you with the written information provided to you by IEROC representatives prior to utilizing the IEROC program?

2. How satisfied are you with the verbal information provided to you by IEROC representatives during landlord briefing sessions?

3. How satisfied are you with the prospective tenants referred to you by IEROC staff members?

4. How satisfied are you with the assistance provided to you when contacting IEROC staff members to address concerns pertaining to tenants participating in the IEROC program?

5. How satisfied are you with the overall services provided to you by the IEROC staff members?

Additional comments:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX E: LETTER OF LANDLORD PARTICIPATION

Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling Program

A collaborative Effort to Increase Affordable Housing Between
Housing Authority of the County of Riverside ▪ Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino ▪ Upland Housing Authority

600 N. Arrowhead Avenue, #100
San Bernardino, CA 92401
(909) 387-1122

A program of the
Volunteer Center of Greater Riverside
2060 University Avenue, Room 200
Riverside, CA 92507
(909) 686-4402 ▪ FAX (909) 781-2737

Date

Dear IEROC Landlord Participant:

Thank you for participating as a landlord in the Inland Empire Regional Opportunity Counseling program. You have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by a staff member with the IEROC program, Carlos G. Moreno. The research has been approved by the Department of Social Work Subcommittee of the California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board. The purpose of the research study is to determine if the services provided by the IEROC program are meeting our clients' needs. We are also interested in determining if the services we are providing the landlords are also meeting their needs. You are under no obligation participate, although your participation would be deeply appreciated. If you decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the research study at anytime during the research process.

We would like to assure you that any information your provide Mr. Moreno will be kept in the strictest of confidence. At no time will your identity be revealed to other IEROC staff members or other agencies. Should you choose not to participate, this will not affect your status as a landlord participating in the IEROC program. Any questions or concerns that you may have about the research can be directed to me at (909) 686-4402 or Dr. Rosemary McCaslin at (909) 880-5507.

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire that I am requesting that you fill out and return to my office by April 10, 2000. You will find a self addressed stamped envelope for your convenience. The IEROC program staff members would like to express their gratitude in advance for choosing to participate in this very important research project. The information you supply Mr. Moreno will assist in providing you and the IEROC clients the highest level of services which your are entitled to receive.

Sincerely yours,

Ofelia Wilson
IEROC Program Director

Ofelia Wilson
REFERENCES


