

# Section 8 Housing: The effect subsidized housing has on poverty

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## Introduction

Section 8 Housing also known as The Housing Choice Voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. (Hud.gov) The program aims to improve living conditions for these aforementioned groups.

## Key Findings

Decentralization of poverty plays a major roll in the successes of Section 8 Housing. Gains can be found in reduction of crime and increased employment opportunity. Because of these strict guidelines Section 8 recipients face, often they become artificially clustered in certain areas (often a small opposite effect than intended by the program) Debate over what the programs goals should be, also drive what views researchers draw about the program. Some researchers with a focus on moving families to better neighborhoods often espouse skepticism.



## Results

According to the cost benefit analysis many of the benefits afforded by the program to Section 8 Voucher recipients are auxiliary benefits outside of the in kind payment towards rent. Some of these benefits include, better child care, reduction in crime, and reduction in instances of substance abuse (Carlson, Deven). It is important to fully calculate these auxiliary benefits along with the costs they incur. Costs, mostly measured in increased taxes for nonparticipants do dampen the benefits but still come out as a net positive.

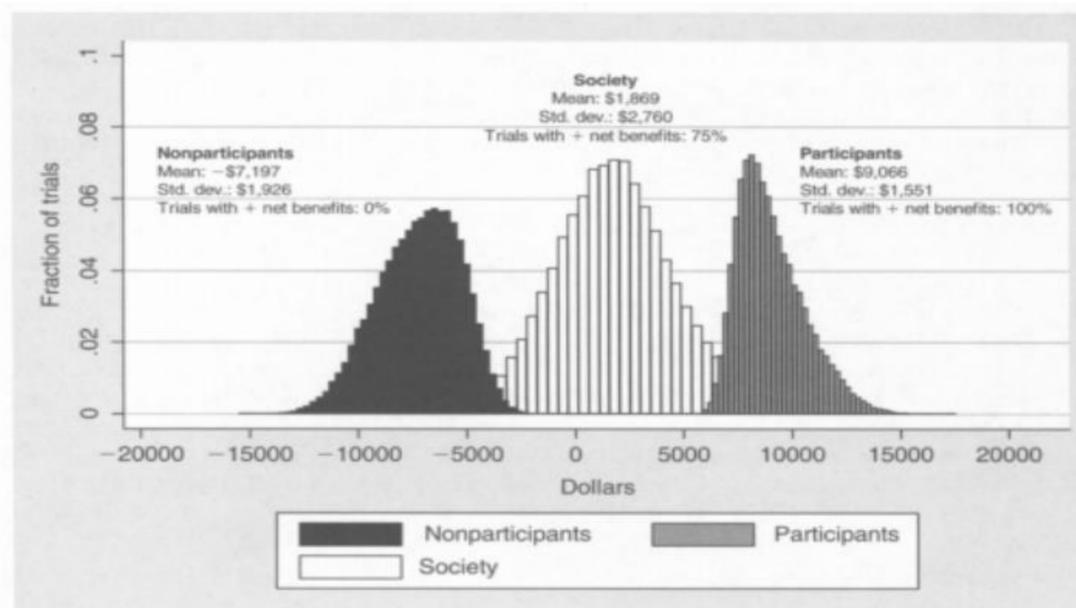


Figure 1. Distribution of Net Benefits: Nonparticipants/Society/Participants.

## Analyses

Directing policy towards programs like Moving to Opportunity (MTO) is the most substantial step towards making Section 8 Housing an anti poverty device rather than housing welfare. Programs like this that can place families away from impoverished communities can provide opportunity for those families.

Anti clustering legislation may be the policy proposal that could make Section 8 Housing more effective on a wider scale but may have the unintended effect of limiting perfectly reasonable housing choices away from recipients.

## Conclusions

Overall, housing choice vouchers could direct more poor families into neighborhoods with more opportunity. The possibility of this happening on a program wide scale is very small purely because of the available housing that meets Section 8 criteria. The program does provide benefit to the poor but as of yet is not able to provide profound change to the poor community

## References

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