Plan Forward
Stakeholder Input Report
Prepared by the Chicago Housing Authority - January 2013
The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) serves more than 53,000 families, including more than 17,000 in public housing and more than 37,000 renting in the private market with a Housing Choice Voucher.

Acknowledgements
The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) would like to acknowledge all those who have given their time, expertise and ideas to help shape its future. This includes all of the facilitators and participants in the many professional stakeholder groups; the residents who attended input sessions; and all those who provided comments via the online forum. CHA also thanks the City of Chicago, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for their ongoing guidance, partnership and support.

The ideas and suggestions these stakeholders shared throughout the input process will help shape the plan and ensure that it reflects the best way forward to serve CHA residents, their communities and the city at large.

INTRODUCTION

Background
The Plan for Transformation, launched in 2000 under the leadership of Mayor Richard M. Daley, is the largest and most ambitious redevelopment effort of public housing in the history of the United States. Beyond rehabilitating and redeveloping Chicago’s stock of public housing, the Plan aimed to build and strengthen communities by integrating public housing and its leaseholders into the larger community, as well as the social and economic fabric of Chicago. Today, CHA’s goal of delivering 25,000 housing units is 85% complete with 21,203 newly developed or rehabilitated housing opportunities available in the city.  

Twelve years later, with new leadership at the City of Chicago and the Chicago Housing Authority, CHA initiated the process of looking beyond the Plan for Transformation and planning for the future. In collaboration with the City of Chicago and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, CHA is exploring new tools and strategies for completing initial goals of the Plan for Transformation and planning for the Housing Authority’s future role in providing affordable housing options.

The Input Process
CHA has engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders in an intense information gathering and input process to identify lessons learned as well as ideas for the future. The process included a large number of professional stakeholder groups, meetings with resident leadership, four resident input sessions and an online portal for all those concerned with the future of CHA to make their voices heard. rd.

Stakeholder Groups
CHA held 32 stakeholder input sessions, engaging more than 300 professionals in a range of fields for a series of conversations on the future of CHA. Led mostly by outside facilitators, each stakeholder group reflected on the Plan’s successes and challenges and provided a wealth of ideas and advice for CHA to consider as it plans for the future. In addition, sessions with staff solicited their ideas and expertise as employees. Facilitators stressed the importance of candor, and groups were open and forthcoming in sharing their experiences and expertise. Facilitators then helped identify key themes and ideas, which are reflected in this document.

1 The Chicago Housing Authority serves more than 53,000 families, including more than 17,000 in public housing and more than 37,000 renting in the private market with a Housing Choice Voucher.
Resident Input Sessions
CHA held regional meetings to get the input of its most important stakeholders – residents. All public housing and Housing Choice Voucher families were invited to four meetings across the city to voice their ideas and suggestions for the future of the plan. A total of 807 public housing and housing choice voucher residents attended, providing valuable input and unique perspectives on the issues that affect their lives. In addition, CHA held meetings with resident leadership, including the Central Advisory Council and senior building presidents.

Online Input
From February to June 2012, individuals from across the city and beyond engaged in an online conversation about thoughts and suggestions on CHA’s direction for the future. A total of 341 users registered on the site and posted 96 ideas and 212 comments in topic areas from Citizen Participation and Communication to Sustainability Strategies.

Themes
Over the course of the input process, a number of themes arose that provide the organizational structure for this report. Participants had ideas about how CHA should approach providing affordable housing opportunities in healthy communities, including through the mixed-income model. Related to this topic were comments on CHA’s geographic strategy in terms of where to locate units and how to consider whole communities. Suggestions and advice on real estate development focused on more detailed aspects of this approach.

Groups also discussed how to use supportive services to help residents achieve better outcomes and to increase their quality of life. Other ideas offered by participants focused on CHA’s internal operations with the goal of ensuring long-term sustainability. These included comments on CHA’s organizational structure and communication with stakeholders. Participants also addressed housing reform policies, including helping capable adults transition from subsidized housing in order to serve more people. Other comments emphasized the need for CHA to maximize its partnerships, and some addressed specific issues around policy implementation.

Stakeholder Groups
- Developers
- Contracted service providers
- Legal and community advocates
- Finance experts
- Academics and researchers
- Foundations
- Business and civic groups
- Faith-based organizations
- Youth/education experts
- Workforce development experts
- Advocates for special populations
- Property Management
- HCV Owners Council
- Resident leadership, including seniors
- HCV and public housing residents
- Residents at all income levels of mixed-income developments
- LGBT community
WHAT WE HEARD

This report reflects, in summary, the input that participants shared through the above stakeholder input process. The recommendations reflected here are a synthesis of what we heard from individuals at the meetings and online; they are not presented verbatim and should not be attributed to any specific group or individual. Due to the volume of input shared by a wide range of stakeholders, not every comment is included in this report. However, the report intends to provide an accurate summary of the collective input CHA has received throughout the process.

These recommendations provide a wealth of ideas and perspectives for CHA to consider as it continues to plan for the future, and CHA appreciates the constructive spirit in which this advice has been given.

Affordable Housing Opportunities

25,000-unit commitment

Many stakeholder groups discussed CHA’s commitment to provide 25,000 units of housing under the Plan for Transformation. While no one suggested disregarding this commitment completely, not everyone felt that 25,000 hard units should be a priority.

Sample comments:
- Fulfill the commitment to 25,000 units to maintain CHA’s integrity and rehouse families.
- There may be other ways to complete the Plan than building hard units.
- Complete 25,000 units, but not necessarily by 2015 – the priorities should be to accommodate families with a Right of Return and let new neighborhoods develop amenities.
- Rather than focusing on the 25,000 units, consider whether the Plan for Transformation is working for those who invested in it.
- Balance the need to deliver fully on the plan with the need to consider the current market; be clear about priorities.

Strategies to increase affordable housing opportunities

Several stakeholder groups suggested ways to decrease the cost of hard units and provide other housing opportunities.

Sample comments:
- Decrease cost of hard units by finding ways to streamline the community process and government requirements and by educating partners about real risk; perceived risk is often much higher.
- Consider asking other developers to designate units for CHA.
- Consider purchasing foreclosed properties, including large apartment buildings, in healthy neighborhoods.
- Bring offline units back into use.

Communication

Clear communication with residents

A number of participants stressed the importance of open communication with residents.

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2 As part of the Plan for Transformation, through the Relocation Rights Contract, all leaseholders in good standing as of October 1, 1999, who remain lease compliant, are guaranteed a right to return to their choice of permanent housing or a housing choice voucher.
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Sample comments:
• Set clear expectations for all residents of mixed-income developments, including about how to resolve conflict.
• Be firm and clear with residents about the expectation that they transition out of public housing.
• Be consistent and honest with residents about what service providers and property managers can and can't do; follow through on promises.
• Communicate better with HCV residents by expanding satellite offices, doing home visits and creating a resident advisory committee.
• Communicate better with seniors about their housing options.
• Commit to going out into the communities to hear from residents about their ideas and concerns.
• Improve communication and increase flexibility around housing inspections.
• LACs are needed for resident representation and reputation.

Communication to the public
Several participants stressed that CHA should focus on its messages to the public.

Sample comments:
• Consider other benchmarks to communicate the success of the Plan in addition to completing 25,000 units – for example, housing the last of those with a Right of Return.
• Communicate a clear narrative about mixed-income developments and their mission.
• Use a range of marketing tactics to increase diversity in the population CHA serves.
• Keep homeowners in mixed-income developments informed about the development process.
• Increase outreach to Latino population; many don't see public housing as a service targeted to them.
• Redefine CHA's portfolio of housing opportunities to include Section 8 vouchers; in total, CHA offers more than 53,000 subsidized housing opportunities.
• Share more data about vacancies; provide quarterly progress reports.
• There should be multiple access points for people to learn about what CHA has to offer.

Strategic plan documents
A number of participants had ideas about what to include in the final strategic plan documents.

Sample comments:
• Include an honest assessment of what happened to people and communities under the Plan for Transformation.
• Be clear about what numbers and measurements mean and what population is being measured.
• Incorporate resident leadership into the development of the plan.

Geographic Strategy
Comprehensive approach to neighborhoods
Many stakeholder groups discussed the need to consider whole neighborhoods, not just developments.

Sample comments:
• In making decisions about the geographic strategy, consider CHA's whole portfolio and the surrounding neighborhoods.
• Aim to dedicate CHA land to its highest and best use. Assess the viability of current mixed-income
New types of subsidy
Several participants suggested exploring differently structured housing subsidies to meet CHA’s goals.

Sample comments:
- Explore a floating subsidy so that families can move off of subsidy but not need to leave their unit or neighborhood.
- Explore a tenant-based subsidy with less bureaucratic burden than HCV to destigmatize vouchers.
- Consider cooperatives as a housing model.
- Explore a rent-to-own model.
- Consider up-front capital investment in exchange for affordable rents for a certain number of years.

Deconcentrating poverty
Most participants who addressed this issue emphasized the need to deconcentrate poverty; however, some felt that 100% public housing is appropriate at certain sites.

Sample comments:
- Consider ways to distribute more units and vouchers in better neighborhoods, including Opportunity Areas.
- Balance the need to deconcentrate poverty with the need for affordable housing.
- Address the issue of families using a voucher to move into a tax credit or condo unit in a mixed-income development.
- Revisit plans for traditional public housing communities and consider converting larger sites to mixed-income and/or other uses.
- Be careful that vouchers don’t continue to concentrate people in the same or similar neighborhoods to the ones they’re leaving.
- Lathrop Homes should have a mix of incomes, but there is no need for market-rate housing there.
- Preserve north-side developments (Lathrop and the Cabrini row houses) as 100% public housing.
- Recognize that Lathrop Homes is already a diverse community; maximize these assets when considering redevelopment.
- At LeClaire, consider spreading replacement units in neighborhood; 900 units on site would be too dense.
- Construct public housing at LeClaire and Ickes; complete Henry Horner redevelopment; do not reduce the number of public housing units.
- While affordable housing on the northwest side is desirable, the approach must be carefully considered due to the difficulty and cost of combating NIMBYism.

Housing Reform Policies
New types of subsidy
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Term limits
A number of stakeholder groups discussed the issue of term limits for some or all CHA residents; there was no consensus on this issue, although very few participants called for a blanket term limit.

Sample comments:
- Consider factors such as resident need, the economy and the lack of affordable housing before implementing term limits.
- Educating families about transitioning out of public housing is better (and more humane) than term limits - there should be an element of choice for families.
- Consider a term limit for public housing; this will encourage families to take advantage of services and change their mindset.
- Consider a term limit for families coming off the wait list.
- For families that are able to transition now, impose a 12-month time limit with the possibility of extension if the family is engaged in services.
- Develop a pilot of a new service model with time limits for a sub-segment of the population.
- Term limits aren’t consistent with the goal of building strong communities.

Transitional housing
Many participants addressed the issue of moving families off of a subsidy more broadly than simply term limits. The vast majority of participants – though not all – expressed that those who are able to leave a housing subsidy should do so.

Sample comments:
- The goal of services should be to transition people off of a housing subsidy.
- There must be incentives to get people to leave public housing or penalties for staying; without this, services will not be enough to get people to leave.
- Residents who earn money but remain in public housing can be good role models for other residents.
- Consider why the typical tenure in public housing is so much longer in Chicago than elsewhere.
- Consider asset-building strategies as part of a strategy to prepare families to transition off a housing subsidy.
- Consider the larger economic context. Before taking major steps to transition people off of a housing subsidy, realize that there is not enough affordable housing and jobs are not very stable.
- Be realistic about what residents can achieve given the economy; economic independence may not be possible.
- Residents who lived through bad times at CHA but should not be expected to leave now that they have nice housing and a sense of community.
- By giving residents input into redevelopment, as well as perks such as holiday give-aways, CHA provides an incentive for residents to stay.
- Clarify definition of self-sufficiency; it can mean different things under different economic circumstances.
- The quality of mixed-income developments and units may disincentivize engagement and self-sufficiency when moving out of that community means a family will likely have to move to a less affluent neighborhood.
- Provide a pathway for residents who are ready to transition out of public housing, including transition services.
• Use families who transition out of public housing as an example for others who are ready (or nearly ready) to move out.

Other new policies
A few participants suggested policies that had not otherwise been part of the discussion.

Sample comments:
• Consider a zero-tolerance policy on drugs for both residents and staff.
• Consider implementing a higher or increasing minimum rent; part of it could go to a reserve for people who lose their jobs and need time to get back on their feet.
• Consider implementing a work requirement with supportive services for HCV residents.
• Formulate a policy for helping ex-offenders.
• HCV contracts should be extended from 12 months to 24 months.

Mixed-Income Model

Developing mixed-income sites
Many participants had ideas and suggestions pertaining to the development of mixed-income sites from a real estate perspective.

Sample comments:
• Find ways to integrate tenant selection plans so it is consistent across a site rather than different for each phase of development.
• Re-focus on the goal of mixed-income sites; consider what they are trying to accomplish.
• Use income generated by market-rate units to fund services.
• Find ways for CHA to dispose of land fee simple, not ground lease.
• Consider developing a mixed-income senior-designated building.
• Find creative temporary uses for vacant land slated for eventual redevelopment.
• Balance previous commitments to finishing existing sites with the redevelopment of new sites – remember that developers are competing for the same financing resources.
• Focus on creating neutral “third spaces” in mixed-income developments that can be accessed by a broad range of people.
• Be careful not to build too many low-rises; neighborhoods need density.

Encouraging effective neighboring
Several groups discussed ways to improve community interaction in mixed-income sites.

Sample comments:
• Focus on residents at all income levels, not just public housing residents.
• Prepare residents to move to new neighborhoods with programs like Good Neighbor.
• Engage neighbors in decisions about design and use of neutral spaces so the community has a common purpose to gather around – e.g. designing a park.
• Consider encouraging and/or funding community organizing and resident leadership training in and around mixed-income sites.
• Help residents understand what the purpose, role and rules of condo associations are.
• Consider making more rigorous screening criteria for mixed-income sites.
• In order for mixed-income developments to be successful, CHA must quickly remove problem families.
• There must be equality in the use of space at mixed-income developments; if one group can gather outside, all groups must be able to do the same.

**Governance structure**
The input process also focused on the appropriate governance structure for mixed-income sites. There was not consensus among participants, with some advocating for an elected Local Advisory Council (LAC) or similar representation and others calling no representation structure specific to the public housing residents.

Sample comments:
• Create governance groups that represent all residents, rather than LACs, which segregate public housing residents from others in the community. Public housing residents should participate as members of the broader community.
• Groups representing residents must have a legal status that determines how CHA relates to them; stand-alone community groups do not have this status.
• To have what has traditionally been an LAC works backwards as it entrenches the idea that residents cannot get their issues solved in their new community, relying instead on the CHA.
• Give residents more options for governance structures; it will empower them to have more of a voice.
• Consider ways to represent renters on condo boards in mixed-income developments.
• Consider at-large seats on the CAC that non-LAC locations can vote for.

**Unit mix**
Most participants who addressed the issue of the mix of incomes in mixed-income sites felt that the mix of 1/3 public housing units, 1/3 affordable/tax credit units and 1/3 market rate units does not necessarily work in all circumstances.

Sample comments:
• Avoid blanket policies on the mix of incomes – 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 doesn’t work at every site.
• Mixed-income sites do not need to include market-rate units; they can include subsidized housing at different levels.
• A narrower range of incomes would make it easier for people to get along better.
• Consider lessons learned about marketability from the geographic and income mix at current sites.
• Decrease the density of public housing units in mixed-income developments.
• The last phase should be homeownership because creating rental communities stabilizes the market and creates value.
• It’s simpler to integrate market rental than for-sale; renters will be more likely to try out mixed income communities because they can walk away.

**Organizational Structure**

**CHA as an organization**
A number of participants had general comments about CHA as an organization and its administration.
Sample comments:
- Improve CHA’s call center. Messages either go unanswered or have different responses from different people, leading to confusion.
- Put more internal work processes in writing.
- Make CHA more customer-oriented so that it’s easier to interact with, particularly for youth and those unfamiliar with navigating bureaucracy.
- Knowledge sharing across departments within CHA can be improved to address operational issues.
- Consider ways to outsource paperwork to the private market to make the system more efficient.
- Consider a process to fast-track the PBV approval process.
- All CHA employees should be able to answer basic questions about the agency.

**Oversight of contractors**
Several groups, including those with representatives from organizations that currently have contracts with CHA, discussed how CHA oversees contractors, without reaching consensus on if or how CHA should change its oversight.

Sample comments:
- Give certain property managers more flexibility and discretion to do their jobs.
- Improve oversight, training, and data collection for poorly performing property managers.
- Service provider staff should focus on building relationships, not meeting targets on a checklist.
- Written communication between CHA and service provider staff is important to remedy communication breakdowns.
- Have CHA contractors hire more CHA residents as a condition of the contract.
- CHA should maintain recent improvements in communication between CHA’s Resident Services division and contracted service providers – the current system works well.
- Improve accountability and communication with HCV landlords.
- Make sure property managers have open, respectful communication with seniors.

**Staff training for contractors**
Some participants discussed suggestions to improve CHA’s training for contractor staff.

Sample comments:
- There should be joint trainings on major policies with property managers and service provider staff to ensure a consistent message.
- Provide sensitivity training for contractor staff on issues such as dealing with people in diverse populations.
- Service provider staff must understand the population and the larger context - CHA’s mission and goals and the history of the Plan.

**Working group structure**
Some participants discussed possible changes to the working group structure.

Sample comments:
- Clearly define the role of the working group.
- Working group membership should be realigned to represent current stakeholders, including those who live in the new mixed income developments.
- End the practice of having legacy leaders on working groups.

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3 Under the Plan for Transformation, CHA committed to convening a “working group” for former sites undergoing redevelopment. Working groups function as a steering committee of core stakeholders for the development process and provide advisory recommendations and guidance to CHA. They currently consist of CHA staff, residents from the original development, advocates, community members and City partners.
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- Plan the agenda for working group meetings so everyone knows in advance what will be discussed.
- The working groups’ role should be limited to planning and should not address the ongoing issues of life in the community; it should fade away when the planning is done.
- CHA should have more senior-level staff at working group meetings.
- There need to be two tiers of the working group – one ongoing for day-to-day monitoring, and then one super working group or forum for broader input.

Partnerships

Coordination with City and sister agencies
A number of stakeholder groups stressed the importance of working with the City of Chicago and other sister agencies. There was strong agreement that CHA should attempt to increase this coordination.

Sample comments:
- Continue working with City and sister agencies; make a particular effort to include schools in planning and implementing strategies.
- Make sure partners like the Park District promote public spaces for people to interact in.
- Participate in the city task force on homeless youth to learn more about the issues affecting that population.
- Work more with the City to ensure the safety of seniors and youth.
- Work with the City to address regulatory factors that increase development costs; for example, there’s no incentive to use TIF funds near CHA developments, where there’s a lower return than elsewhere.
- Collaborate with other agencies to understand and address all of the disincentives to work; residents should want to get and maintain employment.
- The City could implement and monitor a hiring preference for CHA residents and manage a relationship with unions so residents can get union jobs.

Increase public-private partnerships
- Many participants called for CHA to increase the number and impact of public-private partnerships.
- Sample comments:
  - CHA should both acknowledge partners’ contributions and challenge them to do more in the future.
  - Take advantage of partnerships to locate PBV units in desirable neighborhoods.
  - Some community organizations are already trying to develop communities by working with potential small businesses. CHA needs to take note of these organizations.
  - Consider working with a partner on a pilot LGBT housing program.

Maximize partnerships for services
Many participants agreed that CHA should focus on building and maintaining partnerships with independent service providers. However, some cautioned that providers do not have the capacity to serve a significant portion of CHA residents.

Sample comments:
- CHA cannot deal with all issues alone – it must work in collaboration with community partners.
- Work more closely with faith communities – one possible area of overlap is youth mentoring.
- Collaborate better with service providers who work with diverse populations on housing needs for those communities.
• Beyond Section 3, have professionals who contract with CHA train residents, such as paralegals or similar positions.
• Develop partnerships to tie housing to other work in the city with LGBT young people.
• Reinstate partnership with Spanish Coalition for Housing - they are good mediators.
• Develop a clear understanding of which other organizations are serving residents.
• Do not rely on neighborhood partners for services; their quality and capacity is not high enough.
• CHA and providers should partner more with schools, even though not all schools are equally willing to be a partner.
• Consider partnerships with trade organizations and universities to help students work on a GED and then get into a trade or college.
• Learn from supportive housing providers what services are the most important.
• There are resources available for early childhood programs; the challenge is to communicate and coordinate availability. Take advantage of the City's upcoming new RFP process for early childhood providers.
• Work hand-in-hand with the City Colleges to connect residents to job training and to bring technology to residents, especially seniors.
• Work with like-minded community partners to coordinate services for youth, rather than duplicate services or leave gaps.
• Youth programs through neighborhood partners are a good way to build community in mixed-income developments.

Policy Implementation

Consistent policies regarding residents
Several participants stressed the need for CHA to consistently enforce policies, including policies that are currently in place.

Sample comments:
• Both providers and property managers should hold all residents accountable to the same rules. There should not be an escape hatch for those who are unwilling to comply with policies.
• There must be equality in the use of space at mixed-income developments; if one group can gather outside, all groups must be able to do the same.

Examination of current policies
Several participants asked that CHA reconsider specific policies that are currently in place.

Sample comments:
• Re-consider the one-strike policy.
• Residents' orientation to engagement and self-sufficiency is unlikely to change until actual policy changes are implemented which require that change.
• Consider using site-based waiting lists.
• Loans, such as loans for college tuition, should not be counted as income. It penalizes residents for doing something productive.
• For residents who volunteer their time for their development, CHA should reinstate the $75 monthly stipend to support their work.
• Give families more than 120 days to use a Housing Choice Voucher.
Real Estate Development

Access to capital/funding

Several participants suggested ways for CHA to access untapped sources of capital or other funding.

Sample comments:

- Explore potential sources of capital including the County, Neighborhood Stabilization funds and programs administered by private groups.
- Use Project Based Vouchers to leverage private funding and acquire distressed housing.
- Use CHA-owned land as an asset to attract new capital. Developers need outside equity infusion and patient capital. Value capture options are promising.
- Banks are concerned about cash flow; there needs to be continued operating subsidy.
- Concerns over long-term financing can be resolved if the PHA always gives an amount HUD says is required regardless of appropriations.
- Consider serving a role in bridge financing, including risk share.
- Consider ways to reintroduce CHA to the private development world and reeducate them about CHA's willingness to partner.
- Units with unrestricted rents are easier to lease and easier to underwrite.
- If there were participation by HUD through the provision of credit enhancement on a first mortgage then banks would be more likely to provide the equity loan on construction.
- Meet with FHA representative to learn how FHA products interact with tax credit equity to do a bridge.
- In order to attract capital, CHA must show that it uses funds effectively and units aren't disproportionately expensive.
- The presence of market-rate units in mixed-income deals is a challenge because of the risk for investors; tax credit subsidies build in returns independent of the market.
- Permanent financing is riskier for CHA development. Long-term hold positions for these types of projects don't support debt due to product type/mixed income and realize a lot more operating expenses for units set aside for certain income limits.
Construction considerations
A number of stakeholder groups discussed issues specific to the construction of new units and developments.

Sample comments:
- Reevaluate long-term plans and commitments regarding types of construction, levels of finish, unit size, etc. – factors that affect resources and marketability.
- Examine why the cost to build new units is so high.
- Build more units for large families.
- Build more housing accessible to people with disabilities and environmental illnesses like asthma.
- CHA should be a leader in environmental sustainability.
- Consider moving away from a high-end development product – perhaps single-family homes rather than condos.
- Do not reduce the quality of housing to make it cheaper – housing that looks like affordable housing will not attract people.
- Establish agreed-upon standards for green development, considering the value in reducing utility costs for residents – what features are worth the costs?
- Seniors should be given more space and amenities, like bathtubs.
- The way to drive costs down is to build more cost-efficient building types, including taller buildings and smaller units.
- With the current housing market, CHA should be looking to rehab existing properties rather than tearing them down and redeveloping them.

Supportive Services
Level/type of services to offer
Many groups discussed the intensity and type of services CHA should offer; some participants recommended specific services for different segments of CHA’s population.

Sample comments:
- Allow services to be individualized to meet families’ needs; allow residents to set their own goals for services.
- Continue providing wrap-around services – eliminating services is not a good option.
- Be creative about how best to serve families who are not likely to move out of public housing; we need to look beyond what we consider to be the normal services.
- Make sure that troubled families that prevail in eviction cases get counseling.
- Intensive services allow us to better understand the needs of individual families, and their plans – which don’t necessarily align with CHA’s plans for them.
• Mobility counseling services need to strengthened. Feedback suggests that process is too rushed, people don't have time to explore communities, they're not accompanied to different communities, etc.
• Serve residents directly, rather than sending residents to other programs.
• Services in mixed-income developments should focus on all residents, not just public housing residents.
• Re-open the resource room that helped HCV participants find information on better and safer neighborhoods with opportunities for low-income families.
• New residents should receive a one-time hardship voucher for furniture and household supplies.
• Consider on-site task forces to address resident issues on a local basis.
• Consider making engagement in services grounds for extension of time limits.
• Consider urban agriculture as a way to create economic opportunity and improve nutrition.
• Weigh the desire to serve HCV families against funding constraints and the logistical difficulties of reaching so many people in different locations.
• It's not realistic to expect people with low literacy skills to get a job and make enough to pay market-rate rent.
• Senior services need to include linkages to services, including medical system navigation, and social events/recreation.
• Focus on specific populations, such as: young fathers, residents who have been homeless, those re-entering after incarceration, residents facing addiction, seniors, residents with mental or emotional health concerns, and young women.
• Help residents take better advantage of the services currently available, rather than asking what more services are needed.
• Residents working full time and making minimum wage are not likely to be able to afford housing in the private market, particularly housing as nice as where they live now.
• Provide more access to computer labs and exercise rooms.

Mandatory services
Many participants weighed in on whether services should be mandatory. While most advocated for some level of mandatory services, not all agreed.

Sample comments:
• Consider making certain services mandatory for some segments of CHA's population.
• Services should err on the side of giving families more choice, not making mandates.
• Consider making certain activities for young children mandatory for parents – developmental screenings, enrollment in Head Start or pre-k, etc.
• CHA cannot simply make services mandatory and expect residents to do well.
• Consider what other cities have done, such as making specific services mandatory at certain sites.
• Mandatory assessment would help providers do their jobs better and get to root causes.
• Convene a meeting of outreach workers to gather best practices in terms of engagement.
• Resident clients face a lack of repercussions. Residents often do not show up again or complete tasks asked of them by case managers.

Motivating/empowering residents
Several groups addressed issues dealing with residents' mindsets and motivation to engage in services and move toward economic independence.
Sample comments:
- Give residents input into what services they need.
- Build trust and hope among residents; show youth that there’s a way out of public housing.
- Help residents change their mindset about the possibilities for success.
- Find ways to challenge residents’ sense of entitlement.
- Use peer-to-peer mentoring as a way to motivate residents.
- Use connections to jobs to motivate residents and build trust.
- Use people who have moved out of public housing as examples and mentors for those who are ready to move out.
- Collaborate with other agencies to understand and address all of the financial disincentives to work; residents should want to get and maintain employment.
- Educate residents about why services, education and employment are important for them and their kids.
- Encourage providers to have consistent staffing in order to build relationships and trust with residents.
- Best practices show that large cash incentives for parents do not work unless they’re associated with case management services. Be careful not to create an expectation that CHA will always be providing incentives.
- Find ways to encourage residents to focus on the long-term benefits of work; often in the short term work leads to a decline in benefits.
- Find ways to foster residents’ sense of ownership of their building and community.
- So long as a safety net is in place, residents who are in compliance with their lease often have little incentive for advancement; a main motivation is to retain their subsidy and their unit. Even residents who are working are not necessarily thinking about self-sufficiency, but just about being in compliance with the work requirement.
- Some residents who seek instant gratification have a misunderstanding of the value of work; they expect to earn far more than what is realistic.

Segmenting the population
Several groups talked about the need to divide CHA’s population into segments based on service needs and potential methods for doing so.

Sample comments:
- Use assessments to create categories that account for families’ potential to transition off of a housing subsidy and determine the best mix of services for them.
- Clearly define self-sufficiency, and find a way to assess those who are ready to become self-sufficient.
- Consider what segment should be the top priority for services: for example, youth or families likely to transition off of housing subsidy.
- Consider setting different goals/higher expectations for families from the waiting list; perhaps a time limit.
- Provide ways for families to move between categories; assessments are useful but not predictive.
- Consider population segments that stretch across age and income categories. For example, parents with very young children may be an important group to target across categories.
Transition services

Some participants stressed the importance of services in helping families to transition off of a housing subsidy.

Sample comments:

- Assess families to determine who is ready to live without a subsidy.
- Consider the varying levels of service residents need to transition off of a housing subsidy, including transition support or housing locator services. Recognize that those who remain will require more intensive, expensive support.
- Consider how families will access services after they’ve left public housing – continued services could act as a safety net for families.
- Continue outreach to families who are likely to transition; it's important to maintain these relationships.

Workforce development and education

Several groups focused on recommendations for services in the areas of workforce development and education.

Sample comments:

- Continue to provide workforce development services, but limit the number of training programs residents can participate in.
- All workforce services must include counseling, coaching and case management components.
- Employment programs are important to give families employment networks that they might not otherwise have.
- Focus on developing residents’ interviewing skills.
- Each individual requires a unique combination of workforce services.
- Focus on education; consider ways to improve academic achievement, such as incentives and education about opportunities.
- Focus on on-the-job training over education; not all positions require a degree.
- For residents who are looking for immediate payment, consider focusing on jobs that tip as an alternative to the street.
- It will take a long time to move people along a path from poor soft skills to good soft skills to work; manage expectations about this process.
- Work with employers willing to hire CHA residents; provide additional training and resources to ensure that residents are ready for work.
- Work to understand the adult population that isn’t working; literacy is often a problem.
- Take advantage of move toward green buildings to provide green jobs to residents.
- Retention services – including ongoing support – are the single biggest thing missing from workforce programs; these services are important but expensive.
- Host evening programs for people who work to advance their skills.
- Help residents who are interested in starting their own businesses; have a preference for those residents when awarding contracts.

Youth/family focus

Many groups and individual participants had ideas about services for youth and families.
Sample comments:
- Base service goals around entire families.
- Focus on youth to strengthen their connection to learning and other opportunities nearby, regardless of where they go to school.
- Consider making activities for children – such as finding and enrolling in a good school – an acceptable kind of engagement to satisfy the work requirement.
- Work with parents should involve peer-to-peer services and engagement.
- Youth should have some choice in what they want to participate in, such as arts or sports programming.
- Begin working with youth on college admissions at a younger age.
- Consider strategies to target services to 18 to 24 year-olds, even if they’re not the head of household.
- Consider working with schools to find ways to give youth class credit for participating in programs, such as college visits or out-of-school-time programs.
- Focus on homework help and career awareness between ages 9 and 12.
- Focus on serving younger youth in order to make a positive impact early, before negative behaviors develop.
- Consider the best practice of having a case manager specializing in children for families with children, in addition to a regular case manager.
- Consider ways for case managers to get children’s elementary and secondary school report cards.
- There must be year-round opportunities for youth to earn wages or a stipend.
- Focus services on reducing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
- Incorporate mentoring in youth programs; engage seniors as mentors.
- Safety and health are important issues for youth; services should screen for developmental delays and ensure ongoing access to health and dental care.
- Services starting at age 14 need to start focusing on income and employment.
- Work readiness, employment awareness and internships are important for youth.
- Continue supporting youth while they’re away at college.
- Youth services should address transition periods, like from pre-K to kindergarten, from middle school to high school and from high school to college or the workforce.
- Focus on connecting middle school kids to after-school programs, including restorative justice.
- Begin working with parents before pregnancy, and emphasize relationships with parents, not just parenting classes.
- Consider using the Strengthening Families model.
- Ensure all students are reading at grade level in third grade; ability in third grade is a strong indicator of success in high school.
- There are a lot of grandparents raising grandchildren. Supportive services should be tailored to the needs of those families.
- The way to get adults engaged is through their children. More activities for kids will keep them off the streets and force their parents to interact.

Early childhood services
A number of comments focused specifically on services for young children.

Sample comments:
- In considering early childhood programs, focus on three to four year olds as a priority group.
• Accessing programs for children (like child care and developmental screenings) is more than just providing information – families need help all the way through the process.
• Consider transportation issues when working to engage children in early childhood services.
• Those communicating with residents about early childhood service should be people from the community who residents can identify with.
• Parents of young children must be re-engaged when they miss an appointment for screening or follow-up.
• Pilot innovative early childhood service models to determine what works and what doesn’t to get families to enroll kids in available programs.
• Find ways to dispel the myth that taking advantage of early childhood services will interfere with income received for child care.

CONCLUSION

Like its past and present, CHA’s future relies on partners across the city and beyond. The valuable input received during stakeholder sessions has been essential to the planning process. CHA will take full advantage of the collective expertise summarized in this report as it considers how best to serve CHA residents, their communities and the city at large.

CHA would again like to thank all those who offered their thoughts and suggestions for their candor and commitment to CHA’s future. As staff and leadership continue to look ahead, we are committed to developing a plan that is worthy of the time and attention that CHA’s many stakeholders dedicated to this process.

Session Facilitators

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Joe Antolin  Antolin & Associates Consulting
MarySue Barrett  Metropolitan Planning Council
Jim Brooks  Boulevard Group, Inc.
Julie Elena Brown  Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI)
Maria Hibbs  formerly of The Partnership for New Communities
Jamie Kalven  Invisible Institute
Jen Keeling  Chicago Jobs Council
Janelle LaVigne  Heartland Human Care Services
Keith Magee  National Public Housing Museum
Mary Ellen Messner  Ingenuity, Inc.
Debra Schwartz  John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Julia Stasch  John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Maria Whelan  Illinois Action for Children