ECONOMIC MOBILITY ADVOCATES ARE HOUSING ADVOCATES

Safe, affordable housing enables low-income people to climb up the income ladder and achieve the American Dream.

A landmark study by Harvard economist Raj Chetty demonstrates the enormous positive impact that affordable housing can have on upward economic mobility for low-income children. Chetty analyzed the long-term adult outcomes for low-income children whose families used a housing voucher to move from a high poverty neighborhood to lower poverty neighborhoods through HUD’s Moving to Opportunity experiment (Chetty, 2015).

For low-income children who moved before age 13:

Because of this, future children and grandchildren were more likely to be raised in a better neighborhood by two parents who have more education and more income, which helps break the cycle of generational poverty.

“Young adults who had lived in public or voucher-assisted housing as teenagers had higher earnings and lower rates of incarceration than young adults from unassisted low-income households. The study suggests that housing vouchers and public housing provide low-income parents with greater financial resources to devote to their children’s development, which improves adult outcomes later in life” (Andersson, Haltiwanger, & Kutzbach, 2016).” Quoted from NLIHC, A Place to Call Home

“In 2012, housing assistance programs such as rental vouchers and public housing lifted 4.0 million people above the poverty line. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities).”
Affordable housing located in high-opportunity neighborhoods can help promote residential diversity and help children in poor families climb the income ladder as adults.

Places with higher rates of upward mobility for low-income children have less segregation and more residential diversity. As Harvard economist Nathaniel Hendren states: “In places where kids of different economic backgrounds are mixing in the same environment, those tend to be places where kids from low-income backgrounds rise up further in the income distribution.”

“Research shows that increasing access to affordable housing is the most cost-effective strategy for reducing childhood poverty in the United States.” Quoted from NLIHC, *A Place to Call Home*

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