

FAIR HOUSING IN AMERICA, VOLUME V:
SECTION 8 HOUSING IN BUFFALO AND SYRACUSE

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Section 8
being
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SEPTEMBER 1982

A report of the New York State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights prepared for the information and consideration of the Commission. The report will be considered by the Commission, and the Commission will make public its reaction. In the meantime, the findings and recommendations of this report should not be attributed to the Commission but only to the New York State Advisory Committee.

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SECTION 8 HOUSING IN BUFFALO AND SYRACUSE

--A report of the New York State Advisory
Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Attribution:

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the New York State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights and, as such, are not attributable to the Commission. The report has been prepared by the State Advisory Committee for submission to the Commission, and will be considered by the Commission in formulating its recommendations to the President and Congress.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

New York State Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
September 1982

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Dear Commissioners:

The New York State Advisory Committee submits this report, Section 8 Housing in Buffalo and Syracuse, as part of its responsibility to advise the Commission on relevant civil rights problems within the State. It hopes that the report will provide useful followup information to the Commission's national study on fair housing.

The report provides a review of various groups' access to Section 8 housing in Buffalo and Syracuse, administrative regulations on the part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the local public housing authorities' practices affecting equal housing opportunity, and the degree of mobility of participants. This report is based on a study submitted by the Suburban Action Institute as well as further research and field work conducted by the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee found an underrepresentation of Hispanics in all Section 8 programs in Buffalo. In Syracuse blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans were underrepresented in new and rehabilitated units. The Advisory Committee believes that all efforts should be made to increase outreach to these underrepresented groups. It also recommends that HUD change eligibility requirements to increase low income participants in the program. HUD should issue regulations lowering income limits establishing such eligibility. Better data collection and monitoring of the mobility and concentrations of various groups are necessary in order to determine the effectiveness of the Section 8 program. We urge the Commissioners to support our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Mangum, Chairperson
New York State Advisory Committee

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Advisory Committee wishes to thank the staff of the Commission's Eastern Regional Office, New York, New York, for its help in the preparation of the report. This report is based on a study conducted by the Suburban Action Institute, under contract to the Commission. Mark Simo, equal opportunity specialist, served as the project director until September 1979. Eleanor Telemaque, who became project director in 1979, conducted further field investigations. Editing was begun by Linda Dunn. However, Celeste Wiseblood, who joined the office in January 1981 had the major writing, research, and editing responsibility. Legal review was conducted by Larry D. Martin, regional attorney. Primary staff support was provided by Sandra Patterson and additional staff support was provided by Diane Diggs and Salvatore Martinez. The project was conducted under the supervision of Ruth J. Cubero, regional director.

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1. Introduction

Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 states that:

For the purpose of aiding lower income families in obtaining a decent place to live and or promoting economically mixed housing, assistance payments may be made with respect to existing, newly constructed, and substantially rehabilitated housing.¹

The public housing program began with the passage of the 1937 act and continued with the passage of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, which created the concept of leased housing. The purpose of the act was to encourage the use of existing housing stock to house eligible, lower income families. Under this type of leased housing program known as Section 23, a public housing authority (PHA) could lease decent, safe, and sanitary units on the private market for the purpose of subleasing to assisted tenants. The PHA would then sublease to the tenant and charge the tenant a rent comparable to those being charged in the PHA's public housing units. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would provide Federal funds through an annual contributions contract (ACC). In time this program was broadened to include newly constructed units. This program operated until January 1973, when it fell victim to the housing moratorium.

Through several experimental housing allowance programs, the principle of direct cash assistance was found to be effective in providing housing for lower income families. Thus, based on the experiences of public housing (Section 23 leased housing and the housing allowance programs), the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 advanced the national policy by instituting the Section 8 Leased Housing Assistance Payment Program.²

Under the Section 8 Leased Housing Assistance Payment Program, HUD contracts directly with owners of both public and private existing, new, or rehabilitated units for the payment of the difference between a contract rent (not exceeding the HUD-established fair market rent for the dwelling) and a percentage of the tenant's gross income. An assisted family pays no more than 15 to 25 percent of its income to the owner or landlord. This program is today the largest rent funding source available from the Federal Government to assist lower income households.³

In September 1979, the New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) initiated a project reviewing Section 8 housing in two upstate cities, Buffalo and Syracuse. The review was in part an attempt to provide followup to a broader national Commission on Civil Rights study of federally subsidized housing. The report on this study, The Federal Fair Housing Enforcement Effort, was released in March 1979.⁴

The goals of the Advisory Committee project were several. Since the Commission's jurisdiction is to study discrimination based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age, and handicap, the Committee first wanted to determine whether minorities, female heads of households, the elderly, and the handicapped had equal access to and participation in the Section 8 program. Second, it reviewed whether selected administrative regulations or practices on the part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the local public housing authorities limited the opportunities of these persons applying to the program; and third, it looked at the degree to which the program provided economically mixed housing as required by the act.⁵ Finally, the Committee was interested to look at whether racial deconcentration was achieved along with the goal of economically mixed housing.

The Eastern Regional Office (ERO) of the Commission contracted with the Suburban Action Institute (SAI), a nonprofit organization with expertise in fair housing and other related issues, to conduct the studies of the Section 8 Existing Housing Programs in Buffalo and Syracuse. SAI conducted an extensive study including a review of Federal Section 8 rules and regulations, a review of the required documents developed by the local housing authorities and other sponsors, a review of the activities of the HUD area office, and interviews with both Section 8 certificate holders and persons who applied for but did not receive certificates.

More than 60 persons were interviewed including 25 black and Hispanic female heads of households; several black and Hispanic male heads of households; several disabled persons; and persons working in community organizations including the Buffalo Urban League, the Puerto Rican Chicano Committee, the Buffalo North American Indian Culture Center (Buffalo), the North American Indian Club (Syracuse), the People's Equal Action and Community Effort (Syracuse), and the Spanish Action League (Syracuse). Information collected during these interviews is used throughout the document.

SAI submitted a report to the New York State Advisory Committee in June 1980 which is the basis of this document. In addition, the Advisory Committee reviewed data on the new and rehabilitated Section 8 units in both cities in order to develop a comprehensive view of the programs in the two cities. This study will be submitted to the national Commission for inclusion in its study on housing issues and for use in its recommendations to the President and Congress.⁶

2. Section 8 Program

A. General

The Section 8 program, which is the largest rent subsidy funding source from the Federal Government, provides funds to make up the difference between the housing a family can afford and the cost of housing in a specific area. The program has the following three components, each of which relies on a different mechanism for supplying housing:

The Existing Housing Program, often called the "finders keepers" program in which households receive a certificate from the local public housing authority under contract to HUD to administer the program. The certificate is used by the household to find existing housing units in the private market. Participation by landlords is limited by the "fair market rent" in the local housing market.

The New Construction Program, in which HUD guarantees to private developers of new housing projects, prior to their construction, that it will provide subsidies to eligible families who rent directly from the project's owner.

The Substantial Rehabilitation Program for existing structures, which require more than routine or minor repairs. This component operates in a manner similar to the New Construction Program in which HUD guarantees to provide subsidies to private developers.⁷

Regulations governing Section 8 Existing Housing and Section 8 New Construction and Substantial Rehabilitation differ in that certificates are only required for the first program and no certificates are required for the latter two programs. In addition, Section 8 new and rehabilitated units may be earmarked for the elderly.

B. Eligibility Requirements

In order to receive assistance through the Section 8 program, a recipient must qualify as being a "family" and as "lower-income", in accordance with requirements established by HUD. The term "family" is defined by the statute and by HUD regulations. It includes two or more individuals living together as a family unit and/or single individuals who are:

- Elderly (62 years of age or older);
- Disabled (a physical or mental impairment of long-term duration that renders the individual unable to engage in gainful activity);

- Handicapped (a physical impairment of long-continued and indefinite duration that substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently and that could be improved by more suitable living conditions);
- Displaced (by either governmental action or by a federally recognized disaster); or
- The remaining member of a tenant family participating in the Section 8 program, should the family composition change during the period of participation.

Single individuals may qualify for Section 8 if they meet the above criteria. Two or more elderly, disabled, or handicapped individuals living together or one or more such individuals living with another person who is determined to be essential to the person's care or well-being also may be considered as a family unit.

The second factor to be considered in determining eligibility is the income of the potential recipient. HUD has established a series of maximum income limits for different areas of the country. To be eligible, a family's income cannot exceed the maximum income permitted by HUD for the particular area in which the family will be housed. Additionally, HUD regulations require that at least 30 percent of all Section 8 participants must be "very low income," a level also established by HUD which is well above the Federal poverty line.

Different income limits are established in accordance with family size within individual communities. The amount of these income limits is calculated from a percentage of the median income in the area.⁸

In Buffalo, for example, a family of four earning up to \$16,904 qualifies for Section 8 Housing. The income established by HUD for "very low income" for a family of four is \$9,800. In Syracuse, a family of four earning up to \$16,900 qualifies for Section 8 Housing. In Syracuse, "very low income" for a family of four is \$10,050. These limitations are considerably higher than the Federal poverty line, which as of August 1, 1980, was \$7,540 for a family of four.⁹

C. Fair Housing Requirements

There are a number of nondiscrimination and affirmative action requirements imposed upon localities which receive Section 8 funds. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in all federally funded programs and Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination specifically in federally funded housing. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (HCDA) and the Section 8 program regulations impose further requirements to insure that minorities, female

heads of households, the elderly, and the handicapped have equal access to the program and have means of recourse if they are subject to discrimination.¹⁰ These requirements are discussed below as part of the housing assistance plan (HAP) and grantee performance report.

D. Review of the Housing Assistance Plan and Grantee Performance Report

1) The Housing Assistance Plan (HAP)

The Housing and Community Development Act (HCDA) requires all localities receiving Community Development and Block Grant (CDBG) funds to develop a housing assistance plan outlining the local government's 3-year housing plan for the community. The HAP is required to outline steps for promoting greater choice of housing opportunities for low income persons and avoiding undue concentrations of assisted persons in areas already containing a high proportion of low income persons. The HAP is to provide an assessment of the housing needs of low and moderate income persons and the special needs of minorities, female headed households, the elderly, handicapped, and displaced persons expected to reside in the community. The general location for assisted housing must further fair housing, and provide for a number of dwelling units for lower income persons. A survey of the condition of existing housing stock must be conducted.¹¹

2) Grantee Performance Report

HUD requires all localities receiving CDBG funds to submit grantee performance reports indicating the locality's fair housing efforts. The report must include the number of housing units by program made available to minorities, female headed households, large families, the elderly, and handicapped. The locality also must include action taken to convert conditions which have limited minority participation in the past and a summary of other actions undertaken to assure equal opportunity.¹² However, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) report, The Federal Fair Housing Enforcement Effort, notes that HUD seldom investigates or otherwise verifies a grantee performance report unless a complaint is filed about the document.¹³

3) Housing Assistance Plans and Grantee Performance Reports in Buffalo and Syracuse

The housing assistance plans and grantee performance reports for 1980 for the cities of Buffalo and Syracuse were made available to the Eastern Regional Office by the Buffalo HUD Area Office. The New York State Advisory Committee noted that both the Buffalo and Syracuse documents are very general in describing methods of achieving fair housing goals. The Syracuse Housing Authority includes in the appendices to its report, a breakdown of its

employees by race, ethnicity, and sex. There is no such breakdown in the Buffalo HAP plan or grantee performance report.

The Buffalo narrative of Section 8 is more detailed in that it describes by census tract the targeted area for recipients of Section 8 housing, and includes a copy of the Buffalo Fair Housing Ordinance in describing implementation of fair housing goals in the city of Buffalo.

E. Equal Opportunity Housing Plan

1) General

Included in the HAP and grantee performance report is the equal opportunity housing plan as required by Section 8 regulations. These regulations require that all public housing authorities (PHA) operating Section 8 housing assistance programs develop an equal opportunity housing plan outlining the PHA's strategy for ensuring equal access for minorities, female headed households, elderly, and handicapped persons to the Section 8 program. The plan must indicate:

- the affirmative steps to be taken to inform minorities, female headed households, elderly, and handicapped of the program, including advertisements in general and minority circulation media;
- contact with local civic associations and neighborhood groups;
- efforts to encourage unit owners in areas without concentrations of low income and minority residents to participate in the program;
- means of selecting certificate holders; and
- assistance to be provided in finding a unit for certificate holders who believe that discrimination is preventing them from finding a suitable unit.¹⁴

2) Equal Opportunity Housing Plans in Buffalo and Syracuse

The equal opportunity housing plans for both Buffalo and Syracuse met the criteria established by HUD discussed above.

According to Thomas Demartino, director of the Buffalo Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc., the equal opportunity housing plan provides information on the availability of assistance to victims of discrimination. When tenants seek certification, they are given Federal pamphlets on equal housing opportunity. He stated that his office also advises all certificate holders to call if they have any discrimination complaints or equal opportunity concerns. Neva Fisk, director of Section 8 housing in Syracuse, stated that there are no such provisions in the Syracuse equal opportunity housing plan, but that she personally tells Section 8 recipients where to seek assistance if they have been victims of discrimination.¹⁵ The

Advisory Committee was particularly concerned about fair housing information provided to participants.

However, many respondents interviewed by the Commission staff and the Suburban Action Institute stated that they did not know where to turn for help if they thought they had faced discrimination. They complained that the PHAs failed to give adequate information regarding the nature of discrimination, the appropriate agencies dealing with complaints of discrimination, and the appropriate remedies and protection afforded those subject to discrimination. They were also concerned with the failure of PHAs to continuously recruit landlords for the program and the lack of followup assistance.¹⁶

Edward Starr, human services coordinator for the Buffalo North American Indian Culture Center, stated that HUD should provide more "outreach" services to Native American communities to inform them of the Section 8 housing program. He indicated that the lack of participation by the Native American community in the Buffalo existing housing program may be due to bureaucratic negligence of that important segment of the population. He stated that many Native Americans did not know that the Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc. administered the Section 8 existing program in Buffalo.¹⁷

F. Certificate Holder's Package

1) General

As part of the equal opportunity housing plan HUD requires that PHAs develop a package providing information to help certificate holders find existing housing of their choice. The required contents of the package include:

1. Request for lease approval;
2. Requested lease provisions and prohibited lease provisions;
3. Information regarding lead based paint poisoning hazards, symptoms, and precautions;
4. PHA forms for inspection of housing units;
5. "Fair Housing USA" in either English or Spanish and the housing discrimination complaint form in either Spanish or English;
6. A list of HUD held properties available for rent;
7. Information concerning recently available housing, if any, including location and applicable fair market rents;
8. Information on gross family contribution, fair market rents, and family size composition;

9. PHA schedule of allowances for utilities and other PHA services;

10. Information on and copies of local fair housing laws; and

11. Information on remedies if a certificate holder believes that he or she has been the victim of discrimination.

In addition to the written materials, the PHA is required to brief certificate holders on Federal, State, and local fair housing laws. The PHA must provide assistance in the filing of individual complaints and/or refer the complainant to the HUD area office or a local fair housing group. The PHA is required to encourage persons who believe they may have faced discrimination to file both with HUD and local or State agencies, especially where local or State fair housing ordinances call for injunctive relief or where the agency has a good record.¹⁸

Section 8 housing regulations also require that the PHA provide a certificate holder with a full explanation of the locations and characteristics of neighborhoods in which landlords accept Section 8 certificates.¹⁹ Under HUD regulations, inspection of the proposed unit is the responsibility of the local public housing authority.²⁰

2) Certificate Holder's Package in Buffalo and Syracuse

In both Buffalo and Syracuse SAI found that the certificate holders' packages were generally consistent with HUD's regulations. In each city the certificate holder's packet or package contained the proposed lease, a list of prohibited lease provisions, request for lease approval, certificate of family participation, utility allowance schedule, dwelling unit inspection report booklet, lead paint booklet, and fair housing brochure.

The Buffalo packet did not contain a separate description of the concepts of gross family contribution and fair market rents, but this information was included in the certificate of family participation. Housing discrimination complaint forms are not in the Buffalo packet although a fact sheet advises persons who believe they have been the victims of discrimination to file a complaint with the regional HUD office. Thomas Demartino, executive director of the Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc., said that the council provides a referral service for certificate holders who have been the subject of discrimination. The packet did not contain a list of HUD held properties as required by HUD regulations, nor were documents available in Spanish.

In Syracuse the following documents were available in Spanish as well as English: Fair housing booklet, preliminary application form, and general brochure listing HUD held properties.

G. Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan (AFHMP)

Developers and sponsors applying for five (5) or more units of HUD subsidized or unsubsidized housing must submit an affirmative fair housing marketing plan (AFHMP) before an application can be approved. HUD regulations require that Section 8 developers and sponsors carry out an affirmative program to attract buyers and tenants from low income groups regardless of race, national origin, sex, religion, age, and handicap. These regulations apply only to new and rehabilitated units. Specifically, in the AFHMP developers and sponsors agree to take the following steps:

- develop a written affirmative marketing plan that details the procedures that they will follow in soliciting buyers and tenants;

- neither developers, sponsors, nor any builder's agent shall decline to rent or sell any HUD subsidized housing to anyone because of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin;

- make minority and female home buyers aware of the housing offered;

- develop and maintain a nondiscriminatory hiring policy and provide all marketing staff with both written instructions and training on affirmative marketing; and

- display prominently the equal housing opportunity poster in each place of business where HUD appraised or approved housing is offered for rent.²¹

All affirmative fair housing marketing plans are to be included in the HAP and grantee performance reports. According to SAI, the affirmative fair marketing plans for Buffalo and Syracuse were in compliance with HUD area office standards.

3. Section 8 Housing in Buffalo

Buffalo, which was incorporated as a city in 1832, is located in Erie County at the eastern end of Lake Erie on the Niagara River. The land area of the city covers 41.4 square miles. Buffalo grew as a transportation center and a point for the transfer of goods. Manufacturing and heavy industry such as automobile and steel are important to the city. Parts of the Cattaraugus and Tonawanda Indian Reservations are located in Erie County.

According to the 1970 census, the city had a population of 462,768 persons. As shown in Table 1, 20.4 percent were black, 1.6 percent were Hispanic, and 0.5 percent were Native American. The total population declined by 13.1 percent from 532,759 in 1960 to 462,768 in 1970, and the 1980 census indicates a continuing decline of 22.7 percent

to 357,870. Nonetheless, the black, Hispanic, and Native American populations have grown during this period. In 1980, blacks made up 26.6 percent (95,116), Hispanics 2.7 percent (9,499), and Native Americans 0.7 percent (2,383).

The percentage of minorities below the Federal poverty line is significantly greater than the percentage of those who meet HUD eligibility criteria. The Buffalo Housing Assistance Plan projects that in 1980, of the 35,143 lower income renter households eligible for Section 8, 30.3 percent are minority. (For a family of four the maximum income for eligible families is \$16,904.) Of those Section 8 eligible families, a greater percentage of minorities appear to earn at the lower end of the income scale. In 1970, of 12,708 families in the city with incomes below the poverty line, 39.5 percent (5,021) were black and 2.5 percent (318) were Hispanic. Nationally, the income gap is growing between minorities and whites. Although detailed data on the 1980 census are not yet available, it is anticipated that the 1980 census will show that an even higher percentage of minorities in Buffalo are below the poverty line than in 1970.

A. Certificate Holders

1) General

As of 1979, Buffalo had 779 units of Section 8 existing housing. As indicated in Table 2, 56.1 percent were rented by white families, 40.4 percent by black families, 1.8 percent by Hispanic families, 0.4 percent by Native Americans, and 0.5 percent by Asian Americans. A total of 72.4 percent were rented by female headed households, 33.0 percent by elderly persons, and 20.4 percent by the disabled or handicapped. Black and Hispanic certificate holders were represented to a greater degree than their representation in the population according to the 1970 census. However, Hispanics were underrepresented in comparison to their representation in the 1980 census and among those below the Federal poverty line.

Female headed households represented 72.4 percent of the 779 certificate holders and females held a much greater percentage of certificates than males in all subgroups. Of the racial and ethnic female headed households, Hispanics were underrepresented in comparison to the 1980 population but not according to the 1970 recorded population. Out of 159 disabled or handicapped certificate holders, 94 were female; and out of 257 elderly certificate holders, 193 were female.

Whites held the majority of certificates earmarked for the elderly, disabled, and the handicapped. Furthermore, white females dominated the certificate holders who are elderly, disabled, or handicapped heads of households. As shown in Table 3, Hispanics were virtually not represented in these categories.

Table 1

POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Buffalo

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
1970 ^{1/}	462,768	364,367	78.7	94,329	20.4	7,408*	1.6	2,189	0.5	1,883	0.4
1980 ^{2/}	357,870	252,365	70.5	95,116	26.6	9,499**	2.7	2,383	0.7	8,006	2.2

Sources: 1. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, General Characteristics for County Subdivisions, Table 33, p. 211, Race by Sex, for Areas and Places, Table 23, p. 88.

*General Social and Economic Characteristics: Ethnic Characteristics for Areas and Places, Table 81, p. 338. The Hispanic figure of 7,408, "Spanish Speaking persons" listed in Table 81 is derived from a different census report than that of the other figures. It is not additive as part of total figure of 462,768 in the 1970 census. Hispanics are not listed separately but are included in racial and "other" groupings.

2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing, Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, Table 2, p. 23.

**The Hispanic figure of 9,499 is not additive to the total 1980 population of 357,870. Persons listed as "Spanish Origin" are also included in racial and "other" groupings.

Table 2

SECTION 8 CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

Buffalo

TYPE OF CERTIFICATE HOLDER	TOTAL		WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICANS		ASIAN & PACIFIC AMERICANS	
	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
All Families	779	100.0	437	56.1	315	40.4	14	1.8	3	0.4	4	0.5
Female Headed	564	72.4	299	53.0	253	44.9	9	1.6	0	0	3	0.5
Elderly	257	33.0	228	88.7	30	11.7	1	0.4	0	0	0	0
Handicapped	159	20.4	108	68.0	48	30.2	2	1.3	0	0	1	0.6

- Sources:
1. Total numbers given by the Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc. and percentages determined by Commission staff. Numbers and percentages are added horizontally for each type of a certificate holder under each racial and ethnic subcategory.
 2. The total numbers and percentages of types of families are determined vertically. Numbers and percentages are not additive as some of the categories may overlap (i.e. some families are female headed and elderly and therefore some of the female headed are actually figured in the elderly category; other families are elderly and handicapped).

Table 3

ELDERLY AND HANDCAPPED BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AND SEX

Buffalo

	<u>Elderly</u>		<u>Disabled and Handicapped</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
ALL	259	100.0	159	100.0
White	228	88.0	108	68.0
Female	173	66.8	61	38.4
Black	30	11.6	48	30.2
Female	19	7.3	31	19.5
Hispanic	1	0.4	2	1.2
Female	1	0.4	1	0.6
Asian & Pacific American	0	0	1	0.6
Female	0	0	0	0
Native American	0	0	0	0
Female	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

Source: The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

2) Interviews with Certificate Holders

SAI held interviews with approximately 18 certificate holders in the Buffalo Section 8 program. Of those, 17 were black women and one was a Hispanic woman. Two of the 18 were handicapped. The interviews covered a wide range of topics including discrimination in the Section 8 program in the application process, "steering," i.e. efforts to encourage minorities to remain in or move to predominantly minority neighborhoods, assistance provided by the Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc. (HCNF) in the search for Section 8 housing, the certificate holder's attitudes toward the new housing, information on fair housing laws, and remedies for discrimination.

The majority of certificate holders stated that they were satisfied with the location, size, and condition of their apartment, although 56 percent complained that they had not had adequate time to search for the new apartment.

All those interviewed commented that the program was not well advertised. Eighty nine percent of the interviewees learned about the program through word of mouth. In response to a question about methods of disseminating information on the program, the HCNF director remarked that the program was advertised for one day--February 21, 1977--in general circulation, and in black and Hispanic papers in the city. In addition, there were several public service announcements on local radio and television stations for a month. A general mailing on the program was sent to minority ministers and community groups. These actions generated a lengthy waiting list and each family on the list was screened for eligibility on a first-come-first-served basis.

All persons interviewed stated that they were given assistance in the search for housing; however, 83 percent stressed that the lists of vacancies given them were of little use. Ninety-four percent said that they received no followup assistance after moving to the new housing.

No one reported that they had been the victims of discrimination or "steering" (being encouraged or pressured to either stay in their former neighborhood or move to a specific new neighborhood). Sixty-one percent stated they did not know where to turn for help if discrimination occurred and 89 percent said they did not know what type of remedy they were entitled to receive.

B. Mobility and Spatial Deconcentration

According to the Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc. (HCNF), of the 779 holders, 56.4 percent remained in their original housing (439 "stayers") while 43.6 percent found new housing (340 "movers"). As shown in Table 4, whites at 63.4 percent had the highest percentage of families who stayed. However, since most whites in the program

are elderly, the high percentage of stayers is probably a function of the generally lower mobility rate for the elderly, who find it more difficult and dislocating to change residences. Among blacks, there were slightly more movers than stayers; however, more black elderly remained in the same place than moved to new housing. Almost double the number of Hispanics moved than stayed and some persons charged that these statistics indicate that Hispanics were living in the least desirable housing prior to participation in the Section 8 housing program. However, the low number of Hispanics participating makes it difficult to draw any sound conclusions from the data. Although this study measured the mobility of Section 8 participants, it did not evaluate the nature of the move--either the economic or racial/ethnic composition of the new location.

HUD regulations require that spatial deconcentration in terms of the economic composition of individual neighborhoods be achieved.²² However, SAI attempted to measure the degree to which the Section 8 program furthered racial and ethnic as well as economic spatial deconcentration in Buffalo. Because data collected indicate solely the income level of the neighborhoods from and to which participants move, it was impossible to draw any conclusions about the degree of racial and ethnic deconcentration.

In a separate study conducted by the HCNF, of 300 families in the Section 8 program, data indicate that some degree of economic spatial deconcentration is achieved by the program. In that study as well as the SAI study, more white families stayed in place than minority families.²³ (See Table 5). However, as shown in Table 6, more than half the minority families who moved went to neighborhoods which, according to some indicators, were a "step upwards" in terms of the economic composition of the community. In the study, neighborhoods were classified as either "impacted" or suffering a high rate of such factors as joblessness, number of families on public assistance, etc.; "transitional" or experiencing some of these problems or undergoing a negative rate of change; or "non-impacted" or experiencing few or none of the factors. A family could move from a so-called impacted area to a transitional area and be considered moving "upward." However, the reality might be that the family moved from a neighborhood with a high rate of unemployment to a transitional one in which unemployment was increasing and in another year would be no different from the neighborhood which the family had left.

In its report HCNF staff concluded: "where blacks moved to non-impacted or transitional areas, for the most part these were areas with substantial and rapidly increasing numbers of black residents. Almost no blacks moved into the predominantly white, non-impacted areas of the city as a result of Section 8 participation."²⁴

Table 4

**SECTION 8 EXISTING HOUSING
MOVERS AND STAYERS BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AGE, AND HANDICAP**

Buffalo

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Movers</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Stayers</u>	<u>Percent</u>
ALL	779	340	43.6	439	56.4
WHITES	437	160	36.6	277	63.4
ELDERLY	228	56	12.8	172	39.4
DISABLED HANDICAPPED	110	58	13.3	52	11.9
BLACKS	315	168	53.3	147	46.7
ELDERLY	30	10	3.2	20	6.3
DISABLED HANDICAPPED	48	28	8.9	20	6.3
HISPANICS	14	9	64.3	5	35.7
ELDERLY	1	0	0	1	7.1
DISABLED HANDICAPPED	2	2	14.3	0	0
OTHER	13	3	23.1	10	76.9
ELDERLY	0	0	0	0	0
DISABLED HANDICAPPED	1	1	7.7	0	0

Source: Suburban Action Institute, Study of the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program in Buffalo and Syracuse, New York, June 1980.

Table 5

MOVERS AND STAYERS RELATED TO SPATIAL DECONCENTRATION

Buffalo

	<u>White</u>		<u>Minority</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mover	96	55.2	104	82.5
Stayers	78	44.8	22	17.5
Total	174	100.0	126	100.0

Source: The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

Table 6

DIRECTION OF MOVES

Buffalo

	<u>White</u>		<u>Minority</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Move Upward	41	42.7	59	56.7
Move Downward	55	57.3	45	43.3
Total Movers	96	100.0	104	100.0

Source: The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

C. New and Rehabilitated Housing

The Advisory Committee conducted a limited review of new and rehabilitated housing funded by Section 8 in both Buffalo and the surrounding Erie County. This was done in order to obtain a composite of the Section 8 program to make sure that all racial and ethnic groups were adequately represented in the program as a whole and that no one geographic area received a disproportionate number of units at the expense of another.

In 1979, Buffalo had 486 new and rehabilitated units of housing subsidized through Section 8. Of those, 33.7 percent were rented to blacks and 1.6 percent to Hispanics (Table 7).

Of the 486 new and rehabilitated units, 337 or 69.3 percent were earmarked for the elderly. As shown in Table 8, 89.9 percent were held by white occupants, 8.0 percent by blacks, and 0.3 percent by Hispanics. Minority elderly were represented in smaller numbers among the units earmarked for the elderly. However, the lower representation may be appropriate because the black and Hispanic populations are significantly younger than the white population. In 1970, only 8.7 percent of the elderly population was black.

A total of 1,274 new and rehabilitated units were located elsewhere in Erie County outside of the city of Buffalo (Table 9). Approximately, 93.6 percent of the leased units were rented to whites, 4.6 percent to blacks, 0.5 percent to Hispanics, 0.2 percent to Native Americans, and 1.1 percent to members of other minority groups.

4. Section 8 Housing in Syracuse

Syracuse was chartered as a city in 1847. Situated on the Old Erie Canal, it is located in central New York State at the eastern edge of the Finger Lakes near Lake Onondaga. It is just south of one of the Great Lakes, Lake Ontario. The total area of the city is 26 square miles. In the Syracuse area, there are the Onondaga and the Oneida Indian Reservations. Located in the center of a farming region, its manufacturing industries include electronic equipment, electrical appliances, chinaware, automobile parts, and roller bearings.

According to the 1970 census, Syracuse had a population of 197,217. As shown in Table 11, 10.8 percent were black, 1.1 percent Hispanic, and 0.5 percent Native American. Syracuse has experienced a decline in population in 1970 and again in 1980.

According to the 1980 census, the population declined 13.8 percent to 170,105. However, the minority population continued to grow and blacks made up 15.7 percent (26,767), Hispanics made up 1.7 percent (2,819), and Native Americans made up 1 percent (1,722) of the population.

Table 7

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED HOUSING UNITS AND POPULATION

Buffalo

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
Section 8 Units ^{1/}	486	305	62.8	164	33.7	8	1.6	0	0	9	1.9
1970 Population ^{2/}	462,768	364,367	78.7	94,329	20.4	7,408*	1.6	2,189	0.5	1,883	0.4
1980 Population ^{3/}	357,870	252,365	70.5	95,116	26.6	9,499**	2.7	2,383	0.7	8,006	2.2

Sources: 1. The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, New York, New York, Table 23, p. 88.

General Social and Economic Characteristics: Ethnic Characteristics for Areas and Places, Table 81, p. 338.

3. *The Hispanic figure of 7,408 is derived from a different table and census report from that of the other figures and is not additive as part of total census of 462,768. In the 1970 census Hispanics are not listed separately but are included in racial and "other" groupings.
3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, Table 2, p. 23.

**The Hispanic figure of 9,499 is not additive to the total of 357,870. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

Table 8

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED HOUSING UNITS

Buffalo
(Including Erie County)

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
City	486	305	62.8	164	33.7	8	1.6	0	0	9	1.9
County, Excluding City	1,274	1,193	93.6	58	4.6	6	0.5	3	0.2	14	1.1
Total County	1,760	1,498	85.1	222	12.6	14	0.8	0	0	26	1.5
Elderly	337	303	89.9	27	8.0	1	0.3	0	0	6	1.8

Source: The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

Table 9

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED HOUSING UNITS AND POPULATION

Erie County
(Excluding Buffalo)

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
Section 8 Units ^{1/}	1,274	1,193	93.6	58	4.6	6	0.5	3	0.2	14	1.1
1970 Population ^{2/}	650,723	642,476	98.7	4,909	0.8	*	*	*	*	3,338	0.5
1980 Population ^{3/}	657,602	640,830	97.4	7,831	1.2	4,891**	0.7	2,681	0.4	6,260	1.0

Sources: 1. The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, New York, Table 33.

*Figures are unavailable for Hispanics and Native Americans. These figures may be included in racial and "other" groupings.

3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing, Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, p. 8.

**The Hispanic figure of 4,891 is not additive to the total 1980 population of 657,602. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

Table 10

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED HOUSING UNITS AND POPULATION

Erie County
(Including Buffalo)

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
Section 8 Units ^{1/}	1,760	1,498	85.1	222	12.6	14	0.8	0	0	26	1.5
1970 Population ^{2/}	1,113,491	1,006,843	90.4	99,238	8.9	*	*	*	*	7,410	0.7
1980 Population ^{3/}	1,015,472	893,195	88.0	102,947	10.1	14,390**	1.4	5,064	0.5	14,266	1.4

Sources: 1. The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc.

2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, New York, Table 34.

*Figures are unavailable for Hispanics and Native Americans. These figures may be included in racial and "other" groupings.

3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, p.8.

**The Hispanic figure of 14,390 is not additive to the total Erie County population of 1,015,472. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

Table 11

POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Syracuse

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
1970 ^{1/}	197,217	173,611	88.0	21,383	10.8	2,086*	1.1	1,067	0.5	1,147	0.6
1980 ^{2/}	170,105	138,223	81.3	26,767	15.7	2,819**	1.7	1,722	1.0	3,393	2.0

Sources: 1. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, General Characteristics for County Subdivisions, Table 33, p. 214; Race by Sex for Areas and Places, Table 23, p. 88.

*General Social and Economic Characteristics: Ethnic Characteristics for Areas and Places, Table 81, p. 340. The Hispanic figure of 2,086 is derived from a different census report from that of the other figures and is not additive as part of total census of 197,217. In the 1970 census Hispanics are not listed separately but are included in racial and "other" groupings.

2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing, Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, Table 2, p. 29.

**The Hispanic figure of 2,819 is not additive to the 1980 census of 170,105. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

The percentage of minorities who meet HUD eligibility criteria for Section 8 housing was greater than their representation in the population in 1970. The percentage of minorities below the Federal poverty line was greater than the percentage who meet HUD eligibility criteria. In 1970, the combined minority population was 12.3 percent. According to the Syracuse Housing Assistance Plan, of the 14,683 low income renter households eligible for Section 8, 3,142 or 21.4 percent were minority and 7,063 or 48.1 percent were female headed.²⁵

As in Buffalo, of the Section 8 eligible families, a greater percentage of minorities appear to earn at the lower end of the income scale. According to the 1970 census, of the 6,257 families in the city earning below the poverty line, 1,259 or 20.1 percent were black and 69 or 1.1 percent were Hispanic. As in Buffalo, it is anticipated that detailed information on the 1980 census will show that an even greater percentage of minorities were below the poverty line.

A. Certificate Holders

1) General

As of December 1979, Syracuse had 416 units of Section 8 existing housing. As indicated in Table 12, 29.6 percent were rented by white families, 63.7 percent by black families, 2.6 percent by Hispanic families, 3.4 percent by Native Americans, and 88.2 percent by female headed households. Hispanics were represented in the Section 8 existing housing at a slightly higher rate than their current representation in the 1980 census, while blacks and Native Americans had even higher participation rates in existing housing than their representation in the population. Among the 367 female headed households, 237 or 64.6 percent were minority. Minority female headed households made up 67.2 percent of all certificate holders.

2) Interviews with Certificate Holders

SAI staff interviewed 22 certificate holders of Section 8 existing housing units who were selected for the interviews by the Syracuse Housing Authority. Of those, 13 were black women, 2 were black men, 5 were Hispanic women, and 2 were Native American women. Of these, two were disabled and one was elderly.

Almost all persons interviewed said they were satisfied with the size, condition, and location of their new apartment although 40 percent said they were "neutral" about their new neighborhoods.²⁶ They all said that their present home was where they wanted to live.

Ninety percent of those interviewed indicated they thought that the program was not well publicized for racial and ethnic minorities. Seventy five percent of the persons interviewed stated they had learned about the program through word

Table 12

SECTION 8 CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

Syracuse

TYPE OF CERTIFICATE HOLDER 1/	TOTAL 2/		WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		ASIAN OR PACIFIC AMERICANS	
	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
All Families	416	100.0	123	29.6	265	63.7	11	2.6	14	3.4	3	0.7
Female Headed	367	88.2	130(+)	35.4	221(+)	60.2	13(+)	3.5	3(+)	.8	0	0
Elderly	84	20.2	72	85.7	9	10.7	2	2.4	1	1.2	0	0
Handicapped	2	0.5	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1. Total numbers computed by the Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc. from data obtained from the Syracuse Housing Authority. Percentages determined by Commission staff. Numbers and percentages are added horizontally for each type of certificate holder and under each racial and ethnic subcategory.

2. The total numbers and percentages of the types of certificate holders are determined vertically. Numbers and percentages are not additive as some of the categories may overlap (i.e. some families are female headed and elderly and, therefore, some of the female headed are figured in the elderly category; other families are elderly and handicapped).

(+)These racial and ethnic breakdowns are estimates based on previous statistics as of December 1, 1979.

of mouth. In a response to a question about efforts to publicize the Section 8 program, the director of the Syracuse Housing Authority indicated that no public announcements were made either in the media or to community groups. The director said that the housing authority selected names from an existing list and when the list was exhausted a new list would be established. No special effort was made to contact minorities, female headed households, or other special groups because, according to the director, the existing waiting list contained many such families.

All persons interviewed said they had been given assistance in the search for new housing; however, only half found the assistance to be helpful. Four persons said they needed assistance in another language and had received that assistance. Everyone said they received no followup assistance.

No one reported that they had been the victims of discrimination or "steering". However, 55 percent said they did not know where to turn for help if discriminatory acts occurred.

B. Mobility and Spatial Deconcentration

SAI and Commission staff could not obtain data on mobility and spatial deconcentration of certificate holders directly from the Syracuse Housing Authority, the local agency designated to implement the Section 8 program in the city of Syracuse. Without this data it was impossible to determine the number of certificate holders who moved to another unit or stayed in place and whether the program permitted movement from one neighborhood to another.

C. New and Rehabilitated Housing

In 1979, of the 256 new and rehabilitated units in Syracuse as shown in Table 13, all were earmarked for the elderly. Of those rented, 87.9 percent were leased to whites, 11.7 percent were leased to blacks and 0.4 percent were leased to Hispanics. Native Americans were not represented in new and rehabilitated units. Blacks and Hispanics were underrepresented under 1980 census population figures. However, of the 979 units in the county as a whole including the city of Syracuse, blacks were better represented and rented 15.7 percent of the units. Hispanics, who rented 0.6 percent, and Native Americans, who rented 0.1 percent, were significantly underrepresented.

In the county as a whole, blacks made up 6.5 percent, and Hispanics made up 1.0 percent of the 1980 population (Table 14). Of the 669 units earmarked for the elderly in the county, 5.5 percent were rented by blacks and 0.8 percent by Hispanics. Most of the units for the elderly are located in the county and not within Syracuse city limits. Minorities live mainly

Table 13

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED UNITS AND COMPARISON TO POPULATION

Syracuse

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
Section 8 Units ^{1/}	256	225	87.9	30	11.7	1	0.4	0	0	0	0
1970 Population ^{2/}	197,217	173,611	88.0	21,383	10.8	2,086*	1.1	1,076	5.0	1,147	0.6
1980 Population ^{3/}	170,105	138,223	81.3	26,767	15.7	2,819**	1.7	1,722	1.0	3,393	2.0

- Sources:
1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Office, Buffalo, New York.
 2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, Tables 23, 33; General Social and Economic Characteristics, Table 18.

*The Hispanic figure of 2,086 is derived from a different census report from that of other figures and is not additive as part of total census of 197,217. In the 1970 census Hispanics are not listed separately but are included in racial and "other" groupings.

3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, p. 14.

**The Hispanic figure of 2,819 is not additive to the total of 170,105. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

Table 14

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED UNITS AND COMPARISON TO POPULATION

Onondaga County
(Including Syracuse)

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
Section 8 Units ^{1/}	979	796	81.3	154	15.7	6	0.6	1	0.1	22	2.2
1970 Population ^{2/}	472,746	445,970	94.3	22,718	4.8	*	*	*	*	4,058	0.9
1980 Population ^{3/}	463,326	424,782	91.7	30,117	6.5	4,730**	1.0	2,684	0.6	5,743	1.2

Sources: 1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Office, Buffalo, New York.

2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, Table 33, p. 214.

*Figures are unavailable for Hispanics and Native Americans. These figures may be included in racial and "other" groupings.

3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, p. 14.

**The Hispanic figure of 4,730 is not additive to the total of 463,326. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

Table 15

SECTION 8 NEW AND REHABILITATED UNITS AND COMPARISON TO POPULATION

Onondaga County
(Excluding Syracuse)

	TOTAL	WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		NATIVE AMERICAN		OTHER	
		NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
Section 8 Units ^{1/}	723	571	79.0	127	17.6	5	0.7	0	0	20	2.8
1970 Population ^{2/}	275,538	272,359	98.8	1,335	0.5	*	*	*	*	1,844	0.7
1980 Population ^{3/}	293,219	289,559	98.8	3,350	1.1	1,911**	0.7	960	3.3	1,350	0.5

- Sources: 1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Office, Buffalo, New York.
2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics, Table 33, p. 214.

*Figures are unavailable for Hispanics and Native Americans. These figures may be included in racial and "other" groupings.

3. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing Advanced Reports, Persons by Race and Spanish Origin and Housing Unit Counts for Places, p.14.

**The Hispanic figure of 1,911 is not additive to the 1980 census of 293,219. This figure is included in racial and "other" groupings.

within the city of Syracuse and therefore were not significantly underrepresented. Another factor to be considered is the age of the various groups. The black population is significantly younger than the white population; therefore, most of the elderly in the county as a whole are white. In 1970, of 140,442 persons 62 years and older in the county, only 3,347 or 2.4 percent were black. This particular information is not yet available for 1980.

5. Findings and Recommendations

A. Findings

1) If the 1979 participation data are updated in terms of the 1980 census, the following problems exist in Buffalo and Syracuse.

a. In Buffalo, Hispanics were underrepresented in both existing and new and rehabilitated housing units in comparison to their representation in the population;

b. In Syracuse, although minorities were well represented in existing housing programs as compared to their representation in the population, blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans were underrepresented in new and rehabilitated units as compared to their representation in the population.

2) It is unclear the degree to which Section 8 program actually serves the most needy population. In both cities minorities earned less than white families and the percentage of minorities earning below the Federal poverty line was significantly larger than the percentage in the general population or the HUD eligible pool for Section 8. This trend was well documented in 1970 and, although detailed information on the 1980 census is not yet available, it is expected to continue in 1980. It appears that in the new and rehabilitated units in Buffalo and Syracuse minorities were not represented in the Section 8 program equal to their representation among the population below the Federal poverty line. Although HUD regulations stipulate that 30 percent of the Section 8 participants must fall into the lower income bracket determined by HUD as "very low income," this bracket is still significantly above the Federal poverty line, and the 30 percent requirement is not adequate to insure that the program reaches the most needy.

3) In Syracuse, the public housing authority (PHA) did not take adequate steps to assure outreach concerning the existing housing unit program in the community. In Buffalo, the PHA placed one advertisement in the media and made extensive public service announcements on the radio and television for a month. Buffalo made more diligent efforts for outreach than Syracuse which placed no advertisements. Nonetheless, the city of Buffalo

is still using a 5-year-old list. Officials in both cities said that additional advertisement was not necessary because existing lists contained adequate minority representation. The Advisory Committee, however, believes that the use of lists developed by word-of-mouth communication or only very limited advertising precludes many eligible persons from applying and increases the possibility of favoritism in the program.

Although both Buffalo and Syracuse had information and referral programs, these programs were criticized by Section 8 participants. First, they indicated that the PHA failed to provide sufficient useful information about the program and available housing. Second, and equally important, although all of the interviewed respondents in both Buffalo and Syracuse believed they were not subject to overt discrimination in the program, they said they were not informed about remedies available if discrimination occurred.

4) The Advisory Committee was unable to determine conclusively whether the Section 8 program furthered economic spatial deconcentration in Buffalo and Syracuse as required by housing regulations. One study indicated that a limited degree of such deconcentration occurred in Buffalo. No information was available on the Syracuse program.

B. Recommendations

To the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

1) HUD should issue regulations lowering the income limits presently establishing eligibility for Section 8 housing. The current income limits are considerably higher than the Federal poverty guidelines. Due to the continuing income gap between minorities and whites in Buffalo and Syracuse, as well as nationwide, minorities are expected to make up a larger percent of the very poor. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends that HUD lower the present "very low income" level to the Federal poverty level to increase the participation of the very poor in Section 8 housing.

2) HUD should periodically investigate and evaluate Section 8 support programs including outreach, advertising, and fair housing information whether or not complaints have been filed.

3) HUD should take steps to determine whether the Section 8 program is furthering economic spatial deconcentration as required by regulations. If feasible, without imposing undue data collection, HUD should require the local PHAs or other Section 8 sponsors to do a preliminary analysis of the degree of spatial deconcentration achieved by the program.

To the local public housing authorities (PHA):

4) The Buffalo and Syracuse housing authorities should continue to take steps to increase the percentage of Hispanics in those

Section 8 programs where they are underrepresented until their representation is equal to their representation in the HUD eligible pool.

5) The Buffalo and Syracuse PHAs should increase outreach to the landlords and the general public regarding information on the Section 8 programs. In Buffalo where outreach efforts were extensive 5 years ago, the PHA should update its list in a manner fair and equitable to both people on the old list and other persons now eligible. Counseling programs, particularly those regarding fair housing and remedies for victims of discrimination, should be an integral part of their activities.

6) The Syracuse Housing Authority should evaluate and report on the degree of spatial deconcentration achieved by the program.

FOOTNOTES--

¹C.F.R. § 70.306; also 42 U.S.C. § 1437 (Supp. 1975).

²42 U.S.C. § 5301 (Supp. 1975).

³Ibid.

⁴U.S., Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR), The Federal Fair Housing Enforcement Effort, March 1979.

⁵42 U.S.C. § 5301 (Supp. V. 1975).

⁶USCCR, Study of the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program, Buffalo and Syracuse, New York, prepared by Sub-urban Action Institute, June 1980, unpublished, available in USCCR/ERO files (hereafter cited as SAI Report).

⁷42 U.S.C. § 1437, (Supp. 1975). Also see U.S., Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Lower Income Housing Assistance Program (Section 8) Nationwide Evaluation of the Existing Housing Program, 1978 (hereafter cited as HUD (PDR) Section 8 Report).

⁸24 C.F.R. § 570.3048(a) Title 24, Selection and Admission of Assisted Tenants, § 881.603. See also Certificates for Family Participation, § 881.603 and § 882.209.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰24 C.F.R. § 200.600-640 (1977).

¹¹Ibid., August 27, 1979, Federal Register 24 C.F.R. 570.306.

¹²24 C.F.R. 570.906.

¹³USCCR, The Federal Fair Housing Enforcement Effort, March 1979.

¹⁴HUD Regulations, Section 8, Chapter 9, § 882.204(b) and 882.503(b).

¹⁵Thomas Demartino and Neva Fisk, telephone interviews, March 19, 1982.

¹⁶SAI Report, pp. 10-14; pp. 33-37.

¹⁷Edward Starr, telephone interview, March 17, 1981.

¹⁸24 C.F.R. § 570.348 Title 24, Section 8 Existing Housing, § 882.204(b) and 882.503(b). See also 882.209.

¹⁹Ibid. See also SAI Report, pp. 18-19.

²⁰Ibid. HUD Section 8 Existing Housing Program.

²¹42 U.S.C. § 20000-4; 42 U.S.C. § 5301-5317 (Supp. V. 1975).

²²The Community Development Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. § 5301.

²³Buffalo, New York, The Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc., Mobility and Deconcentration of Low-income Households, August 1980.

²⁴Buffalo, New York, Housing Council of the Niagara Frontier Inc., Mobility and Deconcentration of Low-income Households: A Study of Section 8 Housing Assistance Program in Buffalo, New York, p. 11, May 1981, available in ERO files.

²⁵Syracuse, New York, Syracuse Housing Authority, Syracuse Housing Assistance Plan, Housing Assistance Needs of Lower Income Households, Table 2-1, May 1978 - April 1980.

²⁶SAI Report Appendixes.

