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## Abstract

This Moving To Work (MTW) Benchmarking Study has documented a strong and positive correlation between the quality of neighborhoods where assisted families reside and the socioeconomic status achieved by families among the 18,934 households that receive housing assistance from the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). Using an innovative benchmarking technique called MIMS™ (Matrix Information Management System™)<sup>1</sup>, the study examined 109 benchmarking variables, 48 AHA housing developments, and 33 voucher neighborhoods in the Atlanta Metro area. The variables reflected detailed demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of families and the quality of neighborhoods where they reside. The variables were classified into categories. The most important benchmarking categories examined were: the demographic characteristics of the MTW target population, the employment rate and earnings of adults, the income of households, the poverty status and income deficit of households, the extent to which households were dependent upon public assistance, the income of households relative to area median income, the income of retired adults, the extent to which families encountered terminations from housing assistance because of death or other reasons, the amount of violent crimes that occurred in the police beat where

families reside, the census tract characteristics of neighborhoods where families reside, the zip code characteristics of neighborhoods where families reside, the performance of elementary schools in neighborhoods where families reside, the yearly attendance record of public housing assisted students, and the performance of public housing assisted students on standardized tests in math, reading, science, and social science.

The MTW Benchmarking Report has found that the 5.8% of families who live in signature communities (i.e. revitalized mixed-income communities) experienced the most positive outcomes on all benchmarking criteria. The second most positive outcomes were experienced by the 17% of families who used vouchers and resided outside of the City of Atlanta. The third most positive outcomes were experienced by the 37% of families who used vouchers and resided within the City of Atlanta. Finally, the lowest outcomes on every dimension of socioeconomic status were experienced by the 25% of families who resided in affordable communities (i.e. conventional public housing projects). The conclusion is that the neighborhood environment and socioeconomic status is highly correlated.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matrix Information Management System™ (MIMS) is a trademark of Thomas D. Boston.

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<sup>2</sup> This abstract does not include results for the 7% of families who reside in developments designed for the elderly and disabled.