Both sites provide a rich environment to test the HOST framework as a strategy for supporting families and their communities. In Chicago, the housing authority has made large investments in rehabilitating Altgeld’s units, controlling crime, and, to the extent feasible, improving services and amenities in what is now its largest family public housing development—the hope is that HOST will help sustain these investments and help build community. In Portland, the goal is to capitalize on the large investment in new building, infrastructure, and amenities, as well as to support the already-strong levels of community cohesion.

In this brief, we paint a picture of the first two HOST communities, drawing on data from our 2012 survey of adult and youth participants, administered as HOST services were just getting under way at both sites. To better understand the HOST participants’ community perceptions, we compare them with adults from the Urban Institute’s 2001 Chicago Panel Study of families who lived in a deteriorating Chicago public housing development, Madden/Wells Homes, and the 2007 Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration, a study that provided wrap-around case management services to adults in Chicago’s Dearborn and Madden/Wells Homes (Popkin et al. 2002 and 2008).

HOST aims to reduce community violence and disorder through adult and youth services for the most troubled families.

HOST: Helping Families, Building Community
Chantal Hailey and Priya Saxena

The Housing Opportunity and Services Together (HOST) Demonstration is a place-based initiative that seeks to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable residents in public and mixed-income housing developments (see page 8). Public housing communities are among the most disadvantaged in the nation, suffering all the ills of concentrated poverty and chronic disadvantage. HOST is currently under way in four communities. The first two HOST sites, in Chicago and Portland, are very different. Chicago’s Altgeld Gardens (see image 1) is a very large traditional public housing development, racially and economically segregated with high levels of crime and disorder. Portland’s New Columbia and Humboldt Gardens are both new, mixed-income communities housing former public housing residents alongside market rate tenants and homeowners (see image 2; Scott et al. 2013). The HOST framework posits that targeting the most vulnerable families with intensive services for parents and children will help strengthen the community overall—and ultimately reduce costs to the housing authorities and other public systems (Popkin and McDaniel 2013).
HOST Sites Are in Very Different Communities

The Chicago HOST site, Altgeld Gardens, is the Chicago Housing Authority’s (CHA) largest remaining traditional public housing development and is home to approximately 4,000 predominately African-American residents. In 2005, large sections of the Altgeld Gardens homes underwent complete renovation; the CHA updated bathrooms, kitchens, and living spaces, and installed modern lighting fixtures and heating and cooling systems (Chicago Housing Authority 2013). During this rehabilitation, the CHA created a large urban garden, tended to by adult and youth residents, to improve the general livability of the neighborhood (see image 3). Although the buildings and physical environment have substantially improved, the residents of Altgeld Gardens remain in a high-poverty, racially segregated neighborhood (95 percent African American; 58 percent of families report incomes below the poverty level). In addition, this community is extremely isolated, located about 25 miles south of Chicago’s Downtown Loop, inaccessible by Chicago’s expansive public train system, and similarly distant from employment opportunities and services.

According to focus groups held with residents and UCAN, the HOST service providers, case managers in August 2012, residents have access to only two grocery stores. The grocery store on-site sells mainly liquor and processed foods and the other is difficult to access on foot and sells overpriced, low-quality food. There is a community health center on the property, but case managers report that residents do not like to use it because the center’s entrance faces the outside of the property, making residents feel unwelcomed to use its services. Because of concerns over the continued problems with crime and concentrated poverty, the CHA halted the development’s renovations partway through, leaving about one-third of the units vacant and boarded up. The CHA board and resident advocates continue to debate the ultimate future of the development, including whether the CHA will be able to take eminent domain over a space that currently houses a convenience and liquor store to build a new community center (Chicago Housing Authority 2013).

Portland’s HOST intervention is split between two Home Forward (the Housing Authority of Portland) sites: Humboldt Gardens, the largest HOPE VI mixed-income development in Portland, and New Columbia, also a HOPE VI site and an adjacent public housing property, Tamarack Apartments. Portland’s HOST sites differ from Altgeld in many key ways. Most notably, Portland’s sites have unusual racial and ethnic diversity—one-half of residents are native-born African Americans and Caucasians, one in six are Latin American immigrants, 11 percent are African immigrants, and the remaining 22 percent are European immigrants and native-born Latinos, Asians, and others. In 2003, Home Forward dedicated over $120 million to revitalize the New Columbia community, including redeveloping the public housing development as new, mixed-income apartments and homes, and constructing a new small grocery store, school, and boys and girls club. In 2005, Home Forward also used HOPE VI funding to redevelop Humboldt Gardens into an affordable public housing development within its revitalizing North Portland neighborhood (Home Forward 2013). Both Portland sites are physically attractive and boast a range of amenities, including community centers, parks, bus lines, community gardens, and in New Columbia, a new bike park (see image 4). The Portland HOST sites are also located in racially and economically diverse neighborhoods—about 60 percent of residents are white, 20 percent black, and 15 percent Hispanic or Latino. Although less impoverished than Altgeld Gardens, both Portland sites are in moderately poor neighborhoods—about 38 percent of families are under the poverty line. While Portland’s sites could not look more different than Altgeld on the surface, they still house a substantial number of poor, vulnerable families (Scott, McDaniel et al. 2013).

HOST Participants Perceive a Lack of Quality Resources in Their Neighborhoods

Our 2012 survey findings indicate that residents in both HOST’s Chicago and Portland sites are seeing the benefits of the housing authorities’ investments in rehabilitation and

1. UCAN Office in Altgeld Gardens

2. Housing in Humbolt Gardens
management. Relatively few report problems with physical disorder—graffiti, trash, and junk (about 7.8 percent of HOST adults)—compared with the Chicago public housing development residents in our Chicago Panel Study and Demonstration described above (about 50 percent). However, both sites report similar levels of problems with neighborhood services. About one-fourth of HOST participants report quality of schools 26 percent in Chicago and 24 percent in Portland, as well as lack of response to crime from police (22 percent, Chicago, and 17 percent, Portland as big problems—figures comparable to Demonstration participants (28 percent and 24 percent, respectively).

The Portland perceptions of local services are surprising given their new on-site community facilities—grocery stores, schools, and public green spaces; however, recent school quality troubles may have disheartened residents. The school that served Humboldt Gardens’ youth was closed last year, scattering students to schools throughout the city (Swart 2012).

Although the HOST demonstration does not directly address these community deficiencies, case managers connect families with services to help circumvent these resource shortages. Tutoring services assist Portland and Chicago children in reaching their academic pursuits and supplement school sources. Additionally, Home Forward through HOST has partnered with the local schools to lead children to academic success. One New Columbia elementary school aims to help students get back on track by offering a year-round continuity of learning for all children and a longer school day for 4th and 5th grades to help its large immigrant and low-income student population with many cultural and language barriers succeed.

**HOST Participants Perceive Violence and Social Disorder as Major Community Problems**

Like many large public housing properties, Altgeld Gardens has struggled with high rates of crime, drug trafficking, and gang activity. Over the past decade, the CHA has made substantial investments in security, installing police cameras throughout the development, but there are still frequent incidents—such as a shooting that occurred in a nearby convenience store in 2011, leaving four people dead and two wounded (Gorner 2011).

About one-half of Chicago and Portland residents report shooting and violence as big neighborhood problems. This is comparable to the reports of the Chicago Demonstration participants who lived in two deteriorating public housing developments in 2007, but lower than Chicago Panel study residents in 2001, consistent with the fact that CHA’s public housing has improved over time, but that the developments have persistent problems with crime (Popkin et al. 2002 and 2008). Gangs are also a significant issue—about one-half of Altgeld adults and one-third Portland adults cite gangs as a big neighborhood problem. These perceptions may not reflect actual crime rates—ofﬁcial crime statistics document much higher levels of crime in Altgeld’s neighborhood. In 2012, Altgeld’s community area, Riverdale, had an average 1,531 crimes per 1,000, New Columbia’s neighborhood, Portsmouth, had 473 crimes per 1,000; and Humboldt Garden’s neighborhood, Humboldt, had 633 crimes per 1,000. The reports from the Portland participants likely reﬂect a set of high-proﬁle violent incidents in one of the HOST sites, which, according to the case management staff, traumatized community members (Scott, Falkenburger et al. 2013). The disparity in reports of people being attacked or robbed may better reﬂect the difference between the two sites; three times as many Chicago HOST participants (36 percent) indicate this as a big neighborhood problem as did Portland participants (12 percent).

Beyond violent crime, our survey shows that the two HOST communities—especially Altgeld—are struggling with chronic social disorder: drug trafﬁcking, drug use, loitering, and gang activity. One-third of HOST adults in both sites perceive loitering or people just hanging out as a signiﬁcant neighborhood problem (41 percent in Chicago and 35 percent in Portland). In addition, in our survey with HOST youth ages 12–16, over one-half of children say they saw people yelling or cursing in public more than once in the past year. Drug use and trafﬁcking are serious problems in Altgeld—one-half of the Chicago
adults report drug dealing (48 percent) and use (58 percent) are big problems in their community. Likewise, nearly one-half of Altgeld youth report witnessing open drug markets (43 percent) and drug paraphernalia on the ground or in public (35 percent) more than once in the past year. According to resident reports, Portland’s drug problem is less severe, but still significant—one-third of Portland adults report big problems with drug dealing and 42 percent say drug use is a big problem in their community.

A Dangerous Place for Women
Another indicator of community distress is what we have termed a “coercive sexual environment.” Our prior work suggests that a coercive sexual environment can emerge in a neighborhood with chronic violence, low collective efficacy (trust and cohesion among residents), and little social control. In these communities, sexual harassment and degradation, and abuse of women and girls are normalized; that is, part of daily life, while still being shameful and traumatizing for residents (Smith et al. forthcoming; Popkin, Leventhal, and Weisman 2010). Over one-quarter of surveyed HOST adults—the majority of whom are women (93 percent)—report receiving unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures (34 percent in Chicago and 25 percent in Portland); 7 percent said they were grabbed, pinched, or touched in a sexual way; and one in 10 were brushed up against in a sexual way in the past 12 months. Children are exposed to this degrading behavior: One-third of youth said they saw men publicly mistreating women physically (46 percent) or verbally (32 percent) in the past year. Our survey also suggests that this unwanted sexual attention can be debilitating for residents; one in four Chicago adults and 18 percent of Portland participants were afraid to go out because of this unwanted attention.

Concurrent with theories and themes of low collective efficacy aiding and encouraging a more coercively sexual environment, less than one-half of respondents (43 percent) reported people standing up for them when they received this unwanted physical or verbal sexual attention.

While they report serious problems with crime, disorder, and harassment in their communities, HOST youth still say they usually feel safe in their neighborhoods (60 percent in Chicago and 88 percent in Portland). In fact, the portion of Portland youth who feel safe is comparable to the national average in the 1994 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health’s survey with middle and high schoolers (90 percent). Youth’s perceptions of safety, however, may reflect desensitization to violence rather than actual safety because they also report high incidents of victimization and exposure to violence. Over one-quarter of Chicago youth (28 percent) had a knife or gun pulled on them, were cut or stabbed, or were jumped in the past year. In addition, two-thirds of Chicago youth and one-third of Portland youth have heard gun shots more than once in the past year.

Residents Suffer from Poor Mental Health
Social disorder and sexual harassment often cause adults and children to have high levels of stress and trauma and to exhibit emotional and behavioral ailments, as seen in the devastating levels of HOST adult and youth worry and depression explained by Scott, Popkin, et al. (2013) and Jordan and Mireles (2013) (see Popkin and McDaniel 2013). HOST parents have similar rates of anxiety and depression as the “high risk” families in the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration, and the youth anxiety and worry incidences are almost twice the national average in the Portland site and almost three times the average in Chicago. Adults’ experience with sexual harassment, in particular, has a substantial relationship with mental health—for every type of sexual harassment an adult experienced in the past year, they were 66 percent more likely to be depressed and 36 percent more likely to be anxious.9 These alarming levels of mental health issues could be related to HOST families’ instability, including a 50 percent adult unemployment rate, one-half of youth being disengaged in school, and one-half of Chicago youth and one in three Portland youth being suspended from school in past year, and whole community instability. To address these individual impacts of chronic disadvantage and their subsequent community-wide impacts (drug use, crime, and gang activity), Chicago offers adults and youth individual and small group therapy and Portland, similarly, offers small group and family therapy and activities and mentoring for children (Scott, Falkenburger et al. 2013). HOST participants’ fear of violence also provides a challenge to families and youth reaching their self-sufficiency and well-being goals and youth engaging in programming and services. Case managers from Chicago have indicated that potential threats of violence, shootings, bullying, and sexual coercion isolate children in their homes, especially during the summer months. To remedy this barrier, adult case managers and concerned parents have created a “human bus” system in which adults escort groups of young people directly from their homes to activities, classes, or other events.

High Community Cohesion in Portland and “Community Depression” in Chicago
Concentrated disadvantage, social disorder, and chronic violence not only lead to poor outcomes for parents and youth, but also can erode community collective-efficacy—cohesion, shared values, expectations, and trust. Chicago participants’ perceptions of collective efficacy are extremely low, demonstrating this community erosion—only one-quarter of residents believe people in their neighborhood can be trusted (Popkin and McDaniel 2013; Sampson 2012).
Our survey results indicate that the Portland HOST sites are much stronger (see figure 1), with rates comparable to the average Chicago neighborhood—a notable finding given the sites’ ethnic and racial diversity and the language barriers that can keep neighbors from communicating. Altgeld Garden’s low rates of community trust and solidarity, on the other hand, are similar to residents from our studies of other distressed public housing communities in Chicago. High levels of community cohesion, like in the Portland sites, mediate potential neighborhood crime and disorder and serve as a great launching point for the continued neighborhood improvement hoped for through HOST (Sampson 2012).

Youth in both communities are highly connected to their neighbors, indicating high rates of knowing (73 percent in Chicago; 69 percent in Portland) and talking to their neighbors (82 percent in Chicago and 81 percent in Portland), compared with the 1994 national average (70 percent and 78 percent, respectively). Consistent with Sampson’s argument (2012) that strong social connections are not “inherently pro-social,” despite the high rates of neighborhood social interactions and correspondence with their parents, Chicago youth reported lower rates of neighbors looking out for each other (61 percent) than the Portland (79 percent) and national average (71 percent).

The Chicago HOST site aims to remedy its low level of community cohesion and trust by creating a HOST community of families collectively reaching their goals with positive reinforcement and encouragement. Community-wide parties hosted each quarter to highlight and celebrate youth goal setting and achievements are one tactic; this could increase resident interaction and assist in galvanizing...
families amongst shared values, norms, and, possibly, further community activities (Tseng and Seidman 2007).

Looking Ahead: Community Impacts of Intensive Family Case Management Services

The HOST demonstration builds on the substantial investments the CHA and Home Forward have made in both sites. In addition to its new redeveloped homes and neighborhood amenities, the Portland HOST site has a high neighborhood collective efficacy that serves as a viable base for the HOST neighborhood improvement goals. Chicago’s low community cohesion and both sites’ moderate violence and social disorder, however, challenge HOST’s individual and collective sufficiency objectives, as youth and adults suffer from the debilitating emotional and behavioral impacts of violence. Although it is possible that HOST’s individualized efforts will not be able to substantially improve the community distress described by Chicago residents nor advantages already permeating in Portland, at the end of the demonstration we hope these efforts will lead to increased individual and community well-being; violence and disorder will decline as the most troubled families’ lives are stabilized through adult and youth services, HOST participants’ mental health will improve as a result of counseling and decreased neighborhood violence, and Chicago’s community cohesion and trust will increase as neighbors encourage one another’s success (see figure 1). The rehabilitation of public housing, like in Altgeld, and the redevelopment of public housing into mixed-income communities, as in the Portland sites, has proven effects on resident’s housing and neighborhood quality (Popkin and McDaniels 2013); the HOST community impacts will provide a framework to maintain these physical improvements by comprehensively serving the most vulnerable—and possibly most disruptive—families and enhancing their well-being.

Notes

1. Altgeld Gardens is located within Census Tract 5401.01. Data reported from the 2010 Census.


3. Humboldt Gardens is a racially diverse community of white (36 percent), African American (58 percent), and Hispanic or Latino (11 percent) residents. Residents in the New Columbia, Tamarack Apartment Census Tracts are the most diverse among the Chicago and Portland sites (39.7 percent white, 22.4 percent black or African American, and 25.6 percent Hispanic or Latino in New Columbia, and 60.2 percent white, 15.6 percent black or African American, and 16.3 percent Hispanic or Latino in Tamarack). Tamarack Apartments falls under Census Tract 39.01, New Columbia under 40.01, and Humboldt Gardens under 34.01. All data reported from Census 2010.

4. In 2007, 50 percent of the Chicago Case Management Demonstration participants from CHA public housing developments, Madden/Wells and Dearborn Homes, rated shooting and violence as big neighborhood problems. In 2001, 69 percent of Madden/Wells residents rated this as a major neighborhood issue.

5. In the 2011 Long Term Outcomes Study, the 10- and 4-year follow-up with Chicago Panel Study and Demonstration residents, 24 percent of mixed income development and 19 percent of traditional public housing residents who formerly lived in Madden Wells or Dearborn Homes rated gangs as a big neighborhood problem.


7. Portsmouth and Humboldt’s crime rates were calculated using 2012 neighborhood crime data from the City of Portland’s Crime Stats Portal. See http://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/crimestats/index.cfm) and 2010 Census population data http://www.portlandoregon.gov/ooni/6897. Reports of aggravated assault, arson, burglary, homicide, larceny, rape, robbery, sex crime, simple assault, stolen property, theft from vehicle, and vehicle theft are included in these calculations.


9. Instances of adult depression and anxiety were modeled using multivariate logistic regressions. The dependent variable for the depression model was whether a resident indicated being depressed in the past year according to the Compostive International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI), a validated depression screening tool used in the National Health Interview Survey. Indicating a sexual harassment experience in the past year, neighborhood social disorder, and physical health were significant at the .1 level, controlling for age, gender, and immigration status. The dependent variable for the anxiety model was if the adult answered yes to “During the past 12 months, have you ever had a period of time lasting one month or longer when most of the time you felt worried, tense, or anxious?” Indicating a sexual harassment action in the past year, neighborhood social disorder, neighborhood violence, and physical health were significant at the .1 level, controlling for age, gender, and immigration status. The sexual harassment/CSE scale is an additive scale (alpha=7) of residents indicating the following has happened once or more in the past year: unwanted sexually touched or grabbed, unwanted sexual comments, jokes or gestures, brushed against in a sexual way, someone spread sexual rumors, and afraid to go somewhere because of this unwanted sexual attention.

10. Collective Efficacy scales are comparable to Sampson’s 1994 Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, a large-scale, interdisciplinary study of how families, schools, and neighborhoods affect child and adolescent development. City-wide Chicago collective efficacy averages are derived from a sample of 8,782 adult Chicago residents from across 343 neighborhood clusters in 1994. This study was conducted during the height of the drug and violence epidemic in Chicago.

11. Rates are similar to those in the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration 2007 study of residents living in Chicago’s Madden/Wells and Dearborn Homes.

HOST: Helping Families, Building Community

Baseline Survey
During this first year, the Urban Institute fielded two surveys—an adult survey and a youth survey—to capture baseline outcomes for HOST families and their communities. The adult survey asked respondents about themselves and up to two focal children—one between the age of 6 and 11, and another between the age of 12 and 16. Parents with a child in the older age range could then consent for that child to participate in a separate youth survey. Overall, response rate exceeded 80 percent among adults and 90 percent among eligible youth in both sites. The survey table describes the basic characteristics of adults, focal children, and youth respondents.

Survey Response Rates and Respondent Characteristics.

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<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>CHICAGO</th>
<th>PORTLAND</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total HOST families</td>
<td>366</td>
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<td>Adult Survey</td>
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<td>Number of adult respondents</td>
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<td>192.0</td>
<td>107.0</td>
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<td>Percent female</td>
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<td>Mean age</td>
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<td>98.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
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<td>Number of focal children 12–16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent female</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Youth Survey</td>
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<td>Number of youth respondents 12–16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mean age</td>
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Upcoming Research Tasks
A follow up survey will be fielded in Chicago and Portland late in 2014. Before the survey, the Urban Institute will conduct focus groups, interviews staff and program observations, as well as gather program data on HOST participants. The additional data will provide valuable feedback to the sites to continually refine their HOST model, contribute to a robust outcomes evaluation, and provide context for the larger evaluation findings.

References


HOST Demonstration Program and Funding Overview

Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST), launched by the Urban Institute with support of the Open Society Foundations in December 2010, is an innovative approach to coordinating services and programs for adults and youth in public and mixed-income housing. HOST’s core case management component helps parents in low-income neighborhoods confront key barrier to self-sufficiency—poor physical and mental health, addictions, low literacy and education attainment, and historically weak connections to the labor force—while simultaneously integrating services for children and youth. The results of the multisite research project will influence how federal agencies such as the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, local housing authorities, and private developers create place-based, multigenerational programs and supportive environments for their residents.


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Housing Opportunity and Services Together Demonstration

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