

RETHINKING PUBLIC HOUSING
IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY

*A Staff Report of the
Allegheny Institute for Public Policy*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| KEY FINDINGS | 2 |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| THE MAJOR PLAYERS | 4 |
| THE SANDERS DECREE: A FLAWED DECISION | 4 |
| AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY: PRIVATIZATION AND VOUCHERS | 9 |
| CALCULATING THE COST ADVANTAGES | 10 |
| ADVANTAGES OF VOUCHERIZING ACHA'S PUBLIC HOUSING OPERATIONS | 11 |
| DISADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC HOUSING | 13 |
| VOUCHERS ARE AN ESTABLISHED CONCEPT | 14 |
| APPENDICES | 15 |

KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ The Sanders Consent Decree is a flawed legal decision based on faulty analysis that has created an expensive and ill-conceived social-engineering project:
 - * The Decree is dismissive of plaintiff class wishes, ignoring their petition.
 - * A key goal of the Decree, which seeks a 38 to 58 percent black population in Allegheny County public housing, is mathematically impossible to achieve due to the separation of elderly clients (80% white, 20% black) and non-elderly clients (30% white, 70% black) served by the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA).
 - * The premise underlying the non-racially identifiable guidelines is logically erroneous, resulting in government interference at its worst.
- ◆ Rental vouchers should replace public housing:
 - * Providing a household with a public housing unit costs taxpayers on average approximately 2.4 times as much as would an average voucher (\$7465 per year for a public housing unit vs. \$3075 for a voucher).
 - * The voucher program encourages integration. Of the 100 municipalities in Allegheny County where voucher holders reside, 92% would comply with integration guidelines for housing clients implied by the Decree's methodology.
- ◆ ACHA public housing should be completely privatized:
 - * With federal cooperation, the ACHA would get all of the estimated \$60 million resulting from the sale of its public housing stock and could serve approximately 1360 more families with just the interest on that capital.
 - * By selling its public housing and redirecting HUD's low-income housing subsidy expenditures in Allegheny County, ACHA could serve approximately 850 more families. In total, under a complete privatization and voucher program, the ACHA could serve approximately 2200 families more than it does currently with no increase in taxpayer subsidy.
 - * The tax bases of municipalities where public housing currently exists would increase from the transfer of public housing structures to private ownership.

INTRODUCTION

This report deals with two separate but related issues. In part one, the report addresses the Sanders Consent Decree and shows why its provisions are inappropriate and unwarranted. The Consent Decree is a federal judicial ruling which requires, among other things, that the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) construct or purchase homes in communities with low black representation in their populations and move the plaintiffs in the suit into those homes as a remedy for alleged past discrimination and segregation. The implementation of the Decree has created a swirl of controversy.

In part two, the report develops the case for selling the County's public housing and converting all expenditures to vouchers in order to allow maximum client freedom in selecting a home and to provide housing assistance in the most economical manner possible.

Allegheny County Housing Authority's Difficulties

The recent firestorm of controversy over the Allegheny County Housing Authority's purchase of several moderately priced homes for conversion to public housing units has its genesis in a 1988 class-action lawsuit. The named defendants included HUD, the Allegheny County Housing Authority, and Allegheny County. Public housing residents from the Talbot Towers development, in a suit filed by Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS), alleged discriminatory placement of minorities. The settlement, popularly known as the Sanders Consent Decree, calls for 100 housing units to be bought or built for public housing residents to make up for the 210 units that were lost when Talbot Towers was razed in 1990. The residents may be selected to receive a voucher instead of a public housing unit.

As of May 1996, plans called for the eventual purchase of twenty-three single-family homes in the Woodland Hills School District, with the first seven located in Edgewood. As of this writing six sales had closed. The remaining seventy-seven housing units will be scattered throughout other Allegheny County communities. Many will be new multi-family dwellings.

To put it mildly, many elected officials and community organizations have reacted negatively to the Housing Authority's plan to buy homes and take property off the tax rolls. Indeed, political and neighborhood objections have caused the original plans to change. Then too, there are many residents who feel there is great inequity in the government's acquiring homes to give to people who have not worked to earn them. Working and paying for a home for one's family is the "American Dream", and the idea that someone can get a nice home in a nice neighborhood with little or no effort of their own obviously disturbs many local residents.

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THE MAJOR PLAYERS

The plaintiffs of the Sanders Case, represented by Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS), have an interest in making sure that the Sanders Consent Decree is carried out and that HUD does not practice “de jure” discrimination in the future in its public housing operations.

Two other key actors are HUD and the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA). They are responsible for complying with the Sanders Consent Decree as well as for providing the “poor”, as defined by federal guidelines, with safe, sanitary housing for as many as possible.

The most important group throughout this entire process is the poor served by the ACHA and HUD. They seek public housing that is distributed in a non-discriminatory manner which affords them the highest quality housing with the most freedom to live where they choose.

Finally, many Allegheny County communities are involved because of the Sanders Consent Decree. HUD’s preferred strategy of compliance is through “scattered-site” housing in “non-impacted census tracts,” generally interpreted to mean communities with low minority or poor populations. This “scattered-site” policy requires that public housing residents be dispersed throughout the county as a whole. The rationale lies in the belief that concentrations of public housing residents are inherently more prone to social and other ills.

THE SANDERS DECREE: A FLAWED DECISION

The Decree Dismisses Legitimate Concerns

According to the Sanders Decree:

“Defendants [ACHA and HUD] have argued that the interests of the named plaintiffs are not typical of, and in fact conflict with, the interests of the class they purport to represent because certain potential class members have indicated a desire to remain in Braddock and because over 90% of the residents of Talbot Towers signed a petition indicating that they oppose the litigation. The Court does not agree....the Court has reviewed the petition and finds it unpersuasive since there is no indication that the petitioners fully understood the nature of this litigation when they signed the petition.”¹

The Court finding contained in the preceding quotation embodies an arrogant and condescending attitude toward public housing residents. It is an insult to the dignity of the tenants. By so ruling, the Court disagrees with over 90 percent of the residents of the former Talbot Towers, whom this “class-action” lawsuit purports to represent, when they stated that they were opposed to this litigation. Why? Because the original

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¹ P.9 of the Opinion of the Sanders Consent Decree

seven plaintiffs signed affidavits which stated that the overwhelming majority of residents didn't understand what the lawsuit was about.

The Decree has additional negative consequences. First, the Sanders Decree limits the ability of the ACHA to serve needy families. It compels ACHA to spend money inefficiently and for non-housing purposes, resulting in the housing of fewer eligible families. As a direct result of this Decree, the ACHA will use some \$11.3 million for the purchase or construction of 100 additional public housing units.

Additionally, over the next seven years, \$3.5 million will be spent on a Fair Housing Services Center that will overlap many of the functions of the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunities Department at HUD. Furthermore, the Services Center will take on the duties of the public housing authority, including tenant selection and assignment, all with the expressed purpose of complying with the integration requirements of the Decree. These are dollars that could have been better spent in housing poor people, especially when the ACHA Section 8 Director, Debra Martin, estimates the combined Section 8/Public Housing waiting list at more than 5800 applicants.

Moreover, the Sanders Decree limits the flexibility of those who are currently using public housing. The Fair Housing Services Center (FHSC) will focus on relocating people in order to comply with a specified quota of African-Americans in each housing development. As a result, the poor have less choice with regard to where they can live. In particular, the Center will focus on providing "desegregative housing opportunities." These opportunities are defined by the Decree to be offers for suitable units to recipients only in those areas that are not "racially identifiable as to race of the person given the opportunity." That is, if you are black you will not be offered a unit in a primarily black area, but rather in predominantly white areas, and vice versa. Similarly, even though the FHSC might decide to provide a public housing client with a voucher, that client must first undergo "appropriate mobility counseling." Moreover, the client must be informed of at least one Section 8 landlord whose property is located in a "non-impacted" neighborhood, i.e., a community with few minorities and little public housing.

Again, the paternalistic, condescending attitude of this Decree is apparent. Why does the ACHA, HUD, or the Fair Housing Services Center need to direct where the poor choose to live? If they are capable of living independently, shouldn't they have the freedom to choose where they wish to live? The poor are denied that option because that choice might be in a community that does not meet the government's approved racial mix.

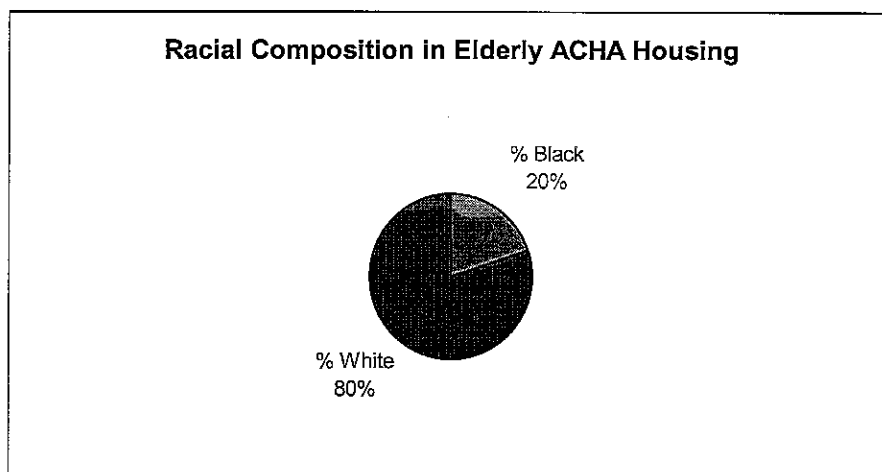
The Decree Uses Faulty Analysis to Establish Guidelines

The Decree requires that the ACHA move aggressively toward a black population ratio of between 38 to 58 percent in each family public housing development. The 38 to 58 percent range was formulated by taking the proportion of African-Americans in the County's public housing and on the waiting lists in 1991 (48 percent) and setting a range of 10 percentage points (20 percent of base) on either side as the maximum and minimum. The argument followed by the Court is that if housing

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projects have racial compositions that differ widely from the combined racial mix in all ACHA housing, one can assume it is the result of discriminatory assignment policies. However, as will be shown, the 38 to 58 percent black population range is inappropriate and does not reflect the underlying facts in this case.

Consider that 1300 minority and 1639 non-minority families currently live in Allegheny County public housing. Of these 2939 families, 1447 live in elderly units: 1162 (80 percent) of these families are white and 285 (20 percent) are black. In the non-elderly units, there are 1015 families (68 percent), while 477 (32 percent) of the non-elderly families in Allegheny County public housing are white.



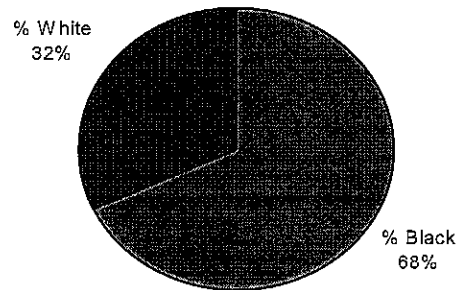
Also, bear in mind that 108 elderly black families live in non-elderly public housing. This is probably due to their length of residence. When a family has stayed in a non-elderly unit for a long time, it can choose to remain in those units, rather than move to an elderly project. Thus, an adjustment is made for these elderly that are living in non-elderly units. So, of the 1555 total elderly residents in public housing: 1162 (74.7 %) are white and 393 (25.3 %) are black. However, this adjustment is largely irrelevant since the elderly cannot be forced to move.

Since the elderly and non-elderly are housed separately and *will continue to be so housed*, it therefore follows that these two groups must be treated separately for purposes of determining whether or not racial compositions in the housing developments are consistent with nondiscriminatory practices.

Obviously, since approximately 70 percent of the non-elderly public housing residents are black, it will be mathematically impossible to achieve the Consent Decree's goal of having a 38 to 58 percent black population in each of the non-elderly projects.

...SINCE APPROXIMATELY 70 PERCENT OF THE NON-ELDERLY PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS ARE BLACK, IT WILL BE MATHEMATICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE CONSENT DECREE'S GOAL OF HAVING A 38 TO 58 PERCENT BLACK POPULATION IN EACH OF THE NON-ELDERLY PROJECTS.

Racial Composition in Non-Elderly ACHA Housing



Thus, the Consent Decree sets an impossible objective while at the same time providing the plaintiffs' attorneys and HUD carte blanche to achieve it. Failure to separate elderly and non-elderly public housing residents for analytical purposes results in a tremendous error in choosing the target for racial balance. If a more reasonable approach to setting a definitional standard had been taken by the plaintiffs and the court, there would be no need to order the purchase or construction of 100 additional units to house the former Talbot Towers residents, especially in light of ACHA's 1995 vacancy rate of nearly 30 percent.²

Moreover, to determine the appropriate racial mix in public housing projects that reflects actual local conditions, one must take into account public housing usage rates by race. For example, 6.4 percent of the County's non-elderly black population (outside the City of Pittsburgh and McKeesport, which have their own housing authorities) reside in public housing, compared to a white ratio of just 0.18 percent. Thus, among the non-elderly, blacks are about 36 times more likely to use public housing than whites.

The implications of the preceding ratios are enormous. Consider the following table showing the percentage of public housing applicants by race in communities with various hypothetical racial mixes and the usage rates for Allegheny County's black and white populations.

...THE EXTREMELY HIGH PUBLIC HOUSING USAGE RATES AMONG BLACKS CAN ACCOUNT FOR THE APPARENTLY DISPROPORTIONATE PERCENTAGE OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN MANY PROJECTS.

² 1995 ACHA PHMAP score report

Non-Elderly Public Housing Racial Composition

Effect of population mix and usage rates by race

6.4 % of blacks and 0.18 % of whites use public housing

| Hypothetical Community Racial Composition | | Theoretical Share of Applicants by Race | |
|---|---------|---|---------|
| % Black | % White | % Black | % White |
| 50 | 50 | 97.3 | 2.7 |
| 20 | 80 | 89.9 | 10.1 |
| 10 | 90 | 79.8 | 20.2 |
| 5 | 95 | 65.2 | 34.8 |

Note that in a community where African-Americans account for just 10 percent of the total population, almost 80 percent of the applicants seeking non-elderly public housing in that community would be African-American.

Why are these numbers important? They show that the extremely high public housing usage rates among blacks can account for the apparently disproportionate percentage of African-Americans in many projects. In fact, using the procedure outlined above, **none** of the municipalities in Allegheny County with public housing projects have a black population in public housing that exceeds the theoretical share. Thus, the high black population in many of the County's non-elderly housing projects does not prove the existence of intended or inadvertent discriminatory practices by the ACHA. Indeed, the "de jure segregation" alleged in the Consent Decree is easily explained by the simple arithmetic of the usage rate and population mix of Allegheny County public housing residents. The question of why blacks use public housing at a much higher rate than do whites is an interesting but irrelevant question.

On another front, the Decree makes an assertion that is highly questionable. The class represented in the lawsuit are those deemed by the Court to have been denied "decent, affordable, and racially integrated housing opportunities."³ When and how did it become a governmental responsibility to guarantee "racially integrated housing opportunities?" While every American should be protected against discrimination, that is a far cry from saying that every American has the right and must be given the opportunity to live in integrated housing. That would require intrusions into individuals' private lives that are unjustifiable. Suppose that there were no white residents in public housing; must whites then be recruited or compelled to live there to satisfy this "newly decreed" right?

What is even more frustrating is that evidence indicates no lack of integrated public housing in the county. "...Over 65% of the [ACHA] public housing projects and units in Allegheny County are located in non-minority concentrated areas..."⁴ Still, the Court is not satisfied with this reasoning because "such projects have been and

...THE HIGH BLACK POPULATION IN MANY OF THE COUNTY'S NON-ELDERLY HOUSING PROJECTS DOES NOT PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF INTENDED OR INADVERTENT DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES BY THE ACHA. INDEED, THE "DE JURE SEGREGATION" ALLEGED IN THE CONSENT DECREE IS EASILY EXPLAINED BY THE SIMPLE ARITHMETIC OF THE USAGE RATE AND POPULATION MIX OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS.

³ p. 2 of the Sanders Consent Decree

⁴ p.15 of the Sanders Consent Decree

remain segregated.”⁵ However, the Court in this instance has misinterpreted the situation because it has used a fallacious definition of “non-racially identifiable”, assuming that the lack of a 38 to 58 percent black population in Allegheny County public housing proves discrimination, deliberate or inadvertent. How can the ACHA and HUD be held responsible for discrimination if the projects were built close to potential clients in the first place-- which they were as a matter of public policy-- or if public housing residents do not wish to move out of their “home” area?

All of this amounts to after-the-fact rule-setting. The ACHA and Allegheny County residents are held accountable and penalized for producing discrimination which does not in fact exist.

AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING WHICH PROVIDES THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE: PRIVATIZATION AND VOUCHERS

At this point, one thing should be crystal clear: a far superior plan would have the ACHA get out of the business of owning and managing public housing properties. A bold solution that breaks from the traditional public housing mindset is needed. A more cost-effective and efficient strategy would be to voucherize the entire public housing program of the ACHA. This program would occur in two steps.

First step: ACHA will sell all its existing public housing. The sale of its 4052 units should realize approximately \$60 million. While any estimate contains an element of speculation, this estimate is based on a real estate appraisal rule of thumb that states that the value of rental property is 4 to 6 times gross annual rent.

In the case of ACHA, an estimate of gross annual rent is based on the total of all Housing Authority expenditures on the projects plus the rent paid by tenants: a grand total of just under \$15 million. A conservative multiplier of 4 is chosen, producing the \$60 million estimate. This would represent a one-time capital inflow to ACHA.

Alternatively, one could derive an estimate of gross rent by multiplying the average annual total rent paid by ACHA voucher recipients (\$4400) by the 3643 livable units to obtain a figure of little over \$16 million. Again, a conservative estimate of market value is in the neighborhood of \$60 million. The actual market value could be higher or lower, but \$60 million seems a very conservative figure for properties with a book value of \$140 million.

Second step: The ACHA would redirect all of the money currently spent on public housing projects to vouchers. There are several ways to estimate the amount spent on public housing. The most conservative estimate would entail summing the direct expenditures by ACHA on public housing and the expenditures on new construction, which are around \$11.6 million. There would be no need for new construction because the ACHA would no longer be in the home ownership business. Vouchers are vastly more cost-effective than traditional public housing and have several other benefits important to recipients. In fact, about 850 additional families could be

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⁵ p.16 of the Sanders Consent Decree

served if ACHA's current public housing expenditures were redirected to a voucher program.

Moreover, the interest proceeds from the \$60 million in new capital gained from the sale of ACHA's housing stock (about \$3.9 million per year, based on current tax-free rates) would also be available to fund vouchers. This interest income alone could support upwards of 1360 vouchers, assuming that the current voucher level is used. All told, it is conservatively estimated that nearly 2200 additional families could be served under this proposal.

CALCULATING THE COST ADVANTAGES

In order to compare the cost of vouchers with the cost of public housing, the total costs of each program are divided by the number of families served by each program.⁶

ACHA spends \$11.7 million per year on vouchers to serve 3800 families, or \$257 per month per family. In addition, these families contribute, on average, 30 percent of their income (\$110 per month) toward rent. Since the average public housing recipient contributes \$167 per month towards rent, the cost to ACHA of converting a public housing resident to a voucher will not exceed the current voucher cost of \$257 per month.

For public housing, there are four separate costs that must be factored in to obtain the true taxpayer cost of providing public housing:

- 1) ACHA expenditures on public housing.
- 2) The amount of money paid as rent by public housing recipients that is dependent upon public assistance.
- 3) Foregone income on the market value of invested capital.
- 4) The amount of foregone property taxes on ACHA-owned properties.

* The ACHA expends \$11.65 million annually, or \$3964 for each of the 2939 families served.

* The total rent paid by residents is \$5.9 million. We assume that 75 percent of this rent (\$4,450,972, or \$1514 per family) represents funds derived from taxpayers.*

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⁶ Allegheny County Housing Authority, Financial Audit for the year ended Sept. 30, 1994, by Maher Duessel

* The 75 percent estimate was derived from information from the tenant profiles of public housing residents within Pittsburgh. Information about the percent of ACHA residents on public assistance was not available.

- * A conservative estimate of foregone capital income is calculated by applying an interest rate of 6.5 percent (the current rate for a municipal bond) which can be used as a reasonable measure for the opportunity cost of capital. Thus, the County has foregone \$3.9 million in capital earnings-- an annual cost per family of \$1,325.
- * Using a conservative estimate of \$16,445 for the market value per public housing unit and applying a typical total tax rate for Allegheny County municipalities (130 mills) to the assessed value puts the annual foregone tax loss per family at \$662.

All told, the cost to the taxpayer per family in public housing is \$7,465 per year (\$622 per month), compared to \$3,067 annually (\$257 per family per month) for vouchers.

Thus, the monthly per-family cost of public housing is approximately 2.4 times the monthly per-family cost of vouchers-- a clear demonstration of the cost advantages of vouchers. These results are in line with the findings of other studies. The White House Office of Management and Budget found that over a twenty-year period, housing vouchers cost an average of nearly \$28,000 per family, while a public housing unit for a family cost nearly \$70,000.⁷

Meanwhile, competition in the private sector forces private landlords to a much higher standard of performance than public housing managers. A vacancy rate of 7 percent is considered high by private standards. In contrast, the ACHA has over 1,200 units vacant out of a possible 4,052, a rate of about 30 percent and an average unit turnaround time of 308 days.

***ADVANTAGES OF VOUCHERIZING
ACHA'S PUBLIC HOUSING OPERATIONS***

Vouchers are clearly superior to public housing in terms of cost and performance. If taxpayers are going to subsidize housing for the poor, housing vouchers will deliver service to the greatest number of residents for the least amount of money. There are at least ten good reasons to recommend a voucher-based program.

1. Providing housing through vouchers is less costly than public housing. Thus, vouchers can serve more people per dollar spent. Under the proposed program, using a very conservative of spending on public housing, the ACHA would be able to serve an additional 2210 households.
2. Vouchers offer opportunities for **voluntary** desegregation. For example, voucher holders currently live in 100 Allegheny County municipalities. In forty of these municipalities, the black-white mix in the voucher holder population is 50-50. In the County as whole, blacks hold 64.5 percent of total vouchers. If we allow a range of 50 to 70 percent as non-racially identifiable, then 92 percent of the

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⁷ "Abolish HUD" by Ronald D. Utt 3/23/95, Heritage Foundation

County's municipalities would be classified as non-racially identifiable. This is a truly remarkable finding which suggests very strongly that vouchers have done an excellent job of achieving integration. Similar national results have been obtained at HUD: "Blacks who receive tenant-based assistance are far less concentrated in high-poverty, high-minority neighborhoods than those who live in public housing."⁸ If the aim of the Decree is to encourage integration, then vouchers are by far the best way to achieve that goal.

3. The advantages of vouchers over public housing have been recognized by HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros. In his "Blueprint for the Transformation of HUD," Cisneros calls for an organized conversion of federal support from public housing to vouchers.
4. Vouchers will allow more choice for public housing recipients. They give people more freedom to live where they want to live and flexibility to move when and if they want to.
5. Vouchers would put property back on the tax rolls and would allow for a one-time capital inflow to ACHA.
6. Vouchers empower recipients by allowing them to remain in areas where they are most likely to succeed. Unlike public housing, where one is assigned a particular unit on a "take it or leave it" basis, vouchers allow the recipient to remain with family, friends and organizations (such as churches) that serve as valuable informal support systems. In fact, HUD believes that "tenant-based assistance [i.e. Section 8 vouchers] is less likely than project-based programs to concentrate needy households in high-poverty neighborhoods."
7. Recipients will likely be safer with vouchers than in public housing. Public housing tends to be isolated and tends to be more prone to social problems. For example, judges are reluctant to evict people from public housing, even if they are dealing in drugs, because public housing is seen as housing of a last resort.⁹ Thus, the law-abiding majority of tenants have to live with the problems created by a small fraction of residents.
8. Vouchers allow for greater flexibility in encouraging the economic advancement of recipients. One possibility would be to model vouchers after medical savings accounts. Currently, recipients have to pay up to 30 percent of their income as rent. However, if the vouchers allow recipients to set aside an amount greater than that 30 percent in an account that would go toward the eventual purchase of a HUD home, such an action would encourage savings and fiscal independence. Other variations on this model are possible. In Britain, for example, public housing authorities adopted a "right-to-buy" model in the early 1980s that greatly encouraged home ownership. We are simply suggesting that HUD and

CURRENTLY, RECIPIENTS HAVE TO PAY UP TO 30 PERCENT OF THEIR INCOME AS RENT. HOWEVER, IF THE VOUCHERS ALLOW RECIPIENTS TO SET ASIDE AN AMOUNT GREATER THAN THAT 30 PERCENT IN AN ACCOUNT THAT WOULD GO TOWARD THE EVENTUAL PURCHASE OF A HUD HOME, SUCH AN ACTION WOULD ENCOURAGE SAVINGS AND FISCAL INDEPENDENCE.

⁸ "Federal Rental Assistance Should Promote Mobility and Choice" Issue Brief Number 5, May 1995, from HUD

⁹ Source: American Alliance for Rights and Responsibilities

the ACHA develop ways to encourage and assist residents who wish to become homeowners.

9. Privatization of public housing has the potential to strengthen minority groups. Ideally, minority groups might form investment consortiums which would be able to buy public housing and manage it successfully. Voucher recipients would be able to rent from and support African-American businesses. Even HUD is promoting the concept. "The Federal Housing Administration will make it easier for nonprofit groups to acquire HUD-owned properties..."¹⁰
10. Voucher holders will receive better service. If the voucher-holder does not like the service and quality of housing that he or she is receiving, then that person can simply move and take their subsidy with them. However, in public housing they would go to the bottom of the waiting list and would effectively lose their subsidy. The competition for voucher-holders would produce a greater supply of available housing for recipients that is possibly more specialized for their particular needs than is currently available under public housing.

Vouchers Have One Drawback

One possible shortcoming of the concept of vouchers is that the program might be too successful in accomplishing its objectives. Vouchers could make the concept of public housing more appealing because of its simplicity. Then too, for some people, public housing perhaps carries a stigma that might keep them from applying. In all likelihood, more people would seek help if they could choose where to live. Thus, any change to a voucher program would require careful scrutiny by HUD and ACHA to ensure that the program is means-tested fairly and not an expanding entitlement.

DISADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC HOUSING

Meanwhile, public housing has several well documented disadvantages.

Public housing structures are typically isolated from the rest of the community. Their social problems are so enormous that public housing projects have been called "zipcodes of pathology." HUD and the ACHA recognize the past failures of public housing and are now pushing scattered-site housing, or single-family dwellings dispersed throughout neighborhoods, as an alternative that will empower public housing residents. Such empowerment is already taking place in the form of vouchers. Thus, there is no reason for the government to build, buy, or own dwelling units.

Public housing projects are more expensive than their private counterparts due to the additional regulations and laws to which a governmental agency or authority such as the ACHA must adhere. In the private sector, a rental management company might hire a construction company as a general contractor to put up a building. However, because of the Pennsylvania Separations Act, the ACHA must hold bids for each

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¹⁰ "Today's FOCUS at HUD" May 20, 1996

part of the job, i.e. have bidding for the plumbing, electrical work, etc. This expensive bidding process is unnecessarily complex and serves to drive up the final cost of the project. Furthermore, by law all workers on government projects must be paid at the "prevailing wage" rate, which in most cases is a relatively high union wage.

VOUCHERS ARE AN ESTABLISHED CONCEPT

There is ample precedent to suggest that the ACHA can successfully privatize and voucherize its public housing operations. Each component has been carried out with positive results and is being promoted by HUD.

Chicago was able to revitalize the South Shore banks through vouchers.¹¹ Local companies were able to fix up units in the area and rent them out. It has been transformed from a decrepit, unkept neighborhood to a thriving well-maintained community. Atlanta, Boston, St. Louis, and Washington D.C. all have some public housing units under private or tenant management and the conditions of projects have improved. Gregory Byrne, director of public housing in Dade County, Florida, plans to privatize thirteen percent of the county's 12,000 units. Overseas, Britain sold off more than a million public housing units under Margaret Thatcher.

HUD also believes that the private sector can be a better landlord than can the government. "The mismanaged Section 8 programs will be privatized, and the use of private and resident managers will be substantially expanded in non-performing public housing agencies."¹² If HUD believes that the private sector can manage those properties and programs more successfully than can the government, then there is no reason for them to object to ACHA adopting the strategy outlined in this report.

CONCLUSION

Our proposal will empower the current recipients of public housing by giving them greater choice and flexibility in their selection of housing;; strengthen residents' social, communal and political ties; increase the tax base of the municipalities where public housing structures are located; drastically increase the number of eligible poor that ACHA can serve and increase the level of service and quality of housing that recipients receive. The interests and needs of those in public housing must be central to any discussion of changes to public housing. Overall, they would greatly benefit from a shift from public housing to vouchers.

...THE INTERESTS AND NEEDS OF THOSE IN PUBLIC HOUSING MUST BE CENTRAL TO ANY DISCUSSION OF CHANGES TO PUBLIC HOUSING. OVERALL, THEY WOULD GREATLY BENEFIT FROM A SHIFT FROM PUBLIC HOUSING TO VOUCHERS.

¹¹ "Public Housing: Subsidies or Vouchers?" by Gary Wolfram Aug. 1, 1994, no. 94-19

¹² "Transformation of all Federal Affordable Housing" HUD document

APPENDIX I: ADDITIONAL FAMILIES THAT CAN BE SERVED

Step 1: Estimate of additional families served if all 4,052 units of public housing stock is sold.

The estimated market value of the properties (\$14,977,838) can be calculated by taking rent and using a multiplier ranging from 4 to 6. The above number is the amount that ACHA spends annually on its public housing and can be treated as an estimation of gross rents.

Estimated total market value using rent multiplier of 4: \$59,911,352

Estimated market value per unit using rent multiplier of 4: \$16,446

Amount of interest that would be earned at 7.0% if the money gained by selling off public housing was invested in 30 year Treasury bills: \$4,193,795

Number of additional vouchers that could be supported by interest income for an average cost of \$3,075: 1,364

APPENDIX II: WHAT WOULD HAPPEN UNDER AN ALL VOUCHER PLAN

Step 2: Estimate of additional families that could be served if public housing monies were redirected to vouchers.

Conservative Estimate

In this estimate, we assume that HUD will keep the funding for public housing and new construction constant, even if it is redirected toward vouchers.

Direct Expenditures by ACHA on Conventional Low-Income Housing Program: \$10,009,553

Total Direct Expenditures by ACHA on New Construction: \$1,644,492

Total Amount of Money that could be redirected to Section 8 vouchers: \$11,654,045

Total Amount of Vouchers that could be supported at \$3,067 per voucher: 3,760

Number of Additional Vouchers that could be supported if expenditures are redirected: 851

Total Number of Additional Vouchers that could be supported, including the number from Step 1 (1,364): 2,215

Liberal Estimate

In this estimate, all HUD contributions to ACHA's public housing and related programs were totalled. It is assumed that funding for the ACHA will remain constant, even though the money is being redirected to vouchers.

Total relevant HUD contributions: \$24,687,753

Total amount of vouchers that could be supported at \$3,075 per voucher : 8,029

Number of additional vouchers that could be supported if expenditures are redirected: 5,090

Total Number of additional vouchers that could be supported, including the number from Step 1 (1,375):
6454

Note: The voucher cost per year per family was calculated by dividing the net expenditures on Section 8 housing (\$11,685,169) by the number of Section 8 ACHA recipients (3,800). All financial information was obtained from the 1994 ACHA financial audit.

APPENDIX III: USAGE RATE CALCULATIONS FOR NON-ELDERLY

As of 1996, ACHA had 1015 black families and 477 white families. According to the Consolidated Plan for Allegheny County for 1995 (a report prepared by the County for HUD), the average number of people per household broke down in the following manner:

For blacks = 2.7 people per household, or 2741 total ACHA public housing residents.
For whites = 2.5 people per household, or 1193 total ACHA public housing residents.

According to 1990 Census data for Allegheny County, 24% of all whites and 14% of all blacks were classified as "elderly."

In Allegheny County (excluding the City of Pittsburgh and McKeesport, which have their own housing authorities), there were 669,827 nonelderly white residents and 42,742 nonelderly black residents. Thus, the public housing usage rates among nonelderly can be calculated in the following manner.

For blacks: $2741/42742 = 0.0641$
For whites: $1193/669827 = 0.0018$

To demonstrate what these usage rates show, we used a hypothetical community of 10,000 residents with various racial mixes.

| % of Blacks | % of Whites | Number of blacks in public housing and the % of total it represents | Number of whites in public housing and the % of total it represents |
|-------------|-------------|---|---|
| 50 | 50 | 320.5 97.3 | 9 2.7 |
| 20 | 80 | 128.2 89.9 | 14.4 10.1 |
| 10 | 90 | 64.1 79.8 | 16.2 20.2 |
| 5 | 95 | 32.05 65.2 | 17.1 34.8 |

APPENDIX IV: BLACK-WHITE POPULATION COMPOSITION IN PUBLIC HOUSING

| <i>Location</i> | Black Residents | White Residents | Total Residents | <i>% Black</i> | <i>% White</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Aspinwall | 2 | 1 | 3 | 66.7 | 33.3 |
| Avalon | 36 | 22 | 58 | 62.1 | 37.9 |
| Baldwin Borough | 9 | 7 | 16 | 56.3 | 43.8 |
| Baldwin Township | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Bellevue | 62 | 61 | 123 | 50.4 | 49.6 |
| Ben Avon | 9 | 8 | 17 | 52.9 | 47.1 |
| Bethel Park | 8 | 8 | 16 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Blawnox | 3 | 3 | 6 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Brackenridge | 30 | 29 | 59 | 50.8 | 49.2 |
| Braddock | 156 | 32 | 188 | 83.0 | 17.0 |
| Braddock Hills | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Brentwood | 20 | 19 | 39 | 51.3 | 48.7 |
| Bridgeville | 8 | 6 | 14 | 57.1 | 42.9 |
| Carnegie | 55 | 41 | 96 | 57.3 | 42.7 |
| Castle Shannon | 46 | 38 | 84 | 54.8 | 45.2 |
| Chalfant | 4 | 4 | 8 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Cheswick | 7 | 7 | 14 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Churchill | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Clairton | 149 | 91 | 240 | 62.1 | 37.9 |
| Coraopolis | 37 | 20 | 57 | 64.9 | 35.1 |
| Crafton | 15 | 12 | 27 | 55.6 | 44.4 |
| Crescent | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Dormont | 44 | 39 | 83 | 53.0 | 47.0 |
| Dravosburg | 2 | 2 | 4 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Duquesne | 182 | 50 | 232 | 78.4 | 21.6 |
| East Deer | 3 | 2 | 5 | 60.0 | 40.0 |
| East McKeesport | 24 | 24 | 48 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| East Pittsburgh | 82 | 56 | 138 | 59.4 | 40.6 |
| Edgewood | 6 | 4 | 10 | 60.0 | 40.0 |
| Elizabeth Borough | 16 | 14 | 30 | 53.3 | 46.7 |
| Elizabeth Township | 20 | 20 | 40 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Emsworth | 3 | 3 | 6 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Etna | 34 | 33 | 67 | 50.7 | 49.3 |
| Forest Hills | 14 | 14 | 28 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Forward | 2 | 2 | 4 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Glassport | 56 | 54 | 110 | 50.9 | 49.1 |
| Glenfield | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Greentree | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Harmar | 4 | 2 | 6 | 66.7 | 33.3 |
| Harrison | 30 | 30 | 60 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Heidelberg | 2 | 2 | 4 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Homestead | 139 | 42 | 181 | 76.8 | 23.2 |
| Ingram | 10 | 9 | 19 | 52.6 | 47.4 |
| Jacksonville | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Jefferson | 4 | 4 | 8 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Leetsdale | 3 | 3 | 6 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Liberty | 12 | 12 | 24 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Lincoln | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| McDonald | 3 | 3 | 6 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| McKees Rocks | 140 | 129 | 269 | 52.0 | 48.0 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|-----|------|------|
| McKeesport | 29 | 14 | 43 | 67.4 | 32.6 |
| Millvale | 30 | 29 | 59 | 50.8 | 49.2 |
| Monroeville | 34 | 25 | 59 | 57.6 | 42.4 |
| Moon | 8 | 5 | 13 | 61.5 | 38.5 |
| Mount Lebanon | 16 | 16 | 32 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Mount Oliver | 89 | 68 | 157 | 56.7 | 43.3 |
| Munhall | 84 | 54 | 138 | 60.9 | 39.1 |
| Neville | 2 | 2 | 4 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| North Braddock | 166 | 38 | 204 | 81.4 | 18.6 |
| North Fayette | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| North Versailles | 61 | 46 | 107 | 57.0 | 43.0 |
| O'Hara | 3 | 2 | 5 | 60.0 | 40.0 |
| Oakdale | 4 | 4 | 8 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Oakmont | 14 | 14 | 28 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Penn Hills | 160 | 49 | 209 | 76.6 | 23.4 |
| Pitcairn | 93 | 92 | 185 | 50.3 | 49.7 |
| Plum | 40 | 38 | 78 | 51.3 | 48.7 |
| Port Vue | 24 | 22 | 46 | 52.2 | 47.8 |
| Rankin | 41 | 11 | 52 | 78.8 | 21.2 |
| Richland | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Ross | 7 | 7 | 14 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Scott | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Sewickley Borough | 5 | 2 | 7 | 71.4 | 28.6 |
| Sewickley Heights | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Shaler | 11 | 11 | 22 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Sharpsburg | 35 | 32 | 67 | 52.2 | 47.8 |
| South Fayette | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| South Park | 11 | 9 | 20 | 55.0 | 45.0 |
| South Versailles | 1 | 1 | 2 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Springdale Borough | 5 | 5 | 10 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Springdale Township | 3 | 3 | 6 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Stowe | 10 | 10 | 20 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Swissvale | 206 | 125 | 331 | 62.2 | 37.8 |
| Tarentum | 44 | 41 | 85 | 51.8 | 48.2 |
| Turtle Creek | 109 | 94 | 203 | 53.7 | 46.3 |
| Verona | 62 | 39 | 101 | 61.4 | 38.6 |
| Versailles | 7 | 5 | 12 | 58.3 | 41.7 |
| Wall | 9 | 8 | 17 | 52.9 | 47.1 |
| West Deer | 4 | 4 | 8 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| West Elizabeth Boro | 4 | 4 | 8 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| West Homestead | 23 | 12 | 35 | 65.7 | 34.3 |
| West Mifflin | 33 | 31 | 64 | 51.6 | 48.4 |
| West View | 35 | 34 | 69 | 50.7 | 49.3 |
| Whitaker | 5 | 4 | 9 | 55.6 | 44.4 |
| White Oak | 9 | 8 | 17 | 52.9 | 47.1 |
| Whitehall | 51 | 48 | 99 | 51.5 | 48.5 |
| Wilkins | 5 | 4 | 9 | 55.6 | 44.4 |
| Wilkinsburg | 766 | 67 | 833 | 92.0 | 8.0 |
| Wilmerding | 61 | 51 | 112 | 54.5 | 45.5 |
| Totals | 3935 | 2168 | | 64.5 | 35.5 |

APPENDIX V: Section 8 Racial and Geographic Breakdown

| | 1960 | % Blacks | 1970 | % Blacks | 1990 | % Blacks | No. of Whites | % Whites |
|--------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|
| | No. of Blacks | % Blacks | No. of Blacks | % Blacks | No. of Blacks | % Blacks | No. of Whites | % Whites |
| Allegheny County | 134122 | 8.2 | 144345 | 9 | 149550 | 11.10 | 1169452.00 | 87.50 |
| Blawnox | 1 | 0.04 | 12 | 0.6 | 5 | 0.32 | 1572.00 | 99.68 |
| Brackenridge | 242 | 4.2 | 99 | 2.1 | 91 | 2.41 | 3682.00 | 97.59 |
| Braddock | 2898 | 23.5 | 2181 | 25 | 2181 | 47.06 | 2454.00 | 52.94 |
| Carnegie | 345 | 2.9 | 193 | 1.8 | 300 | 3.26 | 8893.00 | 96.74 |
| Clairton | 4029 | 21.9 | 3773 | 25.1 | 2557 | 26.60 | 7054.00 | 73.40 |
| Coropolis | 1092 | 11.3 | 1033 | 12.2 | 834 | 12.46 | 5860.00 | 87.54 |
| Duquesne | 2120 | 14.1 | 1847 | 16.2 | 2624 | 31.10 | 5813.00 | 68.90 |
| East Pittsburgh | 204 | 4.9 | 116 | 3.8 | 152 | 7.06 | 2001.00 | 92.94 |
| Homestead | 1354 | 18.1 | 1735 | 27.5 | 1828 | 44.53 | 2277.00 | 55.47 |
| McKees Rocks | 350 | 2.7 | 787 | 6.6 | 1078 | 14.14 | 6544.00 | 85.86 |
| Natrona Heights | 175 | 1.1 | 218 | 1.5 | 246 | 2.11 | 11436.00 | 97.89 |
| North Braddock | 950 | 7.2 | 1194 | 11 | 1609 | 22.95 | 5401.00 | 77.05 |
| Penn Hills | 2509 | 4.9 | 2838 | 4.5 | 7946 | 15.54 | 43180.00 | 84.46 |
| Rankin | 1756 | 34 | 1352 | 35.4 | 1416 | 57.07 | 1065.00 | 42.93 |
| Shaler | 31 | 0.1 | 21 | 0.06 | 68 | 0.22 | 30212.00 | 99.78 |
| Sharpsburg | 97 | 1.6 | 79 | 1.47 | 58 | 1.55 | 3677.00 | 98.45 |
| South Fayette | 698 | 7.4 | 825 | 8.8 | 671 | 6.57 | 9548.00 | 93.43 |
| Springdale | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0.50 | 1776.00 | 99.50 |
| Tarentum | 107 | 1.3 | 78 | 1 | 102 | 1.80 | 5550.00 | 98.20 |
| Turtle Creek | 7 | 0.6 | 15 | 0.2 | 127 | 1.95 | 6397.00 | 98.05 |
| West Mifflin | 1457 | 5.3 | 1550 | 5.5 | 1761 | 7.48 | 21793.00 | 92.52 |
| West View | 3 | 0.03 | 12 | 0.14 | 27 | 0.35 | 7673.00 | 99.65 |
| Wilkinsburg | 726 | 2.4 | 5315 | 19.8 | 11076 | 53.21 | 9740.00 | 46.79 |
| Wilmerding | 121 | 2.8 | 94 | 2.9 | 85 | 3.84 | 2126.00 | 96.16 |
| Ross | 350 | 1.3 | 332 | 1 | 369 | 1.11 | 32772.00 | 98.89 |
| Listed communities | 21622 | | 25699 | | 37220 | 0.16 | 238496.00 | |
| City | 109692 | | 104904 | | 95362 | | 266791.00 | |
| County ex city | 24430 | | 39441 | | 54188 | | 902661.00 | |
| Co ex city ex | 2808 | | 13742 | | 16968 | 0.03 | 664165.00 | |

APPENDIX VI: Section 8 Racial and Geographic Breakdown

| Blacks in Public Housing | Whites in Public Housing | | % Black in P.H. | % Black | <i>Projected</i> | | <i>Projected</i> | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | | | | | % Black | % White in P.H. | % White | % White |
| Households | Households | | | | | | | |
| 1300 | 1630 | | | 11.10 | | | 87.5 | |
| 0 | 90 | Blawnox | 0.00 | 0.32 | 9.04 | 100.00 | 96.7 | 90.9 |
| 1 | 41 | Brackenridge | 2.38 | 2.41 | 49.30 | 97.62 | 97.3 | 50.7 |
| 57 | 9 | Braddock | 86.36 | 47.06 | 97.20 | 13.64 | 52.4 | 2.8 |
| 6 | 6 | Carnegie | 50.00 | 3.26 | 57.00 | 50.00 | 95.9 | 43.0 |
| 235 | 27 | Clairton | 89.69 | 26.60 | 93.50 | 10.31 | 73 | 6.5 |
| 25 | 66 | Coroapolis | 27.47 | 12.46 | 84.90 | 72.53 | 86.8 | 15.1 |
| 108 | 33 | Duquesne | 76.60 | 31.10 | 94.70 | 23.40 | 68.2 | 5.3 |
| 56 | 26 | East Pittsburgh | 68.29 | 7.06 | 74.90 | 31.71 | 92.6 | 25.1 |
| 77 | 196 | Homestead | 28.21 | 44.53 | 96.90 | 71.79 | 54.5 | 3.1 |
| 297 | 186 | McKeesrock | 61.49 | 14.14 | 86.60 | 38.51 | 85.1 | 13.4 |
| 92 | 187 | Natrona Heights | 32.97 | 2.11 | 45.90 | 67.03 | 97.2 | 54.1 |
| 60 | 30 | North Braddock | 66.67 | 22.95 | 92.10 | 33.33 | 76.8 | 7.9 |
| 14 | 72 | Penn Hills | 16.28 | 15.54 | 38.30 | 83.72 | 83.9 | 61.7 |
| 123 | 10 | Rankin | 92.48 | 57.07 | 98.10 | 7.52 | 42.9 | 1.9 |
| 0 | 25 | Shaler | 0.00 | 0.22 | 8.00 | 100.00 | 98.9 | 92.0 |
| 28 | 31 | Sharpsburg | 47.46 | 1.55 | 44.26 | 52.54 | 97.2 | 55.7 |
| 47 | 17 | South Fayette | 73.44 | 6.57 | 73.50 | 26.56 | 92.4 | 26.5 |
| 3 | 75 | Springdale | 3.85 | 0.50 | 16.50 | 96.15 | 100 | 83.5 |
| 17 | 102 | Tarentum | 14.29 | 1.80 | 41.90 | 85.71 | 97.8 | 58.1 |
| 4 | 61 | Turtle Creek | 6.15 | 1.95 | 43.90 | 93.85 | 97.6 | 56.1 |
| 14 | 90 | West Mifflin | 13.46 | 7.48 | 76.10 | 86.54 | 92.2 | 23.9 |
| 5 | 95 | West View | 5.00 | 0.35 | 12.10 | 95.00 | 99.2 | 87.9 |
| 23 | 14 | Wilksburg | 62.16 | 53.21 | 97.80 | 37.84 | 46.2 | 2.2 |
| 6 | 53 | Wilmerding | 10.17 | 3.84 | 61.10 | 89.83 | 95.9 | 38.9 |
| 2 | 97 | Ross | 2.02 | 1.11 | 30.70 | 97.98 | 97.8 | 69.3 |
| 1300 | 1639 | | | | | | | |