



Innovating to End Urban Poverty Conference

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Panel 2: Income II – Other supports Summary

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Respondents

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Moderator

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Alleviating Poverty through Housing Policy Reform

Focus on how to get more from the current budget

- The rapid growth of spending and entitlement programs for the elderly that will occur until there are substantial reforms will create pressure to reduce spending on programs whose budgets are determined each year by Congress.
- Target assistance on poorest families.

Require housing authorities to allow tenants to use portable vouchers or stay in their current housing unless the housing authority decides to sell the project

- The generosity of the voucher subsidy would be set to ensure that the housing authority could pay for the vouchers with the money available.
- Allow housing authorities to sell any of their projects to the highest bidder with no restrictions on its use, to generate the maximum amount of money to provide housing assistance to additional families.

Provide modest subsidies for more households, rather than large subsidies to only a few households

- HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program provides very large subsidies to recipients while offering nothing to others in the same economic circumstances.
- In 2012, a household in Los Angeles with one adult and two children and no countable income was entitled to a voucher subsidy of over \$17,000.

Improving Access to Health Care for the Urban Poor

Proposals to increase health access to the poor population

- Bring low-cost providers into communities where poor reside.
- Increase medical extenders: nurse practitioners and physician assistants.
- Create a new category of providers: primary care technicians. They would work under nurse practitioners or doctors with specialized training to provide care for a limited set of individuals.
- Expand community health centers: they offer traditional primary care-based care and case management. They tend to offer translation in areas in which the population does not speak English, as well as outreach and health education.

Saving resources

- Use only effective outreach practices.
- Increase co-payments for higher income individuals.
- Cap tax subsidy for employer-sponsored insurance. We have done that a little in the Affordable Care Act, but there are more funds that we could garner if we were to reduce that tax subsidy.

Discussion

- There is a need for changing housing voucher programs and an integrated system for people to move out of poverty (e.g., child care services, mental health services, alcoholism services, and so on). Currently working off an outdated model.
- Housing vouchers allow families to move and have better access to resources. However, not everyone can choose where they live.
- One of the biggest barriers for housing policy is the negative incentive that is built into this system that keeps residents less likely to obtain employment to become more self-sufficient-- economically self-sufficient. Because right as soon as they get a job, then rent increases, their SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits go down. This tug-of-war keeps a lot of residents in place.
- Interrelation of issues: housing and health. Housing is often one of the largest problems that families face once they have addressed their hunger situation.
- Better neighborhood design needed: parks are important for obesity prevention.
- Innovation in technology: telemedicine. Many people who do not have access to specialists are able to get it through being on one side of a phone or computer, talking to a health care provider.
- Community-based programs: training of health coaches in colleges, who then go out and help college communities stay healthier. Part of a coordinated effort.