

Understanding Strategies to Support Children’s Access to Opportunity Neighborhoods

Creating Moves to Opportunity (CMTO) aims to improve long-term outcomes of children by evaluating strategies that support Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) families in moving to higher opportunity neighborhoods. Given that many low-income families with children reside in lower opportunity areas in the Seattle-King County area, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and King County Housing Authority (KCHA) are taking part in reducing rental barriers and increasing neighborhood choice through the Seattle-King County CMTO pilot project.

Which strategies most effectively support families with children to move to opportunity areas?

CMTO will provide and evaluate strategies that reduce barriers and level the playing field for families with children trying to access higher opportunity areas. This pilot will provide practice-relevant evidence that informs:

- Local best practices to facilitate higher rates of lease-up among voucher holders in opportunity areas, especially in tight rental markets.
- The design and policies of other public housing authorities’ mobility initiatives.

Neighborhood quality matters

A recent study¹ provides compelling evidence that children who moved to higher opportunity areas had significantly better outcomes than their counterparts:



32% more likely to attend college



\$302,000 increase in total lifetime earnings



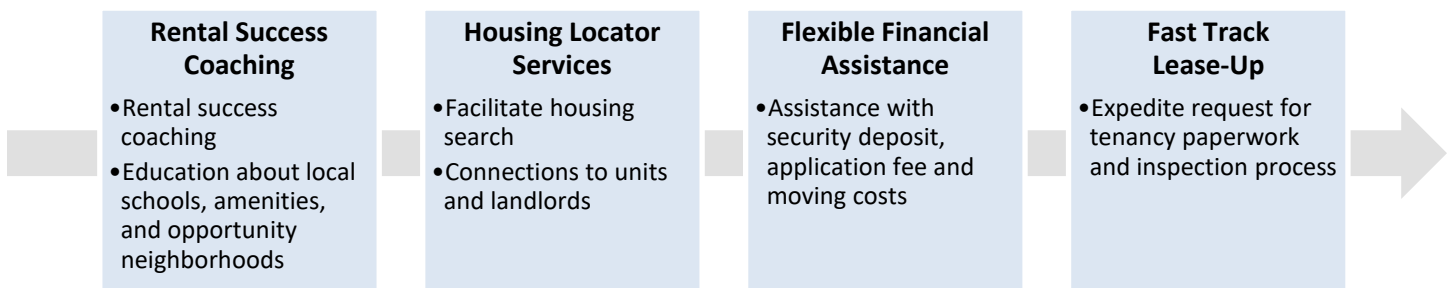
26% less likely to become single parents

Project Framework

To ensure that rental barriers are addressed through locally-relevant and appropriate strategies, CMTO involves frontline staff, families, external researchers and other stakeholders in a 2.5 year process to test and refine approaches.

CMTO will use a randomized study design with a pilot group that receives the CMTO services and a standard group that receives usual HCV services to evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies. Enrollment will begin in late 2017 with initial strategies implemented in 2018. After the incorporation of feedback and lessons learned, individual strategies will be further assessed in 2019.

CMTO Strategies



¹Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence Katz. 2016. “The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Project.” American Economic Review 106 (4).