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Clarksdale HOPE VI Evaluation Project

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BACKGROUND: HOPE VI was designed to revitalize the nation's most severely distressed public housing by demolishing current developments, developing mixed income communities, de-concentrating poverty, helping increase family self sufficiency and resident management of properties (Abt Associates, Inc., 1999).

Purpose: The evaluation of the Clarksdale HOPE VI project will focus on indicators such as: residents' characteristics, business activity and levels of community collaboration, satisfaction of the residents with the process and outcomes, indicators of social welfare of the residents, and residents' perception with regards to the helpfulness of the services provided to the families.

Goals: The HOPE VI Initiative aims to reshape neighborhood in terms of resident characteristics, business activity and levels of community collaboration. The goal of the research evaluation is to measure residents' level of satisfaction with the process and its outcomes, to determine if the social welfare of the residents improved, as well as to assess the impact of supportive services on family self sufficiency and other outcomes for residents.

Research Questions: It is hypothesized that at this baseline stage of the revitalization, residents will score fairly low on measures of mental and physical well-being and economic self sufficiency, but fairly high on measures of sense of community and social network variables. We expect that their scores will be lower than the national sample of people in the same economic bracket due to living in a dilapidated project.

METHODOLOGY:

- This panel study has a quasi-experimental design. Two-to three waves of interview data from the same set of people will be collected.
- Archival data from the HAL needs assessment of each client so as to match those variables with new data that will be collected through interviews with a stratified sample of 414 families from the original 695.
- The stratification criterion utilized is the family structure, more specifically, the presence of children or of the elderly; three groups were identified: -families with children, elderly families, and families without children or elderly members.
- Data will be collected from one adult from each family during a face-to-face interview.
- Data gathered during the first interview will serve as a baseline, and will be reported using appropriate descriptive statistics. In addition, it will be compared to the national figures. Once data is collected at multiple points in time, longitudinal data analyses will be conducted.

KEY FINDINGS: This is a project that is in its early stage. As of February 2005 we have the study approved by the University of Louisville Institutional Review Board. The first batch of interviews will be conducted in March

USEFULNESS TO CABINET: The residents of Clarksdale community are clients of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. The research evaluation project will inform all agencies that provide social services or any other supports about their effectiveness in improving outcomes.