

## **Report: Housing vouchers fall short as anti-poverty tool**

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Housing vouchers have only marginally helped low-income New Orleans families move to neighborhoods with greater educational and job opportunities and less poverty, according to a [new report](#) written by primary author [Stacy Seicshnaydre](#), a Tulane University law professor.



Stacy Seicshnaydre is the William K. Christovich associate professor of law and director of the civil litigation clinic at [Tulane Law School](#).

The use of vouchers to find replacement housing more than tripled in and around Orleans Parish from 2000 to 2010, but the program “has fallen short of its potential,” the report says. Vouchers are meant to provide greater housing choice, which can help residents expand long-term opportunities for socioeconomic mobility.

The analysis, by Seicshnaydre, a nationally recognized fair-housing authority, and

Ryan C. Albright, an urban studies doctoral fellow at Tulane, is part of [The Data Center's](#) "New Orleans Index at Ten," which provides a research perspective on progress after Hurricane Katrina.

The report found encouraging trends: Federal data shows "a sharp drop in the percentage of black voucher households living in neighborhoods of high poverty." Still, it concluded that both before and after Katrina, New Orleanians have less access to low-poverty neighborhoods, because of a shortage of rental units, landlords' reluctance to accept vouchers and evidence of racial bias against voucher users, who most often are black.

"The clustering of 25 percent of Orleans Parish housing vouchers in 5 percent of the parish's census tracts demonstrates the tendency of vouchers to follow the path of least resistance and mirror the racial and economic segregation in other affordable housing programs," Seicshnaydre said.

Under the federal program, which is administered by local public housing agencies, recipients must pay at least 30 percent of their monthly income toward rent and utilities, and the government subsidizes the remainder.

The report recommends several changes to improve the voucher program, including giving low-income families more data and counseling with which to make better-informed housing choices and administering the program regionally to streamline the application process.