

Accompanying Notes to PHA Preferences Web Census Survey Data Documentation

The purpose of this document is to record additional notes related to the methodology of how certain key variables were created, describing the process of creating the master dataset, and etc.

Additional Information on created variables:

1. Number of PHA units: final_total_units/final_hcv_units/final_pubhsg_units

The final_hcv_units and final_pubhsg_units variables were calculated by looking at whether the PHA had indicated that the pre-populated number of units from PIC/TRACS data was approximately correct or not correct in ARI4 (HCV) or ARI5 (Public Housing) questions in the web survey. If the PHA indicated that the number was approximately correct, we kept the PIC/TRACS number, which is found in the "srbi_hcv_units" and "srbi_pubhsg_units" variables. If the number was not correct, we used the PHA's corrected number, given in the variables ARI4A_1 (HCV) and ARI5A_1 (Public Housing). Final_total_units was calculated by summing the final_hcv_units and final_pubhsg_units variables

The final PHA program type (HCV Only, Public Housing Only, Combined) was determined by whether they had at least one HCV and/or Public Housing Unit after the final_hcv_units/final_pubhsg_units variables had been created.

2. Survey Completion (survey_completed & status)

There were two steps to determining whether a PHA was counted as having completed the survey and was included in the "survey_completes" dataset.

- a. The PHA had to have a status of "complete" in the "status" variable
- b. The PHA had to have greater than zero final total units.

The frequency table for "status" in the all_PHA's data set shows that there were 3,249 PHAs that completed the survey ("complete"), 366 PHAs that started but did not finish the survey ("entered, not complete", 12 PHAs that turned out to no longer exist ("no longer exists"), and 429 that did not begin the survey ("not entered").

Of the 3,429 PHAs that completed the survey, there were 20 PHAs that completed the survey but did not have any units after updating their number of units, and these were dropped from the survey_completes dataset. There were also 19 PHAs that were marked as complete but did not complete all of the preferences information in the survey, and these were also dropped from the survey_completes dataset, which results in the 3,210 PHAs counted as completing the survey that were included in the survey_completes dataset.

3. Priority PHAs

There are two Priority PHA variables in the dataset: "Priority_PHA" and "Priority_PHA2". Originally, priority PHAs were defined to be Tier 1 and Tier 2 priority cities for HUD TA or any of the top 25 PHAs in terms of total units. That definition was later modified to be any PHA in a Dedicating Opportunities to End Homelessness (DOEH) city or in the top 25 PHAs in terms of total units and is

reflected in the “Priority_PHA2” variable. This variable has a 1 if the PHA meets these criteria and a zero if it does not.

However, in order to have a sufficient sample size for the follow-up telephone survey group of 50 Priority PHAs with no preferences, we had to use a slightly broader definition that included DOEH, Tier 1+2 priority cities, and top 25 PHAs. This definition is reflected in the variable “Priority_PHA” which has a 1 if the PHA meets this definition of a priority PHA and a 0 if it does not. Thus the two variables represent slightly different definitions of Priority PHAs, with “Priority_PHA” being slightly more expansive since it includes additional cities that are in the Tier 1+2 priority city list that aren’t covered in the DOEH list.

4. Dummy variables

Some dummy variables were created to transform responses that had a 1=Yes, 2=No coding into a 0=No, 1=Yes coding for analytic purposes or to break out a variable with multiple response options into a series of dummy variables to facilitate regression analysis. Created dummy variables have the tag “_dummy” attached to the end of the variable name.

5. PHA Demand (pha_demand_cat)

To create a measure of PHA demand, we looked at the distribution of PHAs’ waitlist turnover ratios (the number of years it would take to clear the PHA’s waitlists assuming a 15% annual turnover rate and no new applicants) and whether their waitlist was closed or not.

The waitlist ratio was calculated as follows: If the PHA had an HCV program, estimated annual turnover was calculated as 15% of the total HCV units (final_hcv_units); if the PHA only had a public housing program, estimated annual turnover was calculated as 15% of the total Public Housing units (final_pubhsg_units). The turnover ratio then was the total size of the program type waitlist (A1_1_1 for HCV and B1_1_1 for Public Housing) divided by that annual turnover rate.

If a PHA had an HCV Program (HCV Only or both HCV and Public Housing), then the HCV waitlist status and turnover ratio were used. If a PHA only had a Public Housing program, then the Public Housing waitlist status and turnover ratio were used.

PHAs were classified as “high demand” if this turnover ratio was in the 75th percentile or higher (7.8 years to clear the waitlist or more) for PHAs completing the survey or if the waitlist had been closed for 24 months or more. PHAs were classified as “moderate demand” if the turnover ratio was between the 25th and 75th percentile (1.5 to less than 7.8 years to clear the waitlist). Otherwise the PHA was classified as “low demand.”

NOTE: The State of Massachusetts has a centralized waiting list for its Section 8 Vouchers that 90 of its PHAs use. Because most of the PHAs that participated in this centralized wait list are relatively small, they have extremely large turnover ratios because the centralized wait list is over 100,000

persons while the number of HCV units for a given program is often under 50. (Source: http://massnahro.org/S8_Home.php)

6. Primary PHA Contact (reference only, not in data documentation dataset)

In some cases, the original primary contact we had in our dataset was updated (as indicated by the NEWCONTACT variable). To create one set of primary contacts, a set of variables with the prefix “prim_contact” (e.g., prim_contact_name, prim_contact_email) was created that used the original contact information if NEWCONTACT=0 and used the updated contact information if NEWCONTACT=1.

Additional information on other variables:

7. ** coding in labels

There occasionally were responses that appeared often enough in “other” responses that our survey team retroactively coded additional response categories for them (such as “working” for an unlimited preference population). These cases are denoted by a double-asterisk appearing at the beginning of the label (e.g., “A.4.1.06. **No limited preference - How do the households for which you have established a limited preference use their vouchers?”).

8. Family Unification Program (FUP) PHAs – “FUP” vs “spv_FUP”

The variable “FUP” was on the survey dataset as a pre-populated variable from an initial HUD data extract. There were 248 total PHAs with FUP vouchers in the study universe according to this variable. This variable was populated from the “FUP” variable in the CoC-PHA crosswalk data in the file “PHA_CoC_2011_PIT_Counts_PRIORITY COMMS_7.26.12.xls”, which had 251 total FUP PHAs, three of which were combined with another PHA for survey administration (GQ001/GQ901, AK001/AK901, VQ001/VQ901), giving 248 PHAs with FUP vouchers.

The variable “spv_FUP” came from a list of PHAs with Special Purpose Vouchers (FUP, MS5, NED, and VASH) sent to Abt by HUD. This file, created on 10/5/2011, had 334 PHAs listed as having FUP vouchers.

The “FUP” variable was used for the report analysis because it came from a more recent file.