

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRACKING AND DATA SYSTEMS  
FOR THE MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY DEMONSTRATION

HUD-0008760

**Implementation of  
Tracking and  
Data Systems for  
the Moving to  
Opportunity  
Demonstration**

**Task Order 5**

**C-OPC-5953**

**OMB Submission**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Part A: Justification</b> .....	1
A.1 Circumstances Making Information Collection Necessary .....	1
A.2 Purpose and Use of Information .....	2
A.2.1 Evaluation Overview .....	2
A.2.2 Purpose of the Data Collection .....	7
A.2.3 Who Will Use the Information .....	7
A.2.4 Instruments—Item by Item Justification .....	7
A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology .....	8
A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication.....	12
A.5 Involvement of Small Entities .....	12
A.6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection .....	12
A.7 Special Circumstances .....	13
A.8 Consultation Outside the Agency .....	13
A.9 Payments to Respondents .....	14
A.10 Arrangements and Assurances of Confidentiality .....	17
A.11 Sensitive Questions.....	17
A.12 Estimate of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs.....	17
A.13 Estimated Recordkeeping and Reporting Cost Burden on Respondents .....	19
A.14 Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government .....	19
A.15 Changes in Burden.....	21
A.16 Plans for Tabulation, Analysis, and Publication.....	21
A.17 Expiration Date Display Exemption .....	21
A.18 Exceptions to Certification .....	22
<b>Part B: Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods</b> .....	23
B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods.....	23
B.2 Information Collection Procedures.....	24
B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates.....	24
B.4 Test of Procedures .....	24
B.5 Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects of the Design .....	24
Appendix A: Canvass of MTO Families	
Appendix B: <i>Federal Register</i> Notice	

# Part A

## Justification

### A.1 Circumstances Making Information Collection Necessary

This request is for an extension of clearance previously granted by OMB for annual canvass instruments for the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing (MTO) program. MTO is a unique experimental research demonstration. Authorized by Congress in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 at the request of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), MTO makes use of Section 8 Rental Assistance, in combination with intensive housing search and counseling services, to learn whether moving from a high-poverty neighborhood to a low-poverty community significantly improves the social and economic prospects of poor families. This carefully designed random assignment research effort operated in five cities: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. The operational phase of MTO ended in February 1999.

The demonstration has two sets of research goals. First, in the short term, the demonstration is comparing the costs and services of the MTO program with the routine implementation of the Section 8 tenant-based rental assistance program. HUD reported to Congress in 1996 on the progress and effectiveness of the demonstration. Second, in the long term, the demonstration will assess the housing, educational, and employment outcomes of families assisted through the program.

In order to ensure that all of the research questions can be answered, the MTO demonstration contains an experimental research design involving the three-way random assignment of participant families to:

- the **MTO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**, which receives Section 8 certificates or vouchers useable only in low-poverty areas (areas with less than 10 percent of the population below the poverty line in 1989), along with counseling and assistance in finding a private unit to lease;
- the **SECTION 8 COMPARISON GROUP**, which receives regular Section 8 certificates or vouchers (geographically unrestricted) and ordinary briefings and assistance from the PHA; and
- the **IN-PLACE CONTROL GROUP**, which receives no certificates or vouchers but continues to receive project-based assistance.

Over a ten-year period, the participants assigned to these three groups will be tracked and periodically surveyed to determine the long-term effects of the demonstration. The experience of families receiving the special MTO assistance can be compared with that of families who receive the "regular" Section 8 treatment. The in-place control group is essential in order to estimate correctly the separate impacts of Section 8 rental assistance by itself and MTO assistance with counseling, providing a benchmark against which the outcomes of the two other groups can be measured.

The MTO evaluation (not included in this request) will examine many facets of family life that may be affected by MTO participation over a ten-year period. The first attempt to interview sample members *in depth* will occur in 2000, and the final evaluation data collection is likely to take place in 2005. In order to maintain address information for the MTO families and to track interim changes in family status, employment status, and receipt of program services, contact is being made periodically with the MTO families through the canvasses that *are* the subject of this request.

*This request is for an extension of clearance originally granted by OMB under clearance number 2528-0189, expiration date January 1999.<sup>1</sup>* The request, which is necessary in order for HUD to maintain the longitudinal panel for MTO research, covers two canvass instruments (one for heads of household and one for family members no longer in the same household), which are being administered to obtain updated location and status information on participants. These canvass instruments are the subject of this Supporting Statement for the Paperwork Reduction Act.

## **A.2 Purpose and Use of Information**

HUD selected Abt Associates Inc. to provide planning and implementation assistance for the MTO demonstration, as well as to track and locate families in the demonstration to support HUD's short- and long-term evaluation needs. The data collected with the canvass instruments will be used by Abt Associates or a successor contractor to maintain current information on families' locations, composition, mobility (i.e., changes in location), employment status, and receipt of MTO services. The data collected will support the long-term evaluation of MTO program outcomes (to be conducted by HUD and/or HUD contractors).

### **A.2.1 Evaluation Overview**

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<sup>1</sup> Extended to April 1999; see Notice of Short Term Extension from Donald R. Arbuckle, OMB, dated 1/19/1999.

At HUD's request, the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration was originally authorized in Section 152 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. The demonstration combines Section 8 rental assistance with intensive housing search and counseling services in order to ease families' relocation to low-poverty communities and help them become self-sufficient. The legislation set the basic parameters of the demonstration as follows:

- **Eligibility** of very low-income families with children residing in public housing or project-based Section 8-assisted housing located in areas with high concentrations of poverty.
- The demonstration was restricted to no more than six **very large cities** with populations of at least 400,000 in metropolitan areas of at least 1.5 million people. Of the 21 cities eligible to participate in MTO, five cities were selected by competitive procurement for the demonstration. They are **Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York;**
- Local programs were created via contracts between the Secretary of HUD and **nonprofit organizations** or **NPOs** to provide counseling and services in connection with the demonstration) and **public housing agencies** or **PHAs** (to administer the rental assistance). The NPOs were funded to help pay for the costs associated with counseling participating families, assisting them in finding appropriate units, and working with landlords to encourage their participation in the MTO program. Local programs had to match federal counseling funds with funds from state or local public or private sources. PHAs received administrative funds for the increased number of Section 8 certificates or vouchers made available through the MTO program.

Prior studies of other mobility programs have been unable to prove whether program impacts were attributable to the program design and services offered, the locational characteristics of communities selected by the families, or the special characteristics of the enrolled families themselves. The MTO demonstration is a research demonstration, carefully designed to answer three sets of questions about the impact of neighborhood on social and economic opportunity for very low-income families:

- What are the impacts of MTO on families' locational choices, and on the housing and neighborhood conditions of families moving to low-poverty neighborhoods?

- What are the impacts of moves to low-poverty neighborhoods on employment, income, education, and social well-being?
- What is the long-term effect of MTO counseling services on improving the social and economic well-being of MTO families?

The mechanism that HUD has chosen to address these questions is an experimental research design involving the three-way random assignment of participants to:

- The MTO experimental group, which receives certificates or vouchers usable only in low-poverty areas, along with counseling and assistance in finding a private unit to lease;
- The Section 8 comparison group, which receives regular Section 8 certificates or vouchers (geographically unrestricted) and ordinary briefings and assistance from the PHA; or
- The in-place control group, which receives no certificates or vouchers and continue to receive project-based assistance.

Over the ten-year evaluation period, the participants assigned to these three groups will be tracked and periodically interviewed to determine the long-term effects of the demonstration.

The experience of families receiving MTO assistance will be compared with that of the families who receive "regular" Section 8 treatment. The in-place control group will provide a benchmark against which the outcomes of the two other groups can be measured.

**Tracking MTO Families.** Abt Associates is supporting the implementation, monitoring, and longitudinal tracking of the MTO demonstration for HUD. Longitudinal panel studies, designed and conducted by Abt Associates and other social science researchers in the past, clearly demonstrate the importance of maintaining panel integrity and minimizing panel attrition. Central to this reduction are effective means of household and member tracking.

For the MTO sample, HUD seeks to keep attrition to an annual rate between 2 and 5 percent.

This is being accomplished through specially designed data and tracking systems. In order to maintain address information for the MTO sample, a comprehensive tracking system has been implemented. Abt Associates and its subcontractor, Fu Associates, have established a data system and an integrated tracking strategy to support the Department's efforts.

Abt Associates and its vendors are conducting passive and active searches for these families.

Passive locating methods (which do not include direct contact with the families) are tried first, including searches of national databases and directory assistance services. Active

locating is used for the most hard-to-locate families and includes telephone tracing by experienced tracers, who attempt to reach families through known family contacts and, as necessary, cultivate other contacts (such as former neighbors) who may know the family's current address.

Families who are not located through these means are traced locally by Abt Associates field interviewers. As each family is located, the interviewers carry out the canvass (described below) to confirm household composition and obtain updated contact information for all family members.

**Annual Canvass of MTO Families.** HUD has determined the need for an annual canvass of all participants, based on the anticipated level of residential mobility in the MTO sample.<sup>2</sup> Periodic direct contact with sample members is a core feature of virtually all longitudinal panel studies, because it is the most reliable method for updating information on the whereabouts of all household members. Other studies that use such regular direct contact include the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experience (NLS).

Under the previous OMB clearance, the MTO canvass was carried out once, in 1997.<sup>3</sup> In this section, as we discuss the plans for the annual canvass in the future, we reference the experience of the 1997 canvass.

Abt Associates (or HUD's successor contractor) will attempt a canvass of all MTO families in the research sample on an annual basis during the tracking period leading up to the MTO mid-term and final evaluations. This annual contact is the principal opportunity to confirm address information, update household composition data and, for a subset, to ask about selected socioeconomic characteristics.

For the annual canvass, HUD seeks to minimize burden by dividing the survey into a short form (data elements required for all participants, principally address and household composition information) and a slightly longer form containing questions on a number of topics of research interest. Those include employment, education, training, and the impact of welfare system changes. Under the present extension request, the longer form would only be used in the last year.

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2 The one-year mobility rate for public housing residents in 1988 was 19.5 percent; for Section 8 recipients, it was 29.5 percent. See Duane T. McGough, *Characteristics of HUD-Assisted Renters and Their Units in 1993* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, March 1997).

3 The 1998 cycle was skipped, due to resource limitations, although all other tracking activities were continued as described in the text.

There are two versions of the canvass instrument:

- The Family Canvass
  - Short Form (locating and tracing information only)
  - Long Form (in addition to the short form elements, collection on employment, education, and training activities)
- The Member Canvass (locating and tracing information only).

Thus, the Family Canvass instrument is designed to be administered either as a simple locating instrument approximately 13 minutes in length, or, by asking the optional sections, as a 19-minute survey that includes other data of interest.

The Member Canvass is necessitated by the fact that some members of MTO families will leave those families during the tracking period. The Family Canvass is designed for administration to the head of the family; if the Family Canvass reveals that one or more members of the family are no longer living with the head, the respondent is asked how to reach these members. The Member Canvass is for family members who are no longer residing with the head. Adults or emancipated children who have left the family are the intended respondents for Part I of this instrument. Part II collects information on younger children now living with a different responsible adult; that adult is the intended respondent for Part II.

Families in the annual canvass are first sent a letter notifying them about the survey and giving them the opportunity to provide updated contact information. (In the 1997 canvass, 37 percent of families returned the requested information.) Then families are telephoned by professional interviewers from the Telephone Research Center. Care is taken to avoid duplication; families contacted by telephone or field interviewers during the locating process are administered the canvass at that time and are not contacted again for the routine canvass.

Exhibit 1 shows the proposed schedule for future use of the MTO canvass instruments. This clearance request covers three cycles: 1999, 2001, and 2002. The intervening year 2000 is when HUD intends to carry out the data collection for the MTO mid-term evaluation. The research plan and instruments for that evaluation have not yet been designed and would be the subject of a separate clearance request.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Timing and Coverage of Proposed Future MTO Canvasses**  
**for which Clearance is Sought**

<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
MTO Canvass	1999	All families and persons in MTO; short form only

Mid-term Evaluation	2000	All families and persons in MTO (not part of this request)
MTO Canvass	2001	All families and persons in MTO; short form only
MTO Canvass	2002	All families and persons in MTO (or a sample); long form only

The canvass instruments are presented in Appendix A.

### **A.2.2 Purpose of the Data Collection**

As mentioned above, prior studies of mobility programs have been unable to demonstrate whether program impacts were the result of the program design and services offered, the locational characteristics of communities chosen by the families, or the special characteristics of the enrolled families themselves. This study has been carefully designed to control for these factors. The purpose of the canvass data collection is to maintain the MTO sample, so that research on MTO families can determine whether moves to low-poverty areas have a measurable impact on the life chances and well-being of those who move. A critical element in the study's success is minimizing attrition in the sample so that the long-term effects of the demonstration can be assessed. HUD has determined that annual attrition rates for MTO must be held to between 2 and 5 percent. Equally important, the methods used to track the panel must minimize intrusiveness from the viewpoint of MTO participants so they continue to cooperate with the MTO research.

### **A.2.3 Who Will Use the Information**

The primary beneficiary of the tracking data will be HUD, which will use the information to ensure panel integrity. The central use of this survey is therefore to maintain panel retention, to ensure the long-term viability of this research demonstration.

The proposed continued canvassing of MTO families will also enable HUD to meet the long-term research needs of the demonstration. The canvass instruments are designed principally to collect tracking information but, in the long version, are also designed to report regularly on the employment and training status of the participants. Results of the 1997 canvasses provided data for assessing the effectiveness of MTO tracking activities to date. More important, they furnish and/or confirm the location of sample members and assure the tracking continuity needed to answer HUD's questions in the MTO Final Report. Long-term impacts of particular interest include housing, employment, and educational achievements of the families assisted under the demonstration program.

### **A.2.4 Instruments—Item by Item Justification**

In this section, we present our justification of these instruments and their contents.

Two canvass instruments were developed, because of the likelihood that some members of MTO families would leave those families during the tracking period. The family canvass is designed for administration to the head of the family; it seeks to update location information (address, telephone number, any upcoming moves, anticipated location) and household composition. The "long form" version of the family canvass includes reasons for moves, employment, education, and training information for the head of the household identified on the initial HUD 50058 Form.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it updates secondary contacts (to be used only if the household cannot later be located directly).

If the family canvass reveals that one or more members of the family are no longer living with the head, the respondent is asked how to reach these members. The second canvass instrument is for family members no longer residing with the head. Adults or emancipated children who have left the family are the intended respondents for Part I of this instrument. Part II is a section concerning younger children now living with a different responsible adult; that adult is the intended respondent.

Exhibits 2a and 2b provide item-by-item justifications of the questions in each of the canvass instruments. Minor changes have been made to them, based on experiences with their use in 1997.

### **A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology**

Abt Associates is using several electronic databases as part of the passive locating effort, in order to minimize respondent burden. The searches of electronic data files include:

- Periodic comparisons of administrative databases; and
- Quarterly searches of electronic data maintained by outside vendors.

These methods do not involve direct contact with the MTO families; they are unintrusive and effective ways to maintain current information on the MTO families. Each strategy is described briefly below.

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<sup>4</sup> This form was filled out when the family joined the MTO program and was initially determined eligible for Section 8.

**Routine Comparisons of Administrative Databases.** Abt Associates has collected periodic extracts of tenant characteristics and certification data (HUD Form 50058 data) for MTO families, from some of the public housing agencies (PHAs) participating in the MTO demonstration for the duration of the tracking period. In order to minimize the burden on the participating agencies, we have requested monthly extracts that coincide with normal reporting cycles at most PHAs. Four of the five agencies have been able to comply with this request. However, in most cases their data cover only the families that moved using Section 8 under MTO. Therefore, this source cannot serve as a substitute for other sources of updated tracking information.

**Exhibit 2-a**

**Canvass Justification**

**Intended Respondent: Family Head of Household**

<b>Section/Question(s):</b>	<b>Content and Reason for Inclusion:</b>
Introduction	Informs respondent of the nature of the questionnaire, referencing the advance letter, the burden estimate, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurance of confidentiality.
Screener	Confirms identity of respondent by confirming the Social Security Number and date of birth.
Questions 1- 3	Confirms current name, address, and telephone number.
Questions 4- 7	Asks about plans to move in the short term. It is expected that few respondents will know where they plan to move, but asking this series elicits valuable information on potential mobility, which is useful for tracking.
<b>Questions 8-8c</b>	<b>[Long version only.]</b> Questions on recent moves will help gauge mobility during the years prior to the mid-term data collection.
<b>Questions 9-12</b>	<b>[Long version only.]</b> Asks about current employment; nature of employment and wages and benefits. Employment episodes may inform the long-term data collection.
<b>Training Module</b>	<b>[Long version only.]</b> Explores training that is separate from educational attainment. Respondents may have received specific job search or skills training that did not lead to certification.
<b>Question 16</b>	<b>[Long version only.]</b> Education attainment since MTO. The baseline survey captured completion of high school or GED; this question asks about other attainment, whether prior or subsequent to MTO enrollment.

<b>Welfare Reform Module</b>	<b>[Long version only.]</b> This series of questions asks about current receipt of certain assistance and whether the respondent has had restrictions placed on receipt of benefits. Important to gauge the impact of welfare reform on MTO families.
Questions 21-22d	Household members are tracked as part of the longitudinal study. These questions are a review of household composition, including updated information on members who have moved from the household. Asks about school enrollment and current employment for members. New questions added to collect more information about new location for departed members. Necessary for tracking.
Questions 23-23h	Gathers basic identifying information on new members of the household so that they can be tracked longitudinally. These members are tracked as long as they remain part of the household.
Secondary Contacts	Collects new contact data. Necessary for tracking.

**Exhibit 2-b**  
**Canvass Justification**  
**Intended Respondents: Movers from Household**  
**Part I: Adults or Emancipated Children**

<b>Section/Question(s):</b>	<b>Content and reason for inclusion:</b>
Introduction	Informs respondent of the nature of the questionnaire, referencing the advance letter, the burden estimate, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurance of confidentiality. Reminds respondent of link to MTO.
Screener	Confirms identity of respondent by confirming date of birth.
Questions 1- 3	Confirms current name, address, and telephone number.
Questions 4- 7	Asks about plans to move in the short term. It is expected that few respondents will know where they plan to move, but asking this series elicits valuable information on potential mobility, which is useful for tracking.
Secondary Contacts	Collects new contacts for respondent. Necessary for tracking; can not rely on contacts from former household.

**INTENDED RESPONDENT: MOVERS FROM HOUSEHOLD**  
**PART II: YOUNG CHILDREN NOW LIVING WITH DIFFERENT ADULT**

Introduction	Informs respondent of the nature of the questionnaire, referencing the advance letter, the burden estimate, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurance of confidentiality. Informs respondent of child's link to MTO.
Screener	Confirms identity of child by confirming date of birth.
Questions 1- 3	Confirms current name, address, and telephone number.
Questions 5- 6	Asks relationship of respondent to child and when child became member of household. These responses help define whether the move is temporary or long term, and whether child is in the care of a family member.
Questions 7- 13	Asks about respondent's plans to move in the short term, and whether child is likely to remain in this household. It is expected that few respondents will know where they plan to move, but asking this series elicits valuable information on potential mobility, which is useful for tracking.

**Secondary Contacts**

Collects new contacts for respondent. Necessary for tracking; cannot rely on contacts from former household.

**Searches of Other Electronic Databases.** The second component of passive tracking for the MTO sample involves use of electronic databases. Using a data file of all MTO families and members over 18, Abt Associates initially checks the National Change of Address Database (which catalogs U.S. Postal Service change-of-address notices). This produces new address information on recent movers in the MTO sample.

Every quarter, a more exhaustive tracing of households with stale address information (over a year old) is conducted,, using other databases maintained by outside vendors.<sup>5</sup> Of particular importance is national credit bureau locating information, which lists address information provided by creditors based on credit applications and ongoing account maintenance. In addition, automated decedent data are searched. Potentially, a variety of other administrative databases maintained by public agencies or proprietary vendors may be consulted for current location data if needed.

The final form of passive tracking of MTO families relies upon standard national telephone directories. These are available on CD-ROM, as are city directories that provide name-to-address and address-to-name (reverse) look-up capabilities.

Three types of sources of location data have been used in MTO thus far: active sources from the enrollment period (the participants and MTO site agencies, using instruments cleared by OMB)<sup>6</sup>; the passive electronic sources just described; and the canvass itself. The 1997 canvass results showed the following:

- Over 60 percent of the MTO families canvassed were still at locations known from the active sources from the enrollment period;
- Another 14.5 percent of the families were at addresses learned from passive sources after the enrollment period; and
- Some 15.5 percent were at new locations learned from the canvass.

The canvass was vitally important, as it confirmed current actual location from among various possible addresses previously collected. While the majority of the known addresses for the 1997 canvass came from the Enrollment Agreements and site agency tracking logs, these sources will recede in importance as the time interval since families joined MTO lengthens. As time goes on, more and more addresses will need to be found through tracking. Passive tracking can generate multiple different addresses for one

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5 Credit databases are searched quarterly. However, a record for each person or family is submitted only once a year.

6 OMB Clearance Number 2528-161, expires November 2000.

family. Only an active contact—like the canvass—can confirm the family's or member's actual location.

#### **A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication**

The purpose of the canvass described under this request for extension of clearance is to obtain current location and status information that cannot be obtained elsewhere, such as changes in household composition, or that is not available elsewhere for all groups in the demonstration. Every effort will be made to avoid duplication. For example, families contacted during the year by telephone or field interviewers as part of the locating process will be administered the canvass at that time and will not be contacted again for the routine canvass.

#### **A.5 Involvement of Small Entities**

No small businesses or other small entities are involved as respondents in the proposed data collection effort. Respondents are all families participating in the MTO demonstration.

#### **A.6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

Studies of the residential mobility of low-income populations demonstrate that the target population for MTO is highly likely to change residential location more often than the general population. Housing mobility is even more likely among the MTO participants who obtain Section 8 assistance. A study of the Section 8 voucher program showed that over 30 percent of those recertified moved at the end of their first year on the program.<sup>7</sup>

Exhibit 3 shows the degree of mobility measured to date for the part of the MTO population that was canvassed in 1997.<sup>8</sup> Among the canvass respondents, a substantial proportion of the families in the MTO experimental and Section 8 comparison groups were able to move through the demonstration, under the Section 8 program. In addition, nearly

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7 Mireille L. Leger and Stephen D. Kennedy, *Final Comprehensive Report of the Freestanding Housing Voucher Demonstration* (Washington, DC: HUD PD&R, May 1990), Vol. 1, pp. 91-94.

8 The 1997 canvass covered all MTO families who joined the demonstration through December 31, 1996. These 2,883 families represent almost two-thirds (62.5 percent) of the full program population, which numbered 4,610 when random assignment was completed in July 1998.

a third of all those who had not used Section 8—including a third of the "in-place" control group—had moved on their own. Thus, depending on the group, from one-third to three-fourths of MTO families who joined the program from 1994 through 1996 had moved by late 1997.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Mobility Facts for MTO Movers**  
**(1997 Canvass Sample)**

	<b>MTO Experimental Group</b>	<b>Section 8 Comparison Group</b>	<b>In-Place Control Group</b>
<i>Families making moves through the MTO program</i> Percent of Total	44.4%	64.0%	N/A
<i>Non-mover families making own moves</i> Percent of Total (Percent of Non-movers)	16.8 (30.2)	10.6 (29.5)	34.1 (34.1)
<i>Combined—All MTO families making moves since program entry</i> Percent of Total	61.3	74.6	34.1

Notes: Table includes only families responding to the 1997 MTO canvass. Data were weighted to minimize overall variance while adjusting for differences in random assignment ratios. "Own moves" may include transfers within public housing.

Sources: PHA and NPO tracking logs, 1997 canvass, other tracking sources.

A primary objective of the MTO tracking data collection is to enable the mid-term evaluation to gather information on as many individuals as possible from the original sample. To maintain a high level of contact, steps must be taken both to minimize attrition and to maximize response rates. Mobility—which is high in the MTO population—is a large potential source of attrition, but its effects can be limited by maintaining current and accurate location information. Carrying out active contact annually helps ensure that location information stays current. For a longitudinal panel still in its early years, this is vital.

## **A.7 Special Circumstances**

The proposed data collection activities are consistent with the guidelines set forth in 5 CFR 1320.6 (Controlling Paperwork Burden on the Public—General Information Collection Guidelines). There are no circumstances that require deviation from these guidelines.

## **A.8 Consultation Outside the Agency**

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the

agency's intention to request an OMB review of data collection activities for the MTO Longitudinal Tracking. The notice was published on February 22, 1999 in Volume 64, Number 34, pages 8586-8587 and provided a 30-day period for public comments. A copy of this notice appears in Appendix B.

The data system and tracking plan were developed and are being implemented with the assistance of Abt Associates Inc., the prime contractor. Key staff members involved in this Task Order are Dr. Judith Feins, Ms. Debra McInnis, Ms. Anne St. George, and Mr. Robert Teitel. Subcontractor Fu Associates is represented by task leader Ms. Dianne Driessen, with assistance from Mr. Hardee Mahoney.

HUD staff have consulted with Abt staff on the design at critical junctures in the study. The purpose of such consultation is to ensure the technical soundness and usefulness of the data collection instruments, as well as the accessibility of the data required for the system. HUD staff also consulted, in 1994, with Dr. Jeffrey E. Zabel of the Census Bureau on attrition rates.

## **A.9 Payments to Respondents**

Payments to respondents were authorized by OMB for the MTO canvass in 1997, following a briefing by HUD of OMB staff concerning the original request for clearance.<sup>9</sup> The incentives were used for household respondents and contributed to a highly successful 1997 canvass (as described further below). *At this time, we are requesting OMB approval to continue use of incentives for household respondents and to expand use of incentives to departed members of MTO families.*

*HUD requests continued use of incentives for household respondents.* The use of incentive payments for the MTO canvass was justified on these grounds:

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<sup>9</sup> Notice of OMB Action, OMB No. 2528-0189, dated August 15, 1997.

- ***The MTO panel is small***—A total of 4,610 households joined the program and were randomly assigned to one of the three groups during the course of the demonstration. Although lease-up is not yet complete, no more than 1,700 of these families (in either the MTO experimental or Section 8 comparison group) will use Section 8 certificates or vouchers issued through the program to move.<sup>10</sup> This population size will permit detection of impacts in the likely size range only if panel attrition is kept very low. Even with no attrition, only fairly large effects could be detected.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, HUD believes it is absolutely necessary to keep panel attrition under 2 percent in the early years of the tracking period. This minimal attrition rate is the core justification for an incentive system.
- ***The MTO population is likely to respond positively to incentive payments***—Previous research has shown that sample members with certain socio-economic characteristics are significantly more likely to become survey respondents when incentive payments are offered. In particular, sample members with low incomes and/or low educational attainment have proven responsive to incentives, as have minority group members. These characteristics are heavily represented in the MTO panel.<sup>12</sup>
- ***Incentive payments could reduce the cost of locating mobile panel members***—Despite passive tracking efforts, Abt Associates is anticipating a modest response to initial canvass mailings, and it is likely that a substantial part of the canvass sample will require field locating efforts at considerable expense to the Federal Government. Based upon prior research experience, the use of an incentive payment is estimated to significantly reduce the need for expensive field locating. In one pretest, use of incentives significantly reduced the number of interviewer actions and amount of interviewer time required to reach sample

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10 Families assigned to the third group, the in-place control group, remain in their current public or Section 8 project-based housing.

11 To illustrate this critical issue, and assuming a 37 percent lease-up rate, we can be confident (at the .05 level with 80 percent power) of detecting a program-induced increase of 9 percentage points in the educational attainment of members of the Section 8 comparison group families, and an increase of 14 percentage points in the educational attainment of members of the MTO experimental group families. These are not small increases, and greater sample attrition would of course increase these minima. Therefore, HUD believes it is absolutely necessary to keep panel attrition under 2 percent in the early years of the tracking period. This minimal attrition rate is the core justification for an incentive system.

12 See among the sources documenting this recommendation: Allen P. Duffer et al., "Effects of Incentive Payments on Response Rates and Field Costs in a Pretest of a National CAPI Survey" (Research Triangle Institute, May 1994), *passim*; see also "National Adult Literacy Survey Addendum to Clearance Package, Volume II: Analyses of the NALS Field Test" (Educational Testing Service, September 1991), pp. 2-3.

members; in fact, in that pretest, the costs of the incentives were fully offset by field savings.<sup>13</sup>

- ***The MTO study period is long***—A 10-year study is needed to provide sufficient time to detect a wide range of program impacts on the education, employment, and social well-being of the families in the program.

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13 See Duffer et al., *ibid.*

- ***The canvass data collection is the key active MTO tracking step***—Except for the 1997 canvass, only passive tracking methods (methods involving no direct contact with the panel members) have been used thus far to maintain location information on the panel. No canvass was conducted in 1998, due to resource limitations. By late 1999, when the next canvass will be conducted, substantial time will have elapsed since enrollment, and other positive incentives to cooperate with the data collection (such as willingness to fulfill the commitment made at enrollment) are likely to be low. At a 1992 OMB-sponsored symposium on the topic of incentive payments, "most participants agreed with the general thesis that `incentives should be considered whenever the positive forces to cooperate are low.'" <sup>14</sup>

Based on OMB's approval, \$10 incentive payments were made to the household heads who completed the 1997 canvass. The response to the canvass effort was very positive, and Abt Associates staff firmly believe the incentive played an important role in their ability to achieve a 91 percent completion rate for the families in the sample. To maintain high response rates in the future, the incentive payments will certainly still be needed.

***HUD is requesting OMB's specific authorization to offer \$10 incentive payments to departed members of MTO households.*** During the 1997 canvass, some 668 persons known to belong to families in the sample were reported to no longer be living with the original family. Efforts to contact these departed members by mail after the family canvass proved far less successful than had the initial pre-canvass mailing; the response rate was much lower (13 percent compared to 37 percent) even when an address was known. And there are a substantial number of these members for whom recent address information is lacking.

Over the course of the MTO demonstration, it is anticipated that an increasing number of members will depart the initial households. This expectation is based on the fact that eligible families had to have children under 18, and a growing number of these children are likely to leave as they reach the age of independence. There will also be some movement of adults out of the households.<sup>15</sup>

Maintaining location information on departed members is of great importance to any longitudinal study, but it is of particular importance for MTO. This is because the program's impacts, as theorized, are likely to be greatest on the children of participating families. Differences in schooling, environment, and employment opportunities may be anticipated for

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14 See *Providing Incentives to Survey Respondents: Final Report* (Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, September 1993), p. 10.

15 For the 1999 canvass, it is projected that there will be 1,321 departed members in the sample (including those detected and not contacted from the 1997 canvass). By the time of the 2001 canvass, this number is expected to grow to nearly 3,000. In 2002, the final year for which canvass authorization is sought, the number may reach 3,700.

the children of families that moved to low-poverty areas, in contrast to those who made ordinary Section 8 moves or remained in public housing. These kinds of differences, as suggested by the Gautreaux program, were the primary source of Departmental and Congressional interest in conducting a research demonstration like MTO.

In light of these factors—the importance of detecting MTO impacts on children, the initial low response of departed members to follow-up efforts in 1997, and the projections of as many as 3,700 departed members by the 2002 canvass—HUD requests OMB permission to make \$10 incentive payments to departed members. The ability to offer such incentives should increase response from these members and may also help locators and interviewers obtain better information on how to contact these individuals.

## **A.10 Arrangements and Assurances of Confidentiality**

The data collected in the MTO canvass will be used for research purposes only (for analysis and for long-term tracking of the research sample). Mailings to potential respondents, and all telephone and in-person introductions, will include assurances that participation is voluntary, that all information will be kept confidential, and that the respondents' answers will be reported as part of a group only.

## **A.11 Sensitive Questions**

Families joining the MTO demonstration were informed that they would be asked to fill out other surveys or be interviewed later. The questions in the canvass are not sensitive in nature.

## **A.12 Estimate of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs**

The MTO family canvass instrument has two forms—a long form (which collects information on employment, education, and training activities, plus locating and tracing information) and a short form (which only collects locating and tracing data). In the 1997 canvass, Abt Associates carried out the plan explained in the initial Request for OMB Clearance: the long form was administered to families enrolled in MTO under the original random assignment ratio, while the short form was administered to the other families in the sample. Exhibit 4 shows the actual respondent burden for the 1997 MTO canvass (the only

one conducted under prior approval of the instrument). It shows that, with a 91 percent response rate, the total burden was 756 hours.

For the canvass activities proposed under this request for clearance, HUD intends to vary the pattern just described. As shown above in Exhibit 1, HUD's research plans for MTO involve conducting the data collection for the mid-term evaluation in the year 2000. Because that data collection will be quite extensive and will include the entire MTO program population (all families and departed members), only the short form canvass will be fielded in the years immediately before and after (1999 and 2001). This will minimize burden while maintaining up-to-date tracking to facilitate high response for the mid-term research.

**Exhibit 4**  
**Actual Respondent Burden: MTO Canvass Through April 1999**

		<b>1997 Canvass of MTO Families</b>
Original Random Assignment Ratio		1,979
Other Enrolled Families		904
Total Sample		2,883
Actual Response Rate		91%
Sample by Form Type:		
	Long Form	1,979
	Short Form	904
Response Burden in Hours: Long Form @ 19 minutes per interview		572
Short Form @ 13 minutes per interview		184
Total Response Burden in Hours		756

Exhibit 5 shows the estimated respondent burden for the three annual canvasses for which clearance is being requested. For the 1999 and 2001 canvass, HUD anticipates covering the full MTO population using the short form. The estimated burden in 1999 is 1,099 hours; with an increased number of departed members, the anticipated burden in 2001 is 1,346 hours.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Estimated Future Respondent Burden: MTO Canvass**

		<b>1999 MTO Canvass</b>	<b>2001 MTO Canvass</b>	<b>2002 MTO Canvass</b>
Total Enrolled Families		4,610 <sup>a</sup>	4,610	4,610
Total Departed Members		1,321 <sup>b</sup>	2,947	3,685
Expected Response Rate	Families	90%	90%	90%
	Members	70%	70%	70%
Sample by Form Type:	Long Form	0	0	8,295 <sup>c</sup>
	Short Form	5,931	7,557	0
Response Burden in Hours:				
Long Form @ 19 minutes per interview		0	0	2,131
Short Form @ 13 minutes per interview		1,099	1,346	0

- a Full MTO program population.
- b Number of departed members is estimated based on data from 1997 canvass. Departed members are cumulative across years.
- c Upon OMB approval, the long form will be adapted for departed members.

For the 2002 canvass, HUD is requesting approval to use the long form for the entire sample. However, it is possible that—based on the findings of the mid-term evaluation—HUD will decide to use the long form for only a sample or subset of the MTO population in that year, using the short form for the rest. Nevertheless, Exhibit 5 shows the burden based on the long-form-only plan, estimated at 2,131 hours.

### **A.13 Estimated Recordkeeping and Reporting Cost Burden on Respondents**

The cost to respondents will be the time required to respond to the survey.

### **A.14 Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government**

Exhibit 6 shows the costs to the federal government of participant tracking activities for the Moving to Opportunity demonstration. The first row of the exhibit shows the actual cost of all tracking and data system activities for the 25-month period ending in October 1998. On an annualized basis, for the full MTO population (4,610 families), the cost was \$123 per family.

The second row of Exhibit 6 shows the actual cost of the 1997 canvass, which totaled \$441,711. For the number of families in that canvass sample (only part of the full MTO population, which was not yet complete at the time), the 1997 canvass cost came to \$154 per family.

Other activities carried out for the MTO demonstration—including passive tracking and maintenance of a tracking database as the core of the MTO data system—contributed to reducing respondent burden and controlling the costs of the 1997 canvass. These activities will also contribute to minimizing burden and costs in the future. Between October 1996 and October 1998, \$52 per enrolled family was spent on passive tracking, and \$103 per enrolled family was spent on the data system supporting the tracking. Contractor Abt Associates has refined the methods of passive tracking and brought down the associated costs over time. However, passive tracking often produces information about multiple possible locations for the same MTO family or member. Thus, it still requires periodic canvasses to confirm their location.

The last row of Exhibit 6 shows *estimated costs* for the three MTO canvass cycles covered in this request for OMB clearance. These estimates were prepared by HUD's current Contractor, Abt Associates, although HUD has not yet selected a contractor to carry out the 1999 data collection or later canvasses. Therefore, the estimates will be refined in the future.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Actual and Estimated Costs to the Federal Government**

Line Item	Cost
<i>Total Cost of MTO Tracking and Data System (Oct. 1996-Oct. 1998)</i>	\$1,179,520
Cost Per Enrolled Family	\$256
Annualized Cost Per Enrolled Family	\$123
<i>Actual Cost of 1997 MTO Canvass</i>	
1997 Canvass Data Collection Total Cost (including Incentive Payments)	\$ 444,711
Number of Enrolled Families in 1997 Canvass	2,883
Cost Per Enrolled Family in Canvass	\$154
<i>Estimated Cost of Future MTO Canvass Data Collection (including Incentive Payments)</i>	
1999 Canvass Data Collection Estimated Total Cost	\$830,000
Number of Enrolled Families in 1999-2002 Canvasses	4,610
Estimated Cost Per Enrolled Family	\$180
2001 Canvass Data Collection Estimated Total Cost	\$990,000
Estimated Cost Per Enrolled Family	\$215
2002 Canvass Data Collection Estimated Total Cost	\$1,100,000
Estimated Cost Per Enrolled Family	\$239

- NOTES:
- 1) No MTO canvass is planned for 2000, because the data collection for the midterm MTO evaluation will take place in that year.
  - 2) The number of enrolled families remains at 4,610 for all three canvass cycles. The number of departed members to be canvassed is expected to increase from 1,321 in 1999 to 3,685 in 2002.

The cost estimates for the three rounds of canvass data collection covered by this request range from \$830,000 in 1999 to \$1,100,000 in 2002. The cost per family in the MTO sample ranges from \$180 to \$239. The estimates include a 4 percent annual adjustment for inflation.

Apart from inflation, the increase in estimated costs over the three rounds results from three factors. First, the MTO panel will grow in size, as the number of family members who will leave their initial MTO families is expected to increase sharply (see Exhibit 5 above). This is because a growing number of children will reach the age of independence and establish

separate households.<sup>16</sup> Locating and interviewing additional departed members will add considerably to the cost of each successive canvass.

Second, the share of the data collection that will need to be conducted in the field rather than by phone is expected to increase over time, because the families' readiness to provide telephone numbers and respond to a phone interview is likely to decrease as identification with MTO weakens over time. For the same instrument, field interviewing is always more costly than telephone interviewing.

The third and final factor in the rise of estimated MTO canvass costs over time concerns only the 2002 canvass. In that annual cycle, HUD is requesting OMB approval to use the long form of the canvass for the entire sample; canvass costs will be greater for the long form than they would be for the short form.

## **A.15 Changes in Burden**

*This submission to OMB is a request for an extension of clearance.* The original clearance was for two annual canvass data collections (of which only one was carried out); this request covers three annual canvass data collections.

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<sup>16</sup> See Section A.9 for further discussion of the need to canvass departed members.

Exhibit 7 shows the actual respondent burden for the 1997 MTO canvass (the only one conducted under prior approval of the instrument).<sup>17</sup> This is compared to the original burden estimate for the two rounds of data collection approved by OMB. The exhibit shows that (with a 91 percent response rate but no member canvass) the total burden was 756 hours, about 68 percent of the total previously approved by OMB. The present request—for three annual canvasses of both families and departed members—would add a total of 4,224 hours in respondent burden to the amount previously approved but unused.

## **A.16 Plans for Tabulation, Analysis, and Publication**

HUD will tabulate the results of the canvasses and issue periodic reports on the MTO demonstration.

## **A.17 Expiration Date Display Exemption**

All data collection instruments will display prominently the expiration date for OMB approval.

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<sup>17</sup> The canvass anticipated for 1998 and included in the original burden estimates was not conducted.

**Exhibit 7**  
**Change in Respondent Burden from Original Estimate**

	MTO Canvass Original Burden Estimate (1997-98) <sup>a</sup>	1997 Canvass Actual Burden	Estimated Burden Under This Request (1999- 2002) <sup>e</sup>	Net Change in Total Burden from Original
Original Random Assignment Ratio	3,958	1,979	13,830	
Other Enrolled Families	3,120	904		
Departed Members	300	0 <sup>d</sup>	7,953	
Total Sample	7,378	2,883	21,783	
Response Rate	70%	91%	90%/70% <sup>f</sup>	
Sample by Form Type:				
Long Form	3,958	1,979	8,295	
Short Form	3,420	904	13,488	
Response Burden in Hours:				
Long Form @ 19 minutes per interview	694 hours <sup>b</sup>	573 hours	2,131	+2,010
Short Form @ 13 minutes per interview	415 hours <sup>c</sup>	184 hours	2,445	+2,214
Total Response Burden in Hours	1,109 hours	756 hours	4,576	+4,224

a Combines original estimates for first and second canvasses.

b Long form originally pre-tested at 15 minutes. Additional time is due to covering more family members.

c Short form originally pre-tested at 10 minutes. Additional time is due to covering more family members.

d Contact with departed members was attempted only by mail.

e Combines the three canvasses shown in Exhibit 6.

f Target response rate for families is 90 percent, for departed members 70 percent.

## A.18 Exceptions to Certification

This submission describing data collection requests no exceptions to the Certificate for Paperwork Reduction Act (5 CFR 1320.9).

# Part B

## Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

### B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

The purpose of the MTO canvass is to *track the entire MTO population*, with a targeted response rate of 90 percent for families and 70 percent for departed members of those families. As shown in Exhibit 1, this request for clearance covers three annual cycles for the full MTO population, which numbers 4,610. Exhibit 8 shows how the MTO population built up over time. The 1997 canvass sample included the first two columns. Future canvasses will include all.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Moving to Opportunity Demonstration Program**  
**Build-up of MTO Population**

Total Program Population	Original Random Assignment Ratio	Other Enrollment Through 1996	Remaining Enrollment 1997-98	Total
Baltimore	423	215	0	638
Boston	450	265	246	961
Chicago	515	0	380	895
Los Angeles	267	208	559	1,034
New York	324	216	542	1,082
All Sites	1,979	904	1,727	4,610

## **B.2 Information Collection Procedures**

Canvass instruments will be administered by experienced telephone interviewers or local in-person interviewers.

## **B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates**

Prior to the start of data collection activities, a letter will be sent requesting verification of address, telephone, and other contact information. Then, an advance letter will be sent to respondents explaining the study and reminding them of the MTO demonstration and their role in the study. The Contractor will offer \$10 incentive payments for completing the canvass. In addition, they will use trained telephone and field interviewers who are skilled at maintaining rapport with respondents. Finally, the data collection will minimize intrusiveness. This is vital so that participants will cooperate with the ongoing data collection for MTO over the long term; it does little good to locate a sample member if he/she then refuses to be interviewed. The canvass instruments are therefore designed to be administered in 13 minutes (on average) for the tracking component; a longer version that incorporates questions on work experience, training, and income is designed for administration in 19 minutes (on average).

## **B.4 Test of Procedures**

Abt Associates has pretested both the MTO family and family member canvass forms to assess respondent burden and ensure item clarity. Pre-testing consisted of mock interviewing. In addition, the family canvass instruments were used in the 1997 data collection.

## **B.5 Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects of the Design**

The following staff of Abt Associates assisted the Department in the random assignment design:

Dr. Larry Orr  
Dr. David Hoaglin

Dr. Jeffrey E. Zabel of the Census Bureau was consulted on the question of attrition rates.

Inquiries regarding the statistical aspects of the study's planned analysis should be directed to:

Dr. Judith D. Feins  
Ms. Debra McInnis  
Abt Associates Inc.  
55 Wheeler Street  
Cambridge, MA 12138  
Telephone: (617) 492-7100

## **Appendix A:**

### **Canvass of MTO Families**

➤ Main Instrument

➤ Instrument for Departed Family Members

Part I: For Adults or Emancipated Children

Part II: For Younger Children from MTO Families Now Living with a Different Adult

**Appendix B:**

***Federal Register Notice***

