

Leadership Message

Under President Donald Trump and Secretary Scott Turner, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intends for HUD's rental assistance programs to serve as a temporary lifeline to people in need. Able-bodied people should not require long-term Federal Government assistance to meet their basic housing needs, and so it is imperative that we establish policies and programs that encourage HUD-assisted households to make progress towards self-sufficiency.

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) plays a critical role at HUD by producing rigorous research about what works, and what doesn't. Research on the Family Self-Sufficiency program (FSS), including the articles in this issue of *Cityscape*, indicates that the FSS program may not achieve self-sufficiency goals. Although the randomized controlled trial conducted on FSS did not differentiate between different types of FSS programs, it nonetheless demonstrated that FSS participants overall do not achieve better employment and earnings outcomes than similar families who don't participate in FSS. This indicates that different approaches to strengthening self-sufficiency, such as work requirements or time limits, are likely needed.

We must continue to seek innovative new programs and policies to help families escape poverty. The Trump administration believes that all able-bodied recipients of government assistance should work, and that recipients should only be able to receive HUD assistance for a limited period. The Administration has also proposed replacing the existing system of fragmented rental assistance programs with a State Rental Assistance Program block grant. This block grant approach will empower states and localities to determine the programs and policies that work best in their communities. We hope that the research in this issue, and other HUD-sponsored research, will inform state and local practitioners as they design innovative new solutions to the challenges of housing assistance and self-sufficiency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Gibbs', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Gibbs

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development