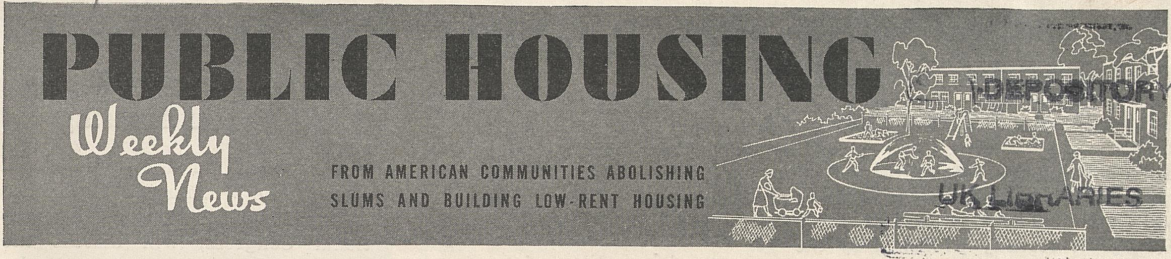


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Federal Works Agency, U. S. Housing Authority—Nathan Straus, Administrator

September 1, 1939

Private Capital Sought to House "Middle Group"

A plan to induce private capital to enter the "no-man's land" of residential construction and to build homes for families with annual incomes averaging between \$1,200 and \$2,000, is being studied by the newly created Division of Industrial Economics, Department of Commerce.

Public housing built with the aid of the USHA is intended for families with annual incomes averaging below \$1,200, the group for which private builders agree that they cannot afford to provide homes. Practically all present private construction is for families earning over \$1,750 annually, thus leaving untouched the housing needs of the \$1,200 to \$1,750 income group.

What means the Division of Industrial Economics will find to make adequate building for the middle-income third of the Nation profitable to private industry cannot as yet be guessed. Certain it is, however, that the new building techniques, simplification and rationalization of design, and other means by which construction costs have been reduced under the USHA program will be available as an aid to the Division and to private industry.

Robert L. Davison, housing research technician loaned by the John D. Pierce Foundation; James Hughes, former Detroit builder and research planner for NRA; and Robinson Newcomb, housing economist and originator of the real property survey, have been appointed to conduct the Commerce study.

USHA Creates Seven Regional Offices To Facilitate Service and Reduce Costs

SLUMS COST YOU MONEY! On 12 square blocks of South Philadelphia slums, according to M. W. Mountjoy, writing in the *Philadelphia Record* of August 23, the city levies property taxes of approximately \$67,000 a year. But in a single year, police, fire, and health services given to those 12 square blocks cost the city \$336,000. The net loss, made up by other taxpayers, was \$269,000. It might be pointed out that unless 100 percent of the taxes levied were collected (a very unlikely possibility) the total loss to the city was considerably more than \$269,000.

To make USHA facilities available to local housing authorities with the greatest possible economy of time and money and to facilitate understanding of local problems, the operating staff of the Washington office of the United States Housing Authority has been organized into seven regional offices, each a working counterpart of the parent organization.

A Regional Director heads each of the seven new units. Under him is a staff of professional and technical advisers, qualified to assist local housing authorities in the successful development of their programs. Except for matters of major importance, the regional offices are authorized to provide local authorities with final decisions and complete service in the formulation and processing of their projects.

At present, all regional offices except one are set up in Washington. Because of the urgent need for constant local contact and because of the great distance from Washington, the office for Region VII has been established in San Francisco.

The relatively small residual central office staff is made up largely of specialists engaged in research aimed at reducing construction and operating costs, evolving more economical methods of financing, simplifying planning and designing, investigating social and economic results of the program, and disseminating pertinent information to the public, as well as to local housing authorities.

(Continued on p. 2)

USHA Aid Sought by Ten Cities Since Congress Adjourned

Recognition of the need for public housing has so stimulated demand that regardless of the lack of funds available now for additional projects, USHA continues to receive applications from communities determined to clear their slums and build decent rental dwellings for low-income families. Applications for 19 projects in 10 cities have been received since Congress adjourned.

Indicating the widespread demand for public housing, applications have come from Chicago in the North; Biloxi, Miss., in the South; Elizabeth, N. J., in the East; and Phoenix, Ariz., in the West.

Work of USHA Depicted by Animated Diorama at N. Y. World's Fair

Housing plays a prominent part in the World of Tomorrow, as depicted at the New York World's Fair. In a pamphlet recently published by the National Committee on Housing Education, called *A Guide to Housing Exhibits at the Fair*, 13 pages are required to list briefly the American and foreign housing exhibits.

The Federal Building contains an animated diorama which contrasts a slum neighborhood with a new public housing project and describes the financial and technical aid given by the USHA.

The *Guide* lists the housing exhibits in 5 categories: (1) General Educational Exhibits; (2) American Federal and Local Government Exhibits; (3) Private House Building and Building Materials Exhibits; (4) Fundamental Household Equipment, Appliances, and Furnishings; (5) Foreign Housing Exhibits.

C. I. O.—A. F. of L. Picnic to Aid Warren Project

Illustrating the unanimity with which labor supports public housing, the C. I. O. and A. F. of L. in Warren, Ohio, together sponsored a Labor Day picnic to mobilize members of both unions behind the Warren Metropolitan Housing Authority's proposed low-rent housing project. It is estimated that 20,000 attended the picnic.

Labor Day was picked for the demonstration because of the public hearing which is to be held in Warren early in September, on a resolution to rezone the Carrie Beck property, the site of the proposed project, to permit construction of multiple dwellings.

Members of the Citizens' Housing Committee distributed a written statement among the union picnickers, explaining the benefits to be derived from the housing project.

Illinois Takes Lead In Housing Activity

With the establishment of 6 new housing authorities since the middle of July, Illinois has brought its total to 12 and now has 12 more either in process of formation or in contemplation. The new authorities are completing their organization, making surveys, and preparing applications to the USHA in the conviction that funds will eventually be available to meet their pressing needs for low-rent housing. Twenty-five million dollars in loans have been requested in the past month by 11 Illinois authorities.

The housing program in Illinois was forced to mark time for many months pending a decision by the State Supreme Court on the legality of public housing. When a favorable decision was handed down in January 1939, friends of housing took the lead in stimulating State-wide interest. Last July the Peoria authority invited Nathan Straus, Administrator of the USHA, to address a State-wide conference in Peoria.

Congress of Architects to Discuss Government in Public Housing

Architects from all over the world, meeting in Washington September 24-30, for their fifteenth international Congress, will discuss the "Consequence of the participation by Government, whether Federal or local, and/or by private enterprise, in the preparation of plans and the carrying out of building operations."

Discussions will be in five languages—English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish—subjects to be discussed in addition to that mentioned above will include: (1) Planning and development of rural districts; (2) the relation between population density and built-up area; (3) contemporary architecture compared to the architecture of the past; (4) should public authority be clothed with power to reject plans as artistically unsatisfactory rather than, as at present, for purely technical reasons only.

The American Institute of Architects will hold its seventy-first convention in conjunction with the International Congress.

USHA Creates Seven Regional Offices

(Continued from p. 1)

The regions, with the States and Territories included in each, and the Regional and Assistant Regional Directors are as follows:

Region I—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island.

Sumner K. Wiley, Regional Director.
Harold Robinson, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

Region II—New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania.

John T. Egan, Regional Director.
F. Barret Quirk, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

Region III—Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Puerto Rico, Virginia, West Virginia.

Oliver C. Winston, Regional Director.
B. T. Fitzpatrick, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

Region IV—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.

John P. Broome, Regional Director.
Lowry Lindsay, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

Region V—Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

William K. Divers, Regional Director.
Rudolph J. Nedved, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

Region VI—Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas.
Marshall W. Amis, Regional Director.
James T. Haile, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

Region VII—Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington.

Winters Haydock, Regional Director.
H. L. Holtzendorff, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

9/26/39



A nursery school helps make good citizens

Richmond Uses Radio to Aid Public Housing Drive

Through the cooperation of the Office of Government Reports, civic leaders in Richmond, Va., are making a series of radio broadcasts, describing the need for low-rent housing construction and slum clearance in that city, and urging the necessity of creating a housing authority at the earliest possible date. The radio programs have stimulated a series of newspaper stories and editorials.

In order to obtain the information necessary to prepare the radio scripts, an analytical list of questions was prepared. This list and copies of the radio scripts used in the first five programs may be obtained by writing to the Informational Service Division, United States Housing Authority.

In view of the ever-expanding demand for public housing, other communities may find the Richmond material helpful.

N. J. Issues Report on Housing

Six years' experience in discovering the facts about housing in New Jersey and evolving a State-wide program in harmony with the activities of Federal housing agencies is made available in the 1939 *Report of the State Housing Authority of New Jersey*.

Local authorities all over the country may well profit by this account of the methods which have been successfully applied by the New Jersey State Housing Authority in advancing the State program to a ranking position among the 38 States with housing legislation.

Provision for Community Activities Essential to Bolster Civic Spirit of Low-Income Families

Public housing is opening a new way of life to low-income families—a new design for living, based not only upon occupancy of modern, sanitary, low-rent homes, but upon traditional American principles of self-government.

In each low-rent housing project built under the USHA program, tenants are encouraged and assisted by project managers to set up their own governing body. They are aided in the organization of community activities, often suggested by the tenants themselves, such as cooperative buying clubs, women's sewing clubs, nursery schools, tenant newspapers, debating societies, classes for the study of crafts and trades.

Not only do these activities develop a rich community life within the different projects, but they promote tenant initiative and responsibility and lead the way toward a higher form of community life outside the projects.

Experience gained in former PWA projects should prove helpful to local housing authorities in determining what types and amounts of space are

needed for community activities. The site plan of a project, the location and space allotted to social rooms and play areas largely determine the extent and nature of community activities.

Adequate rooms should be allotted for club and group meetings. Omission of such rooms in three PWA projects necessitated the later conversion of storage space for this purpose. Space for a workshop for boys and girls and for adults to build and repair furniture is needed, and provision for a library should be made. Kitchen facilities must be provided in social rooms for home-making classes and demonstrations.

Toilets and drinking fountains must be accessible to community rooms, and adjacent storage space provided so that equipment may be put away and the rooms used for a variety of purposes. Walls of social rooms should be painted with washable paints to lower maintenance costs.

It has been found that basements, unless carefully planned, generally are not suitable for many community uses because of the lack of many of these facilities.

Whether a housing project is a mere conglomeration of dwelling units, differing from the tenants' former dwellings only in being more sanitary and better equipped, or whether it is a unified community, depends in large measure upon the provision of proper space for community activities and upon the co-operation of project managers in assisting tenants to take full advantage of the opportunity for a well-rounded community life.



Music lessons given by WPA workers to children in a public housing project

To all Local Housing Authorities:
PUBLIC HOUSING is your publication. It is intended to provide you a medium for the recording of your achievements and for the exchange of housing experience with all other housing authorities in the United States.
Every authority is developing some particular bit of new knowledge or some new method—in public housing administration, in land assembly, design, construction, tenant selection, public relations—which other authorities are eager to hear about. New methods of reducing costs, of lowering rents, of making surveys, of demonstrating the need for public housing, can be of use to every authority. Such information cannot be collected by Washington. If PUBLIC HOUSING is to publish the facts, you must send them in.

Current Housing Literature

THE LOW-COST HOUSING PROBLEM, *The Constructor*, Aug. 1939, pp. 11-13.

Temporary National Economic Committee hearings develop data on housing needs.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY IN LOW-COST HOUSING, 1932-38, by Gilbert A. Cam, *The Journal of Political Economy*, June 1939, pp. 357-378.

History of low-cost housing legislation and activities of various Federal agencies up to and including USHA.

HOUSING THE RURAL WORKER, by R. T. Shears, *Great Britain Ministry of Agriculture Journal*, July 1939, pp. 318-329.

Reconditioning of Devonshire cottages under Housing (Rural Workers) Acts. Illustrations.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD UNIT PRINCIPLE IN TOWN PLANNING, by W. Russell Tylor, *The Town Planning Review*, July 1939, pp. 174-185.

Discusses the importance of the neighbourhood unit in urban and regional planned developments.

THE LOCATION AND DESIGN OF HOUSING ESTATES, by S. Pointon Taylor, F. R. I. B. A. (M), *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, May 1939, pp. 219-229.

Reprint of paper on England's housing estates. Discussion.

RURAL ZONING, by Samuel Lubell and Walter Everett, *Current History*, Aug. 1939, pp. 32-35, 60.

Wisconsin's successful experiment in rural zoning. Six other States pass similar zoning laws.

WHY RENT IS HIGH, by John T. Flynn, *Collier's*, June 17, 1939, pp. 12-13, 49-53.

What's wrong with the building industry and what should be done about it. Illustrations.

2,196 FAMILIES, by Katharine Hamill, *Harper's Bazaar*, Aug. 1939, pp. 100-103, 132.

Description of family life in the Williamsburg and Harlem River Housing Projects, N. Y. Photographs.

OUTDOOR RECREATION, *School and Society*, June 10, 1939, pp. 725-726.

Report of National Recreation Society on standards for outdoor recreation space in housing developments.

GREENHILLS MANUAL. Pamphlet, unpaginated. Mimeographed.

Regulations to be observed by tenants of Greenhills, a Farm Security Administration project in Ohio. Community activities and community facilities are treated.

Material for Public Housing should be addressed to Informational Service Division, U. S. Housing Authority, Washington, D. C.

Publication is approved by the Director, Bureau of the Budget, as required by rule 42 of the Joint Committee on Printing.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. Subscription price \$1 domestic, foreign \$1.80 per year. Single copies, 5 cents.

PUBLIC HOUSING CUTS COSTS—Average estimated net construction costs per family dwelling unit on 20 USHA-aided low-rent housing projects for which main construction awards were authorized in July, ranged from \$2,131 in El Paso, Tex., to \$3,389 in Pittsburgh, Pa. Private construction cost in these two cities in July averaged \$5,107 and \$5,826, respectively, according to building permit data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. On both USHA-aided projects and private building, these costs include only basic construction and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation.

Paducah Program Upheld by Kentucky Court

The legality of municipal public housing activities under the USHA program received additional confirmation recently, when Judge Joe L. Price of the McCracken Circuit Court, in Paducah, Ky., dismissed a suit filed last winter against the City of Paducah Municipal Housing Commission.

The suit contended that the ordinance setting up the housing commission was not adopted according to law; that the city commissioners illegally appropriated funds to finance the commission's early work; and that the city was in no financial condition to undertake housing activities.

The counsel for the commission held that cities are empowered by a special State Statute to set up housing commissions; that the city is not liable for the commission's obligations; and that the city's past financial record was irrelevant.

Construction Bids

State and local authority	Project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
BID OPENINGS DEFINITELY SCHEDULED			
Athens, Ga.	GA-3-1	50	9-18-39
Athens, Ga.	GA-3-2	120	9-18-39
Atlanta, Ga.	GA-6-2	604	9-19-39
Baltimore, Md.	MD-2-4	298	9-15-39
Boston, Mass.	MASS-2-4	342	9-13-39
Charlotte, N. C.	NC-3-2	452	9-22-39
Covington, Ky.	KY-2-1	263	9-21-39
Covington, Ky.	KY-2-2	168	9-21-39
Laurel, Miss.	MISS-2-1	150	9-15-39
McComb, Miss.	MISS-3-1	76	9-26-39
New York City, N. Y.	NY-5-4	448	9-8-39
Perth Amboy, N. J.	NJ-6-1	258	9-25-39
Phenix City, Ala.	ALA-5-1-R	216	9-15-39
Wilmington, N. C.	NC-1-1	116	9-29-39

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF BID OPENINGS¹

Atlanta, Ga.	GA-6-3	634	10-3-39
Bristol, Va.	VA-2-1	142	10-3-39
Bristol, Va.	VA-2-2	56	10-3-39
Butte, Mont.	MONT-3-1	225	10-15-39
Charlotte, N. C.	NC-3-1	254	10-6-39
Columbia, S. C.	SC-2-1	250	10-3-39
Columbus, Ga.	GA-4-1-R	360	10-2-39
Corpus Christi, Tex.	TEX-3-3-R	72	10-13-39
Dallas, Tex.	TEX-9-1	626	10-5-39
Gary, Ind.	IND-11-1	305	10-5-39
Harrisburg, Pa.	PA-3-1	200	9-26-39
Laurel, Miss.	MISS-2-2	125	10-3-39
Los Angeles Co., Calif.	CAL-2-2	300	10-5-39
McComb, Miss.	MISS-3-1	76	9-26-39
Meridian, Miss.	MISS-4-1	89	10-28-39
Mobile, Ala.	ALA-2-1	100	9-27-39
Peoria, Ill.	ILL-3-1-R	400	9-30-39
Peoria, Ill.	ILL-3-2	606	9-30-39
Reading, Pa.	PA-9-1	400	10-6-39
Sarasota, Fla.	FLA-3-1	60	10-3-39
Zanesville, Ohio.	OHIO-9-1	324	10-5-39

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening. None of the bid openings shown here have as yet been definitely scheduled.

Construction Report Analysis

During the week ended August 25, construction was started on a 1,089-unit project—Charlestown—in Boston, bringing to 89 the total number of public housing projects under way. (See table.) The new community will be built at a total net construction cost of \$3,258,690, or an average of \$2,992 per unit. The addition of the Boston project caused a slight increase in average net construction cost per unit for the country as a whole, and a fractional decrease in the average over-all cost of new housing per unit.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended August 25, 1939	Week ended August 18, 1939	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction	89	88	+1.14
Number of dwellings under construction	38,583	37,494	+2.90
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing	\$179,542,000	\$174,511,000	+2.88
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit	\$4,653	\$4,654	-.02
Average net construction cost ² per unit	\$2,916	\$2,914	+0.07

¹ Includes: (1) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (2) dwelling equipment, architects' fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (3) land for present development; (4) nondwelling facilities.

² The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.