

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON URBAN PROBLEMS

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FOR RELEASE

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SEVEN-CITY STUDY PINPOINTS HOUSING PLIGHT OF LARGE POOR FAMILIES

Public and private housing have failed by a large margin to meet the needs of large poor families, according to a study prepared for the National Commission on Urban Problems and released today.

"The finding of a shortage of some 71,000 dwelling units affecting almost 70 percent of the large poor families in seven major cities is not just another statistic," said Commission Chairman Paul H. Douglas. "The number of children affected by this gap in these cities alone is computed to be approximately one-third of a million." (See p. 19.)

The seven cities studied were Washington, Philadelphia, New Orleans, St. Louis, Richmond, Denver and San Francisco. They were selected because, in these places, detailed income data by family size could be correlated with available housing supply information. Walter Smart, Walter Rybeck and Howard E. Shuman of the Commission staff prepared the report, "THE LARGE POOR FAMILY--A HOUSING GAP."

The shortage of 71,000 units was figured after including as available for occupancy 12,000 units which the seven cities indicated were merely planned. When only the current available inventory is counted, the shortage is more than 83,000 units and affects 80 percent of the large poor families. Poor families are defined in the study as those who with 25 percent of family income cannot afford decent private housing. The inventory available to them is necessarily the housing supplied under various subsidy programs.

What is the gap? The study (1) finds the minimum income required to afford standard or decent housing in each city as determined by the local redevelopment agency, (2) calculates the number of large families below that income level, and (3) totals the number of existing and planned standard housing units suitable for large families under all housing programs. In essence, the gap is the difference between (2) and (3), between need and supply.

In the seven cities (see Table 3, p. 15) there were 103,464 large families with insufficient income to afford standard housing. Available and planned housing left a gap of 71,162--a shortage affecting 68.8 percent of these families.

The five- and six-member families numbered 63,728. The gap in their case was 40,026 units--a shortage affecting 62.8 percent of these families.

The seven- and eight-member families numbered 26,225. The gap in their case was 19,237 units--a shortage affecting 73.4 percent of these families.

The nine- and ten-member families numbered 9,558. The gap in their case was 8,148 units--a shortage affecting 85.2 percent of these families.

The very large families of 11 or more members numbered 3,953. The gap in their case was 3,751 units--a shortage affecting 94.9 percent of them.

As family size increases, the number of families goes down sharply, the size of the gap rises significantly, and the number of children affected by each unit of housing shortage increases. The report further shows the high percentage of non-whites affected by the large poor family housing gap (pp. 17-18).

The authors cite a number of legislative and administrative factors that have tended to discourage the building of subsidized housing suitable for large families. (See pp. 21-28.)

Mr. Douglas said, "I was very pleased to find provisions in the new Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 which, in part, move in the direction of easing some of the housing problems faced by large poor families."

Note to Correspondents: The authors will hold a press conference on the report (for Sunday release) at 10 a.m. Friday, August 30, in Room 10211, tenth floor, of the New Executive Office Building, 17th & H Streets, N.W. Advance copies available on request.

PUBLICATIONS - NATIONAL COMMISSION ON URBAN PROBLEMS - AUGUST 1968

1. The Commission hearings cover all topics assigned to the Commission and many related current issues. The complete set of five volumes has been at the printers for many months but only those listed are available at this time.
2. Background studies undertaken by the Commission staff and consultants, in preparation for the Commission's report to the President and to Congress, resulted in several dozen research papers, many of which it was felt would be of public interest. Research reports that are published do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Commission.
3. The Commission's own report, carrying out the Congressional and White House mandates, will be the final category of publication.

Order Form and Summary of Publications to Date

Requests are being handled without charge.

Single copies only, please. Bulk orders cannot be filled because of limited supplies. (Exception: reprints of Research Report No. 1 have been made available by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress.)

The Hearings are also available for purchase from "Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402."

To avoid errors and hasten mailing, check publication you wish to receive and PRINT CLEARLY in the address blank.

- HEARINGS BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON URBAN PROBLEMS, Vol. 1. Baltimore, New Haven, Boston, Pittsburgh. Major topics-- urban renewal, rehabilitation, housing codes, financing and insuring in blighted areas, property taxation, land values. Indexed, 361 pp. (Our supply almost exhausted.)
- HEARINGS, Vol. 2. Los Angeles, San Francisco. Major topics--land-use regulation, building codes and technology, urban design, governing metropolitan areas, housing low-income families. Indexed, 493 pp.
- HEARINGS, Vol 3. Denver, Atlanta, Houston, Fort Worth-Arlington-Dallas, Miami. Major topics--metropolitan housing patterns, public housing, new housing subsidies, zoning, building and housing codes, urban finance, government consolidation. Indexed, 386 pp.
- Research Report No. 1, IMPACT OF THE PROPERTY TAX, by Dick Netzer. Measures the tax burden on housing, examines intrametropolitan tax differentials that stimulate exclusionary practices and unsound development; scores faulty assessment practices; proposes reforms and alternatives; 62 pp.
- Research Report No. 2, PROBLEMS OF ZONING AND LAND-USE REGULATION, by the American Society of Planning Officials. Finds land-use controls often exclude low-income minority families from certain urban areas; claims zoning may exert less influence on development patterns than utility extensions, land speculation, highway locations; includes views of 28 experts; 80 pp.
- Research Report No. 3, THE CHALLENGE OF AMERICA'S METROPOLITAN POPULATION OUTLOOK--1960 TO 1985, by Patricia Leavey Hodge and Philip M. Hauser. Projects urban expansion with biggest growth in suburban rings; further racial concentration of whites in suburbs and nonwhites in central cities; marked increase in growth of young labor force (ages 15-44); 90 pp. (Commission supply exhausted. Praeger, 111 4th Ave., N.Y., N.Y., reprinting for sale. Government may reprint.)
- Research Report No. 4, THE LARGE POOR FAMILY--A HOUSING GAP, by Walter Smart, Walter Rybeck, Howard E. Shuman. Study of seven cities (Washington, Philadelphia, New Orleans, St. Louis, Richmond, Denver, San Francisco) finds poor families of five or more persons neglected in public programs; measures shortage; cites restrictions inhibiting supply of larger dwelling units; 28 pp.

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