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POLS 373 State of Black Asheville

Final

Housing

Housing will always be a major issue in America because everyone needs it; those cannot provide shelter for themselves, have historically been an issue. Public housing arose as an answer to those needs. Public housing does not only house the homeless of the society but those who live in substandard housing are also, given adequate housing with the emergence of Public Housing. Slums at one point were a large portion of housing readily available in America.

Tenement House laws emerged as early as 1766; these laws were created to protect people from building with hazardous materials, fire hazards, or things that could easily collapse on people while buildings were occupied. Tenement House laws aimed at protecting those who could not own from renting homes that were dangerous. The Laws required roofs to be made of wood or bricks, more stable materials than hay, and tar that was widely used. The creations of these laws were to protect people they ironically became the same laws to force impoverished people out of the homes they had. "During the 1920's, a few concrete steps were taken in the states toward support of positive housing programs; in the 1930's the New Deal housing and resettlement programs suggested that the day was near when a profound housing solution was at last possible. The Wagner-Steagall Housing Act was passed in 1937." (49 Friedman) This act came as a result of the 1933 National Industrial recovery Act that authorized the president to create the Federal Emergency Administration of Public works.

The turning point for public housing was the invention of the PWA (Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works) which gave authorization under Title II, for slum clearance, new construction, and creation of low cost housing. The administrator of the PWA established a Housing Division in 1933. The Housing Division had the authority to condemn, sell, or lease property. They also were given the power to make loans to localities up to seventy percent of the construction cost develop housing and give thirty percent grants to build or construct themselves. "Within three and a half years, the Housing Division undertook 51 projects in 36 cities within 20 states." (23 Mitchell) The Housing Division was solely in control of its own budget under the direction of the Administrator, this power was strategically given a 60 year life. However, slum clearance took away black neighborhoods and made room for more white homes typically. (Williams)

Since 1937 there have been five major changes in Public housing: Housing act of 1949, Housing act of 1954, Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Tax Reform Act of 1986, and the Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. The Housing act of 1949 stated every person deserves a decent home and they would get that home by urban redevelopment. Title I gave money to fund the slum clearance. Title II increased FHA mortgage insurance for home buyers and Title III gave federal money to rebuild homes on the same spots that were cleared, to replace the unacceptable homes. (26 Bennett) Parts one and two were carried out as defined unfortunately these were typically black homes and they were not resettled in the same places. These practices are easily identifiable in Asheville, where the impoverished black

communities where there are now highways, commercial property, and the housing developments that replaced them are close but they are not in the same place.

The Housing act of 1954 “Introduced urban renewal, which focused on conservative rather than clearance through a “workable program” of rehabilitating and upgrading urban “slum and blight” areas. The act aimed to increase private contributions, responsibility of local government, and citizen participation and to use fewer federal dollars to produce more results.” (26 Bennett) This workable program hurt the population it was intended to help, by making impoverished people that could only look for federal assistance, turn to their constituents who saw them as undeserving initially to protect them. The federal government trusted local governments to perform at the same way it had to serve its citizen’s.

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, “Sought to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities principally for low and moderate income families. Replaced categorical grants with community development block Grant and introduced Section 8 rent supplements for new, existing and rehabbed rental housing plus funding for development of affordable housing in the private sector”(26 Bennett) This allowed for another method of public housing Section 8 was progressive program that help institute mixed communities.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 “Eliminated some tax provisions that favored low-income rental housing production and instituted a tax credit to system authorizing states to give tax credit to property owners to offset taxes on income. Tax credits are generally sold to outside investors, usually syndicated, to raise initial development funds for a

project. Projects must have at least 20 percent of units for households at or below 50 percent of median or 40 percent of units for households at or below 60 percent of area median income. Rentals are not to exceed 30 percent of income at these thresholds.” (26 Bennett) The tax reform act is how income became widely calculated to determine what type of development an applicant, would best fit based on financial resources. It also removed the incentive to keep affordable rental property available to Section 8 recipients.

Today in Asheville the policies that determine eligibility are a family of one can make no more than \$28,200 per year to qualify, a family of eight no more than \$53,200 to qualify for Sec 8 assistance.

The Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 “focused attention on the availability of affordable housing or low and moderate-income families, and created the HOME program, which provided new resources for nonprofit and public agencies to develop affordable rental and for sale housing” (26 Bennett) This was the first in progressive movements towards public housing, after three movements that hurt the populations the developments were designed to provide homes to.

HUD direct loans were instituted to provide non-profit organization with monetary resources to provide loans to help elderly buy homes in early 1961. Because these loans originally were designed to help the elderly stay indoors, they don’t spark much political attention, and are seen as acceptable forms of public service. These loans have now been extended to families with children, in need of stable homes.

New constructions in Asheville mainly consist of mixed income communities they include low, and middle income the rent is lower than market rates, so all participants are getting a savings. These are not housing projects but subsidized housing

for low-income rentals. They include Dunbar, Woodbridge, Altamont, and Woodcroft. Since the height of the New Deal, there have been no new Public housing constructions.

The Public Housing Developments in Asheville include Erskine, Deaverview, Hillcrest, Pisgah View, Klondyke, and Lee Walker Heights. These are all still and traditionally have been predominately black with the exception of Pisgah view was built for whites when housing was still segregated. The age groups that compromise the most of the units are children and elderly people. Security is monitored by APD patrols, and citizen's council to ensure the population some added security. This has become the main issue in Public Housing, security Deaverview Apartments gained recognition for need of added security by a concerned school principal.

On May 30, 2003, Asheville, North Carolina Johnston elementary school Principal Linda Allison and a group of her teachers and staff reached out for help for their children. In a letter addressed to the police chief, mayor and City Council, the educators asked for help keeping the students safe. The focus of their concern was the young students. "We, the teachers and administrators of Johnston Elementary School, are informing you of our deep concern for the safety and well being of the children and families of the Deaverview," the letter began. "The murder that occurred there on Saturday is just one of many violent incidents that these students have witnessed." (Bellamy) Allison and her staff described the dangerous lack of safety at Deaverview in painful detail. "These families have had their doors kicked in, random shootings with bullets piercing their walls and fires started on their outside doors. Some of our students have been used as "ponies" to run drugs... [They] are not able to lead normal childhoods

as they cannot safely ride their bikes, play in the yards and go over to other children's homes..." (Bellamy)

The letter also explained the damage these living conditions were having on the young students in school. "Many of them come to school with the evidence of living in "trauma" as some of them are generally over-anxious, hyper-vigilant, depressed, and angry, all of which have a direct correlation with and impact on their behavior and learning." (Bellamy) As an answer to these pleas Bellamy, began pushing for added support and gained three officers for the housing development to make those who live there feel safer. With combination of political and her organization's support she achieved this. The police presence has been received with mixed reviews from the population it is intended to serve some believe the police are not the best method.

These needs of security are also one of the main focuses for Asheville's public housing. Public Housing Director Gene Bell has given full attention to the needs of security. Walt Robinson is the Asheville Housing Authority Security Director, has made policy out of heavy patrol, checkpoints, and ID cards for residents. With the scale of the problem the leaders now look to install gates in two Developments Hillcrest, and Deaverview. "In the past year, Pisgah View, with 517 residents, had 2,312 calls for service from police. Those numbers included three rapes, five gunshot wounds, eight armed robberies and two stabbings." (Behsudi)

"Hillcrest, also with 517 residents, had 967 calls for service, according to data compiled by the Housing Authority and the Asheville Police Department. McClure said people who live outside of Hillcrest cause 90 percent of trouble. A gate has been used

before, but that stopped despite some success. Gate-opening devices were left intact.

McClure said police, with help from residents, would work at the proposed gate.”

(Behsudi)

“We have plenty of examples of gated communities in the area, it’s just that rich people live there,” said City Councilman Carl Mumpower who chairs the council’s public safety committee. “This is not an effort to isolate people in public housing; it’s an effort to protect those people.” “Police regularly use checkpoints to cut crime at Hillcrest’s single entrance, and since the beginning of this year public housing residents have been required to carry identification cards.” (Behsudi)

“But unlike police checkpoints, done primarily at night, gates will be in place 24 hours.” (Behsudi) “Right now, the complexes are wide open,” said Walt Robertson, director of security for the Housing Authority. “You got people coming all the way over from Rutherford County and Waynesville.” (Behsudi) That traffic is the root of the problem in these communities.

Public housing developments in Asheville serve 2887 people. Of those people, 2138 (74%) are African American, 700 (24%) are white, with roughly 3% of their population falling into Latino, Asian, and Native American. In total, 634 families (46%) living in public housing are single parent families. Roughly 14% of families are headed by residents over the age of 65, and 20% of families are headed by near-elderly people. 46% of the people in public housing are under the age of 18. Of these children, 43% are under age 6, 36% are between the ages of 7 and 13, and 19% are 14 to 18 years of age. This translates to at least 48% of minors living in single parent households. 20% of

people in public housing are handicapped or disabled. Overall, at 62%, female residents outnumber male residents.

In Pisgah View Apartments, 71% of residents are African American, while 28% are white. 64% of households are run by single-parents, and 53% of residents are under 18. The majority of these minors are still in preschool. At least 48% of children live in single-parent households.

84% of residents in Hillcrest are African American, while 15% are white. 59% of households are single-parent. 51% of residents are under 18. This translates to 48% of children in single-parent households.

In Erskine/Walton, 92% of residents are African American, 5% are white. 58% of households are single-parent, and 50% of the populations of Erskine/Walton are under 18. This means that 47% of children live in single-parent homes.

In Livingston, 87% of the population is African American and 12% is white. 78% percent of households are run by a single-parent, and 48% of residents are children. At least 51% percent of residents under the age of 18 live in single-parent households.

48% percent of residents in Aston Park Tower are African American while 52% are white. Only 0.67% of households are run by a single parent.

In Lee Walker Heights, 84% of residents are African American while 15% are white. 59% of households are single parent families, and 50% of residents are under 18. This corresponds to at least 53% of children living in single parent homes.

76% of residents in Project 19 are African American while 22% are white. 38% of households are single parent families, with 32% of the residents being under the age of 18. At least 66% of children live in single parent households. These are women and

children who need a safe place to live.

The most affordable way for the average citizen of Asheville to own a home is in conjunction with help of organizations especially designed to provide affordable housing due to the income gap in Asheville. These organizations include, Neighborhood Housing Services of Asheville, NC Inc., Mountain Housing Opportunities, Affordable Housing Coalition of Asheville NC, and Buncombe County's Affordable Housing Programs. These programs combined with community oriented businesspeople construct the Affordable housing opportunities in Asheville.

Neighborhood Housing Services of Asheville, NC Inc. focuses on community driven community revitalization, they build, repair, and find available homes. The equity maintained through home ownership is there solution to the poverty gap. They offer low to moderate income people with homeownership that would not be possible without their securing the loans. They built two new three bedroom two bath homes in 2003 with the need of affordable housing in Asheville so great these homes pre-sell before construction. The most widely used programs are the Community revitalization program, and the Down payment Assistance program.

Down payment Assistance Program "Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) offers financial assistance for first time homebuyers (or those who have not owned a home in the past three years). This money helps make home purchase possible when the homebuyer lacks sufficient cash to meet their primary lender's (bank or other financial institution) requirements for down payment or closing costs OR the homebuyer needs to reduce the amount of their first mortgage to meet the lender's debt-to-income

requirements. Through the use of federal and local government funds, the program helps the homebuyer bridge cash gaps in financing. The level of funding is determined by the specific financial needs of the buyer.

NHS conducts one-on-one counseling with clients regarding pre- and post-purchase issues and foreclosure prevention and intervention. Once the NHS Loan Program Manager establishes a relationship with a potential homebuyer, the homebuyer's needs are presented to NHS' Loan Committee for a decision on funding. The Loan Program Manager works closely with the client, their primary lender and the NHS Loan Committee to arrive at the best financial decision for the client.

NHS services its loans in-house, often with clients coming to our office monthly to make payments. This enables us to establish a closer relationship with our clients and to monitor their progress with payments and credit management.

NHS services a portfolio of approximately 80 loans (down payment/closing costs assistance, acquisition assistance, renovation loans) and plans to make a minimum of 30 new loans in fiscal year 2003-2004 to assist those community members typically underserved by traditional lending programs in our area.” (Marine, Neighborhood Housing Services of Asheville NC)

Shiloh Community Revitalization Initiative “In 2002, NHS began a three- to five-year neighborhood partnership with the Shiloh community in south Asheville to initiate a resident-led, asset-based community revitalization through the Shiloh Community Association, neighborhood churches, and individual residents. We are

grateful to Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for their support of this initiative from the beginning.

Established in the early 1870s, Shiloh is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited African American community in Western North Carolina. Shiloh is facing housing and economic development issues with its aging housing stock, presence of crime and drug traffic, and encroachment from industrial and commercial development on its borders. Within Shiloh is a community of citizens working to maintain the neighborhood's historical integrity as they search for ways to reclaim and revitalize their community. Change is inevitable for Shiloh and of utmost importance is the residents' development of a unified approach to control and influence that change before the community's identity is destroyed.” (Marine, Neiborhood Housing Services of Asheville NC)

Single-Family Home Construction Program “While NHS continues building single-family homes in Asheville, Shiloh will be a focus area for construction for the next several years. Fiscal year 2002-03 was the beginning of our building program in Shiloh, with five houses completed and sold to first time homebuyers of low- to moderate-income. In fiscal year 2003-2004, we will build at least four homes, with more planned as suitable land becomes available. The more homeowners there are in Shiloh, the more people there are invested in the community who are concerned about the future of their neighborhood.” (Marine, Neiborhood Housing Services of Asheville NC)

Shiloh Task Force “In 2002, NHS brought together a group of 25 individuals from the Shiloh community, city government, not-for-profit organizations and for profit

businesses, to begin looking at the assets of Shiloh, defining goals and objectives that strengthen the community, and working as an organized force to influence and/or guide impending changes. A community vision, or wish list, was produced as a result of this meeting.

Out of this group the community-based Shiloh Task Force was formed. Its objective is to guide the revitalization efforts in the community over the next two to five years.

The Task Force consists of Shiloh residents, City representatives, non-profit organizations and for profit businesses with an interest in Shiloh who are willing to commit to the two-year process which includes monthly meetings. Only those members who are Shiloh residents will be able to vote on initiatives or decisions that directly impact Shiloh. City Council approval of the Task Force mission will be requested as well as authorization for the City Planning and Community Development staff to spend time helping prepare a small area plan for Shiloh, utilizing directives and decisions from the Task Force.

Through the Task Force, opportunities for community dialogue and consensus building are offered while Task Force members make critical decisions for the benefit of the community at large in the face of a diversity of opinions. The first meeting of the Shiloh Task Force was held in January 2004. Thanks to a New Horizons grant from the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, a professional facilitator was hired to act as an impartial advisor, ensuring each member an opportunity to voice his or her opinions, a safe environment for discussion, and decision-making that is thoughtful with

the whole community in mind. The Task Force will work with the City to develop a small area plan for the Shiloh community that will guide the City in establishing policies for development activities and in prioritizing needed improvements to municipal infrastructure and community facilities. The small area plan will continue to guide the City in its work after the Task Force's two-year tenure is completed.” (Marine, Neiborhood Housing Services of Asheville NC)

Community Leadership Training “In order to equip Shiloh residents to do not only the work at hand today but to prepare them for their leadership roles in the future, NHS is committed to securing training opportunities for emerging community leaders. NHS community outreach coordinator, Marilyn Bass, works in the community to identify these leaders and guide and support them in trainings.” (Marine, Neiborhood Housing Services of Asheville NC)

“The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners has recognized the area’s need for affordable housing and

Number of Housing Units Built or Rehabilitated with Affordable Housing Funds from 2000-2004	
Type of Program	# of Units
Owner Occupied Rehabilitation	29
Multi-Family Construction	114
Special Needs Housing	30
Senior Housing	40
Down payment Assistance	10
Single-Family Home Construction	5
Results	228

Source: Buncombe County Planning Department. 2004

has dedicated time, money and effort to creating better housing opportunities for low-income citizens. Regionally, the County participates with the City of Asheville and its neighboring counties in the Asheville Buncombe Regional Housing Consortium. Last year, the Board supported the County-City Housing Task Force, which undertook an 11-

month long study of affordable housing issues and created a series of recommendations for the governments to help encourage the creation of new affordable housing. And for over a decade, Buncombe County has been the recipient of federal and state grants that pay for several affordable housing programs. Since 2000, the County has contributed to the construction or rehabilitation of 228 dwelling units in the area. “ (Department)

Goals -The goals of the Buncombe County Affordable Housing Programs are:

- Preserve the existing housing stock and reduce substandard housing
- Expand the supply of low and moderate income housing
- Support homeownership initiatives such as down payment assistance

Affordable Housing Funds from 2000-2004- Grant Funds \$1,765,298 County Funds \$423,717 Leveraged Funds \$13,348,322 *Source: Buncombe County Planning*

Department

Funding Sources “The County provides these affordable housing programs through leveraged funds (86%), state and federal grant programs (15%), and County funds (3%). The state and federal grant programs include the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) HOME program; Community Block Development Grants (CDBG) Scattered Site Rehabilitation Grants; and the CDBG Individual Development Account (IDA) Grant. County funds include a Housing Trust Fund.” (Department)

All of the programs that assist in home-ownership are making strides towards the needed corrections to improve the state of black home-ownership. This has been a debate blacks have been trying to gain insight and control since 1967. Martin Luther King’s Last book where do we go from here makes the first phenomenal argument for affordable housing for blacks and demanded end to legal methods that do not include blacks in

home ownership. He recognized the root of the problem poverty, poor people cannot afford homes. He suggests a guaranteed income for all Americans like minimum wages, but he understands this wage must factor each component of what comfortable living includes not just a across the board number. "We are likely to find that the problems of housing and education, instead of preceding the elimination of poverty, will themselves be affected if poverty is first abolished. The poor transformed into purchasers will do a great deal on their own to alter housing decay. Negroes, who have a double disability, will have a greater effect on discrimination when they have the additional weapon of cash to use in their struggle." (King) He goes on to explain that if we end poverty we simultaneously end the housing problem in America period. He identifies the main reason people who find themselves in need of education, healthcare, and housing are typically poor, he expands his argument to show the needs of people come directly from lack of income. This should not be such a divide in a country as rich as ours and compares it to cannibalism as to leaving the poor to fend for themselves. "The curse of poverty has no justification in our age. It is socially as cruel and blind as the practice of cannibalism at the dawn of civilization, when men ate each other because they had not yet learned to take food from the soil or to consume the abundant animal life around them. The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty." (King) He uses powerful language to express the urgency to change the course of dealing with poverty; he understands the existing system is one of flourishing for one class at the expense of the other.

The Covenant however identifies the problems in our communities and supports what we found as the State of Black Asheville. Racial segregation and Jobs Mismatch is

identified as the first problem blacks have in obtaining decent affordable housing. This means that most impoverished blacks live in an urban setting; however 66% of entry level job growth is in the suburbs. (Smiley 104) The government assists in this segregation by keeping the bulk of the funding in inner-city low income housing by controlling where blacks can afford to live. What is available for blacks to live in affordably is not where the jobs are abundant or coming to soon. "Of people in Detroit who receive income assistance from the government, 42 % of whites live in neighborhoods with above average access to jobs while only 13% of the blacks live in job-rich areas and are therefore much less likely to exit income-assistance programs." (Smiley 104)

Still today unethical social practices still keep blacks from accessing quality affordable housing they are told homes are not available or directed to mostly black communities. "Black renters are 20 times more likely to get less information and help than whites with similar economic backgrounds when inquiring about advertised housing. Landlords tell them about fewer apartments on the market and do not show them everything available." (Smiley 104) Blacks have the lowest home-ownership rates nationally thanks to these obstacles. Almost half the homeless population is composed of blacks. The national average of black income is not enough to afford housing. "Basic housing is out of reach for the more than 24% of African Americans who live in poverty. A full-time worker making minimum wage could afford a typical one-bedroom apartment in only four out of all 3,066 counties in the United States." (Smiley 105)

One of the questions raised by the audience of our panel was "What about more public transportation, the buses don't take us where the jobs are?" This was identified as one of the major problems for impoverished having transportation to obtain a job. Most

of these people do not own cars and live further from the jobs than those who do making it even harder to compete for employment. The transportation budget that is to fund this issue spends over half its budget on highways that serve white suburbs instead of public transportation.

The solutions offered by both books speak of unity among blacks to inspire the most fundamental changes. This age old debate has no clear fixes only the realization that it must take everyone united to cause change of the state of blacks. The only clear example of change in this area was self help, personal savings, employers, and community groups banding together to inspire change. There are no laws guaranteeing housing so people have to if it is to happen. There are examples of impoverished children being killed due to unsafe conditions, and those who suffered the lost pushed for safety mechanisms to make sure these things don't happen again. Communities have come together in some parts of the nation to protect every member by providing access to housing as a community service not a luxury. People must make the change to help one another if the problem is to be defeated.

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Table A-9
Tenure by Race and Ethnicity (2005-2007)
Buncombe County Occupied Housing

	Total	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Total	94,052	63,935	30,117
White	84,633	59,677	24,956
Black	6,973	2,977	3,996
Other	2,446	1,281	1,165
Hispanic or Latino	2,342	674	1,668

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

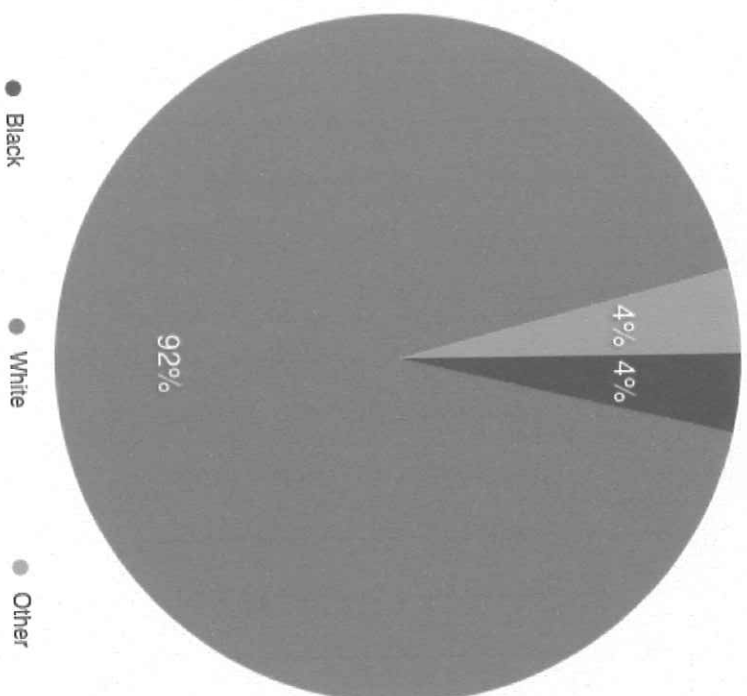
Table A-10
Tenure by Race and Ethnicity
Asheville City Occupied Housing (2005-2007)

	Total	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Total	33,725	18,527	15,198
White	27,679	16,132	11,547
Black	5,220	2,122	3,098
Other	826	273	553
Hispanic or Latino	883	137	746

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

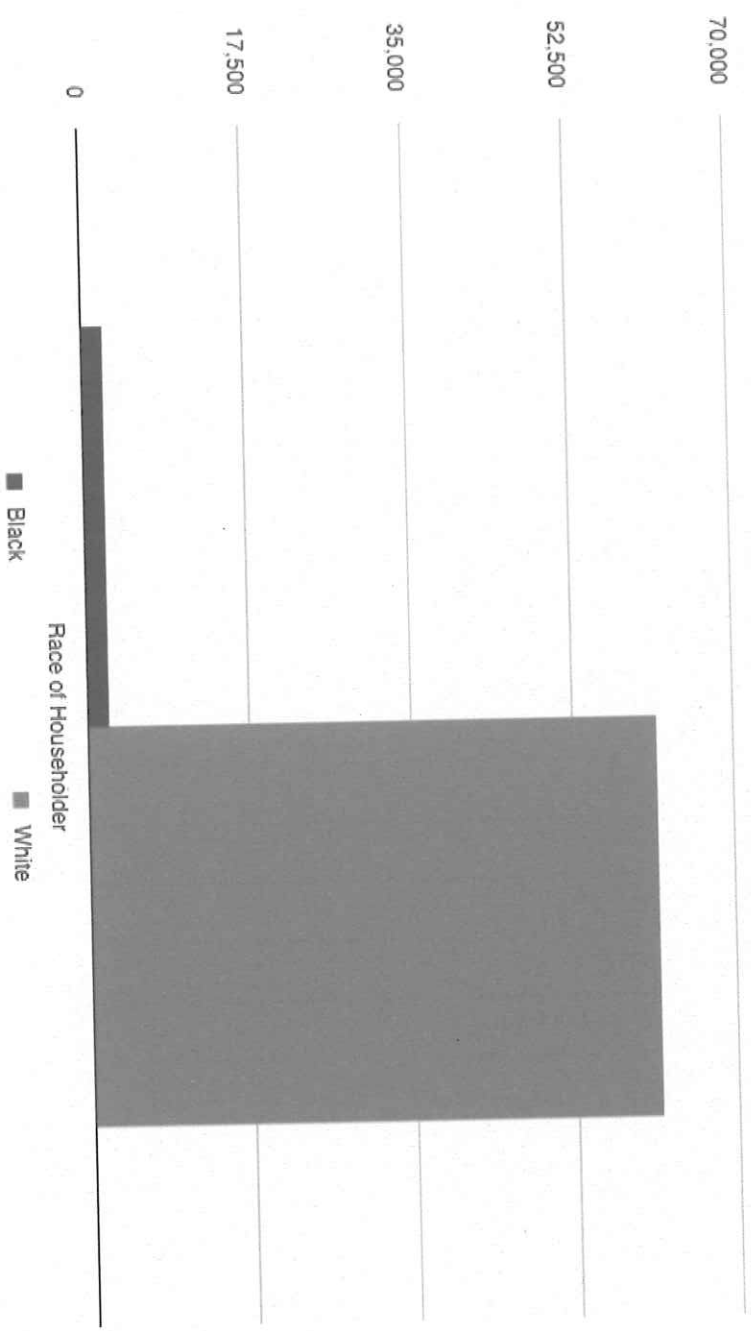
home ownership - occupancy

Population in Owned Occupied Homes by Race - 2010



home ownership - race of householder

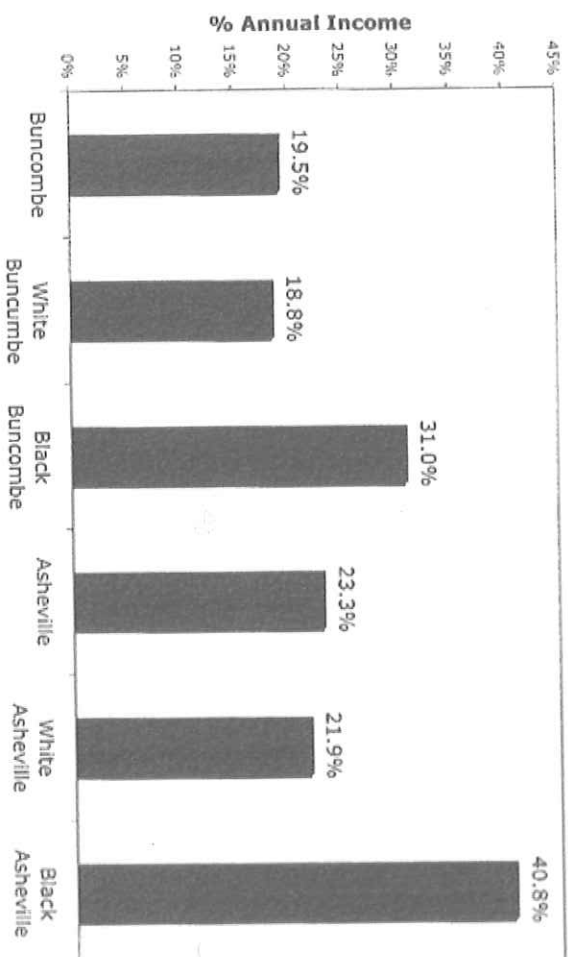
Tenure by Race of Householder



Households headed by mother alone

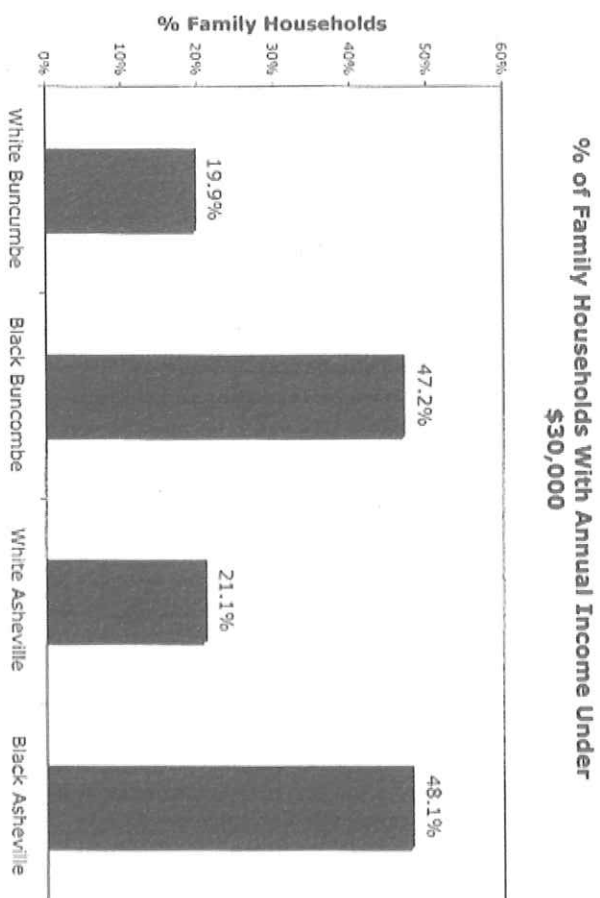
Gross Rent as percent of household income - 2009 Estimates

Median Gross Rent as a % of Household Income



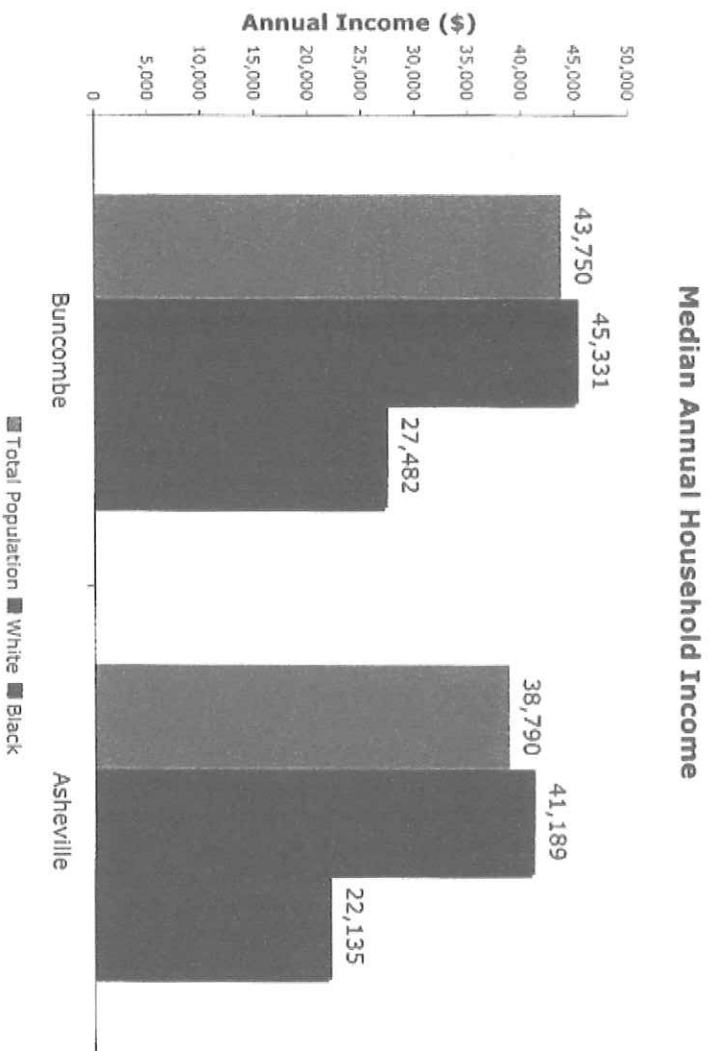
Compiled by the author from U.S. Census ACS 2005-2009

Percent of Family households with annual income under \$30,000 - 2009 estimates



Compiled by the author from U.S. Census ACS 2005-2009

Median Annual household income



Compiled by the author from U.S. Census ACS 2005-2009

Public housing population by race

Figure 2

Public Housing Development	Total Population	Black Population	Percentage Black
Altamont Apartments	60	32	53.3%
Aston Park	161	72	44.7%
Bartlett Arms	114	68	59.6%
Deaverview Apartments	393	195	49.6%
Erskine-Walton Apartments	293	245	83.6%
Hillcrest Apartments	559	407	72.8%
Klondyke Homes	356	301	84.6%
Lee Walker Heights	244	184	75.4%
Livingston Apartments	338	298	88.2%
Pisgah View	582	423	72.7%

Public Housing

The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA) manages 1540 public housing units in 11 developments within the City of Asheville (detailed in Appendix Table A-17). Public housing units represent just over 10% of the rental units in the City and 5% of the total in the County).

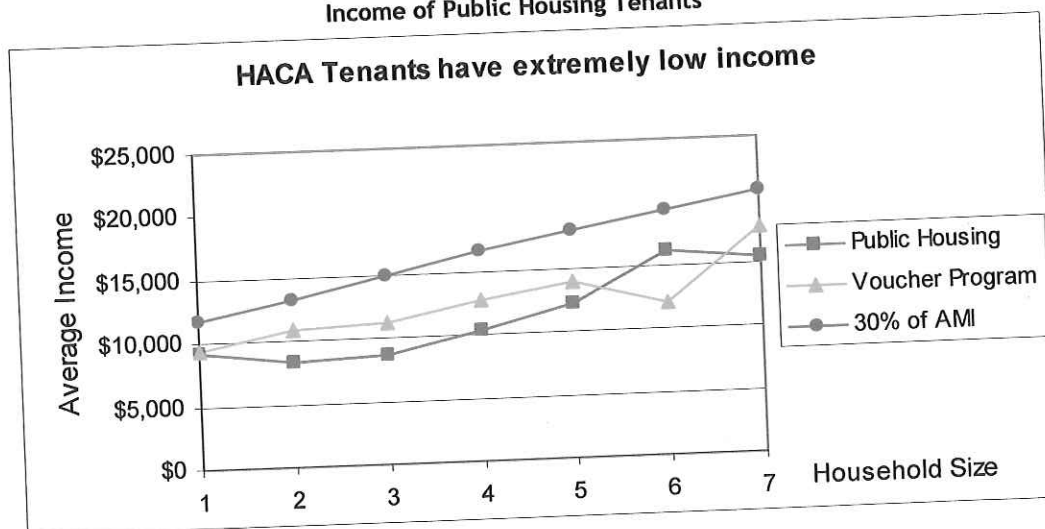
HACA also administers 1390 Housing Choice Vouchers which are rental subsidies that, in principle, can be used anywhere in Buncombe County¹⁴. Through these two programs, HACA was housing a total of 2818 families in June, 2009, that is 9.4% of the county's rental households.

HACA has an active Resident Council that serves as an Advisory Board for planning purposes and advocates on behalf of residents with the HACA board and staff. HACA also operates a wide variety of programs for education, economic opportunity, youth activities, and homeownership. The agency currently has a "standard" performance rating from HUD. It had previously been designated "high performing" and expects to regain that status.

1. Tenant Characteristics

Income: Both public housing and the voucher program tenants have average income below 30% of area median (Figure 19).

Figure 19
Income of Public Housing Tenants



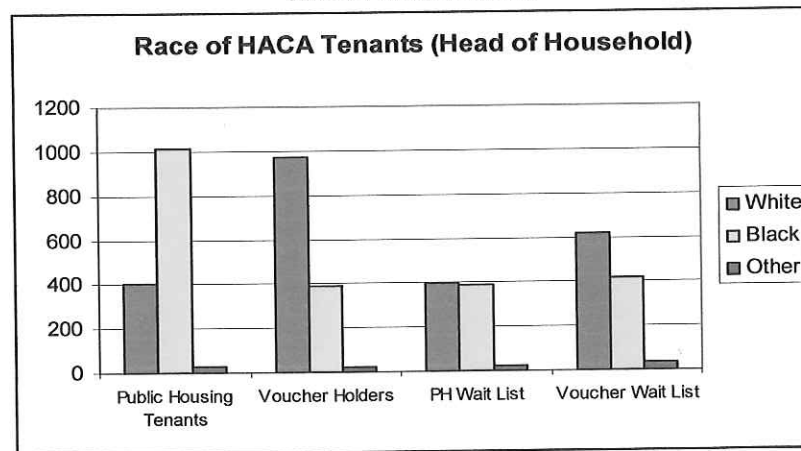
Source: Housing Authority of the City of Asheville

¹⁴ 1251 of these vouchers are in the regular HCV program; 35 vouchers are designated for veterans under the HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program; 104 vouchers are currently designated as "project-based" and can only be used in three specific locations: Compton Place, Life House, and Mountain Springs, all of which are affordable rental developments for elderly or disabled people.

Tenure: Few public housing residents are lifelong tenants: only 7% have stayed over 20 years. The majority have had less than two years tenure, and the average tenure is under 5 years. Existing voucher holders have had their vouchers for an average of 4 years.

Race: HACA serves roughly equal numbers of White and African American tenants, though in the county as a whole Whites outnumber African Americans by 13 to 1. Figure 23 shows that African Americans are the majority (70%) in public housing, while exactly the opposite is true for voucher holders. HACA staff report that this disparity is due to choices made by tenants and is slowly reducing: in 2004, almost 80% of public housing tenants were African American. On the current public housing waiting list, only 44% are African American. The numbers of other racial and ethnic minorities served by HACA are roughly in proportion to their numbers in the population.

Figure 23
Race of HACA Tenants



Disabilities: 598 (19%) of public housing residents are disabled, of whom 24 need and have an (ADA) accessible apartment. HACA has 55 fully accessible apartments (3.6% of total units). This is a little below HUD's guideline of 5% but appears adequate to meet current demand. Among voucher holders the proportion of disabilities is higher (26%) but only 17 are noted as needing accessible apartments.

2. Waiting lists

At July 1, 2009, 887 households were on the waiting list for public housing units. Families needing units with two or more bedrooms are waiting only 2-3 months, but because of the shortage of 1-bedroom units, single people must wait 12-14 months. HACA gives priority in public housing to:

- Chronically homeless people who have accepted case management help;
- Victims of domestic violence living in a shelter

The more popular voucher program has a waiting list of 1033, which means a wait of two to three years. The list is currently closed to new applicants because HACA must reduce the number of vouchers in use in order to stay within the program funding limits. Staff are confident they can do this through natural attrition.