

The 'projects' are nice now finds study on HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration Program

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A study led by Columbia Mailman School examined the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to understand residents' experiences and their perspective on the program. The study published in *Housing Policy Debates* is among the first to examine the impact of RAD which aims to improve and preserve affordable housing by converting traditional public housing to rental assistance. The results from one of the first sites in the U.S. to successfully undergo the RAD conversion indicate notable, and mostly positive, results associated with conversions according to residents.

RAD is the latest HUD-sponsored initiative to preserve public housing while addressing deferred maintenance and its ill effects.

"Our research is especially relevant as [housing](#) authorities across the U. S. proceed to implement RAD, particularly in [large urban areas](#)," said Diana Hernández, Ph.D., assistant professor of Sociomedical Sciences, and first author.

Hernandez and colleagues conducted 30 in-depth interviews with residents at three RAD sites in Central California. The study findings include four main outcomes associated with the RAD conversions according to residents: upgraded heating/cooling systems and appliances; improved unit layout and conditions; perceived safety and

connectedness; and enhanced resident resources and pride of place.

"Our study is unique in that it examines the impacts of a federal program that incorporates major renovations and returns residents to their original residences after a temporary relocation. This approach builds upon previous efforts to address issues endemic to the national [public housing](#) model."

Residents reported being pleased with aesthetic upgrades, improved thermal comfort, increased feelings of pride, and improved tenant relations after the renovation. However, safety concerns and pest infestations were not completely resolved.

"Our results provide clear and original policy recommendations that could be adopted to improve program implementation at future RAD sites, including improved resident education and engagement and the need for ongoing evaluation of the impacts of the RAD conversion process." noted Hernández.

More information: Diana Hernández et al, "The 'Projects' Are Nice Now": Resident Perspectives on the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program, *Housing Policy Debate* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2019.1586746](https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2019.1586746)

Provided by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health

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