

STUDYING SMOKE-FREE HOUSING POLICIES IN THE MINNEAPOLIS PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER PROGRAM

RESEARCH SUMMARY

JANUARY 2023



BACKGROUND

In September 2022 the Minneapolis Health Department (MHD) and Live Smoke Free (LSF), a program of the Association for Nonsmokers – Minnesota, collaborated with the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA) to survey property owners of Project-Based Voucher (PBV) rental housing. The purpose of the survey was to collect information to complement a similar survey of property owners and managers in the Minneapolis Housing Choice Voucher program conducted in 2021. Both surveys aimed to understand low income residents' access to smoke-free housing options in Minneapolis.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the prevalence of smoke-free policies at Minneapolis rental properties that accept vouchers.
- Understand barriers to adopting a smoke-free policy for properties accepting vouchers.
- Understand property owner and manager support for potential citywide smoke-free housing initiatives.
- Offer technical assistance to interested property owners and managers.

In the United States, Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937 provides government subsidies for low-income housing. There are two types of Section 8 subsidies:

- **Housing Choice Voucher**
- **Project-Based Voucher**

WHAT IS THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM?

The HCV program provides federal housing subsidies to renters as a voucher that can be used to pay rent to private owners.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER (PBV) PROGRAM?

The PBV program is similar to the HCV program, except that instead of providing housing subsidies to renters, it provides subsidies (vouchers) to property owners to provide housing at affordable rates for qualified renters. In Minneapolis, the PBV program serves about 3,000 renters.

In Minneapolis, the MPHA administers both the HCV and the PBV programs.



PROCESS

The PBV survey was adapted from the 2021 HCV survey. It included questions about the quantity of units/properties owned and the existence and components of smoke-free policies at those properties. The survey also included questions about property owner support for potential citywide smoke-free housing initiatives such as disclosure, requiring a smoke-free policy, and expanding the smoke-free incentive for Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

The survey was conducted online using SurveyMonkey. MPHA promoted the survey via email to an unknown number of Minneapolis property owners in the PBV program on September 13, 2022. Property owners had two weeks to complete the survey and some may have received an email reminder to complete the survey.

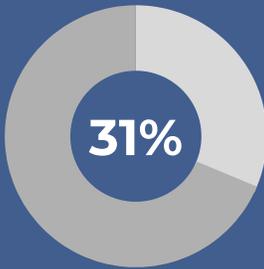
An incentive was offered to respondents in the form of a raffle to win a \$50 Target gift card.



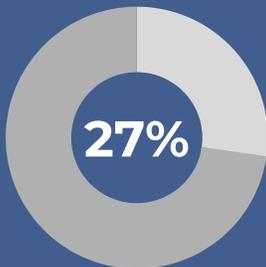
RESULTS

Eleven respondents participated in the survey and **nine** completed the survey. These respondents represent **454 rental properties** and **1,403 units**. Additional responses could not be collected due to limited staff capacity to promote the survey. A few observations from the survey include:

142 of the properties represented (31%) receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits



3 of the respondents (27%), representing 4 properties, indicated that they do not have a smoke-free policy for their properties



Of the 8 respondents who have a smoke-free policy for their properties:



2 respondents said their policy applies to some outdoor spaces



7 respondents said their policy applies to vapes/e-cigarettes



7 respondents said their policy applies to cannabis/marijuana

Support for Potential Citywide Smoke-Free Housing Initiatives:

7 respondents (78%) said they would support a citywide **disclosure** policy



5 respondents (56%) said they would support a citywide policy **requiring** apartment buildings to have a smoke-free policy



3 respondents (33%) said that they would be incentivized to adopt a smoke-free policy by discounted rental license fees or special recognition from the City of Minneapolis



6 respondents (67%) said they would support requiring smoke-free policies for properties to receive Low Income Housing Tax Credits



SELECTION OF SURVEY PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

REGARDING A DISCLOSURE OF SMOKING POLICY

“It is an important decision for some in deciding where to live.”

“It would be far more beneficial to be upfront.”

“We already do this.”

REGARDING A CITYWIDE SMOKE-FREE REQUIREMENT

“Smoke free is the way to go - that way other residents are not affected.”

“I do not support this since the buildings that residents are allowed to smoke in should not be required to change.”

REGARDING REQUIRING SMOKE-FREE POLICIES TO RECEIVE LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

“Logically makes sense.”

GENERAL COMMENTS/CONCERNS ABOUT SMOKING IN MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

“Increased potential for fires.”

“People are not complying.”

“Damage to the property, second hand smoke exposure.”

“Residents who have lived here for 15+ years have gotten used to the smoking policy and are resistant to change.”

*Special thanks to Michele Reid of the
Minneapolis Public Housing Authority.*

*This project was funded by the Minneapolis Health Department and the Statewide Health
Improvement Partnership of the Minnesota Department of Health.*

