

of view. At the School of Public Health, Nan Astone has been gracious over the years and is very excited about the prospect of my new work becoming part of the research at the Center for Adolescent Health. Clea McNeeley has also been generous with her support of my work, including the development of this current proposal.

My proximity to Washington also allows me to share my work with colleagues in the world of housing policy. Susan Popkin and Margery Turner at the Urban Institute are both national experts on housing policy and neighborhood effects. Sue has agreed to act as an additional source of local research support for me, and her experience with the HOPE VI panel study as well as the MTO Three City study will be of great help as I try to understand the effects of involuntary mobility on youth outcomes in my samples. Phil Tegeler at the Poverty, Race and Research Action Council is active in connecting legal issues with social science. I can seek their advice about the usefulness of my research findings for housing policy.

Role of Award

For the last 8 years, I have analyzed data from three residential mobility programs that helped poor families relocate to better neighborhoods—Gautreaux, MTO and the Thompson program in Baltimore. Through this work, I have become skilled in the use of census data, administrative data from government agencies and some geocoding applications. I have also had the opportunity to conduct fieldwork as a result of my MTO involvement. If I receive this award, the resources will allow me to further develop much needed skills to advance my research career and support my time in the field in Alabama. The award assists my professional development in four major ways: conceptual stretch, methodological skills, support for data collection, resources to support my time working on the project goals. In terms of conceptual growth, this award allows me to expand the theoretical framework of my research to include a more serious consideration of the dynamics of families in poor neighborhoods and how they interact with neighborhood effects. In previous work, I focused heavily on neighborhoods, and now can also incorporate the details of family life as well. Dr. Edin will be particularly helpful in this respect. I will also be able to bring together research in psychology and sociology by considering some psychological mediators of mobility and environment, such as hopelessness, stress and efficacy. I will also extend my work to include an examination of adolescent health outcomes, which I have not previously done. Drs. Bolland and Oakes will be instrumental in guiding this development. In terms of learning new methodological skills, I will be employing models that help advance my research questions, such as latent class models to measure mobility patterns and propensity score methods to better assess the causal links between mobility and youth outcomes. I can also spend supported time learning how to use the full capabilities of GIS software and the ArcView mapping program.

I am also excited that the support from this grant will allow me to execute my first original data collection effort and spend extended periods of time learning about the urban environment in which I will conduct some my work. By supporting my summer fieldwork in Alabama, I can also travel throughout the region to meet with other scholars who study the South. I have already contacted Debra MacAllum at UA Tuscaloosa and Alex Vazsonyi at Auburn University and both have offered to meet with me to discuss our research interests. The summer salary support and teaching release afforded by the grant will allow me the protected time to execute analyses, write up research results and travel to present the results of my work.

Lastly, the work that I begin with the WT Grant award will set the course for a rich long term research agenda using the NLSY97 and the MYS, which will continue to be collected, and further developing research projects that take advantage of the mobility interviews I will conduct. I can extend my work on mobility by looking directly at the schooling experiences of the MYS youth and the intersection between neighborhood and schooling effects. I can take the mobility interview instrument that I design during the period of the award and develop a larger scale, multi-city study of how mobility affects youth development and family functioning.

Implications and Dissemination

I see the proposed research being of use in several different capacities. First, by studying the nature and effects of residential mobility on youth and family life, I can help inform how housing policy operates in people's lives, especially the HOPE VI program. It is my hope that the work will help us understand the conditions under which residential *mobility* initiatives are appropriate and effective for improving educational, social and health outcomes, and when residential *stability* is more conducive to positive outcomes for young people. For example, learning whether the negative effects of

mobility can be attenuated by stability in school environment indicates that programs aimed at reducing school mobility may have positive effects on long term educational attainment (see Kerbow, 1996, 2003). After learning how mobility can be a strategy or an unwelcome disruption, I can communicate this work to local foundations who are concerned with these issues. This is a very timely topic in Baltimore, as the Johns Hopkins University has been displacing residents in East Baltimore to make room for new medical centers (in addition to the large HOPE VI relocations here). The Annie E. Casey Foundation is particularly interested in mobility processes and their effects on children's' outcomes. I have provided research assistance about neighborhood effects to the Casey foundation in the recent past, and still communicate with the foundation staff who are interested in findings that could come from this proposed research. Additionally, I work directly to help fair housing lawyers in Baltimore interpret the early results of the Thompson mobility program. I can therefore also directly communicate my new findings about the role of mobility in the lives of families and youth, to help them better understand some of the challenges the Thompson families face. I work with the lawyers who run the mobility program as part of a court ordered remedy, but also regularly communicate with the voucher administrators who implement the program for families, so I have multiple points of practical access.

Given the significance of concentrated poverty for youth life chances, I hope that the findings from this research may also help social scientists and policy makers better understand the processes of segregation and why they affect youth. This involves acquiring knowledge about how low income black families make residential decisions, in addition to understanding the dynamics of white flight and white preferences. My experience testifying in the Thompson v HUD lawsuit last spring made it very clear how important it was for us to have better research about the mobility decisions of poor minority families. Critics suggest that co-ethnic preferences drive and support racial segregation, so housing policy can do little to promote racial integration or affect the choices of poor families. However, in my research for the testimony report, I realized that most of this research uses observational data to infer the preferences of low income black families, which prevents us from understanding the structural correlates of these patterns. Also, the data used do not have large counts of very poor black families, so the conclusions that can be drawn are somewhat limited. My research on Gautreaux and MTO was invoked to support the idea that black families will choose to improve their neighborhood condition if given the opportunity. In this process, I realized that we know quite a bit about on segregation patterns and neighborhood effects, but we know little about why poor families move where they do and how their mobility decisions affect youth. If the proposed work is funded, I will get a chance to examine these issues more carefully.

I am qualified to see to it that the products of this proposed research are communicated in applied settings and in ways that can inform public knowledge. I have been lucky to have the chance to share my work with many different kinds of audiences in the recent past, including, but not exclusive to the academic community. I have provided expert witness testimony for a housing desegregation case, provided research consulting for the Annie E Casey Foundation, given a sponsored Congressional briefing about the effects of neighborhoods on special education, and have been a resource for multiple newspapers and magazines. I was also recently profiled in a full length feature story about my neighborhood research in the Johns Hopkins magazine, which I agreed to do so that I could have a chance to provide an additional perspective on the recent housing case in Baltimore, which has become very politically charged. I will be able to disseminate the findings from this proposed research with the contacts I have already established at the Casey Foundation, other researchers at the School of Public Health's Baltimore Neighborhood Research Consortium, academic conferences, Poverty and Race Research Action Council, and continued communication with the *Baltimore Sun* and other media outlets. I also hope to be able to establish connections with the press in Mobile, and through some of the other researchers on the MYS team.