The Protective Effects of Housing Assistance Programs on Eviction

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ABSTRACT

Recent research highlights that housing eviction is common in the lives of low-income families, especially urban mothers. Housing assistance programs are expected to support residential stability, but little is known about their protective effects on eviction. In this study, we use 15 years of panel data on a diverse sample of urban families from all regions of the U.S. to compare the likelihood of eviction between low-income mothers who reside in public housing, private housing subsidized through a voucher program, and non-subsidized private housing. Findings show that eviction is not uncommon among those who participate in housing assistance programs; annual risk of eviction is between 2 and 3 percent. However, low-income mothers’ receipt of public housing and voucher assistance reduces their likelihood of eviction substantially; comparable low-income mothers who do not receive assistance are around 1.7 percentage points (or 40%) more likely to experience an eviction in a given year.