

# THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

2021 PROBLEM STATEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

## Analyzing Housing and Migration Trends Post-COVID 19

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**THE CHALLENGE** – During the pandemic, housing needs quickly changed, as some people moved far from employers or to non-urban locations, and some industries collapsed, grew, or shifted to remote operations. This challenge is to 1) use data to help stakeholders understand post-pandemic housing and migration trends, and/or 2) create tools that help to visualize and process this information for data driven predictions and recommendations. Resulting products could focus on interactive data analysis or visualizations, AI tools, interactive maps, predictive analytics tools, or others.

**EXECUTIVE CHAMPION** – Kurt G. Usowski, Ph.D., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**THE PROBLEM** – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has supported low-income housing for more than 50 years, using data about housing needs and demographics to inform affordable housing policies and programs. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic's global shutdowns challenged many past assumptions about affordable housing needs. Office worker commutes and business travel fell suddenly and sharply, with [60 million fewer commuting miles](#) as 37.1% worked from home. This in turn cut the use of hotels, airlines, dining, entertainment, and more. For instance, [business travel spending fell 76%](#). Millions remain unemployed. Some social and economic patterns are likely to return after the pandemic, while others may continue in a changed form or be gone forever. The housing needs of both remote workers (e.g., office jobs) and on-site workers (e.g., restaurants, delivery, hospitality, etc.) are shifting. Affordability may change for some urban areas, as people relocate to desirable and newly achievable places including the less expensive exurbs of large cities, to lower-cost southern states, and to communities that facilitate non-work activities such as golfing, boating, hiking, art, music and live entertainment, etc.

**THE OPPORTUNITY** – Many stakeholders, including local Public Housing Authorities, city and regional planners, housing developers, schools, state and local governments, and many federal agencies need to understand the changes coming in the post-pandemic era. For example, these stakeholders are facing challenges including:

- Where might housing soon become affordable if remote workers create vacancies?
- What are the locations, industries, and characteristics of people who now require housing assistance?
- How might HUD deliver and optimize assistance as people can choose to reside in transitory, semi-permanent, or remote housing?
- What are potential strategies to support unemployed and retired people who cannot afford costly housing or relocation?

The changes resulting from the pandemic affect numerous government services, including schools, healthcare, emergency responders, energy and utilities, roads, railroads, airports, etc. Industries and organizations outside of housing that have already shifted to heavy or full remote work (e.g., technology, software) might adapt successful existing strategies and provide value from lessons learned.

**VISION FOR SPRINT OUTCOMES** – Deliver essential and timely information to stakeholders who support local affordable housing, by gathering and/or analyzing relevant data necessary to plan the post-pandemic changes, requirements, and priorities of housing assistance programs.

**TARGET END USERS** – Any stakeholder involved in affordable housing, to include HUD clients (in the general population), HUD landlords, real estate developers, banks and funding organizations, public housing analysts, local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), non-government advocacy organizations, city and regional planners, tribal governments, etc.

#### **RELATED DATA SETS**

- ↳ [COVID-19 Data Hub](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [COVID-19 Household Pulse Survey](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [COVID-19 Small Business Pulse Survey](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [American Housing Survey](#), U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- ↳ [Key Economic Indicators](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

#### **LEAD POINTS OF CONTACT**

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