U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)
OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH (PD&R)

HOUSING INSECURITY RESEARCH FOR THE AMERICAN HOUSING SURVEY (AHS)

Expert Roundtable Program
Contract No.: 86614624C00004

Meeting Logistics

Meeting Date and Time: *March 20th, 2025 at 9am (virtual lobby opens at 8:45am)*

Meeting Details: *Teams Webinar* including Q&A, Polls, and Breakout session features.
Sessions will be recorded for note-taking purposes

Participants

HUD: Katherine Tait, Contracting Officer's Representative
George Carter, Program Office Representative

Optimal/Abt Glo
Team: Oswaldo Urdapilleta, Project Manager, Optimal
Scott Brown, Senior Technical Staff, Abt Global
Andrey Vinokurov, Senior Technical Staff, Optimal
Meryl Finkel, Senior Technical Staff, Abt Global
Lorraine Scott, Senior Analyst, Abt Global
Nicholas Bahel, Research Assistant, Optimal
Jasmine Grant, Communications Specialist, Optimal

Technical
Experts:
Kevin Corinth, American Enterprise Institute
Hope Harvey, University of Kentucky
Chris Herbert, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University*
Vincent Reina, University of Pennsylvania
Jill Khadduri, Abt Global
Martha Galvez, New York University
Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Marybeth Shinn, Vanderbilt University
Scott Susin, Federal Housing Finance Agency*
Jonathan Wilson, National Center for Healthy Housing
Justin Winikoff, United States Department of Agriculture

* Pending confirmation

Purpose of Study and Expert Roundtable

Secure housing promotes a wide range of positive outcomes. The lack of a comprehensive, validated measure of housing insecurity (HI) has made it difficult to track its prevalence in national data. The multidimensional nature of HI also has posed challenges in measurement development work.

In 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a report on initial research toward the development of an HI index, "Measuring Housing Insecurity: Index Development Using American Housing Survey Data." This work drew on data collected in an opt-in follow-on survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2019, called the "Housing Insecurity Research Module," or HIRM, which was administered shortly after the core American Housing Survey (AHS). Questions included in the HIRM were informed by HUD and Census Bureau staff, an expert panel, and cognitive pretesting. HI was measured according to three dimensions: affordability, stable occupancy, and safety and decency. Based on HIRM data, a research team conducted initial research in developing a housing insecurity index.

The present study aims to continue HUD's work on developing an index to measure housing insecurity. The present research team, composed of Optimal Solutions Group and Abt Global (Optimal/Abt Team) has reviewed and prepared an analytical brief of the 2023 report and produced an updated review of the research literature on housing insecurity; particularly, updates from 2019 to 2023. Based on the HIRM and the research done in the 2023 report, a housing insecurity module was included in the 2023 American Housing Survey.

The research team is conducting an expert roundtable to support the following goals:
- Discuss the 2023 "Housing Insecurity Research for the American Housing Survey" Report
- Identify the state of the art in housing insecurity research
- Identify the state of the art in scale design methodology and measurement of a multidimensional concept

The research team plans to ensure that analysis plans for current and further research work in developing an index to measure HI, using the 2023 American Housing Survey public use data, are informed by expert input. The team aims to consider both substantive and methodological developments that could inform this work.

Agenda Overview

Time	Event
8:45 am – 9:00 am	Registration and Bios of Attendees
9:00 am – 9:15 am	Welcome Message and HUD's Perspective and Plan for the Roundtable
9:15 am – 9:20 am	Plan for the Roundtable
9:20 am – 9:35 am	Presentation on 2023 HUD Measuring Housing Insecurity Report
9:35 am – 10:30 am	Full Group Discussion of 2023 Report
10:30 am – 10:35 am	Break
10:35 am – 10:50 am	Presentation on Updated Housing Insecurity Literature Review

10:50 am – 11:20 am	Breakout Discussions of State of the Art in Housing Insecurity Research
	      Group 1: Affordability Focus
	      Group 2: Stable Occupancy Focus
	      Group 3: Safety and Decency Focus
	      Group 4: Psychometric Considerations

11:20 am – 12:15 pm	Share Out and Full Group Discussion of the State of the Art in HI Research
12:15 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch Break

12:45 pm – 1:30 pm	Breakout Discussions of Scale Design and HI Measurement
	      Group 1: Affordability measurement
	      Group 2: Stable Occupancy measurement
	      Group 3: Safety and Decency measurement
	      Group 4: Scale development methodology

1:30 pm – 1:35 pm	Break
1:35 pm – 2:30 pm	Share Out and Full Group Discussion of HI Scale Design Considerations
2:30 pm – 2:35 pm	Break
2:35 pm – 3:40 pm	Continue Discussion of HI Measurement, Focusing on Substantive and Methodological Considerations for Developing Short-Form HI Measures
3:40 pm – 3:50 pm	Break
3:50 pm – 4:50 pm	Consolidate Main Themes of Discussion and Next Steps for HI Research and Scale Development
4:50 pm – 5:00 pm	Conclusion

Detailed Agenda

Note to HUD: Preliminary sample of questions for discussion are included in blue.

08:45 – 09:00   Registration and bios of attendees

- Webinar landing page includes bios of all participants.

09:00 – 09:15   Welcome message and HUD's perspective and plan for the roundtable

- Optimal-Abt team welcomes panel attendees

- A HUD staff member will orient the panel to the history of the efforts to develop an HI measure, aims of the project and where this roundtable fits within that history.

- Advance materials will include bios of each expert panel member, helping streamline the time needs for introductions given the anticipated size of the panel.

09:15 – 09:20   Plan for the roundtable

- The Optimal-Abt team will provide a brief summary of the key areas for discussion in the roundtable and the high-level goals for each discussion. The key areas for discussion are:

    o The 2023 "Housing Insecurity Research for the American Housing Survey" Report

    o The state of the art in housing insecurity research

    o Scale design methodology and measurement of a multidimensional concept

09:20 – 09:35   Presentation on 2023 HUD Measuring Housing Insecurity Report

- As part of their pre-work, panel participants will be asked to read the executive summary and select sections of the 2023 Report.

- Panelists have varying levels of content knowledge on HI. Thus, briefly summarizing key points of analysis from the Analytic Brief and the Updated Literature Review may also be informative and help spark discussion.

- The Optimal-Abt team will adapt content from the Analytic Brief deliverable to provide a presentation summarizing the 2023 HUD Housing Insecurity Research Report and the Updated Literature Review.

- The Analytic Brief presentation will include a summary of the definition of housing insecurity and its dimensions, final measure items, steps of the measure development process, and observations about potential limitations and areas for further development.

09:35 – 10:30   Full group discussion of 2023 Report

- Panelists will then be given 5 minutes to jot down and share via the Teams chat any initial reactions to this content or questions that came up for them during the presentation. After that, we will open the floor for a moderated full panel discussion.

- Key discussion topics will include:

  o *Definition of housing insecurity and its dimensions*: What are panelists' reactions to what is included or excluded in the definition of HI and how its dimensions are defined?

  o *HI measure content*: Is there content within each dimension that is missing or that could use refinement? Thoughts on use of both subjective and objective measures?

  o *Validation process*: Are there additional analyses that would enhance confidence in the validity and reliability of the measure? Thoughts on the inclusion of divergent validity as a validation approach?

  o *Different forms of the measure*: Comparing "gold standard", short-form, medium-form, and long-form.

  o *Data sources*: What are the strengths and limitations of using American Housing Survey data to validate a measure of HI? Are there other data sets that could potentially be used to help with measure validation – particularly for a short-form measure?

- The Abt-Optimal team captures final thoughts.

10:30 – 10:35   BREAK

10:35 – 10:50   Presentation on Updated Housing Insecurity Literature Review

- We will provide a brief presentation summarizing the highlights of the updated literature review, focusing on developments in housing insecurity measurement and in U.S. housing trends since 2019.

10:50 – 11:20   Breakout discussion of state of the art in housing insecurity research

- We will break out experts into four sub-groups of approximately 3-4 experts each based on content expertise to have in-depth discussions on the state of the art in each dimension of HI and on psychometric considerations in multidimensional scale development. Each breakout group will have an Optimal-Abt team member facilitator.

- Each breakout group will begin with a general prompt: "What would you describe as the key developments in research on this topic in the past 5 years?"

- Follow-up questions and probes will be tailored to specific topics or outstanding questions in each dimension, including those identified in the analytic brief and the updated literature review.

  Group 1: Affordability focus

  o What are potential strengths and limitations of considering transportation costs in measuring affordability with respect to housing insecurity?

      ○   Are there developments particular to survey-based methods of assessing housing affordability (versus, for example, using transaction data)?

Group 2: Stable Occupancy focus

      ○   What have we learned about eviction and eviction policies – particularly from the COVID-19 pandemic?

      ○   What kinds of details are important for understanding whether moves reflect housing insecurity?

Group 3: Safety and Decency focus

      ○   Have there been any notable advances in assessing how indoor environmental exposures may relate to housing insecurity?

      ○   How has our understanding of natural disaster risk evolved with respect to housing safety and quality?

Group 4: Psychometric considerations

      ○   Have there been any notable advances in multidimensional scale development or validation?

11:20 – 12:15   Share out and full group discussion of state of the art in HI research

- 11:20 – 11:40: Each group will have 5 minutes to share out on key takeaways from the breakout group discussions.

- 11:40 – 12:15: Full-group discussion questions:

      ○   What implications do advancements in our understanding and measurement of individual dimensions of HI have for attempting to conceptualize and comprehensively measure HI on a continuum?

      ○   What are the prospects for integrating multi-dimensional HI measurement into research on housing insecurity? What would researchers (and peer reviewers) view as the strengths and drawbacks of using a measure like the one presented in the 2023 HUD report? What might encourage take-up?

12:15 – 12:45   LUNCH BREAK

12:45 – 01:30   Breakout discussions of scale design and HI measurement

- This section builds on the discussion of the state of the art in HI research to focus on issues in measurement.

Group 1: Affordability measurement

- What are some strengths and limitations of objective and subjective measures of affordability? Are they distinct constructs conceptually?

- For a household-level measure of HI, what are the implications of differing approaches to measuring income? (e.g., head of household only versus all family members)

- How should insurance costs and coverage be considered?

Group 2: Stable Occupancy measurement

- What are strengths and limitations of using objective and subjective measures of stable occupancy? Are they distinct constructs conceptually?

- Approaches to measuring homelessness and doubling up in a household measure of HI

Group 3: Safety and Decency measurement

- What are strengths and limitations of objective versus subjective measure of housing quality?

- How should we think about potential issues related to differences in measurement or item functioning in urban versus rural settings; new versus existing construction?

- Are there approaches to measure informal housing or legal security of housing? To what extent does informality or the legal security of housing arrangements map conceptually to safety/decency versus stable occupancy?

Group 4: Scale development methodology

- Are there best practices for developing a multidimensional scale on housing insecurity?

- Strengths and limitations of measurement models for this application – Rasch model vs. 2-parameter logistic model?

- How to deal with score distributions that are often heavily skewed? What are the implications of having a more heavily skewed dimension in a multidimensional measure?

- Suggestions for developing a scale that balances full transparency and simplicity with precision?

01:30 – 01:35   BREAK

01:35 – 02:30   Share out and full group discussion of HI scale design considerations

- 1:35-1:55: Each breakout group will have 5 minutes to share out on their discussion

- 1:55-2:30: Full group discussion:

  o What are the benefits and drawbacks of measuring each dimension as a separate construct (versus allowing overlap across dimensions)?

  o Discuss potential tradeoffs between accuracy and usability – e.g., if need to collect income information to administer

    o   What are the implications of household-level measurement versus individual-level measurement of these dimensions?

02:30 – 02:35   BREAK

02:35 – 03:40   Continue discussion of HI measurement, focusing on substantive and methodological considerations for developing short-form HI measures

- Focus of this discussion is eliciting feedback on the goals of a short-form HI measure (e.g., differences between screening for presence / absence of HI versus continuum of HI) and implications for the process and methods needed to produce a short-form measure. Potential questions include:
  - What should distinguish "moderate" HI from more severe HI? Problems in one domain versus multiple domains? Are there qualitative experiential/behavioral markers (e.g., in food insecurity, hunger as an important differentiator)?
  - Are there specific key characteristics by which scoring/weights may need to vary (e.g., equivalent to how food insecurity measure has different scoring for households with and without children)?
  - What are key methodological considerations in developing short-form measures for multidimensional constructs?

03:40 – 03:50   BREAK

03:50 – 04:50   Consolidate main themes of discussion and next steps for HI research and scale development

- What are the key strengths and weaknesses of current multidimensional HI measures?
- What are some key areas for future HI research?

04:50 – 05:00   Conclusion

- Time for Optimal-Abt team to summarize some key takeaways and next steps for the project and to thank participants.