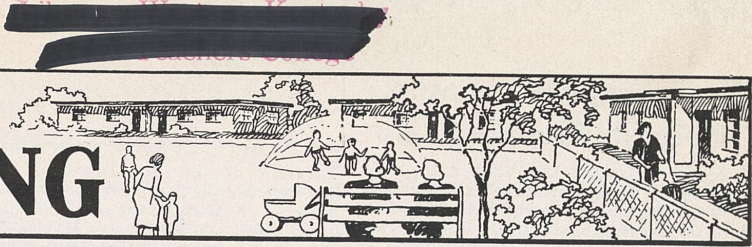


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PUBLIC HOUSING



Federal Works Agency - John M. Carmody, Administrator

Vol. 2, No. 2 - July 9, 1940

U. S. Housing Authority - Nathan Straus, Administrator

Louisville Project To Open This Month

Scheduled to open some time this month, the Clarksdale project in Louisville, Ky., will take 781 families out of "old Kentucky homes" which have none of the romantic appeal of Stephen Collins Foster's well-known composition.

The Clarksdale project, for white tenancy, is one of two USHA-aided projects now being completed in Louisville (Beecher Terrace, for Negroes, to open in September, is the second) and is an integral part of a 10-year housing plan designed to clear up Louisville's slums and provide new homes for the families who now live in the 39,860 substandard dwellings counted in the recent Low-Income Area Survey.

Bad housing in Louisville was effectively dramatized in 1937 by the spring floods which rendered some 1,300 residential units in the city useless. At that time, two PWA Housing Division projects, LaSalle Place, 210-unit project for white tenancy, and College Court, 125-unit project for Negroes, were under construction. They were soon completed, and civic leaders in Louisville, favorably impressed with the results, have urged expansion of the local public housing program as rapidly as possible.

The 781 new homes in Clarksdale and the 808 in Beecher Terrace, added to those in LaSalle Place and College Court, bring the

Defense Housing Set-up Provided In Recent Navy Bill Amendments

More than 450 local housing authorities will be enlisted in the defense housing program as a result of amendments to H. R. 9822 (to expedite naval shipbuilding, and for other purposes) recently passed by Congress. The amendments were supported by War and Navy Department officials, who have recognized that the existing machinery of local authorities in all parts of the country forms a ready-made solution to the urgent problem of housing military personnel and workers in defense industries. The purpose of the amendments was to make this already functioning machinery available immediately, to gear it in with the whole defense program, and to take advantage of the technical experience and ability of local housing agencies.

total number of homes in USHA-aided or supervised low-rent housing and slum clearance projects in Louisville to 1,924.

Clarksdale's tenants will be families whose average incomes range between \$818 and \$1,093 a year. They will pay rentals of from \$17.50 to \$19.50 a month, including the cost of heat, light, water, and refrigeration. Many of these families lived on the site when it was a littered slum.

The USHA and the War and Navy Departments are authorized to cooperate in making housing available for persons engaged in national defense activities, including (1) enlisted men with families, (2) employees of the Navy and War Departments, and (3) defense-industry workers and their families. Projects may be undertaken in any localities where the President determines that there is an acute housing shortage which impedes the national defense program and where adequate housing would not otherwise be provided.

Project rentals will be low, within the financial reach of workers and enlisted men. In the case of projects built near military or naval posts, intended to house enlisted personnel and civilian personnel of the War and Navy Departments, no subsidy will be required from USHA. Such projects will be operated by the respective Departments under lease agreement with USHA.

The problem of housing for defense-industry workers (who will soon swell the population of existing manufacturing centers and may also be shifted to new centers of defense industry) will become the responsibility of the local housing authorities, aided by USHA. Where a housing shortage is found, and where no local agency exists (or where it is inoperative), the USHA is authorized to provide housing directly.

In the Conference Report on H. R. 9822, the Managers on the part of the House of

(Continued on page 4)



Boston Slum Home Collapses Before Site Can Be Cleared

Slum clearance in the South End of Boston was dramatically anticipated about nine o'clock one night a few weeks ago, when the entire back wall of a six-family three-story frame and brick veneer apartment on Harrison Avenue collapsed with a resounding crash. Fortunately, the accident occurred when the children who ordinarily play in the back yard of this building had been put to bed.

This building (see picture, left) is typical of thousands of structures erected on piles in the made land of Boston's South Bay. The retreating water level left much of the piling exposed, and in practically every instance the piles provide no support for the buildings, which are tenuously held together by lateral support.

The Boston Housing Authority had begun appraisals of the buildings for a low-rent housing project 3 days before the wall crashed.

UK LIBRARIES

Texas Supreme Court Upholds Housing Law

Ruling that slum clearance and low-rent housing for low-income families are public uses for which local housing authorities may exercise the power of eminent domain, the Supreme Court of the State of Texas recently handed down a decision upholding the Housing Authority of the City of Dallas. This makes the thirty-fourth consecutive favorable ruling on the question of public housing, similar cases having been tried before courts of last resort in 24 other States.

The Dallas case was particularly interesting to housing authorities in the Southwest, because the district court of Dallas County previously had granted to Will Higginbotham a temporary injunction restraining the Housing Authority of the City of Dallas from condemning his property for the construction of a low-rent housing project. Higginbotham had attacked the constitutionality of the Texas Housing Authorities Law.

The Dallas housing authority then appealed its case to the Court of Civil Appeals at Dallas, which certified the constitutional questions involved to the Supreme Court of Texas. In a carefully worded opinion, the Supreme Court decided every issue in favor of the Dallas housing authority and, in effect, dissolved the temporary injunction awarded by the county court. Actually, however, the Court of Civil Appeals will hand down judgment in conformance with the Supreme Court's opinion. The high court's opinion declared:

(1) The eradication of slum conditions and the providing of safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations for persons of low income are public uses or purposes for which a Housing Authority may be granted the right to exercise the power of eminent domain.

(2) Although the low-rent housing project will be available only to persons of low income and not to the public generally, no special privileges are granted to any group since public use depends upon the character and not the extent of the use.

(3) The Texas Housing Authorities law validly delegates legislative power to the Housing Authority, since sufficient guides, definitions, and standards are laid down for its guidance.

(4) The property of a Housing Authority may be exempt from all taxes and special assessments of the State, city, or other political subdivisions.

(5) The Housing Authority may condemn property in either slum or vacant areas.

(6) A determination by the Housing Authority regarding the necessity for acquiring certain parcels of property is conclusive in the absence of fraud.

Most significant facts revealed by the WPA housing survey in Los Angeles to date are that:

30,000 children are living in dwellings that are unfit for use or are in a serious state of dilapidation.

25,000 children are living in dwellings that are overcrowded.

12,000 children are living in dwellings that are both overcrowded and unfit for use.

Current Housing Literature

METALLIC ROOFING FOR LOW-COST HOUSE CONSTRUCTION, by Leo J. Waldron. Report BMS 49, National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Dept. of Commerce. May 7, 1940. 10c. 23 pp. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

"Abstract.—The general aspects and status of metals utilized for roofing purposes are discussed. Considerations which apply in general to all roofing materials and to metals in particular are given. Basic principles of metal-roof construction are listed, together with descriptions of the type of seams, decks, nails, and coverings used.

"Galvanized sheet steel, terne, and copper roofings are discussed in detail because they constitute the bulk of present-day roofs. The durability of galvanized sheet-steel roofings is shown by the data obtained from outdoor-exposure tests conducted by the American Society for Testing Materials.

"Information on the maintenance of terne and galvanized roofs is given."

PERFORMANCE TEST OF FLOOR COVERINGS FOR USE IN LOW-COST HOUSING: PART 1, by Percy A. Sigler and Elmer A. Koerner. Report BMS 34, National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Dept. of Commerce. Jan. 15, 1940. 10c. 14 pp. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

"Abstract.—A performance test was conducted in the floor-testing chamber of the National Bureau of Standards on 40 different test installations involving 12 floor coverings and 11 adhesives. The floor coverings tested included several kinds of linoleum, felt-base floor coverings having various wearing surfaces, pressed fiberboard, and three strip-wood floors. The bonding agents used included lignin pastes, various resinous cements, casein-latex cement, asphaltic cements, and nails. Installations on both a concrete subfloor and a wood subfloor were tested. Descriptions of the testing equipment and test installations are given. Results showing the relative magnitude of the depressions in the floor coverings caused by the testing equipment are summarized and presented in tables. The appearance of the various installations after 48,000 cycles of the testing equipment is discussed, and representative photographs are shown."

PERFORMANCE TEST OF FLOOR COVERINGS FOR USE IN LOW-COST HOUSING: PART 2, by Percy A. Sigler and Elmer A. Koerner. Report BMS 43, National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Dept. of Commerce. Feb. 13, 1940. 10c. 20 pp. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

"Abstract.—In the second series, 40 test installations were subjected to a performance test in the floor-testing chamber of the National Bureau of Standards. Included in the tests were battleship linoleum, rubber in sheet and tile form, felt-base floor coverings having various wearing surfaces, three monolithic floors, and a number of asphalt tiles. The bonding agents used included lignin pastes, resinous cements, latex adhesives, rubber cements, cut-back asphalt, and asphalt emulsions. Installations were made on both concrete and wood subfloors. Descriptions of the testing equipment and test installations are given. Results showing the relative depth of the depressions in the floor coverings during the test are presented in tables. Brief summaries showing the performance of the test panels are given, and the appearance of the different floor coverings after 48,000 cycles of the testing equipment is shown by representative photographs."

HOUSING. Survey Midmonthly. June 1940, pp. 204-206.

The section on housing includes the following brief items: excerpts from the USHA Annual Report; a mention of the relationship of housing and health; notes on rural housing, on recent developments in public housing in New York State, and on integrating a community program with the recreational activities of the Queensbridge project in New York City. Several recent publications in the field of housing are also annotated.

PUBLIC HOUSING LAWS. An Outline Analysis of the United States Housing Act, New York State Constitution, and Public Housing Law of New York State. Prepared by Joshua S. Chintz and Edith B. Drellich, in cooperation with the Laws and Administration Committee, Citizens' Housing Council of New York, Inc. November 1939. 61 pp. Processed. 50c.

A convenient reference guide to the United States Housing Act, the New York State Public Housing Law, and to the provisions of the New York State Constitution which are applicable to housing.

USHA-AIDED PROJECTS—NOTICE TO ARCHITECTS. *The Octagon.* The American Institute of Architects. Vol. 12, No. 5. May 1940, pp. 8-9.

The attention of architects engaged in work on USHA-aided projects is directed to a proposed change in the provisions of architects' contracts which relate to the payment of social security and workmen's compensation taxes on pay rolls of those engaged as inspectors and clerks-of-the-works on housing projects.

SAVING OUR BLIGHTED DOWNTOWN AREAS, by H. M. Propper. *Nation's Business.* May 1940, Vol. 28, No. 5, p. 20.

Vacancies, tax delinquencies, and depreciated property values in downtown areas put an added burden on all taxpayers, which, since 1929, has become increasingly noticeable in our cities. This article, with a detailed illustration of a blighted area in downtown New York, offers a practical reconstruction plan for the consideration of all civic groups concerned with a balanced rebuilding of their city.

"Replanning will need to deal with both business and residential slums and in areas sufficiently large to establish and maintain their own neighborhood character.

"Such undertakings seem to offer an ideal field for government-business cooperation. Both have tremendous stakes in bringing these districts back to economic life; government to restore the city to a sounder, more economical, smoother functioning machine and private enterprise to conserve a huge investment now seriously impaired as well as to put accumulations of idle capital to profitable employment."

HOUSING FACILITIES AND EXPENDITURES OF WAGE EARNERS AND CLERICAL WORKERS. *Monthly Labor Review,* Vol. 50, No. 4. U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 1940. 30c. Pp. 807-824. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

This article summarizes housing data collected in the study of money disbursements of employed wage earners and clerical workers in 1934-36 for 42 cities combined. Reports were collected from 14,469 white and Negro families with incomes of not less than \$500. A few of the statistics follow: Housing expenditures averaged \$34 per month; two-fifths of all families lived in one-family detached houses and one-fourth in apartments; two-thirds had central heat, and two-thirds used ice for refrigeration; 30 percent were home owners.

WHAT THE 1940 CENSUS MEANS TO CITIES AND VILLAGES, by Dr. Vergil D. Reed. *The Municipality,* published by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. June 1940, p. 109.

The slowing down of population growth in this country has focused attention on characteristics of our population rather than the rate of growth. The results of the current Census will be of particular importance to cities and towns in relation to city planning. The Census data will be of great assistance in planning fire prevention, street construction, utility services, transportation, new industries and markets, public works, work relief, health programs, and many other aspects of community life.

BROADENING THE BASE OF PUBLIC HOUSING. *National Public Housing Conference.* 25c. 35 pp. National Public Housing Conference, Inc., New York City.

Addresses delivered at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the National Public Housing Conference, Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., January 26 and 27, 1940.

USHA Program Helps To Equalize Differences In 1939 Construction

In many sections of the country where private home building activity is lagging, the USHA program is of vital importance in raising the level of residential construction.

The stimulus provided by the public low-rent housing program is most strongly felt in cities of 25,000 to 500,000 population, where private construction is at its lowest.

The volume of USHA-aided building tends to equalize the differences in construction rates as between the various geographic sections and city-size groups.

These facts are revealed in an analysis of the rates of urban construction per 1,000 population, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 1939. During that year the volume of construction under the USHA program amounted to 55,438 dwelling units, or 16.2 percent of all residential building in urban areas of the United States. This fact in itself indicates the importance of the public housing program in the total picture of the Nation's home building. The full significance of the USHA program, however, becomes apparent when one analyzes its effects in the various sections of the country and in cities of different size.

As shown in the left-hand chart below, the rate of USHA-aided construction per 1,000 population in 1939 was highest in the East South Central and South Atlantic States, where it amounted to 43 and 26 percent, respectively, of all urban home building. The stimulus provided by the public low-rent housing program was also of particular importance in New England, where the rate of private construction was lower than in any other section.

The rate of USHA-aided construction was next highest in the West South Central and Middle Atlantic States; it was lowest in the North Central, Mountain, and Pacific sections. Private building activity, on the other hand, was greatest in the Pacific, Mountain, West South Central, and South Atlantic States, and lowest in the New Eng-

land, North Central, Middle Atlantic, and East South Central sections.

Thus, in many sections of the country where private building activity was lagging, the volume of USHA-aided construction had the effect of raising the level of total home building to an appreciable extent. On the other hand, in regions where the rate of USHA-aided construction was lowest, as in the Mountain and Pacific States, private building was most active. The influence of the USHA program, therefore, tended to reduce the geographic differences in construction rates.

Analysis of construction by city-size groups, as shown in the right-hand chart below, reveals that the rate of USHA-aided building was highest in cities of 25,000 to 500,000 inhabitants. In these city-size groups USHA construction comprised from 18 to 34 percent of all home building, thus providing a stimulus where private construction was at its lowest. In the largest cities (over 500,000 population) and in the smallest localities (under 25,000), where private building activity was greatest, the rate of USHA-aided construction was lower. In other words, the public housing program had the tendency to equalize the variations in construction rates between the various city-size groups.

The larger the city, the chart shows, the lower the rate of private construction. The only exception is in the case of cities over 500,000 population, which is due to the large amount of building in four cities in this group—New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington. Further study indicates that the high construction rate in places of less than 25,000 inhabitants is caused by building activity in suburbs of large cities rather than in small localities located at a distance from metropolitan areas. (See PUBLIC HOUSING, Vol. 1, No. 41, p. 2.)

The variations in the rate of private construction as between the various sections

USHA Engineers Study Lighting In Projects

USHA engineers have been cooperating with representatives of the American Lighting Equipment Association in the development of fixtures specially designed to give efficient lighting in rooms of the size and height used in low-rent housing projects. The fixtures are expected to be very low in first cost, of sturdy construction, with indestructible and permanent finish. They will be available from any manufacturer of such equipment.

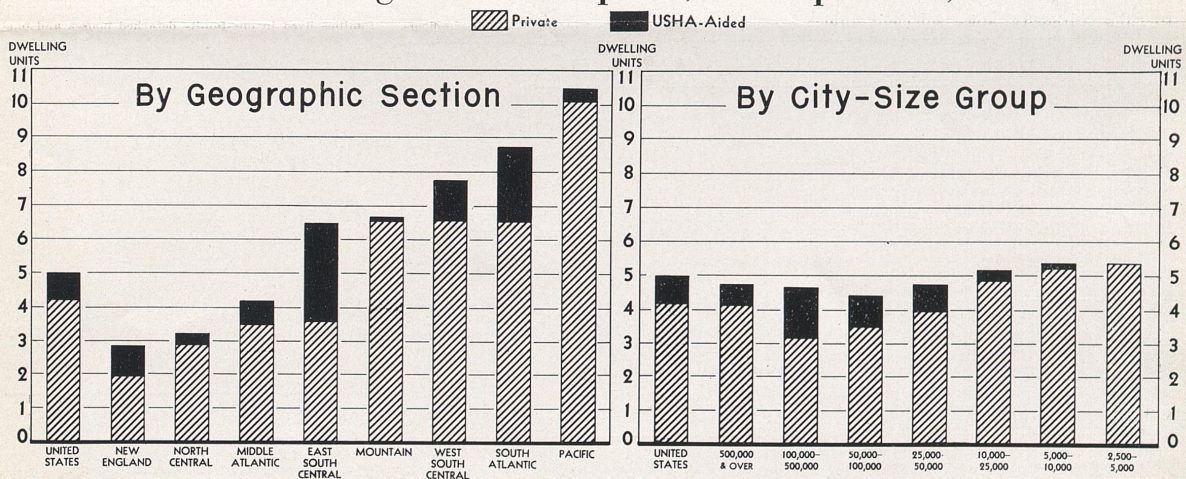
Sample fixtures have been submitted by the Association and are being tested.

It is anticipated that the new fixtures will make possible the installation of artificial lighting which meets accepted standards of lighting efficiency.

and city-size groups are due to differences in economic conditions, in the rate of population increase, migration, and many other factors. To some extent the variations in construction rates between geographic sections and those between city-size groups are interrelated: In the Northern and Eastern States, where private building activity is lagging, there is a concentration of large cities, which are characterized by low construction rates. (While the New England, Middle Atlantic, North Central, and East South Central States comprise 66 percent of the country's urban population, they account for 77 percent of the urban population living in cities over 25,000.)

The low construction rates in the Northern and Eastern States, therefore, would seem to be related to the lag in building activity in cities over 25,000. The high construction rates in the Mountain, West South Central, and South Atlantic States, on the other hand, appear to be associated with the high level of building activity in cities under 25,000 (including suburban communities), which are concentrated in these sections. (Thirty-eight percent of the urban population in these regions live in cities under 25,000, as compared with only 18 percent in the Northern and Eastern States.)

Urban Dwelling Units Built per 1,000 Population, 1939



SOURCES: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Release No. 8785, Feb. 10, 1940; U. S. Census of Population, 1930

Research and Statistics Division
June 17, 1940

Defense Housing Is Authorized

(Continued from page 1)

Representatives stated that, "The housing to be provided is not only urgently necessary during the present emergency but will thereafter represent permanent assets to the Nation. It will materially assist in keeping worthy American citizens and their families out of the slums."

The same Report emphasizes that "The existing 450 public agencies located in all parts of the country will be utilized in expanding housing facilities."

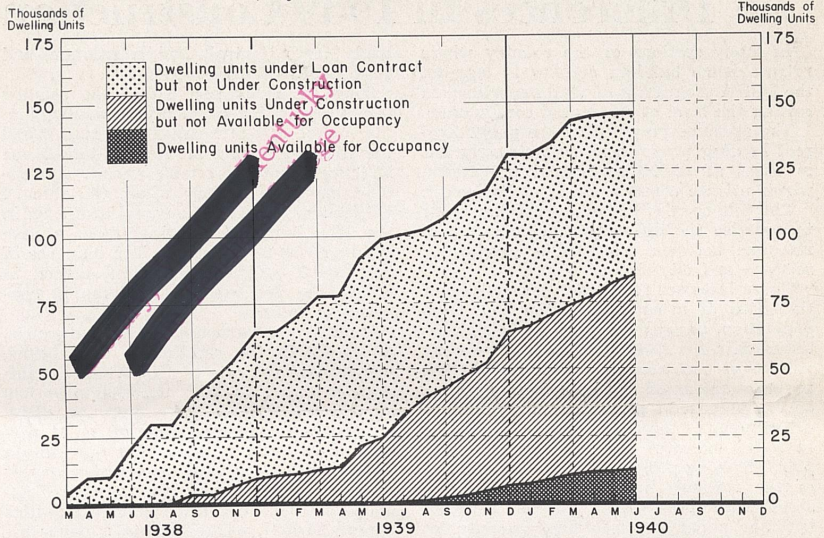
"Recruitment of personnel is already being hampered by lack of housing in many places, including the Panama Canal; Hawaii; Charleston, S. C.; Vallejo, Calif.; etc., and in the vicinity of isolated industrial plants," according to the Report.

Although no funds are provided by the amendments, any funds available to USHA may be expended for the purposes outlined in the bill. Already USHA loans totaling \$1,948,000 have been granted for the first two defense housing projects, in Montgomery, Ala., and in Pensacola, Fla. (for full details see PUBLIC HOUSING, Vol. 1, No. 46, June 25, 1940).

The character of the housing in contemplated defense-housing projects is discussed in a recent statement by the NAHO Board of Governors, as follows:

"Experience and technical opinion are against the provisions of so-called temporary housing. Under most conditions, even in an emergency, durable family units should be constructed. They should be planned as parts of the larger urban or metropolitan areas in which they are located. They should provide not only shelter but decent standards of equipment, open space, and neighborhood life."

Progress of the USHA Program Cumulative, by months, March 1938—June 1940



Construction Report Analysis

During June, one loan contract was rescinded and two defense housing projects approved, bringing the total of all projects now under loan contract to 413.

During the month, the following projects entered the construction stage:

Dayton (Ohio-5-1-R).....	604 units
Jersey City (N. J.-9-1).....	490 units
Fajardo (P. R.-3-1).....	210 units

Brunswick (Ga.-9-1).....	128 units
Brunswick (Ga.-9-2).....	144 units
Phoenix (Ariz.-1-3).....	132 units
San Antonio (Tex.-6-4).....	236 units
Houston (Tex.-5-2).....	333 units
Martinsburg (W. Va.-6-1).....	48 units
Martinsburg (W. Va.-6-2).....	52 units

Between May 18 and June 22, five additional projects were opened for tenancy:

Columbus (Ga.-4-2), Booker T. Washington Apartments, 288 units.
Utica (N. Y.-6-1), Adrean Terrace, 213 units.

Memphis (Tenn.-1-1), Lamar Terrace, 478 units.

Corpus Christi (Tex.-8-1-R, Pt. I), Kinney Place, 134 units.

Mount Hope (W. Va.-7-1), Stadium Terrace, 70 units.

Construction Report Weekly Data

Item	Week ended June 28, 1940	Week ended June 21, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction ¹	222	221	+0.45
Number of dwellings under construction ¹	84,494	84,258	+0.28
Total estimated over-all cost ² of new housing.....	\$373,280,000	\$372,555,000	+0.1
Average over-all cost ² of new housing per unit.....	\$4,418	\$4,422	-0.09
Average net construction cost ³ per unit.....	\$2,764	\$2,766	-0.07

Summary of USHA Program as of June 30, 1940

Item	Projects under loan contract ¹	Projects under construction ¹	Projects being tenanted ⁴
Number of projects.....	413	225	31
Number of local authorities represented.....	171	123	25
Number of States represented.....	⁵ 35	⁵ 30	13
Number of loan contracts.....	245		
Value of loan contracts.....	\$634,567,000		
Number of dwelling units in projects.....	145,646	84,927	13,657
Number of dwelling units available for occupancy.....			12,716
Total estimated development cost ⁶	\$709,595,000	\$407,891,000	\$65,936,000
Total estimated over-all cost of new housing ²	\$650,913,000	\$375,013,000	

¹ Includes projects which have been completed.
² Includes: (a) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (b) dwelling equipment, architects' fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (c) land for present development; (d) nondwelling facilities.
³ The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.
⁴ As of June 22, 1940.
⁵ Includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.
⁶ Includes over-all cost of new housing plus the cost of purchasing and demolishing old slum buildings and the cost of land bought for future development.

Schedule of Bid Opening Dates ¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Athens (Ga.-3-1-A)....	100	8-1-40
Atlanta (Ga.-6-5, Pt. II).....	520	7-16-40
Bayamon (P. R.-3-5)....	133	7-16-40
Beverly (N. J.-18-1)....	71	7-25-40
Detroit (Mich.-1-4)....	2,150	7-30-40
Kinston (N. C.-4-1)....	152	7-15-40
Mayaguez (P. R.-4-1)....	476	7-11-40
Montgomery (Ala.-6-1).....	136	7-12-40
Montgomery (Ala.-6-4)....	424	7-26-40
Newark (N. J.-2-8)....	300	7-15-40
New York City (N. Y.-5-6).....	1,166	8-1-40
Pawtucket (R. I.-2-1)....	226	7-25-40
Ponce (P. R.-1-3)....	116	7-23-40
San Antonio (Tex.-6-3)....	796	7-31-40
Springfield (Ill.-4-1)....	599	7-15-40
Stamford (Conn.-7-1)....	250	7-10-40
Wheeling (W. Va.-3-2)....	302	7-24-40

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening.

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