

## **Understanding Rapid Re-housing Housing Photo Journal Guide**

Hello! We're so glad that as part of your participation in the Understanding Rapid Re-housing Study that you've agreed to share your story with us through a housing photo journal. Your journal photos are a way for you to tell a story through pictures about the places you live and how you feel about them. As explained when you joined the study, an interviewer from Abt will be in touch with you about every few months to talk to you about your experiences. One of the things we will talk about are the photos you've taken and what they mean to you. The interviewer from Abt will ask to see the photos you've taken and will talk with you about them. We also ask your permission to make them available to other members of the Abt Associates research team and our study partners at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

We would also like to make you aware of some important things:

- Your participation with this housing photo journal is completely voluntary (not required) and will not affect your housing benefits in any way.
- Your name will never be used in any reports or publications.
- All information collected during this study will be kept private, and your responses will not be identified individually in any way.
- Your input will help the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development understand participants' experiences, circumstances, and needs regarding rapid re-housing programs.
- According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 2528-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is approximately 3.5 hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

This guide explains what we'd like you to do to make your housing photo journal. This guide also answers some questions that might be on your mind, and gives you tips on how to get started. If you have any questions you can call [SITE DIRECTOR NAME and PHONE].

## What is a housing photo journal?

A housing photo journal is a collection of photographs—photos that you will take—that capture your thoughts and feelings about the place or places that you live. You don't have to take a photograph of every single part of your house, every street sign in your neighborhood, or every place you've ever lived. You can just focus on what's important to you and the things that you think would help someone who doesn't know you to understand the story you want to tell about where you live (or used to live, or want to live) and how you feel about it.

## What should I take pictures of?

That's really up to you. We'd like you to take pictures of things that about where you live, rather than, say, your favorite foods, but you have a lot of freedom to capture what you want. There are some ideas for you below. We encourage you to try out things from different categories and to make up your own if these don't work for you.

### Where you live now

- Where do you live now? What is it like on the inside and outside?
- What do you like and dislike about the neighborhood?
- How do you feel about the place (apartment or house)? What do you like and dislike? What is easy or hard about living here?
- How do other members of your family feel about the neighborhood/apartment or house?
- How is this place different than or similar to other places you've lived? What is better or worse about this place than the last place you lived?

### Where you used to live

- Where did you used to live?
- What is the neighborhood like? What do you like and dislike about it?
- How did you feel about living there? What did you like and dislike? What do you miss about it? What are you happy to have left behind?
- What was that neighborhood or house/apartment like for other members of your family?
- How was that housing unit different than or similar to other places you've lived?
- Where (or what kinds of places) did you grow up? How did you feel about where you lived growing up? How is it similar or different to the places you've lived since living on your own?

### What kind of place would you like to live

- What kind of place would you like to live in (either a type of building or a neighborhood)?

### Rapid Re-housing

- How has your housing situation changed since you got into the Rapid Re-housing program? What, if anything, is different in terms of where you live and what your home life is like?
- Is there one picture you could take to summarize what Rapid Re-housing has been like for you or your family?
- What is good about being in Rapid Re-housing? What is bad or difficult?
- Is there something you would change about Rapid Re-housing that you can capture in a picture?

### What home means to me

- What does “home” mean to you? What does it look like? What does home feel like?
- What parts of this idea of “home” do you have where you currently live? What parts are missing?
- “I feel safe here because...”
- “I feel unsafe here because...”
- “My ideal home has or would have...”
- “Being homeless was...”

### TIPS for taking pictures:

- **Your pictures should represent you and your story.** They can be as simple or as creative as you like. We have provided tips for taking high-quality pictures, but how you take pictures is up to you and what you like.
- To take **high-quality photos**, keep in mind:

- o The **auto focus settings** on your smart phone will almost always be fine to use.
  - o The **light**. Consider if there is enough light for the picture. Are there shadows? Would using the flash help? Would taking the picture from another angle help (by getting the light in front of your subject instead of behind or vice versa)?
  - o The **zoom**. Do you want to show a whole scene? Is there some smaller subject you want to zoom in on that shows something important? Not all pictures have to be of a whole room or scene. Close-up pictures or pictures of small items can be powerful to show how you feel. Feel free to experiment with different types of subjects and zoom.
- Some of the things we're asking you to think about can be hard to photograph. If you want to capture something that you're not sure you know how to take a picture of, just snap a shot of something that reminds you of it or of how you feel. You can use the conversation you'll have with us about the photographs to explain what you were trying to get at.
  - **Who is in your pictures?** If you take pictures of other people *where they are recognizable*—even family and close friends—you'll need to ask their permission to be photographed and get them to sign a release form that shows that they have given permission to being photographed. This is just like what you did when you agreed to create a housing photo journal. If you take a photo of someone and don't have a signed release form from them, we won't be able to use the photo or your description of it in our research. We do this to respect and protect everyone's privacy. ***Your Abt interviewer will explain this to you and will explain how to get people to sign releases.*** We'll provide you with as many blank forms as you need.

### **How many pictures do I have to take?**

We'd like at least 20 to 30 but you can take more if you'd like. We'd like to hear you talk about each photo you share. Between 20 to 30 photos is about the right number to talk through in the hour we'll spend on them. If you take more than 30 photos, we'll ask you to choose the ones you want to talk about.

Your interviewer will have the photos printed out in hard copy so that you can arrange them on a table and talk us through them in any order you want. You'll get to keep those hard copies once the interview is over.

### **What happens once I've taken the photos?**

We ask that you share the photos with your Abt interviewer before your next interview so that she can print out the photos and bring them to the interview. You will share them by uploading them from your smartphone to a Google Drive folder we've created. ***Your Abt interviewer will explain this to you and make sure you're comfortable with how to send us the photos.***

You will meet with your Abt interviewer at a place you've both agreed on for your follow-up interview. She will bring print-outs of the 20 to 30 housing journal photos you selected and shared.

As we talk about your photos, what we talk about is up to you. You can arrange the photos for our us in any way you want, talk about them in any way you want, and go through them in any way you want. We might ask you some simple questions ("How does this picture make you feel?"; "Can you tell me more about this picture?") but, for the most part, this is your chance to tell your story in a way that makes sense to you. We expect that talking about the photos will last about an hour, but if you have more to say, we're here to listen.

### **How many times will you meet with me?**

Twice to talk about photos (we will meet with you other times without photos). That means you'll take, share, and talk through two sets of photographs. You're welcome to share more photos with us in between sessions, but we'll only have two sit-down, in-person sessions to talk about photos with you.

### **Do I have to keep taking photos if I don't like it or if it makes me upset?**

No. You can stop taking photos any time you want, even if you promised us you'd take photos beforehand. You can also free to stop talking to us during a face-to-face session at any time, even if you felt fine when you started. If you would like us to, we can refer you to counseling services to help you sort

through the emotions that taking and talking about these photographs bring up.

## Who can I contact if I have any questions?

For Questions About...	Contact Person			
	<b>Abt Project Director Lauren Dunton</b> 301-634-1779 Lauren_dunton@abtassoc.com	<b>&lt;North Carolina site name&gt; Anna Jefferson</b> 617-520-2898 Anna_jefferson@abtassoc.com	<b>&lt;New England site name&gt; Meghan Henry</b> 617-520-2860 Meghan_henry@abtassoc.com	<b>Abt Associates Institutional Review Board</b> 1-877-520-6835
How to make my housing journal (brainstorming or troubleshooting)		✓	✓	
A problem with my camera or phone	✓	✓	✓	
Getting consent forms from people		✓	✓	
My rights as a research subject				✓
A concern or complaint about the study	✓	✓	✓	✓