



Joint Center for Housing Studies
of Harvard University

FIVE DECADES OF HOUSING RESEARCH
1959–2009

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For five decades, the Joint Center for Housing Studies has informed and convened university researchers, government officials and industry leaders in an effort to exchange ideas and open new avenues for policy research on cities, communities, and housing. Our unique position among diverse academic venues at Harvard allows us to draw upon the expertise of faculty and researchers from a wide variety of relevant fields, in support of our programs of research, education, and public outreach.

History

The Center was originally formed in 1959 as the Joint Center for Urban Studies of Harvard and MIT, and took up the challenge of addressing intellectual and policy issues confronting a nation experiencing widespread demographic, economic and social changes, with dramatic and far-reaching effects on cities in particular. With principal support from the Ford Foundation, the research agenda was based on the premise that the resolution of these issues called for imaginative interdisciplinary approaches to the study of urban problems and issues and required cooperation among universities, government and industry.

During the decade after its inception, when urban studies programs were not yet established at Harvard or MIT, the Center concentrated on building a bridge between multidisciplinary research and policy applications. Research activities were deliberately flexible and exploratory.

In the 1970s, the Center consolidated its research around a core of subjects related to housing. Its analysis of U.S. housing policy reflected the national debate over the government's responsibility to ensure a decent home and suitable living environment for all its citizens. Early in this period, the Center recognized the need to supplement housing analysis with research in related fields, and with input from outside the academy, in the form of partnerships with public, private, and not-for-profit entities.

The Policy Advisory Board (PAB) of the Joint Center for Housing Studies was formed in 1971--- under the guidance of John T. Dunlop, former United States Secretary of Labor and then Dean of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences--- to bring together a diverse group of leading firms and organizations with interests and influence in the housing sector. The PAB continues to play a critical role in identifying emerging issues and trends and joins our commitment to advancing housing as a national priority.

By 1975, research in regional and urban economies, demographic trends, and social policy had been integrated into the program, and during the 1980s the Center underwent a variety of institutional changes. In 1985, the Joint Center for Urban Studies officially became the Joint Center for Housing Studies. In 1989, the Center evolved into a unit based solely at Harvard and jointly affiliated with the Graduate School of Design and the Harvard Kennedy School.

In 1988, the Center launched its signature report *The State of the Nation's Housing*, which continues to provide a widely-referenced annual assessment of housing markets, homeownership, and affordability challenges. Since 1998, the Center has expanded its programs of research and convenings to address emerging issues in remodeling markets, rental housing, and housing finance, and has been at the forefront of national policy discussions concerning mortgage and consumer lending and the foreclosure crisis.

JCHS Today

In contrast to the Center of several decades ago, the Joint Center for Housing Studies is institutionally smaller, yet more connected to national and international networks as we investigate and illuminate housing's critical role in the economy and in communities. We continue to foster strong academic ties with schools, faculty and students from across the university community, and to engage with new initiatives on global urbanism, sustainability, and other critical topics for the 21st century. Most importantly, our work continues to serve as a resource for scholars, public and private sector leaders, housing practitioners, and policymakers.

As of October 2009

JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES DIRECTORS

1959-1963
MARTIN MEYERSON

1963-1966
JAMES Q. WILSON

1966-1969
DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

1969-1970
ROBERT C. WOOD

1970-1971
WALTER A. ROSENBLITH
(Acting Director)

1971-1975
BERNARD J. FRIEDEN

1975-1980
ARTHUR P. SOLOMON

1980-1982
DAVID T. KRESGE

1982-1996
H. JAMES BROWN

1996-1998
JOHN R. MEYER
GERALD M. MCCUE
(Interim Co-Directors)

1998-Present
NICOLAS P. RETSINAS

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRS

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Johns-Manville Corporation

1973
C. E. PECK
Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation

1974-1975
JOHN E. PFLIEGER
Time Magazine

1976
O.M. MADER
Aluminum Company of America

1977-1978
WILBERT NEWTON
PPG Industries

1979
CHESTER E. SHEPPERLY
Johns-Manville Corporation

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National Gypsum Company

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GEORGE E. MCCOWN
The Boise Company

1984-1985
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Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation

1986-1987
PETER G. DANIS
Boise-Cascade Corporation

1988-1989
JOHN M. THOMPSON
National Gypsum Company

1990
WESTON E. EDWARDS
Weston E. Edwards & Associates

1991-1993
DAVID M. HADLOW
The Stanley Works

1994-1995
JOE F. HANAUER
Grubb & Ellis

1996-1997
BARBARA T. ALEXANDER
UBS Warburg

1998-1999
HAROLD MAXWELL
Temple-Inland

1999-2000
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Zaring National Corporation

2001-2002
DAVID K. WELLES, JR.
Therma-Tru Corporation

2003-2004
TIMOTHY R. ELLER
Centex Corporation

2005-2006
THOMAS C. NELSON
National Gypsum Company

2007-2008
STUART A. MILLER
Lennar Corporation

2009-Present
BRUCE A. CARBONARI
Fortune Brands, Inc.