



Homecoming: Life after Incarceration
Chapter 6: Making Housing Happen

Homecoming: Life after Incarceration | Supercharging Reentry Success

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Homecoming: Life after Incarceration

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

One

Functions as an introduction to the ‘book,’ through providing background information, framing topical discussions, and telling the history and context of mass incarceration (and subsequent release for most) in the U.S. from the late 20th century till now.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-1.pdf>

Two

Dives more deeply into the mechanics and broad reach of the U.S. criminal legal system and its impacts on those who spend months, years, and often decades walled off from the outside world. We highlight Innovative Models of successful “in-reach” in jails and prisons in Texas and in-prison educational programming and advocacy in Illinois.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-2.pdf>

Three

Looks at the LGBTQ+ population, cis women, and girls to shed light on the multiple struggles of these underserved and seldom-discussed populations. They are all over-represented in the criminal legal system and susceptible to physical and emotional abuse, stigma, and discrimination inside, as well as homelessness, difficulty finding employment, and other societal challenges outside the walls after their release.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-3.pdf>

Four

Discusses the complexities of family reunification, including common differences between mothers’ and fathers’ experiences and the importance of family reunification for children, followed by a series of Innovative Models related to family reunification.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-4.pdf>

Five

Examines conditions related to behavioral health and infectious diseases inside correctional facilities; shares several evidence-based innovative models of post-release housing and support services tailored to meeting the needs of those living with mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and/or HIV; and closes with an overview of post-release HIV prevention strategies and the campaign to end the HIV epidemic by 2030.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-5.pdf>

Six

Starts with managing the transition from inside to outside and then describes—and offers examples of—the structure, financing, and delivery options for several different models of housing and services to support the wide range of people being released.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-6.pdf>

Seven

Discusses getting releasees re-established in the community, including the range of “soft” and “hard” skills needed by systems-impacted people to successfully gain employment and effective ways of helping people in reentry learn (or re-learn) skills for managing behaviors and coping with the stresses of life in contemporary U.S. society.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-7.pdf>

Eight

Explores building strong strategic partnerships in your town, city, and/or state to achieve community-wide implementation of the kind of innovative programs and best practices described in prior chapters and to advocate for systems-level change. Chapter Eight closes with highlights from an interview with a provider with more than twenty-five years’ experience post-release trifecta of housing development/operations, support services delivery, and systems-level advocacy for formerly incarcerated people and offers selected resources on planning, siting, and developing post-release supportive housing.

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HOPWA-Homecoming-SRS-Chapter-8.pdf>

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Homecoming: Life after Incarceration – Companion Videos

Also found on the HUD Exchange website is a suite of new documentary films that cover topics similar to those explored in this book but use the unique capabilities of film to humanize and supplement the more detailed discussions of the written text. Each video is 20 - 40 minutes in length and comprises interviews conducted with post-release housing and services clients and providers, as well as researchers and policy makers in the field.

Readers are encouraged to use the videos to supplement the information shared here (and vice-versa) to get a better feel for the dignity, intelligence, life experiences, and humanity of (a small sampling of) the millions of Americans who have been incarcerated and/or are supporting others in their reentry process.

The videos most closely related to the topics covered in this chapter include the list below. All videos can be streamed at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homecoming>

- [Episode I:](#) Release
- [Episode II:](#) Housing
- [Episode VI:](#) Trauma and Dignity
- [Episode VIII:](#) Federal Housing Policy

Chapter Six Introduction

The first five chapters of this book were designed to provide:

- A broad context to the structural elements of the criminal legal system in the U.S., including a focus on the differences between jail and prison, the benefits of in-prison education and training, the harm caused by the imposition of court/corrections-related fines and fees, and the role and impacts of probation and parole;
- An examination of key issues related to the damaging treatment experienced by cis and trans women, girls, and the LGBTQ+ population throughout the criminal legal system—from arrest through release—and the horrific impacts incarceration typically has on members of these groups;
- A discussion of the importance of (and impediments to) family reunification for mothers, fathers, and their children;
- A sense of the scope of behavioral health and infectious disease issues faced by people held in jails and prisons, and the impacts that the lack of care (in some cases) and quality of care (where it exists) have on people, both inside the walls and afterwards; and
- An overview of HIV's impacts on certain subpopulations before and after incarceration, as well as how HIV testing and care are provided in jails and prisons and the importance of maintaining a focus on post-release HIV prevention to help end the HIV epidemic in the U.S. by 2030.

In the preceding sections, we have tried to articulate the strong links that exist between each topic and the dynamics of post-release housing. Now, in Chapter Six, we're diving deeply into the structure, financing, and delivery of housing. We're offering a sampling of the many different ways housing professionals can make stable housing and effective support services available, affordable, and desirable to the wide range of people released from U.S. jails and prisons. Some models can be implemented quickly, with little-to-no upfront costs; development, in contrast, can take up to five years and is quite capital-intensive. Each approach has its strengths and limitations. This is merely a starting point—a quick look at what it takes to open housing and keep it running successfully.

In Chapter Seven we discuss a range of “soft” and “hard” skills needed by systems-impacted people to successfully gain employment, as well as different approaches to helping people in reentry learn (or re-learn) skills for managing behaviors and coping with the stresses of life in contemporary society. In the same way that the contents of the preceding sections of the book created a synergistic picture when taken together, the last three chapters also build on each other. Chapters Six and Seven describe best-practice approaches, and Chapter Eight talks about building strong partnerships to achieve community-wide implementation and to advocate for systems-level change.

Glossary of Terms

Congregate housing: A residence in which a number of unrelated individuals each has their own (or a shared) bedroom and the whole group shares bathing, cooking, dining, and other common spaces within the building.

Continuum of Care (CoC): A group composed of a broad range of community representatives (including government, healthcare, housing, social service, education, law enforcement, homeless and formerly homeless persons, etc.) organized to operate the CoC for a defined geographic area. Its role includes: designating and operating a HUD-defined data system (HMIS), planning for the CoC (including coordinating the implementation of a housing and service system within its geographic area that meets the needs of the individuals and families who experience homelessness there), and designing and implementing the process associated with applying for CoC Program funds.

Coordinated Entry: A community-wide process developed under guidelines established by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and/or other assistance, based on their strengths and needs.

HOPWA: The acronym for the “Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS” program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In-reach: The process of making contact, building trust, and helping people being held in jails and prisons to plan for their release and a successful reentry.

Low-barrier housing: Housing in which requirements for entry are limited or minimal; also called “Housing First.” With a focus on “harm reduction,” it eliminates sobriety as a precursor for move-in and affirms the dignity of all.

Master leasing: A housing model in which a sponsoring agency signs a long-term lease with a landlord or housing provider for a number of units and then subleases them to eligible tenants. The agency is responsible for the monthly rent and utility payments and for keeping the units occupied and in good condition. Tenants sign an occupancy agreement with, and their portion of the rent is paid to, the agency, not the landlord. The tenants’ rent and utility amount is typically determined by formula. For many government programs, including HOPWA, this is set at 30% of the household’s adjusted gross income.

Not in My Backyard (NIMBY): The practice of objecting to something that is proposed in one’s local area based on the assumption that it will have a negative community impact, such as increased crime, lower property values, etc.

Permanent housing: Housing that has no externally-imposed limits to the length of tenancy; tenants can stay as long as they would like, if they are in compliance with their lease terms and maintain eligibility for their subsidies, if any. Often the stated goal for people in “emergency,” “short-term,” “time-limited,” and “transitional” housing.

Post-Incarceration Syndrome (PICS): A set of symptoms that are present in many people currently incarcerated, or recently released, that are caused by being subjected to prolonged confinement in environments of punishment with few opportunities for education, job training, or other forms of rehabilitation.

Reentry navigation: Individualized support to help people get reestablished in the community after release from jail or prison, including assistance with accessing housing, healthcare, IDs, benefits, employment, and training.

Social-entrepreneur ventures: Commercial enterprises focused on social, as well as material, gain, prioritizing social well-being over traditional business needs; profits are typically reinvested in the venture to facilitate the enhancement or expansion of services. They are often focused on creating a business model that can meet the social needs of a community or population that governments and other businesses are not currently meeting.

Strengths-based (or asset-based) approach: A social work practice that emphasizes people's self-determination and strengths. It is a philosophy that focuses on the powerful knowledge and abilities clients often develop through adversity rather than on the perceived "deficits" clients bring to the table ("deficits-based" approach).

Tenant-based rental assistance: A method of providing housing assistance in which a household is provided a rental subsidy (sometimes referred to as a "voucher") and they are then responsible for finding a suitable unit of their choice in the private rental market that the landlord/owner agrees to rent to them and which meets the requirements of the sponsoring program. The tenant's portion of the rent is typically determined by formula (for many government programs, including HOPWA, this is set at 30% of the household's adjusted gross income), and the subsidy program makes up the difference between the tenant's portion and the amount paid to the landlord/owner.

Advice for Housing Specialists Bridging between Inside and Outside

“First you need to convince corrections officials that a community group should come into the prison. Then you need to follow people through each step and build a relationship along the way.”¹

The divide between prison and the world beyond incarceration is both wide and deep. Visualize post-release housing and services programs as standing on the outside of a moat that surrounds the prison. The moat’s waters are filled with menacing monsters, such as temptation, confusion, post-incarceration syndrome (PICS), and bad judgment, all of them eager to get their claws into the people exiting prison. If they are to cross successfully, most will need a bridge of some sort—one that community-based organizations are best positioned to help them construct—so housing specialists, “reentry navigators,” and their organizations need to understand this divide in order to intervene effectively.

Getting Down to the Nuts and Bolts

As a provider of post-release housing/services, creating a program of in-reach to one or more correctional institutions should be a priority. Such efforts will allow you and your colleagues to connect with the future clients/residents of your programs while they are still behind the walls. Staff in-reach also helps prepare future residents for the challenges that await them, both in crossing the “moat” and once they start to settle on the outside.

Relying on other organizations to do the work of bridging the inside with the outside is not ideal, but it may be the only way for you to get started. Partnering with another group that already has an in-reach component is an excellent first step. Then, once your team understands the lay of the land and has established its credibility, you can conduct in-reach on your own. In the end, it’s best for the organization that will ultimately be providing post-release housing/services to establish itself inside these institutions to build durable, trusting relationships.

The concept of building a bridge to the outside goes by several names. It is interchangeably called transition planning, discharge planning, pre-release planning, reentry case management, or reentry navigation. Sometimes it’s done well, sometimes poorly, or, as is the case in most correctional institutions, not done at all. It is important to do your homework on the issues outlined in this chapter, and in the rest of this book as well, because re-entering society is difficult and those supporting this process, even when well-intentioned, can cause real harm to those leaving prison through ignorance and misguided assumptions.

As a provider of post-release housing and/or services, your support in reentry is critical; and nothing short of ethical, engaged support should be acceptable. This is because all the variables that affect your clients’/residents’ ultimate success hinge first on how adequately they are prepared to leave the jail or prison. Whether the correctional institution itself sponsors the transitional services or they allow community groups such as yours to come in for this purpose, what matters most is that each individual is prepared for their day of release, and their subsequent first weeks of freedom, as fully as possible.

1. Lynn Levy, interview by Kristina Hals, October 2001, SPAN, Inc., Boston.

At a Glance 6.01

Getting into a correctional facility²

1. Determine which correctional institution(s) you will target.
2. Contact community groups that support incarcerated people in your area and ask about how to get established inside target institutions on a regular basis.
3. Find out the attitude of the warden and/or sheriff about the presence of community groups.
4. Contact the liaison for community groups at the institution.
5. Find out about the dress code for visitors. There will be restrictions on jewelry, certain colors, jeans, revealing clothing, briefcases, and backpacks.
6. Learn prohibitions against what a visitor brings inside, such as phones, scissors, spiral-bound notebooks, and condoms.
7. Obtain identification badges for your staff, if required. Find out if staff will need to have clearance checks completed before they can enter the prison or jail.
8. Learn routines of the facility, such as times during the day when people are counted, meals, and when you will not be able to visit.
9. Work with the prison or jail to determine where you will have meetings and always show up at the place (and time) identified. Try to show up early, when possible, to allow for red tape, pat downs, and other “normal” parts of prison life (for those inside and those visiting) that can make even simple visits complicated and longer than expected.

At a Glance 6.02

If you cannot get into a correctional facility

1. Obtain a list of incarcerated people who might benefit from your services.
2. Write to them, if you can, and develop a correspondence.
3. Send them descriptions and pictures of your program, together with your rules and expectations.
4. Accept all collect calls from people in prison and educate yourself on the predatory practices of telephone service providers in prisons and jails; people may not be able to afford to call in any way other than via collect calls.
5. Learn the schedules of the people you are communicating with and set aside a regular time of day in which collect phone calls will be accepted at your organization.
6. Allow those you are working with to get to know you a little bit and also learn about them to build rapport and connection.

2. Project Bridge. *Building a Program for Jack* (Providence, R.I.: Project Bridge, Miriam Hospital, 2001), 4-9.

At a Glance 6.03

The dos and don'ts of visiting correctional facilities³

1. Know and follow all their rules.
2. Call ahead, make appointments, and arrive for a preliminary meeting with copies of the materials that you wish to use inside.
3. Don't dress too informally or too formally.
4. Don't give people in prison your personal phone number or address. Correctional facilities often strictly prohibit such an exchange.
5. Don't bring in or take out items for incarcerated people. Correctional facilities are typically very wary of visitors acting as intermediaries between people in prison and the free world.
6. Know the facility's schedule. Roll call, change of shift, and meal times are never a good time to try to meet people.
7. Know and use the correct terminology while in the facility or when communicating with corrections staff: "prisoners," "correctional officers" (call them Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, etc.), and "civilian employees" (call them Ms. Smith, etc.).
8. Understand that prisons and jails can lock down without any notice. Call on your way over to ask if a lockdown is in place. Know that you may be told there is no lockdown on the way to the prison and still not be allowed to make a visit because of a lockdown—or without a specific explanation.
9. Remember that the rules in prisons and jails fluctuate from facility to facility and can vary from day to day at any given facility. Ask questions and seek support if your visit is being denied or is infringed on for seemingly no reason, but arguing with correctional officers will rarely help the situation.

Adapting to the Corrections Culture

Once established inside a correctional institution, your organization may find working there is harder than anticipated. Barriers will arise, but none of them is likely to be insurmountable. Among the challenges faced by community groups is the difficulty in maintaining contact with specific people, who may be readily available one week and then inaccessible the next.⁴ Complicating such problems further, transfers between facilities can occur suddenly and unexpectedly. One solution is to correspond through letters or emails on a monthly or semi-monthly basis and provide the information needed to contact your organization, should the people you are working with be moved. This kind of resourceful problem solving will be the best approach to all logistical issues that arise. At the same time, some departments of correction (for example, in Illinois) do not allow volunteers in prisons to correspond with people through the mail or by phone; know the rules of your state and work with them to the best of your ability.

3. Beauchesne, Margaret. *First Steps, Understanding the Culture of Corrections* (monograph) (Washington, D.C.: National Minority AIDS Council, 2002), 7-10.

4. The Fortune Society. *Latino Discharge Planning Program Evaluation* (New York: The Fortune Society, September 1999), 3. Abstract available online: <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/fortune-societys-latino-discharge-planning-model-comprehensive-care/>

Community groups that establish good reputations for themselves inside correctional institutions ultimately have fewer problems working there, and it is helpful to establish positive relationships with correctional officers and others who may be allies. Toward this end, be your most conciliatory selves with personnel who work at a corrections facility. As representatives of a community organization, realize that prison personnel are operating from a corrections-based set of professional values. For example, they are interested, first and foremost, in maintaining security, whereas you are there to assist prisoners in their reentry. Also remember that corrections officers feel responsible for visitors' safety and must be on higher alert during your visits. This is invariably stressful for them.⁵

Despite the stress that visits from community groups pose for corrections facilities (and that corrections facilities can pose for community groups), there are still areas of common ground to be found with corrections personnel. For example, like you, they want to increase the likelihood that those exiting prison will not return to prison. Try to build on these commonalities with guards and other personnel you encounter, and avoid conflicts with their priorities. In addition, show your respect by always following the protocols of the facility.

How to Do In-Reach

In-reach consists of a series of meetings with prisoners starting several months prior to their release. Some community groups deliberately limit such early contact to one month, for fear of being associated with corrections personnel. Others feel it is possible to dispel this misconception and will meet with people from three to six months prior to their release. For those who are in institutions too far away for frequent visits, you may try using teleconferencing if the technology is available from the correctional institution. Many groups have used it successfully.

“One of the biggest difficulties you face doing case management with ex-prisoners is the timing of release ... not knowing the date. This creates huge problems—people lose housing and links to other services. They are in the danger zone.”⁶

During in-reach, do everything possible to convince those behind bars that you do not work for the corrections department. To persuade them, bring along pictures of others in your program, brochures about your organization, and your business card. Your staff could also wear t-shirts with your organization's name on it. In general, community groups need those who are in prison to see them as allies, or they will likely assume you are against them. Allyship, of course, must also be genuine and something forged through real communication and deep listening on the part of the community group.

The most common sabotage to in-reach pre-release planning is an unpredictable release. This is when an incarcerated person is released suddenly, without any notice. Scheduled release dates can also be pushed off, often with very little explanation. Invariably, in such cases, plans for a structured transition fall apart. You can save a lot of frustration by connecting with “classification departments” inside

5. Beauchesne, 6.

6. Focus group with New York City organizations housing formerly incarcerated residents, conducted by Kristina Hals at Bailey House, November 2001.

correctional facilities. These are institutional insiders who track release dates, and they can give you precise information about impending releases without breaking confidentiality. Community organizations, however, are generally given access only to institutional outsiders, such as medical providers. Yet, if you are persistent in asking around and calling, it is possible to get to another level of access within institutions.⁷

At a Glance 6.04

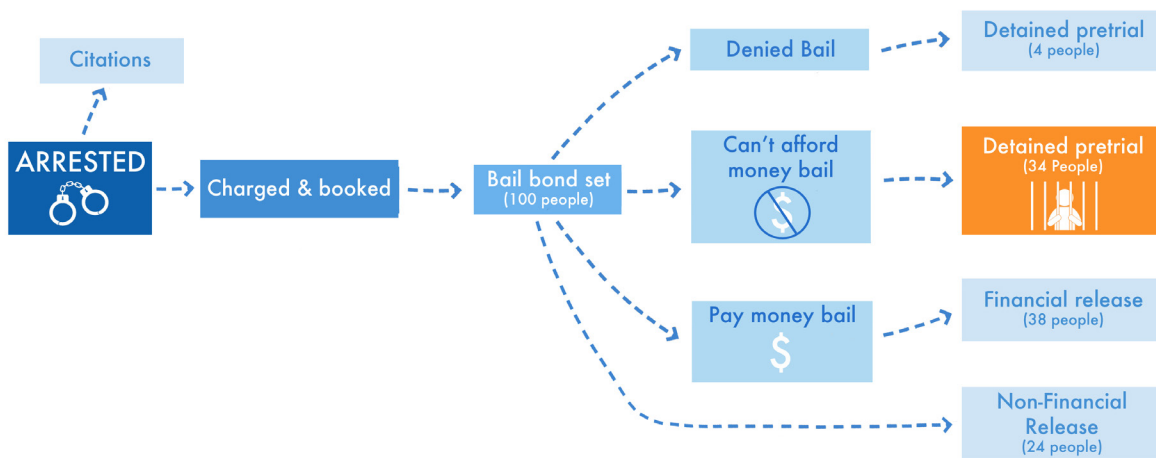
Getting to know “Joe” in prison

1. Meet Joe for the first time at his correctional institution.
2. Introduce him to your organization and carry out your intake steps.
3. Ask Joe for the names and phone numbers of the people in the community who will know where he is after his release, so that you can connect with them should he be let out suddenly or should you lose contact for other reasons.
4. Find out the names of all the medications Joe uses, if you can (for future reference), and confirm with the institution that they will, in fact, have whatever allotment they allow available to him upon release.
5. Arrange for a pharmacy in the community to fill his prescriptions upon release, if possible. Determine what system can cover the costs, e.g., Medicaid or the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).
6. Maintain contact with Joe through bi-weekly visits, letters, teleconferences, etc. Get to know him as a person.
7. As Joe’s date for release approaches, make appointments for him (with his permission) to be seen by providers of healthcare (including, potentially, mental health services, treatment for substance use, etc.).
8. Plan with Joe how he will spend his first 24 hours after release.
9. Choose a rendezvous date and time to meet up with Joe after he gets out—maybe the first day. Even if you arrange to meet him at the gate and usher him out, a backup plan is essential, in case you fail to connect or the release day or time changes at the last minute, etc.
10. Describe for Joe what life is really going to be like when he gets out to the best of your ability. Find out how he expects things are going to work out and listen carefully to all the information he provides. Encourage his dreams and hopes as you also offer a realistic assessment of his expectations.
11. Gather together paperwork: birth certificate, Social Security Card, “Green Card” (resident alien identification), medical summary, and Parole Contract, if available. If anything is missing, write to Joe’s community of origin for a new copy of his birth certificate or the appropriate agency for any other missing documents. Having all the necessary paperwork in hand upon release helps enormously.

7. Joy Ickstein, interview by Kristina Hals. November 2001. *Integration Program of the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital*, Boston.

12. Start the process of assuring healthcare coverage before release. Begin applying for Medicaid when appropriate. The lack of Medicaid is the biggest obstacle to getting access to treatment after release.
13. Prepare to submit applications for other entitlements, such as SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and SSDI (Social Security Disability Income), ADAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Income Maintenance Support, and VA (Veterans Administration) benefits.⁸

The Path from Arrest to Pretrial Detention



At a Glance 6.05

Getting Joe's head together for release⁹

1. Have Joe write or dictate a letter to a few family members and/or friends, telling them he is on his way out. Help him obtain addresses and send the letters if needed.
2. Ask Joe to list people and places that can make life better for him, and those that will make life worse for him, when he gets out. Write them down and give him a copy.
3. Review with Joe any conditions of parole that may restrict who he can spend time with, or where he can go.
4. Have Joe think about what will be the hardest things about getting out. Have him think about positive ways to conceive of these challenges, as well as negative ways he may find himself thinking about them. Consider strategies for overcoming difficulties.

8. Steven Nesselroth. *Hitting the Bricks: Working with Recently Released Former Prisoners Living with HIV/AIDS* (monograph) (Washington, DC: National Minority AIDS Council, 2002), 10. (No longer available.)

9. Ronald Mendlin and Marc Polonsky. *The Double You: The Person You Are and The Person You Want to Be* (Indianapolis: JIST Publishing, 2000), 121.

As one step in helping someone develop a rehousing strategy, find out about their housing history, i.e., where they have lived in the past, any assistance they might have received, what type of housing they've felt at home in, etc., and use this information as part of pre-release planning to determine their best fit for housing after release.

At a Glance 6.06

Questions to ask Joe in a “pre-release” discussion conducted inside¹⁰

1. Which people on the outside do you need to forgive?
2. Who do you need to ask forgiveness from?
3. What are your dreams and goals for how you will live when you get out?
4. Are these reasonable goals for right now? For the future?
5. What is your personal mission for how you will lead your life?
6. What were the biggest mistakes you made in the past and what was learned and lost from them?
7. How has the loss of intimate relationships in prison affected you? How might those feelings affect how well you, and a future intimate partner when you get out, practice safe sex and/or engage in HIV prevention services?
8. How is the world on your side? How will you work with it when it is not?
9. What do you have to offer society?
10. What are your accomplishments and strengths?
11. Who do you want to share your accomplishments and strengths with?

Escorting Them Out

At the time of release, some community groups make a policy of meeting exiting prisoners at the gate and escorting them to their program. By keeping the company of new releasees during these first critical hours after getting out, such groups provide stability at a time of acute vulnerability. This strategy also cements helping relationships with people at a juncture in their lives when they need people they can trust.

Commitments to usher people out of prison can be extended beyond the time of release. For example, some groups provide a staff member to “shadow” someone newly free for the first two days of their release. A post-release housing group for women in New York City pairs new residents with another formerly incarcerated woman for 30 days, “just to get through the activities of daily living.”¹¹ Also recommended is accompanying new residents/clients to medical and social service appointments scheduled shortly after release, to help them get there on time, tolerate potential delays in waiting rooms, and manage other challenges that might unexpectedly arise.¹²

10. Ibid.

11. Focus group with New York City organizations housing formerly incarcerated residents, conducted by Kristina Hals at Bailey House, November 2001.

12. Project Bridge, 8.

After releasees are settled into their new homes, among the first services to offer are modalities of relaxation and stress reduction. Specifically, experts working in reentry recommend that yoga, meditation, and visualization be used to help newly released people calm their nerves in their first days out. Also recommended right away is a chance for new releasees to meet other people who experienced reentry and survived it.¹³ In addition, according to one expert, “positive reinforcement is potent and unfamiliar” at this stage. This means that complimenting someone on even the smallest of their achievements, while useful at any time, is particularly appropriate during reentry.

Other recommendations for those supporting new releasees include simple forms of kindness and maintaining a practical orientation. Just conveying that you care and routinely responding positively to them, according to one experienced advocate, makes an enormous difference.¹⁴ In addition, orienting newly released people to the neighborhood where they will live is a crucial first step. Many will have come from other regions, don’t know much of anything about where they are, and might feel overwhelmed by the unfamiliarity of the area where they end up in reentry.¹⁵

Others who have served long sentences are returning to communities that may have changed dramatically while they were away. In addition, those who have served more than two decades may never have used a smart phone or other devices that have become integrated into daily life but are completely new to them. They may need significant and ongoing help in navigating their way through web-based applications, appointment making, banking, and other online services.

At a Glance 6.07

What Joe might learn in a “post-release” peer group discussion¹⁶

1. His basic survival needs;
2. Where to find help;
3. How to stay busy;
4. How the outside is different from prison;
5. How to reality-test what may be paranoia;
6. How to stop looking at everything with negativity and suspicion while still being safe and careful;
7. The links between success and trustworthiness and the limits of success achieved through fear or domination;
8. The benefits of a positive attitude;
9. How to think kind and transformative thoughts about himself and others;
10. How to recognize and deal with the realities of prejudice, racism, discrimination, and more—without being overwhelmed by them; and
11. How to ally with others to survive and thrive.

13. Carl Fulwiler, interview by Kristina Hals. November 2001. *Integration Program of the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital*, Boston.

14. Nicole Gudzowsky. *Community Reentry: When the Only Way Out Is Up* (Enterprise Quarterly, summer/fall 2001), 17.

15. Adolph Grant, interview by Kristina Hals. September 2001, SPAN, Inc., Boston

16. Mendlin, 38.

At a Glance 6.08

What Joe could learn in a life-skills group (either before or after release)¹⁷

1. How to deal with fear and confusion;
2. How to build community for himself;
3. How to communicate: e.g., listening skills, compromise, and conflict resolution skills;
4. How to manage finances;
5. How to manage time;
6. How to fight boredom;
7. How to value freedom by doing positive things;
8. How to build his own freedom and the freedom of others; and
9. How to delay gratification when needed and how to maximize joy.

Choosing a Housing Model

“We are taking something that was an eye-sore and a risk to the community and turning it into a resource. Our clients are people who have done a lot of damage and had a lot of damage done to them. And we’re working to help them become people who help to build their communities.”¹⁸

When learning anything for the first time, it helps to have teachers and mentors. Similarly, new post-release housing initiatives will turn out best when existing models are consulted first. Unfortunately, in many communities there are no, or not many, programs of this kind. In looking across the country, however, you will find a variety of post-release housing programs to consult and many staff members eager to share their ideas.

Contrasting Programs

Research into organizations with experience in post-release housing quickly turns to questions of philosophy. In fact, these groups could fill a lecture series with their opinions, often contrasting, as to what people who have experienced incarceration need in the way of post-release housing and how their particular approach is the best way to help this population be successful in life. Therefore, you will need to reflect on the issues yourselves and come to your own conclusions as to what paradigm of housing to create in your jurisdiction.

The degree of structure is one area of debate. Some groups advise creating highly structured residential environments with many expectations for what is and is not acceptable behavior among residents. Others adhere to a “low threshold” for what residents need to do to get into the housing and remain

17. Ibid.

18. JoAnne Page, Executive Director of the Fortune Society, quoted in Gudzowsky, 16.

there.¹⁹ A moderate approach is to emphasize structure at the outset of the residents' tenancy and decrease those expectations over time.

Another variable is the scale of a program. Stand-alone residences, with up to 8 or 10 residents, offer the intimacy of a family-like environment, where considerable living space is often shared. Such settings have the benefit of fostering friendships and camaraderie between residents. Some research suggests that these natural relationships can be more powerful sources of support than those with professionally trained helpers.

In contrast, large residences, typically housing between 60 and 100 residents, have benefits associated with their economies of scale. First, they simply meet more of the need. In addition, given their numbers, they can offer a wider range of supportive services on-site. This arrangement, where multiple services are made available in one centralized location, has proven to have particular success with folks coming out of jail and prison. It eliminates problems that arise for some formerly incarcerated residents when they are required to move between multiple sites to obtain services.

Alternatively, your housing program may be based solely on units that are rented in the private rental market. This is called scattered-site housing. Many supportive housing programs use the scattered-site or clustered-unit model. A variation of this model is project-based rental assistance, in which a portion of units in a building are dedicated to tenancy by clients of a housing program, so if (or when) a resident moves away, the unit remains in the control of the housing program and a new tenant is selected to move in. Through using existing underutilized housing stock in local communities these models don't require the creation of new buildings; there should be little delay in start-up.

Another area of distinction is the degree to which a program is focused on residents' needs versus an emphasis on their assets. Traditional supportive housing programs typically focus on addressing as many of their residents' challenges as possible, from health and psychological problems to lack of education and the desire to find work. There are, however, more "strengths-based" models that emphasize the contribution residents can make to their own support and that of the wider residence. Examples of this idea are found in social-entrepreneur ventures that are linked to housing for people who were formerly incarcerated.

In the end, what most residents want is their own apartment—either on their own, with a roommate or partner, or perhaps as a means to reuniting their existing family. Whatever housing a releasee first moves into, it's vital that they stabilize there. But at some point, they'll most likely move on, and this is a good thing if they are able to maintain long-term stability and gain more independence. Let's look next at some successful housing paradigms.

Essential Characteristics of Supportive Housing

Supportive (low-barrier/low-threshold) housing is a highly effective strategy that combines affordable housing with intensive coordinated services to help people struggling with chronic physical and

19. Anne Marks. *A Survey of Potential Models of Transitional Housing Programs for Former Prisoners* (monograph) (New York: The Fifth Avenue Committee, August 2001), 22.

mental health issues maintain stable housing and receive appropriate health care.²⁰ Supportive housing features the following attributes:

Affordability: Tenants generally pay no more than 30% of their adjusted gross income in rent.

Permanence: They have the same rights and responsibilities as other renters, such as having the lease in their name and the right to privacy in their unit, which means they cannot be evicted “without cause.” As long as a tenant household does not violate the rules, they can stay until their rental term ends.

Supportive Services: The housing is designed around a core set of service principles:

- **Housing-oriented:** Services aim to help tenants remain housed. Service providers help people find suitable housing, build relationships with their landlords, and understand their rights and responsibilities as renters. Providers are also readily at hand to intervene to prevent evictions, when needed.
- **Multi-disciplinary:** Service providers help tenants address physical health, mental health, and substance use conditions, and help with other issues like applying for Social Security benefits or gaining employment. Teams of professionals such as mental health and substance use specialists, nurses or doctors, and case managers provide care. Services must be flexible enough to address each individual’s needs, which may involve multiple agencies working together. These teams also try to link people to mainstream systems like work training, if appropriate.
- **Voluntary but “assertive”:** Tenants should not lose their housing simply because they do not participate in services. But providers offer supportive services through progressive engagement and other assertive strategies, including showing up and checking on someone even if a tenant doesn’t request help.
- **Accessible:** Services are usually provided in the unit or building, or at a place of the resident’s choosing in the community. They should not lose access to services if they choose to live some where else. Less accessible services put residents’ housing and health at risk: if they are unable to travel to service providers’ offices, for instance, they may stop using the services. At the same time, providers can connect to residents virtually and/or employ other creative strategies for engagement.
- **Integrated:** Individuals and families are able to live independently in apartments or single-family homes in residential neighborhoods. Tenants in supportive housing should have access to public transportation, grocery stores, parks, and other neighborhood amenities common to all other Individuals or families living in the community.
- **Emphasis on choice:** Supportive housing maximizes clients’ choice in housing options and in the services they receive. For instance, tenants can generally come and go as they please and have control over their daily schedule, like mealtimes and visitors. They also can direct the types of services they receive and the goals they set with the service provider.
- **Low barriers to entry:** Supportive housing providers do not require clients to hit benchmarks before moving into housing or put other screening barriers in the way. Blanket bans on people with criminal histories or bad credit, for example, or requirements to meet goals, like employment or completing a course of treatment, before entering supportive housing would screen out the very people supportive housing aims to help. The emphasis should be on screening applicants in, not screening them out.

20. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/supportive-housing-helps-vulnerable-people-live-and-thrive-in-the-community>

A large body of research shows that the vast majority of people who live in supportive housing are able to stay stably housed in the community. Research has also examined the effect of supportive housing on other outcomes, like mental and physical health, and the use of healthcare, corrections, and other mainstream systems. Most of this research has focused on people with disabilities and/or those experiencing chronic homelessness, especially people with mental illness or substance use disorders as well as chronic physical health issues like living with HIV.

The research on supportive housing designed to move people with disabilities directly out of jails or prisons is limited to a few studies, most of which are case studies. One well-designed study tracked 121 participants who lived in supportive housing after release and 118 who did not. Those in supportive housing were 43% less likely to be rearrested on misdemeanor charges (though there was no difference in the likelihood of felony arrests), and they were 61% less likely to be re-incarcerated one year later.²¹ There is a clear consensus that supportive housing works.

Housing as Healthcare

Housing is described as having a unique position as an “intermediate” structural factor in community health because it links “upstream” economic, social, and cultural determinants of health to the more immediate, “downstream” physical and social “environments” in which everyday life is lived. Thus, housing accessibility, quality, and stability directly impact both health risks and health outcomes. Poor health, loss of income, stigma, and policy restrictions on housing assistance for people with drug use or incarceration histories, as well as preexisting social disadvantages, make it difficult, if not impossible, for many people living with HIV (PLWH) to secure or maintain adequate housing.²²

The importance of maintaining housing stability for HIV care and prevention has long been recognized and is commonly referenced in the phrase, “Housing = Healthcare.” PLWH are more likely to access and adhere to HIV medication and care regimens, as well as reduce challenges to their overall health and wellbeing, when they have stable housing.²³

Knowing this, AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC) and the Center for Housing and Health (CHH), in one well-documented housing experiment, established a “Flexible Housing Pool.” This program partners with local landlords to match people experiencing homelessness and living with serious chronic health conditions, including recent releasees, with affordable housing in Cook County, IL. Once enrolled, clients are linked to a housing case manager, receive rent and utility assistance for as long as needed, and are supported in furnishing their homes. In 2020, the Flexible Housing Pool successfully housed 281 households, and 95% of clients stayed in housing past the 12-month mark.

AFC and CHH follow the “Housing First” approach, which emphasizes quickly linking people experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and/or substance use issues with safe, affordable housing and providing wrap-around, voluntary services in the context of stable housing. One of

21. Jocelyn Fontaine et al. *Supportive Housing for Returning Prisoners: Outcomes and Impacts of the Returning Home Ohio Pilot Project*. Urban Institute, August 2012, <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412632-Supportive-Housing-for-Returning-Prisoners-Outcomes-and-Impacts-of-the-Returning-Home-Ohio-Pilot-Project.PDF>.

22. Aidala, A & Sumartojo, E. *Why housing?* *AIDS Behav.* 2007;11(6 suppl):1–6.

23. Aidala, A, Wilson, M, Shubert, V et al. *Housing Status, Medical Care, and Health Outcomes Among People Living With HIV/AIDS: A Systematic Review*. *Am J Public Health.* 2016;106(1):e1–e23. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2015.302905

the fundamental issues that the partners identified was the need for more flexible funding. All too often, government funding is restricted, and can only be used for a few specific services. However, people seeking housing have diverse and unique needs, including furniture, transportation, mental health care, and more. It's important that once housed, residents continue to receive the services and other supports they need to thrive.²⁴

Health policy leaders tell us that we can prevent new infections and reduce HIV-related illnesses only when we focus on both the health of people living with HIV and the broader structural factors driving the HIV epidemic, including socioeconomic inequities, multiple forms of discrimination and oppression, the lack of adequate housing, and other basic human needs.

All the evidence on Housing First indicates that such an approach helps residents achieve stability and demonstrates service use outcomes that are equal to or, more often, greater those of the more traditional models that require sobriety first or passing through a sequence of transitional housing arrangements prior to being "rewarded" with long-term housing. National housing policy of both the U.S. and Canada now support Housing First as a best practice strategy to assist homeless persons with multiple complex needs, including PLWH and most people leaving jails and prisons. In some states, agencies that manage publicly funded health insurance are investing in housing as healthcare as part of a larger Medicaid redesign process that aims to improve care delivery and reduce costs through innovations made possible by the Affordable Care Act.²⁵ (See the Medicaid section later in this chapter.)

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Status of Research on Housing = Healthcare

A team of researchers who examined more than 300 study and randomized trial results published through March 2014, found strong evidence that "interventions addressing housing needs potentially will improve health outcomes for people with HIV, reduce transmission, reduce HIV-related health disparities, and move us closer to ending AIDS."²⁶ Specific findings noted by the researchers include the following documented outcomes:

- Lower antiretroviral treatment adherence, higher viral loads, and failure to attain or sustain viral suppression are found among those who were homeless or unstably housed;
- Both homelessness and housing instability are associated with an increased risk of premature mortality;
- Homelessness or unstable or inadequate housing are associated with significantly poorer outcomes on one or more indicators of quality of life, mental health functioning, symptoms, and diagnoses, as well as physical health comorbidities, such as hepatitis C and tuberculosis;
- PLWH whose housing status improved between baseline and follow-up significantly reduced their risks of drug use, needle use, needle sharing, and unprotected sex by half compared with individuals whose housing status did not change; and

24. <https://www.aidschicago.org/page/news/all-news/housing-is-healthcare>

25. <https://www.csh.org/resources/administrative-models-for-medicaid-funding-services/>

26. <https://www.aidschicago.org/page/news/all-news/housing-is-healthcare>

- Where housing status worsened between baseline and follow-up, the odds of recently exchanging sex were more than 5 times as high than for clients whose housing status did not change.

In their closing comments, the team noted: “Research is needed to better understand different dimensions of housing that may be protective or problematic with regard to optimal outcomes for PLWH and also to examine different models and levels of housing assistance so as to inform the development of housing interventions.”

Bringing Project Design Ideas to Fruition

One way for organizations that have not yet ventured into creating post-release housing to start out would be with the basic, widely needed, and well-tested model of time-limited housing in a congregate setting. To make the biggest difference, it should attempt to serve ex-prisoners as soon as possible, if not immediately, after their release.

This program should also be linked in some way to a range of long-term housing options so that there is an obvious path to stability for folks and a route to increasing independence as an individual’s circumstances allow. Depending on the size of the building, some units could be allocated to permanent housing for individuals who are hard to place elsewhere upon the end of their agreed-upon term of tenancy. The residence should be at least moderately sized so as to support 24-hour staffing. There are many examples of this type of housing, historically called “transitional.”

Another way to get started is through the master-leasing model in which an agency leases a number of units in a single complex (or across multiple buildings), sets aside one apartment as a staff office, and then subleases the remainder to formerly incarcerated individuals or to families moving together after release. This doesn’t require acquisition or construction, nor is it necessarily limited in size. Depending upon the flexibility of the landlord, the program could grow (or contract) over time, based on the number of households served. (See Innovative Model 6-C, AIDS Foundation Houston’s Bridge ReEntry Initiative.)

A third way that organizations can get started in housing is to develop and operate a site-based project through acquisition and rehabilitation and/or new construction. Although it is not a primary focus of this book, development is referenced in the “Building It” section of this chapter and again in Chapter Eight in the Epilogue and Closing Thoughts sections. And finally, one can join forces and collaborate with other providers in your community to expand existing resources in one way or another. Such community-level collaborations are also highlighted in Chapter Eight.

In planning the development of a first project, be sure to give attention to the possibility of innovation. Post-release housing, almost more than other aspects of the housing field, lends itself to the idea of a demonstration project. As there are not so many residences dedicated specifically to this population, groups planning one can see themselves as pioneers in most parts of the country. Furthermore, few of the nonprofit groups involved with helping those who have been incarcerated are venturing into housing. Therefore, advertising post-release housing as an original and model program can be strategic. Innovation may bring attention, approval, and money. While targeting housing to recent releasees is, in and of itself, innovative, there are also unique angles your group could take to expand on the basic recommended models.

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Ideas for demonstration projects

1. Housing operated entirely by formerly incarcerated persons;
2. Home-sharing options for recent releasees;
3. Post-release housing built as a community service project by people released from jails and prisons;
4. Housing for fathers who were incarcerated and their children;
5. Post-release housing linked with micro-enterprise or social-entrepreneurial ventures;
6. Low-threshold housing for people with histories of substance use, trauma, and mental illness; and
7. Housing targeting transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who typically encounter a lot of stigma and other challenges in securing housing post release.

Innovative Model 6-A

Impact Justice's Homecoming Project – Alameda County, CA

Impact Justice, a national organization that focuses on criminal justice reform, runs a program called the Homecoming Project, which is an approach to addressing the housing needs of ex-prisoners that adds the element of community integration that is lacking in many other housing options. The Homecoming Project is specifically intended for those who have served, or been sentenced to, ten or more years in a state or federal prison.

People coming home from prison are matched with a community host and then live in their home for six months to optimize their stability post release. Determining a match consists of screening participants and hosts, then sharing a participant's application with potential hosts and undertaking a thorough process to pair hosts and participants who are compatible in terms of living preferences. These criteria include: early birds versus night owls, smokers and not, those who love to cook, women who are only comfortable hosting other women, the role of faith in a person's life, etc. Both parties have to agree to the match. This careful process builds trust from the beginning.

Impact Justice pays the host a daily stipend of \$25 per day to house the participant. Hosts also receive an up-front payment of \$250 to cover any expenses associated with preparing the participant's room and for normal wear and tear on their home. Program participants are assigned a "community navigator," an Impact Justice staff member who conducts a needs assessment and co-develops the participant's individual reentry plan. This plan outlines a participant's personal goals, along with tasks that will directly support their reentry process, such as attending job fairs, securing long-term housing, and budgeting. Hosts are provided with professional training workshops every 45 days to educate them about the reentry population and parole conditions.

As of 2019, the Homecoming Project had placed 15 participants into community-hosted homes throughout Alameda County. Six participants completed their six months with the Homecoming Project, and three others had moved into their own apartments, while another three opted to continue living with their host on their own mutually agreed-upon terms. In 2020, the project received a \$2.5 million award from Enterprise Community Partners and Wells Fargo, for expansion. Impact Justice's goal is to place an additional 120 formerly incarcerated people in housing in the East Bay, support them with their reentry plans, and continue to develop the program as a model that can be shared in neighboring counties and, ultimately, across the country.

For more information, go to: <https://impactjustice.org/impact/homecoming-project/>

Finding the Financing Needed

Raising funds for post-release housing can be, not surprisingly, an enormous challenge. Not only have there been only a few private funders who have invested in post-release housing over the years, there is also still a limited supply of post-release housing in operation to serve as examples for how the funding can be pieced together. Nevertheless, with the growing national concern for reentry as an issue that impacts public health, public safety, and racial justice, the opportunities may be growing.

Private Funding Opportunities

Few private foundations have done more than dabble in funding services for people involved with the criminal legal system. To advocates for people who have been incarcerated, the dearth of philanthropic attention may be a little disheartening. However, some private foundations may be worth researching, particularly if you can suggest an angle on your program that captures a particular passion of theirs at the moment. Foundations are a good source to approach with your cutting-edge ideas for untried projects. To locate appropriate foundations, you might start with Candid (formerly the Foundation Center), which provides information about pretty much every foundation in the country. <https://candid.org/>

Public Funding Opportunities

"Categorical funding streams have left few resources available for projects serving formerly incarcerated persons without special needs, who do not easily fit within the federal definition of homelessness. These individuals continue to be left behind without dedicated funding streams targeted towards them."²⁷

The primary source of financing for any supportive housing program will typically be public funds. Other than the monies that states once made available to contract with community groups operating halfway houses, which rarely exist anymore, there are few resources dedicated specifically to housing for people coming out of correctional facilities. As for public funds directed to populations that overlap with people who were incarcerated, such as housing for low-income and special populations, there is a small but growing number of post-release housing programs that have received such grants. Nevertheless, many public (that is, governmental) sources are, in fact, potential underwriters of post-release

27. Corporation for Supportive Housing., *Project Financing for Reentry Supportive Housing*. (New York: Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2002), 7.

housing and should hear about the housing needs of formerly incarcerated people and their families who are living in your community.

Perhaps the first place to look for public money is from local funding that may be in your individual city, county, or state. Forty-seven states, the District of Columbia, the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico, and several cities have created what are called “housing trust funds.” In 2021, these trust funds collected more than \$1.7 billion to advance affordable housing initiatives.²⁸ Each has its own guidelines and requirements, but all the money goes to housing!

State departments of corrections, mental health, and substance use are also increasingly alert to the kinds of problems people face in reentry and the need for suitable housing to help reduce recidivism. Your local and/or state government may have such funding or be willing to help you address this need in other ways. For the many people leaving prison who might choose, or be required, to enroll in substance use treatment, your state’s department that deals with substance use may also fund residential settings that would be appropriate for releasees with an interest in recovery. Such settings typically require licensing, which involves an additional set of guidelines and requirements.

An Alternative to Grants

In the early 2000’s, four nonprofits in New York City collaborated on a strategy for paying for post-release housing without grant funding.²⁹ Instead, they used a provision of the City’s benefits program that provides an enhanced housing allowance to anyone living with HIV. The nonprofits encouraged private landlords to use the allowance to operate informal group homes, called Safe Houses, for releasees living with HIV. Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAPS) and donations also helped to keep the houses afloat. For information on this initiative, contact the Osborne Society (www.osborneny.org) or the Center for Community Alternatives (www.communityalternatives.org).

Accessing Federal Programs for Post-Release Housing

Federal funding may sometimes be challenging to secure, however, federal programs may contribute substantially more per award than other programs are able to. Also, they typically offer specialized competitions seeking “emerging practices,” “innovative approaches,” or “projects of national significance.” And with the emphasis being placed on reentry by the Biden Administration, there are new opportunities across multiple federal agencies.³⁰ The following section outlines the major federal programs you might consider accessing to fund post-release housing.

HHS’s Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) provides a comprehensive system of HIV primary medical care, medications, and essential support services for low-income people living with HIV (PLWH). Its impact is wide-reaching. More than half of all PLWH in the U.S.—over 514,000 people—receive care

28. <https://housingtrustfundproject.org/housing-trust-funds/state-housing-trust-funds/>

29. Nessleroth, 17.

30. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/04/26/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-expands-second-chance-opportunities-for-formerly-incarcerated-persons/>

through RWHAP-funded services. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of RWHAP clients in 2020 were from racial/ethnic minority populations, and approximately 61% were living at or below the federal poverty level (FPL).³¹

Services offered through Part A (Cities), Part B (States), Part C (community-based organizations), and Part D (community-based organizations for women, infants, children, and youth) include:

- Medical care, medications, and laboratory services;
- Clinical quality management and improvement; and
- Support services including case management, housing, medical transportation, and other services.

Part F services include:

- Clinician training, dental services, and dental provider training; and
- Development of innovative models of care to improve health outcomes and reduce HIV transmission among hard-to-reach populations.

In October 2018, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which manages RWHAP, updated Policy Clarification Notice #16–02 regarding “Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds.”³² HRSA indicated that it had modified its guidance on housing services to in order to facilitate and expand access to housing for all eligible individuals. Additionally, some reporting requirements were reduced to “increase accessibility to housing services.”³²

This guidance clarifies that clinical sites receiving RWHAP Part C funding, which had previously been prohibited from providing housing services, now could offer support for “temporary” housing services. The guidance also emphasizes the clinical sites’ ability to provide emergency financial assistance to meet short-term emergency housing needs. As a result, the wide range of medical centers that access RWHAP funding for medical services, medications, and medical case management join grantees of Part A (impacted metropolitan areas) and Part B (states and territories) in being able to offer housing assistance to Ryan White-eligible clients, including those being released from jails and prisons.

31. Health Resources and Services Administration HIV/AIDS Bureau. *Clients Served by the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program 2020*. Available online: <https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/data/reports>

32. Health Resources and Services Administration HIV/AIDS Bureau. *Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds Policy Clarification Notice #16–02* [Internet]. 2018 Oct. Available from: https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hab/Global/service_category_pcn_16-02_final.pdf

At a Glance 6.11

Definition of housing services under Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) guidelines

1. Housing services include emergency, short-term, or transitional housing assistance to enable a client or family to gain or maintain outpatient/ambulatory health services and treatment, including temporary assistance necessary to prevent homelessness and to gain or maintain access to medical care.
2. Activities within the housing category must also include the development of an individualized housing plan, updated annually, to guide the client's linkage to permanent housing.
3. Housing activities cannot be in the form of direct cash payments to clients and cannot be used for mortgage payments or rental deposits.
4. Grantees and local decision-making planning bodies are strongly encouraged to institute duration limits to housing activities and to align them with those used by other housing programs, such as those administered by HUD, which currently uses 24 months for transitional housing.
5. Housing may provide some type of core medical (e.g., mental health services) or support services (e.g., residential substance use disorder services).
6. Housing activities also include housing referral services, including assessment, search, placement, and housing advocacy services on behalf of the eligible client, as well as fees associated with these activities.

Because jail and prison administrators are able to access Ryan White funds to provide medications and clinical services, if needed, many incarcerated PLWH will already be connected to RWHAP services prior to release. In some states, they will have ready access to needed medications and a link or referral to a RWHAP-funded health center.

The central unifying role that facilitates access to the wide array of RWHAP services is that of the medical case manager. They are the ones who will be able to assist individual releasees to find and secure short-term housing, if they are eligible and RWHAP funding is available, as well as to help them link to other housing options in their community, including initiatives receiving funding through HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program. (Described later in this section.)

In a number of states and metropolitan areas, both the RWHAP and HOPWA programs are administered by the department of health, which tends to facilitate collaboration between the two program offices and activities. In addition, RWHAP program guidance requires Part A and Part B grantees to utilize community advisory or oversight boards, which must include PLWH and representatives of collaborating agencies in the community, to help set local priorities for funding levels and the range of ancillary services delivered. Since housing routinely ranks as one of the top unmet needs in community needs assessments, RWHAP programs should be responsive to the needs for housing among RWHAP-connected PLWH exiting jails and prisons as they get settled within their jurisdictions.

To learn more about the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Programs go to: <https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/>

At a Glance 6.12

LSS's Stabilization Housing Program – San Francisco, CA

Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (LSS) offers immediate access to housing for PLWH exiting jail or living on the streets or otherwise in need of immediate low-barrier housing. LSS's Stabilization Housing Program (SHP) provides short-term, temporary supportive housing of up to 28 days a year in collaboration with partner agencies that provide SHP residents with medical case management. LSS's Stabilization Housing Program has a 21-person capacity. The goal of SHP is to ensure temporary access to housing and supportive services to low-income homeless PLWH. The Stabilization Housing Program takes referrals from a wide range of community-based clinics and case management programs in San Francisco. During their stay in SHP, eligible residents may apply to transfer to LSS's longer term Forensic Housing Program, which operates in the same Tenderloin District, single-room occupancy (SRO) building, which formerly operated as an SRO hotel. (See Innovative Model 5-B in Chapter Five.)

Innovative Model 6-B

LSS's AIDS Financial Services Program – San Francisco, CA

The goal of the AIDS Financial Services (AFS) program at Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (LSS) is to provide money management and representative payee services to support low-income people in San Francisco living with HIV, in order to create and maintain a more stable living environment. Helping clients maintain their housing, as well as supporting them in their spending and budgeting habits, is directly related to their overall stabilization of life, ultimately leading to an improved likelihood of better health outcomes and long-term housing stability.

Program History and Overview

The AIDS Financial Services (AFS) money management program was officially launched in 1993. From 1995 to 1998, AFS was expanded with Ryan White Title II funds to provide services specifically to Native Americans living with HIV/AIDS who resided in the Tenderloin neighborhood. By the end of 1999, more than 1,000 clients had received financial management/representative payee and other support services from LSS. Today, primary funding for the program comes from Ryan White Part A, which is supplemented with private donations. Looking across all of its San Francisco-based programs, LSS offers money management or representative payee services to more than 1,800 adults.

The AFS money management program is based on the following values and beliefs:

- Non-judgmental services;
- A culturally competent approach re: gender, mental health, substance use/abuse, or other issues;
- Client trust in workers;
- "Openness" of services (transparent processes);
- Accessibility of the program; and
- A safe, inviting environment.

Target population: The population served by AFS consists of very low-income San Francisco residents living with HIV. This diverse community includes youth, seniors, trans and gender non-binary individuals, previously incarcerated individuals, individuals with difficulties building or maintaining interpersonal relationships, those in recovery, active substance users, and persons who have become impoverished because of HIV-related illnesses.

Services provided: AFS focuses on one aspect of the intensive support services needed to meet the goal of a stable living environment, financial management. To accomplish this goal the AFS program:

- Prioritizes the timely and accurate payment of rent;
- Establishes relationships with landlords who, because of a guaranteed rent payment, will open an impossibly small and expensive housing market to clients whose previous difficulty managing their funds made obtaining and maintaining housing nearly impossible; and
- Provides support to clients to better manage their funds remaining after their rent is paid to cover food, clothing and personal needs.

How the AFS Program Works

Each AFS program client receives monthly services that include budget planning, authorizations for disbursement, maintenance of client financial records, negotiations with landlords, communication and coordination with entitlement agencies, payment of bills, disbursement of funds, and access to banking services.

After a prospective client has met with LSS staff to ensure they understand all program policies and procedures, the client is assigned to a caseworker, and s/he may be available to assist the client in gathering the information necessary to verify eligibility. To be eligible for the AFS program, an individual must present:

- A verifiable letter of diagnosis for HIV or AIDS (or current document entry in the statewide ARIES database)³³
- Proof of San Francisco residency; and
- Verification of low-income status—at, or below, 400% of Federal Poverty Level (\$51,520 for an individual in 2022).

Once eligibility has been established, the caseworker explains to each client their rights/responsibilities, procedures for filing a grievance, and all other procedures of the program. Application is then made to appropriate entitlement agencies, designating LSS as the representative payee/money manager. The client signs a “Letter of Agreement” with LSS that specifies, at minimum, the client’s authorization for LSS to issue a monthly check for rent. It also specifies that LSS will provide the client with personal expense money, if available in their account after payment of rent, according to an individual personal expense budget agreed upon by the client and their caseworker. Besides rent payments, additional benefits counseling and bill paying services are offered to all clients.

33. The AIDS Regional Information and Evaluation System (ARIES) is a centralized HIV/AIDS client management system that allows for coordination of client services among medical care, treatment and support providers and provides comprehensive data for program reporting and monitoring.

At the time of enrollment, LSS will add the individual's name to the operating client system linked to a collective account for the AFS program. Check signing authority is limited to authorized LSS management staff only. Checks are written by LSS staff and mailed by the caseworker, picked up by the client at the LSS office location, or routed via direct deposit to the client's personal bank account. There are no cash disbursements.

Program Outcomes (2016-2017):

- 93% of clients were able to access housing during the contract period;
- 96% of clients maintained their housing for 6 or more consecutive months during the contract period; and
- 90% of clients who completed a Client Satisfaction Survey were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with services.

When Do Services End?

AFS program clients are discharged when they move out of the geographical area of service, when they become ineligible for their income benefits, when they fail to comply with the LSS Letter of Agreement, when they wish to seek services elsewhere, or if they decide to manage their own funds. If a one-month period passes with no contact with the client, a letter will be sent to their last known address. If at three months there is still no client contact, that file is considered to be inactive. Inactive files are followed up with contact to the client's case manager or emergency contact, if available. After a client has not been seen or heard from in three months, the client's file will be closed and a letter will be sent to all entitlement agencies informing them that LSS should no longer receive funds on the client's behalf. All remaining funds in the client's account are forwarded to the issuing administration or agency.

Learn more about AFS and other LSS programs at: <https://www.lssnorcal.org/>

HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS Program

The Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program was established by the AIDS Housing Opportunity Act in 1992³⁴ and remains the only federal housing program solely dedicated to providing rental housing assistance for individuals living with HIV and their families. The program provides resources and incentives to devise long-term, comprehensive strategies for meeting the housing needs of low-income PLWH.

HOPWA is one of the programs at HUD that has no restrictions related to the severity or timing of a crime. Its only eligibility criteria are being "low income" (at or below 80% of area median income as defined by HUD) and living with HIV (as confirmed by a medical provider). HUD very much encourages HOPWA grantees to do what they can to support PLWH as they exit jail or prison because housing stability has been shown to be crucial to maintaining both HIV and overall health, and to reducing HIV transmission in impacted neighborhoods and communities.

34. 42 U.S.C. 12901 et seq., Title 24, Part 574

At a Glance 6.13

HOPWA Eligible Activities

1. Acquisition, rehabilitation, and/or new construction of housing units/facilities;
2. Costs of operating facilities and residences, including emergency, short-term, and long-term models;
3. Rental assistance:
4. Short-term payments to prevent homelessness, i.e., short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance;
5. Long-term rental assistance, including tenant-based, project-based and master leasing models;
6. Permanent housing placement assistance for costs to get eligible households into permanent housing.;
7. The coordination and delivery of supportive services, including but not limited to:
 - Adult day care and childcare;
 - Assessment and case management;
 - Assistance with daily living (life skills);
 - Education;
 - Job training and placement assistance;
 - Mental health and substance abuse treatment;
 - Nutritional services;
 - Transportation; and
8. Resource Identification and Housing Information Services

Ninety percent of HOPWA funds (\$450 million in FY 2022) are allocated by formula to impacted metropolitan areas (greater 500,000 people and 2,000 PLWH) and territories and states with more than 2,000 PLWH outside eligible metropolitan areas. Ten percent of total program funding is awarded through a competitive process for Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) and for non-formula areas. Recipients of formula awards are the eligible states and the most populous city in each “Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area” that qualifies and participates in HUD’s “Consolidated Planning” process. Eligible competitive grant applicants include states, units of general local government, and nonprofit organizations. The 2021 SPNS competition awarded \$41 million to entities in 14 states.

The HOPWA-eligible rental housing assistance listed in Category 3 above can be further described as falling into three primary types, and these activities form the bulk of activities that HOPWA formula funds are supporting nationwide:

- **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA):** a rental subsidy used to help households obtain and maintain permanent affordable housing by paying the difference between the contract rent to the owner and the household’s calculated rent payment.

- **Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) assistance:** short-term rent, mortgage, and utility payments to prevent homelessness of a tenant or mortgagor of a dwelling. STRMU is designed to prevent households from becoming homeless by helping them remain in their own dwellings. STRMU assistance is capped by statute at 21 weeks in a 52-week period.
- **Permanent Housing Placement (PHP)** assistance to help HOPWA-eligible households establish a permanent residence in which continued occupancy is expected. Eligible costs include a range of items necessary to move people into permanent housing, such as housing application fees, related credit checks, utility hookup fees and deposits, first month's rent, renter's insurance, payment of a past due utility debt (if it is a barrier to accessing housing), and reasonable security deposits (capped at no more than two month's rent).

Find out more at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hopwa/>

Innovative Model 6-C

AFH's Bridge ReEntry Initiative – Houston, TX

Overview

Since 1982, AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH) has led the fight in addressing the impacts of (and ending) the HIV epidemic in Houston and Harris County, TX. Among its multiple direct client services, AFH offers five housing programs that provide safe, affordable living and supportive services to individuals and families impacted by HIV.

To help individuals develop a stable, healthy, and productive future, all AFH housing programs provide intensive case management, community, and social support. AFH's comprehensive assistance model includes individualized plans to address financial stability, resolve family issues, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and guidance on how to obtain other medical and social services.

Over the years, AFH has built communities designed to serve a broad range of needs among:

- Homeless youth ages 18-24 regardless of HIV status;
- Individuals or couples experiencing housing and financial instability where one or both are living with HIV;
- Families with one or more members who are living with HIV and experiencing housing and financial instability;
- Homeless cis-gender and transgender women living with HIV who face additional barriers, such as trauma, sexual violence, economic instability, and prior incarceration; and
- Chronically homeless individuals living with HIV who may also have disabilities.

Bridge ReEntry Initiative

The Bridge ReEntry Initiative (BRI) is a two-step transitional housing program designed for recently released PLWH. AFH's vision for this project is to assist those reentering society from a correctional facility by providing stable housing and access to medical care, with the additional goal of maintaining HIV viral load suppression.

BRI accepts referrals from other regional programs that serve recent releasees, such as the Bail Project, city and county jails, the Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice, public defender offices, healthcare facilities, as well as from family, friends, and by self-referral. The program serves women, men, transgender, and gender nonconforming individuals living with HIV who are at least 18 years old or a legally emancipated minor. In addition, all residents must:

- Meet income guidelines established by the City of Houston for the HOPWA program (below 80% of area median); and
- Be recently released (in the past 120 days) from a jail or prison at the time of referral.

In addition to housing assistance, participants in BRI also have access to the following AFH programs:

- **Somebody Cares:** a peer-based program designed to help individuals plan for living with HIV after their release, offering access to post-release resources and services that increase adherence to treatment and medication; and
- **Medical Transportation:** providing transportation to recently released persons living with HIV to medical appointments, mental health appointments, probation/parole appointments, and to appointments at other supportive services offices.

Services provided in BRI include:

- Short-term supportive housing (hotel, extended stay);
- Transitional supportive housing;
- Access to testing services for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI);
- Linkage to medical care;
- Referrals to other essential services;
- Benefit enrollment assistance;
- Employment assistance/referrals; and
- Permanent housing placement.

Short-Term Supportive Housing:

- 60 days maximum stay; and
- Short-term facilities are intended to provide temporary shelter to eligible individuals to prevent homelessness and allow an opportunity to develop an individualized housing plan to guide the client's linkage to more stable housing and establishing income.

Transitional Supportive Housing:

- Transitional Supportive Housing (TSH) provides up to 12 cumulative months of rental assistance to households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness, utilizing the "master leasing" approach. AFH leases a block of apartments in one complex, sets aside one unit to serve as an on-site office, and then sub-leases the remaining units to eligible clients. TSH allows households an opportunity to prepare for permanent housing and develop individualized housing plans that guide their linkage to permanent housing and increasing/maintaining their income. By paying their portion of the rent each month they also build up a positive rental history, which will come in handy when they go to lease a unit in their own name after graduation from BRI.

Program Goals include:

Enhanced Residential Stability:

- To provide short term supportive housing or transitional supportive housing, access to food, and housing case management for recently released PLWH.

Increased Skills or Income:

- In collaboration with community partners, provide access to education and engage in job preparedness activities to increase residents' job-related skills and shape residents' behaviors and attitudes towards education and work in ways that would result in obtaining and maintaining suitable income.

Greater Self-Determination:

- Utilizing case management coupled with supportive services, residents receive support, encouragement, and help shaping obtainable goals for themselves to reach while in the program. The program has set the goals of participants to increase their knowledge of community resources, the opportunity to connect with medical care, and to have an increased awareness of medication adherence and education.

Graduating from Supportive Housing:

- Staff works closely with residents to create successful exits, when ready, to more permanent housing options, either within housing offered by AFH, through aligned community housing programs, or with private-market landlords. (Some households move on through signing their own leases in the complex where AFH operates BRI.)
- BRI has the ability to provide financial support to cover application and administrative fees, security and utility deposits, first month's rent, and other costs.
- AFH provides ongoing case management to graduated households for up to six months after leaving BRI housing.

AIDS Foundation Houston provided housing to 313 PLWH in 2020. Forty-four "graduated" to independent living, and 96% of residents were linked to care. In late 2021, this innovative supportive housing program received a three-year HOPWA competitive award that will enable AFH to serve an additional 30 PLWH over 36 months. AFH and its partners will provide stable supportive housing, case management, financial management, employment training and placement, life skills coaching, navigation into culturally humble health care, food and transportation assistance, mental health and substance use disorder counseling, housing information services, and robust permanent housing placement to PLWH who are most vulnerable to being out of care.

For more information, go to: <https://www.afhouston.org/community-programs#SupportiveHousing>

Editor's Note

There are three additional examples of HOPWA-funded housing models in Chapter Five:

- 5-A: AFC's Scattered-site Permanent Supportive Housing Programs – Chicago, IL
- 5-B: LSS's Forensic Housing Program – San Francisco, CA
- 5-E: DESC's Site-based Housing First Model – Seattle, WA

HUD Consolidated Planning

HUD's Consolidated Plan was designed to help states and local jurisdictions assess their needs for affordable housing and a range of other community development activities and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions. The Consolidated Planning process serves as a core framework for a community-wide dialogue to identify housing and community development priorities that align and focus funding from HUD's Community Planning and Development (CPD) formula block grant programs. These include: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA), and the National Housing Trust Fund (HTF).³⁵

Jurisdictions must demonstrate that a thorough needs assessment was undertaken and that the goals and action steps developed in the plan address the pressing needs in the community that were surfaced and documented in the process. It is therefore incumbent upon post-release housing agencies to make sure that they, their clients, and other stakeholders speak up through the consultation, citizen participation, and public hearing opportunities provided.

Formula grantees (primarily cities and states) that receive funding from one or more of the above programs must develop three-to five-year, over-arching plans (Consolidated Plan) that are updated and implemented through Annual Action Plans, which provide a concise summary of the actions, activities, and the specific federal and non-federal resources that will be used each year to address the priority needs and specific goals identified in the Consolidated Plan. HUD provides grantees with detailed guidance regarding the kinds of consultations across systems that are required as an integral and essential aspect of the planning process. The groups identified by HUD include:

- Homeless Continuums of Care (CoC) and the public and private agencies (specifically including agencies that serve PLWH) that address the housing, health, social service, victim services, employment, and/or educational needs of low-income, at-risk of homelessness, and homeless individuals and families;
- Publicly funded institutions and systems of care that may discharge people into homelessness, such as healthcare facilities, mental health facilities, corrections programs and institutions, foster care, and other youth facilities; and
- Business and civic leaders.

35. <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/consolidated-plan/>

In addition, each jurisdiction is expected to develop a Citizen Participation Plan which: “must provide for and encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the plan, and the annual performance report. These requirements are designed specifically to encourage the participation of low- and moderate-income residents of the neighborhoods where housing and community development funds may be spent. The jurisdiction is expected to take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of all its residents, including minorities and non-English-speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities.”

The Citizen Participation Plan must provide that at least two public hearings are held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. It must identify how the needs of non-English-speaking residents will be met and provide accommodation for persons with disabilities. In addition: “citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties, including those most affected, must have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission concerning the proposed activities, including the amount of assistance the jurisdiction expects to receive, and the range of activities that may be undertaken.”

All five CPD programs involve the development and operation of HUD-funded housing, and CDBG, ESG, HOPWA, and the National Housing Trust Fund also allow for the provision of some services. The HOME program includes the ability to create a targeted tenant-based rental assistance program for up to two years.

In addition, the mandatory consultations provide a mechanism for the needs of those coming out of incarceration to be brought to the attention of a wide range of housing and service providers throughout the community. It behooves post-release housing and services advocates and consumers to play an active role in their local Consolidated Planning process.

Learn more at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/consolidated-plan/con-plans-aaps-capers/>

HUD’s Homeless Continuum of Care Program

Although HUD’s homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) program is not governed by the Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) requirements outlined above, HUD guidance offers several opportunities for CoC and Con Plan programs to coordinate:³⁶

- Consultation between CoCs and Con Plan jurisdictions, and a CoC’s participation in the public comment process as the Con Plan jurisdiction is developing its Con Plan, can help ensure that the CoC’s plan to prevent and end homelessness, and thus the projects it funds, is consistent with the Con Plan. Additionally, consideration of the priorities set forth in the Con Plan for the jurisdiction could inform the CoCs’ ranking and selection process of project applications, if the Con Plan identifies a certain housing or service need within the jurisdiction that can be filled with a CoC program grant.

36. U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. *Guide to Coordination and Collaboration for CoCs and Consolidated Plan Jurisdictions 2016*. Available online: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4988/coordination-and-collaboration-for-cocs-and-con-plan-jurisdictions-guide-and-video/>

Just as a HOPWA formula grant may be managed by a housing department or a health department depending on state and local preference, the same is true for the CoC program grants. Grantees may be a local housing agency, human services department, or an entity established specifically for that purpose. Although the guidance regarding conducting a Consolidated Planning process requires that the grantee consult with the local homeless CoCs, meaningful collaborative policy and goal setting is not guaranteed. Once again, active citizen participation in these mandated community planning processes is necessary to assure that priority setting aligns with Second Chance Act and other justice system reform goals.

One may find HUD's CoC program a bit confusing at the program implementation level, especially when evaluating whether or not your local CoC will fund the housing for formerly incarcerated people you have in mind. On first read, CoC program guidelines seem to simultaneously both include and exclude people exiting jails and prisons. By statute, the funds are restricted to helping people who fit a specific definition of homelessness that contains an exclusion stating that the term "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained by an Act of Congress or state law. The detailed guidance that HUD provides does help to clarify what's what in practice.

HUD requires each CoC to establish a "coordinated entry" system through which referrals to programs will be prioritized based on a standard tool adopted by that Continuum. Programs working with formerly incarcerated applicants for housing should review the local prioritization policies, reach out to their CoC and coordinated entry system, and discuss the potential for allowing releasees to be prioritized for housing and services. The CoC will have to weigh any restrictions in the criteria for eligibility that might apply and determine if an individual being released meets HUD's strict guidelines. Programs serving people who were formerly incarcerated may need to work to obtain the appropriate documentation that will show that an individual is indeed eligible.

Eligibility criteria used to determine CoC-funded program eligibility

Based on the guidelines in place in 2022, HUD has indicated that a formerly incarcerated person may, in fact, be eligible for housing supported by CoC programs. To be considered "literally homeless," a releasee must have met the HUD criteria prior to their incarceration and then not have been held inside the jail or lock-up for more than ninety days. Only a small percentage of releasees would likely be eligible for CoC-funded programs under the literally homeless definition, but if they are, then it's important to assure that they get connected to the local network of providers and the coordinated-entry system for housing assistance ASAP. In some cases, those coming out of prison (and longer-term incarcerations in jails) might also be eligible. Please check with your local CoC for specifics.

To address HUD's concerns regarding eligibility, some post-release housing groups have agreed to serve only those who are out on parole. Another recommended strategy is to work with your Continuum of Care/Coordinated Entry system to develop procedures of "due diligence" whereby an incarcerated individual can be found in compliance with the regulations of HUD's homeless Continuum of Care programs. (See Innovative Model 8-A in Chapter Eight for an example of this process.)

Find out more about HUD's Continuum of Care programs at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>

Innovative Model 6-D

Building Partnerships between CoCs and Departments of Corrections to Increase Housing Options for Releasees

In October 2021, the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments published *Action Points: Four Steps to Expand Access to Housing for People in the Justice System with Behavioral Health Needs*.³⁷ This briefing presents four steps that state-level leaders can take to increase housing opportunities and improve justice and health outcomes for people with mental health and substance use treatment needs who are, or have been, incarcerated.

Action Points proposes that leaders follow four steps: the first two steps (Collaborate and Assess) provide a foundation to make effective needs-based connections to housing and maximize the impact of subsequent investments. The next two steps (Connect and Expand) focus on connecting people with housing that meets their needs and making longer-term strategic investments in housing and services. The four steps include the following action items:

Collaborate:

- Ensure meaningful cross-sector representation in the key planning bodies for each of these systems;
- Formalize collaboration mechanisms to achieve shared goals; and
- Facilitate regular cross-system training to equip staff to meet housing and service needs.

Assess:

- Design and implement screening and assessment tools;
- Provide resources and expertise to integrate these assessments into existing workflows and scale their use statewide; and
- Report publicly on homelessness risk and housing needs among the prison and jail populations.

Connect:

- Facilitate the establishment of outreach efforts;
- Embed entry points to CoC Coordinated Entry (CE) systems within key justice system touch points such as jails, prisons, courts, diversion, and parole/probation programs;
- Facilitate conversations among housing agency leaders to prioritize the target population and reduce policy barriers; and
- Promote participation of jails, prisons, and diversion providers in the state's Health Information Exchange to allow for continuity of care with health providers, such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) in the community.

37. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/action-points-2/>

Expand:

- Utilize data collected and reported under Step 2 (Assess) to advocate for increased housing investments and prioritization of the target population among legislators and other state leaders;
- Leverage no-cost and low-cost resources to increase feasibility and scale of development projects;
- Seek non-traditional funding sources to supplement housing funding, including from testing services justice system sources as DOJ's Byrne Justice Assistance Grants;³⁸
- Leverage private funding to augment limited public resources; and
- Analyze racial equity implications of proposed housing development.

As a follow-up, in March 2022, the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments, in collaboration with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, published another pamphlet, *Explainer: Building Effective Partnerships with CoCs to Increase Housing Options for People Leaving Prisons and Jails*.³⁹ In suggesting strategies that criminal legal system leaders looking to engage in housing might pursue, it proposes beginning cross-system collaboration through emphasizing the significant overlap in populations served by both systems, and then it goes on to offer a number of concrete ways that the partners can work together to increase housing opportunities for people in reentry, such as:

- Corrections leaders can devote resources to creating Coordinated Entry access points, thereby enabling discharge planning staff to conduct needs assessments and make housing and service referrals while people are still in prison or jail.
- Justice system agencies can also provide valuable resources to augment those available from the CoC directly, such as short-term rental subsidies, assistance with moving costs, and housing search and stabilization services. These resources can be especially useful in serving people not typically prioritized by HUD-funded programs, while still utilizing the Coordinated Entry infra-structure for assessment, prioritization, and referral.
- Most importantly, justice system leaders should focus on maintaining and strengthening their CoC partnerships over time (for example, by joining the CoC board), as these ongoing relationships can help inform long-term prioritization and resource allocation decisions.

To learn more about the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments and the role of cross-system partnerships in increasing housing options for people leaving prison and jail visit: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/> and <https://csgjusticecenter.org/2022/04/25/national-initiative-aims-to-improve-reentry-outcomes-by-2030/>

HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program is the federal government's major vehicle for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities to afford decent, safe, and sanitary

38. Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/jag/overview>.

39. https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/resources/explainer-building-effective-partnerships-continuums-care?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=d99b880bf6-Preventing+Homelessness+Prisons+Jails+4+11&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-d99b880bf6-19223901

housing in the private rental market. With “tenant-based” Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) the participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. An individual or family issued a voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of their choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. Rental units must meet HUD’s Housing Quality Standards.⁴⁰

In the HCV model, a housing subsidy is paid to landlords directly by the entity managing the vouchers, typically a public housing agency (PHA) on behalf of a participating household, which then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount that is subsidized by the program. Tenants’ rent payment amounts vary based on income and other factors, but are typically 30% of their adjusted gross income.

While the laws and regulations that govern the HCV program impose only limited restrictions related to the histories of arrest and incarceration of applicant households, each PHA has the flexibility to adjust program rules locally; and historically this meant strict exclusions for applicants with criminal records. In recent years, however, HUD’s focus has been more oriented to opening up its resources to people with histories of incarceration. The following language clarifies the required restrictions:

Only in limited and specific cases of criminal activity do HUD statutes and regulations require denial of admission or termination of assistance (and in only two cases—where someone has been convicted of producing methamphetamine in federally-assisted housing or must register as a lifetime sex offender—is someone permanently barred). In all other cases, PHAs and owners have discretion to consider any mitigating circumstances in making admission and eviction decisions.⁴¹

Under the Biden administration, new guidance has been issued encouraging PHAs to loosen their restrictions and be more open to welcoming formerly incarcerated applicants. In a letter dated June 23, 2021 and addressed to “Public Housing Authorities, Continuums of Care, Multifamily Owners, and HUD Grantees,” HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge wrote: ⁴²

The President and I believe that everyone deserves a second chance and a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. No person should exit a prison or jail only to wind up on the streets. To that end, HUD is committed to taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the housing needs of returning citizens and people with criminal records, and by doing so, increasing public safety within our communities. Addressing reentry housing needs also furthers the Biden Administration’s commitment to advancing equity and reversing systemic racism, given the racial disparities evident in the criminal justice system.

HUD Notice PIH 2021-15 makes clear that people exiting prisons and jails who are at-risk of homelessness due to their low incomes and lack of sufficient resources or social supports are eligible for the American Rescue Plan’s vouchers. Given the significant overlap between recent incarceration history and homelessness, HUD strongly encourages PHAs to work with their Continuum of Care (CoC)

40. https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/hqs

41. U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. *FAQ’s for HUD Notice PIH 2015-19 / H 2015-10* (11/02/2015). Question 5, p.3. https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FAQ_EXCLUDE_ARREST_RECORDS.PDF

42. https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/SOHUD_reentry_housing_letter.pdf

partners to ensure that individuals who are at-risk of homelessness after leaving prisons or jails are considered for these vouchers.

Further along in the letter, Secretary Fudge also promised to review existing HUD policies and regulations that limit access to housing and HUD assistance among people with criminal conviction histories. She also stated that HUD is developing additional tools and guidance to assist private landlords, PHAs, and multifamily housing owners to ensure that their applicant screening and tenant selection practices avoid unnecessarily overbroad denial of housing to applicants on the basis of criminal records, which could lead to Fair Housing violations, consistent with the 2016 memo on disparate impact and criminal records, which is excerpted in At a Glance 6.14 below.

At a Glance 6.14

Concluding statement in HUD's 2016 Guidance on the Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Use of Criminal Records by Providers of Housing⁴³

The Fair Housing Act prohibits both intentional housing discrimination and housing practices that have an unjustified discriminatory effect because of race, national origin, or other protected characteristics. Because of widespread racial and ethnic disparities in the U.S. criminal justice system, criminal history-based restrictions on access to housing are likely disproportionately to burden African Americans and Hispanics. While the Act does not prohibit housing providers from appropriately considering criminal history information when making housing decisions, arbitrary and overbroad criminal history-related bans are likely to lack a legally sufficient justification. Thus, a discriminatory effect resulting from a policy or practice that denies housing to anyone with a prior arrest or any kind of criminal conviction cannot be justified, and therefore such a practice would violate the Fair Housing Act.

Policies that exclude persons based on criminal history must be tailored to serve the housing provider's substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest and take into consideration such factors as the type of the crime and the length of the time since conviction. Where a policy or practice excludes individuals with only certain types of convictions, a housing provider will still bear the burden of proving that any discriminatory effect caused by such policy or practice is justified. Such a determination must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Selective use of criminal history as a pretext for unequal treatment of individuals based on race, national origin, or other protected characteristics violates the Act.

In addition to the guidance referenced above, in November 2015, HUD produced Guidance for PHAs on Excluding the Use of Arrest Records in Housing Decisions, which addresses increasing access to public housing and other forms of federally-subsidized housing for people with criminal records.⁴⁴

It is incumbent upon housing providers, advocates, local government agencies, and interested community members to get in contact with your local public housing agencies, landlord associations, and other actors in the rental housing and real estate markets to assure that they have received, read, and

43. https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/hud_ogcguidappfhastandcr.pdf

44. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4833/notice-pih-2015-19-guidance-for-public-housing-agencies-phas-and-owners-of-federally-assisted-housing-on-excluding-the-use-of-arrest-records-in-housing-decisions/>

understand the implications of these policies on their current practices, and are actively taking steps to implement revisions to policies and practices to assure compliance with the Fair Housing Act and other federal laws and directives related to ending discrimination in housing based on criminal histories and other community impacts from structural racism.

Find out more at: https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8

Innovative Model 6-E

Examples of Reentry Housing Funded with Housing Choice Vouchers – Nationwide

Also in 2016, HUD published a guide to developing reentry housing using Housing Choice Vouchers as the mechanism for providing rental assistance. It's called *It Starts with Housing: Public Housing Agencies Are Making Second Chances Real*.⁴⁵ It highlights innovative programs in King County, WA; Burlington, VT; and New York City, NY. The table below briefly describes the housing model developed in each location.

Program Sponsor	King County Housing Authority	Burlington Housing Authority	New York City Housing Authority
Description	Comprehensive Supportive Housing aimed at reentering parents	Transitional housing with supportive services for those under supervised release	Experimental policy that allows reentering individuals to live with their families in public housing while receiving supportive services
Targeted Population	Individuals recently released who are at risk of homelessness and are able to reunite with their children	Individuals who have completed their minimum sentence but have one year of correctional supervision remaining and no housing available upon release	Individuals released within the past three years who are otherwise ineligible for public housing assistance
Number Served Annually	46 families	15 individuals	60-75 individuals
Program Length	Up to 2-3 years	Until participant completes conditions of release	Varies
Housing Assistance Provided	Project-based HCV vouchers subsidize families living in site-based supportive housing operated by a non-profit partner	Housing Choice Vouchers subsidize beds in transitional housing facilities	Temporary permission granted for participants to reside with their families in public housing
Significant Outside Sources of Funding	King County & private foundations	Vermont Dept. of Corrections	New York City Dept. of Homeless Services

45. https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/HUD_It_Starts_with_Housing.pdf



Innovative Model 6-F

YWCA's Passage Point Family Housing – Maple Valley, WA

YWCA Passage Point (YPP) is an innovative, supportive residential community for individuals discharged from the corrections system seeking to reunite with their children and reintegrate into the community. Sponsored by the YWCA and King County Housing Authority, it is an adaptive reuse of six 1960s-era wood-framed buildings that once housed King County's Cedar Hills Alcohol Treatment Center.

Passage Point provides 46 apartment units, administrative office space, classrooms, a computer lab, indoor and outdoor children's play areas, and a range of supportive services that assist residents in gaining self-sufficiency. YPP is focused on serving one-parent households with one or two children. In a few cases, the parent may have three children. Seven of the apartments have two bedrooms, while the rest are one-bedroom units.

YPP offers supportive housing and services to previously incarcerated individuals or families, empowering them in the reunification process with their children by providing a stable environment. The program equips parents with the necessary tools and skills through educational and social opportunities, thereby reducing the likelihood of recidivism. Residents are selected through community referrals and outreach. Each applicant goes through a screening process that includes: application, interview, child reunification assessment, project-based subsidized housing approval, and Washington State Income Eligibility approval.

The eligibility guidelines for YWCA Passage Point applicants include:

- Has been incarcerated or in a facility to avoid incarceration within the last 24 months;
- No convictions for violent crime, sexual offense, or methamphetamine production;
- Homeless upon release, or has a history of homelessness;
- Has a child under the age of 18 and a reasonable chance of reuniting with them (resident family size of five or less);
- Meets income eligibility per WA Income Eligibility and King County Housing Authority guidelines;
- Signed agreement for YWCA housing and case management; and
- Demonstrated ability to make changes and work toward self-sufficiency.

Incarceration, addiction, and homelessness make it difficult to overcome barriers to obtain housing, employment, and education. Through educational and social opportunities, YPP helps reduce the chances of re-incarceration by equipping parents with the tools, skills, and resources for success. “Re-Entry Life Coaches” work with residents individually, encouraging self-sufficiency, positive community interaction, and connecting people to community services. Services for residents include:

- Pre-release screening and counseling;
- Intensive case management;
- Family reunification support;
- Education, job training, and placement support;
- Financial literacy and budgeting;
- Referral to mental health and chemical dependency counseling;
- Domestic violence support;
- Self-improvement programs;
- Children’s services and school liaison support;
- Permanent housing planning; and
- Follow-up case management.

“We were interested in a program that would allow for reunification as one of its core components,” says Linda Rasmussen, Homeless Initiatives Director for the YWCA. “Passage Point is a project unlike any other in our region, and through it we can make a lasting difference for the families who live here, and the community as a whole.”

The \$12.2 million development was financed with a combination of sources, including \$4.8 million in Tax Credit Exchange Program funds from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. Other financing partners included King County, the Washington State Department of Commerce, and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle with member HomeStreet Bank. The King County Housing Authority continues to provide project-based HCV housing assistance to all the units, so residents pay just 30% of their adjusted gross income in rent.

For more information on YWCA Passage Point go to: <https://www.ywcaworks.org/programs/passage-point>

Funding from Departments of Corrections

The problems of homelessness, joblessness, and lack of strong family and network connections described in other sections have direct and readily obvious impacts in both urban and rural areas where homeless individuals and families are camping on public lands and in vehicles, and where existing shelter and temporary housing options are totally overwhelmed. Everyone sees this, and it's hard to know what to do. Collaboration is key.

“Housing is an important tool for increasing public safety and connecting individuals to services associated with successful reentry” — Calvin Johnson

One question is: how are your state and local departments of corrections thinking about the role their systems play in fostering the homelessness that awaits so many people upon release; or on the other hand, the role they might play in the future in helping to prevent it? Are they able to see and acknowledge their part in contributing to the problem through their rules and practices? Are they ready to participate in finding workable solutions?

Until recently, far too many corrections administrators might not have willingly come to the table to talk about this. Some may still believe that their mission is limited to the care and custody of incarcerated individuals while under their control, and what happens after release is society-at-large's problem. Flexibility around this extension of correction's mission beyond the prison walls varies from one state, and one locale, to the next. Despite opposition in some states, other corrections departments are slowly wading into the arena of residential reentry programs. Some have done so for many years, in one form or another, and others are developing new partnerships with post-release housing groups.

To explore this avenue for funding, start by researching the history in your state of the extent to which corrections has entered into contracts with any community group to provide housing to parolees. Then share with them examples of what other corrections departments have dared to accomplish. In addition, the federal government has been providing planning grants to improve reentry success. You might even encourage them to apply. (See Chapter Eight for examples of such cross-system collaborative planning and funding opportunities through the U.S. Dept. of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.)

Innovative Model 6-G

Examples of Successful Reentry Housing Partnerships with Departments of Corrections – Nationwide

The federal government has designated April each year as “Second Chance Act Month.” In 2022, HUD created a new webpage called “Meeting the Housing Needs of Formerly Incarcerated and Justice-Involved People” that pulls together guidance, programs, and additional resources related to this topic.⁴⁶

46. <https://www.hud.gov/reentry>

Concurrently, Calvin Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring at the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development wrote:

We acknowledge the collateral consequences of juvenile and criminal justice involvement and spotlight the efforts of governments, nonprofits, the advocacy community, stakeholder groups, family and friends of returning citizens, and returning citizens themselves in designing and informing the design of programs and policies that support successful reentry.

One such effort was initiated last week by HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge. Secretary Fudge directed her principal leadership to conduct a comprehensive review of HUD regulations, guidance, and policy documents that mention the use of criminal records in tenant screening, selection, and tenancy decisions. The review will propose changes to language to help housing providers avoid the overly broad use of criminal records in denying or excluding people from HUD-assisted housing and make appropriate changes based on those recommendations and review of federal statutes.

We take note of America’s history of mass incarceration (the United States has the highest incarceration rate of any country), the disproportionate impact of this practice on poor communities and communities of color, and the ongoing challenge of developing policies that both slow the rate of entries into our jails and prisons and support returning citizens in remaining in their communities upon their release. In this context, housing is an important tool for increasing public safety and connecting individuals to services associated with successful reentry (e.g., employment, health and wellness, and other social services). These services can be especially vital as returning citizens are transitioning back into the community immediately following a jail or prison sentence.⁴⁷

In the table below and on the next page, Mr. Johnson summarizes a selection of “well-structured” post-release housing and supportive services interventions operated by, or in partnership with, a public housing authority or other housing provider.

Participating Agencies	Program Description	Outcomes and Results
<p>Corporation for Supportive Housing; New York City’s Departments of Homeless Services, Corrections, Health and Mental Hygiene, and Housing Preservation and Development; the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) ; and nonprofit housing and service providers.</p>	<p>In New York City Frequent Users Service Enhancement (FUSE II), individuals experiencing homelessness who had four jail stays and four shelter stays in the past five years were offered permanent supportive housing. Participating tenants were linked to comprehensive mental health and medical services and other support services.</p>	<p>FUSE II participants were 88% more likely to be in permanent housing after 24 months than those in a control group. FUSE II participants also had a 40% reduction in jail days, lower rates of recent use of hard drugs and alcohol, scored lower on psychological stress measures, saw a 70% reduction in shelter episodes, and had higher levels of family and social supports.</p>

47. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-fm-asst-sec-041922.html?WT.mc_id=edge_April19&WT.tsrc=Email

Participating Agencies	Program Description	Outcomes and Results
Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the Michigan Department of Correction (MDOC).	The Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative, a collaboration between MSHDA and MDOC, provides Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) and supportive services to parolees who meet requirements for housing assistance. Upon completion of community supervision, eligible participants can continue HCV participation.	93% of program participants in a three-year follow-up study completed their parole requirement.
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing.	Returning Home Ohio (RHO) is a part of the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Returning Home Initiative. RHO offers permanent housing and supportive services to returning citizens with unmet medical needs and who are at risk of becoming homeless.	Despite having higher security level classifications in prison, RHO participants were 40% less likely to be rearrested and 61% less likely to return to prison within one year of release than were members of a comparison group.
Colorado Division of Housing, Denver Housing Authority, Denver Continuum of Care, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, and Mental Health Center of Denver.	Denver's Supportive Housing Social Impact Bond (Denver SIB) Initiative offers permanent housing and supportive services to "front end" or frequent users of criminal justice and emergency medical services. Participants are typically homeless and struggle with substance abuse and mental health problems.	Denver SIB participants experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40% reduction in shelter stays, - 34% reduction in police contacts, - 40% reduction in arrests, - 30% reduction in unique jail stays, - 27% reduction in total jail days, and - 65% reduction in detox services.
New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Corporation for Supportive Housing, and New York City Department of Homeless Services.	The Family Reentry Pilot Program (FRPP) allows people released from jail or prison to move into NYCHA housing with their family members. After completion of a required two-year program, these individuals may be added to the lease.	As of May 2017, 108 people enrolled; 20 completed FRPP; 88 were progressing; fewer than 5 had been re-convicted.

We hope, of course, that the federal commitment to aiding the success of formerly incarcerated Americans will be long lasting; we hope that these commendable actions in 2023 are just the beginning of a sincere, long-term effort to take a holistic approach to reentry in the U.S.

To learn more about the federal government’s reentry activities, go to: <https://nationalreentryresource-center.org/>

Building It

When *From Locked Up to Locked Out* was first published in 2003, the field of post-release housing sponsored by secular, community-based, nonprofit agencies was relatively new. The idea that the harm reduction and housing first approaches would be viable for people in reentry was radical. Over the past twenty years, however, there have been a wide array of models tried and multiple successes documented. We know a lot about making post-release housing work, and we know that it can take many forms. This diversity of models is important for finding the right person-centered approach for the community, sponsoring entities, and anticipated sub-populations to be housed.

At the same time, though, the ability to develop stand-alone housing projects has gotten a lot harder. The availability of suitable pieces of land and the multi-factor costs of construction are two big issues.

Securing financing is also a huge concern. Although it can take several years of hard work, a well-designed, well-sited construction project can typically secure financing for the construction phase; what has historically been more challenging, however, is the oft-needed, ongoing operating subsidies, i.e., some kind of project-based rental assistance to bridge the gap between tenants’ ability to pay and the ongoing needs of building management, maintenance, upgrades, and sustainability. Whereas commercial properties are able to take on debt to build a project and then pay the loan back over time through profits built into the rent structure, non-profit sponsors typically have to secure all future funding in advance of construction because there will never be adequate income from tenant rents alone to operate in the black.

At a Glance 6.15

Kinds of funds needed to pay for site-based post-release housing

1. Acquisition money to purchase a property—either developable land or an existing building;
2. Funds to rehabilitate an existing structure, construct a new one, or a combination of the two;
3. Operations funds to subsidize tenant rents and assure sustainability over the long term;
4. Funds to help pay for basic, or specialized, services needed by tenants that won’t otherwise be covered; and
5. Reserve account funds for both replacement of key building systems and potential future rent shortfalls.

At a Glance 6.16

Hard facts about developing affordable housing

1. It is a long process that takes several years to complete.
2. It is expensive. Cost for both new development and acquisition and rehabilitation can easily exceed \$300,000 (or even \$600,000 in some locales) per unit for a modest structure.
3. It usually requires multiple funding sources.
4. Feasible sites are scarce in communities with high housing costs.
5. Unexpected problems and delays arise throughout the process.
6. It often requires the cooperation of local government officials.
7. If done poorly, it can jeopardize the financial stability of its sponsoring organization.
8. It can be challenging to site housing for this population due to NIMBY concerns.

Additional resources related to planning, developing, and operating post-release housing can be found in the Epilogue and Closing Thoughts sections of Chapter Eight.

First-Time Developers

Developing the actual real estate to be used for post-release housing is a field unto itself, and we will only take a cursory look at it here. Whether an organization already has a property in mind to transform into post-release housing or it will need to identify or construct one, there are many complex, time-sensitive steps in the development process. These include identifying a site, studying feasibility, creating a design, drawing up budgets, putting together complicated financing deals, hiring contractors, and managing the construction and other detailed processes.

Organizations with no experience in the development of housing for low-income and/or special populations most certainly need partners and consultants. If your organization lacks this expertise, first seek out one of the national clearinghouses listed below to help you. Later, you may hire local experts or collaborate with a nonprofit in your region whose specific mission is developing affordable or “special needs” housing.

At a Glance 6.17

First contacts for development expertise in supportive housing

- **The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)** is a national organization that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. CSH provides project-specific technical and financial assistance; the organization also works to build the capacity of the supportive housing industry and reform public policy to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing. www.csh.org
- **Enterprise Community Partners** also assists nonprofits to develop affordable housing through individualized technical assistance to community groups, as well as through on-line publications and products, trainings, funding, and public policy information. In housing

development, they can assist with feasibility, planning, design, production, and management. Their assistance is available to groups in every state at a fee that varies on a case-by-case basis. <https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/capabilities/advisory-services-and-technical-assistance>

- **The Reentry and Housing Coalition** is broad coalition of advocates promoting safe, stable, affordable, and accessible housing for vulnerable people, including people who have been involved in the criminal or juvenile justice system. Its mission is “to expand access to affordable housing opportunities for criminal and juvenile justice involved households,” which it does through fostering partnerships between housing providers, reentry services, and local criminal justice systems. Its website has multiple innovative models and resource documents. <http://www.reentryandhousing.org/>
- **The Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC)** works with funders and clients in every part of the country, contributing policy and subject matter expertise in five Focus Areas: Homelessness, Affordable Housing, Mental Health & Substance Use, Community Integration, and Medicaid. The services TAC provides are always in response to the context of each client’s unique infrastructure, financial resources, and political environment. All of TAC’s services advance proven solutions to the housing and community-based support needs of low-income people with disabilities and people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. www.tacinc.org

Paradigm Choices

When planning a site-based housing program, the physical design and layout should match the needs of the intended residents, both within their individual units as well as in the common spaces. It starts with apartment (or room) size and configuration and goes on to include potential community rooms, offices for staff, recreation and storage areas, education and training facilities, etc. The table below provides specific details drawn from successful reentry housing programs across the U.S. These are meant to give a flavor of the kinds of decisions that developers need to make.

A Highly Structured Residence

- 11-unit transitional housing for single mothers and pregnant women just out of prison
- Curfews, rules, and mandatory meetings
- Random urine screens, restriction against overnight guests, sign-in and sign-out for guests
- Requirement that residents save a certain amount of money each month
- Staff-to-resident ratio of one to three
- Philosophy that residents should be slowly eased out of institutionalization
- Services designed to be “better than what they are used to”

Low-Barrier Mixed Population

- “Low barrier” housing that refrains from prescreening residents, making it available to those who are able to abide by the lease terms
 - Five separate 60 -to 100-unit buildings, with many residents coming directly from prison
 - Harm-reduction approach that is nonjudgmental and encourages a wellness model of less and less harm from daily habits
 - No house rules
 - No requirement of support services
 - Informal visiting hours
 - Has a 24-hour front desk clerk but no security person
-

A Small, Informal Community

- Shared living for a mix of recent releasees and college student volunteers
- Emphasis on building natural supports and healthy relationships
- One college student for every three formerly incarcerated tenants in the residence
- Congregate living with a lot of emphasis on community
- Communal meals, meetings, and other “house traditions”
- The same rules apply to all residents, including staying clean and sober
- Minimal budget and less formal staffing pattern than most supportive housing

An Urban Campus-Like Setting

- Large building in inner city neighborhood renovated to create 33 shared units (up to 59 residents) and generous community space.
- Takes residents immediately upon release.
- Plans to develop a center for extensive support services next door, thereby creating a campus-like environment.
- Offers a meal program, in-house education, a computer lab, community events, HIV specialty services, and a range of other social services
- Programs for hiring and training ex-prisoners as staff of the residence
- Multimillion-dollar annual budget

Social-Entrepreneur Paradigm

- 20-site housing program for individuals in recovery, many entering from correctional institutions or probated there by courts
- Funded through self-supporting enterprises
- Rehabilitation through principles of self-help
- Residents are trained and employed by agency’s small companies: moving, catering, landscaping, house painting, picture framing, etc.
- Goal is to produce self-reliant and upstanding citizens
- Two-year program is highly structured
- Unique services include mentoring, peer counseling, leadership training, and aftercare for graduates
- Has an on-line venture for selling recyclable housing goods as means of advertising and raising revenue

Therapeutic Community Paradigm

- 42-unit residence is for all “treatment compliant” releasees, including sex offenders
 - 16-month program has zero tolerance for substance use
 - Emphasis placed on education, including classes on drugs, parenting, HIV care, cooking, and personal hygiene
 - Case management modulated to each resident’s needs
 - One staff member for every seven residents
 - Provides help with family re-unification
 - Offers a number of clinical services at the house
 - Emergency loans are provided
 - Defuses conflict through dispute resolution and anger management
-

Getting the Doors Open

Supportive housing groups of every kind struggle to make the start-up process smooth and efficient. Once again, it is not the focus of this book, except to say that delays and problems will invariably arise. Post-release housing can, in fact, be even slower to get under way than some other housing projects, given the need to coordinate with correctional institutions and the overall newness and innovative nature of this model of housing. The tips outlined below may alleviate some of those difficulties for your organization, when it is your turn to open for business. In this aspect, as with all the others, it's best to consult with those in your area who've done it before when developing your opening schedule and plans.

At a Glance 6.18

*Tips for an efficient start-up of post-release housing*⁴⁸

1. Hire temporary help to assist with start-up; for larger projects, it may be advisable to work with a consulting group.
2. Use temporary help for hiring new staff, completing logistical tasks, planning your opening day ceremonies, and other one-time activities.
3. Consider using your organization's most experienced staff members in the new housing program during start-up to lead and help foster the development of the desired culture among your new staff. They can be withdrawn and re-assigned once the program is well established.

Weathering Controversies

Anticipating Public Relations Challenges

*"Expect intense initial opposition. Be willing to deal with their anger and fear. There will be shouting. There will be rage. Just keep coming back. Start proving who you are. We found that the angriest people are the people who really care and, in the end, you want them. They are the most important people in the end. You just need to walk right into it. Don't duck it."*⁴⁹

It's a rare community that embraces those returning from prison as neighbors from the outset. Creating post-release housing anywhere other people live will be unpopular with some stakeholders. Most communities are, at least initially, both scared and angry. Unless you choose a site that is completely outside residential areas, you can expect your public relations to be difficult. This kind of community apprehensiveness is termed "Not in My Backyard," or "NIMBY."

Keep in mind that other post-release housing groups across the country have overcome bad public relations. However, such problems have also negatively impacted the momentum of some projects,

48. JoAnne Page, interview by Kristina Hals, October 2001, New York City.

49. Page, interview.

such as a single-room-occupancy residence that lost its site and was never able to draw down funds that were already committed due to opposition from neighbors. Therefore, planning well for your neighbors' acceptance is critical.

Before even talking to neighbors, there are strategies that can be tried to make the idea of your program more palatable. These include choosing to create mixed-use housing instead of a large, concentrated residence in which all the residents were formerly incarcerated. Another idea is to make a commitment to the neighborhood that providing housing to individuals originally from the area will be a priority.⁵⁰ You can collect data on the number of people from the neighborhood who are incarcerated and will need a stable place to which they can return. This method averts the perception of "dumping" on a community.

No matter what techniques you use to appease neighbors, the pivotal factor will be how you treat the community. The process you follow can be a learning experience for your organization and an important part of your work. Think of it as a dialogue, where your organization and the community have much to learn from each other about how ex-prisoners fit into the social fabric.

"I have a problem with always ghettoizing this population. Ideally, they could join housing programs that are not just for former prisoners. Some of their issues are the same and some are different."

— Adolph Grant

At a Glance 6.19

Factors influencing neighbors' opinions of post-release housing

Factors in Your Favor

Many community members have family or close friends of their own who have been in the criminal legal system and needed help when they returned.

Everyone in reentry came from somewhere. A program that focuses on serving people who lived in the targeted community before their incarceration will be more welcome.

Factors Against You

Many urban neighborhoods were treated unfairly in the past by neighborhood-based programs and may be, understandably, a little skeptical and resentful. Your proposal for post-release housing may bring out this resentment and skepticism.

Most housing developments targeting low-income tenants face some degree of neighborhood opposition. People in reentry are likely to be among the most unwanted clients of a community-based program. Therefore, initial opposition is likely to be very strong.

50. Susan Smith. *A How-to Guide: Siting Supportive Housing for Ex-prisoners in South Brooklyn* (New York: The Fifth Avenue Committee, May 2001), 3.

Developers of affordable housing follow what they call a “community notification process” to work with neighbors of a proposed site. There are some agreed-upon standards in the industry for how housing groups should go into neighborhoods to site their programs. The standards’ primary themes are: making connections with residents, listening to their concerns, valuing their input, working together towards compromise solutions, and being flexible about plans. In some instances, additional requirements for involving the community, stipulated by funders or local government, will apply. Developers of post-release housing should follow this community process. However, as opposition is likely to be much stronger when formerly incarcerated people are the proposed residents, additional strategies may also be needed.

At a Glance 6.20

The public relations of developing post-release housing⁵¹

1. Find out about every upcoming community meeting you can identify.
2. Conduct presentations and answer questions at any gathering that will have you.
3. Prepare carefully worded fact sheets about your project.
4. Develop a public relations strategy and consider hiring a consultant to assist you.
5. Suggest that neighbors come and visit your organization, especially other housing and reentry programs.
6. Hold an open house for neighbors to visit your organization.
7. Meet with the local police precinct and whatever governing body oversees the neighborhood.
8. Form relationships with key community leaders who are sympathetic to your goals.
9. When community members provide input, take it seriously.
10. Treat opponents to your project with respect. Listen and respond with information, persuasion, and diplomacy.
11. Create a community advisory board of neighbors and community leaders for your project and schedule regular meetings.
12. Involve potential residents in your public relations to put a real face on the population.

If you manage to gain acceptance before your project is under way, maintain that thread throughout its operation. Continue to talk with people and hold open meetings with your neighbors to keep track of their impressions. Along the way, make gestures that show concern for the comfort of neighbors living in close proximity to your building.

51. Grant, interview.

At a Glance 6.21

Gestures to make your facility more appealing to neighbors⁵²

1. Do simple, neighborly things to improve the exterior of your property as soon as you acquire it, if not before that, such as cleaning up the grounds, installing exterior lighting, planting shrubs, etc.
2. Keep your site clean, safe, and free of trash.
3. Invest as much money as needed to upgrade the exterior to have a positive visual impact on the neighborhood.
4. Recognize that security systems are crucial to the surrounding community. Most neighbors would rather have you create a larger building with tight security than a smaller one without any.⁵²
5. Make some of the amenities in your facility available to the public, such as community rooms that could be used for neighborhood meetings.

Navigating the Dilemma of Exclusions

“We do not believe in exclusion based on criminal charge. There are always crimes ‘du jour.’ Charge exclusions are backwards. The safest person in terms of recidivism is probably a murderer. We base our choices on behavior and risk.”⁵³

There is one question more than any other that embodies the anxiety expressed by neighbors of proposed post-release housing. That is, which types of formerly incarcerated people will you agree not to serve? Neighbors may plead that you exclude those who have committed certain crimes, such as sex offenses, violent crimes, murder, and arson. This is called a “charge exclusion,” and the pressure may be intense to comply. It is a philosophical dilemma. Those who argue against charge exclusion say it invites legal problems related to fair housing and disability rights. They also feel it is discriminatory and irrational. In their experience, the nature of a releasee’s crime has little bearing on his or her success in supportive housing.

Other post-release housing groups take a more pragmatic approach to charge exclusions. Some believe the presence of sex offenders and other violent criminals such as murderers may invite undesirable scrutiny.⁵⁴ Others have extended the exclusion to those with intense clinical needs. One post-release housing program was planning to accept only nonviolent drug offenders, a large target group in itself. Their thinking is that “neighbors have more empathy with substance abuse issues. Many will have more personal experience with that than violence.”⁵⁵

52. Marks, 25.

53. Page, interview.

54. Marks, 24.

55. Smith, 8.

At a Glance 6.22

How to screen tenants without using charge exclusions⁵⁶

1. Place residents entering the program in units designated as short-term, emergency housing.
2. Assess tenants in emergency units as potential long-term tenants.
3. Use existing long-term tenants to help with assessments.
4. Screen out tenants who have demonstrated risks for violence.

Managing Target Population Controversies

Neighbors will typically ask a barrage of questions about what kind of formerly incarcerated people you propose bringing into their neighborhood. This issue of target population has such potential for controversy that it merits a decision well before other programmatic questions are sorted out. Start this process by imagining all the questions you might ask about the target population if such a residence were to move into the vicinity of your home.

At a Glance 6.23

Questions neighbors might ask about your target population

1. How many formerly incarcerated people will live there at once?
2. Will there be women as well as men?
3. What will be their age range?
4. Will you serve teenagers who are no longer juveniles?
5. What proportion will be recently released?
6. What kinds of crimes will they have committed?
7. What other problems and needs will they have?
8. How long will they be living here?

Whether or not to mix formerly incarcerated people with other homeless subpopulations in one building is a matter of debate. The advantage of mixing residents is that it appeals to neighbors and helps releasees feel integrated into society. Mixed-use buildings also avoid the intensity and unreality of a climate with only those who have been in jail or prison. However, to the extent that the residents view themselves as members of “groups” rather than as one diverse tenant population, clashes can ensue. One experienced provider of post-release housing advises that, when mixing releasees with other formerly homeless subpopulations in a housing program, the reentry population comprises no more than 30% of the residents.⁵⁷ A similar standard of 20% of the total is recommended for buildings serving people with severe mental illness. Everyone does better when no single subgroup dominates the overall population.

56. Page, interview.

57. Marks, 10.

“The community is not thrilled to have us but they appreciate how we have gone about approaching them.”⁵⁸

There are also arguments for housing releasees without other groups mixed in. The argument for this model is based on the belief that it helps formerly incarcerated people feel accepted in housing designed just for them. As discussed previously, such a home can offer comfort and familiarity not found elsewhere. This can be especially beneficial during reentry.

Sometimes one or more of the funding sources stipulate certain restrictions regarding eligibility to receive the program’s benefits. HUD’s HOPWA program, for

example, requires that all households are low-income and include at least one member who is living with HIV. In the early days of the HOPWA program, most buildings developed were 100% occupied solely by PLWH; nowadays, however, many tenants’ preference is to have scattered-site housing throughout the community so that they can choose where to live and in what type of residential model.

The age and stage of life of your residents are also significant in choosing the target population. As discussed earlier, it is logical to target those exiting county jail, given their shorter sentences, younger age, and greater numbers. However, some post-release housing groups report more success with the (typically older) state prison releasees. According to one advocate, “They are less likely to go back. Maybe the stakes are higher and they know they will be back in for another ten years. The guys who have done longer time are more desperate to succeed.”⁵⁹ Therefore, it seems that targeting older, more “hardened” individuals may bring the pleasant surprise of a higher rate of stability and success in housing.

Focusing on older releasees from state systems also has its unique challenges. Not surprisingly, they may have more intense clinical needs, such as twice the rate of mental illness as the jail population, and are in worse medical condition generally than their un-incarcerated peers.⁶⁰ They also may find it hard to be mixed in with a younger population that is not really ready to join society.⁶¹ Some other characteristics include their estrangement from family over a longer period of time, less work experience given their longer time behind bars, and their more remote place of incarceration.⁶²

Older teenagers are also a challenge in post-release housing. Although no longer juveniles, releasees in their late teens are often not ready for an independent lifestyle. One provider in New York City, for example, finds that older teens are not generally successful in their large post-release housing program. Therefore, if you choose to include this age group in your target population, plan ahead for their particular needs.

58. Grant, interview.

59. Ibid.

60. National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System. *The Prevalence of Co-occurring Mental and Substance Abuse Disorders in the Criminal Justice System*, 1. Available online: <http://www.addictioncounselor.com/articles/101362/gainsjailprev.pdf>

61. Ickstein, interview.

62. Katharine Bradley. *No Place Like Home: Housing and the Ex-prisoner* (white paper) (Boston: Community Resources for Justice, November 2001), 2. (No longer available, however citations can be found online: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/NO-PLACE-LIKE-HOME%3A-Housing-and-the-Ex-prisoner-Bradley-Richardson/a734bbdae284b80eb9598e64ad83a431580e749c>)

Closing Thoughts

The three issue areas covered in this subsection should be serious considerations for any site-based program, whether you're planning to build/renovate a building, lease a building, or cluster a number of units within a larger setting. As noted above, any one of these issues could derail your great idea. Therefore, we urge you to do your homework, build strong relationships, and listen to people with lived experience—both those who might become your residents, as well as those who would be your housing peers. Your chances of success will be much, much greater if you take a thoughtful, consultative approach. Additional guidance on planning your program/development and navigating both community building and community relations is referenced in the "Closing Thoughts" section of Chapter Eight).

Discussion of Chapter Six

Points to Remember

Points to Remember – Bridging Between Inside and Outside

- In-reach begins with building relationships with carceral institutions.
- It's helpful to know the culture and various rules and expectations of the facilities you work within.
- Building trust is the foundation for successfully working with incarcerated people.
- Preparing for release, emotionally and practically, takes weeks to months. Have patience and persistence!
- Meeting releasees at the gate is ideal, and it's also important to have a Plan B in case something goes wrong.
- The first days and weeks of freedom pose the greatest risks for recidivism, so try to stay connected.

Hands Across the Bars

1. Going inside correctional institutions to work with prisoners prior to their release is valuable. Post-release housing is most effective when this link is established.
2. Pre-release services minimize the great logistical and emotional turmoil that inevitably occurs at reentry.
3. The challenges for community organizations of working inside correctional institutions include:
 - a. Obtaining clearance for regular visits
 - b. Learning the rules that apply to visitors
 - c. Adjusting to the institutions' protocols and schedules
 - d. Adapting and yielding to the corrections culture
4. Effective first interventions for a newly released ex-prisoner include:
 - a. Escorting them out
 - b. Orienting them to their new neighborhood

Building It

5. Post-release housing takes shape according to a variety of different models and paradigms. Variables include:
 - a. Size
 - b. Integration of other populations
 - c. Length of stay
 - d. Degree of governance by residents
 - e. Level of structure and rules
 - f. Depth of support services
 - g. Emphasis on natural supports
 - h. Level of resident leadership
6. Funding for post-release housing can be sought from:
 - a. Private foundations and capital funds campaigns
 - b. Local government housing and homeless funds
 - c. State government mental health, substance abuse, HIV, and housing departments
 - d. HUD's Continuum-of-Care and HOPWA programs
 - e. Housing Choice Vouchers and other HUD housing programs
 - f. Other federal agencies, especially any reentry initiatives
 - g. Your state's and county's department of corrections
 - h. Private donations and in-kind contributions
7. Post-release housing costs at least \$300,000 and up to \$600,000 (or more in certain locations) per unit in acquisition, construction, and/or rehabilitation costs. This is not to say that less formal programs could not be developed at lower cost. In areas with high real estate and construction costs, the price could potentially exceed this.
8. Do not accept the belief, held by many, that regulations pertaining to the applicability of HUD's Continuum of Care homeless funds exclude post-release housing.

Controversies

9. Post-release housing is often a hard idea to promote among everyone from funders to public officials and community members. Nevertheless, other groups have successfully overcome these obstacles.
10. In anticipation of opposition by neighbors to a proposed post-release program:
 - a. Follow a thorough community process.
 - b. Use special public relations strategies.
 - c. Put significant energy and resources into being a good neighbor.
 - d. Work to appease neighbors' concerns.
 - e. Adjust your program and target population.

11. Controversy may emerge related to the particular group of ex-prisoners targeted for a housing program. There will be concern about:
- Their crimes
 - Their age
 - Their gender
 - Whether or not you use charge exclusions
 - Whether or not you choose to mix populations
 - The presence of security guards and systems
 - The extent of supervision and support

Questions & Activities

- Pretend for a moment that you work at a house of corrections. Part of your job is to act as liaison with any community group that wants to come and provide services to prisoners. Recently, a church group caused problems for the guards by promising to provide some items that were, in fact, contraband to a group of incarcerated persons. Meanwhile, personnel cutbacks limit your ability to free up guards for security during visits from community groups. Now a housing organization wants to start visiting weekly to do pre-release planning.
 - What is your first reaction to the housing group's request?
 - Why might you deny the group access?
 - What could the group do or say to gain your confidence?
 - What would you want them to understand about your perspective?
- Create a list comparing the costs and benefits of so-called "in-reach" services. Under "benefits" list all the beneficial outcomes likely to occur, and under "costs" approximate the price of delivering the service to one client. Make a third list of the "social costs" of not supplying the service (i.e., the negative consequences to both the prisoner and society at large). Then estimate these expenses. Now, compare your costs.

Benefits	Cost	Social Cost	Expense of Social Costs
	\$		Total \$

- Pretend you are a fly on the wall of a church basement. Members of a neighborhood group are meeting there to talk over their concerns about a nonprofit group's plans to create post-release housing in the area. What do you think would be the most common concerns you would hear?
- List the advantages and disadvantages, in your opinion, of using "charge exclusions" (barring individuals who have committed certain crimes, such as murderers or pedophiles) to determine who will reside in post-release housing.
- Imagine you are planning a new post-release housing program for 20 residents in a building divided into 15 units. Using your knowledge of the local housing market, loosely approximate what you think the costs might be for the project and where you could look for funds.

Action	\$ Cost	\$ Source
Acquisition of a building	\$	\$
Rehabilitation	\$	\$
First-Year Operating Expenses	\$	\$
First-Year Support Services	\$	\$
First-Year Reserve Account Contributions	\$	\$



Homecoming: Life after Incarceration – Companion Videos

Also found on the HUD Exchange website is a suite of new documentary films that cover topics similar to those explored in this book but use the unique capabilities of film to humanize and supplement the more detailed discussions of the written text. Each video is 20 - 40 minutes in length and comprises interviews with post-release housing and services clients and providers, as well as researchers and policy makers in the field. All videos can be streamed at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homecoming>

Readers are encouraged to use the videos to supplement the information shared here (and vice-versa) to get a better feel for the dignity, intelligence, life experiences, and humanity of (a small sampling of) the millions of Americans who have been incarcerated and/or are supporting others in their reentry.

<u>Episode I:</u>	Release
<u>Episode II:</u>	Housing
<u>Episode III:</u>	Employment
<u>Episode IV:</u>	Health, Wellbeing and HIV
<u>Episode V:</u>	For Us, By Us
<u>Episode VI:</u>	Trauma and Dignity
<u>Episode VII:</u>	Ending HIV Epidemic
<u>Episode VIII:</u>	Federal Housing Policy
<u>Episode IX:</u>	The Cost of Incarceration
<u>Episode X:</u>	Money Management Services