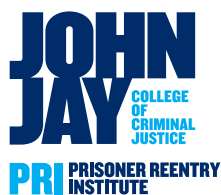


# A Place to Call Home

## A Vision for Safe, Supportive and Affordable Housing

### for People with Justice System Involvement



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John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
City University of New York  
524 West 59th Street, Suite 609BMW  
New York, NY 10019

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# **A Place to Call Home**

**A Vision for Safe, Supportive  
and Affordable Housing**

**for People with Justice System Involvement**

## **About The Prisoner Reentry Institute**

The Prisoner Reentry Institute (PRI) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice focuses on learning what it takes for people to live successfully in their communities after contact with the criminal justice system, and on increasing the effectiveness of the professionals and systems working with them. This goal is pursued through several initiatives, including programs that increase access to higher education in jail and prison and post-release, student fellowships combining academic learning and reentry field placements, administration of the NYC Justice Corps programs, and policy initiatives focusing especially on housing for people with criminal records. Visit us at [www.johnjayPRI.org](http://www.johnjayPRI.org).

## **About The Fortune Society**

The Fortune Society's mission is to support successful reentry from incarceration and promote alternatives to incarceration, thus strengthening the fabric of our communities. Founded in 1967, Fortune's vision is to foster a world where all who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated can thrive as positive, contributing members of society. To address the complex needs of our clients, Fortune employs a holistic model of innovative services and advocacy, offering comprehensive services to nearly 7,000 justice-involved people each year via three primary New York City locations: our service center in Long Island City, our housing model the Fortune Academy ("the Castle"), and Castle Gardens. Learn more about our work at [www.fortunesociety.org](http://www.fortunesociety.org).

## **About the Supportive Housing Network of New York**

The Supportive Housing Network of New York is a membership organization representing 200 nonprofit organizations that have collectively created more than 50,000 units of supportive housing across New York State. Our membership also includes more than 150 affiliate agency and corporate members. The Network is the largest member organization of its kind in the U.S., and the leading national voice for supportive housing. Founded in 1988, the Network's mission is to increase the public's understanding of supportive housing; share best practices that continually improve supportive housing's effectiveness; and, most importantly, encourage the creation of enough supportive housing to end homelessness among the most vulnerable New Yorkers. The Network works toward these goals through advocacy, training, technical assistance, public education, research, and policy analysis. For more information about supportive housing and the Network visit us at [www.shnny.org](http://www.shnny.org).

## **About the Corporation for Supportive Housing**

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) has been the leader in supportive housing for 25 years, demonstrating its potential to improve the lives of very vulnerable individuals and families. CSH has earned a reputation as a highly effective, financially stable organization, with strong partnerships across government, community organizations, foundations, and financial institutions. CSH is advancing innovative solutions that use housing as a platform for services to improve lives, maximize public resources, and build healthy communities. We are working to assure that housing solutions are accessible to more people in more places. Visit us at [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org).

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## Introduction

Everyone should have a safe, stable place to live—not just access to shelter, but to a place to call home. Housing is a fundamental human need that lays the foundation for success in every aspect of our lives. When we have a home, we have a safe space to lay our head at night, store our personal belongings, a kitchen where we can cook our meals, and a launch pad from which we can seek jobs, attend school, and connect with our friends and family. Having a place to call home defines our place in the world, our sense of belonging, and our relatedness to others.

People with past involvement in the justice system need housing in order to reconstruct their lives. In many cases, they were previously experiencing homelessness or are unable to return to the place they lived before. As they look for a home, however, they find the doors to housing closed at every turn. Too often, they are denied this basic need because of their criminal justice history. They face discrimination in the private housing market, scarcity of subsidized housing, lack of affordable places to live, and bans from public housing, all of which puts a stable place to call home out of reach.

The result? The system relegates people with criminal justice involvement to the streets, to shelters, and to unregulated substandard housing—options that don't provide the support necessary for them to achieve their potential. Shelters are often overcrowded and unsafe. They are temporary, causing the stress that comes from living a transient life. People living in such places often have no refrigerator where they can store fresh food. They can't hang their clothes in closets in preparation for job interviews or work. They have no secure space to keep their valuables, photographs, or family keepsakes. They have no permanent address for job or school applications. Rather than providing the basis for success, these types of shelter more often lead to a cycle of homelessness and repeated jail or prison stays.

On October 27, 2016, stakeholders from the public and nonprofit sectors gathered at John Jay College of Criminal Justice for *Excluded: A Dialogue on Safe, Supportive and Affordable Housing for People with Justice System Involvement*, co-hosted by the Prisoner Reentry Institute of John Jay College, The Fortune Society, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), and the Supportive Housing Network of New York. It was a day of conversation about the importance of housing to successful reentry for people who have been involved in the criminal justice system. It was a day to talk about shared values and second chances, and to outline the obstacles preventing people from finding housing. It was a day to focus on model solutions that have been proven to work so that everyone, no matter what their needs, has access to a place to call home.

Increasing access to safe, affordable and supportive housing for people with criminal justice histories furthers the shared values that Americans have held dear since the founding of this country. As a nation, we share a desire for a just society with opportunity for all. We believe that everyone deserves a fair chance to achieve their potential. We believe in redemption, the idea that people should be given the chance for a new start after they falter, and merit patience and compassion as they do so. We believe that individuals can change, given the opportunity to start over in society after making amends. We believe in community—that we are better off when everyone can contribute and participate. Housing builds such opportunity and, where there is more opportunity, life improves for all of us.

This document makes the case for providing dignified housing that meets the needs of those with criminal justice histories, and providing it as quickly as possible upon reentry.

**Increasing access to safe, affordable and supportive housing for people with criminal justice histories furthers our shared American values.**



## Who Needs Housing?

Since the 1980s, America has seen an explosion in the use of its criminal justice system, stemming from “tough on crime” policies, the war on drugs, and the rise in mass incarceration. At the end of 2010, federal and state prisons held over 1.6 million individuals,<sup>1</sup> and nearly 4.9 million people were on parole or probation.<sup>2</sup> One in three Americans will be arrested by the age of 23.<sup>3</sup>

People with criminal justice histories will need a place to live, whether they are being released from prison or jail, under community supervision, or simply have criminal records to disclose to potential landlords. Indeed, the vast majority of those who are incarcerated will eventually be released.<sup>4</sup> Every year, approximately nine million people leave our country’s jails.<sup>5</sup> During 2010, another 708,677 people were released from state and federal prisons.<sup>6</sup>

People in need of housing present a wide spectrum of needs that no one-size-fits-all policy can hope to address. Many simply need access to habitable housing that they can afford – housing that is clean, safe, meets housing codes, and is not overcrowded. Others might need only temporary assistance to get back on their feet as they find work to support themselves. Still others may have higher needs. They include the aging—the fastest growing segment in reentry—who need support navigating an unfamiliar world and, often,





medical care.<sup>7</sup> They include women, who might need assistance reunifying with their children and developing parenting skills. They include people with substance abuse disorders and mental illness, who need access to behavioral health resources.<sup>8</sup> And many have struggled in the past with homelessness and housing instability.<sup>9</sup>

This, then, is a population with varied needs. Yet for all the challenges facing people with a history of criminal justice involvement, most remain crime-free.<sup>10</sup> The majority of those on parole or probation who do return to jail or prison do so because of technical violations of the terms of their community supervision—things like a missed appointment, a failed drug test, or even changing addresses without permission—not for a new crime.<sup>11</sup> These technical violations are often a consequence of housing instability that makes it difficult to locate treatment services, meet with probation officers, or receive court notices.<sup>12</sup>

### In the Words of Carl Dukes:

“I served 31 years in prison. After being denied parole two times, I was finally granted release the third time in January of 2008. For the first several weeks after my release, I was homeless—forced to carry my heavy bag between three different shelters, despite having recently undergone spinal surgery. Luckily, I was referred to the Fortune Academy by some people who were living there, and I was accepted as a resident.



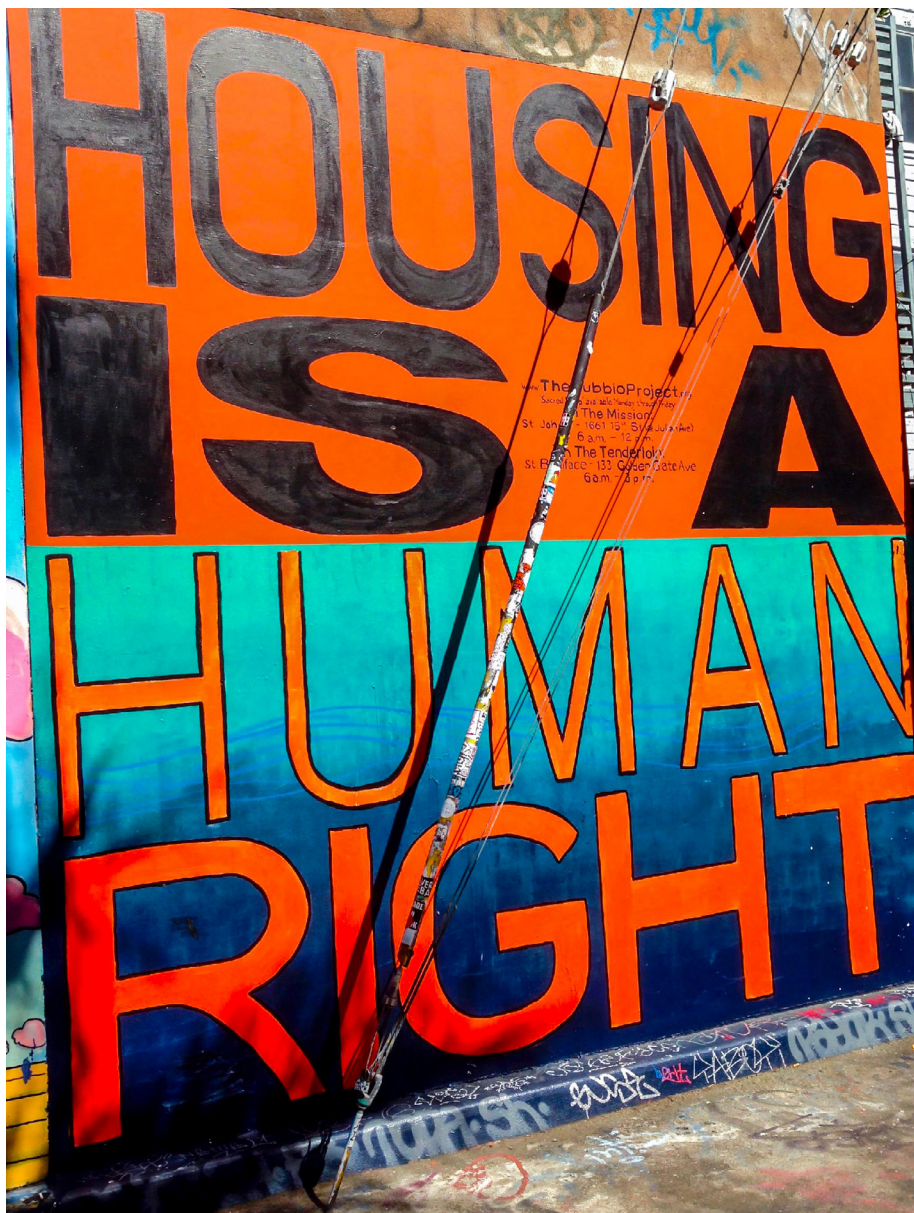
I got the privilege of moving into Castle Gardens, Fortune’s supportive and affordable housing community. I have a beautiful apartment there and have built close relationships with my neighbors. I’m also working part-time at The Fortune Society as a Correspondence Liaison. Castle Gardens gives me a chance to focus on what I need to do to build a successful future. After being in prison for 31 years, it has been a challenge to get back on my feet and rebuild my life.

Having a safe place to readjust to life in the community and living in a supportive environment gives me that opportunity.”

## What Barriers Do They Face?

Housing can provide a springboard for success—a place of stability from which jobs, education, vocational training, mental and physical health services, substance abuse treatment, and community supervision can follow. So where can those who have criminal histories go to find a place to call home?

Too often, they face barriers to permanent, affordable housing. The private housing market is too costly for many. Even for those with the means to afford private housing, landlords often discriminate against applicants with criminal records. Private housing typically requires credit checks, prior landlord references, and hefty deposits, putting it out of reach for people with criminal justice histories, who may be without a job or savings, have no credit history or bad credit, and who are facing stiff payments for criminal justice fines and fees. In addition, some cities have crime-free rental housing ordinances that encourage private landlords to deny housing to those with criminal records and their families.<sup>13</sup>



**Housing can provide a springboard for success—a place of stability from which jobs, education, vocational training, mental and physical health services, substance abuse treatment, and community supervision can follow.**

## The dangers of substandard housing

People with criminal justice histories and limited incomes find themselves relegated to uninhabitable housing replete with dangers. One study conducted by the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice on New York City's unregulated housing market highlighted the plight of residents there. The report found that over 90% of the houses analyzed had building code complaints during the study period, including illegal conversions, violations of certificates of occupancy, illegal SROs, blocked, locked, or improper egress, illegal or defective gas hook ups, boilers, piping, or wiring, or other failures of maintenance. These violations create unsafe fire hazards. According to the report, "House operators typically place two to four bunk beds in a single room, and in some cases, bunk beds are placed in living rooms, hallways, and even kitchens. With anywhere between four and eight people sharing a room and 30 or 40 in a house, conditions can be dangerously overcrowded, compounding the potential for tragedy should a fire ignite." Such overcrowding also contributes to health risks. One tenant interviewed remarked: "Health-wise, I don't feel so safe because where I am at, there are eight of us in a room, right? There's no ventilation, and we are packed in like sardines, right on top of each other. I feel that's a health risk. If I get sick, everybody is going to get sick.... Medically, I feel kind of unsafe."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. (2014). *Three quarter houses: the view from the inside*, 34. Retrieved from <http://johnjayresearch.org/pri/files/2013/10/PRI-TQH-Report.pdf>

People could turn instead to public housing, but it is not widely available and it is common for there to be long waiting lists for apartments. And, there too, criminal justice histories often create barriers to accessing housing. Federal law permanently excludes people with lifetime registered sex offense convictions and people with convictions for producing methamphetamines in public housing.

But beyond this, federal and local housing authority policies may present obstacles to justice-involved individuals. Many housing authorities have blanket exclusions for anyone with a criminal record, while others require complex screenings for prospective tenants who have criminal records that, in practice, require individuals to seek representation to help them navigate the process.

People leaving jails and prisons without a home to which they can return may not qualify for all housing for homeless individuals. This is because some housing can only serve people who meet the HUD definition of homeless and, under the current policy, people who have been incarcerated 90 days or longer do not qualify as homeless. Those leaving prison who are most vulnerable—people with mental, physical, or other health issues—may not qualify for supportive housing because many programs must base eligibility on the HUD definition of homelessness, due to the programs' funding. And there is a dearth of quality, transitional housing,

which helps formerly incarcerated people get on their feet, find stability, and, ultimately, move on to permanent housing options. Formerly incarcerated people also face difficulty finding jobs after release because of discrimination or lack of training, which can lead to a cycle of poverty and income instability that puts market-rate or even affordable housing beyond reach.

Faced with these barriers, people with criminal justice histories instead often end up on the streets, in shelters, and in unregulated, uninhabitable housing.

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## The costs of homelessness

Research has shown that placing people in shelters is costlier than providing long-term solutions to their housing issues.



A New England Journal of Medicine report found that homeless people spend an average of **four days longer per hospital visit** than do non-homeless people.<sup>a</sup>



A study from Hawaii found that the rate of **psychiatric hospitalization** was over **100 times higher** for homeless individuals than for a non-homeless cohort, costing the state \$3.5 million.<sup>b</sup>



A University of Texas survey found that, on average, a homeless individual costs taxpayers **\$14,480 per year**, mainly for **overnight jail stays** as a result of laws specifically targeting the homeless population, including regulations against loitering, sleeping in cars, and begging.<sup>c</sup>

Emergency shelter is costlier than providing permanent housing for families. A HUD study found that an **emergency shelter** for a family costs approximately **\$3,657 more** per month than the average monthly cost of a **permanent housing subsidy**.<sup>d</sup>



**Permanent supportive housing models** have been found to be **less expensive** than conventional homeless shelters.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Salit S.A., Kuhn E.M., Hartz A.J., Vu J.M., & Mosso A.L. (1998). Hospitalization costs associated with homelessness in New York City. *New England Journal of Medicine* 338, 1734-1740. doi: 10.1056/NEJM199806113382406

<sup>b</sup> Martell J.V., Seitz R.S., Harada J.K., Kobayashi J., Sasaki V.K., & Wong C. (1992). Hospitalization in an urban homeless population: the Honolulu Urban Homeless Project. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 116:299-303

<sup>c</sup> Diamond, P. & Schneid, S. (1991). Lives in the shadows: some of the costs and consequences of a "Non-System" of care. Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, University of Texas. Retrieved on July 13, 2017 from <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/38802/1991LivesInTheShadows.pdf?sequence=2>

<sup>d</sup> Gubits, D., Shinn, M., et. al. (2015, July). Family options study: short-term impacts of housing and services interventions for homeless families. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 138. Retrieved from [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/FamilyOptionsStudy\\_final.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/FamilyOptionsStudy_final.pdf)

<sup>e</sup> McLaughlin, T.C. (2011). Using common themes: cost-effectiveness of permanent supported housing for people with mental illness. *Research on Social Work Practice* 21(4), 409. doi: 10.1177/1049731510387307

# Improving Access to Housing for Justice-Involved People Benefits Everyone

Because of housing’s central role in reentry success, access to stable housing improves life not only for the individual—it benefits all of us.

> **Housing is a platform for opportunity.** When someone is released from jail or prison or otherwise moving forward after criminal justice involvement, they must address many immediate needs and concerns. Safe and affordable housing makes it possible for people to engage in the things they want and need to do, such as:

- Find and keep a job
- Attend school or vocational training
- Achieve or maintain physical and mental health
- Support and care for their families
- Become financially stable
- Contribute to their community

> **Increased access to housing reduces taxpayer cost.**

Providing housing as quickly as possible after justice involvement can reduce other public costs, reaping overall savings. The cost of providing emergency shelter is generally as much or more than the cost of placing someone in transitional or permanent housing.<sup>14</sup> For individuals coping with severe behavioral issues and chronic homelessness, who often touch multiple government systems including hospitals, shelters, prisons and jails, foster care, and child welfare, supportive housing has been shown to save \$10,100 per person per year.<sup>15</sup> Because quality housing of all types promotes stability, it reduces people’s use of shelters and public systems and, thus, taxpayer costs.<sup>16</sup>

**Quickly getting people into housing after incarceration creates stability so that people can prosper in all areas of their lives, which increases public safety.**

We’re already making choices about how we invest our resources in housing. We’re paying for hospital emergency room visits, which don’t promote health; the shelter system, which doesn’t provide the stability or benefits of a home; and we’re paying for costly prison and jail stays that too often lead to a cycle of homelessness, recidivism, and repeated stays in the correctional system. Housing can operate as a platform that breaks this costly cycle.

> **Stable housing increases public safety.** Improving access to stable, affordable, quality housing substantially increases the likelihood that a person leaving prison or jail will be able to connect with existing family support, find and retain employment, and rebuild supportive social networks, reducing

reliance on homeless shelters and increasing public safety.<sup>17</sup> Quickly getting people into housing after incarceration creates stability so that people can prosper in all areas of their lives, which increases public safety. Stable housing makes it easier for people to comply with the conditions of criminal justice supervision like probation and parole, and makes it easier for those systems to provide supervision.

- > **Housing promotes family stability upon reentry.** Like all of us, people who have paid their debt to society should have the chance to reunify with their families and have a home where children can visit or live. Providing a true home for people with criminal justice histories helps families get back together, stay together, and provide support to each other. It helps parents care for and support their children, fostering intact families and strengthening parent-child bonds. Housing promotes community cohesiveness by giving a person a place to belong with a built-in support structure to assist them as they navigate the process of reestablishing ties.

**People with criminal justice histories are often shut out of both the private and public housing markets because of policies and practices that discriminate against them.**





## Reducing Barriers to Housing for People with Justice Involvement

People with criminal justice histories are often shut out of both the private and public housing markets because of policies and practices that discriminate against them. In order to successfully reintegrate this population, these systemic barriers must be reduced through mechanisms like the following:

- > **Promote “ban the box” initiatives and eliminate discrimination by landlords.** “Ban the box” policies promote fair procedures by requiring landlords to make individualized assessments of applicants and limit consideration of criminal history to convictions only from the recent past. New York’s governor signed an executive order banning discrimination in housing against people with criminal justice histories in New York State–funded housing, which includes every building that utilizes Low Income Housing Tax Credits or accepts Section 8 vouchers. The New Orleans Housing Authority changed its admissions policy to remove automatic exclusions for criminal records and create a fair process for individual review. Cities like San Francisco, Seattle, Newark, and Washington D.C. have passed “ban the box” ordinances, which remove questions about criminal records from housing applications.



> ***Reform policies that exclude current tenants after an arrest or conviction.***

For decades, many public housing authorities have operated under “one strike” policies, which seek eviction or permanent exclusion of tenants who are arrested. With encouragement from HUD,<sup>18</sup> some housing authorities, including the New York City Housing Authority are reconsidering policies that permanently exclude tenants after an arrest.<sup>19</sup>

> ***Develop creative partnerships and set-asides to include the justice-involved in housing programs.***

The Oakland Housing Authority has set aside a number of units for women exiting jail and reuniting with their children. To be eligible, mothers must participate in a counseling, education, and employment assistance program in the jail and continue with case management services once they return to their community. A number of programs in other cities help people with criminal records access public housing units.

These sorts of innovative policies, partnerships, and models should be replicated and expanded.

# Increasing Housing Options for People with Criminal Records

People who have had involvement with the criminal justice system are individuals with unique needs. To serve these many needs, there must be a spectrum of types of housing available, as well as increased in-reach into correctional facilities to identify and assess people before they are released so that they can immediately access the best housing choice for them. Only through such a diverse array of strategies can we hope to achieve outcomes that align with our shared values and the goal of having people achieve stable, self-sufficient lives after justice involvement.

## Housing Models that Work

Policymakers and practitioners must invest resources in a broad spectrum of housing models because no one-size-fits-all model will meet the needs of the different groups of people who need housing after criminal justice involvement. Here are four programs that have been proven to work to meet the needs of specific populations—the chronically homeless, people with substance abuse and/or mental health histories, and people seeking to reunite with their families in public housing:

- > **Returning Home Ohio (RHO):** In February 2007, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction partnered with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to create a new supportive housing pilot aimed at preventing homelessness and reducing recidivism for individuals returning to Ohio’s communities from state prisons. The pilot, which was funded by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, targeted people with histories of chronic homelessness or who are at risk for homelessness upon release, and gave priority to those who need supportive services to address mental illness, addiction, and/or developmental disabilities. An Urban Institute evaluation during a one-year follow-up period found that RHO participants were 60% less likely to be reincarcerated and 40% less likely to be rearrested for any crime. They received more mental health and substance abuse services and received them sooner than a comparison group, and they had extremely low use of emergency shelters following release.<sup>a</sup>
- > **Fortune Society’s Housing Initiatives:** In New York, the Fortune Academy (referred to as “The Castle” for its gothic architecture) provides both emergency and transitional housing to justice-involved individuals experiencing homelessness, which prepares people for permanent housing. The building includes 18 emergency housing beds, and a longer-term, 41-bed transitional housing program. The Castle’s eligibility criteria have a deliberately low threshold: criminal justice history, homelessness, willingness to refrain from violence or threat of violence, and agreement to engage in services. Clients benefit from an environment carefully designed to meet the needs of people with justice system involvement, offering on-site counseling and peer supports, and lifetime aftercare that recognizes the nonlinear process from homelessness to building a new life. “Castle Gardens,” located next door to The Castle, is a supportive and affordable, permanent residential community for people experiencing homelessness who are returning from jail or prison, as well as community members with lower incomes. The building has 50 units of affordable housing for the community, 63 units for formerly incarcerated residents, and a unit for the building super. The building features a computer lab, library,

community room, roof terraces with gardens, and a Service Center where residents can access counseling services, case management, licensed substance abuse treatment, financial planning, and other life-skill development courses.<sup>b</sup>

- > **NYCHA Family Reentry Program:** Many public housing authorities across the country ban people who have criminal records, which prevents them from reuniting with their families after incarceration. The New York City Housing Authority's Family Reentry Program was established in partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the New York City Department of Homeless Services, and multiple nonprofit reentry service providers, and with the support of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It aims to ease such one-strike bans by providing a screening process to allow people to rejoin their families in public housing. The program promotes successful reentry through family reunification, family engagement, stable housing, supportive services, and case management. A 2016 evaluation of the pilot phase found that of 85 participants, 41 found or kept a job, 11 attended employment training, 12 were receiving training toward certifications, 12 were attending school, and 15 were in substance-use treatment programs.<sup>c</sup>
- > **CSH's Frequent Users Service Enhancement "FUSE" Initiatives:** The FUSE model aims to break the cycle of incarceration and homelessness among individuals with complex behavioral health challenges who are the highest users of jails, homeless shelters, and other crisis service systems. Now 35 communities nationally are implementing FUSE initiatives. The model relies on data to target high-cost, high-need individuals who frequently cycle among these systems and provide them with a more cost-effective and humane solution that includes permanent housing and supportive services linked to their individualized needs. The original New York City FUSE pilot evaluation produced lasting effects in moving individuals to permanent housing: 91% of FUSE participants remained in permanent housing at 12 months, compared to 28% of a comparison group. Those housed in FUSE spent, on average, 146.7 fewer days in shelters than did a comparison group and had a 40% reduction in incarceration days and fewer jail admissions. The program also had a significant and positive effect on drug abuse outcomes and reduced the use of emergency services.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Fontaine, J., Gilchrist-Scott, D., Roman, J., Taxy, S., & Roman, C. (2012). Supportive housing for returning prisoners: outcomes and impacts of the Returning Home-Ohio Pilot Project. Urban Institute. Retrieved July 13, 2017 from [www.urban.org/research/publication/supportive-housing-returning-prisoners-outcomes-and-impacts-returning-home-ohio-pilot-project](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/supportive-housing-returning-prisoners-outcomes-and-impacts-returning-home-ohio-pilot-project)

<sup>b</sup> Corporation for Supportive Housing. (2013). Castle Gardens, New York, NY: integrated family supportive housing. Retrieved July 13, 2017 from <http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Fortune-Society-Castle-Gardens1.pdf>. Fortune will soon be adding 6 "Just-in-Time" (JIT) emergency housing beds, and The Castle and Castle Gardens models of housing are being replicated in Syracuse, New York.

<sup>c</sup> See Bae, J., diZerega, M., Bang-Brown, J., Shanahan, R., & Subramanian, R. (2016). Coming home: an evaluation of the New York City Housing Authority's Family Reentry Pilot Program. Vera Institute of Justice. Retrieved July 13, 2017 from [https://storage.googleapis.com/vera-web-assets/downloads/Publications/coming-home-nycha-family-reentry-pilot-program-evaluation/legacy\\_downloads/coming-home-nycha-family-reentry-pilot-program-evaluation.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/vera-web-assets/downloads/Publications/coming-home-nycha-family-reentry-pilot-program-evaluation/legacy_downloads/coming-home-nycha-family-reentry-pilot-program-evaluation.pdf)

<sup>d</sup> Aidala, A., McAllister, W., Yomogida, M., & Shubert, V. (2013). Frequent Users Service Enhancement 'FUSE' Initiative: New York City FUSE II evaluation report. Retrieved July 13, 2017 from [http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/FUSE-Eval-Report-Final\\_Linked.pdf](http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/FUSE-Eval-Report-Final_Linked.pdf)

## Conclusion

To serve the many but individually unique needs of people with criminal justice involvement, we must offer a range of housing options and we must offer them all on a much larger scale. We need transitional housing to give people a leg up while they find their footing. We need supportive housing that helps individuals address mental health and substance abuse issues, giving second and third chances to those struggling with addiction or battling serious mental health disorders. We need to remove barriers so that people can return home to their families in public housing. We need to prevent discrimination in the private housing market against people with criminal histories. And we need, quite simply, more safe and habitable housing that people can afford and want to live in.

The choices we make about how we invest our resources in housing should match our priorities as a society. Some would argue that housing is a human right. If we consider it to be such, then the level of shelter we provide must be consistent with principles of human dignity. As we allocate resources, we must ask: What type of housing makes us safer? What enhances human dignity? What builds community? What promotes family stability? What supports individual economic well-being, health, and mental health?

In order to provide safe, supportive, and affordable housing for people with past criminal justice involvement, policymakers must embrace innovative ways to meet their needs and help them achieve stability and success in their communities. We therefore recommend that governments invest in housing for people with criminal justice histories as an investment in public safety, in families, and in economic opportunity. This includes removing barriers that keep people with criminal histories from finding and keeping stable, permanent housing and providing a spectrum of housing opportunities for people who are justice-involved so they can meet their potential, no matter what their needs.

All of this calls for a multi-pronged, values-based, housing strategy that acknowledges, assesses, and addresses the individualized needs of people with a history of justice involvement and provides them with appropriate, stable housing as quickly as possible. Policies and practices that prevent people with criminal justice histories from securing adequate housing must change; only then will everyone truly have a place to call home.

**Policies and practices that prevent people with criminal justice histories from securing adequate housing must change; only then will everyone truly have a place to call home.**

## Endnotes

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