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Opening Doors:

How to develop reentry programs using
examples from public housing authorities

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From the Director

Securing housing is one of the greatest challenges for people who are released from prison and jail, especially in localities where safe and affordable housing are in short supply. Stable housing is also critical for the success of formerly incarcerated people and therefore for public safety. Many different types of landlords have restrictive admissions policies that pose an additional barrier to overcome once people are released from incarceration. For reentry service providers and other stakeholders that provide supports to formerly incarcerated people, the success of connecting the people they serve with housing is often undermined by the scarcity and restrictions. These barriers and challenges to housing stability require innovative practices and programs that provide people with places to live and holistic services to support their success after incarceration.

In cities and counties large and small, public housing authorities have heeded that call and developed reentry programs to support safe housing for formerly incarcerated people and their families. This guide, which draws from the best practices and lessons learned from 11 housing authorities, documents the steps, processes, and factors public housing authorities and partners should consider when implementing programs and policy changes for people with conviction histories. The housing authorities that shared their wisdom with us

represent varying geographic regions, urban and rural settings, and range in size from serving several hundred families to more than 174,000 families.

The housing authorities highlighted in this guide are using existing housing stock to prevent homelessness and reduce recidivism. Further, some are reunifying families through their programming and partnering with other agencies (such as social service providers, community corrections, and others) to provide wraparound services to address the varying needs of formerly incarcerated people. These programs offer tangible solutions to address one of the biggest barriers of returning citizens while alleviating the burdens of agencies that help people get back on their feet post-incarceration. We hope the program models, partnerships, and lessons documented in this guide serve as a framework for a national strategy to tackle the issue of housing for formerly incarcerated people, an essential step in promoting successful reentry, enhancing public safety, and strengthening families and communities.



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Using the guide

Public housing authorities (PHAs) across the country are an integral source of affordable housing in communities, and can play a critical role in a person's transition home after being released from prison or jail. Increased awareness of the barriers posed by a criminal conviction led several PHAs to develop programs that support people returning to their communities from incarceration. These programs—often implemented in partnership with community-based organizations offering employment, educational, and other reentry services—demonstrate success with participant progress toward self-sufficiency and low recidivism rates, thus enhancing public safety and strengthening families and communities.¹ Further, the programs create viable options to address a persistent problem faced by people with criminal histories: securing safe and affordable housing. This guide is designed to help PHAs develop new (or improve existing) programs that assist formerly incarcerated people.

While the primary audiences for this guide are PHAs, other stakeholders can use this resource to begin conversations with their local housing authorities about program implementation.

This guide can be used to

- › gain insight on designing and implementing reentry programs in public housing;
- › improve existing programs that aid formerly incarcerated people; and
- › become informed on innovation occurring across a wide array of PHAs.

This guide is divided into three sections:

- › **Background: Housing and reentry** offers information about the challenges in accessing and securing housing for formerly incarcerated people, the links between secure housing and

recidivism, and other factors that point to a need for housing programs to assist people returning to their communities from incarceration.

- › **Design and implementation** explores significant steps in the planning phases of a program, such as identifying partners, defining eligibility criteria, and securing funding. It offers lessons that other programs have learned on resident engagement, managing incident communications, building support, and tracking outcomes.
- › **Sustaining the change** examines how programs can continue to be part of their housing authority's regular operations, how to facilitate and maintain institutional culture change, and how to spur collaborations between local housing authorities and community partners.

Since 2013, the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) has worked with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to launch and implement the Family Reentry Program. At the same time, Vera worked with the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) to address barriers to affordable housing and employment faced by those with criminal records.

For this guide, Vera identified and contacted housing authorities from across the country that have designed and implemented reentry programs, or that have worked to change their admissions policies for formerly incarcerated people. Vera then convened select PHAs to discuss their lessons and experiences in policy and program implementation.

The information presented is drawn from the experience and knowledge of the following housing authorities (see Appendix for a detailed profile of each PHA):

- › Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA), Ohio
- › Burlington Housing Authority (BHA), Vermont
- › Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Illinois
- › Cook County Housing Authority (CCHA), Illinois
- › Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), California
- › Housing Authority of the County of Union, Pennsylvania
- › Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), Louisiana
- › New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), New York
- › Oakland Housing Authority (OHA), California
- › San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), Texas
- › Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA), New York

Key terms

Below are key terms used by public housing authorities:

Housing choice vouchers/Section 8: The housing choice voucher program (HCV, also known as Section 8) assists low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities in obtaining private-market housing. Public housing authorities (PHAs) receive federal funds to administer housing choice vouchers, which are housing subsidies paid directly to the landlord by the PHA on behalf of a participating family. The family pays the difference between the actual rent charged and the amount subsidized.^a

Moving to Work: Moving to Work is a demonstration program sponsored by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides funding to PHAs to design and implement strategies to help residents find employment and increase the number of housing choices for low-income families.^b

Project-based vouchers: Project-based vouchers are a component of the HCV program that are assigned to a specific building, housing unit, or project, as opposed to an individual or family.^c

Public housing: Public housing is federally supported rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. People are considered eligible based on 1) annual gross income, 2) whether they qualify as elderly, persons with disabilities, or as a family, and 3) U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. HUD sets lower-income limits at 80 percent of median income, and very low limits at 50 percent of median income, of the county or metropolitan area in which the individual lives. There are approximately 1.2 million households living in public housing units managed by about 3,300 housing authorities.^d

Tenant-based vouchers: Tenant-based vouchers are a component of the HCV program that are awarded to eligible applicants to assist in rental and/or security deposit payments in privately owned housing. Tenant-based vouchers are granted to tenants, not a development or a project.^e

Below are key criminal justice terms used throughout this report:

Probation: Probation is a community-based sentence imposed by a court in lieu of incarceration. While on probation, a person may be required to check in with a probation officer, and may have special conditions imposed (such as payment of court fees or participation in treatment programs). Violating the conditions of probation can result in incarceration.^f

Jail: Jails are usually operated by local governments and tend to hold people who are awaiting trial or sentencing. Jails can also be used to house those who are convicted of a crime for short sentences lasting less than a year. For some crimes in certain jurisdictions, people may be held in jail for more than one year.^g

Prison: Prisons are mostly operated by state or federal governments and hold people who are convicted of felonies and sentenced to more than one year of incarceration. Certain jurisdictions (Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont) have correctional systems that combine jails and prisons. Some prisons are owned and operated by private corporations that contract with government agencies.^h

Parole: Parole refers to the release of people from prison to serve the remainder of their sentence within their communities. People may be released on parole by the discretion of a parole board, or because of statutes in their sentence. Once released on parole, individuals are required to adhere to certain conditions and stipulations (such as curfew, and participation in reentry programming), and may be required to check in with a parole officer regularly. Violating the conditions and stipulations of parole can result in returning to prison.ⁱ

^a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), “Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet,” <https://perma.cc/B2Z7-WB5P>.

^b HUD, “Moving to Work (MTW),” <https://perma.cc/DM86-TD5G>.

^c HUD, “Project Based Vouchers,” https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/project.

^d HUD, “Public Housing,” https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph.

^e HUD, “Tenant Based Vouchers,” https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/tenant.

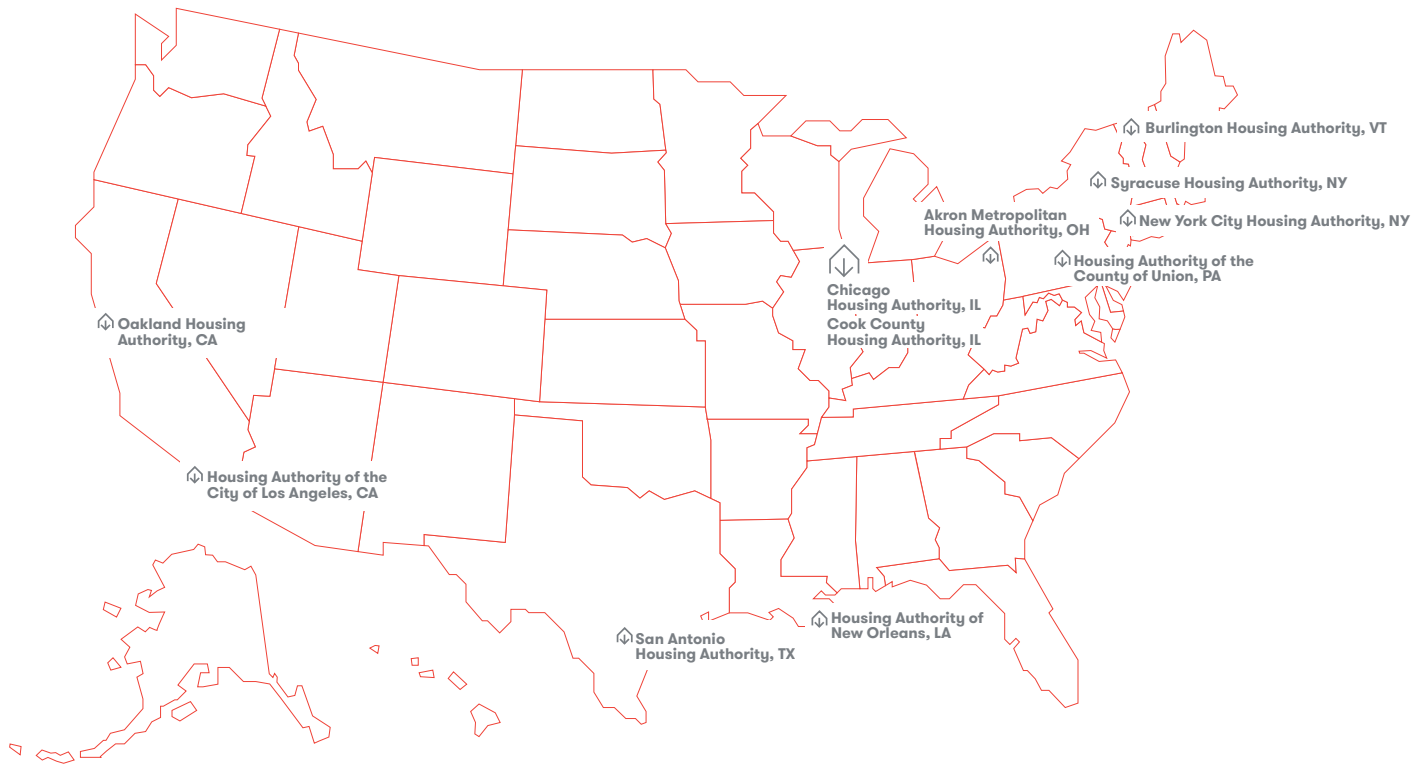
^f Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), “Community Corrections” (Probation and Parole). https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=15#terms_def.

^g BJS, “Terms & Definitions: Local Jail Inmates And Jail Facilities,” <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tdtp&tid=12>.

^h BJS, “Terms & Definitions: Corrections,” <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tdtp&tid=1>.

ⁱ BJS, “Community Corrections” (Probation and Parole), https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=15#terms_def.

Mapping housing innovation across the country



Background: Housing and reentry

Across the country, there are about 3,300 public housing authorities (PHAs) serving more than one million households.² Given its breadth and geographic scope, public housing can be a tremendous resource for people coming out of prison or jail. Public housing connects people with their families and communities, and helps to establish a foundation for employment and other opportunities. However, admissions criteria for much of the country's public housing often bars people with conviction histories. Following federal guidelines, all PHAs place permanent bans on people who are subject to lifetime sex offender registration and people who have been convicted of producing methamphetamine in federally subsidized housing.³ For other types of crimes, housing authorities exercise their discretion; the length of

exclusion usually varies with the severity of the crime.⁴

Despite these exclusionary policies, anecdotal evidence suggests some formerly incarcerated people return to public housing and choose to “live in the shadows” because they have nowhere else to go—and because they may require the financial assistance and emotional support their families provide.⁵ Such living arrangements are unstable and can place entire families at risk of eviction. As such, people returning to their communities from incarceration may have to choose between returning to their families in public housing and placing their family at risk of eviction, or undertaking the arduous task of finding alternative means of shelter.

While research links housing to successful reentry outcomes, formerly incarcerated people face myriad challenges when attempting to secure housing. These challenges can increase their likelihood of becoming homeless and may hinder their successful transition into the community.⁶ Studies show access to stable, affordable housing substantially increases the likelihood that someone returning home from prison or jail will find and retain employment, rebuild supportive social networks, and refrain from committing new crimes.⁷

Home, for many, is connected to family. Family support is crucial for recently released people, not only for basic survival needs, but also for emotional support and stability.⁸ The role of being a parent or spouse can also be a motivating factor for many formerly incarcerated people to successfully transition into the community after prison or jail. For example, strong father-child involvement immediately after release was significantly associated with those men working more hours per week and reporting lower rates of recidivism and substance use.⁹

The difficulties formerly incarcerated people face upon returning to their communities have received significant public attention in recent years, which has opened opportunities for reform.¹⁰ A particular focus on housing-related challenges led federal, state, and local policymakers to reform the restrictions to public housing for formerly incarcerated people. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released policy statements and guidelines for PHAs regarding people with criminal justice histories.¹¹ Subsequently, some PHAs launched programs to help reunite formerly incarcerated people with their families in public housing or assist them in securing their own housing units. Others examined and revised public housing eligibility policies applicable to formerly incarcerated people.

This guide is designed to support PHAs and other agencies that are beginning to develop new housing strategies and programming to meet the needs of formerly incarcerated people. It may also support PHAs that already have programs underway, but seek new ways to enhance

their ongoing efforts. Effective implementation and monitoring of these programs can ensure success for PHAs, the people they serve, their residents, and their communities.

Design and implementation

PHAs starting these programs share common goals: improving the lives of formerly incarcerated people, helping residents become self-sufficient, and keeping public housing communities safe. Still, the reasons for implementing reentry programs may vary across housing authorities. In some jurisdictions, stakeholders identify issues faced by residents and their family members as a result of prior conviction histories, and are motivated to address them. In other places, programs develop in response to policy changes or at the request of criminal justice stakeholders. While the motivations of these stakeholders come from various internal and external forces, their solutions may look quite similar. Once a decision is made to design and implement a public housing reentry program, several questions should be considered during the planning stages, including those below:

- › What are the goals of the program?
- › What is the best way these program goals can be accomplished?
- › Who is eligible for the program, and what is the program's structure?
- › How will the program be funded?
- › What partners should be engaged in program design? In implementation?
- › What roles do each of the partners play?

These guiding questions should be considered throughout the design and implementation phases of a program. They serve as a reminder of the initial focus and direction of the program, and allow partners to reflect on the program's growth and to respond to evolving needs.

It is important to note that not all processes, steps, and components of programming will be the same for each housing authority. Each PHA's approach will differ based on its setting, the needs of the formerly incarcerated people in their community, residents' desires, or other factors.¹² PHAs are cautioned against taking reentry program designs off-the-shelf without first undertaking a comprehensive assessment of their

population, reentry landscape, and the needs and desires of stakeholders. The reentry programs discussed in this guide share some strategies, but the components of each program vary.

Partnerships

It is essential for all PHAs considering reentry housing programs to identify potential partners willing and able to participate in the planning or implementation efforts. The most successful reentry programs allow housing authorities to do what they do best—provide housing—while relying on partners to provide services beyond the scope of the PHA's mandate and resources.¹³ As such, identifying an array of partnerships is critical to a housing program's success. Additionally, a range of expertise and knowledge is crucial when a program is faced with challenges. Diverse partners help find efficient, effective solutions during both program planning and implementation.

Partners can assume various roles, including:

- › connecting formerly incarcerated people to resources beyond housing, such as behavioral or mental health counseling, case management services, family counseling, domestic violence or trauma counseling, legal representation, substance use treatment, educational programs, or vocational/workforce training;
- › providing funding (see page 19 for more about funding);
- › sourcing potential program applicants from their existing pool of clients;
- › building support within the community through outreach initiatives (see “Prospective applicant engagement” on page 20); and
- › assisting efforts to adopt policies that encourage long-term shifts in culture. (An example might be a policy that encourages change in how PHAs or other staffers view and treat people who have been incarcerated.)

PHAs look to many different organizations for program assistance. Here are examples of how some of these partnerships function:

- › The **Burlington Housing Authority (BHA)** in Vermont, which started its program in 2005, achieved success by partnering with local probation and parole officers, landlords, and property managers to offer housing assistance to people recently released from prison.

The Offender Re-Entry Housing Program is entirely funded by the Vermont Department of Corrections, which has been a critical partner since the program's inception. The program works closely with vocational service organizations to offer formerly incarcerated people résumé-building assistance. Other services include referrals to Social Security representatives, behavioral counseling, or substance use treatment. The reentry program also works with five community justice centers, which provide supplemental case management services to program participants. Community justice centers are part of the City of Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office and provide various services for victims of crime and those involved with the criminal justice system.¹⁴

PHAs are cautioned against taking reentry program designs off-the-shelf without first undertaking a comprehensive assessment of their population, reentry landscape, and the needs and desires of stakeholders.

- › The **Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)** developed strong partnerships with two of its service providers, A New Way of Life and Weingart, both of which lead efforts to speak with potential participants about housing programs. They are the main source of referrals and case management services for participants in the program. A New Way of Life's case managers connect families and individuals with supportive services. The organization works with the housing authority to create customized plans that help ensure successful reunification and reentry, all with the goal of preventing homelessness for the formerly incarcerated.¹⁵
- › The **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)** partners with 13 reentry service providers that refer applicants to the NYCHA Family Reentry Program. To be a part of the program, people agree to participate in at least six months of case management from their referring provider. The level and type of services required depends on the participant's individual needs and may range from educational

opportunities or employment readiness training to substance use treatment or counseling. Other partners include the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), the New York City Department of Homeless Services, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), and Vera. DOCCS, federal facilities, and the New York City Department of Correction provide outreach within their facilities, beginning the conversation about housing while people are still incarcerated. The correctional agencies also disseminate information about the program within their parole offices. Family Reentry Program staff and the 13 reentry service organizations also provide outreach within correctional facilities and in the community, while CSH and Vera provide implementation assistance.

- › The **Oakland Housing Authority (OHA)** program, Parents and Children Together (PACT)—a combination of the Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed program and the Dads Acquiring and Developing Skills program—works in partnership with the Santa Rita Jail and the Alameda County Sheriff's Office to identify eligible participants based on housing needs. OHA also partners with the City of Oakland and a network of community-based organizations for their Sponsor-Based Housing Assistance Program (SBHAP). The City of Oakland funds these community-based organizations that provide case management and other services for participants. OHA conducts eligibility and criminal background screenings after participants are referred to the program. Both PACT and SBHAP are local programs developed under OHA's Moving to Work (MTW) agreement. As an MTW agency, OHA uses authorizations to waive some federal regulations and develop local conditions that better serve local communities.
- › The **San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA)** runs its reentry program with the Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department. SAHA developed key partnerships that benefit program participants, their families, and their communities. Employers in the San Antonio area now hire people with criminal histories, in part due to growing manufacturing needs. A well-known auto company's manufacturer—along with other businesses that provide goods to the auto company—actively recruits formerly incarcerated people. In order to attract new hires, companies hold job fairs specifically targeted toward people with criminal histories. SAHA also maintains a partnership with an organization called Crosspoint, which brings on recently released people as volunteers for activities such as food distribution to low-income

residents. SAHA also partners with a rape crisis center to tackle issues around family violence prevention, recognizing the need to restore relationships that may have already been strained prior to incarceration.

After potential partners are identified, programs often find it useful to appoint a manager or central office staff person, such as a reentry coordinator, to oversee the program. At NYCHA (New York City), there are designated housing authority staff members who manage the reentry program. Responsibilities include receiving the referral applications, making home visits, coordinating the screening committee meetings, and administering programmatic and logistical support. BHA (Burlington) has an on-site, full-time staff member to provide supportive services, as well as two dedicated full-time staff members for its reentry program.

Some PHAs get creative, looking toward research institutions or universities for help in shaping and advocating for programming. HACLA (Los Angeles) works with a doctoral student at the University of Southern California to survey potential applicants based on their motivations and reentry needs, and conducts follow-up surveys to examine participants' employment, health, and recidivism outcomes. AMHA (Akron, Ohio) partnered with students from the University of Akron School of Law, who helped develop referral tools for the reentry program. These law students also provide legal service clinics for the community through which they can identify and refer potential applicants to the program.

PHAs often participate in coalitions to identify and address broader criminal justice issues. In San Antonio, the housing authority's partnership with the local probation office and 20 community-based organizations forms a "resurgence collaborative" that serves reentry housing efforts. Similarly, the mayor's office in Los Angeles supports a task force that includes the housing authority, parole and probation services, and nonprofits to collaborate together on criminal justice issues. The Housing Authority of the County of Union, Pennsylvania participates in a criminal justice advisory board that brings together various justice-related service providers.

Program model

Once partnerships are established, the next step is usually defining the structure of the program. At this point, PHAs may want to determine the length of participation, eligibility requirements, termination procedures, and the overall model of the reentry program. PHA reentry programs

can follow a family reunification model (reuniting participants with their families in public housing), a direct housing model (participants move into vacant units managed by the housing authority), or a hybrid of the two. At this stage, PHA reentry programs may also elect to work exclusively with participants who are on parole or probation.

Here are several examples of how housing authorities have structured their reentry programs:

- › The **Burlington Housing Authority (BHA)** recruits potential program applicants directly from correctional facilities. BHA first looks to reunite participants with family members in public housing. If this is a possibility, the residence is approved as long as the property manager agrees and the address is accepted by the department of corrections. If a participant does not have family members to return to, BHA works with landlords in the community to secure housing, or may refer participants to a BHA-operated transitional housing program. Upon receiving housing through this program, participants are required to sign a lease addendum stipulating that the conditions of the lease are also conditions of his or her release.¹⁶ Pursuant to an agreement with the department of corrections, BHA is required to provide housing retention services until the participant is no longer under supervision. Once participants complete the required supervision, they may still receive housing retention services and support through BHA's Housing Retention Unit that works with all residents of BHA.
- › **Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)'s** Reentry Pilot has two tracks: 1) a CHA wait list; and 2) reunion with a family member who is living in public housing or participating in the department's Housing Choice Voucher Program.¹⁷ Both aspects of the Reentry Pilot require formerly incarcerated people to have completed a six-month reentry program offered through a local nonprofit—such as Safer Foundation or St. Leonard's Ministries—prior to submitting an application. Participants must be referred by a partner service provider to be eligible.
- › The **Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)'s**, Demonstration Re-entry Program allows families on the Section 8 housing choice voucher program to reunite with formerly incarcerated family members who would not otherwise be eligible to join the household. Landlords must approve of the formerly incarcerated family member returning to the household. If the landlord does not allow the family member to be added to the unit, the family is given a voucher to move to another unit with

an accepting landlord. Participants must agree to receive case management services from participating partners for one year.

- › The **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)**'s Family Reentry Program is a family reunification program. Participants who wish to participate must be reuniting with family members (falling within relationship categories defined by NYCHA) who are currently living within NYCHA housing. The two-year program is based on NYCHA's existing temporary permission policy that allows family members to live as a household upon receiving property manager approval (the policy was extended from one to two years for this program). All participants agree to work with a reentry service provider to develop an action plan that outlines a person's goals for the first six months and maps steps toward achieving them. People also agree to participate in case management services for at least six months.¹⁸ NYCHA reserves the right to terminate participants from the program if they are convicted of any new crime, or if they pose a threat to the safety of other NYCHA residents. However, if a participant is arrested and acquitted of all charges, the period from arrest to acquittal will count toward their program participation.
- › The **San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA)**'s reentry program is for people who are on active probation with the Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department. Participants are referred into the program by their probation officers. Those accepted into the program receive dual case management from both community supervision and SAHA's Family Self-Sufficiency unit.
- › The **Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA)** recently launched a family reunification program modeled on NYCHA's pilot. The housing authority adopted a two-year temporary permission policy enabling program participants to reside as guests with family members already living in public housing. After successful completion of the program, participants may be added to the lease or apply for their own housing.

Reentry programs that mirror, to the extent possible, the PHA's regular operating procedures may be more readily accepted by housing authority staff and the community, especially during the initial stages of implementation. Such programs are also more easily incorporated into the PHA's regular operations over time. As a program matures, there are bound to be lessons learned that call for changes in eligibility criteria, program length, and structural components. Highlighting the successes of the program and being transparent about its operations will help build support

for any necessary changes after implementation.

Eligibility based on criminal records

Beyond federal restrictions related to people convicted of manufacturing methamphetamine in federally subsidized housing and those who are subject to lifetime sex offender registration, PHAs have wide latitude when determining who to admit or reject from their programs.¹⁹ However, admissions decisions based solely on criminal histories do not take into account the totality of the applicant's circumstances, and ignore the social and personal progress an applicant may have made since conviction and during incarceration. It is vital for PHAs to consider broad eligibility requirements that look at factors proven to be relevant to a participant's success in the program, which may include participation in job assistance or educational programming, drug treatment, or employment. Imposing strict eligibility guidelines for reentry programs may make it difficult to find eligible applicants and allows little room for discretion when determining admission.²⁰ All applications should be reviewed holistically and applicants should be admitted or rejected on a case-by-case basis.

There are several examples of how criminal records are factored into admissions decisions, including:

- › **BHA (Burlington)**'s Offender Re-Entry Housing Program does not exclude prospective applicants based on criminal histories. The program begins its screening process by holding an initial "intake interview" with the applicant, during which he or she is asked about substance use and criminal history, as well as any changes in the applicant's life since his or her conviction. Program staff also ask for additional information from the applicant in order to assess barriers to housing.²¹
- › At **NYCHA (New York City)**, no applicant is excluded from the program solely on the basis of prior criminal history. A screening committee reviews all applications and weighs numerous factors related to the applicant and their family.²² If an application progresses past the initial screening stage, NYCHA staff meet with the applicant and his or her family at their home to assess their living situation. Thereafter, the committee makes a decision on the application and notifies the referring agency.²³
- › In San Antonio, **SAHA's** reentry program requires prospective applicants to be in good standing with their conditions of probation and excludes people with certain serious convictions.
- › In **Union County**, Pennsylvania, the Justice Bridge Housing Program

is open to formerly incarcerated people who are also eligible for the jurisdiction's Housing Choice Voucher program. The selection process is initiated by a referral from an applicant's parole officer to the county chief probation officer. The officer assesses the applicant using a publicly available needs and risk assessment tool, then forwards the assessment to a review panel. The panel includes staff from the Housing Authority of the County of Union, the county sheriff, the jail warden, the chief probation officer, mental health providers, community action agency members or other case management providers, and a citizen prisoner advocate (community members who advocate for prisoners' rights). Most members of the panel have a prior professional relationship with program applicants.²⁴ Acceptance is determined by panel consensus.²⁵

✂ ... admissions decisions based solely on criminal histories do not take into account the totality of the applicant's circumstances, and ignore the social and personal progress an applicant may have made since conviction and during incarceration. ✂

Other eligibility criteria

Reentry programs may also consider other factors for participant eligibility, such as incarceration status or the length of time since a person was released from jail or prison. Some programs actively recruit potential applicants while they are incarcerated, as well as people who have been out of prison for a pre-determined period of time. Depending on the PHA, the program might also include additional requirements regarding applicants who are on parole or probation. In some jurisdictions, restrictions on length of time since release are imposed not as exclusionary measures, but because there may be easier-to-access, alternative methods that would allow formerly incarcerated people to return to public housing. For family reunification models, the PHA may define the type of family relationships

that are allowed for program participation.

Here are some examples of programs using these eligibility guidelines:

- › Initially, **AMHA (Akron, Ohio)** primarily accepted referrals from the Summit County reentry court. Part of the court's referral process includes using the Ohio Risk Assessment System in order to determine whether the applicant is a good fit for the reentry program. Over time, AMHA modified its criteria to accept program participants from other sources, including a procedure that allows current residents to request adding another person to their lease.
- › In order to participate in **BHA (Burlington)'s** Offender Re-Entry Housing Program (ORHP), applicants must have at least one year of their current sentence remaining, or be released on conditional reentry status and be under the supervision of the department of corrections in Chittenden County, Vermont.²⁶ When a person nears release but has nowhere to go, he or she can submit an application to the ORHP.²⁷ Offender reentry housing specialists then hold an intake interview with the applicant, which may take place at the correctional facility if the applicant is still incarcerated.²⁸
- › **SHA (Syracuse)** primarily accepts referrals from the local parole office, but current residents may also refer participants. Prospective participants must be on parole and have family members who currently reside in public housing.
- › To be eligible for **HACLA (Los Angeles)'s** Demonstration Re-entry Program, a participant must have been released from jail or prison within the past 24 months, and must be reuniting with family members related by blood, marriage, or children.
- › **NYCHA Family Reentry Program (New York City)** initially took applications from people who had been released from incarceration within the last 18 months. However, to increase the pool of eligible applicants, NYCHA extended the post-release period to three years.²⁹ Applicants are also eligible to apply while currently incarcerated with a pending release date (for instance, they have been approved by the parole board for release). They may or may not be on parole or probation at the time of referral. Eligible family member relationships are defined by NYCHA's existing policy on people who may be eligible to join a household's lease.³⁰
- › **OHA (Oakland)'s** Parents and Children Together (PACT) program works with parents who are referred directly from the jail by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office. Parents must be reuniting with children and are required to begin workshops and classes—such as family reunification and parenting workshops, and substance use classes—while incarcerated.

Securing funding

Different sources of funding may be available depending on how funds are allocated and by whom. Housing authorities often seek funding to pay for additional staff time, to support reentry services, or for technical assistance to implement programs. Funds for the various types of implementation and programmatic activities may come from public or private sources.

Here are several examples of PHAs securing funds for their reentry programs, and how those funds were used:

- › The Vermont Department of Corrections funds **BHA's** Offender Re-Entry Housing Program in its entirety. The funding is used to secure three full-time staff members, and allocates an additional \$40,000 to support participants' first months' rent, security deposit and housing-related debts, or other housing-related needs.³¹ The funding also covers the Landlord Guarantee Program that reimburses landlords up to \$1,500 in the event that a program participant causes any damage to a unit or leaves an apartment while still owing rent.³²
- › During the pilot phase, **NYCHA's** program was funded in part by the New York City's Department of Homeless Services (DHS). The 13 service providers who referred participants to the pilot, and who subsequently provided case management to participants throughout the program, were not paid by NYCHA. For most of the case management, the service providers used their own funds, as this type of support already fell into their purview as reentry service organizations.³³ The technical assistance to support the implementation was paid for with private funding from foundations as well as DHS.
- › **OHA** provides funding to the City of Oakland for the housing assistance portion of its sponsor-based housing program. The City of Oakland disburses housing assistance funding and provides supplemental monies to community organizations that provide case management and family support to program participants. For the Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers (MOMS) initiative, the County Behavioral Health Care Services Agency provides funding for two case managers. The County Public Health Department previously provided funding for a grant writer.³⁴ Upon completion of the MOMS program and completion of graduation requirements, participants are eligible to receive a project-based housing voucher.³⁵ For OHA's PACT program, the Alameda County Sheriff's Office Inmate Welfare Fund supports eight dedicated Alameda County Sheriff's Office staff members who work in facilities on this program.

- › The **Housing Authority of the County of Union** initially funded its Justice Bridge Housing Program through a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency with supplemental funding from the housing authority's own general funds.³⁶ The program was also able to obtain rental assistance for participants with behavioral health needs through a local behavioral services provider. The county provides rental assistance funds for program participants who are parents of minor children.³⁷ Union County also received funds from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance to evaluate and replicate its program.³⁸

Prospective applicant engagement

It is important to develop strategies that engage prospective applicants, community members, the public, and other stakeholders in a way that builds trust and fosters open communication. Policies and programs designed to increase access to public housing for people with conviction histories are ripe for misunderstanding and rumors. Prospective participants and community residents may have reservations or distrust of the housing authority due to possible poor experiences with housing authority staff. This distrust may lead some formerly incarcerated people and their families to fear that enrolling in these programs could lead to eviction, or that participation may lead to increased monitoring and scrutiny by housing authority staff that would violate their privacy.³⁹ This lack of trust can be exacerbated by misinformation about eligibility requirements or other policies within a housing reentry program. Clarity about the procedures for screening reentry program applicants is critical, including what factors are taken into account when the screening committee makes a decision. These procedures should be made available in writing and provided to applicants.⁴⁰ When developing written materials, it is necessary to exercise caution and sensitivity to these issues, as prospective applicants and residents may be wary of new policies relating to criminal activity, incarceration, and reentry.

- › **HACLA (Los Angeles)'s** initial letter to households with prospective program applicants was met with fear. Although HACLA's program allowed families to be reunited in public housing, many residents worried that by applying for the program and adding formerly incarcerated people to their lease, they would be subject to eviction.

PHAs can employ creative measures to alert both prospective participants and residents of the housing opportunities within the community. In particular, it may be helpful to construct a community engagement strategy that includes a combination of written products, community events, and media outreach or campaigns.⁴¹

- › **NYCHA (New York City)** has engaged with prospective applicants by developing brochures and flyers for distribution in jails and prisons. Some participants said they learned about the Family Reentry Program from flyers they saw in facilities while incarcerated. Additionally, these materials were distributed among probation and parole officers so they could provide information about NYCHA programs and housing options upon an incarcerated person's release. In tandem, Vera has developed resources that aim not only to serve as an introduction to the program but also to dispel myths surrounding people with criminal histories and their access to public housing in New York City.⁴² The resources include flyers, brochures, and posters, and can be widely disseminated throughout the city. Moreover, Vera worked with the Theater of the Oppressed NYC, Youth Represent, and New York City government officials to promote the program to community members, including nonprofits who serve NYCHA residents and prospective applicants. A series of plays were created to address public housing and reentry concerns, and to introduce the Family Reentry Program as a safe and viable housing option for formerly incarcerated people.

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Prospective participants and community residents may have reservations or distrust of the housing authority due to possible poor experiences with housing authority staff.

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Managing incident communication

Public housing residents and other stakeholders may be concerned that people who have broken the law are “jumping the waitlist” or will be endangering others living in the community. Additionally, there are often concerns that returning to the same communities from which someone was arrested may not help formerly incarcerated people succeed upon release.

While it may be tempting to keep quiet about a new reentry program for fear of negative responses, several housing authorities that have launched such programs advise an open, proactive approach. Informing key leaders in partner agencies is critical so that they are prepared to speak with the press and general public about the program and its goals. Communicating with key partners if a negative incident occurs within the program is also necessary, as such issues may garner media attention or other negative programmatic responses.

- › Early on, **BHA (Burlington)**'s ORHP received some resistance from the community for housing formerly incarcerated people in their neighborhoods and using tax dollars to pay for the program. BHA worked with the local police department and the department of corrections to talk about the issues as a matter of public safety. Ultimately, they gained community support.
- › Following the soft launch of the Family Reentry Program in New York City, **NYCHA**'s communications department approached a trusted journalist to give her a preview of the press release about the program and to provide access to key spokespeople in the partner agencies, including a resident leader. The spokespeople shared a set of talking points that were developed in advance of the meeting with the reporter so that they all had access to the same information during initial interviews. This strategy resulted in a thorough and balanced story about the program. Other news coverage of the program that was based on the press release had a more sensational focus, which reinforced the value of the deliberate strategy.

Tracking outcomes

Data can illustrate the success of an initiative (such as employment outcomes achieved by participants, participants' recidivism rates, changes in rent and on-time rent payment), identify areas of improvement, and reveal the progress made since the program's inception. Based on

the program model and services offered, PHAs often find it useful to capture relevant information on specific milestones achieved by program participants and the growth of their reentry programs. This data can be used to educate communities, inform the public, attract funders, and spur innovation among advocates.

The following are some important metrics to consider when measuring the success of a reentry housing program.

- › **Recidivism:** Recidivism may be defined as a new arrest, a new conviction, or return to prison after completing a sentence for a prior crime.⁴³ While the definition of recidivism varies by jurisdiction, defining a standard and capturing this information illustrates the importance of housing stability and other supports for a person's transition from incarceration into the community.
- › **Education and employment outcomes:** Education and employment outcomes during program participation demonstrate a path toward self-sufficiency and a successful transition back home. Communicating participants' success stories can be helpful, particularly when partnering with community-based organizations or nonprofits.
- › **Homelessness prevention:** This may be difficult to measure as there may not be a mechanism to determine if a participant was at risk of homelessness absent program participation. One way to capture this information is to determine if any referrals were made from homeless shelters, or if the participant was living in a shelter at the time of his or her application or prior to incarceration.

Sustaining the change

In recent years, as crime has gone down and awareness of the human and financial impact of the 1990s' "tough on crime" policies rose, there has been a shift in attitudes and understanding about incarcerated people.⁴⁴ There has been a reexamination of the role that government and civil society can play in helping people successfully transition out of prison or jail. These same cultural shifts are occurring among public housing staff and communities.

Public housing authorities (PHAs) with reentry programs recommend developing a deliberate staff engagement process to inform employees about the program's purpose and grounding in research. At the same time, PHAs have found engaging other PHAs and the broader community helpful to garner support and spur innovation. Here are several approaches to consider:

- › **Communicate and collaborate across agencies.** In Burlington, the housing authority, department of corrections, and probation officers host monthly meetings to identify challenges formerly incarcerated residents may face and identify solutions. In Vermont, the department of corrections resides within the Vermont Agency of Human Services. This structure lends itself to collaboration with other agencies, such as the department of health and the department of mental health, which in turn results in a holistic governmental approach to working with currently and formerly incarcerated people.
- › **Engage the local police department.** In New Orleans, the chief of the housing police was an ally in shaping the housing authority's policy change. He was able to describe crime rates in public housing developments in New Orleans and reaffirm to the public that the majority of crime committed in public housing property was not committed by residents. By engaging law enforcement early in the program-planning process, the housing authority had a better understanding of local crime trends, and was able to initiate important conversations about the policy change.
- › **Provide learning opportunities to key decision makers.** By participating in broader conversations about reentry—which includes hearing directly from people who have been incarcerated and their families—staff can gain an understanding of what their role can be in helping people successfully return from incarceration. In Akron, Ohio, AMHA staff shared Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* with board members. In New York City, Family Reentry Program staff regularly share articles and event invitations with members of the program's screening committee to inform them of reentry research and to keep them current about housing access issues impacting people with conviction histories.
- › **Serve as spokespeople.** Another strategy housing authorities can employ is to allow staffers to represent the reentry program in public settings. AMHA in Akron, for example, has staff explain the policy changes to law enforcement, service providers, and other community

partners. Other housing authority staff present at national or regional conferences (such as state housing authority associations) about their reentry work. These sorts of opportunities increase staff ownership of the programs or policy changes, and allow them to hear the positive reception of the changes by outside stakeholders who may be surprised and encouraged by the housing authority's new direction.

- › **Provide training opportunities to line staff.** For an agency's culture shift to be effective, staff at all levels—including housing assistants, property managers, and employees who review applications—need opportunities to participate in reentry programming. For example, the HACC in Illinois held informal trainings for its property managers, explaining how the program would work and gathering valuable feedback from onsite staff. As a reentry program gets underway, sharing participants' success stories with staff and recognizing employee roles in this success can spur and reaffirm program commitment.

Creating broader change

The innovative practices of a housing authority or the successes of a reentry program may open opportunities for broader change. For example, the HACC's Reentry Pilot in Cook County helped spur changes to HACC's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy and its housing application process, including giving all housing applicants the opportunity to present mitigating information related to prior criminal history before a final decision is made on their application. In another example, the success of the NYCHA Family Reentry Program was the catalyst for New York State to partner with three housing authorities, in Schenectady, Syracuse, and White Plains, to create their own reentry programs.

However, the desire for change is not exclusively linked to successful programs or models—it may come simply because there is a need for it. In 2013, HANO in New Orleans began exploring changes in admissions policies affecting formerly incarcerated people. The policy change was driven by resident advocates in partnership with legal service providers, law enforcement officials, and community organizers. The revised Admissions and Continued Occupancy Procedure was finalized and approved in 2016, and is viewed as among the nation's most progressive admissions policies by housing experts.⁴⁵ In the new policy, HANO specifies the convictions that are of concern when evaluating an applicant for housing, clearly describes look-back periods, and creates a process that

allows for an individualized assessment for people with convictions of concern. Barring federally mandated restrictions, no one is automatically denied admission.

Conclusion

Safe, stable housing is crucial to ensuring people released from incarceration have opportunities to succeed. Without a place to call home, formerly incarcerated people face a future deeply marred with obstacles and barriers when attempting to rebuild a life beyond prison or jail. Even with housing, reentering civil society after incarceration is challenging. Restrictive policies that effectively bar people with criminal records lead to challenges around basic survival activities such as obtaining identification, opening a bank account, and securing a job. These practices present a daunting outlook for people with conviction histories, and provide a stark reminder of the lasting punishment that society imposes for people who have completed their sentences.

Housing authorities, such as the ones detailed in this guide, are challenging previously accepted exclusions of people with conviction histories by designing programs to work with formerly incarcerated people and their families. The success stories beginning to emerge from these reentry programs demonstrate that given the opportunity—and when supported by family or services that address their needs—people with criminal records can be reliable tenants, engaged parents, and successful members of the workforce. These programs offer opportunities to mend relationships between housing authorities and their residents, creating pathways to revitalizing communities that were historically marginalized.

Increasing the number of PHAs implementing reentry programs and changing policies for people with conviction histories will greatly contribute to the shifting narrative around formerly incarcerated people. However, there is still work to be done. Capitalizing on the momentum for change, PHAs and other criminal justice stakeholders should continue to lead and push for reforms that will sustain the recent progress related to housing people with conviction histories. A different approach to the way formerly incarcerated people are thought of and treated may give rise to innovations that can lower incarceration rates, increase social mobility, and promote safer communities.

Appendix

Profiles of public housing authorities included in this guide (as of April 2017)

Housing authority	Location	Number of subsidized units	Number of Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA)	Akron, OH	4,322	5,121
Burlington Housing Authority (BHA)	Burlington, VT	636	1,798
Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)	Chicago, IL	23,215	52,482
Cook County Housing Authority (CCHA)	Chicago, IL	1,929	13,168
Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)	Los Angeles, CA	6,971	50,849
Housing Authority of the County of Union	Lewisburg, PA	303	499
Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO)	New Orleans, LA	4,684	18,011
New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)	New York, NY	176,066	86,194
Oakland Housing Authority (OHA)	Oakland, CA	2,122	13,373
San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA)	San Antonio, TX	7,535	13,795
Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA)	Syracuse, NY	2,340	3,872

Note: Information about the AMHA, BHA, CCHA, the HACLA, the OHA, and the Housing Authority of County of Union were obtained through e-mail correspondence between housing authorities and Vera staff.

NYCHA data was retrieved from New York City Housing Authority, *NYCHA 2017 Fact Sheet*, (New York: NYCHA, 2017), <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/factsheet.pdf>.

All other information was retrieved from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), HA Profiles (Washington, DC: HUD), <https://pic.hud.gov/pic/haprofiles/haprofilelist.asp>.

"Number of subsidized units" reflects the number of public housing units or low-rental units. "Number of Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)" reflects the number of families assisted with the Section 8 subsidies or the number of Section 8 units.

Endnotes

- 1 For the New York City Housing Authority's Family Reentry Program, only one participant was convicted of a new crime at the time the evaluation was released. See John Bae, Margaret diZerega, Jacob Kang-Brown, Ryan Shanahan, and Ram Subramanian, *Coming Home: An Evaluation of the New York City Housing Authority's Family Reentry Pilot Program* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2016), 21. The Justice Bridge Housing Program of Union County, PA, reported a recidivism rate of 22 percent in their four years of operation. The housing authority applies the definition of recidivism used by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, which is the first rearrest or reincarceration of a person after being released from prison. See Housing Authority of Union County, *Justice Bridge Housing Program: A Successful Reentry Program of the Housing Authority of Union County, Pennsylvania, Replication Toolkit* (Elkins Park, PA: Diana T. Meyers and Associates, Inc., 2016), 9.
- 2 Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, "Facts about Public Housing" <https://perma.cc/92M4-F7S6>.
- 3 The permanent ban to public housing for lifetime sex offender registrants was established through the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (1998). The Independent Agencies Appropriation Act established the permanent ban to public housing for people convicted of producing methamphetamines in public housing (1999). See Lahny R. Silva, "Criminal Histories in Public Housing," *Wisconsin Law Review* 5, no. 24 (2015): 375-397.
- 4 For example, residents in New York City with a felony conviction may be banned for five to six years after completing their sentence, while people with a misdemeanor may be banned for three to four years, see Bae, et al., 2016, 9. Other cities have policies imposing lifetime bans, see Marie Claire Tran-Leung, *When Discretion Means Denial: A National Perspective on Criminal Barriers to Federally Subsidized Housing* (Chicago: Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, 2015).
- 5 Tony Hebert, *Invisible Tenant: Living in Federally Assisted Housing After Prison* (New York: Family Justice, 2005, NCJ 233273).
- 6 Affordability is the most significant barrier to housing within the private market, and government-sponsored subsidized housing is in scarce supply and tends to exclude people with criminal records. See Caterina Gouvis Roman and Jeremy Travis, *Taking Stock: Housing, Homelessness, and Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 2004). Restrictions to housing options contribute to an increased risk of homelessness for formerly incarcerated individuals, increasing the risk of further involvement in the justice system, see Stephen Metraux and Dennis Culhane, "Homeless shelter use and reincarceration following prison release," *Criminology and Public Policy* 3, no. 2 (2004): 139-160.
- 7 For research linking stable housing and employment for formerly incarcerated people, see Amanda Geller and Marah A. Curtis, "A Sort of Homecoming: Incarceration and the housing security of urban men," *Social Science Research* 40, no. 4 (2011): 1197; Marta Nelson, Perry Deess, and Charlotte Allen, *The First Month Out: Post-Incarceration Experiences in New York City* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 1999), 16.
- 8 Research indicates family support has a positive impact on people returning home from prison. See Rebecca Nasner and Nancy LaVigne, "Family Support in the Prisoner Reentry Process: Expectations and Realities," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 43, no. 1 (2006) 93-106; Nancy G. La Vigne, Christy Visher, Jennifer Castro, *Chicago Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2004), 7-8.
- 9 Christy A. Visher, "Incarcerated Fathers: Pathways from prison to home," *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 24, no. 1 (2013): 9-26.
- 10 Some of the challenges and barriers faced by people once released from incarceration include losing the right to vote, restrictions on employment and licensing, and deportation for non-U.S. citizens. High recidivism rates, coupled with an understanding of the adverse impacts posed by the barriers faced by people with conviction histories, led government agencies and community-based organizations to direct resources toward improving reentry outcomes. See Ram Subramanian, Rebecka Moreno, and Sophia Gebreselassie, *Relief in Sight? States Rethink the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2014), 8-9.
- 11 Shaun Donovan and Sandra B. Henriquez, *Letter to Public Housing Authority Executive Directors* (Washington, DC: HUD, June 17, 2011) <https://perma.cc/TBW4-ES6C>. US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Public and Indian Housing, *Guidance for Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and Owners of Federally-Assisted Housing on Excluding the Use of Arrest Records in Housing Decisions*, Notice PIH 2015-19 (Washington, DC: HUD, November 2, 2015), 2, <https://perma.cc/UP78-DVSH>.
- 12 Forty percent of public housing authorities are found in suburban or rural areas. See Econsult Corporation, *Assessing the Economic Benefits of Public Housing* (Philadelphia, PA: Econsult Corporation, 2007) 5, <https://perma.cc/NDT7-LPSF>. Prisoners returning to rural areas have distinct challenges and needs. See Stella Edosomwan and Kirt Baab, *Rural Reentry: Housing Options and Obstacles for Ex-Offenders* (Washington, DC: Housing Assistance Council, 2011). http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/research_notes/rural_reentry_12-2011.pdf; Gary Zajac, Ph.D., Robert Hutchison, and Courtney A. Meyer, *An Examination of Rural Prisoner Reentry Challenges* (Harrisburg, PA: The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2014).
- 13 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *It Starts with Housing* (Washington, DC: HUD, 2016).

- 14 Community Justice Network of Vermont, “Burlington Community Justice Center,” <http://cjnvt.org/center/burlington-community-justice-center/>.
- 15 A New Way of Life, “Re-Entry Family Reunification Program,” <http://housing.anewwayoflife.org/about-the-program/>.
- 16 Burlington Housing Authority, *Burlington Housing Authority Offender Re-Entry Program Policy and Procedure Manual* (Burlington, VT: Burlington Housing Authority, 2014), 13-14.
- 17 Chicago Housing Authority, *Chicago Housing Authority Demonstration Program and Special Initiatives Overview* (Chicago: CHA, November 2014), http://www.thecha.org/assets/1/6/Reentry_Pilot_Program.pdf.
- 18 New York City Housing Authority, *Family Reentry Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions* (New York: NYCHA, December 2014). <https://perma.cc/9B3E-MA5G>.
- 19 Silva, 2015, 375-397.
- 20 Bae et al., 2016, 33.
- 21 Sarah Russell, interview by John Bae, New York, February 22, 2017.
- 22 The NYCHA Family Reentry Program’s screening committee is composed of representatives from NYCHA’s Applications and Tenancy Administration Department, Management Services Division, and Community Engagement and Partnerships. Factors that are considered when reviewing applications include: (1) the victim(s) of the crime and whether the victim(s) live in the same development as the applicant’s prospective housing; (2) where the crimes occurred; (3) whether the family the applicant seeks to join is in good standing and (4) whether anyone in the family has a pending eviction case. See Bae et al., 2016, 10-11.
- 23 Bae et al., 2016, 11.
- 24 Housing Authority of Union County, 2016, 25.
- 25 Housing Authority of Union County, 2016, 24.
- 26 Burlington Housing Authority, 2014, 19.
- 27 Burlington Housing Authority, 2014, 13.
- 28 Sarah Russell, interview by John Bae, New York, February 22, 2017.
- 29 Bae et al., 2016, 33.
- 30 Categories of relationships that NYCHA considers as familial include: husband, wife, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, brother (including half-brother), sister (including half-sister), grandfather, grandmother, grandson, granddaughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and registered domestic partner of the tenant. See New York City Housing Authority, *Resident Policies and Procedures: Occupancy and Succession (Remaining Family Member) Policy Overview* (New York City: NYCHA). <https://perma.cc/4RGK-KFA6>.
- 31 Burlington Housing Authority, 2016, 10.
- 32 Burlington Housing Authority, 2016, 18; Sarah Russell, interview by John Bae, New York, February 22, 2017.
- 33 For a handful of participants, service providers received modest stipends for referring people to the Family Reentry Program who (at the time of their application) were accessing one of New York City’s homeless shelters or who were involved in a DHS homeless-prevention program.
- 34 Corporation for Supportive Housing, “Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed, Oakland, CA: A program for mothers exiting jail and their children.” <https://perma.cc/F2RM-R42J>.
- 35 Dominica Henderson, interview by John Bae, New York, February 23, 2017.
- 36 Housing Authority of Union County, 2016, 28.
- 37 Housing Authority of Union County, 2016, 28.
- 38 Housing Authority of Union County, 2016, 3.
- 39 In New York City, some prospective applicants and family members did not complete their application for the NYCHA Family Reentry Program because they feared the application would expose their family to eviction. Others were concerned that investigations may be triggered because of existing problems (e.g., rent delinquency), and some families were concerned that NYCHA staff would regularly enter their homes. See Bae et al., 2016, 28-29.
- 40 For example, the Housing Authority of New Orleans released their criminal background screening procedures that outline the process used to make admissions decisions for people with conviction histories. See Housing Authority of New Orleans, *Criminal Background Screening Procedures* (New Orleans: HANO, March 29, 2016), <https://perma.cc/YTJ8-ACPX>.
- 41 Diana Brazell, *Informing and Engaging Communities through Reentry Mapping* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2007).
- 42 A website was also designed to house the resources and offer additional information about NYCHA’s programs and policies for people with conviction histories, see www.backtonycha.org.
- 43 The National Institute of Justice defines recidivism as a new arrest, a new conviction, or return to prison within three years of completing sentence for a prior crime. See National Institute of Justice, *Recidivism*, (Washington, DC: NIJ). <https://perma.cc/4M5M-XP3G>.

- 44 The Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported significant declines in violent and property crime between 1993 and 2015. See Pew Research Center, *5 Facts About Crime in the U.S.* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, February 21, 2017), <https://perma.cc/F79E-UQ33>.
- 45 Rebecca J. Walter, Jill Viglione, and Marie Skubak Tillyer, "One Strike to Second Chance: Using Criminal Backgrounds in Admission Decisions for Assisted Housing," *Housing Policy Debate* 2017, 13. doi:10.1080/10511482.2017.1309557.

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