Housing and Justice: Avoiding Homelessness after Incarceration

WEBINAR
April 28, 2020
2–3:30 PM ET
Introductions

Dana Hunt, Ph.D.
Principal Associate/Scientist
Health and Environment
Abt Associates

Avoiding Homelessness after Incarceration
Webinar Basics

To minimize background noise, all attendees will be **muted** for the duration of the webinar.

**Use the Q&A feature to submit questions and technical problems at any time during the presentation.**

Due to the number of registrants, the **chat function has been turned off** for attendees.

This webinar will be recorded and posted online at a later date.
Agenda

Framing the Issue

Summary of Evidence

Stephen Metraux, Ph.D., University of Delaware

Speaker Presentations and Panel Discussion

Corrin Buchanan, Office of Diversion and Reentry, L.A. County
Richard Cho, Ph.D., Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
Toorjo Ghose, M.S.W., Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice

Participant Q&A

Wrap-up

Avoiding Homelessness after Incarceration
Framing the Issue
The Problem:

1. Challenges that people face in securing housing upon re-entering the community from jail or prison are substantial.

2. Systems are fragmented, and no particular agency is responsible for providing housing to individuals leaving prisons and jails.

The Result:

People who are released from jails and prisons are among those most vulnerable to homelessness.
Cycling Between Systems

Avoiding Homelessness after Incarceration

People Experiencing Homelessness

Factors Associated with Increased Risk of Homelessness After Release:
- Unemployment
- Limited job skills
- Criminal record (especially sex offense convictions)
- Chronic health conditions
- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues
- Weakened family and social ties

Arrests and Incarceration (time in jail or prison)
Abt’s Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness
Stephen Metraux, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Director of the Center for Community Research and Service
University of Delaware
Biden School of Public Policy and Administration
Review of the Evidence:
Discharge Planning

Common Components
- Needs assessments
- Case management
- Family engagement
- Skills building
- Housing planning
- “In-reach” from community groups

Evidence Base
- Effective planning should provide for housing immediately upon release
- Discharge planning combined with supports following release is related to improved housing outcomes

Gaps in Evidence Base
- Isolating the impact of the planning from the impact of the subsequent housing situation
- Measured impacts that focus on housing stability as well as recidivism
- Impact evaluation of VA’s systematic approach to discharge planning

## Review of the Evidence: Community Corrections Facilities (CCFs)

### Common Components
- Residential program
- Staff supervision, subject to rules of correctional departments
- Offer programs such as job trainings
- Do not offer clear path to permanent housing

### Evidence Base
- Provide temporary housing at time when individuals are most vulnerable to homelessness
- Are both costly and temporary
- No evidence on improved housing outcomes after release from CCF programs
- Mixed success of CCFs in reducing recidivism

### Gaps in Evidence Base
- Research about CCFs ability to facilitate transitions to longer-term stable housing
- Evaluations measuring the effectiveness of halfway houses on specific populations such as substance users

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**Key Study:** Wong et al. (2019). “Halfway Out: An Examination of the Effects of Halfway Houses on Criminal Recidivism.” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*
# Review of the Evidence: Rental Assistance Programs

## Common Components
- Program delivery varies widely, most provide:
  - Rental subsidies of varying durations
  - Case management
  - Employment supports
  - Referrals to community housing agencies

## Evidence Base
- Some evidence temporary rental assistance is associated with reduced homelessness for people leaving incarceration
- Mixed evidence due to variations in:
  1. The length and amount of rent subsidy
  2. Other transitional supports provided

## Gaps in Evidence Base
- Impact of the housing supports is difficult to disentangle from the other services provided
- Evaluations of programs with contrasting designs should be implemented and evaluated, with explicit measurement of homelessness and housing stability

**Key Study:** Lutze et al. (2013). “Homelessness and Reentry: A Multisite Outcome Evaluation of Washington State’s Reentry Housing Program for High Risk Offenders.”
# Review of the Evidence: Supportive Housing

## Common Components
- “Housing first”
- Ongoing housing rental subsidy
- Supportive services available to address social, healthcare and behavioral health needs
- PSH is targeted to those with chronic patterns of homelessness

## Evidence Base
- Strong evidence that SH retains formerly incarcerated people in housing
- FUSE model highly effective
- Costs of supportive housing are offset substantially by cost reductions in homeless services, hospitalization, and incarceration

## Gaps in Evidence Base
- Research isolating the elements of this approach that contribute to positive housing outcomes—types of housing, duration of subsidy, types and intensity of available services, and fidelity to a housing first approach

Future Directions

• Develop programs that facilitate family support
• Expand availability of independent housing (i.e., more PSH and other housing supports)
• Keep housing within the criminal justice domain (avoid further burdening the homeless service system)
• Address challenges of housing persons convicted of sex offenses
• Reduce incarceration, reincarceration and criminalization of homelessness
• Scale up housing models
• More research into what works (with a focus that looks beyond recidivism outcomes)
Speaker Presentations
Speaker

Corrin Buchanan

Former Deputy Director  
Office of Diversion and Reentry  
L.A. County

Currently the Assistant Director  
Housing and Homelessness  
California Department of Social Services

Avoiding Homelessness after Incarceration
ODR Mission

• Develop and implement county-wide criminal justice diversion for persons with mental and/or substance use disorders, including persons who are homeless

Goal:

- to provide 2500 units of permanent supportive housing to the justice population
Why Housing?

- At least 20% of jail population is homeless
- Over a quarter have a mental illness
- Housing key to maintaining connection to treatment
- Almost 58,000 people experience homelessness on any given night in Los Angeles
How did We Get Here?

• Department of Health Services launches **Housing for Health and the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool** (Nov 2012)

• DA Jackie Lacey releases **“Blueprint for Change”** (August 2015)

• Board of Supervisors creates **Office of Diversion and Reentry** with 40% of funding for housing (August 2015)

• LA voters pass **Measure H**, $355M annually to end homelessness (Nov 2016)
Avoiding Homelessness after Incarceration

ODR Housing Program

Criminal Justice System

LA Superior Court → Jail In-Reach Services → Conditional Release → Bridge Housing → Permanent Supportive Housing

Interim

PSH
Richard Cho, Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer
Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

Former Deputy Director
US Interagency Council on Homelessness
Data Match Shows Large Prison and Homelessness Overlap in CT

HMIS and DOC data match reveals:

- 48% of sheltered homeless have DOC history; 20% released from jail/prison in last 3 years.
- Roughly ½ sentenced, ½ pretrial; majority of sentenced persons released at end-of-sentence.
- 69% were homeless prior to last DOC release, and 28% became homeless only after most recent DOC release.
- 80% had 2+ DOC stays, 59% had 3+, and 44% had 4+.

57% of matched individuals had their first-ever DOC contact as youth (32% between 19-24 years old and 25% at 14-19 years old).
CCEH’s Re-entry Housing Policy Strategy (Pre-COVID)

• Shaping legislation to increase DOC, Probation, and court accountability and capacity to identify homelessness status of defendants/inmates and prevent homelessness, annualize data match to track progress

• Led legislative committee to proposed policy/legislation to limit landlords’ use of criminal records in tenant selection and as the basis for denials

• Provide direct training, homelessness screening tool for use by DOC, probation, courts

• Leveraging state and federal funding for flexible rental assistance and case management program (rapid re-housing)
COVID-19 Pandemic Creates New Context

- **Legislative session abruptly halted** – On hold indefinitely

- **Homeless shelter system disrupted** – New shelter admissions reduced, major effort to “decompress” shelters into hotels

- **Advocacy to release inmates from prison** – Growing pressure from advocates to release more inmates from prison, lawsuit filed by ACLU

- **Eviction moratorium** – Connecticut issues partial moratorium on evictions, landlords less willing to rent to “riskier” tenants

**DOC census achieves historic low** – Through a variety of mechanisms, DOC prison population is at historic low (~11,000 inmates), but greater challenges with identifying stable housing upon release
CT DOC-Reentry Housing Assistance Program

- **Funding** - ~$150,000 in Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funding to prevent homelessness among people released at end-of-sentence in the next 60 days; seeking additional (DOJ/BJA) funds through the CARES Act to sustain/expand program
- **Triage/Targeting** – Program flow ensures that DOC and Probation exhaust all other housing options before referral to DOC-RHAP program
- **Regional Model** – Regional lead agencies to ensure statewide coverage
- **Flexible Rental/Financial Assistance** – Covers security deposits, rental assistance, rent application fees, transportation, utility deposits, smartphones, hotel/motel stays

**Program Flow**

- **Client Identified by DOC discharge planners 60 days prior to EOS**
- **DOC and CSSD work on exhausting all available housing options**
  - If DOC and CSSD are not unable to establish viable housing option, refers to Regional Lead Agency
- **Regional Lead Agency begins work with client 30 days pre-release to create housing plan**
- **CCEH tracks referrals and progress, facilitates connections to providers, and administers flexible funding through lead agencies**
Toorjo Ghose, M.S.W., Ph.D.

CEO and Founding Director
The Center for Carceral Communities (CCC)

Associate Professor
University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice
Barriers in Philadelphia

- Over **4000 in Jails**, most of whom are there for minor infractions, or because they couldn’t pay bail

- **Courts are shut down.** The administrative judges refused to respond to petitions for release

- **Social service agencies mostly shut down,** raising the question of what to do with folks if they were to be released
Strategies in Philadelphia

• **Organizing in the community**, PD’s DA’s Offices, editorials to put pressure on Judges, Mayor, Governor

• The **Center went online 4 weeks ago**, providing group therapy and case management over Zoom, BlueJeans

• **Working with the City** to extend services online to people being released
• **Phones**, phones, phones. The smart kind

• **Public-academic-private partnership** – the way of the future?

• **NYC** has made 17,000 hotel slots available for at-risk folks

• **Philly** needs:
  – Hotel slots
  – University dorm rooms
  – Mobilization of social and medical workers in training
Panel Discussion
How Can Reentry Housing Programs Address Racial Disproportionality in the Justice System?

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Office of Diversion and Reentry
L.A. County

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Gender, Race, & Ethnicity Combine to Put Women of Color at Greater Risk of Homelessness

Number of formerly incarcerated people per 10,000 experiencing sheltered homelessness when surveyed in 2008

**Formerly Incarcerated Men**
- Rate per 10,000 men

- Black: 108
- Hispanic: 103
- White: 56

**Formerly Incarcerated Women**
- Rate per 10,000 women

- Black: 203
- Hispanic: Data not available
- White: 127

Sources & data notes: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html#methodology
Can Rapid Rehousing Work for This Population? Should This Include Family Reunification?

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What Do We Need to Know More About?
What Is Your Future Research Agenda?

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Thank You!

Abt Associates
BOLD THINKERS DRIVING REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness

Melville Charitable Trust
Questions? Contact:

Dana Hunt, Ph.D.
Principal Associate, Health & Environment
Dana_Hunt@abtassoc.com

Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness:
evidenceonhomelessness@abtassoc.com

abtassociates.com