



the NATIONAL REENTRY  
RESOURCE CENTER

— A project of the CSG Justice Center —

## **Reentry Housing Strategies Podcast**

**Background for Reentry Housing Webinar  
Tuesday November 9, 2010  
2-3:30 pm ET**

Brought to you by the National Reentry Resource Center and the  
Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

# Speakers

## Podcast speaker

Carol Wilkins

Housing Committee Chair, National Reentry Resource Center

## November 9 Webinar Speakers will be

Andy McMahon, Corporation for Supportive Housing

Nadine Scamp and Mary Buchner, Volunteers of America  
Texas, Gulf Coast Region

Stephen Norman, King County Housing Authority

# Podcast Presentation Outline

- The role of housing in successful reentry
- The language of housing – terminology and definitions
- Housing affordability and availability – a few facts and figures
- Where to find more information

# The Role of Reentry Housing

- Help people returning from incarceration
  - Prevent and end homelessness
  - Achieve housing stability
  - Connect with community supports for recovery
  - Reunify with families
  - Become better neighbors
- Help systems and communities
  - Reduce costs and consequences of homelessness and recidivism
  - Improve public safety

# Homelessness and Incarceration

## Revolving Door

- 26% of people in jail were homeless within past year
- Homeless people with mental illness and/or severe alcoholism can spend years on a costly “institutional circuit”
- Families with gaps between homeless episodes have high rates of involvement in criminal justice and child welfare systems

## Re-entry Transitions

- More than 60,000 people enter shelters from jail or prison each year
- Most coming from prison stay for only a few days and do not return to shelter
- Potential to convert and focus some shelter capacity with targeted services for reentry?

# Families are Important

- Most people returning from jail or prison hope to live with their families
  - Support for maintaining positive family connections that can offer housing options and help with community reintegration
  - Families living in public or assisted housing may need help understanding and complying with policies and lease requirements that could restrict occupancy by persons with criminal backgrounds
- Children face higher risk of homelessness when a parent is incarcerated
  - Families may need help to maintain stable housing
- Re-connecting with families and positive social networks can be a source of support and motivation for change
  - But for some people a new living arrangement can provide a fresh start

# The language of housing

## Affordable housing

- Generally refers to housing that is affordable to people with low and moderate incomes
- Tenants should pay about 30% of income for housing costs
- Affordable housing is *usually* rental housing but also includes housing for homeowners
  - Public housing (operated by Public Housing Authorities) for families, elderly adults, and people with disabilities
  - Rental housing developed or operated by non-profit housing organizations or private for-profit developers (all or some “set aside” units are affordable)
  - Partnerships between service providers and housing developers / agencies
  - Rental subsidies (vouchers) used to help pay rent on private market housing

**Area Median Income (AMI)** is used to describe housing affordability and target populations for affordable housing

- **Low Income** means people with incomes below 80% of AMI
- **Very Low Income** means people with incomes below 50% of AMI
- **Extremely Low Income** means people with incomes below 30% of AMI

# The language of housing (continued)

## Housing vouchers

- Housing Choice Vouchers or Section 8 administered by Public Housing Authorities
- Shelter Plus Care program provides housing vouchers for homeless people with disabilities
- HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH provides housing vouchers for homeless veterans who receive case management services from the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Tenants pay 30% of income for rent and the voucher covers the difference, up to Fair Market Rent (FMR)
- Tenant-based vouchers can be used to rent apartments in the private market, as long as the apartment meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and the landlord is willing to accept the voucher
- Project-based vouchers are connected to a housing project and used to cover the difference between tenant rent contributions and fair market rent (operating costs)
- Shallow subsidies help tenants pay rent, but may require that tenants spend more than 30% of their income

# The language of housing (continued)

- **Continuum of Care (CoC)**

- A strategic planning process to develop housing and services for homeless people in a geographic area
- An application process for HUD funding for homeless assistance programs
- CoC responsibilities include partnerships to prevent homelessness for people returning from jails or prisons
- For more information including how to contact the CoC in your area [www.hudhre.info](http://www.hudhre.info)

- **Sponsor-based or “master leased”**

- A sponsor (usually a service provider) receives vouchers or subsidies , or partners with a public housing authority to lease housing that will be provided to program participants
- Sponsor is responsible for selecting tenants, collecting rent from tenants, managing any problems
- This reduces risks and responsibilities for housing owners

# The language of housing (continued)

## Transitional housing

- Time-limited housing (24 months or less)
- Usually requires participation in support services and a plan to increase income in preparation for permanent housing
- May be a form of “after-care” following a more intensive treatment during incarceration or in residential setting

## Housing First

- Strategies for moving vulnerable or chronically homeless people into housing as quickly as possible
- Low barriers: sobriety or participation in support services is encouraged but is not a condition of receiving housing assistance
- Engagement in supportive services to support recovery and housing stability happens over time

# Supportive Housing Is...



## Permanent affordable housing with combined supports for independent living

- Housing is **permanent**, meaning each tenant may stay as long as he or she pays rent and complies with terms of lease or rental agreement
- Housing is **affordable**, meaning each tenant pays no more than 30% to 50% of household income
- Tenants have **access to an array of support services** that are intended to support housing stability, recovery and resiliency, but participation in support services is not a requirement for tenancy
- May be site-based or scattered site
- Options available for adults who are single, those who choose to share housing, and families with children

# Housing affordability and availability – a few facts and figures

People with disabilities who receive SSI have extremely low incomes

- On average only 18.6% of AMI
- On average rent for a modest 1-bedroom apartment costs 112% of SSI

Nationwide there is a shortage of affordable housing for people with extremely low incomes

- Only 3.4 million apartments are affordable and available for 9.2 million ELI renter households
- Only 37 units are affordable and available for every 100 households

Housing Wage of \$18.44 / hour is needed to pay for Fair Market Rent for 2-bedroom apartment (national average)

# Where to find more information

Visit the housing topic page on the

National Reentry Resource Center website

[www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/topics/housing-topic](http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/topics/housing-topic)

- **Reentry Housing Options: The Policymakers' Guide**, Council of State Governments Justice Center
- **An Affordable Home on Reentry: Federally Assisted Housing and Previously Incarcerated Individuals**, National Housing Law Project  
<http://nhlp.org/guidebooks>
- [www.csh.org/reentry](http://www.csh.org/reentry) for information about reentry supportive housing
- **Reference Guide for Public Housing Officials on the Federal Housing Laws Regarding Admission and Eviction Standards for People with Criminal Records**, Legal Action Center

# Contact Information

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