

Returning to Home: Building Pathways for Returning Citizens (Justice- Involved Individuals)

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Criminal legal system involvement can create lasting barriers to housing and stability. Too often, individuals exiting incarceration face an immediate risk of homelessness. This session explores strategies for connecting people to housing, employment, and healthcare, and highlights how communities are partnering across sectors to build supportive reentry pathways.



IMPACT/JUSTICE



The incarceration to homelessness pipeline

9 million people cycling through jails each year in the United States

1 in 5 people entering homelessness from institutions, including jails and prisons

77% of homeless individuals have spent time in jail



From surviving to thriving

Implementing a full menu of support

Experiences:

Incarceration
Homelessness
Poverty

Surviving:

Shelter
Income
Benefits
Healthcare
Digital literacy
Legal services
Healing

Thriving:

Savings planning
Independent housing and ownership
Strong support systems
Upward mobility
Education
Expanded therapy
Transportation advocacy
SUD & mental health

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Key barriers to housing for people with legal system involvement

Formerly incarcerated people typically return to low-income communities where resources — particularly affordable housing — are scarce.

In addition to facing **a national shortage of 7.3 million rental units** that are affordable and available to extremely low-income households, a conviction or arrest record poses an additional barrier to accessing affordable housing.

Criminal record-related stigma

Discriminatory practices

Restrictive eligibility for assistance

Cost of housing

Lack of affordable options

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Themes specific to TAY

- Prefer to be housed with similar aged peers
- Some do not have relationships with their families or have entered foster care
 - When TAY do have relationships with family, family support can be important to reentry success
- TAY feel judged for their age
 - Though others feel there is an expectation that they have things figured out despite their lack of experience
- Can be additional barriers to employment; limited experience

Note: This slide presents preliminary findings from RAND research that has not undergone RAND quality assurance procedures



Strategies for expungements and legal support

People with old records face 40,000 legal barriers to jobs, housing, education, and more.

TimeDone is a nationwide membership community of almost 250,000 people living with a past arrest or conviction.

Their advocacy helps people clear their records, unlock opportunity, and move forward.

\$20.846 BILLION

Estimated loss of GDP resulting from the impact of old records (March 2021).

time done.

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What **one solution** addresses the incarceration-to-homelessness crisis; contributes to housing affordability; and builds thriving communities?

Question

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The Homecoming Project

Our housing model

The **Homecoming Project** is an innovative reentry project that expands opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to heal, fully participate in community life, and reach their potential.

Inspired by the sharing economy model, the **Homecoming Project** connects formerly incarcerated people with safe, stable housing so they can effectively rejoin their communities.

Pre-screening and matching

We follow a rigorous matching process that addresses living preferences and ensures safety and comfortability.

Monthly stipends for hosts

Instead of the participant paying rent, we pay the host a monthly stipend for up to six months.

Case management for participants

Community Navigators provide mentorship and assist participants throughout the reentry process.

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Our success

To date, we have successfully placed **195** participants in welcoming host homes.

95% of participants left the Homecoming Project with full time employment.

100% of participants transitioned into long-term housing.

0% of participants returned to prison.

Hosts earn additional income, and **many hosts say the Homecoming Project has transformed their lives as well.**

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Jail is not a home

Advocacy and policy gaps

The federal **definition of being chronically homeless** is: homeless for 12 or more months in the past 3 years, or have 4 or more separate episodes of homelessness that total 12 or more months in the past 3 years.

“Supportive housing is one of the most effective tools we have to break the cycle of homeless and incarceration.” - Council Member Carlina Rivera (D-02)

“By expanding eligibility to include recent justice system involvement, more New Yorkers can have a safe home and a chance at a fresh start.” - Lauren Velez, CSH Director

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The solutions we're looking for don't just solve problems; they **redefine what it means to return home.**

Learn how to bring the Homecoming Project into your community by emailing **homecomingproject@impactjustice.org**

Questions?

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