

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COMING HOME: HOW CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES CAN CREATE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS LEAVING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

February 24, 2022

WEBINAR SERIES OVERVIEW

Background and Scope

 An overview of the report, webinar series, and registration links.

In February 2021 the Council on State Governments (CSG) Justice Center published [Reducing Homelessness for People with Behavioral Health Needs Leaving Prisons and Jails](#), a report that identifies barriers in California to accessing and maintaining housing for people with behavioral health needs leaving incarceration, as well as proposed solutions.

The webinar series **Building Blocks for Coming Home: How Communities Can Create Housing Opportunities For People With Complex Needs Leaving the Justice System** - hosted by the CSG Justice Center and Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health (CCJBH) with support from the California Health Care Foundation - focuses on how key stakeholders from across the justice, behavioral health, housing, and other systems can *implement these proposed solutions* and help people successfully transition out of the justice system and into the community by connecting them with housing options that meet their needs.

Over-arching strategies to address common challenges in California presented in the webinar series will i (1) cross-system collaboration, (2) assessing for homelessness, (3) connecting people to housing, (4) developing new housing, and (5) sustaining rental assistance and supportive services. During the series, participants will also hear from state leaders moving this work forward and California communities undertaking key cross-system collaboration efforts.

The **worksheets below** can help guide discussions to identify opportunities to collaborate, barriers to overcome, and strengths to build upon. Participants will have the opportunity to review and discuss these questions during each webinar, get feedback from peers, and problem solve with speakers. These worksheets can be used between sessions to help plan, assess, and collaborate locally.

Webinar Series Dates, Registration (upcoming) or Recording Links (past)

Thursday, 12/9/2021	Building Partnerships Between Housing and Criminal Justice Systems in California
Thursday, 1/27/2022	Defining, Screening, and Assessing for Homelessness Risk
Thursday, 2/24/2022	Common Practices for Connecting to and Using Housing as a Strategy for Diversion & Reentry
Thursday, 3/24/2022	Developing New Housing
Thursday, 4/28/2022	Leveraging Rental Assistance and Supportive Service Funding for People with Behavioral Health Needs Leaving Jails and Prisons

1. Building Partnerships Between Housing and Criminal Justice Systems

i Describe who will lead/support this effort, what their responsibilities will be, and a structure for ongoing collaboration.

Session Description

This webinar introduced participants to strategies for building partnerships between criminal justice agencies and housing providers. After an overview of the CA Housing report, participants learned about fundamental best practices in building connections with housing and services, and heard from state leaders moving this work forward and communities undertaking cross-system work.

Learning Objectives

(1) Understand fundamental housing outcomes and models for this population, (2) Learn key strategies for collaboration with housing partners, (3) Learn how one community has leveraged cross-system partnerships to increase housing opportunity

Who are the key housing partners in your area?	What housing resources do they control that can help address these barriers?
Ex. Local Public Housing Authority	
Ex. Continuum of Care	
Ex. County Department of Behavioral Health	

What opportunities exist to align resources and priorities locally between the housing, justice, behavioral health, and others?	
What connections can be made to existing local committees, policies, and initiatives?	

What are the greatest local housing barriers for people with justice involvement?	How can we start to address them?
Ex. Lack of available/affordable units?	
Ex. Stigma/provider policies?	

What strategies will you use going forward to engage your housing partners and meet your shared mission?	Responsible Parties	Proposed Date
Ex. Obtain buy-in from agency X to...	Ex. Local Public Housing Authority	
Ex. Draft joint funding application		
Etc.		

2. Defining, Screening, and Assessing for Homelessness Risk

i Identify your specific target population and the barriers to housing they face.

Session Description

This webinar introduced participants to principles of screening and assessing people for risk of experiencing homelessness upon exit from the criminal justice system. Participants heard from communities undertaking assessments and from state agencies on opportunities to share data. They reviewed strategies to incorporate assessment processes into daily work. Participants left this webinar with knowledge of how assessments can support successful housing placements, as well as how they can capture the scope of housing and service needs at the community level and help address racial and ethnic disparities at the intersection of the criminal justice, housing, and behavioral health systems.

Learning Objectives

(1) Gain an understanding of screening and assessment strategies for homelessness (2) Understand the principles of incorporating these screenings and assessments into existing processes (3) Learn from communities incorporating these screenings and hear about an opportunity from the state on data matching.

Background

Assessments of housing and service needs are a vital tool to both target resources and support a successful transition out of the criminal justice system. They are especially important given the significant level of housing and service need among people with behavioral health needs. Indeed, [between 17 and 39 percent of people in California jails](#) experience homelessness in the 30 days prior to their jail stay and may benefit from ongoing rental assistance. Further, about 2 to 10 percent of people in California jails may benefit from a combination of intensive mental health services and ongoing rental assistance (such as permanent supportive housing). These needs are further compounded by years of racial inequality in our public systems. In California, according to [CSH’s Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index \(RDDI\)](#) Black people are nearly seven times more likely, compared to other racial groups, to interact with the homeless response, justice, child welfare, and other crisis response systems. American Indian/Alaska Native populations are also overrepresented in these systems.

How does our team assess for experiences of homelessness among people involved in the justice system?	When do these assessments occur in our workflows?
Ex. We ask a mandatory question “were you experiencing homelessness prior to incarceration”?	Ex. At jail booking

What existing local data sources can inform our assessments and/or capture the scale of the population?	Who can we talk to about these data?
Point-in-Time Count	Ex. Local continuum of Care
Criminal justice data (jail, prison, community supervision)	Ex. County Executive, County Sheriff, etc.
Behavioral health data	

What existing local data sources can inform our assessments and/or capture the scale of the population?	Who can we talk to about these data?
People with lived experience, local experts	

Population Data	How many people are we talking about?	What data are available on race, ethnicity, income, or other relevant demographics?	How many people have behavioral health/other supportive services needs?
Total population	XX people	XX people	XX people
Location/intercept(s): Jail/prison, community supervision, diversion programs, etc.	XX people in jail XX people on community supervision XX people in diversion programs		

What barriers have you encountered around identifying the target population or data reporting/sharing?	Next steps to address barriers
Ex. We do not currently ask everyone about homelessness as part of the jail intake process	Ex. Make the question mandatory in jail MIS
Ex. People are declining the housing that we offer (emergency shelter)	Ex. Work with our partners to see if offering other housing options might increase engagement
Ex.	

3. Common Practices for Connecting to and Using Housing as a Strategy for Diversion & Reentry

i Describe how people are connected to housing and services.

Session Description

This webinar will introduce participants to best practices for connecting people with behavioral health needs who are leaving prisons and jails to housing as a strategy to reduce homelessness and facilitate reentry, with a particular focus on Continuums of Care and the Coordinated Entry system. Participants will learn about the process of connecting to housing providers and think about how to leverage resources to support these connections. Participants will hear from communities that are prioritizing this population and the housing strategies they are implementing. Participants will leave this webinar understanding how to connect with evidence-based housing and supportive service interventions.

Learning Objectives

- (1) Gain an understanding of the role of Continuums of Care (CoC) and the Coordinated Entry process in connecting to housing opportunities
- (2) Learn how to leverage other housing resources to supplement CoC resources and strengthen pathways to

permanent housing (3) Learn about a community-wide approach to prioritizing this population within Coordinated Entry and the central role of cross-system care coordination, made possible through Whole Person Care and the transition to CalAIM.

What processes do we now have in place in our community to align our systems to connect people leaving prison and jail with housing?	What cross-agency collaboration is in place to support this work?
Ex. A jail-based case manager refers people to the local shelter where they conduct Coordinated Entry assessments.	Ex. Jail case manager meets regularly with shelter and other staff.
Ex. Our local Coordinated Entry allows assessments to occur before people leave incarceration	Ex. In-reach staff conduct assessment by video once notified by jail staff or when contacted by people in jail
Ex. Our probation staff refer people to Coordinated Entry	Ex. Probation staff, coordinated entry assessment staff, county reentry council

What steps do we take now when there is not enough permanent housing available for this population through our Continuum of Care?	What steps would we like to take to build on this?	What resources would we need to support these steps?
Ex. Our jail-based case management staff problem solves to identify temporary options	Ex. . We would like to partner with in-reach services who could problem solve further	Ex. CalAIM ECM or ILOS
Ex. We do not have many options	Ex. . We would like to use flexible local funding for short-term rental assistance or to support families	Ex. Funding for rental assistance, landlord recruitment funds
Ex. We illustrate this problem to our local decision makers to make the case for more rental assistance or to build more housing	Ex. We would like to include cost estimates on not addressing the lack of housing	Ex. Funding for staff to analyze costs and data

Demographics of people connected to different housing options	What equity considerations or other barriers do we see?
XX people in permanent supportive housing	
XX people in shelter	Ex. Black people leaving jail are more often entering shelter than permanent or other housing options compared to other groups
XX people in recovery housing	
XX people in Board & Cares	Ex. People with mental illness leaving prison/jail are only accepted at Board & Cares, despite any Activities of Daily Living assessment level