

Charley Francis:

Hello, everyone. Happy Second Chance Month and welcome to our webinar today on Housing Finance Basics for Criminal Justice Partners. As we kick off second chance month, many of you know that connecting people who are in re-entry with safe and affordable Housing is one of the most impactful things that you can do. In today's webinar, we're going to learn about some key housing models and financing tools as well about some good work that communities have been doing to help make these connections. We hope it's impactful and useful to you and we're excited to share this information with you today. I'll turn things over to my colleague, Jessica, so that to tell us a little bit more about the technical aspects of the webinar today. And my name is Charley Francis. I'm the Deputy Program Director for housing at this Council of State Government's Justice Center, and I'll be your host today.

Jessica:

Good afternoon, everyone. I am Jessica. I am assisting with technical support on this session and I wanted to note for everyone that the meeting is being recorded. Please feel free to drop any questions or requests for technical assistance into the Q&A. The chat has been disabled for this session, so the Q&A is where you can communicate with any of the panelists on the session or request assistance from me. And with that, I am going to turn it over to Tasha Aikens to start the session.

Tasha Aikens:

Thank you, I appreciate that. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Tasha Aikens. I am a policy advisor from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, or BJA. Thank you for joining this webinar, one of many we will be hosting as part of Second Chance Month. Before our presenters get started, I want to spend a few minutes providing some background on BJA and the Second Chance Act. BJA is located within the Office of Justice Programs or OJP, which is part of the U.S. Department of Justice. OJP provides a wide range of services to the criminal justice community in a form of funding, training, research, and statistics. Next slide please.

Under the direction of Director Moore, who was appointed by President Biden in February 2022, BJA's programmatic and policy efforts focused on providing a wide range of resources, including training and technical assistance to law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, reentry, justice information sharing, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges on a national level. Next slide please.

BJA activities support five major strategic areas related to improving public safety, reducing recidivism, integrating evidence-based practices, increase in program effectiveness, and ensuring organizational excellence. Next slide please.

And BJA does this through funding, education, provision of equipment, and supporting partnership and collaboration. Through Second Chance Act funds, BJA supports a suite of competitive grant programs available to state, local and tribal governments, as well as nonprofit organizations to support the implementation and expansion or enhancement of reentry programs. Each of our Second Chance Act grantees benefits from the expertise of training and technical assistance, providers who support grantees in the implementation of their grants, as well as provide training opportunities and develop resources for the field at large. Next slide please.

BJA also funds and support the National Reentry Resource Center or NRRC, which is the nation's primary source of information and guidance on reentry in the host for Second Chance Month. Please visit the NRRC to access Second Chance Month resources, which includes webinars, videos, podcasts and publications. And continue to visit the NRRC after April to learn more about various information, latest

reentry related news, funding opportunities, learning events and resources. And with that, I will turn it back over to CSG. Thank you and enjoy today's webinar.

Charley Francis:

Great. Thank you so much, Tasha. Next. All right, great, thanks. So yeah, once again, this webinar is one of our first events as part of Second Chance Month, which we celebrate every year in April. And second Chance month, the real focus is to look at how communities can work together to support people who are leaving prison and jail through not only housing, which we're going to talk about today, but through education, workforce, family supports, and a number of other important topics. You can track news and updates on social media using these hashtags on the left side of your screen. And again, as Tasha was saying, make sure to connect through the National Reentry Resource Center. We have a whole month's worth of content including a number of webinars, articles, videos, and other resources for Second Chance Month. Next slide please.

So once again, I am with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, and we are a national non-profit, nonpartisan organization. We combine the power of a membership association, so we represent state officials in all three branches of state government. And we're also with think tank. We have policy and research expertise to help develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities. Next slide please.

And so our presentation outline, what we're going to be diving into today. After we finish with our welcome and introductions section, I'll turn things over to the Urban Institute. So we'll be talking about really are nuts and bolts content. What are some of the key housing financing options and models for criminal legal systems stakeholders? And then we're going to zoom in on two communities that have been doing this work, the Fortune Society in New York, focusing on building blocks to create a continuum of reentry housing opportunities in New York City.

And then we have a team of partners from across the housing criminal justice systems from Lane County, Oregon, who have also been building continuum of housing options. And so we'll be hearing from these two different communities to see how they have put these housing options into place and how they've used these housing financing tools to create reentry housing opportunities. And then with the time that we have left, we'll take questions and answers, so definitely make sure to use the Q&A function. We'll answer as many questions as we can as we go, and we will take as many questions as we can, and I will ask them to the panel towards the end of the webinar today. Next slide please.

And so our presenters. I'm Charles Francis, deputy Program Director for Housing and the Division of Behavioral Health at the CSG Justice Center. From the Urban Institute, we have Will Engelhardt, senior Training and Technical Assistance Manager. Our Lane County team. We have Paul Solomon, the Executive Director of Sponsors Incorporated. We have Laura Johnson, the Director of Program Development from Sponsors Incorporated. Donovan Dumire, the Manager of the Lane County Parole and Probation Department. And Jacob Fox, the Executive Director of Homes for Good. From New York City, we also have Andre Ward, Vice President of the Fortune Society who will be joining us and talking to us about their continuum of housing options. Sorry, actually Associate Vice President. There's a typo on the slide here. And he'll actually be going first in our agenda after Will. Next slide, please. All right, so now I will turn things over to Will to talk about housing financing options and models.

Will Engelhardt:

Thanks so much, Charley. Hopefully you folks can hear me okay. As Charley mentioned, my name's Will Engelhardt. I'm a senior training and technical assistance manager with the Urban Institute's Justice

Policy Center. And I'm a social worker by training, and I've been working at the intersection of the criminal legal system in behavioral health primarily. But I'm here to talk today because I'm working with some colleagues on a brief on housing finance options and housing models and also identifying housing partners with an audience for explaining some of the basics, if you will, for a criminal legal system, criminal justice audience specifically. And so I've been learning along with others as I've been developing this brief about some of these housing basics from a criminal justice perspective. So excited to go over some of these concepts with you all. Next slide please.

And yes, so as I mentioned, I'm just with the Urban Institute, which is a national nonprofit research and policy organization based out of Washington DC, and we've been partnering with the Council State Governments' Justice Center and providing technical assistance to Second Chance Act grantees, focused on outcomes based contracting in particular, which is why I'm here today talking with you all. Next slide.

So for a little bit of background of why we're discussing this topic. There's often limited understanding of housing services and financing models by criminal legal system actors at the state and local level. This is largely because funding and financing mechanisms for these two systems are administered typically separately. This is despite people who are unhoused being disproportionately involved in the criminal legal system and also despite the essential role of housing in reducing criminal legal system involvement, particularly for folks who are unhoused or having instable housing. Research has consistently and constantly demonstrated that housing and the criminal legal system are interconnected. Individuals who are unhoused are more likely to interact with the criminal legal system because being forced to live outside can lead to citations or arrests for low level offenses.

People who are incarcerated once, are almost seven times more likely to experience homelessness than the general public. And those experiencing unsheltered homelessness have increased interactions with the criminal legal system such as contacts with police, arrests, incarceration, et cetera. So as I mentioned, this presentation will provide some basics for criminal legal system actors about housing for this population. And as I also mentioned, we'll be pulling from a brief that we're working on to be released after this presentation. Next slide please.

So I'm just going to run through some funding mechanisms for different housing services, some housing models that folks should be aware of, housing partners for folks to be aware of, and key questions that criminal legal systems stakeholders should be considering in their localities. And I'll mention that if you are a housing provider or very much enmeshing housing services on this webinar today, some of this information might be somewhat redundant to you, but hopefully useful for those that are more familiarizing themselves with some housing concepts in their community. Next slide.

Okay. So housing funding and financing mechanisms and models can be quite complex to understand even for those who are engaged in these services on a day-to-day basis. A basic understanding of housing financing models can still help us, particularly criminal legal systems stakeholders to identify ways to fill critical gaps in housing for the populations that you're working with. This knowledge will help you one, support better outcomes for people involved in the criminal legal system. And two, effectively collaborate with organizations that provide, develop, and connect people to housing more directly. So I'm just going to give a quick overview of some of these key funding mechanisms and financing mechanisms potentially available to your community. Next slide.

So the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit provides a tax incentive to construct or rehabilitate affordable rental housing for low income households. Since its inception in 1986, about 3 million affordable housing units have been created through this program. Typically, the federal government will issue tax credits to state and territorial governments, and then state housing agencies award the credits to private developers. These private developers sell the credits to private investors to obtain funding, and once the housing project is accessible, investors can claim the tax credit for a 10-year timeframe.

In order to receive the tax credit, a minimum of 20% of the units must be specifically for those who are earn less than half of the local median income, or a minimum of 40% of units must be devoted to the individuals who earn less than 60% of the median income. The Low-Income Tax Credit is one of the main funding sources for creating and maintaining affordable rental housing. Tax credits are an extremely useful funding source, but are usually not substantial enough on their own, and so developers often blend funding approaches locally. Next slide, please.

Thanks. So the HOME Investment Partnerships program was originally devised to raise home ownership and affordable housing opportunities for low income individuals through federal grants to states and local governments. The HOME program is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed solely to create and expand affordable housing for low income households and families. Around \$3 million is allocated annually to qualifying jurisdictions across the country. As you'll see here, there's a condition that participating jurisdictions match 25 cents to every dollar in program funds for community resources in support of affordable housing. HOME grants also tend to have more flexibility in their use compared to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and can be excellent source for filling gaps such as security deposits. Next slide, please.

As I'm sure many are familiar with, the American Rescue Plan Act includes provisions to aid those who are struggling with rent or mortgage payments and is the largest federal investment of housing resources in a generation. Specifically, funds are distributed through HUD's Home Investment Partnership program, which I just discussed. Some of these provisions include emergency rental assistance, homeowner assistance funds, emergency housing vouchers, homelessness assistance and supportive services programs, housing assistance and services for Native American population specifically, funds for housing counseling and relief measures for Section 502 and Section 504 direct loan borrowers.

In the past year, the housing provisions under ARPA have significantly helped millions of renters avoid eviction due to the government's interventions and investments. In fact, a recent study found that low income and majority Black neighborhoods that typically see a disproportionate share of eviction cases, experienced the largest absolute reduction in eviction filings. Funds from ARPA are also a critical source for funding for affordable housing development as well as supportive housing operating expenses and rehabilitation repair public housing. Next slide.

And it might, sorry, you can just skip the video. Thank you. So pay for Success or Outcomes Based Contracting is actually a financing mechanism, although we have funding mechanism in the title there. And the reason I call it a financing mechanism is that it shifts financial risk from a traditional funder, typically the government to a new investor who provides upfront capital to scale an evidence-based social program. Could be housing. Doesn't have to be housing. To improve outcomes for vulnerable population, and it's not necessarily funding program like the others I've discussed, but it's a financing tool that can be used for different types of funding approaches as some others might be able to talk about it a little bit when they present later today.

As we'll see from this image here, the way it works just very simplified is that investors provide this upfront capital, the service provider would implement the intervention. It'd be one of these housing programs that I'll discuss in a bit. Could be a totally different intervention. The service provider and the investors will agree upon some outcomes that need to be measured, and then the government repays the investor if those outcomes are achieved. Again, this is an oversimplification, excuse me, but just a quick overview of how to Pay for Success generally operates. Next slide.

Okay. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is operated by HUD and is a major government program for assisting low income families, the elderly and those with disabilities to obtain housing in the private market. This program was authorized in 1974 as Section 8 of the United States Housing Act. Each year,

Congress determines funds for vouchers that are distributed locally by public housing agencies. Once housing is secured, a housing subsidy is paid to the landlord by the housing agency, and the family or individual is responsible for paying the difference between the actual rent charge and the amount subsidized by the voucher.

Project based vouchers are a component of the Housing Choice Voucher Program and are tied to a specific number of units in a building. This means that the housing assistance stays with that unit once a resident moves out. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is the country's largest rental assistance program with over 5 million people participating. And research has demonstrated consistently over the years that housing vouchers substantially diminish homelessness and housing instability for those that are involved with the program.

Finally, just going to mention before we move on, talk about housing models. That there are some other key financing mechanisms note, such as state bond funds, particularly community development block grant programs, state and local trust funds and foundation funds. For example, the community development block grants are another flexible funding stream. And in fiscal year 2018, over \$3 billion were distributed to about 1,200 sites to further community development needs. And all of those financing types are available for people with criminal legal system involvement upon reentry. Next slide please.

Okay, so the following section I'm just going to outline a couple different housing models, and we'll address out housing models can be used to support housing stability for people with criminal legal system involvement. These various housing models do not have to be siloed and instead can be used by a blended approach to best serve the needs of the community, even though I'll talk about them individually. Next slide.

Okay. So I imagine most folks are familiar with this program, but just quickly. Permanent Supportive Housing is a permanent housing model that combines low barrier, affordable housing, healthcare, and supportive services, i.e. case management services to help individuals and families lead more housing stable lives and connecting services. It follows the Housing First model and then pairs this housing with these supportive services that I just mentioned. The target population typically for Permanent Supportive Housing is those who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability and experiencing barriers to housing broadly.

Since 2007, Permanent Supportive Housing programs have decreased the chronic homelessness population, sorry, the chronic homeless population by 8%, and there is a lot of research out there about the impacts and efficacy of the program. Previous research has also revealed that Permanent Supportive Housing can improve housing stability and overall health for those that are using it. Utilizing and leveraging Permanent Supportive Housing can dramatically benefit those with criminal legal system involvement as well as several studies of shown. Next slide.

Rapid Re-housing is housing that provides short-term and medium term tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness as well. The Rapid Re-housing program is designed as a solution to homelessness, which is why it is offered, and this is key, without pre-conditions such as employment, income, absence of criminal record or sobriety. And these services are provided uniquely to each household. There are three essential components of these services, housing identification, rent and movement assistance, and Rapid Re-housing case management services. Studies on Rapid Re-housing programs have established that those who received the service are homeless for shorter periods of time than those assisted with shelter and transitional housing. It's also a more affordable financial option for homeless interventions compared-

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Will Engelhardt:

It's also a more affordable financial option for homeless interventions compared to shelter transitional housing as well. Next slide. But it's still important to talk about transitional housing programs which offer homeless individuals and families wraparound supports and services for up to 24 months and ensure a stable housing environment with the goal of eventually transitioning people to independent permanent housing. The population for transitional programs are those requiring additional support to transition from homelessness to stable independent housing. The three most common transitional housing models are scattered site, clustered site, and communal living. The main goal for this model is to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing, though it's not a permanent housing solution and the goal is by decreasing the period of time that someone is unhoused at all. Next slide please.

So due to the expansive nature of housing, as I've just discussed, housing partners can constitute a wide variety of different stakeholders. Housing partners can work and should work hopefully closely with criminal legal system actors to address the housing needs of individuals with previous system involvement. We've provided just a few examples of some partners, but there's certainly more available and I'm sure some of the folks that present later can talk about that in a bit more detail. Next slide, please.

Okay. So housing finance agencies are established in each state and is the agency responsible for meeting the affordable needs of its residents. This is typically through advice or financial assistance in the form of a loan. HFAs can vary in structure, but usually they are independent entities that operate under the discretion of a board of directors appointed by the government. HFA loan programs are an established partnership between state housing authorities, and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are the agencies that regulate most of US mortgages. The program was designed to make home buying more affordable for those with lower incomes.

One major benefit of HFA loans is that they offer lower upfront costs and lower monthly payments than standard mortgage programs. Decisions on program offerings and funding amounts are made at the state level within HFA. In terms of working with criminal legal systems stakeholders, in terms of working with them, HFAs can be a key partner in building out permanent housing options and decision making is often at the local level within each state with HFAs and so they have a great deal of authority inciting what programs related to this population to fund and support.

Next, regarding public housing authorities, they're either a state, county or municipal government entity that is authorized to engage or assist in the creation and oversight of low income housing, which is actually outlined in the 1937 United States Housing Act. HUD administers operating funds and capital funds provided by Congress with approximately 3,300 public housing agencies to house eligible low income tenants. Public housing is entirely funded by Congressional appropriations and currently there are over 1 million units in America that are formed under public housing program.

Congress and HUD are responsible for establishing the federal rules for the public housing program that PHA's must adhere to. It's important to note that PHA's have excluded those with prior criminal legal system involvement in the past. However, in recent years, HUD has encouraged PHA's to allow justice involved people live with their families in public housing through the housing choice voucher program or public housing. PHA's criminal legal system stakeholders and local lawmakers should still work together, defer their build on these efforts by implementing laws and regulations that no longer restrict people because those restrictions are still in place in many places from previous criminal legal system involvement.

Finally, the Continuum of Care program was developed to promote community-wide commitment goal of ending homelessness. It also has a goal to provide funding for efforts by non-profit providers and

state local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused at homeless individuals. While it can be challenging for COCs to prioritize people leaving prison and jail among many individuals need of assistance, a helpful strategy for criminal legal system partners is to engage with their community COC. Okay, I'm going to move on to the next slide. So just last section here, just wanted to go over some key questions that criminal legal system actors locally should be thinking about when engaging with housing providers, thinking about housing models and financial services or financial mechanisms. Next slide please.

So some questions to consider. First, what are the housing needs in your local community? Specifically for people with criminal legal system involvement? How can these housing models and other supports be leveraged? And how can they address the overlapping needs of the community regarding housing and reentry? Who are the key partners as we just previously discussed, and how can they get directly involved in the work? What inventory exists already in your community? This is key for identifying needs, what projects already exist as well. And then of course, what specific services and supports have already been implemented in development or in use? And then related to that, if programs are already in place, what components work well, have they been evaluated, what can be approved, et cetera.

Next, as mentioned, what are the specific outcomes that the community's looking to achieve, specifically as it relates to housing stability and also the criminal legal system. Is it recidivism? Is it increasing home ownership, connecting people to case management and services, et cetera. And then finally, what are the gaps in the financing approaches specifically that could be filled to meet the community? And that's where thinking about those different financing models can be really effective. So I think next slide is just the last slide. I'm looking forward to hearing from colleagues in the community, developing programming and talking through how they've blended some of these approaches. And with that, I'll turn it back to Charley. Thank you.

Charley Francis:

Thank you so much Will for that overview of financing tools and models. Now that we have that excellent grounding, I want to turn things over to Andre Ward from the Fortune Society to talk about how they have put some of those pieces into place as the building blocks to creating reentry housing opportunities in New York City. So Andre, it's all yours.

Andre Ward:

Thank you so much, Charley. Really appreciate that. And certainly on behalf of our CEO Joanne page, our executive vice president, Rob Deon and Deputy CEO, Stan Richards and all of Fortune staff, we're really grateful for this opportunity to be in discussion with all of you about this really important issue. The Fortune Society has been around for about 55 years doing reentry and advocacy work. And we have started that work with notion that we believe as our mission and supporting successful reentry from incarceration and promoting alternatives to incarceration, thus strengthening the fabric of our communities. We've been in the housing work for about 20 years or so doing this work. We have housing throughout New York City where we provide emergency, transitional and supportive permanent housing for people. And we have scattered site housing throughout New York City as well. So we're really excited to be a part of this conversation during second chance month. But for us also knowing that for many that we serve, it's a first chance that they've been given the opportunity to have to access housing. So I want to talk a little about building blocks to creating reentry housing opportunities in New York City. Next slide.

And so what we'll talk about is with development of phases for affordable supportive housing for people with criminal justice involvement. And we'll talk about land property acquisition, pre-development

costs, construction financing, permanent financing, rent subsidies, and supportive housing funding. Next slide. So land property acquisition and funding resources. Once a piece of land or property for the project has been located, an organization was moved to gain site control by entering into a purchase contract, lease agreement, or completion of an actual purchase. And if land is being acquired through New York City, for example, it requires a zoning designation change, the project will be subject to the ULA or uniform land use for review procedure. And ULA typically takes a year to complete. And on the other hand, funding sources exist that can assist with land and property acquisition costs. As we think about that for projects located in New York City, one such funding source is the New York City acquisition fund, which is a partnership between Enterprise Community Partners Incorporated and local initiative support corporation, LISC. And that provides funding for land /property acquisition as well as pre-development costs. And there's a website that you can consult to learn more about that. Next slide.

So ULURP, let's talk a little bit about ULURP. Look the land is being transferred, for example, from the city of New York or the property requires a zoning designation change in order to build a residential building, then we find out that the ULURP process must be completed and it involves the following. Write an application must be submitted to the New York City Department of City planning, which may also involve submitting an environmental impact statement. Following that, once a proposal is submitted to DCP, the local community board in which the property is located has 60 days to review the project before it votes on the project. Thereafter, the community board votes on the project. If it's passed, the borough president has 30 days to review the project and offer some recommendations. The project is also considered by the City Planning Commission. If CPC or the City Planning Commission votes to disapprove, the process stops. Yet or however, if approval is granted by the CPC, the project moves to the city council. So you see there's an entire process that happens here. And so if the City Council approves, the mayor has five days to veto the city council decision. However, if the mayor vetoes the project, the city council can override with the majority vote. Next slide.

Pre-development costs and funding resources. Once a piece of land or property is identified, site control is established, the project must undertake pre-development actions. And those actions are and include project design and engineering, project approvals which city agency approvals, building, zoning, community approval, et cetera. As discussed previously, project may require submission to the Mueller process. And then there's financing applications. And so pre-development costs include engagement of necessary professionals like architects, engineers, environmental experts, land use attorneys and consultants. So you have this whole team of focus involved in its pre-development cost engagement. And then the organizations can apply for funding of pre-development costs from lenders, including enterprise community partners whose website is there, and Leviticus Fund, which is another funding entity. Next slide.

So construction and permanent financing. Once the pre-development process is completed, the project will transition into construction. Either new construction or rehabilitation of an existing property. And at this point, the organization will be closing on construction financing, which will fund the construction or rehabilitation of the property. Financing of construction may include private bank lending, New York State or New York City funding, federal state tax credits, philanthropy foundation support. And what's important to note is that to engage experts to determine the right financing mix for the project. Next slide. So construction and permanent financing. Once construction is completed in this process, the project will need to shift to permanent financing and it'll become the debt service that the project will need to carry going forward. And if the project involves the use of tax credits, there will be year 15 issues with the building and you'll need to consult with tax credit experts to understand year 15 and its effect on the building. Next slide.

So government resources, which is fundamental and key to this entire process, right? There are a number of government resources available in connection with the development of affordable and supportive housing. In New York, there's low income housing tax credit. The website is there for LIHC. You have New York State low income housing tax credit program, which is hcr.ny.gov. And then there's a New York City tax credit program whose website is there. And the Homeless Housing Assistance Program. And so those are some government resources to which you can consult to be involved in the development of affordable and supportive housing. Next slide.

Some additional government resources, right? Government funding for operation and supportive housing programs include New York City 15/15 program. And the website is there for that and it spells out it's criteria, et cetera for eligibility. New York State Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative, which we refer to as ESSHI. Then there's a New York City Justice involved supportive housing program called JISH. Government funding for rent subsidies it's Section 8 vouchers in New York City, and you can find that on the link there. Next slide. Philanthropy is a key part of obviously establishing supportive and permanent housing for folk who have been impacted by the criminal legal system. And so philanthropy's role in terms of raising money for private contributions can fill in funding gaps for the project, can also provide support for supportive housing programs available to residents of the building as well as services for the community at large, which is critically important. And then it can create closer ties to the community. Next.

So foundations. Now as mentioned earlier, foundations play a major role in supportive housing development and creation. And numerous foundations, both nationally and community fund healthy housing and community development efforts from a healthcare affordable housing and sustainable smart growth perspective. And funding cycles may vary of course, and as focus areas. And so from year to year to the next. And so check out these websites that are listed here. Handed and council on foundation for community foundations and several funder collaborative or affinity groups have formed to share information, build awareness, and in some cases really pool funding to support healthy housing and community efforts. And although not all the organizations listed provide funding, they may in fact provide information on the foundations in corporate giving programs, working in the healthy housing community arena. So you can check out a range of National Center for Healthy Housing and Housing Toolboxes, et cetera. They can also support with pre-development costs. Next slide.

So corporate entities. A range of corporations provide mostly capital to affordable housing projects. And in 2019 Microsoft had dedicated \$500 million to fund construction of affordable housing and homeless services in the Seattle region. And this affordable housing fund is the largest philanthropic pledge in Microsoft history, providing \$475 million in loans to affordable housing development over three years and donating another \$25 million in grants per homeless service providers. Amazon, CVS, Aetna also provide capital funding. Next slide. So a continuum of housing options, right? You'll notice in this picture here, which is one of our buildings that we affectionately call the castle. It looks like a castle obviously in appearance and we're certainly grateful for its appearance and what it means to the community. But the Fortune Academy is an emergency and transitional supportive housing program in West Harlem that provides a safe rehabilitative community for people returning from incarceration.

And the residents there who we call community members, receive regular case management that assist them in locating stable housing and employment, substance use services, family reunification, and among other services that we offer from among our 14 services that we offer within our organization. Then we have Castle Gardens, which is the building next to it, which is another beautiful building. And next to the Fortune Academy, the Castle Gardens is the mixed use, supportive and affordable residential development and service center that provides long-term housing solutions for justice involved people and their families at risk of homelessness. So we had this unique blend of people who were directly

impacted by the criminal legal system that are housed there permanently and people from the community. And it's a really robust and powerful model that we have replicated and offer technical assistance to other states on. Next slide.

So another continuum of housing option. And I just mentioned that we offer technical assistance to help different states or different localities build out our housing model. And that housing model is what you see there Syracuse, New York. It's called Freedom House. It's an emergency and transitional housing unit located in East Harlem for adult men with behavioral needs and who are currently likely to be detained. Services include case management and mental health and substance use and treatment. And then there's the Mandela community located in the Bronx. And this is 154 unit residents that provides onsite services to fortune participants and justice impacted seniors, which is a huge need and we know there's a gap there in services for them. And so we have seniors that are living in the building. The community includes 96 affordable homes for people, aged 55+. And 57 affordable supportive homes for seniors with histories of incarceration. So again, this picture that you see here is called the Freedom Commons. That is a housing model that's replicated off of our own housing that's located in Syracuse, New York, which is mentioned here. But that's the picture that obviously is shown what that looks like up in Syracuse, New York. Next slide. And I'll turn it back to Charles.

Charley Francis:

Thank you so much, Andre, for that overview of all the great work that Fortune Society is doing in New York City and some of the pieces to put in place to make that work happen. And now we will take a trip to the other coast, to Lane County, Oregon to learn about how they have partnered across different systems for reentry housing development success. So I'll turn it over now to Paul Solomon and the team there to get things started.

Paul Solomon:

Great, thank you Charley. Welcome. It's great to be here with you all this morning, or at least it's morning here on the West Coast. My name is Paul Solomon, I'm the executive director at Sponsors Inc. And nationally recognized reentry program in Oregon where I've worked for the last 22 years. We provide housing to approximately 600 people a year releasing from state and local custody and additional services to over 1500 people annually. We operate 20 buildings and have approximately 50 staff who work as sponsors, majority of whom are people with lived experience in the criminal legal system. And I'm thrilled to be here with my esteemed colleagues today and I will turn it over to Laura to introduce herself.

Laura Johnson:

Good morning, well afternoon for you all. I'm Laura Johnson. I'm Director of program development here at Sponsors. I've been with the organization for seven and a half years, and one of the areas that I focus on most intensively in my work and that I'll share a bit with you about is our permanent supportive housing program for individuals releasing from state prison here in Oregon. I'll turn it over to Donovan.

Donovan Dumire:

Good morning, here on the West Coast. Donovan Dumire, it's a pleasure to be here with you today. I have worked in parole and probation proudly for 25 years. Been in Lane County for the last 10 years and it really is an honor and a privilege to lead operations here in Lane County parole and probation. Our Lane County parole and probation team is comprised of currently 35 officers, change agents, six support staff, one post-conviction victim advocate, one program evaluator, five supervisors, and myself. In total,

as of this morning, we're currently charged to oversee 2129 clients. This includes 975 high risk individuals, 664 medium risk individuals, and about 457 low risk individuals. Our parole and probation.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:46:04]

Donovan Dumire:

...157 low risk individuals. Our parole and probation team specializes in working with those suffering from mental illness, individuals convicted of sex crimes, domestic violence, justice involved women. We also have three treatment courts that include drug court, mental health court, veterans court. We have a downward departure program that we oversee with the 416 and close collaboration with our DA's office. We have high risk supervision and reduced supervision. And currently in the process of developing an emerging adults' caseload. Our Lane County prone probation team is passionate in their efforts to improve the quality of life. We've developed a special team of creative innovators who routinely push the evidence-based envelope here in Lane County. We pride ourselves as a balanced group of professionals who really embrace a dual role that are consistent of both accountability and rehabilitation. And this really is a team that is always striving to do better and really aligns with a system here in Lane County that's always striving to do better. Thank you. Jacob.

Jacob Fox:

Hello everybody. My name is Jacob Fox. I'm the executive director of Homes for Good, which is Lane County's Public Housing Authority. I just want to kind of start with why I do the work I do. So I was raised in a very dysfunctional family, both immediate and extended, where there were a lot of addiction issues. Members of our family were involved in the justice system, mental health issues. So for me, it's important to lead with just being in service to people in our community that most need our help. A little bit about our organization. We're the second-largest affordable housing organization/housing authority in the state of Oregon. Our annual budget is \$40 million. We have 130 employees and we provide a home to over 5,000 households across Lane County at any point in time. So it's a real honor to be here today and we look forward to moving through these slides together. Paul, I'll turn it back to you.

Paul Solomon:

Great. Thank you. Next slide. So these next few slides, I want to ground us in why we do the work we do and why it's important for us to develop housing. Some of this may be information that you're already familiar with, but I think it's important for us to acknowledge that almost every person we lock up is going to return back to our community. Nationally, about 95% of the people in custody will be released at some point. We anticipate about 600,000 people releasing from state prison this year alone. Here in Oregon, about 5,000 people are releasing from state prison. We have 150,000 people cycling in and out of our county jails just in this state alone. So when you add the jail population, the number of people in reentry skyrockets nationally. We know that a good number of these folks are veterans. And most importantly, a large number of people, and this varies from state to state, are released without any identified housing, or maybe they're releasing to a shelter, but they're not releasing to stable housing.

Hence, the need for a range of reentry services and housing types when people are coming back to our community. Next slide. So our target population are individuals released homeless and indigent from state or local correctional institutions who are assessed as moderate to very high risk to reengage in the system using a validated risk assessment tool. And people who we identify as experiencing really the greatest barriers, the highest needs to reentry without additional supports. Priority populations include, as Andre was noting, there's a lot of people that are seniors. Here in Oregon, we have the highest

concentration of people over the age 55 in custody in the United States. So that's a real burgeoning population that we have to address. We also prioritize women with children, veterans, people with disabilities, and people convicted of sex crimes. This is another population that has a very difficult time accessing housing. Next slide, please.

So when folks come to us, we do a battery of assessments that really drive our service delivery model. We do the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment, which assesses people's stage of change in their appropriateness for cognitive behavioral interventions. We also do an LS-CMI or WRNA, the Women's Risk Need Assessment. Those are gender-specific to address risk and need. So we really want to build a case plan that is driven by a needs assessment to look at where are the criminogenic areas where we see as people having both the highest needs and the greatest opportunity to provide meaningful interventions in their lives. We also do a PHQ-9, which is a mental health screen to identify behavioral health needs that would lead to referral to a behavioral health provider for additional screening. Next slide.

So our service delivery model is based on the case plans that are developed through assessment. And the services that we provide include a reentry resource center, which provides a range of services including employment assistance, housing navigation, community-based referrals, assistance accessing public benefits, and higher education. Additionally, the RRC, as we refer to it, provides crisis funding to assist with identification, public transportation, workflows, funds to help people get into housing, first month's rent deposits, and the like. We also have a mentoring program that was started by a BJA grant back in 2010. We received a second BJA grant for the mentoring program to do a randomized control trial in 2015. And since inception, we have matched over a thousand individuals releasing from custody with trained volunteer mentors. We also have paid certified peer recovery mentors who work with our participants.

Additionally, we have trained master's level behavioral health clinicians who provide counseling and facilitate DBT groups. We have a part-time psychiatrist who prescribes medication. We deliver multiple cognitive behavioral intervention curriculums and offer over 20 groups a week to participants. And we provide substance abuse treatment to individuals who are assessed as needing treatment through an outside contracted provider. We offer parenting classes and also provide a monthly legal clinic through a partnership with University of Oregon's Law School. Next slide.

So now that we've shared a little bit about our service delivery model, I want to shift gears and move into our housing. So sponsors has been around for 50 years. We operate 20 buildings on seven sites. We have 119 beds of transitional housing, 124 units of permanent supportive housing. Our transitional programs are staffed 24 hours a day, and we also have administrative offices and onsite parole and probation offices at multiple facilities. Next slide. So I want to talk about our partner roles in these projects. And I'll kick it over to Jacob to talk about the role as a developer in some of our permanent supportive housing projects that we've launched in recent years.

Jacob Fox:

Sure. Thanks Paul. So I was just really blessed by the presentations that Will and Andre gave. I call what I do sometimes as a housing nerd, and so we'll get into some of those details, but they both did an exceptional job of framing the role of a housing developer. But so we've developed two different apartment communities and then helped with some capital project improvements and partnership with sponsors. And then we also have parole and probation staff in a number of different apartment communities across our portfolio outside of the sponsors projects. So we array the financing. I would say that sponsors and Lane County Parole and Probation have been great partners. Lane County's done

things like donate land to our apartment communities, sponsors helped by raising funds for pre-development costs. So I don't want to pretend like we do it all ourselves. It is truly a partnership.

Once we develop an apartment community, we're responsible for all the tax credit compliance that Will and kind of Andre both touched on. And we sort of actively asset manage the property throughout the life of the property, which in Oregon, we are required by the state finance agency to guarantee affordability for 60 years minimum. So obviously we're in it for the long haul. The other thing I'd mention is that through our partnership with Donovan and Paul, we've opened up access to our other programs at a much deeper level by reducing screening criteria. So for us being in service to people with conviction histories has become part of our mission. So we've minimized barriers to the maximum extent possible and we have more work to do. So with that, I'll turn it back to Paul.

Paul Solomon:

So I've already talked about our services quite a bit, but what I'll say is sponsor's role as a service provider is to offer some constellation of supportive services in our permanent supportive housing projects that can include case management, housing navigation, peer support, behavioral healthcare and more. And Donovan, you want to talk about parole and probation's role?

Donovan Dumire:

Yes, thank you. And as Jacob kind of alluded, we really are blessed in Lane County to have such a high degree of collaboration with our system partners. Our Lane County parole and probation team is closely partnered with both sponsors and Homes for Good for well over 25 years. Today, in fact, we're located across the street as of a year ago, two sponsors. And we really take great joy and pride in partnering with sponsors to really provide evidence-based and what we know to be supportive housing, motivational enhancement, cognitive behavioral intervention, and other programs. These programs adhere to continuous quality improvement through regular evaluation. As a true measure of our collaboration, we, as Paul and Jacob mentioned, have officers stationed at multiple Homes for Good and sponsors locations. This would include our innovative and specialized justice involved women's office, where we provide gender-specific programming and assessments and intervention.

It is often misconstrued at these locations that we act primarily as a police presence, although that's a benefit. I also believe that our larger role really is to work in collaboration with partners to effectively address responsivity or what we would refer to as barriers. Address criminogenic risk for those client populations to reduce both immediate and long-term risk. We have one officer dedicated currently to the Way Home Initiative, which I know Laura's going to talk about here shortly, and stationed on location. This officer works in close collaboration with sponsors' navigators. For us as a parole and probation shop, this project has become a bit of an incubator to push and really expand evidence-based practices that we're going to be considering in the future. This would really include for us a collaborative system-wide case plan approach that incorporates not only the client but every system provider involved with that client.

Thorough assessment, validated assessments, a system-wide focus is established to effectively and strategically address individual barriers and identify criminogenic needs in reducing risk. The way Home aspires to not only track and meet prescribed dosage, which I would refer to as hours of cognitive and behavioral intervention aimed at drivers in criminal behavior, but also benchmarks and incorporate intensity and duration to ensure that dosage is captured with remaining time and practice to really learn and implement the skills in the community. In addition and in preparation for life beyond community supervision and services, participants work with their parole and probation officer and sponsors re-entry navigators to identify a minimum of four pro-social supports, which can be friends or family. And a

minimum of three organized community activities aimed to anchor long-term support in the community. The Way Home outcomes, which Laura will discuss here shortly are really exciting and absolutely worthy of our duplication. In fact, efforts are underway to expand this through the Coleman Project that will be located actually between our office and sponsors. So this is very exciting and amazing opportunity to really improve the quality of life within our community.

Paul Solomon:

Thanks, Donovan. And last thing I'll say before we move on is when we talk about financing, it's one thing to build facilities, but you also have to staff them. And we have been very fortunate to partner with Lane County who has continuously contracted with us to provide supportive services in these facilities because without those services, permanent supportive housing doesn't exist. So really appreciate that relationship and feel like it's an important component in any project that is considering developing housing with supportive services. Next slide, please. Jacob, I think you're going to talk about financing here.

Jacob Fox:

Sure. As I mentioned earlier, I think Will and Andre did an exceptional job of just talking about what we would call the capital stack for developing an affordable housing apartment community. So there's really nothing here that they didn't cover. We use a low income housing tax credit. We get home funds from the city of Eugene or City of Springfield. They're cooperatively part of what's called a participating jurisdiction. The county's been very generous in terms of land donations and other funding, and then GAP financing. There's some local end state GAP financing that we can apply for. And then sponsors has taken the lead on the philanthropic foundation grants just because of their network in that space. But one of the things I would say is the resident services or the support of services that are provided primarily by sponsors, but also by parole and probation is kind of like the secret sauce to make our apartment communities run really well.

We develop a lot of permanent supportive housing apartment communities for people experiencing chronic homelessness. And we've really struggled with some of the nonprofit service providers in terms of their professionalism, their access to appropriate level of funding. So I would say that that's really what sets this partnership apart is the supportive services that keep these buildings stable over the lifecycle of these projects. And we can go next slide.

So I got a couple questions in the chat and we'll head on both of them live and this is the genesis of a project. Again, between Will and Andre, they've covered a lot of these. So I think what I'm going to do is just hit on the not in my backyard or NIMBY opposition. So at a project that we're going to talk about here in a couple of minutes, Oaks at 14th. The NIMBY pushback when we started engaging with a neighborhood around the fact that we were going to build the apartment community was pretty intense. And how we navigated through that was frankly in large part due to the partnership and education that sponsors and Lane County Parole and Probation had provided to elected officials and law enforcement agencies in our area. So our first meeting had approximately 80 people. Folks were extremely agitated, but our county commissioners were there, our city commissioners were there.

Our police chief or someone senior from the police department was there and our sheriff was there in strong support of what we were doing. So what we experienced was after that sort of initial emotional reaction, we just continued to engage with the neighbors. And it wasn't whether or not we were going to build the building in the neighborhood. It was how we were going to build it and how we were going to make sure that the residents there had the supportive services they need. So I'll just pause there, Paul, and see if you had anything to embroider off of that.

Paul Solomon:

No, I think you hit the nail on the head. One of the things that we also did was in response to concerns that neighbors had, we made some adjustments to the design of the project. We also milled trees from the property and built park benches for the local homeowner association that was nearby and really tried to do a lot of outreach to engender support for the project.

Laura Johnson:

I was fairly new to sponsors when this process was happening, and it was really remarkable to observe. There was a citizen advisory council and the meetings kept happening. And the more that there was listening, the less the meetings were agitated and the less of that emotional response that Jacob was describing. So much so that when we had the grant opening for the Oaks at 14th, which we'll learn about later, the local neighborhood association presented a piece [inaudible 01:07:07] to one of the first residents. So it was pretty remarkable.

Paul Solomon:

Indeed. Great. Next slide. So this is a tax credit project we completed in 2010 where we have 45 units, 86 beds of transitional housing for male identifying clients. And you'll see with the pictures of these projects, one of the things that I think is really important is the aesthetic value of our properties. They are beautifully landscaped, they're well maintained, they're colorful, they're warm, they're welcoming. When you drive by, you think, "Wow, that's a beautiful apartment complex." You don't think, "Oh, there's 86 people living in this facility with conviction histories." And I think that's important for the people that live there and for the community. In this project, we have 10 dedicated beds for veterans through a VA grant and per diem contract. The project was funded with tax credits and various grants, staffed 24 hours a day. Our administrative office is on site, and this is a hub for all of our wraparound services, our reentry resource center, mentorship program, and much more. Next slide, Jacob.

Jacob Fox:

So this was the latest project that we brought online in 2019, and then this is the one where I kind of shared just our experience as it relates to engagement with the neighborhood. But 54 one bedroom units, the project cost \$9.2 million. And what I would say on that is just given...

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Jacob Fox:

And what I would say on that is just given some of the incredible increases in construction costs, building this project today will cost at least twice this much. We do consider this property permanent supportive housing. One nuance or important point I would make is we don't receive referrals from the continuum of cares coordinated entry waiting list that doesn't work for sponsors clients, but it meets all other definitions of permanent supportive housing. And then on the right you'll see the kind of the gazebo and the benches. So those were milled out of oaks that were removed from the property as well as that kind of tree back splash situation that you see in the picture on the left side. So yeah, I think that's all I'll say about the oaks. Paul, unless you want to add anything.

Paul Solomon:

Just next slide. One thing. These are furnished units and this gives you insight into what they look like. They're beautiful apartments that range from, I think about 500 to 550 square feet. They're designed for single occupancy. They're one bedroom units and the rents are very affordable. They range from about 500 to 575 a month and many of them have section eight vouchers that are used to subsidize good portion of the rent. Laura, take it over to you. Next slide.

Laura Johnson:

Thanks. So you've heard a lot about the deep collaboration between these three project partners and in 2016 we partnered together to apply for a permanent supportive housing demonstration grant offered through HUD and Department of Justice and we were awarded one of seven grants. Next slide please. To support reentry communities in permanent supportive housing, we're unique in this grant cohort in that I believe we're the only entity focusing specifically on a prison reentry population. So the target population for our particular program is individuals who are releasing from state custody, so Oregon State prisons within the last six months who are homeless, released to homelessness, and who are assessed as high risk to become re-engaged in the system without additional supports. Next slide please.

So you've already heard a lot about the robust service delivery model that we employ here at sponsors and that we deliver in collaboration with our program partners. We received a \$1.3 million grant to support the development of this permanent supportive housing program. And you heard Donovan refer to it as the Way Home. It's a Way Home Reentry Collaborative. And the goal of the program was to serve 125 individuals in PSH over the course of a five-year period. And the outcomes that we determined in collaboration with HUD were that we would reduce recidivism and the metric we use is one year felony recidivism, to reduce homelessness and improve housing stability, and also to increase appropriate utilization of Medicaid dollars. So reducing things like emergency room visits and inpatient stays and increase primary care, behavioral health, and prescription coverage. Because it was a pay for success grant, there were outcome payments associated with it.

I'm pleased to report that we have received the maximum allocation of outcome payment for the project. So that's the \$608,000. And the grant really allowed us to enhance that service delivery model. And our goal with this project is of course to improve the lives of the individuals that we serve, which also of course then improves our communities, but also to serve as a sort of case analysis and evaluative point to further the development of other programs like this in other parts of the country. Next slide please. One component of our program is to conduct a longitudinal evaluation with the support of third party researchers. And they are also looking at qualitative metrics on a quarterly basis with both individuals placed in permanent supportive housing, but also a comparison group of individuals who are assessed as being eligible for the project, but who aren't successfully placed in a unit within that six months of release from incarceration.

So they're tracking both of these groups over time. At this point, we're just past the four and a half year mark of placing people in housing. We've got actually it's about 190 individuals placed in housing to date. The most recent metrics assess that 89% of them remain stably housed and fewer than 9% have been convicted of a new felony offense. When we consider the population that we're serving through this program is an estimated 80% reduction in recidivism, which is astounding. And also I think it speaks to the critical importance of housing as a basic human and a social determinant of health and wellbeing. But also I think it's really important to note the intrinsic motivation of the people that we're serving. These are people who want to do right by their community and to live brighter lives. And by affording them a very simple resource, they're able to effectuate that.

Of course, also with supportive services. So one thing that I think is really important to speak to when we talk about the types of support through this program, folks are able to access all of those services

that Paul described when he talked about our transitional housing program after they're placed in our permanent supportive housing. They're also assigned a reentry navigator on the day that they're placed in a unit through the way home. And that individual utilizes assertive engagement techniques to build rapport with individuals, to assess where maybe there are places where they would benefit from resources. Is there food scarcity? Are they having trouble with neighbors? Are they meeting regularly with their parole officer? And if not, why? And being curious about that from a very supportive standpoint, walking alongside people. And the other place where the navigators work very closely is in communication regularly with the parole officer and also with landlords and property managers.

We're really able to mitigate many issues that arise when we have active communication across our team to really support the individual in maintaining their housing stability from a very compassionate place. And I think Donovan speaking to parole officers onsite, it's absolutely true and in many respects I hear people saying it's convenient. It's a pain for me to have to go across town to meet with my PO and actually he's pretty cool and I don't mind having them right here. And then I think... I think I've said most of what I wanted to say. I guess the other thing I wanted to say about staffing and service delivery, the way that we've been able to access section eight vouchers and these public housing units through Homes for Good is through what's a local preference and a provider preference. So when we send those referrals, we're going to the top of the list, the folks that we send.

And that's a huge testament to the support and collaboration that we have through Homes for Good, which is unique. I think in conversations I've experienced with other reentry providers around the country, when people have section eight vouchers, they really need a lot of support in order to utilize them to access housing. What we find is if someone submits an application in the private market, they're immediately denied. And our staff says, "Expect that. Come back to us. We'll help you appeal it. We'll help you request a reasonable accommodation. We'll walk you through the process of helping you advocate for yourself." And at this point, 20% of the people who we've placed in Way Home units are utilizing section eight vouchers in the private market. And that wasn't true when we first started, but we had some hard lessons learned and developed some important support positions in that space. And I think I'll close there and turn it back over to Paul.

Paul Solomon:

Great. And Charley, next slide. I want to do a time check here. We've got a couple more slides, but we could stop here if we want to move to Q&A.

Charley Francis:

No, I think it's okay because we've answered a lot of the questions already. I'd rather give you the chance to finish up what you want.

Paul Solomon:

Great. Great. So I want to talk about one other housing model, smaller scale projects that don't use federal funding tools as have been described in this presentation project we completed in 2020 called Jeffrey Commons is a 10 unit tiny home apartment community. Next slide please. The total cost in 2022 was \$1.3 million, and we received no federal funding. The project was funded solely with foundation grants, a county housing grant, and private donations. Next slide.

As you can see, these units are pretty small but are nicely furnished, an ideal for single individuals in need of longer term housing. The picture in the top left, there's a community room, but the other three pictures are of the actual units. And these are 300 square foot units. They're very modest, but well

appointed, and the rents are very reasonable in part because our cost for construction and the very limited debt that we have on the project has made it possible for us to provide extremely low rents on this project. So we'll stop there and kick it back to you, Charley, for any questions.

Charley Francis:

Great, thank you so much. It's really great to hear from the whole team about how you have built and leveraged this longstanding collaboration and really the results of that in terms of concrete housing options. So I think we've got a couple more specific questions for sponsors that have come up in the chat. I think one of them is very specific to community corrections, so I think Donovan's going to answer that via typing, but I think there's another one that was just asked by Brad, and I think this is a good one that will probably be widely applicable. So I'm going to repeat this one. There's a few parts about sponsors transitional housing, so what sort of staff have 24/7 presence, are folks with criminal legal system involvement mixed, with folks who aren't involved with the system, and how involved is probation with these transitional houses. So it's pretty wide-ranging, but I think it really gives us a good sense of the staffing and population served. So anyone from the team that wants to take that, I think that'll be great.

Paul Solomon:

Yeah, I'll take a little bit of it and let Laura, Donovan chime in. So yes, in our transitional housing, we have 24 hour day staffing in part because these are folks coming directly from institutions with high needs behavioral health issues. And it's important, particularly given the scale of the projects that we have some level of staff presence 24 hours a day. It's skeletal staffing. So when you say it's expensive, yes, but there are economies of scale. The larger project is the easier it is to fund 24 hour a day staffing. And these projects are designed specifically for people with criminal legal involvement.

So we don't have people that aren't involved in the criminal legal system housed in our projects. And as it relates to problems, behavior problems or drug issues, I mean, we regularly do drug testing. It's an accountability based model. When people are non-compliant at times we ask them to leave. We work with people oftentimes through multiple relapses, and it's pretty rare that we have to call on parole and probation to assist with any type of termination. We're in regular communication with them around these behavior issues so that we can work together in concert to address issues early on. And I'd let Donovan or Laura further articulate.

Donovan Dumire:

Yeah, absolutely. And as I mentioned earlier, parole and probation really is a collaborative partner. And I think the often identity that we take on is maybe the hammer or the police agency within this. And as much as that we do have that presence, we also really embrace the collaboration, the mutual approach to addressing risk, our development of case plan and our continual collaboration in those efforts. So we are very strategic and deliberate in our efforts. And as it pertains to... I can't think of ever a time and in fact it's never happened where we have come into sponsors and had to conduct some kind of massive sweep of the property. That has never happened nor would happen. This is one of those efforts that we are partners in this and we have identified values and really a common mission to really improve the quality of life. And these are folks that demand our respect and fairness and understanding and all of those things that we know and hold to be true with sponsors and homes for good.

Laura Johnson:

I think that all is very well said. And I think the thing that I would add is that sponsors is an entirely voluntary program and people have a pretty deep understanding prior to coming here of what the program expectations are, which includes in our transitional program a drug and alcohol-free housing environment. And so when people come here, they're, they're regularly committing to those program expectations. And then if there's a deviation from those program expectations, there's a question about whether they still feel that they're committed to being here and a conversation about that. It's not a one strike and you're out situation, but we're very concerned... Well, we're invested in the health and wellbeing of the broader community and I mean our transitional housing community.

And so making sure that we're taking a person-centered approach while also taking an approach that considers the wellbeing of the collective. With respect to the criminal justice involved folks mixed with non justice involved folks, what Paul said for our own housing is absolutely true. When people are referred to units in the community or to public housing or affordable housing that Homes For Good owns and operates, they're in the milieu. And there's no need for anyone to know that they have any sort of a conviction history. They're a resident just like any other resident who may or may not have a conviction history. You may have people down the street from you who have a conviction history and there wouldn't be any need for you to know that.

Paul Solomon:

And I'd like to take the opportunity here to just share that Homes For Good. And Laura mentioned this as somewhat unique among public housing agencies in the country, and I really see this as both a model and an opportunity for other public housing agencies to look at their screening criteria, their use of their prioritization of Section eight vouchers and their ability to partner with nonprofits like us. We don't have the in-house technical expertise to develop tax credit projects. Without that partnership, we just couldn't do it. We'd have to pay a private developer. So that relationship I think is critically important and I think there's just an opportunity for housing authorities in this country to do more.

Charley Francis:

Great. Thank you all so much. So it looks like we are just about out of time here. So before we wrap up, whether it's from you all or from Andre, does anybody have a 60-second last thing to say? I think so many communities are looking for what's, what are one or two things that we can do? But specifically if you sit within the criminal justice criminal legal system, what's the one next step that I can take to bring these systems together to talk with my housing partners? What is one impactful thing that I can do to move the needle on reentry housing? What advice would you offer?

Andre Ward:

I think one of the things is certainly engaging your city council members, et cetera, to be able to support with funding opportunities. The other thing that is somewhat related, I think the advocacy work is really important and eliminating barriers to people accessing housing who have conviction history to begin with. I think that's hugely problematic. That's not to put us all out of business, our colleagues are here to offer re-entry housing, but fundamentally we know that a part of the challenge is that people with conviction history are being discriminated against because they have history, they're unable to access housing. So those are two little things I would just offer and just really deeply grateful for all of my colleagues from the different states who are doing amazing work and certainly look forward to speaking with you all at some point in the future.

Jacob Fox:

Charles, I just asked briefly on the... We need sort of criminal justice advocates and professionals on housing authority boards. So local jurisdictions, whether it's a county, city, or in some cases a state actually appoint housing authority boards. Oftentimes it's hard to get people to apply for housing authority boards, but if you get people on your board that are passionate about being in service to people with conviction histories, that's going to move the dial, I think. So that would be one plug I would put in.

Will Engelhardt:

I would just put a plug forward the reverse to criminal justice advisory boards or criminal justice advisory councils oftentimes do not have housing representation on those councils and just seems like a missed opportunity, certainly for further coordination between those entities.

Paul Solomon:

And I touched on it in my last comment, but certainly if you're not already partnering with your local public housing agency, creating those opportunities to work with them on some level I think is critically important.

Charley Francis:

Well, that was a lot of great advice in a very short time. So thank you all. Thank you all again to everyone who joined us today. Thank you so much to all of our panelists for the great work that you're doing. Thank you to BJA, AIR, all our partners from the NRRC and everyone else that supported this webinar today and put everything together. We hope you learned something today and you're able to leave inspired, and we'll hope that you'll join us for so many of the other great events that we have scheduled for Second Chance Month. Thank you again so much, and this will conclude our webinar for today.

Paul Solomon:

Thank you. Bye-bye.

Charley Francis:

Thank you.

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