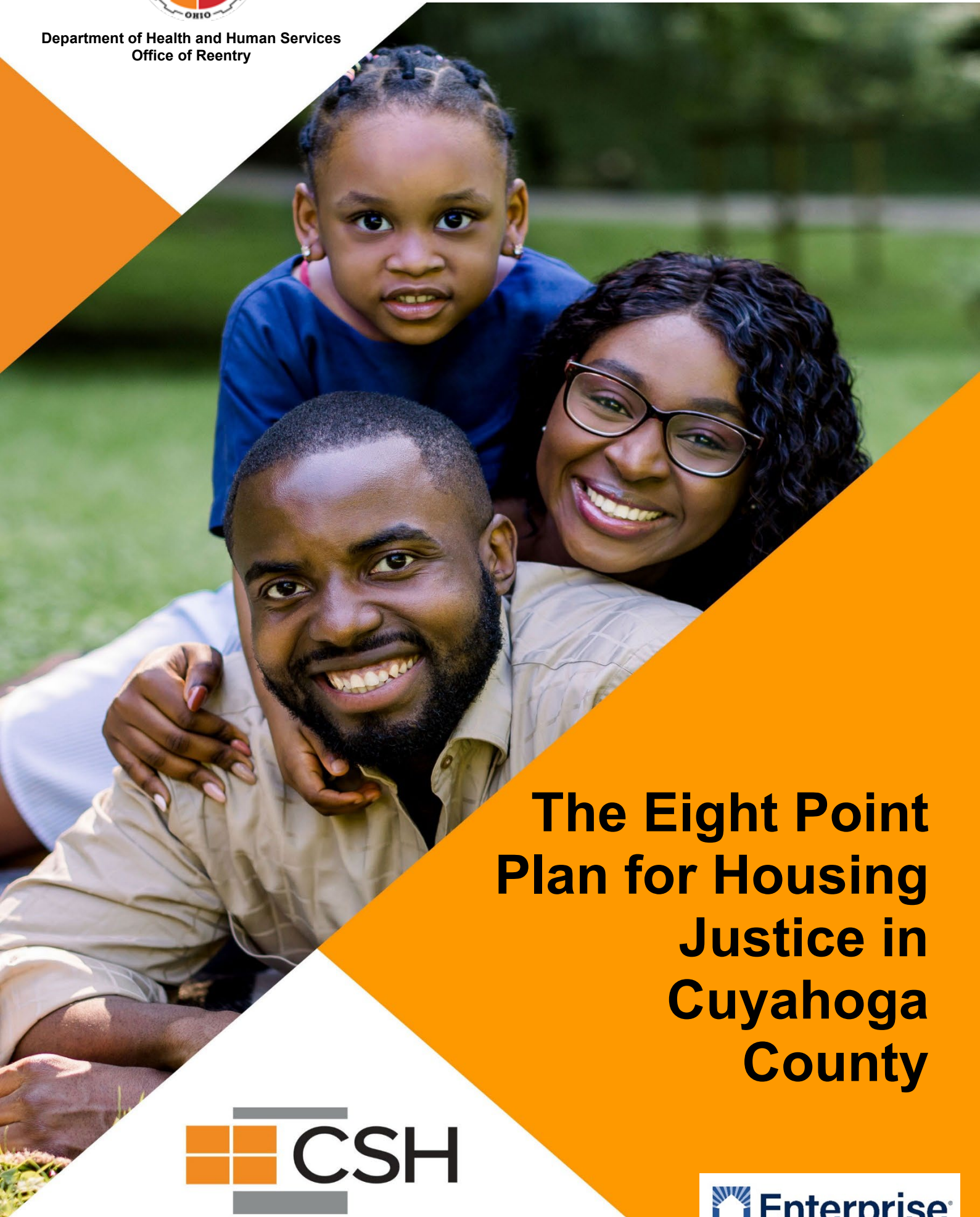




Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Reentry



# The Eight Point Plan for Housing Justice in Cuyahoga County





## INTRODUCTION

Homelessness and incarceration are two sides of the same coin as those with criminal records are ten times more likely to experience homelessness, and those who are homeless are more likely to be arrested.<sup>i</sup> The Cuyahoga County's high rate of incarceration, particularly of Black men, requires a housing-focused response to break this harmful cycle. A recent review of Tenant Selection Plans among affordable rental housing found that 78% had a long-term ban on those convicted of minor offenses, illustrating the lack of access to housing for the 20,000+ exiting incarceration in Cuyahoga County each year<sup>ii</sup>. Housing prices are escalating at unprecedented rates, and there is a fragmented, insufficiently resourced system to support successful reintegration. At the prompting of the Cuyahoga Office of Reentry, a dedicated Steering Committee, made up of those whose lives have been impacted by incarceration and housing professionals, explored the housing needs and gaps in Cuyahoga County, promising and evidence-based housing interventions, and developed an actionable 8-point plan to address the housing needs of individuals who have been incarcerated.



### Our Objective

Beginning in May 2022, a 13-member Steering Committee began meeting regularly to review quantitative and qualitative information about the housing needs of people who have been incarcerated in Cuyahoga County. Members reviewed and submitted ideas on evidence-based and promising housing interventions and heard from a focus group of individuals who were homeless and had criminal records, as well as professionals in the housing and social services industry about what a path toward equitable housing could look like in the County.

The Steering Committee included the following members: Ayonna Donald, Sharyna Cloud, James Walker, and Angelina Turner from Enterprise Community Partners, Leaders with Lived Experience: Damien Calvert, Mike Jones, Angela Outlaw and Tanisha Easterling; Elaine Gimmel, EDEN, Kevin Nowak, CHN Housing Partners, Michael Sering, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry and Katie Kitchin and Janee Jenkins from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH); (community consultants).

While addressing employment and income is an integral aspect of housing access and affordability, this plan focuses specifically on housing and the Steering Committee will support the Reentry Committee's recommendations on Employment and Income, developed separately.

Our objective was to:

- Build a shared understanding of the most up-to-date evidence on effective housing policies and interventions that enhance the quality of life of individuals and households involved in the justice system;
- Review and enhance data from a 2019 Housing Needs and Opportunities report by CSH;

- Lay the foundation for an evaluation framework for process and implementation measures;
- Scan financing tools and strategies to be pursued from federal, state, local and private sources; and
- Provide training to lived experts in public policy and advocacy to integrate their voices and experience into the plan development and oversight.

The Steering Committee elected to guide the work with the following values statement:

“In our journey of evolution, we must first know ourselves worthy, then we must be determined to plow forward with a no-surrender attitude, being innovative in how we apply our life's lessons in a way that adds integrity and hope.

1. We believe in:
  - Equality and equity
  - Housing as a human right; and
  - Housing as a foundation for opportunity and resiliency.
2. We are determined to take actions that are innovative and impactful.

The Steering Committee elected to frame this document as a Housing Justice plan rather than a Justice Housing plan to reflect our commitment to housing as a human right, and to work against the “othering” of those impacted by incarceration. We respectfully submit this 8-Point Plan for Housing Justice in Cuyahoga County and looks forward to being a part of the solutions.



# OVERVIEW

The Cuyahoga County Justice Housing Steering Committee recommends eight immediate and short-term actions to advance equitable housing policies that end or prevent homelessness, and help households build equity and assets. Additionally, the Plan identifies longer-term recommendations to continue building out a stronger, individually responsive set of housing and supports to promote successful reintegration. Altogether, the initiatives would serve thousands of people with justice backgrounds, leverage significant public and private investment, and reduce the harmful cycle of incarceration and homelessness in the County. Specifically, the Steering Committee seeks \$38 million to be utilized in the next three years for a combination of supportive and affordable housing initiatives, policy changes, and asset building. These efforts would directly serve 1,300 individuals and indirectly benefit tens of thousands of returning citizens, their families, and the community.





**“We all need housing. We (people with criminal records) need to have access to decent, affordable housing without being discriminated against and overlooked... Stable Housing is life changing.”**

**Richard D.**

# PART ONE: Assessing the Need for Housing

In 2019, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) worked with Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, Enterprise Community Partners, and numerous stakeholders to identify housing needs for individuals who have been incarcerated from and/or released to Cuyahoga County. For the 2022 Justice Housing Plan, CSH worked with the Steering Committee to revisit the assumptions that underpin the 2019 Needs Assessment; update the data; and solicit additional input from the community.

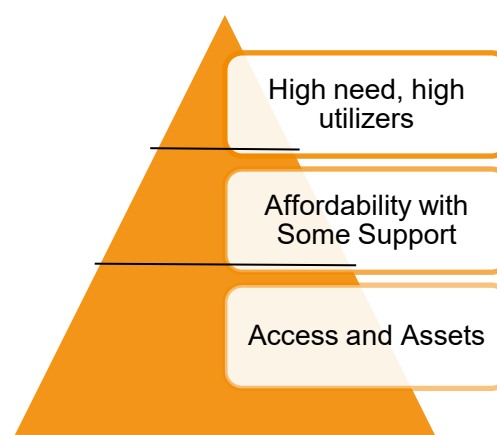
The Steering Committee sought answers to the following questions:

1. *How many people need help, based on the most recent information available?*
2. *What kind of housing help do people say they want?*
3. *What are evidence-based and promising housing interventions for justice-involved individuals who need housing?*
4. *What housing options already exist in the community?*

## ***How many people who experienced incarceration need help with housing?***

There were over 23,000 individuals released into Cuyahoga County from jail or prison in the most recent year. After updating data and assumptions from the 2019 Needs Assessment, the Steering Committee identified:

- 710 individuals per year need supportive housing
- 1,312 households need affordable housing with some support: and
- 4,500 households need system-wide improvements to open up access to housing options in the community such as less stringent background requirements, and the opportunity to build assets through home ownership.



## The Impact of Race/Racism in Housing Formerly Incarcerated Persons

Black men are significantly overrepresented in the incarcerated population. The racial makeup of the County is 30.5% Black, but 76% of those incarcerated are Black.<sup>iii</sup> In FY22, 18,108 black men from the County were incarcerated, which represents just over 12% of all black adult males residing in the county – incarcerated in a single year. This compares to less than 2% of all white males.<sup>iv</sup> Thus, Black men are six times as likely to be incarcerated as their white counterparts in the County. The connection between incarceration history and unemployment and homelessness is well known, and as this troubling trend has been noted for many years, the compounding impact on Black communities is devastating.<sup>v vi vii</sup>

Cuyahoga County also has the highest commitment rate to prison among all counties in the state, at 13.36% despite having only 10.6% of the state's population.<sup>viii ix</sup> While criminal

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justice system reform is outside the scope of this report, policies and practices that result in these incarceration rates are clearly a contributing factor to the significant housing needs of formerly incarcerated individuals in the County.

*Table 1*

DRC Incarcerations as of January 2022 (Source: *DRC.ohio.gov*)

	Male	Female	Black	White	Hispanic	Other	Total
Cuyahoga County Commitments	6,271	283	4,968 (76%)	1,185 (18%)	Unav.	381 (6%)	6,554
State Total	40,104	3,326	17,806 (44.4%)	20,654 (51.5%)	1,083 (2.7%)	561 (1.4%)	43,430

*Table 2*

Jail Data (Source: *County jail administrative data, calendar 2021*)

	Male	Female	Black	White	Other	Hispanic	Asian + Indian	Total
Annual County Jail Inmates	16,897	3,915	15,194	4,471	332	776	41	20,814

While County-specific release information is unavailable, using the percentage commitments from the County applied to annual releases, we estimated 2,707 people returned to Cuyahoga County from DRC Institutions in 2021. Commitments from Cuyahoga County represent 15.09% of all commitments in the state, (the highest rate in the state, and higher than the proportional population of 10.6%.<sup>x</sup> **Thus, combining jail releases and prison releases, approximately 23,521 people were released in the County in 2021.**

Data from Cuyahoga County's Office of Homeless Services show a small number (22) of the 5,085 individuals who entered homelessness (either shelter or unsheltered) in calendar 2021, report their prior sleeping location as prison or jail. We expect the actual number entering from jail and prison to be higher, however due to real or perceived barriers to accessing homeless services based on criminal backgrounds, individuals may choose not to voluntarily disclose this information. Other national studies have shown that while fewer than 10% exit incarceration directly into homelessness, a larger number (30%-35%) will experience a downward drift into homelessness after short-term stays in treatment, halfway houses, and with family and friends.<sup>xi</sup> This is supported by a data match of jail bookings in Cuyahoga County that found of the 30,299 jail bookings in 2018, 14,508 (48%) also had a record in the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS.)<sup>xii</sup>

This is similar to a recent jail, HMIS data analysis conducted in Baltimore which found 48% of all homeless individuals had at least one jail booking, and the average number of cases for individuals with a record was 7.96.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **What kind of housing do people say they want?**

The Justice Housing Steering Committee conducted three Focus Groups and a Community Forum in October and November 2022 to solicit additional input from those currently experiencing homelessness, or who had lived experience of incarceration and homelessness. While they didn't describe specific housing models, their comments focused on supports needed to access and maintain independent, permanent housing opportunities that are affordable and accessible to people with justice backgrounds. The supports needed

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that were specifically mentioned are:

- Dedicated staff to help shelter residents with criminal backgrounds navigate various housing and support needs that can be individually tailored, and at a caseload size small enough to be effective.
- Employment and job training;
- Additional units of housing available and affordable to people with justice backgrounds; and
- Ongoing support, including legal and credit building, to ensure successful housing outcomes and the potential to become homeowners.

Members of the Steering Committee, who have been directly impacted by incarceration and homelessness, similarly emphasized the importance of individualized advocacy and housing navigation support, employment opportunities, and home ownership/asset building.

In the 2019 “Service and Asset Mapping Report” prepared for the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry, focus group participants expressed housing as the most pressing challenge, and the need for an individualized, person-centered approach to support reintegration.<sup>xiv</sup> They noted that there were many programs competing with each other for funding, with complex eligibility requirements, and lack of clear information and guidance on how to access programs and services.

### ***What are evidence-based and promising housing interventions for justice-involved individuals who need housing?***

The Steering Committee reviewed evidence and summary information on thirteen different housing models, approaches, or specific programs. These models are set forth in Appendix 1.

The best evidence for housing-focused interventions that impact recidivism, housing stability, and individual wellbeing is supportive housing targeted to individuals with behavioral health needs. Other housing models have some evidence for treatment, employment, or recidivism, but there is little rigorous evidence to date supporting other interventions for the justice populations. Outside of the justice populations, the strongest evidence for individuals without disabling conditions is the Family Options Study which found strong evidence of positive impacts of affordable housing voucher-holders.<sup>xv</sup> [See housing models in Appendix 1].

While there are many programs and models that might be interesting, the best chance at scale and impact lies in building on the strengths in the County among the individuals directly impacted by incarceration and homelessness, and the non-profit housing and service providers that work to support reintegration.

### ***What housing options already exist in the community?***

In 2019, CSH reviewed data from the Office of Homeless Services and found that approximately 10% of those who enter supportive or rapid rehousing are coming directly from institutions, primarily from incarceration. Therefore, we used that percentage of existing housing stock in the homeless system as accessible to those with reentry backgrounds. We also reviewed asset map information recently conducted in the County and reached out to partners to update data in order to determine what is currently available. The following housing options are potentially available (e.g. as vacancies occur) for individuals with recent justice backgrounds in Cuyahoga County.



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Table 3

### Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

	Families	Singles
10% of existing PSH housing inventory	66	290
PSH housing units specifically serving returned citizens	20	95
PSH Subtotal	86	385

### Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

	Families	Singles
10% of existing RRH housing inventory HIC	37	53
Reentry Specific	2	5
RRH Subtotal	28	58

### Transitional, Halfway House

	Beds
Halfway House	739
Transitional Housing	71
Transitional, Halfway House Subtotal	810

### Recovery Housing, Ohio Recovery Housing certified and non-certified

	Beds
Recovery Housing	905

CSH has a research-based tool to estimate the number of individuals with High Need for permanent housing, which factors in rates of serious mental illness and homelessness applied to those incarcerated in a given jurisdiction. We considered data from housing assessments conducted on individuals in prison who were returning to Cuyahoga County, and projections on those who return to family and friends or are served in recovery housing and halfway houses. From these datasets, we determined that **in total, 710 households need supportive housing each year but don't receive it, and 1,312 households need moderate housing interventions, such as rapid rehousing, eviction prevention, or other affordable options with some support.**

# PART TWO: The Eight Point Plan for Housing Justice

## **Action Item 1: Accountable Entity**

Changing housing policies and investments toward a more equitable and just system requires significant and concerted effort and a credible voice in a leadership position. The Steering Committee acknowledges the importance of identifying an Accountable Entity to be tasked with the work of implementing this plan. The accountable entity should:

- Convene and coordinate interested organizations and people;
- Support the ongoing participation of individuals with lived experience, to elevate their voices and ensure their perspectives continue to guide and ground the work;
- Develop collaborative funding applications; and
- Communicate through a variety of means (web-based, in-person events, and social media) the progress against plan goals and measurable impacts, as well as lessons learned.

Anticipated funding required: \$750,000 for three years. Intermediary should be selected through an RFP process, once funds are secured.

## **Action Item 2: Evaluation**

The Steering Committee understands the wisdom of the saying “what gets measured gets done” and seeks to ensure that evaluation and progress reports are developed and provided to the community. As the Justice Housing Plan calls for multiple interventions and policy changes, as well as numerous organizations and new leadership, a process evaluation should be undertaken to help identify potential enhancements and course corrections throughout implementation. Evaluation of the impact of investments and the creation of a community dashboard are critically important to the potential success of this work.

Anticipated funding required: 10% of all new program funding (excludes capital funding) should be set aside for evaluation activities. These costs are assumed and included in the funding estimates throughout the Plan.

## **Action Item 3: Double Existing, Successful Supportive Housing Initiatives for High Need Individuals and Families**

In Cuyahoga County, as in many communities in Ohio, there are a small group of individuals that cycle through the jail, hospitals, and the shelter system on a repeated basis. Jail and police know them well, and they consume significant public resources all the while suffering immensely. CSH launched the Frequent User System Enhancement as a pilot in New York City in 2007.<sup>xvi</sup> FUSE is an evidence-based supportive housing intervention that provides long-term affordability and intensive home-based supports targeted to people frequently incarcerated across the country. There are more than 30 of these initiatives, including a small pilot that already exists in Cuyahoga County known as Returning Home Cuyahoga and a larger one in Franklin County, OH. The individuals are identified through data matching of jail and homeless data, and provided with supportive housing, combining voluntary but intensive home-based supports, with quality affordable housing units for which they sign a regular lease.

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There are also two statewide prison-focused supportive housing programs – and the Community Transition Program (CTP) and Returning Home Ohio (RHO) - targeting those exiting ODRC institutions without stable housing and who have high behavioral health needs. Eligible individuals are identified typically while incarcerated by staff at the DRC institutions or Community Linkage workers who assess and make referrals on behalf of individuals with behavioral health needs. The participants are connected to community-based providers and provided with affordable housing of their choice (they pay 30% of their income on rent and utilities), and intensive supportive services including advocacy, benefit counseling, employment assistance, and connections to a range of community supports, all delivered in a small caseload (15:1.) One of these programs, CTP, funded by Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Service, found recidivism to prison over three years was 7% for those housed, vs. 30.4% for all other DRC releases.<sup>xvii</sup>

Some findings from FUSE initiatives that were independently evaluated using quasi-experimental methodology, include:

- **Denver Social Impact Bond Evaluation:** Jail stays for treatment group were between 35% and 42% lower than a control group, prompting performance payments of \$5.1M by the City/County to repay investors.<sup>xviii</sup>
- **Coalition Lift.** Coalition Lift is a project in Miami-Dade County, FL, that provides single-site permanent supportive housing to 34 of the county's most frequent jail users. As of July 2019, the housed group had a 97% retention rate and overall public system cost savings of \$11,343 per person.<sup>xix</sup>
- **MeckFUSE Pilot Project Evaluation.** Mecklenburg County, North Carolina's MeckFUSE program demonstrated a two-year 90% retention rate and reductions in criminal justice system involvement post housing for participants. Using a matched comparison group, the research found that housed participants were arrested significantly less (4.5 vs. 9.3 arrests) and had much longer average times to arrest post-housing.<sup>xx</sup>

### Development and Leasing Strategy:

While the Steering Committee is aware of the significant shortage of affordable housing units in Cuyahoga County, zoning approvals and anticipated neighborhood opposition make siting large multi-family buildings for the target population extremely difficult. Furthermore, the Steering Committee reviewed research from the University of Cincinnati on the potential adverse impact of housing low-risk offenders with high-risk offenders – namely that individuals who score at lower criminogenic risk experience an increase in recidivism when they are in the same programming with higher risk individuals.<sup>xxi</sup> While the Committee has significant concerns about the reliance on criminogenic risk assessment tools given the likelihood of racial bias in the tool, members concurred that a scattered site, or smaller number of units in any single development would better serve those impacted by the criminal justice system.

In the first three years of implementation, the Steering Committee recommends:

- Secure capital funding for 45 supportive housing units (scattered site or small-scale projects with a max of 8 units in any building, sited in various municipalities throughout the County);
- Secure 50 ongoing rental subsidies from CMHA and the Continuum of Care (CoC), with an initial grant from the Office of Criminal Justice Services.
- Secure funding for home-based services from the CoC, and by expanding state funding allocations for the Returning Home Ohio and Community Transition Programs.
- Add 40 units/slots to Returning Home Cuyahoga through Ohio's American Rescue Plan Act funding, currently under consideration with the Ohio legislature.



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- Pursue tenancy support benefits through Ohio’s Medicaid state plan. Tenancy supports are available now in more than 23 states and serve to streamline and enhance Medicaid financing of home-based services for people with behavioral health and physical health challenges.<sup>xxii</sup>

Anticipated funding request: \$5.2M for the three-year period. An evaluation is already underway or anticipated for the supportive housing initiatives.

**The subpopulation breakout for the 90 households is expected to be:**

	Build	Lease
Individuals	31	32
Families	9	9
Youth	5	4
Total	45	45



Over the long-term, we estimate 710 supportive housing units are needed and recommend that the same approach – scattered sites primarily, half or fewer are developed, and the majority are leased, along with Medicaid tenancy supports, are pursued. Additionally, there should be a youth-specific supportive housing initiative pursued, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Youth Services. Veterans are not included in the subpopulations, given sufficient or near-sufficient resources made available through the VA Supportive Housing program.

### Identification and Targeting Supportive Housing:

For the FUSE-eligible households, these individuals would be identified through a data-matching process in partnership with the jail. EDEN’s Returning Home Cuyahoga could be scaled up to meet the need.

For those coming out of prison, existing Supportive Housing programs including Returning

## The Eight Point Plan for Housing Justice in Cuyahoga County

Home Ohio and the Community Transition Program could be scaled up. These programs have an existing and extensive referral process from the Institutions, Community Linkage workers, and local recovery providers, and a strong track record of success. The programs are briefly described on page 11 of this report.



### **Action Items 4-6: Address Housing Affordability and Support Needs for Individuals and Families**

For those exiting incarceration with more moderate level needs (e.g. under- or unemployment, low earnings, some health-related challenges, but have employment history and some supports), the Steering Committee recommends a focus on adding affordable housing options, rapid rehousing/transition in place, and eviction prevention. Treatment-oriented and transitional housing have high drop-out rates and aren't what people say they want. It also effectively pushes the problem down the road, as these individuals and families will still have to find a place to live when they exit. The Committee chose instead to focus on adding units and improving access to affordable housing, connecting people to community behavioral health, while holding those systems accountable for ensuring access and continuity of care.

Our needs assessment indicates some 1,312 households including families with children (296), single individuals (886), and young adults (130) need these resources each year. The strategy below reflects what the Steering Committee believes can be accomplished in the first three years of Plan implementation.

- 4) **Develop New Units:** Create or improve 105 new units of affordable and accessible housing. These units would be scattered site or low density, meaning no more than 8 units in a single site, or no more than 20% of a larger multi-family development, and would be sited in municipalities throughout the County. This may also include single family homes and duplexes. The Intermediary could initiate an RFP for willing developers to create new units and collaborate on related funding applications. Operating sources, to the extent required, could be secured through CMHA or a capitalized operating reserve if the capital funding source allows. Operating income could also be secured through higher income units in the larger development project.

## The Eight Point Plan for Housing Justice in Cuyahoga County

- 5) **Prevent Evictions:** Keep families in existing housing through one-time support and mediation, and by changing policies in federally assisted housing to allow those exiting incarceration to return to their families without violating lease agreements. This includes expanding existing mediation programs and continuing the ARPA-funded eviction prevention programs. Specifically, 150 households receive mediation, non-financial support; 180 households receive financial support to prevent eviction over the first three years.
- 6) **Unlock Existing Units:** Provide short-term funding and case management to house people coming out of jail and prison, who need only moderate levels of support. Specifically:
  - Provide Rapid Rehousing, which includes financial assistance such as security deposits or 1<sup>st</sup> month's rent payment and home-based supports (e.g. housing navigation, care coordination, advocacy, and other individually tailored services) to 100 people for an average of 12-months. Pursue partnerships with Medicaid managed care organizations for care coordination. Advocacy is also needed to expand eligibility for HUD-funded rapid rehousing programs so that individuals who would be eligible, but for their time incarcerated, can access these important programs.
  - Seek funding from Ohio's Risk Mitigation pool for property owners and incentive funds to support repairs to units and serve target population.
  - CMHA should replicate the New York City Housing Authority's Family Reunification program to enable family members to return from incarceration and rejoin their families in CMHA housing.

Anticipated funding request for Items 4-6: \$25,000,000 for capital gap expenses to preserve or create 140 units (including the 45 PSH units.) \$1.3M for capitalized operating reserves and Rapid Rehousing initiative.

### **Action Items 7 and 8: Access and Assets**

Most individuals exiting incarceration will find employment and reunite with family, with little or no intervention required. Nonetheless, these individuals likely still struggle with finding property owners willing to rent to them even when they can afford the rent, and fewer still are able to meet traditional bank's credit and background requirements to own homes and build assets. Members of our Steering Committee were especially passionate about identifying innovative strategies to address the access and asset-building needs of this large group of County residents, whose futures are of vital importance to all of Cuyahoga County. For this group, the Steering Committee recommends the following strategies:

- 7) **Pass Fair Chance Housing legislation and help people access housing in the community:** Prevent property owners and property managers from discriminating against individuals with criminal backgrounds by enacting legislation that expressly bars this common practice. The [A Never Ending Sentence](#) report issued in January 2020 after extensive work by a coalition in Cuyahoga County to gather local data and input, found that 78% of properties surveyed may reject tenants with misdemeanor convictions, including a majority that may disqualify applicants permanently for low-level offenses. This creates significant barriers to successful reentry. Legislation should be pursued to replicate Fair Chance Housing policies which were recently enacted in municipalities and statewide in New Jersey to address these discriminatory tenant selection and screening practices that disproportionately impact black household heads. (See also CSH's Fair Chance in Housing Act [Toolkit](#).) Additionally, leverage grant programs for housing counseling and reduce barriers to market-rate housing.



## The Eight Point Plan for Housing Justice in Cuyahoga County

8) **Building assets to promote resiliency and upward mobility:** Building assets and wealth can help families avoid homelessness and pursue educational and career goals. Recent research about the growing divide between white and black savings and assets, was illustrated in Enterprise’s report entitled “[A Tale of Two Markets: Equitable Housing Platform for Cuyahoga County.](#)” The Steering Committee proposes the following pilot initiatives to increase the opportunity to build assets and home ownership among households directly impacted by incarceration:

- Provide down payment assistance to individuals with justice backgrounds: Provide (as a grant) 10% of purchase price, up to \$20,000 to 30 households per year.
- Asset building through matched savings: Match household savings at a rate of 5:1 match (\$5 incentive for every \$1 contributed) up to \$5,000 per person.
- Pilot flexible credit programs: Establish a loan loss reserve to mitigate credit risk issues and encourage lending to households with credit and criminal background barriers.
- Dedicate a housing and financial capabilities counselor: Establish dedicated housing counselors to help re-entering individuals with budgeting, credit building, asset building, and housing counseling. Include in the funding application a micro-grant pool to help individuals pay for individual housing applications.
- Pilot an accelerated lease to own pilot: Develop or renovate eight single family homes with capital subsidy of \$40,000 per unit to support the affordability and appraisal gap. Households will be provided 3-5 years for credit repair and to save for down payment matching funds.

Cost Estimate for Action Items 7-8: \$4.95M for three years of programming. (Leverages \$16.7M in private capital.)

### **Cost estimate for the 8-Point Plan for Housing Justice**

The total cost estimate for the eight action items is \$37,645,000 and would directly serve 1,288 household heads. Thousands more justice involved individuals, and their family members, will be impacted through policy changes.

## CONCLUSION

Leveling the playing field for individuals who are exiting incarceration, their family members, and communities whose lives they touch, must be prioritized to promote Cuyahoga County as a thriving place to live. The eight action items and long-term objectives detailed in the plan will significantly reduce the suffering of people with behavioral health challenges cycling through incarceration, homelessness, and hospitals, while making smarter investments of public dollars. The housing recommendations will also decrease the recidivism rate for returning citizens, support them in stabilizing their lives for future success and increase public safety. It will contribute to reducing the gap of affordable housing that is accessible to people regardless of their justice histories; and it will help build assets and wealth so that future generations of residents can pursue career and education goals that are too often out of their reach. The inclusion of an accountable entity to implement the plan and the evaluation investments will be critically important to allow course corrections and scale up successful initiatives over time.

The Steering Committee is grateful for the opportunity to develop the 8-Point Plan which is a roadmap to achieve housing justice for a population of individuals who have direct experiences with both the criminal legal system and being homeless. The Steering Committee has shared responsibility of solution finding with those who will be most impacted by the work and humbled by the obligation to create a more just society in the future of Cuyahoga County.



# APPENDIX ONE

## APPENDIX ONE: HOUSING MODEL REVIEW

**Table 1. A Continuum of Supports for Housing the Justice-Involved**

	Short/Long Term	Target Population	Service Needs
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)</b>	Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent users of jail/homeless/other systems</li> <li>• People with long term homeless histories</li> <li>• People with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders</li> </ul>	Residents of PSH need access to regular, flexible case management and connection to a range of services they may need. These supports are not time-limited and are tailored to the needs of the tenant.
<b>Transitional Housing (TH)</b>	Short term – 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic violence victims</li> <li>• Youth, such as those experiencing homelessness and/or aging out of foster care.</li> <li>• Veterans (esp. those without co-occurring disorders)</li> <li>• Families that need short term rental assistance</li> <li>• People exiting prison without co-occurring disorders</li> </ul>	<p>TH services can be more intensive and focused on those skills needed to live independently such as employment supports, life skills, and substance use treatment.</p> <p>Can also be operated as a Transition In Place model, where tenants take over the lease.</p>
<b>Rapid Rehousing (RRH)</b>	Short or medium term – three to twenty-four months of rental assistance and home-based case management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower-risk individuals with employment histories and moderate levels of service need</li> <li>• Individuals and parents who are homeless and need assistance connecting to landlords or overcoming credit and criminal barriers to market housing</li> </ul>	RRH participants benefit from employment focused services and connections to community services for longer-term supports once assistance ends.
<b>Halfway Houses/ Community Based Correctional Facilities</b>	Short term – based on sentencing and program completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People exiting prison with low to moderate risk of re-offense.</li> <li>• People without mental health diagnoses</li> <li>• People without co-occurring disorders</li> </ul>	Services levels can vary, but generally include peer supports, substance use treatment and employment services. These housing models have stricter house rules, such as staff on site and curfews.
<b>Sober Living Homes/ Recovery Housing</b>	Short term – at least 6 months, potentially longer but rent payments needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probationers and parolees with alcohol and/or drug problems with high recovery capital</li> <li>• People without co-occurring mental health disorders along with substance use treatment needs.</li> <li>• People without histories of physical or sexual abuse</li> </ul>	Motivational interviewing has been proven to help improve both substance and criminal justice outcomes for probationers and parolees
<b>Shared Housing</b>	Short term – 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals with non-violent backgrounds and moderate service needs.</li> </ul>	This model is relatively new for justice populations but involves support from community navigators.



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**Permanent Supportive Housing:** According to HUD's Housing Inventory Chart for 2020, the County's homeless system, known as the Continuum of Care (CoC), has 2,976 permanent supportive housing units for individuals without accompanying children and 655 units for households with children.<sup>xxiii</sup> These CoC PSH units are typically reserved for individuals who meet HUD's definition of chronically homeless. Extensive research, including at least seven random assignment/control trials have found significant benefits for justice-involved populations including reduced recidivism and increased housing stability. There are three reentry supportive housing programs operating in Cuyahoga County, ODRC's Returning Home Ohio (RHO) and OMHAS's Community Transition Program (CTP) (both housing programs are managed by CSH), as well as EDEN/Frontline's Returning Home Cuyahoga, which houses high utilizers of the County jail. A total of 105 PSH units are currently funded in the County through CTP and RHO for individuals exiting prison with behavioral health disorders.

**Rapid Rehousing:** The County also has 278 rapid rehousing slots for individuals and 201 rapid rehousing slots for families.<sup>xxiv</sup> While there have not been rigorous evaluations of rapid rehousing for those with justice backgrounds, Ohio has had success with a statewide housing initiative, CTP, that provides both supportive and rapid rehousing to individuals exiting state prison with a history of substance abuse. Those utilizing rapid rehousing had a 93% success rate, (most individuals took over their lease after an average of five months of rental assistance), and only 4% exited to incarceration (prison or jail.)<sup>xxv</sup> We estimate 10% of the PSH units and Rapid Rehousing slots are available to individuals exiting incarceration, based on the feedback from local providers. As the CoC is required to prioritize individuals who are residing unsheltered or are in emergency shelter, and there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs of these individuals, only individuals who exited incarceration and later became literally homeless are served in the CoC PSH and RRH programs. There are 14 RRH slots for the CTP program in Cuyahoga County.

**Halfway Houses and Transitional Housing/Transition In Place:** According to data from ODRC and responses to CSH's inventory survey, there are 816 Halfway House or Transitional Housing beds in the County. Among these beds are those operated by the Salvation Army, CATS, Oriana House, Coventry House, Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), and the City Mission. Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries operates a Transition In Place model through which the non-profit initially master leases units for individuals with challenging criminal backgrounds, then places tenants in the units instead of shelter and works with the tenants to take over the lease. This model has been found to reduce shelter reliance for those served.

**Recovery Housing:** Ohio Recovery Housing (ORH) reports there are currently 905 beds of recovery housing. The recovery housing beds are available to a broad range of individuals in recovery, not just those exiting incarceration. Further, there may be a low demand for this particular housing type for individuals exiting incarceration, given the experience with CTP during which just 20 out of 342 participants opted for this intervention when offered a choice between rapid and recovery housing. Evaluations have found positive impacts on treatment participation and income, but the model has not been rigorously evaluated for justice-populations or people experiencing homelessness.

**Shared Housing:** A newer approach involves placing individuals exiting prison in homeowners' extra rooms or space within their homes. The Homecoming Project conducts background screening and interest matching to pair individuals with willing homeowners and provides the support of community navigators for a period of 6-months. No evaluations have yet been conducted on this model.

### **OTHER MODELS REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED, NOT SPECIFIC TO JUSTICE-INVOLVED**

**Affordable Housing:** There are nearly 40,000 affordable housing units in Cuyahoga County. This includes units under affordability restrictions through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, public housing units (9,152) and housing choice vouchers (15,419) through CMHA. There are restrictions on criminal backgrounds for all affordable units in the County and there is a shortage of roughly 40,000 affordable units in the County for extremely low-income households.<sup>xxvi</sup> CMHA has made strides to open its housing units to more individuals with criminal backgrounds in the County and currently allows individuals convicted of fourteen major felony offenses to apply for housing after a year of completing their sentence and any supervision period.

While not focused on individuals who have been incarcerated, the Family Options Study found that the best predictor of avoiding homelessness and improving outcomes for families was the presence of a housing choice voucher.<sup>xxvii</sup>

**Direct Cash Transfer/Flexible Subsidy programs:** This approach can take many forms, but involves cash transfers or pooled funding accessible to individuals for a range of needs that may include housing, transportation, or other challenges facing families and households. LMM and Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless utilized this approach to serve 400 individuals that were exiting shelter or unsheltered. They were given \$500 in exchange for an agreement not to return to shelter within 60 days. Only 3% returned as of 180 days. Additional evaluations are being conducted. There are other similar flexible funding initiatives that have been evaluated with people at risk of eviction after receiving Rapid Rehousing assistance or periods of homelessness that have also been found to be effective.<sup>xxviii</sup>

**Home Ownership:** A primary source of wealth for the majority of American households is the equity in their home. Given discriminatory housing practices, too many Black families have been shut out of home ownership.<sup>xxix</sup> Home ownership programs typically exclude individuals with poor or no credit history, which makes this path to asset-building very difficult for individuals who have been incarcerated. CHN's Lease to Own program offers a promising approach for people who can build skills and savings to become a homeowner, even for those with credit and background challenges.

**Asset Matching and Renter Equity:** There are several approaches to assisting low-income families grow savings and assets, including Individual Development Accounts and other asset matching programs. Evidence is mixed on their effectiveness, with average savings rates of only 1.2%, however the approach to helping renters build assets is growing in popularity in Ohio.<sup>xxx</sup>

# APPENDIX TWO

## INITIAL THREE YEARS

### Accountability and Evaluation

Funding Request	Approach	Milestones
\$750,000	<p>An accountable entity or intermediary is identified to ensure the Justice Housing Plan is initiated and fulfilled. Entity will be responsible for convening partners, putting forward collaborative funding applications, and supporting ongoing engagement of lived experts.</p> <p>Baseline data, progress, and outcomes must be shared with all those investing time and energy in changing outcomes in the County. This promotes accountability and ensures progress, as well as meets the demand for progress among impacted persons and their families and advocates.</p>	<p>RFP to select intermediary, or staff appointed</p> <p>Staff collect baseline and progress data. Communications resources to develop and disseminate materials.</p> <p>Individuals and families directly impacted by incarceration are engaged and supported.</p>
Up to 10% of new program awards	<p>Set-aside up to 10% of new program funding (excludes capital funding) to initiate evaluations that collect and report on outcomes and impact of any new initiatives. (Note that RHO and CTP are currently being evaluated through a Randomized Control Trial in partnership with Notre Dame and the Department of Justice.) Evaluation activities will include a process evaluation as an embedded function in the collaborative. A logic model will be developed by the Intermediary and evaluator(s) to guide and measure progress and impacts.</p>	<p>New grant applications fulfilling elements of the Justice Housing Plan are submitted and include a set-aside of funds for evaluation.</p>



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### Develop New Units

Funding Request	Approach	Milestones
\$10M from Affordable Housing Gap Financing under City ARPA, or other gap source.	Initiate an RFP for willing developers to create new units in a range of scattered site approaches (e.g. no more than 8 units in a single site, or no more than 20% of multi-family developments; possibilities also include single family and duplexes.) The intermediary will work with interested partners to collaborate on funding applications. Operating sources, to the extent required, to be secured from CMHA, and/or a capitalized operating reserve established through HOME-ARPA program, or other eligible sources including operating income from mixed income developments in set-aside projects.	RFP initiated by City of Cleveland by Spring 2023. Funds must be awarded in time to expend all funds by 12/31/25. 60 units produced
\$15M from Cuyahoga County ARPA	Same as above	90 units produced
TBD from OHFA sources, including LIHTC 9%, National Housing Trust Fund and State SLFRF	Secure commitments from developers and non-profit partners that meet experience and capacity requirements to develop housing.	Annually submit at least one project application that will create 30 units per year; additional units included in the above as the OHFA funds would be leverage for City/County ARPA.  Of the 150 new units, 105 are for moderate need individuals and 45 are supportive housing.

### Double Successful Pilots like Returning Home Cuyahoga (RHC), OMHAS's Community Transition Program (CTP), and ODRC's Returning Home Ohio (RHO)

Funding Request	Approach	Milestones
Capital funding for 45 units described in Develop Units section.	Intermediary and partner collaborative will identify potential projects to put forward in various capital rounds.	New units added to the pre-development pipeline by 12/31/2023.
\$1.35M from CMHA, State	EDEN/Frontline secure 25 vouchers from CMHA; Referrals through existing process through state/CSH.	CMHA voucher request Spring 2023. RHO expansion request submitted Spring 2023
\$1.35M, from CoC, State	EDEN/Frontline secure 25 vouchers from CoC, after initial funding through OCJS	OCJS application submitted in October 2022; CoC application to be developed by June 2023; CTP expansion request submitted Spring 2023, if funding not secured through OCJS.
\$2.5M from Ohio's State and Local Fiscal Recovery FUSE	Seed funding for first three years of RHC expansion. Rental	Legislation to be introduced by end of calendar year 2022;

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replication pilot pool for RHC expansion	assistance can be provided for use in newly developed units or through scattered site leases.	pilots could be funded by June 2023.
(\$250,000 from FUSE Replication noted above) Resource and Referral Staff to work with FUSE participants.	Partner with Cuyahoga County Jail staff to identify FUSE eligible individuals and facilitate the referral and enrollment process.	Funding secured by June 2023. Sustainable sources identified by December 2025.

### Eviction Prevention

Funding Request	Approach	Milestones
\$1.3M for a three-year period	Enhance existing mediation resources for reentry population. Private foundation grant request; ESG funding application	Funding applications are submitted by December 2023; programs are operational by June 2024.

### Unlocking Existing Units

Funding Request	Approach	Milestones
\$1.55M over three years	Rapid Rehousing e.g., Justice Rapid Rehousing in Columbus. Potential sources include County/City CDBG, HUD Nofa, and private sources.	Funding applications are submitted by June 2024 and operational by January 1, 2025.
N/A Advocacy only	Fair Chance Housing legislation or legislation to reduce barriers to privately-owned units with HUD subsidy; scoring incentives on capital funding for minimal background requirements.	Legislation introduced in calendar year 2023.
N/A In-kind contributions from CMHA	NYCHA Family Reunification pilot replication	CMHA launches program by December 2023. Outcome reports provided by March 2025.

### Home Ownership and Asset Building

Funding Request	Approach	Milestones
\$4.95M for three-years' of programming. (Leverages \$16.7M in private capital.)	<b>Pilot Wealth Building Program</b> – Comprehensive wealth building program centered on homeownership: Dedicated housing counselor position, and grant funds for housing applications and credit reports/repair. Intermediary supports an application for County/City/HUD Housing Counseling funding rounds and advances employment opportunity for individuals with backgrounds. Down payment assistance – 10% of purchase price, up to \$20,000. 30 holds/year, for \$1.65M, which includes evaluation support and administrative costs. Asset building through matched	Funding secured by December 2023 and programs operational by June 2024. Outcome data published by Spring 2025.

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	<p>savings – up to \$5,000/person in 5:1 match (\$5 incentive for every \$1 contributed) = \$1.8M</p> <p>Pilot flexible credit programs – loan loss reserve to mitigate credit risk issues. 20% of 30 mortgages for \$576,000</p> <p>Dedicated housing and financial capabilities counseling - \$75,000 per year – focused on budgeting, credit building, asset building, and housing counseling. Total for three years plus evaluation = \$240,000</p> <p><u>Accelerated lease to own pilot:</u> 8 single family homes developed or renovated with capital subsidy of \$40,000/unit to support affordability and appraisal gap; households have 3-5 years for credit repair and to save for down payment matching funds. Capital subsidy \$320,000. Operating reserve \$250,000. Total, with admin and eval: \$684,000.</p>	
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### ACRONYMS USED:

CoC = Local Continuum of Care, administered by the County's Office of Homeless Services

CMHA = Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority

ESG = Emergency Solutions Grant

FUSE = Frequent Users System Enhancement, a supportive housing model that involves data matching to identify individuals cycling through jail and homeless systems.

HUD = US Department of Housing and Urban Development

JRR = Justice Rapid Rehousing, a program operating in Franklin County jail

NYCHA = New York City Housing Authority

OHS = Office of Homeless Services

OOR = Office of Reentry

TCAP = Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison



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- <sup>vii</sup> Crutchfield, [The Effects of Mass Incarceration on Communities of Color \(issues.org\)](#)
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- <sup>ix</sup> US Census Bureau, ACS Estimates July 2021
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- <sup>xiii</sup> Roberts, H. Journey to Jobs: Understanding Barriers to Employment for Homeless Individuals, 2017.
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xxvii HUD's Family Options Study [The Family Options Study | HUD USER](#)

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xxx [Individual Development Accounts: a Vehicle for Low-Income Asset Building and Homeownership | HUD USER](#); ['Renter Equity' Programs Gain Traction in Cincinnati, Cleveland | Planetizen News](#)

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