

Returning Home — Ohio

Demonstrating Success

Planned Outcomes

The *Returning Home — Ohio* pilot includes an evaluation component which is being conducted by The Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center. The evaluation will assess the impacts of and cost benefits associated with the pilot; specifically, the effectiveness of the pilot in reducing recidivism, preventing discharge into homelessness, and reducing the costs associated with multiple service use across systems.

Policy Reforms Achieved

To date, some policy reforms have already been achieved, including ODRC's funding of the supportive housing pilot. Although ODRC has a history of funding community-based programs — such as halfway houses and independent housing — this is the first time the department has provided funding for permanent housing and services, and the first time for a program that serves individuals not under supervision by ODRC. Additionally, the creation of a rental subsidy program for this population within the Ohio Housing Finance Agency represented a significant policy change and improvement and collaboration across public agencies.

Policy Implications and Next Steps

As the pilot proceeds, ODRC, CSH, and other stakeholders will identify additional policy changes to be pursued based on the experience and success of the pilot; these discussions will be informed by the research and evaluation being conducted by The Urban Institute. In addition, the pilot program design, implementation, and goals are being shared through CSH-sponsored events — such as the CSH Midwest Re-entry Forum — and evaluation results will also be disseminated widely, creating opportunity nationwide implications as well.

Overview of the Initiative

Initiative Design and Costs

In February 2007, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) and the Corporation for Supportive Housing began implementation of a new supportive housing initiative, *Returning Home — Ohio*. The initiative is aimed at preventing homelessness and reducing recidivism for individuals returning to Ohio's communities from state prisons. Through this pilot, ODRC and CSH are working with select nonprofit organizations to demonstrate how supportive housing can reduce an offender's return to the criminal justice system and prevent homelessness. Over the course of the pilot, ODRC will provide \$3.2 million for rental subsidies, tenant assistance, case management, program evaluation, and project management.

CSH and ODRC are working with eight nonprofit organizations in five communities to identify a minimum of 84 units of housing for single adults and families. Providers use a mix of scattered-site and single-site housing and also coordinate with community-based organizations for additional services and resources.

Of the 96 individuals accepted to date, 92 actually moved into housing. As of March 2009, 51 individuals (55%) were in housing; 20 individuals (22%) have exited with positive outcomes; 11 individuals (12%) have been terminated with negative outcomes; and five individuals (5%) have exited for other reasons (e.g. death, treatment program, nursing home).

Target Population

The target population includes people released from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction who are identified as chronically homeless or at high risk to become homeless. Priority is given to people identified as being most likely to require housing linked to support services in order to maintain housing. This includes, but is not limited to, offenders who are seriously mentally ill, have a developmental disability, severe addiction, co-occurring disorders, or who have custody of minor children.

Innovative Housing Resources

CSH, in collaboration with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), has established a rental subsidy program to assist *Returning Home — Ohio* tenants who may require rental subsidy for an indeterminate amount of time beyond the pilot period. This is the first such rent subsidy program established in the state of Ohio and will provide ongoing rental assistance to participants as needed.



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Program Partners

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

- Bureau of Community Sanctions
- Office of Policy and Offender Reentry
- Office of Prisons

The Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center

Ohio Department of Mental Health

Ohio Housing Finance Agency

Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services

Eight non-profit providers:

- Amethyst, Inc.
- EDEN, Inc.
- Mental Health Services, Inc.
- Miami Valley Housing Opportunities, Inc.
- Neighborhood Properties, Inc.
- Volunteers of America NW Ohio
- Volunteers of America Ohio River Valley
- YMCA of Central Ohio

Partnership Between Criminal Justice and Other Public Systems

This pilot is strengthening and enhancing partnerships between the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and other state departments — especially the Departments of Mental Health (ODMH) and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) — to address the needs of people involved in the criminal justice system by providing staff and programming within prisons and in the community to address peoples' mental health and substance abuse needs. ODMH is also providing \$20,000 toward the evaluation

for the pilot. A new partnership with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency has been established as a result of the pilot, whereby the OHFA is designing and will administer a rental subsidy program to assist *Returning Home* tenants with long-term subsidy needs.

Research Advisory Committee

In collaboration with CSH, ODRC, and The Urban Institute, ODMH, ODADAS, and OHFA participate on the *Returning Home — Ohio*, Ohio Research Advisory Committee. The Committee provides assistance to The Urban Institute on information gathering and data sharing; provides CSH and the Urban Institute assistance and guidance on the dissemination of evaluation findings; and assists in ensuring that the evaluation is fully funded.

Managing the Partnership

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's Bureau of Community Sanctions (BCS), is responsible for oversight and management of the pilot. CSH subcontracts with the nonprofit providers, performs grant administration, and conducts compliance monitoring visits. In addition, CSH coordinates and conducts quarterly meetings between the nonprofit providers and ODRC institution staff. CSH also manages the relationship with The Urban Institute.

Innovations and New Approaches

This is the first community-based housing program offered by the ODRC that does not require individuals to be on supervision upon release from the institution. This is also the first permanent housing program funded by the department.

About CSH and the *Returning Home* Initiative

The **Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)** is a national non-profit organization and community development financial institution that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. Founded in 1991, CSH advances its mission by providing advocacy, expertise, leadership, and financial resources to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing. CSH seeks to help create an expanded supply of supportive housing for people, including single adults, families with children, and young adults, who have extremely low-incomes, who have disabling conditions, and/or face other significant challenges that place them at on-going risk of homelessness.

CSH's national *Returning Home* Initiative aims to end the cycle of incarceration and homelessness that thousands of people face by engaging the criminal justice systems and integrating the efforts of housing, human service, corrections, and other agencies. *Returning Home* focuses on better serving people with histories of homelessness and incarceration by placing them to supportive housing.



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