



# System Change Accomplishments of the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Returning Home Initiative

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### **Reentry Research at the Urban Institute**

In 2000, the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute launched an ongoing inquiry into prisoner reentry research to better understand the pathways of successful reintegration, the social and fiscal costs of current policies, and the impacts of incarceration and reentry on individuals, families, and communities. Over the past ten years, the Urban Institute's reentry research portfolio has informed a broad set of policy and practice discussions about the challenges facing former prisoners. The Institute's research includes a range of studies, from rigorous program evaluations to strategic planning partnerships with state and local jurisdictions. More information can be found at <http://www.urban.org/justice>.

### **Corporation for Supportive Housing**

The Corporation for Supportive Housing is a national nonprofit organization and community development financial institution that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. For several years, CSH has been working closely with a coalition of national organizations interested in criminal justice reform and is a strong advocate for reducing recidivism among people re-entering communities at high risk of homelessness by providing supportive housing.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

## Introduction

In 2001, the Corporation for Supportive Housing began exploring how to promote supportive housing for individuals returning to the community from incarceration. Supportive housing for the reentry population is designed for individuals with chronic health challenges who were homeless upon entry to prison or jail or at risk of homelessness upon release. In general, supportive housing is the combination of permanent affordable housing and supportive services aimed at helping residents maintain housing stability. Typically, supportive housing services include coordinated case management, health and mental health services, substance abuse treatment and recovery, vocational and employment services, tenant advocacy, and training in money management and life skills. Research has shown that individuals with histories of incarceration, homelessness, mental illnesses, or other disabilities often cycle through the criminal justice and homelessness systems multiple times and may also frequently use crisis health and mental health services (Burt and Anderson 2005; Hall, Burt, Roman, and Fontaine 2009; Metraux and Culhane 2004). Given the success of supportive housing models in increasing the residential stability of persons with homeless and mental health histories (Burt and Anderson 2005; Culhane, Metraux, and Hadley 2002; Culhane, Parker, Poppe, Gross, and Sykes 2007), expanding these programs to target those released from incarceration may be a way to break the costly cycle of incarceration, homelessness, and emergency service utilization.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) designated a staff person from their New York City Office whose primary responsibility was to develop a reentry supportive housing initiative nationwide. After using small grants to strategize and support the development of a larger initiative, CSH launched its Returning Home Initiative with a \$6 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and additional support from the Open Society Institute, the Conrad N. Hilton and JEHT Foundations in the spring of 2006. The Returning Home Initiative (RHI) has two goals. First, it is dedicated to establishing permanent supportive housing (PSH) as an essential component of reintegrating formerly incarcerated persons with histories of disabilities and housing instability into their communities. Second, it is dedicated to initiating and implementing public policy changes that strengthen the integration and coordination of the corrections, housing, mental health, and human service systems. As part of the first goal, the RHI seeks to: 1) develop successful supportive housing models tailored to formerly incarcerated persons; 2) facilitate the placement of 1,000 formerly incarcerated persons into supportive housing units; and 3) document decreased recidivism rates of the formerly incarcerated persons who live in supportive housing compared to a similar group of formerly incarcerated persons who do not receive supportive housing. To initiate and implement public policy changes as part of the second goal, the RHI engages local and national stakeholders, such as supportive housing providers, public administrators, and elected officials, through an array of activities.

The initial geographic focus of the RHI was the nation's three largest cities—New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Recently, CSH has expanded its efforts to several other states, including Connecticut, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and Washington as well as the District of Columbia. In November 2006, CSH asked the Urban Institute (UI) to assess the process of system change stimulated by the RHI activities in New York, Los Angeles,

and Chicago, the three communities that received the most significant RHI investment. This report summarizes the influence of the RHI activities in these three communities based on three site visits to each city between 2007 and 2009 and ongoing conversations with the RHI program manager in each site who leads and coordinates the RHI activities. It focuses on changes in system functioning and interagency collaboration that have come about, at least in part, through the facilitation and encouragement of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff funded with the RHI resources. In addition, this report highlights the RHI activities taking place in some of the other jurisdictions listed above. Using this information, the report identifies challenges and lessons learned from the RHI to date and provides a summary of the influence of the RHI activities on system change.

System change is an evolving, iterative process that can take years. System change is especially challenging in the case of reentry housing since many corrections departments have had limited responsibility for what happens outside the prison or jail facility for decades. While corrections departments have historically funded temporary or transitional housing (e.g., halfway houses), long-term housing solutions have not been part of their suite of services. Given this history, a corrections department that works with public systems to provide supportive housing is undertaking a major shift in its operating paradigm that may also lead to changes in how its resources are allocated. Such changes take time to work out. Yet, facilitating these changes is a critical way that the RHI intends to meet its goals. It seeks to improve financial integration and policy coordination among corrections, housing, and human service agencies, document cost savings to participating corrections and other systems, and demonstrate on a national scale the power of supportive housing as a solution to the complex needs of formerly incarcerated persons with chronic health and mental health issues.

## The Returning Home Initiative as a System Change Agent

Reentry is one of today's most pressing policy issues. More than 730,000 prisoners are released from federal and state prisons annually (Sabol, West, and Cooper 2009) and another 9 million people exit jail each year (Beck 2006). These individuals face many obstacles to successful reintegration into their communities (see Travis and Visher 2005 for review). In particular, safe and affordable housing has been documented as a serious barrier to successful reentry (Metraux, Roman, and Cho 2007; Roman and Travis 2006). Local and state governments have experienced difficulties in overcoming this barrier because service systems are often fragmented and isolated, creating a complex landscape in which no single agency is responsible for providing housing to those leaving prisons and jails (Cho, Gary, Ball, and Ladov 2002; Roman and Travis 2006). Furthermore, individuals released from incarceration with mental illness are often the ones in

need of, but unable to obtain, housing on their own because the complexity of their problems (e.g., health, mental health, substance abuse, and victimization) requires multiple agency resources and comprehensive, expensive solutions (McNiel and Binder 2005). As a result, these "hard to house" individuals are likely to fall through the cracks of fragmented service systems with limited budgets. Furthermore, communities create obstacles to possible solutions due to perceptions of safety and fear. Particularly troubling for the criminal justice system is recent research showing that the cost of serving individuals with a mental illness has been shifting heavily toward jails and away from mental health systems (Domino, Norton, Morrissey, and Thaker 2004).

Supportive housing has gained considerable attention in the last ten years as a promising intervention for homeless persons with major disabilities. Research studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in increasing residential stability and decreasing shelter use, incarceration, inpatient hospital stays, and visits to the emergency room and their associated costs (see Culhane et al. 2007 for review). It is a promising model for the part of the reentry population that faces multiple barriers and disabilities, including homelessness. Since reentry supportive housing programs must be prepared to provide a range of services, developing and operating them involves a high degree of service integration among service providers, property owners and managers, and the array of housing, mental health, and human service agencies that fund these projects. Promoting more integrated systems is often needed to accomplish the level of service integration that the disabled reentry population requires. Although the existing target population for supportive housing—people with a history of homelessness, mental illness, and other disabilities—may also have a history of incarceration (Culhane et al. 2002; Metraux and Culhane 2004, 2006; Zugazawa 2004), the RHI focuses on people who cycle between incarceration and homelessness. A critical component of the RHI strategy is to work with corrections systems to develop strategies and mechanisms for linking incarcerated persons to supportive housing upon release and to help fund or develop supportive housing that is dedicated to this reentry population.

Although many jurisdictions recognize the challenge of reentry, legislatures, government agencies, and community organizations struggle to prioritize or dedicate resources to provide supportive housing for criminal justice system-involved persons with disabilities. Changing and integrating systems is always difficult. Changing systems in ways that benefit the reentry population is especially complex due to the issues the reentry population faces and the number of government and community-based agencies necessary to respond to these issues. System change demands careful oversight, innovation, and frequent assessment and feedback. Thus, the central focus of the RHI is on system change at the state and local level. Through the RHI, CSH has conceptualized and operationalized the key efforts necessary to create an infrastructure that enables access

to supportive housing for formerly incarcerated people, through collaborations between corrections agencies and housing/service providers.

## Characterizing System Change

To describe the level and direction of system change brought about by the RHI and the staff funded with these resources, we use the framework developed by CSH through its work on another initiative: Taking Health Care Home. In Taking Health Care Home, CSH developed several frameworks to describe system change; for this report we use two: the “levels of change” framework from *Taking Healthcare Home: Impact of System Change Efforts at the Two-Year Mark* (Burt and Anderson 2005) and the “building block” framework from *Laying a New Foundation* (Grieff, Proscio, and Wilkins 2003). Research on Taking Health Care Home indicates the importance of looking at several different, but equally important, levels to see where “integration” or “system change” is happening. Further, the Taking Health Care Home evaluation demonstrates the importance of recognizing that change at any one of these levels may have a tenuous relationship to change on other levels. Therefore, it is necessary to note changes within each level of change and how changes across levels could be brought together to form a coherent whole, that is, a significantly altered system.

To explore where integration and coordination is happening in the three communities that received the most significant RHI investment, we examined the following four levels where change must occur:

- **Local Elected Officials**—City, county, and state politicians, such as mayors, county council representatives, state legislators, and governors who need to propose and then champion new money, joint contracting options, altered or extended eligibility, and other enabling legislation for PSH.
- **Public Agency Administrators**—Agency heads and the directors of key departments within public agencies who need to come together to fund and support PSH.
- **PSH Providers and Developers**—Housing developers, managers, and service agencies, which are usually but not always nonprofit, who need to work together to produce and run PSH.
- **People and Units**—People who need PSH and the projects that have units available.

To indicate what happened at each of the four levels to promote increased residential stability among formerly incarcerated persons with histories of homelessness through the development of PSH, we explored changes in one or more of the following building blocks:

- **Power**—People with formal authority are invested in and responsible for developing PSH in the community.

- **Money**—Ongoing funding is dedicated for PSH.
- **Habits**—Interactions among the agencies and organizations involved in funding, developing, and operating PSH become institutionalized.
- **Knowledge, Technology, Skills**—A set of skilled practitioners at most or all levels in the delivery chain has developed; a set of mutually agreed upon “best practices” is being used.
- **Ideas and Values**—A new definition of performance or success is created, such that there is greater focus on homelessness, residential stability, and developing PSH as a solution to reducing homelessness.

This report develops over several sections. Before discussing the activities in the three main sites in detail, the next section provides a brief introduction to the levels of change across them. Following the brief introduction, three sections detail the key accomplishments in system change in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago specifically, including the roles played by the RHI program manager and other CSH staff in facilitating these changes. Each site description includes a summary table that describes how the levels of change are associated with the building blocks. Following the three main site sections, we provide a brief review of some of the RHI activities taking place outside of New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Then, we identify challenges and lessons learned for policy and practice and conclude with a summary of our findings.

## The Returning Home Initiative Site Overview

Table I highlights the similarities and differences in the RHI activities across the three sites: the first row describes the focus of the RHI/CSH staff interventions; the remaining rows use the four levels of system change just described to highlight key changes in the sites. Briefly, the RHI program managers and other CSH staff have focused their efforts towards city public administrators primarily. In New York City (NYC), much effort has been focused on the development and implementation of the Frequent Users of Service Enhancement Project (FUSE)—Phase I and Phase II and a new City-State Reentry Supportive Housing Initiative. In addition, the staff in NYC works closely with providers through pre-development grants, capacity building, and training and technical assistance across the five boroughs of NYC, including the providers who serve the FUSE population. In Los Angeles (LA), efforts for the RHI are focused on the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department primarily, through a program called Just In Reach (JIR). In Chicago, efforts for the RHI are focused on administrators in the State of Illinois, the Cook County, and the City of Chicago government agencies to support the development and implementation of reentry supportive housing programs, including the Frequent Users of Jail and Mental Health Services Program. Staff members in Chicago also focus on building community capacity through pre-development grants and training and technical assistance across the state of Illinois.

**Table 1.** RHI Activities in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago

	<b>New York City</b>	<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>Chicago</b>
<b>Focus of Interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City administrators that support the development and extension of a PSH program for individuals who have recently been in Rikers Island Jail called the Frequent Users Service Enhancement Project (FUSE)</li> <li>▪ City and state administrators that support the development of a PSH program in state prisons called the City-State Reentry Supportive Housing Initiative</li> <li>▪ Developing provider capacity through training and technical assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ County Sheriff's Department administrators that support a PSH program in the County Jail called Just In Reach (JIR)</li> <li>▪ State legislators and administrators to pass and implement new legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City and state administrators that support the development and implementation of a PSH program in the Cook County Jail called the Frequent Users of Jail and Mental Health Services Program (FUSE-Chicago)</li> <li>▪ City, county, and state administrators through participation in a reentry housing collaborative</li> <li>▪ Developing provider capacity through training and technical assistance</li> </ul>
<b>Local Elected Officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mayor</li> <li>▪ City Council</li> <li>▪ Brooklyn District Attorney</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ County Sheriff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners</li> <li>▪ County Board of Commissioners</li> <li>▪ County Sheriff</li> </ul>
<b>Public Agency Administrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Departments of: Corrections; Homeless Services; Human Resources Administration; Housing Preservation and Development; Health and Mental Hygiene; and Housing Authority</li> <li>▪ State Departments of: Health and Human Services; Office of Mental Health; Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services; and Division of Parole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ County Sheriff's Department</li> <li>▪ County Executive's Office</li> <li>▪ County Department of Mental Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ County Department of Corrections</li> <li>▪ City Department of Community Development</li> <li>▪ State Departments of: Corrections; Housing Development Authority; and Mental Health</li> </ul>
<b>PSH Providers and Developers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extensive direct funding, training and technical assistance to FUSE and other providers</li> <li>▪ RHI program manager participates in reentry housing task forces, coalitions, and organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited support for the JIR service provider coalition through training and technical assistance</li> <li>▪ Training, technical assistance, and funding for other PSH developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extensive direct funding, training and technical assistance to FUSE-Chicago and other providers</li> <li>▪ RHI program manager participates and leads reentry housing coalitions, planning, and workgroups</li> </ul>
<b>People and Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-reach at shelters for target population for first phase of FUSE (FUSE I)</li> <li>▪ In-reach at shelters for target population for second phase of FUSE (FUSE II)</li> <li>▪ Innovative data matching efforts to identify target population for FUSE services</li> <li>▪ Coordination with probation, parole, and others for non-FUSE placements</li> <li>▪ Provider network to target and house frequent users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-reach at County Jail to target population for JIR</li> <li>▪ RHI program manager supervises housing and service linkages</li> <li>▪ Coordination with Sheriff's Department to assure appropriate JIR referrals and to facilitate linking detainees with mental illness to Jail Mental Health services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-reach at County Jail for target population for FUSE-Chicago</li> <li>▪ RHI funds support two case managers in the jail to support FUSE-Chicago enrollment and linkage to housing and supportive services</li> <li>▪ Innovative data matching efforts to identify target population for FUSE-Chicago services</li> </ul>

## New York

In New York City, the RHI activities are wide-ranging. In general, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff funded with RHI resources direct equal effort to: launch reentry housing programs; advance policy development; supply training, technical assistance and direct lending to local service providers and developers; facilitate collaboration between local leaders; participate on workgroups and planning collaboratives; and write policy and programmatic documents to disseminate achievements from the RHI. The reentry housing programs launched through the efforts of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff include the Frequent Users Service Enhancement Project (FUSE)—Phases I and II—and a new City-State Reentry Supportive Housing Initiative (City-State Initiative), both of which are focused on developing supportive housing models for individuals released from incarceration to the community. Through the development of these projects, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff facilitate collaboration between city and state public agency administrators to advise on the development of dedicated funding streams for housing the reentry population specifically and by participating on a number of workgroups and collaboratives with a group of diverse stakeholders. As part of these projects and to increase the number of providers serving the reentry population, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff provide training, technical assistance, and developmental and planning grants to a host of providers throughout the city.

The wide-ranging nature of the RHI effort in NYC is primarily the result of the city being the home of CSH's initial foray into the field of reentry housing. After CSH dedicated a full-time staff person to develop a reentry housing initiative in 2000, momentum continued to build after CSH staff won a small grant from the Rhodabek Charitable Trust to explore and assist in the planning and development of small community-based projects focused on reentry housing. Within a few years, CSH collaborated with a local housing/service provider, Common Ground, to establish the NYC Reentry Housing Roundtable. The roundtable convened approximately 25 individuals working in both the supportive housing and criminal justice fields to share knowledge about the housing and service needs of formerly incarcerated people and to advocate for creating and expanding housing opportunities for the reentry population. Meetings of the roundtable led to the publication, *New Beginnings: The Need for Supportive Housing for Previously Incarcerated People* (Black and Cho 2004), co-authored by staff from CSH and Common Ground.

This publication and the increased visibility of the reentry housing issue through the efforts of the dedicated CSH staff person led staff from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to visit NYC to see the supportive housing models around the city. The eventual funding of the RHI from the RWJF was timely. In 2006, facilitating reentry was a priority for the NYC Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner (i.e., the local jail system), Martin Horn. With the assistance of staff from

CSH, the NYC DOC formed a collaborative known as the NYC Discharge Planning Collaboration that includes advocates, service providers, and administrators from city agencies such as the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA), the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA). The discharge planning collaboration formed three subcommittees initially, one of which the CSH staff person chaired. These subcommittees drafted vision statements, and through this work, the idea of focusing on “frequent users” or “high flyers”, that is, individuals who use systems frequently, started to form.

The discharge planning collaboration developed a pilot housing program that targeted high-needs individuals incarcerated in the jail. The targeting would be accomplished through a data match of individuals who had at least four incarcerations at the Riker's Island Jail and four stays in the city's shelter system over a five-year period. The NYC HRA determines eligibility for the project according to existing NY/NY III service categories<sup>1</sup>. This project would become known as FUSE. Implementing, managing, and evaluating the project became the central focus of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff between 2006 and 2008. By 2008, staff from CSH was implementing a second phase of FUSE, called FUSE II, developing the City-State Initiative, and disseminating preliminary findings from the evaluation of the first phase of FUSE (now known as FUSE I) conducted by John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

## Local Elected Officials

The continued operation of the RHI's FUSE I and FUSE II programs and the development of the City-State Initiative are due, in part, to the support from local elected officials in NYC, specifically Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Though independent, CSH's initial reentry housing efforts before the RHI were occurring in conjunction with efforts of the Bloomberg administration, where the issue of prisoner reentry was receiving attention. First, he appointed Martin Horn to be the Commissioner of the NYC DOC. Commissioner Horn proved to be a strong advocate for jail reentry and collaboration with other agency administrators. Second, he appointed Linda Gibbs to be the Commissioner of the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS), where she proved a very active administrator for the needs of the city's homeless population. Third, Mayor Bloomberg appointed Gibbs to the position of Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services—an agency that oversees the NYC DHS and the NYC DOC, among others. Finally, he made strong commitments to create thousands of affordable and supportive housing units and was deeply interested in city

<sup>1</sup> NY/NY agreements are between the New York City and New York State to provide funding to nonprofit providers and developers to create supportive housing for homeless people with mental illness and other disabilities. In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Pataki signed the NY/NY III agreement (NY/NY I was signed in 1991), which committed them to create 9,000 supportive housing units for disabled homeless people in NYC over 10 years.

agencies working collaboratively and using data-driven processes. The type of agency collaboration on reentry housing necessary for the successful implementation of FUSE projects (and the nascent City-State Initiative), were well aligned with the Bloomberg administration's operating philosophies.

Meanwhile, city council members also supported reentry housing efforts through the introduction of legislation to identify frequent users. The legislation was successful and Mayor Bloomberg gave a speech about the importance of the legislation. He also made a keynote address at the Mayor's Summit on Reentry and Employment that highlighted FUSE as a successful model that addresses homelessness and reentry worth replicating. He also praised efforts to assist formerly incarcerated persons improve their housing outcomes.

In addition to working with the NYC Mayor, CSH made efforts with Governor George Pataki's administration as well as Governor Eliot Spitzer's administration. Though the RHI program manager and other CSH staff tried to engage with each of these administrations and had received some interest in the reentry housing issue, these efforts were largely unsuccessful. To capitalize on the RHI's success with local elected officials in NYC, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff retained a lobbying firm in January 2008 to make inroads with state legislators on budget issues with assistance from the Rockit Fund. These lobbying efforts resulted in the New York State Office of Mental Health and Hygiene (OMH) making a commitment to the City-State Initiative as well as increased participation from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) in an interagency workgroup tasked with developing protocols and resourcing the City-State Initiative. As the name suggests, the City-State Initiative proposes to bring together resources from several city and state agencies, including criminal justice and social service agencies, to implement a supportive housing project specifically for those returning from prison to the community. These ongoing efforts led to the first commitment of resources from the OASAS to fund new reentry supportive housing units and the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services to fund supplemental services for the NYC OMH housing beds being redirected as a part of the City-State Initiative.

### **Public Agency Administrators**

As previously mentioned, public agency administrators in NYC and the state had a strong commitment to providing housing options for formerly incarcerated persons before the RHI began. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff were there to capitalize on and nurture the interest and momentum that was building among public agency administrators, specifically Commissioners Horn and Gibbs. The interest and leadership of Commissioners Horn and Gibbs made it possible to suggest and implement new ideas that would have ordinarily seemed risky to administrators. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff developed close relationships with city agency leaders within the NYC

DHS and DOC. Due to the leadership within these agencies and assistance from the RHI program manager and other CSH staff, NYC is at the front of the field in innovation on reentry housing for formerly incarcerated persons with histories of homelessness.

Since 2002, Commissioner Horn was a regular participant at national prisoner reentry roundtables and a keynote speaker at many reentry events around the country through his retirement from the NYC DOC in 2009. By the end of 2003, it was evident that discharge planning was a central focus of his agency, and across the array of discharge challenges, his agency was committed to innovate on the issue of reentry housing. The NYC DHS and DOC Commissioners, whose offices are located in the same building, collaborated on reentry housing based on their joint understanding that persons released from jail were going to have difficulties succeeding post-release without suitable housing options. According to them, no one agency was responsible for reentry; the challenges and importance of reentry reached across various agencies, including their own.

In 2003, the NYC DHS and DOC organized a discharge planning retreat, known as the Gracie Mansion Retreat, which transformed itself into the ongoing formal NYC Discharge Planning Collaboration. The Collaboration proved to be an important vehicle for developing reentry housing initiatives because it provided all interested stakeholders with the ability to voice their concerns and participate in shaping the agenda. As mentioned previously, the RHI program manager participated in the collaboration from the beginning and served as the chair of the "Big Picture" Subcommittee. It was the RHI program manager's work on the subcommittees that helped create the impetus for FUSE I, which had the full support of Commissioner Horn. Overwhelmingly, the local providers, public agency administrators, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff attribute the successful establishment of reentry housing in the NYC area to both Commissioner Horn and Commissioner Gibbs—who were able to champion the issue to higher levels of government. Through their position as commissioners, Horn and Gibbs were able to secure 100 housing vouchers from the NYCHA for FUSE I and used the demonstrated successes of FUSE I as evidence that housing should be included in criminal justice discharge planning.

Further, Commissioner Horn was able to champion reentry housing to other criminal justice agencies and stakeholders at the state level. Over time, it has become apparent that NYC administrators from a number of different agencies are dedicated to continuing support for supportive housing. Currently, oversight for FUSE I and FUSE II rests in the NYC DHS; oversight includes managing and coordinating meetings with other agency officials such as the NYC HRA (determines eligibility for FUSE I and II), the NYCHA (provides housing funding for FUSE I and II), the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (provides housing funding for FUSE II), the

NYC DOHMH (provides housing and services funding for FUSE I and II), and providers at the local level. With the RHI program manager, the NYC DHS and DOC help providers get through paperwork challenges, track clients, and measure outcomes.

In addition to the collaboration that was achieved through FUSE I and FUSE II, administrators across the city and state have been coming together for the City-State Initiative through the efforts of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff. This new initiative, which seeks to streamline resources from city and state agencies into one pipeline, will increase access to housing and services for individuals released from state prisons to NYC. Informed by the challenges faced with the FUSE projects trying to fit services for the reentry population into existing funding sources for disabled homeless persons (i.e., the NY/NY agreements), the City-State Initiative is being developed specifically for the reentry population. The City-State Initiative, despite the fiscal challenges faced by NYC, has been committed to fund 50 units of supportive housing for the reentry population.

Although there are several public agencies at the city and state level that support the FUSE projects, the one agency that has been cautious about collaboration is the NYC Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Despite the efforts of CSH staff and other city administrators, momentum on the reentry housing issue within the NYC OMB has not been successful. The RHI and other CSH staff have met resistance in the NYC OMB due, in part, to their concerns about capturing the theoretical savings of FUSE without the effective budgetary tools necessary to track and reduce costs in the large and bureaucratic jail and shelter systems. This has not hampered the efforts of CSH staff; city and state administrators are coming together for the City-State Initiative.

### ***PSH Providers and Developers***

Before the RHI, there were few housing providers in NYC with programs targeted specifically to the reentry population. With the help of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff through local conferences, meetings, and technical assistance, roughly a dozen providers have built skills and developed the capacity to engage the reentry population directly. The training and technical assistance provided through the RHI helps providers learn how to work through obstacles in housing the reentry population—including siting issues, not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) feelings among community residents, and restrictions on public subsidies and funding. Technical issues have been resolved through conversations with the RHI program manager and other CSH staff; the housing providers have learned how to work together and produce reentry housing and how to integrate FUSE clients with other non-reentry clients. Through collaboration with CSH, the providers have also earned a reputation as innovators with city administrators and other key leaders to the benefit of all stakeholders. In addition, the RHI has provided small planning grants to provider agencies to

develop reentry housing projects and small development grants for buildings and units in NYC.

### ***People and Units***

In NYC, most of the engagement with the reentry population by supportive housing providers occurs post-release due to restrictions against using funding streams for housing subsidies for incarcerated persons. Most of the providers involved in reentry housing efforts—particularly FUSE providers—target individuals who have been released from jail as they are in homeless shelters. Very little in-reach into the jail or prison system is happening. As a result, not much is happening before jail discharge. Potential program clients must become homeless before they can be recruited into FUSE, requiring program staff to perform the challenging task of locating the highly mobile frequent user population in shelters and on the street. Yet, as an increasing number of providers have joined efforts to create reentry housing with the assistance of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff, the capacity to serve the reentry population has increased. The ability of providers to see initial successes with the reentry population has allowed them to engage a greater number of people returning from the jail and to increase the number of applications for support from public agencies. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff have also been successful in convincing providers that they should prioritize some housing units for the reentry population.

***Building Blocks in New York City***—The work in NYC, centered on the RHI program manager and other CSH staff's work with various reentry housing stakeholders, has been successful in system change efforts on several building blocks within the levels of change (power, money, habits, knowledge/technology/skills, ideas and values). Key changes are outlined in Table 2.

Change in these building blocks across the levels of the system is promising, yet the building block that has presented the most significant challenge in NYC is money. Though not for lack of trying by the RHI program manager, CSH staff, and other public agency administrators in NYC, work with the NYC OMB has not resulted in any ongoing city funding dedicated to PSH for the reentry population. The majority of new units created in NYC have been the result of repurposing larger funding streams at the state and local level or targeting these larger funding streams explicitly. Yet, the commitment from the NYS OASAS to fund new reentry supportive housing units is the first example of baseline reinvestment to create a dedicated funding stream. A few key lessons learned from the RHI in NYC are the challenges in how to capture savings from PSH, re-program resources for the disabled reentry population at risk of homelessness, and how to create a long-term investment for PSH in the public sector.

**Table 2. Key Changes in New York City**

<b>Building Block</b>	<b>Key Changes</b>
<b>Power</b>	The NYC DHS has formal authority over the FUSE I and II projects, linking the target population to PSH in the community
<b>Habits</b>	Several public agency administrators interact frequently on the FUSE projects to identify the target population and link them to housing/service providers
<b>Knowledge/Technology/Skills</b>	There is a robust group of skilled practitioners who engage the reentry population who are at risk of homelessness with disabilities
<b>Ideas and Values</b>	The NYC DOC focuses on successful reentry from the perspective of residential stability and decreased homelessness and the NYC DHS views formerly incarcerated persons as their clients

## Los Angeles

In LA, the RHI program managers and other CSH staff have focused primarily on working with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and the department's elected sheriff. Secondly, the RHI program managers and other CSH staff have focused on helping to develop state legislation to support reentry projects. At the time when the RHI started in LA, the sheriff had already taken some steps to ease the transition of individuals to the community by establishing a Community Transition Unit (CTU) in the LA County Jail. This was a clear point of connection for the first RHI program manager and other CSH staff funded with the RHI resources. The RHI program manager spent time working with the CTU director on how to link individuals released from the jail to community-based supports and housing. The first two years of working with the CTU in the LASD proceeded slowly due to a lack of resources. Meanwhile, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff used the time to capitalize on the interest of several state legislators in establishing reentry demonstration projects for state prisoners. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff worked with these legislators to develop several pieces of legislation, one of which resulted in a \$10 million state appropriation for supportive services to facilitate reentry for prisoners returning to local communities.

When a second RHI program manager was hired following the departure of the first RHI program manager, the Just In Reach (JIR) reentry program was about to be implemented in the LA County Jail. The JIR program evolved from the discussions between the first RHI program manager and the CTU director, along with several staff members at nonprofit agencies. In 2006, special appropriations by the LA County Board of

Supervisors for a range of novel interventions and demonstrations—known as the Homelessness Prevention Initiative—provided the funds to support the JIR program. In the spring of 2008, the JIR program was funded and enrolled its first clients in July 2008. The JIR program is the primary program in LA that assists with reentry from the LA County Jail. The second RHI program manager and other CSH staff have been very involved in every aspect of the JIR program. Union Rescue Mission, the prime contractor for the JIR program, offers case management, employment, and housing services for program participants.

In LA County, the local elected official with a role in the JIR program is the sheriff. Staff members in the LASD are the primary public administrators involved. A consortium of homeless assistance providers has been the heart of the JIR program, from initial conceptualization to advocacy with the LA County Board of Supervisors for funding to running the program with the CTU staff. The JIR program has been successfully targeting the most appropriate detainees into the project due to extensive work with the CTU staff to identify, recruit, and work on release plans. In addition, CSH staff has worked with state legislators to advance several proposals to fund reentry initiatives in addition to the JIR program.

### *Local Elected Officials*

As mentioned previously, the LA County sheriff has had a standing interest in reducing recidivism and getting appropriate care for detainees with disabilities, including those with major mental illnesses. Therefore, the RHI had the support of the sheriff and jail staff that ran the CTU. In addition to working with the LASD, CSH capitalized on interest in reentry housing within the state legislature with two notable successes: the Program for Returning Offenders with Mental Illness Safely and Effectively (PROMISE) legislation and the Reentry Employment Options Project legislation. A state-level approach—using elected officials and legislation rather than public administrators—reflects the opportunity offered by interested legislators that CSH had long-standing relationships. Staff from CSH capitalized on this opportunity since work with relevant public administrators at the county level was proceeding relatively slowly. Although county-level efforts were proceeding slowly, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff continued to work with public agency administrators.

In 2006 and 2007, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff worked with interested state legislators and advocacy partners to help shape legislation that would establish a pilot program to provide supportive housing with wrap-around services for state inmates with mental illnesses. Several forms of the pilot program legislation got far in two legislative sessions, but did not pass ultimately. Had the legislation passed, it would have given the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) the resources to test innovative approaches to reentry housing. Then, the RHI program manager and

other CSH staff worked with state legislators on PROMISE, which passed once but was vetoed by the governor. Despite the veto, \$4 million in the state budget was designated for “wrap-around services for mentally ill parolees”. Yet, without legislative instruction on the how the funds should be used, the CDCR used most of the funding for cash assistance to approximately 300 parolees rather than for reentry supportive housing. In 2008, the PROMISE legislation was introduced again and led to \$10 million in funding for the CDCR to support local programs offering wrap-around services. Due to its work on the initial and successful piece of legislation, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff are helping implement PROMISE. Finally, CSH staff helped craft another state initiative called the Reentry Employment Options Project. This project intended to assist formerly incarcerated persons with employment opportunities post-release. The CDCR funded 20 projects throughout the state, most of which began in 2007. Five of these projects are in LA County, where one focuses on prisoners who have histories of homelessness or at high risk of homelessness upon release.

### ***Public Agency Administrators***

The RHI program manager and other CSH staff spent several months trying to coordinate a meeting between the LASD CTU staff and the LA County Jail Mental Health staff to help the LASD improve its procedures for facilitating the reentry of detainees with mental illness. This meeting was crucial to ensuring each staff knew what the other was doing with detainees with mental illness and figuring out how each could share capabilities. After several attempts, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff successfully coordinated and facilitated a meeting between the two divisions in the jail. At this meeting, the staff in each division committed to meeting again, conducting cross-training, and identifying similar issues and challenges within the jail structure that they could work together to address. The Jail Mental Health staff has scheduled its first training session for the CTU staff to assist them in recognizing serious mental illness among the jail detainees and the availability of resources within the jail to address mental health issues. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff have also helped meld the JIR program and the CTU staff into a mutually supportive team; the CTU staff appreciates how the JIR program makes jail management easier.

In the summer of 2009, the LASD support for facilitating reentry programming took a significant leap forward due to a peer-to-peer visit to New York arranged by the RHI program managers from NYC and LA. Representatives from all of the JIR agencies, including the CTU director, the LASD commander with responsibility for inmate services and the CTU, the LA RHI program manager, and service providers visited Riker’s Island and various FUSE project partners. Following this visit, there was renewed enthusiasm for engaging in reentry housing for the mentally ill and homeless population within the LA

County Jail. In addition, the CTU staff began attending a monthly meeting of all of the division and department heads within the jail—known as the Interdisciplinary Care Coordinating Committee (ICCC) following the NYC visit. The ICCC is a problem-solving group with the potential to help both the CTU and Jail Mental Health staff resolve some of their issues with regard to access to inmates and information. Following the visit to NYC, the LASD commander came back to LA County with new ideas and enthusiasm for instituting some of the NYC DOC procedures at Riker’s Island in the LASD, especially those that would take minimal or no resources. Lastly, the NYC site visit also engendered greater interest in working with community-based providers within the LASD.

### ***PSH Providers and Developers***

As mentioned previously, the JIR program is the primary program in LA that assists with reentry from the county jail. Union Rescue Mission is the prime contractor in the JIR program, which includes case management, employment, housing and administration of the JIR program. Other team members for the JIR program include the Volunteers of America, which offers housing and transportation services for the JIR participants; Amity, which offers case management, mentoring, and substance abuse recovery services; Tarzana Treatment Center, which offers case management, housing, substance abuse recovery, and HIV/AIDS care services; and Goodwill Industries, which offers employment services for the JIR participants. Union Rescue Mission has had a history of working with most of these agencies for several years, which made collaboration relatively easy. Goodwill and Tarzana Treatment Center were added to the partnership because they offered services the others did not: Goodwill was brought into the partnership for employment services because they ran one of LA’s One-Stop Career Centers and Tarzana was brought into the partnership to offer substance abuse services and due to its geographic coverage in the San Fernando Valley. Even though most of the partners had a history of working together, much effort was needed to make the partnership work smoothly. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff helped the partnership in many ways, from training provider staff to facilitating meetings among providers to ironing out procedures to supervise housing specialists and serve program participants. Union Rescue Mission has experience coordinating a multi-system community-based reentry program targeted specifically for individuals returning from prisons and jails.

The JIR and CSH staffs actively seek ways to leverage funding for the JIR program. In 2009, two joint grant applications were submitted to federal solicitations, including: 1) a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association solicitation for substance abuse and mental health treatment services; and 2) a U.S. Department of Justice – Second Chance Act solicitation for mentoring services for people returning from prisons and jails to the community. In addition to working with providers in the

JIR program, CSH is encouraging other developers and service providers to create new housing units dedicated to the reentry population through its Opening New Doors Supportive Housing Institute (SHI). The SHI, which the RHI program manager in Chicago also uses, offers a multi-session course covering every aspect of PSH development. Typically, the SHI participants are developer and service provider teams; although, some teams may also include property management organizations or more than one service provider. At least two teams that have attended the SHI intend to create housing geared to the reentry population specifically.

### People and Units

In LA, the JIR program is the primary mechanism that matches detainees leaving the jail to appropriate housing resources in the community. By June 2009, the JIR program had assisted in the short- and long-term housing placements of more than 100 clients. The JIR program provides case management services to clients for up to one year post-release. Initial contact with the JIR program happens while people are incarcerated, facilitated by good relationships among the CTU staff and the JIR case managers and housing specialists. The JIR program enrollees released from the LA County Jail are linked to a JIR counselor pre-release. Upon release, JIR participants know where to meet their case manager and the case manager helps ensure the participant reaches their destination by transportation supplied by the JIR program directly. The Jail Mental Health staff also helps coordinate community placement for detainees with mental illness<sup>2</sup>. The JIR program can be viewed as a significant achievement for the RHI in LA, as many hurdles needed to be overcome to successfully operate and maintain the program. Given the State of California's severe budget crisis, it is not surprising that many legislative efforts to fund units of PSH for individuals returning from prison and jails did not come to fruition.

**Building Blocks in Los Angeles**—The work in LA, centered on the RHI program manager and other CSH staff's work with various reentry housing stakeholders, has been successful in system change efforts on a few building blocks within the levels of change (power, money, habits, knowledge/technology/skills, ideas and values). Key changes are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3. Key Changes in Los Angeles**

Building Block	Key Changes
<b>Habits</b>	Personnel within the LASD coordinate with the Jail Mental Health staff
<b>Knowledge/Technology/Skills</b>	Relying on the knowledge and skills of Union Rescue Mission and the Opening New Doors-Supportive Housing Institute, there is a larger group of skilled practitioners who engage the reentry population who are at risk of homelessness with disabilities

While achieving necessary change in the habits and knowledge/technology/skills of stakeholders in LA, the initial efforts of the RHI were focused on achieving system change in power and money. Specifically, the initial RHI strategy in LA was to seek new legislation that designated housing resources for individuals released from prison and jail to the community. Since most of the reentry housing legislation did not pass, at least in part because of the State of California's budget crisis, CSH refocused its efforts on collaborating with the LASD to get a pilot reentry housing program off the ground. Through the JIR program, the RHI program managers and other CSH staff worked to increase the capacity of housing and other service providers to serve the reentry population and to encourage personnel within the LASD to interact with the Jail Mental Health Staff. However, while the JIR program offers linkages to shelter, transitional housing, and case management and other supportive services, it does not link participants to PSH or have permanent housing subsidies under its control. A primary lesson learned from the RHI in LA are the challenges with establishing a long-term investment in PSH in the face of a state experiencing a significant budget shortfall.

### Chicago

In Chicago, the focus of the RHI activities toward increasing access to supportive housing for the incarcerated population has been both top-down and bottom-up. Specifically, the bottom-up RHI activities in Chicago have been centered on building capacity among local, nonprofit developers and service agencies through training and technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning exchanges, and planning grants to assess local capacity for developing reentry housing. A key piece of the bottom-up strategy has been the development of a frequent users program for detainees in the Cook County Jail. The top-down activities have centered on working with elected officials and public agency administrators to facilitate collaboration and funding for projects to house the jail and prison reentry population. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff funded with the RHI resources have focused on three different levels of Illinois government—where some efforts have focused on the entire State of

<sup>2</sup> The work of the Jail Mental Health staff was easier before 2007 when the governor ended a program designed to reduce or eliminate homelessness among people with serious mental illness. This program was the primary program that LA County used to smooth the transition from jail to the community for qualifying detainees with serious mental illness.

Illinois, others have focused on the City of Chicago and the County of Cook. Throughout all of these efforts, the primary approach in Chicago has been to increase access to reentry housing specifically for the population with histories of mental illness and homelessness, but also to capitalize on interest in and movement toward increasing access to reentry housing for all incarcerated populations, regardless of disability or homeless history.

This multi-pronged strategy is exemplified most clearly through the RHI program manager's work with the "Collaborative on Reentry". The Collaborative was formed by Chicago Metropolis 2020 in 2008 to bring together reentry workgroups that existed in the Governor's Office, the Mayor's Office, and Cook County. The Collaborative identified four key reentry issues, one of which is housing. Based on his experiences with and knowledge of the housing and reentry landscape, the RHI program manager is leading this workgroup, which includes more than 80 city, county, state, and nonprofit agency representatives. Through the Collaborative, stakeholders at the city, county, and state levels are working together to develop an action plan for increasing access to housing for the reentry population—including those coming from the jail and the prison system. The eventual action plan will include recommendations for specific projects, a timeline to implement the projects, and the identification of key agencies to spearhead the plan. The action plans are to be developed into a full report and presented to the governor, the County Board of Supervisors, the Chief Judges Offices, the mayor of Chicago, and the General Assembly.

### ***Local Elected Officials***

The interest and commitment of local elected officials was central to the development and continued operation of a reentry housing program modeled after FUSE I in NYC. Following the preliminary successes of FUSE I, the Chicago RHI program manager and other CSH staff worked to begin a similar program in the Cook County Department of Corrections (i.e., the local jail system). Though the Chicago version of FUSE similarly focuses on individuals who cycle between homelessness and jail systems, the Chicago version of FUSE is different from the NYC version in significant ways, mostly due to the political landscape in Cook County and the type of available data and priorities for reentry in Chicago. First, the Chicago program, which is called the Frequent Users of Jail and Mental Health Services Program, includes in-reach at the Cook County Jail to locate and enroll eligible detainees for the program. Because enrollment occurs within the jail, the program is set up so wrap-around services are available as soon as the detainee is released. Second, the Chicago program has two case managers who are located at the jail to assist with the identification, enrollment, and linking of eligible detainees to housing upon release. Third, the Chicago program has a live data matching system that helps the case manager identify which detainees are eligible for the program using the number of previous jail

incarcerations and hospitalizations, the latter of which is a criteria for the Chicago program that does not exist in the NYC FUSE programs. The State of Illinois does not fund most shelters; therefore, reliable data on the shelter population does not exist. Yet, the Cook County Jail has a commitment to serve the jail population with mental illness due to an ongoing consent decree to improve services.

The coordination of all of these pieces into one program was possible because of the efforts of a few key local elected officials who the RHI program manager and other CSH staff worked with intimately to get the program fully implemented. Foremost, the City of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley made the first substantial commitment of resources to the program as part of the city's commitment to eliminate and prevent long-term homelessness. By prioritizing more than 100 housing vouchers for the program from the City of Chicago's Low-Income Housing Trust Fund, Mayor Daley has been committed to the program despite fiscal challenges in the city and state. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff obtained the commitment of the Cook County Sheriff, Tom Dart, to build momentum in the jail for such a program that required the cooperation of the State of Illinois Department of Mental Health to identify detainees' hospitalization histories, the City of Chicago to administer the State of Illinois Housing and Development Authority vouchers for the community-based housing placements, the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, Todd Stroger, and his staff at Cermak Health Services that deliver the medical and psychiatric care at the jail, and of course, the Director of the Cook County Jail, Scott Kurtovich. This high-level commitment to the program helped the Urban Institute in their endeavor to obtain evaluation funds to conduct an experimental evaluation of Chicago's version of FUSE. Further, in spite of the challenges and delays in getting approval from the Institutional Review Boards of the Cook County Hospital and the State Department of Mental Health for the evaluation, the housing vouchers from the City of Chicago's Low-Income Housing Trust Fund remain available to the program. This is due to the advocacy with city and state officials from the RHI program manager and other CSH staff.

In addition to working with Sheriff Dart, President Stroger, and Mayor Daley on the Frequent Users of Jail and Mental Health Services Program, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff has worked with President Stroger and the Cook County Board of Commissioners on developing a new housing project that will include housing for 10 women coming from the jail system who are seeking reunification with their children. The individuals spearheading this project, including representatives from the Cook County Law Office of the Public Defender and the Office of the Cook County President, began this work after the RHI program manager sponsored a trip for elected officials to NYC. Similar to the peer-to-peer learning exchange sponsored by the RHI program manager

in LA, this trip provided elected officials and agency administrators with an understanding of how PSH and wrap-around support services for the reentry population are created and managed and provided points of contact for the Chicago personnel. This new PSH site, the first reentry supportive housing development program initiated by Cook County directly, will be located in one disadvantaged community in Chicago. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff are working with the County on the wrap-around services and informing the County's efforts to develop public funding for multiple case management positions to coordinate services for the women. CSH may provide pre-development funds and ongoing technical assistance for this project.

### **Public Agency Administrators**

As discussed in the introductory paragraph to the RHI activities in Chicago, CSH has not focused exclusively on increasing access to PSH for the reentry population with histories of homelessness and disabilities, but on increasing access to housing for the reentry population in general. For example, while the Cook County Jail has been interested in developing programs for frequent users and collaborating with other agencies in order to do so, the Cook County Jail and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) have also been interested in housing the general reentry population. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff have capitalized on the interest in both agencies, working with the agencies on issues of importance to them. In addition to specific housing projects with the Cook County Jail and IDOC that are discussed below, the Chicago RHI resources were used to fund the Cook County Sheriff's Department to develop a housing resource guide and reentry housing video for all detainees returning from the Cook County Jail to the community in 2009. At the request of the Cook County Jail and IDOC, CSH developed a housing resource guide that is web-based. In addition, the RHI program manager is part of the Cook County Sheriff's Reentry Council, which coordinates the Cook County Jail's reentry efforts. Finally, the RHI program manager serves as the chair of two sub-committees that focus on discharge planning processes that identify and develop strategies to prevent homelessness among the prison and jail population and facilitate housing and services to support a smooth transition from incarceration to the community.

The assistance of several public agency administrators for the Frequent Users Program was critical to getting the initiative started. Initial thinking on the Frequent Users program began around the time that CSH secured funding for the RHI. Despite the fiscal challenges in the state, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff worked to secure more than 100 housing vouchers for the project from the City of Chicago's Low-Income Housing Trust Fund that are pass-through funds from the Illinois Housing Development Authority. Due to challenges getting the approval of the Institutional Review Boards of the Cook County Department of Corrections and the State

Department of Mental Health for the Frequent Users Program evaluation, the Frequent Users program did not enroll participants until a full year after all of the project components were in place. Yet, due to the RHI program manager and other CSH staff's diligence and advocacy with the city and state officials, the vouchers remain dedicated to the program.

As a result of a multi-year planning process between IDOC, the Illinois Department of Mental Health, and the Illinois Department of Human Services on how IDOC should structure their work, the Illinois Governor's reentry commission report "Inside Out: A Plan to Reduce Recidivism and Increase Public Safety" was published in May 2008. This report tasked IDOC with building or acquiring 125 units of housing for the reentry population—scatter-site or single-site models. Currently, the Department is in the planning stages, but the housing will focus specifically on those returning from IDOC. This will be the first project from IDOC to provide a long-term housing option. The Department intends to use the information from the CSH-funded planning grants to identify locations for the housing. Current IDOC plans are to use the housing units for the general reentry population, not specific to individuals with histories of mental illness or homelessness, under the belief that there is an urgent need for housing among the general population not just the disabled or homeless reentry population. To create the housing units successfully, IDOC intends to use CSH staff for cross training purposes, that is, to train the housing experts on reentry issues and to train reentry experts on housing issues.

The State of Illinois' reentry planning body is the Collaborative on Reentry. Through the Collaborative on Reentry—Housing Workgroup, the RHI program manager has collaborated with local elected officials and public agency administrators to assess the need for and ability to develop reentry-housing units across the state of Illinois. Momentum on the Collaborative on Reentry is happening at the city, county, and state level, due to the array of partners associated with the Collaborative and the different levels of interest across the partners. Working with IDOC, the RHI program manager and CSH issued a Request for Proposals in July 2008 for planning grants targeted to 10 "high-impact" communities, that is, communities in the state that had a high number of individuals returning from incarceration. After numerous applications were received, the planning grants were provided to 14 communities, which together account for nearly 85 percent of the people returning home from IDOC not the Cook County Jail. The planning grant recipients included urban, rural, and suburban communities that had a goal of bringing together prison, mental health, housing, and community agencies to figure out how to increase reentry housing in their neighborhoods. The information gleaned from these planning grants will inform the Collaborative on Reentry's work as well as IDOC's efforts to develop more than 125 units of reentry housing, which is discussed below.

## *PSH Providers and Developers*

The RHI program manager and other CSH staff funded with RHI resources have worked to develop the capacity of providers through direct funding, training, and technical assistance. Through the planning grants that funded 14 communities to identify plans for increasing reentry housing in their neighborhoods, CSH staff learned about the common and divergent issues across the urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods. While some of the challenges to developing reentry housing were common to all sites, such as pushback from communities due to feelings of “not-in-my-backyard”, challenges getting participants to services, and the importance of specialized, intensive services for clients, the planning grant recipients all reported that the appetite for expanding housing was there. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff worked to create a website to disseminate the findings from the 14 planning grant recipients to a larger audience (<http://www.reentryillinois.net>). This website is designed to be a resource directory for providers and developers.

In addition to developing capacity through the planning grants, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff assist with the same training and technical assistance institute that exists in LA: the Opening New Doors-Supportive Housing Institute (SHI). The SHI provides training and technical assistance to agencies interested in developing PSH in their community—open to anyone with an idea for a PSH project, whether fully developed or not. CSH also provides pre-development funds to agencies across the state—not limited to Chicago. As a result of extensive technical assistance and a pre-development loan, the first project with dedicated reentry units opened in April 2010. Three additional projects are under development and will open within two years. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff have also worked with the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) on drafting guidelines for the State of Illinois to develop the dimensions of housing quality and training providers and developers on adopting the dimensions of quality.

Finally, the RHI program manager and other CSH staff coordinate and manage the providers that participate in the Frequent Users Program. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff provide consistent feedback to the four agencies associated with the project—Trilogy, Thresholds, Heartland Health Outreach, and Community Mental Health Council—helping them troubleshoot issues with participants, service delivery, and housing placement. These providers cover both the north and south side of the city, and the RHI program manager was critical in getting these agencies on board for the project. As the RHI program manager was previously positioned in one of these agencies, his knowledge of experienced service providers that were eager to serve the reentry population brought these agencies together. Although many of these agencies had previously served the reentry population through other projects, the Frequent Users Program is the

first for some that has them working with the reentry population directly.

## *People and Units*

The Frequent User Program in Chicago is designed to provide reentry supportive housing to roughly 110 individuals leaving the Cook County Jail. More specifically, the program targets detainees who have a history of long-term homelessness (based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s chronic homelessness definition), an Axis I mental health diagnosis, at least two stays in an inpatient mental health treatment program since 1980, and at least two admissions to the Cook County Jail since January 2005. The program links detainees with one of four PSH providers in the City of Chicago. Although this program is a collaboration of multiple city and state partners, the idea originated from and was steadfastly pursued by the RHI program manager in Chicago. The program intends to reduce recidivism, decrease homelessness/shelter use, and decrease the costs associated with multiple system use across the criminal justice, housing/homelessness, and mental health service systems by focusing exclusively on frequent users. Through the efforts of the RHI program manager and other CSH staff funded with RHI resources, the Frequent Users Program in Chicago uses a live data matching system created by the State Department of Mental Health in conjunction with the Cook County Jail. The data match identifies potential eligible program participants immediately as they enter the jail (the match does not include the homelessness criteria or mental health diagnosis).

The RHI program manager was aware of the utility of such a live database in the jail system where detainees are released from the jail quickly and where competing programs within the jail could hinder a case manager’s ability to find eligible participants. The RHI program manager and other CSH staff brought together the needed partners to discuss the appropriate technology for supporting a live data match and the RHI funds were used to support the costs for the data programming behind such a match. The database allows the program case managers in the jail to identify a pool of possibly eligible program participants upon jail entry. However, since eligible program participants have to be identified across two data systems through the data match (e.g., jail data and mental health treatment data) and forms to assess their homelessness history and mental health diagnosis, it is inherently difficult to identify eligible participants in real-time and to link them to the service providers.

Since the program is being evaluated and the random assignment evaluation design is a critical component of overall enrollment procedures, program implementation was slow. Yet, most of this was due to the lengthy process of human subjects’ review. In addition, the random assignment design, as implemented in the Frequent Users Program, yields one person to the treatment group (reentry housing) for every three people identified as

eligible. As a result, enrollment into the program (not the study) has been very slow. Program enrollment began in January 2009, and as of April 2010, there were only 40 people in the program group. The Frequent Users Program team, which includes practitioners and researchers, regularly meet to continue to search for ways to speed up enrollment and overcome program/research obstacles.

**Building Blocks in Chicago**—The work in Chicago, centered on the RHI program manager and other CSH staff's work with various reentry housing stakeholders, has been successful in system change efforts on some of the building blocks within the levels of change (power, money, habits, knowledge/technology/skills, ideas and values). Key changes are outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4. Key Changes in Chicago**

Building Block	Key Changes
<b>Power</b>	Cook County Board of Commissioners efforts to create 10 units of PSH for formerly incarcerated women looking to reunite with their children
<b>Knowledge/Technology/Skills</b>	Use of live data matching system for the FUSE-Chicago Program targets the clients in need of PSH
<b>Ideas and Values</b>	Cook County Jail and IDOC are committed to creating supportive housing or reentry housing focusing on successful reentry from the perspective of residential stability

While the ideas and values of the agency administrators at the Cook County Jail and IDOC appear to have changed over time using the information provided by CSH staff through planning grants and resource guides, change in the habits of these agencies does not appear to have occurred. For example, while the Cook County Jail and IDOC are committed to create PSH units for formerly incarcerated persons, these public agencies do not seem to be working with other agencies routinely, such as the State of Illinois Department of Mental Health. Other than the discharge planning collaboration for the County that the RHI program manager chairs, there appears to be minimal contact between the agencies directly. The Frequent Users Program, while successfully using data from the jail and the State of Illinois Department of Mental Health, does not require active collaboration between these agencies daily. A primary lesson learned from the RHI program in Chicago is the challenge in getting public agencies to collaborate routinely without the external pressure from organizations such as CSH.

### RHI Activities Across the Country

In addition to the RHI activities in NYC, LA, and Chicago that led to the development or support of reentry housing projects for the incarcerated population with histories of

mental illness and homelessness, CSH has started reentry housing pilots in other jurisdictions. Due to the results of FUSE I in NYC, the model has quickly become a national model that is being replicated and adapted in several jurisdictions across the country, including Connecticut and Minnesota. Resources from the RHI are funding additional reentry work in Ohio, Texas, and Kansas. As discussed below, funding and staff from the RHI have supported the design and implementation of these replications.

- **Connecticut**—The Connecticut Departments of Correction, Judiciary, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Social Services have partnered with the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and CSH to implement the Frequent Users of Jail and Shelter Pilot Program. This program targets individuals who cycle through the homeless service and corrections systems in the state's largest urban centers: Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford. These three cities receive the largest proportion of individuals released from state prisons. This cross-agency partnership builds on a successful interagency structure in the State of Connecticut that has provided administrative and program oversight to the state's multiple supportive housing initiatives for the past 15 years. The supportive housing initiatives in Connecticut have led to the creation of approximately 2,000 units of permanent supportive housing. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services will explore program outcomes across several domains, including housing stability, recidivism, and other health and social outcomes.
- **Minnesota**—In Minnesota, CSH's efforts have been focused in Hennepin County where a recent data match found more than 266 people in the county who collectively spent more than 700,000 nights in both jail and shelter over a five-year period. Operated by St. Stephen's Human Services, the Hennepin County FUSE program began in April 2008 and houses single adults who are frequent users of the shelter and criminal justice system. The program is a partnership that combines resources from the Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation, Hennepin County Department of Human Services and Public Health, the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services, and the State of Minnesota Department of Housing Finance, the program has placed more than 40 people into permanent supportive housing. An evaluation is being conducted by the University of Minnesota.
- **Ohio**—The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has launched a supportive housing pilot program in conjunction with CSH that targets prisoners in select prisons with histories of disabilities and homelessness who are at risk of homelessness upon release. As of December 2009, the Ohio pilot program has placed more than 100 formerly incarcerated persons in supportive housing units

across nine housing/service providers across the state. This pilot includes a rigorous program evaluation being conducted by the Urban Institute.

- **Texas**—Staff from the Office for Offenders with Medical and Mental Impairments of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice has worked with CSH staff to promote supportive housing as a mechanism to facilitate reentry for formerly incarcerated persons with significant levels of disability. The work has been focused in Austin, Houston, and Fort Worth using resources from the RHI.
- **Kansas**—CSH staff has been working with the Kansas Department of Corrections to develop a more effective strategy to provide housing for the prison population with special needs that frequently cycles in and out of the prison. With help from CSH, the Kansas Department of Corrections is building partnerships with state and local agencies that address housing for special needs populations. In addition, CSH is working with local community mental health centers, mental health associations, and other providers that have the experience and capacity to provide permanent supportive housing for special needs populations. CSH has worked with the Kansas Department of Corrections to prepare applications for funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Second Chance Act focused on permanent supportive housing for the reentry population.

In addition to efforts to create specific reentry housing projects, CSH staff funded with the RHI resources has engaged in federal policy work with four key successes. First, the RHI staff has pursued the inclusion of housing as an eligible use of funding appropriated under the Second Chance Act with success. Second, the RHI staff has pursued changes to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) administrative policy to include the expansion of the definition of homeless to people who are in public institutions, such as jails, for less than 90 days. Previously, HUD's policy was 30 days. Success in this area has expanded opportunities to connect people leaving institutions with appropriate supports in the community to include resources in homeless systems such as HUD. Third, the RHI staff worked with legislators on statutory language in the HEARTH Act (McKinney-Vento reauthorization and expansion). This Act, passed in 2009, codifies a broader definition of homelessness—to include more of the reentry population. Finally, the RHI has helped embed supportive housing in the national conversation about reentry issues. CSH has accomplished this in a number of ways:

- CSH has convened and supported a national advisory board, co-chaired by Martin F. Horn (former NYC Commissioner of Correction) and Justice Evelyn Stratton from the Ohio State Supreme Court, that is comprised of key leaders in the corrections/criminal justice, behavioral health, and housing systems that has

increased the visibility of supportive housing in the reentry community dramatically.

- Along with key national partners from the Council of State Governments, the Open Society Institute, the National GAINS Center, and others, supportive housing is now a key part of the national conversation about improving reentry efforts, and has been cited and included in numerous reports and plans to address the reentry efforts. Examples include a report by the National Leadership Forum on Criminal Justice and Mental Health, inclusion of housing and supportive housing as an eligible use of federal Second Chance Act monies, engagement of State Supreme Court Justice-led Initiatives, and focused conversations on supportive housing at an array of national meetings including the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Association of State Correctional Administrators.
- CSH has developed a number of communications and "marketing" publications aimed to educate and build support for reentry supportive housing. Key materials include a "Getting Out with Nowhere To Go" publication, fact sheets on the efficacy of supportive housing, and numerous initiative and project profiles. Additionally, reentry supportive housing has been a central element in a number of op-ed pieces locally and nationally.

From 2006 to 2009, CSH convened national forums with more than 150 leaders in the corrections, housing, mental health, and homeless fields to share examples, offer collective experiences, and showcase emerging techniques for ending homelessness. In addition to these national forums, CSH convened two regional forums in the East Coast and Midwest.

## Challenges

As CSH expands their reentry efforts across the country and continues to make great strides toward system change, there are a number of challenges that continue to pose barriers to progress. These challenges include the following:

- **Securing subsidies or vouchers for permanent supportive housing**—Some jurisdictions do not have a "pot" of subsidies available that can be easily accessed for frequent users of jail/prison and homeless shelters. Efforts have been made in some cities to get city public administrators to consider dedicating a portion of housing vouchers for frequent user programs, to develop legislation that would provide housing resources for frequent user programs, or prioritize housing as a need for prisoners returning to their community. During the current recession, providing scarce resources to people involved with the criminal justice system may be a difficult argument to make for some administrators and policymakers. Even when housing vouchers are available in jurisdictions, the approval process for Section 8 and

other housing vouchers can take months. The lengthy process necessitates some type of temporary housing for individuals waiting for housing vouchers for PSH.

- **Securing vouchers for formerly incarcerated persons**—A related challenge is the difficulty of using housing funds for the homeless to develop or provide housing for formerly incarcerated persons. The problem lies in the fact that most housing funds for the homeless restrict eligibility through the use of a formal definition of homelessness. These definitions often exclude persons who are not residing in shelters or on the street. As a result of these definitions, nonprofit developers face the challenge of convincing funders and program administrators that formerly incarcerated persons fit within the given definition of homelessness and are indeed homeless, or are at least, at-risk of becoming so. Most projects that have successfully accessed resources from existing housing funds for the homeless are those projects that target individuals released from incarceration as opposed to alternative-to-incarceration or probation programs that have been less successful. In other cases, projects meet eligibility requirements by providing housing to a formerly incarcerated person after a brief stay at a shelter (e.g., NYC FUSE project).
- **Narrowly-constructed enrollment criteria for programs may unwittingly hamper a steady flow of clients into the program**—In Chicago, it has been difficult to identify the chronically homeless population in the jail since jail assessments do not include this information. Coupling the criterion for chronic homelessness with criteria related to multiple stays in jail and inpatient mental health treatment programs can make it difficult to find eligible clients. In NYC, it has been difficult to physically locate potential FUSE participants since they cannot become eligible until post-release. A significant amount of CSH staff time and effort has been used to troubleshoot these issues in each site since a slow flow of clients may jeopardize the housing vouchers that have been set aside for the project and/or make it difficult for providers to find efficiencies in serving frequent users.

Further, it becomes difficult to conduct a rigorous evaluation of a program that serves fewer than 100 clients annually. Limited enrollment and slow enrollment can take their toll on the prospect of sound research and evaluation. The FUSE-Chicago program, which had roughly 100 subsidies for housing, agreed to work within the constraints of a contemporaneous evaluation design built around random assignment. Having to assign eligible individuals to a control group slowed program enrollment further, which impacted resources spent on staffing the program. Adaptations to the program and to the evaluation may be necessary to solve some of these problems moving forward. But these compromises should be made within the framework of

understanding the importance of evaluation. Currently, there is a paucity of evidence not only about the effectiveness of supportive housing for individuals returning from prisons and jails, but also about the effectiveness of supportive housing for individuals at the intersection of homelessness and incarceration. Programs that demonstrate effectiveness and cost savings would undoubtedly facilitate progress toward system change, increased public safety, and help improve the lives of the individuals that are served.

- **Bringing programs “to scale”**—A number of administrators in the cities with a significant RHI investment indicated that they were proud of the successes of FUSE programs and other reentry housing efforts, but that programmatic efforts need to reach sufficient scale to make a difference (e.g., enough individuals are diverted from the jail to justify closing a housing unit). At best, FUSE programs only reach a few hundred clients a year. Therefore, the programs would need to be expanded considerably in order to close a shelter or a housing unit in a jail.

In the long term, the authors of this report, along with CSH staff, believe that more attention should be paid to engaging the “front end” of the criminal justice system and linking people to supportive housing through mental health and other alternatives-to-incarceration prior to incarceration. Programs that focus on the front end of the criminal justice system can be more efficient and less costly than “back end” programs as they can potentially reach hundreds of clients each year before they need the full suite of expensive permanent housing supports usually provided to frequent users. Judges are powerful allies in this respect and can be very persuasive with audiences that are often difficult to engage.

- **Corrections and community corrections agencies’ beliefs about helping clients find housing**—State corrections and criminal justice agencies seldom offer funding directly for community-based housing or other housing-related services targeting people leaving incarceration. Much of this lack of funding stems from the belief that the mission of corrections is limited to the care and custody of inmates while incarcerated and that its responsibility towards these individuals ends once their sentence is complete. Across probation and parole systems, housing services often get neglected because of the provision of temporary or permanent housing is expensive.

As discussed in the lessons learned section, NIMBY attitudes remain a significant challenge at the community level but also present issues with government partners who are likely to be even more reticent about advocating for new reentry housing in residential neighborhoods.

Finally, even within current progress in federal investment in prisoner reentry and reentry programs, few localities choose to include housing placements or rental subsidies in their reentry programs when developing or expanding programs through new grant funding. Many anticipate that new programs using Second Chance Act funding from the U.S. Department of Justice will include partners that link individuals to permanent supportive housing from prison or jails. It behooves CSH to continue to seek out these opportunities to create lasting partnerships that can be initially supported with federal funding. In fiscal year 2009, \$25 million was appropriated for Second Chance Act programs, including \$15 million for state and local reentry demonstration projects and \$10 million for grants to nonprofit organizations for mentoring and other transitional services. In fiscal year 2010, \$114 million was appropriated for prisoner reentry programs in the U.S. Department of Justice, including \$100 million for Second Chance Act grant programs (although no solicitation has yet expressly been dedicating to supporting housing or housing-related services).

## Lessons Learned

Through the efforts of CSH in the three sites that received a significant investment from the RHI, there are several lessons learned. By using city size as the basis for selecting where the RHI would be focused, the initiative found itself facing three very different levels of readiness for, and interest in, linking incarcerated persons to PSH post-release. New York City is the only one of the three cities that has a Department of Homeless Services; in contrast, Los Angeles and Chicago have no clear allocation of responsibility for homelessness. The directors of the NYC DHS and NYC DOC had already begun to work together when the RHI began. When the RHI began, interest for a reentry housing project was ripe in Chicago as well, though most of the energy and interest in the project came from the RHI program manager and other CSH staff following the demonstrated success of FUSE in NYC. Through the efforts of local elected officials and CSH staff, agencies in NYC and Chicago committed rental vouchers to the RHI projects. While the JIR program in LA offers linkages to shelter and transitional housing, plus wrap-around casework services, it has no committed PSH units or permanent housing subsidies under its control. In contrast to NYC and Chicago, LA had no history of interagency coordination around the issue of reentry housing and no champion with enough influence to take up the issue. Yet, the only state legislation to emerge from the RHI thus far comes from the LA RHI site. Involvement in California legislation from the LA RHI program manager, participation on the Collaborative on Reentry for the Chicago RHI program manager, and extensive collaboration with two key champions of reentry housing for the NYC RHI program manager exemplifies the ability of CSH to identify opportunity and take advantage of the right moment, striking not just “when the iron is hot,” but also “where it is hot.”

Due to the differences in their levels of readiness for change, it is not surprising that the three cities have faced different successes in the building blocks of change across the providers and developers, public agency administrators, local elected officials, and linking the “right” people to the “right” units. System change as a goal comes with a number of challenges, regardless of the substantive field. CSH and the dedicated RHI staff have worked hard to overcome a range of obstacles and pursue success. It has become clear that system change with regard to reentry supportive housing is an ongoing process that can take years to achieve. Some of the lessons learned, highlighted below, are unique to reentry housing and others also will be relevant to policymakers, administrators, and advocates in other fields.

## Policy Level

- **Have someone whose job is system change**—It is critically important to have someone “minding the store”—facilitating, coordinating, stimulating, reminding, organizing, assessing progress, bringing in new players, and keeping the many actors moving in the right general direction. This is the role the RHI program manager has played in each of the RHI sites—the RHI pays for someone to pay attention. Without this explicit support for someone dedicated to coordinate, there would be far less progress in the RHI sites.
- **Look for and capitalize on opportunity**—In NYC, “opportunity” was the combined interest of the commissioners of correction and homeless services; in Chicago, it was the emergence of housing as a key reentry issue for several working groups across different levels of government; in LA, it was state legislators and the LASD. The RHI program managers and other CSH staff were able to start work with already-interested parties, which helps explain why the various sites have made progress in such different ways.
- **Cultivate a champion within corrections**—Having a key advocate/champion in a high level position in corrections is critical to success given the often-held belief that housing is not under the purview of criminal justice. When a corrections leader shows that reentry housing is a priority, other key leaders are likely to follow suit.
- **Collaboration begets collaboration**—Collaboration among local leaders/officials nurtures an environment of which other local leaders want to be part, particularly when there is positive media attention to the issue at hand.
- **Negotiations with housing authorities can result in relaxed eligibility criteria**—It is often difficult to obtain housing subsidies for formerly incarcerated persons because the main source of subsidies, housing authorities, are prohibited by federal law from providing them to people with

certain criminal records. However, many state housing authorities limit eligibility based on criminal record far more than federal restrictions require. Some communities have been able to get housing vouchers for formerly incarcerated persons by working through points of resistance with housing authority staff and boards. Persistence pays off.

- **Use site visits to share successes with interested communities around the country**—Bring leaders, advocates and caseworkers from new, emerging, or interested communities to visit places that have already shown some successes. Seeing success first hand can go a long way toward getting leaders from other communities to understand that change is possible in their own locations. Note that it is important to have not only the local leaders on the site visit, but also the casework staff who would be working with clients regularly.
- **Utilize data to inform the policy/program response**—Conducting data analysis and matching client records across systems to document the scale and scope of the population overlaps is a powerful tool. Data analysis and matching can be used as the foundation to build research-based policies and programs and facilitate a conversation about a shared program mission among the array of stakeholders that may have differing organizational missions.
- **Gather data to document impact**—To achieve sustainability, progress must be tracked and showcased. Documentation should include the impact and costs and benefits of programs and policies. Progress must be measured in terms that local leaders from the different fields can appreciate and benefit from. In addition, although demonstrating the efficacy of supportive housing in reducing incarceration is a powerful tool, it should not be overstated because the criminal justice system and other systems do not always clearly realize savings.
- **Generate positive publicity**—Media attention and publicity that highlight successes can go far to create a positive atmosphere. Use documentation of success to get this publicity. Even small successes can make good news stories, such as one provider’s success with a formerly “hard-to-house” client.

## Program Level

- **Adopt a flexible and locally adaptable approach**—Different program models will work in different places, given that much variation exists among communities in provider capacity, service and housing resources, connections, and interested parties. It is most useful to start with a community’s strengths and branch out once there is evidence of success.
- **Anticipate Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) issues even with past successes**—NIMBY presents sig-

nificant hurdles at the community level, but can be overcome when dedicated and experienced partners are involved in demonstrating that community fears are not always realized. Program partners willing to collect data on successful past projects that can be used to allay fears will be a key tool in gaining community support.

- **Connect with potential clients while they are still incarcerated**—The risk of losing people if they are released without a strong connection to the reentry program is quite high. It is better to engage, screen for eligibility, enroll, and begin post-release planning while a person is still incarcerated, including having a system to flag frequent users when they enter jail or prison. If PSH is not available immediately, the ability to offer some type of immediate post-release housing, with someone to meet a person at release and provide transportation, increases the odds that those enrolled will still be active participants once released.
- **Use available funding for new reentry staff that operate within corrections, if possible**—Related to the issue just discussed, for some jurisdictions, it may only be possible to achieve change within jails and prisons by adding a staff person(s) whose sole responsibility is to identify and connect incarcerated persons to community-based providers with housing and supportive services. In Chicago, the RHI funds were used to create two staff positions within the Cook County Jail to facilitate project enrollment and connection to services. This has helped to ensure fidelity to the program model, a critical factor in achieving intended program outcomes. In LA, new case management and housing specialist positions in nonprofit agencies were trained and supported to work in the jail with the CTU staff. It is important to note that simply adding more responsibilities to an existing position within the jail or prison is not optimal in that the “new” program-related responsibilities may take a back seat to business as usual.
- **Expect and anticipate program implementation hurdles**—The design and implementation of any reentry supportive housing initiative may take twice as long to implement as expected at the outset, which will impact the timing of when public resources need to be made available and when other stakeholder commitments will be necessary. Programs that do not build in the possibilities of delays can jeopardize their resources.
- **Devise efficient ways to identify frequent users**—Programmatic needs for identifying multiple system use are different from the types of data matching that are done to assess the scope of overlap, to know whether it has changed, and to plan for an adequate level of resources to address the needs of frequent users. The program question is, “Has Person A, who just came into jail, used jail and other systems

multiple times?” Mechanisms that allow program staff to answer this question every day, for everyone who just became incarcerated, will be different from those that are trying to answer questions such as, “How many people are frequent users of corrections, shelters, and hospital emergency rooms?” In the ideal world, RHI project staff would be able to access all the systems used by potential clients, to assess eligibility based on the extent of multiple system use.

- **Data systems should be real time, up-to-date, and accurate**—The aforementioned ideal rarely happens, but sometimes it can be approximated, as the FUSE-Chicago program is doing. Having a live system could greatly facilitate release planning from jail, as release from jail can happen quickly, sometimes in a day or two. A live system available to jail release planners might provide the data and impetus to seek far-reaching changes with regard to planning for supportive housing and other housing options upon release (or within a few days of release). Discussions about matching data across systems (e.g., corrections, homeless system, behavioral and primary health systems) should involve external mediators or researchers who can assist in overcoming hurdles involved in sharing sensitive data. External mediators can often see past local barriers. Further mediators can offer the knowledge of how others have solved similar problems or barriers. Most types of data sharing of personal indicators among system partners is possible. Assistance from mediators or researchers in how to share data should be accessed early in program development so that all possible options for sharing data are discussed and considered.
- **Help providers collect relevant data**—Nonprofit organizations and local leaders could benefit from technical assistance from research partners with regard to data gathering, data sharing, performance measurement, and evaluation. Evaluation reporting should be set up with the assistance from outside research partners. In addition, the development of plans for evaluation reporting and the incorporation of evaluation should be part of initial program development discussions, and not an afterthought.

## Conclusions

Given the breadth and extent of the RHI activities over the last three years in NYC, LA, and Chicago, as well as in other jurisdictions, it is clear that the RHI program managers and other CSH staff have accomplished system change in many areas, and continue to work on many others. In each of the three main cities, CSH staff has succeeded in establishing supportive housing as a reentry issue worth exploring. They have worked with local elected officials and public administrators to reach agreement that the issue of reentry housing needs to be a priority and to take concrete steps to formulate solutions through, at minimum, the dedication of resources to

support reentry housing programs. Each city has a collaborative body, of which the RHI program managers and other CSH staff are a part, where there is a subcommittee or a working group on the provision of supportive housing to individuals who have been involved with the criminal justice system. In terms of concrete resources being dedicated by agency administrators, the RHI program managers and other CSH staff have been able to obtain housing subsidies dedicated to frequent users of jail and shelters (Chicago, New York), facilitate a shift in agency grant-making approaches by getting agencies to issue solicitation that explicitly request supportive housing services targeted to individuals coming out of prisons and jails (Chicago, Los Angeles), and use agency staff to manage programs (New York) and collect data and report on program progress (New York, Los Angeles).

In taking on the role of the intermediary, CSH has developed new programs, proven it could be successful managing pilot initiatives, achieved results, and continually innovated to move the policy agenda forward. As a consequence, city and state agencies have been willing to put resources on the table that can be used for units and services. CSH has also leveraged private support successfully, which has made city and state agencies more willing to take the risk of committing their own dollars. The commitment from city, state, and private agencies has opened avenues for providers to obtain and appropriately use the resources to work with a high-need population. With encouragement and financial support from CSH—most often in the form of technical assistance or a planning grant—a large number of providers have either stepped forward on their own or agreed to collaborate.

CSH had built a solid reputation with providers before the RHI, a reputation that continues to grow through its work on the RHI. As all providers we interviewed made clear, CSH was a catalyst in solidifying providers’ involvement in the area of reentry housing. A few providers had been attempting to reach out to formerly incarcerated people before the involvement of CSH, but it appears it was CSH’s involvement that brought targeted programmatic efforts to fruition. CSH staff has shown that they can be trusted to assist in building sustainable collaboratives that benefit all stakeholders involved. The creation of peer support networks in the RHI sites has been enormously successful in helping to overcome typical obstacles, such as NIMBY, benefits for clients, and landlords. The providers have a forum, through the CSH and RHI staff networks, to discuss their challenges serving the formerly incarcerated that can minimize potential feelings of isolation.

Undoubtedly, having a flexible funding stream has allowed CSH to maximize the impact of the RHI investing in the best available local opportunities. CSH staff has used funds for strategies and resources that include: funding staff positions within corrections facilities, conducting training and technical assistance for public and nonprofit agencies, re-granting funds to help community-based

providers develop programs or slots for reentry housing services, funding enhanced services for providers, disseminating successes through conference presentations, facilitating peer-to-peer visits, and other activities. Most important is the use of the RHI funds to support dedicated staff in each city, who know the systems well enough to plug many system holes and innovate by attempting new strategies to target and serve the criminal justice-involved population that would benefit from supportive housing. In doing so, they have elevated the importance of housing as a key service for all reentry populations. When CSH launched the RHI, reentry housing was given minimal attention among the myriad reentry issues across the nation. Today, housing and supportive housing are much higher priorities for criminal justice agencies and other stakeholders.

In sum, the RHI activities have helped CSH become the organization to consult when information or experts are needed related to reentry housing. Indeed, CSH has earned the title of expert through innovative thinking and strategic planning around a difficult issue. Furthermore, the FUSE model has become a nationally-recognized model worthy of replication, and as such, almost a dozen communities are attempting to replicate it. CSH has leveraged resources astutely and, in partnership with external researchers, obtained resources to develop and implement five rigorous evaluations of their programs. These evaluations, combined with the diligence of CSH staff in staying at the forefront of dissemination, are helping to build a knowledge base around the country of best practices in reentry housing.

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