



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0001

June 23, 2021

Dear Public Housing Authorities, Continuums of Care, Multifamily Owners, and HUD Grantees,

Among my priorities at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is to ensure the public safety of the households, the properties, and the communities that we assist. One of the most important ways that HUD can meet this priority is to ensure that people leaving prisons and jails are supported in their reentry to the community. Research also shows that people who lack stable housing following incarceration face a higher likelihood of rearrest and reincarceration. On the other hand, a stable home can serve as the foundation upon which returning citizens can rebuild their lives, obtain employment, improve their health, and achieve recovery.

Unfortunately, too many people exit prisons and jails in America without a stable home to return to. A significant number of people experiencing homelessness are caught in a revolving door between homelessness and reincarceration. In some communities, the lack of stable housing can also delay a person's approval for discretionary release from prison, leading people to serve more time behind bars than those with stable housing. Many people face housing denials based on their criminal records years or decades after serving their time, even when their criminal history does not indicate that they present a substantial risk to persons or property.

The President and I believe that everyone deserves a second chance and a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. No person should exit a prison or jail only to wind up on the streets.

To that end, HUD is committed to taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the housing needs of returning citizens and people with criminal records, and by doing so, increasing public safety within our communities. Addressing reentry housing needs also furthers the Biden Administration's commitment to advancing equity and reversing systemic racism, given the racial disparities evident in the criminal justice system.

The American Rescue Plan provides us with a near-term opportunity to assist people exiting prisons or jails, namely through the nearly 70,000 emergency housing vouchers recently awarded to more than 600 public housing authorities (PHAs) across the country. HUD [Notice PIH 2021-15](#) makes clear that people exiting prisons and jails who are at-risk of homelessness due to their low incomes and lack of sufficient resources or social supports are eligible for these vouchers. Given the significant overlap between recent incarceration history and homelessness, HUD strongly encourages PHAs to work with their Continuum of Care (CoC) partners to ensure that individuals who are at-risk of homelessness after leaving prisons or jails are considered for these vouchers. In the coming weeks, HUD will provide further tools to help communities assess

the homelessness risk of people exiting prisons and jails and to create and strengthen referral partnerships between PHAs, CoCs, and corrections agencies for these vouchers.

In addition to leveraging this opportunity through the American Rescue Plan, HUD is taking additional steps to meet the housing needs of returning citizens and to reduce barriers to housing among people with criminal records. This includes:

- Developing additional tools and guidance to assist private landlords, PHAs, and Multifamily housing owners to ensure that their applicant screening and tenant selection practices avoid unnecessarily overbroad denial of housing to applicants on the basis of criminal records that could lead to Fair Housing violations, consistent with the [2016 memo on disparate impact and criminal records](#);
- Reviewing existing HUD policies and regulations that limit access to housing and HUD assistance among people with criminal conviction histories; and
- Publishing findings regarding best and promising practices on reentry housing, including through HUD's existing programs and demonstrations like the [Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program](#) and the [Pay for Success Permanent Supportive Housing Demonstration](#).

As we take these and other steps to meet the housing needs of returning citizens, I will continue to work closely with the many organizations and entities that help to administer HUD's programs at the state and local level. By working together, I am confident that we can make significant progress in meeting the housing needs of returning citizens, increase their chances of success, and increase public safety within our communities. I thank you for your partnership in these and other efforts.

Sincerely,



Marcia L. Fudge