

# Building Connections to Housing During Reentry

## Results from a Questionnaire on DOC Housing Policies, Programs, and Needs

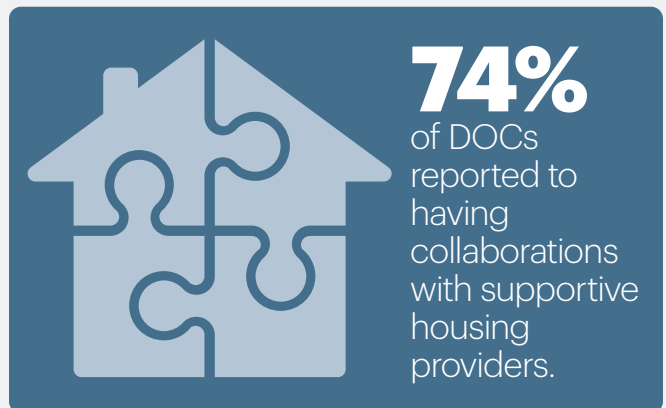
When someone is released from incarceration, securing stable, affordable housing is often one of their most pressing and fundamental needs.<sup>1</sup> Due to their central role in discharge and reentry planning, state Departments of Correction (DOCs) are in a unique position to help meet this need and ensure a successful reentry experience. However, reentry coordinators in these departments may not always have the information and partnerships they need to effectively do so. To help fill this gap in the field, The Council of State Governments Justice Center conducted a questionnaire among DOC reentry coordinators in spring 2022 on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Thirty-seven out of 50 states plus the District of Columbia responded to the survey. This report summarizes the key findings and policy implications of the questionnaire related to screening and assessment, release policies, cross-system partnerships, housing programs provided and funded by DOCs, and reentry housing gaps and needs.

### Finding #1

Nearly all responding DOCs indicated that they ask people questions about their housing needs as part of the discharge/reentry planning process. For almost half, if housing is not identified prior to release, people must remain incarcerated until an address is approved.

**97%**

of responding DOCs ask people housing-related questions as part of their discharge and reentry planning process.



### Finding #2

Most responding DOCs reported that they actively engage in cross-system partnerships, although these engagements are typically with criminal justice system-led planning bodies. DOCs also noted that they partner with a range of housing agencies, with a majority indicating they mostly work with providers of transitional/recovery and supportive housing.

## Finding #3

A majority of responding DOCs indicated that they provide at least one type of post-release housing assistance, but it is typically short-term. Most DOCs also reported providing case management and housing search/navigation assistance.



# 71%

of DOCs said they provide at least one type of post-release housing assistance, with transitional housing (65 percent) and halfway house (52 percent) services being the most prevalent.



# 95%

of DOCs reported that lack of affordable housing options was the top housing barrier for people reentering the community.

## Finding #4

Responding DOCs reported that the most common barriers to housing placements are lack of affordable housing options, discrimination/stigma based on criminal justice history or record, and restrictive housing provider and landlord policies, in addition to widely reported gaps in supportive and permanent housing.

## Next Steps for DOCs

**Participating DOCs shared a range of policies and programs they would like to implement to more effectively connect people with housing at reentry. Of particular focus were increasing the range of available housing options and funding opportunities, as well as improving partnerships and staffing efforts.** Many responding DOCs noted the need to strengthen collaborations with housing agencies to increase access to longer-term resources, such as housing vouchers and permanent supportive housing. Respondents also emphasized the need for increased support for landlords, including financial incentives, as well as more housing for people with sex offense convictions. Finally, DOC reentry coordinators also stated that they would like their agencies to work more effectively with community partners in identifying people in need and connecting them to housing, and that they saw a need for better case management and improved workflows within their organizations.

To read the full report, visit [Building Connections to Housing During Reentry: Results from a Questionnaire on DOC Housing Policies, Programs, and Needs](https://www.csgjusticecenter.org) at [csgjusticecenter.org](https://www.csgjusticecenter.org).

1. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating the Evidence for Improving Health Outcomes Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2018), accessed September 28, 2022, <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25133/permanent-supportive-housing-evaluating-the-evidence-for-improving-health-outcomes>.



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