

HATFIELD RESIDENT FELLOWSHIP PROJECT BRIEF

Expanding the 2022 1115 Waiver to Support the Housing Needs of Individuals Releasing from Incarceration

Project Dates: August/2023 – February/2024

PROJECT GOAL

The goal was to identify programs and regulations in Oregon and across the country that have proven successful in connecting individuals with carceral involvement to stable housing and can be valuable role models to better inform the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on how to shape the new waiver benefits to provide housing assistance to effectively mitigate the needs of formerly incarcerated people and reduce the housing and homelessness crisis in Oregon.

TAKE-AWAYS

In summary, programs in Oregon and other states that assist individuals releasing from incarceration usually involve navigation services and connection to case managers, comprehensive reentry release plans by locating stable housing providers, short-term rent assistance, placement in shelters and supportive housing apartments, transportation to housing providers, and partnerships with other agencies and organizations to locate and house individuals without stable housing in transitional or permanent supportive housing units.

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges was to obtain complete information from all programs in Oregon and in each state, particularly related to housing assistance to formerly incarcerated people. The plan was also to include information on what some countries were doing as well, but lack of information and difficulty in contacting people abroad prevented this component from being added as a complement.

STRATEGY

The strategy applied here was more through a literature review approach, collecting information from the official websites of federal and state government agencies,

nonprofit organizations, and other institutions that work with housing assistance for formerly incarcerated people is included, stressing the funding sources and overall structures of such programs. When needed, the directors of the agencies and nonprofits were contacted for informational interviews to clarify and expand on the information available on their websites. At times, I used my network and supervisors to facilitate introductions when initial contacts did not return any responses.

RESULTS

Based on the findings, 9 major recommendations were suggested to better utilize the demonstration waiver to effectively assist formerly incarcerated people with housing needs. These recommendations are further detailed in the final report produced as the main deliverable.

1. Increase access to immediate assistance.
2. Strengthen legislative advocacy to directly address housing needs.
3. Enhance coordination among state agencies.
4. Promote more partnerships with local organizations.
5. Make people with criminal records a protected class.
6. Expand the capacity and outreach of housing providers, especially in rural areas.
7. Provide access to services while still incarcerated.
8. Invest in rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing (PSH).
9. Include people with lived experiences.