

Dollars and Sense Justice Reentry Housing

How Supportive tenant-based rental assistance
provides reduced costs and better outcomes



Union County
HOUSING AUTHORITY

Session Objectives

2

“How Justice Bridge Works”

Bruce Quigley, Pennsylvania Social Equity Land Trust

“Why Justice Bridge Works”

Ed Bowman, Lockhaven University

Justice Bridge Housing Program

3

The Problem - Justice Involved individuals:

- remaining incarcerated beyond minimum sentence and/or
- Being released despite (recidivism) risk inducing home plan

The Solution - Partnership between the housing authority, criminal justice, and human services systems.

Justice Bridge Housing Program - Key Components

4

- Defined target population
- Public Housing Authority (PHA) operates the program
 - Tenant-based rental assistance provided in accordance with the procedures of the Housing Choice Voucher program
- Probation/Parole Supervision of participants.
- Community supportive services external to the Housing Authority
- *Collaboration*

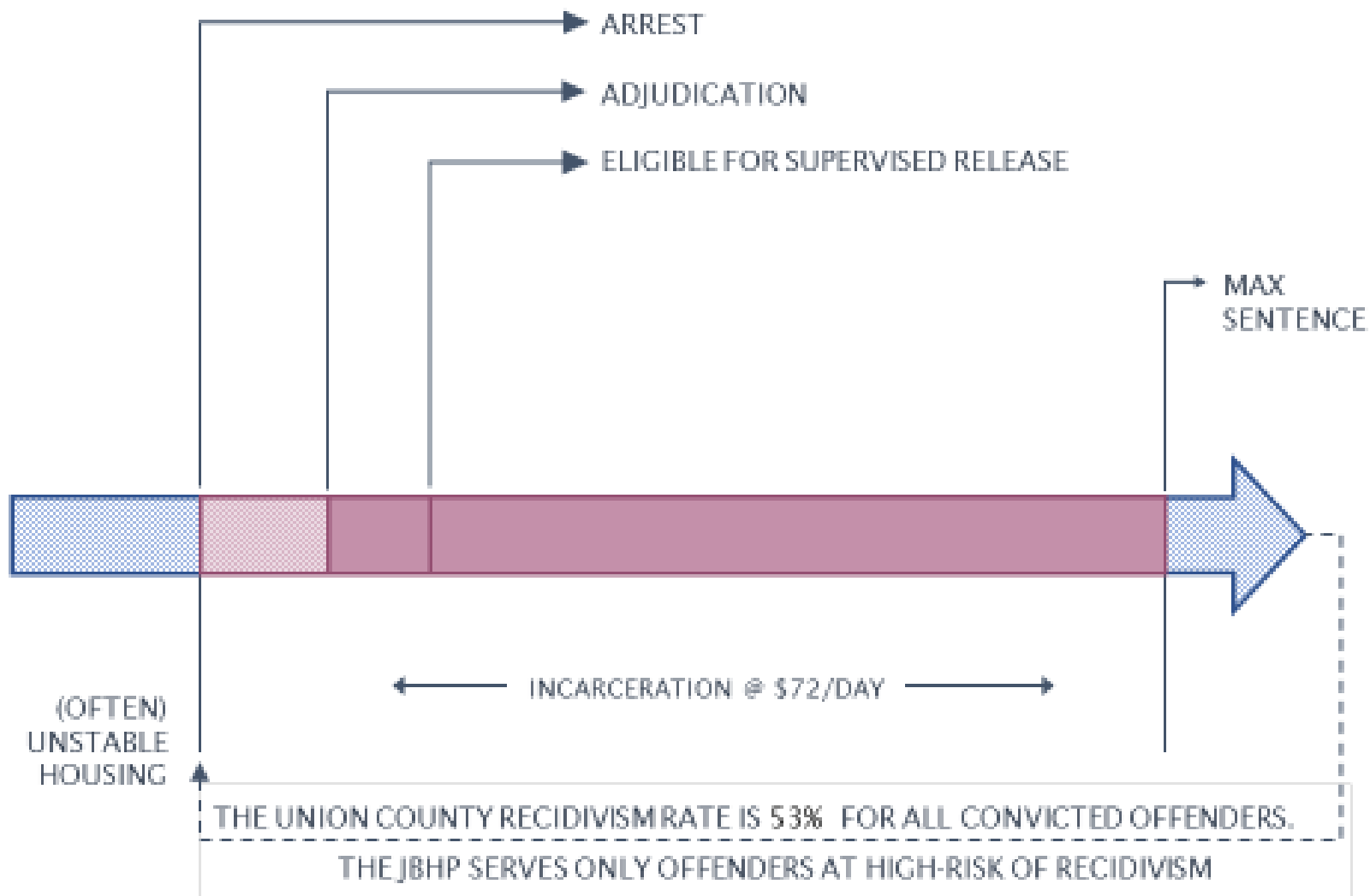
Justice Bridge Housing Program

5

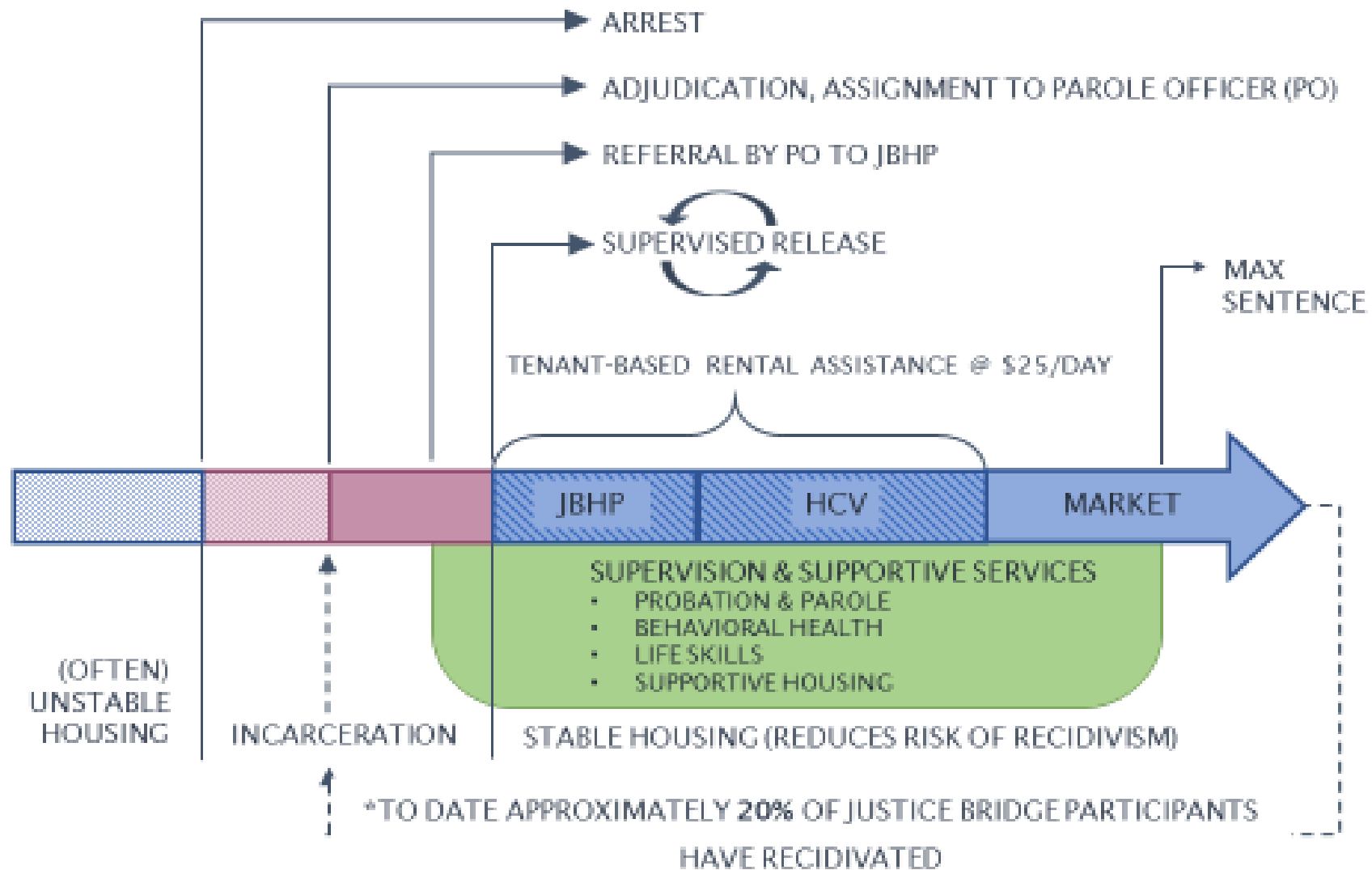
PHA/NFP Scope of Services (3 possible phases)

- (Co)Chair and Administer Justice Bridge Steering Committee (monthly meetings)
- Unit Search - including mitigation of risk factors & landlord negotiations & relations
- Coordination of support services.
- Requisition and disbursement of funds
- Financial and participant monitoring including data collection
- Tenant-based Rental Assistance Administration:
 - Income verification/participant eligibility
 - Administration of lease documents
 - Housing Quality Standards Unit inspection
 - Recertification

WITHOUT UNION COUNTY JUSTICE BRIDGE HOUSING PROGRAM



WITH UNION COUNTY JUSTICE BRIDGE HOUSING PROGRAM - FOR HIGH RISK OFFENDERS -



Voices of Returning Citizens

Housing Instability:

- All the participants reported a period of housing instability prior to placement in the JBHP:
 - Financial Reason/Responsibility
 - Living with dysfunctional family/co-dependent others
 - Nowhere to go

Voices of Returning Citizens

Affective Change:

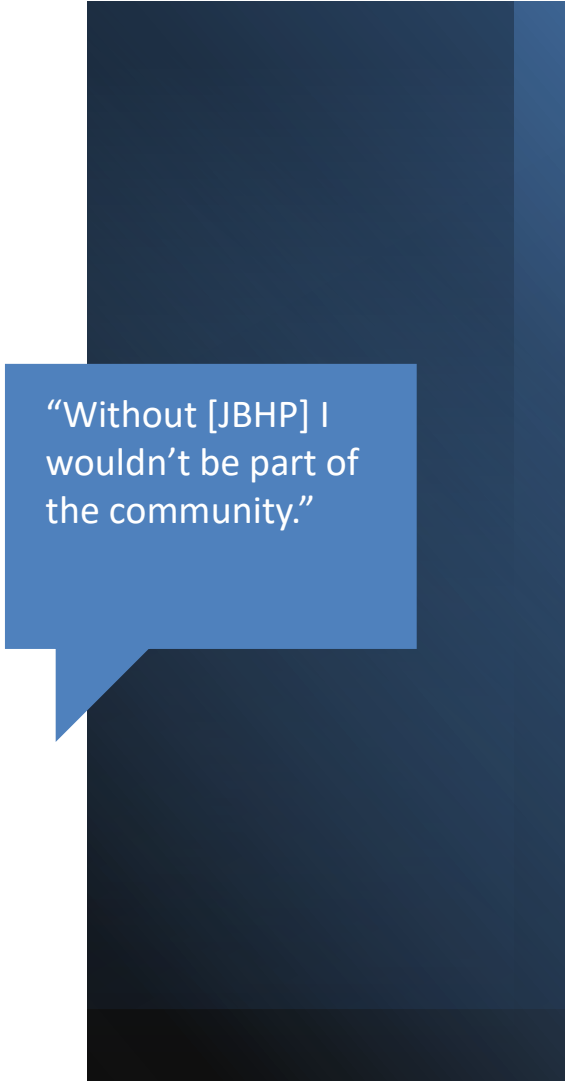
- The most frequently cited change was related to feelings, emotions and relationships.
- Relieved of fear and worry
- Warm, quiet, stable housing
- Improved relationship with family/significant others
- Able to care for my family

“The JBHP helps me feel a sense of independence. I’m able to have my own place and get help at the same time...It gives me a sense of completion – some validation that somebody trusted me enough to want to fund me and help with housing.”

Voices of Returning Citizens

Building (Pro) Social Capital:

- In addition to personal efficacy, the participants reported a change in social capital.
 - Feeling accept by the community
 - Feeling of belongingness
 - Over-coming barriers with community support



“Without [JBHP] I wouldn’t be part of the community.”

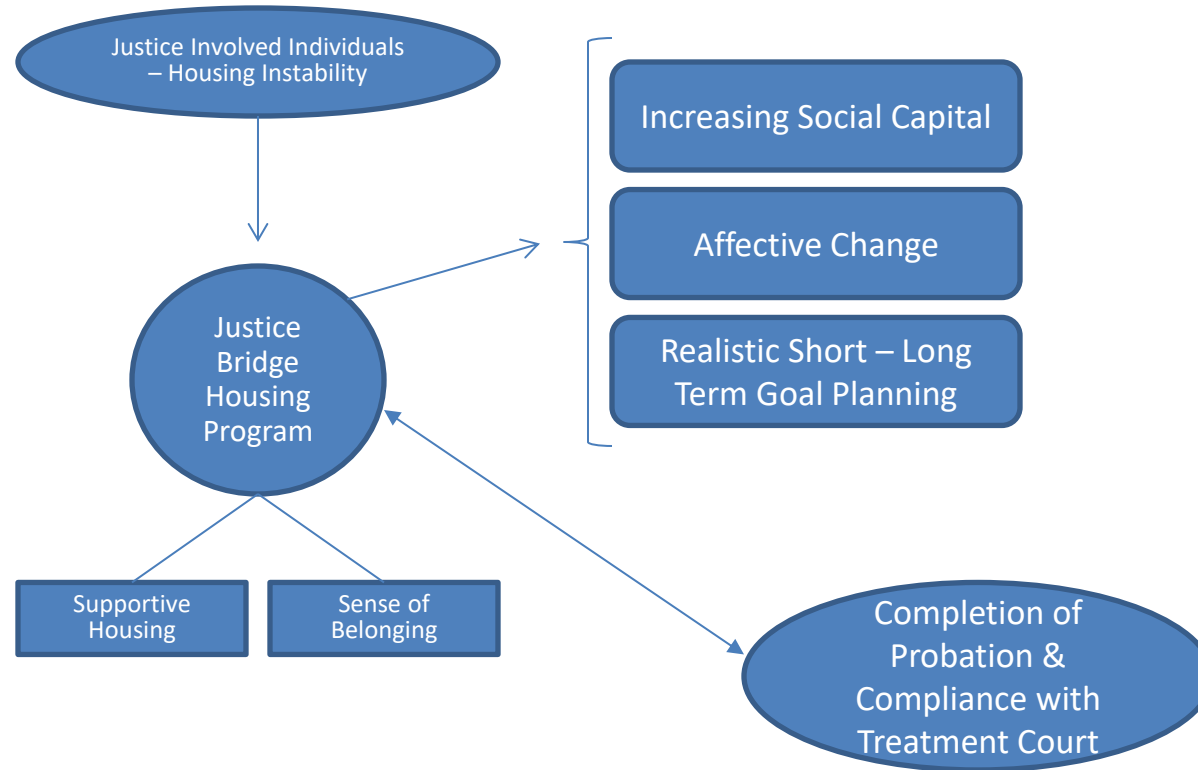
“I am always constantly trying to feel more secure about my choices and about what I’m doing and I think the justice bridge programs gives me one less thing to worry about so I can focus on more things to better my life on a daily basis so it just kind of enables me to be you know, more sure about myself and like to just keep moving.”

Voices of Returning Citizens

Realistic Short- & Long-Term Goals:

- Participants stressed achievable short- and long-term goals.
- Learn to budget successfully
- Increased self-reliance
- Continue education
- Family Stability

Voices of Returning Citizens





“That program saved my life, really. Wholeheartedly, genuinely believe that,” he says.



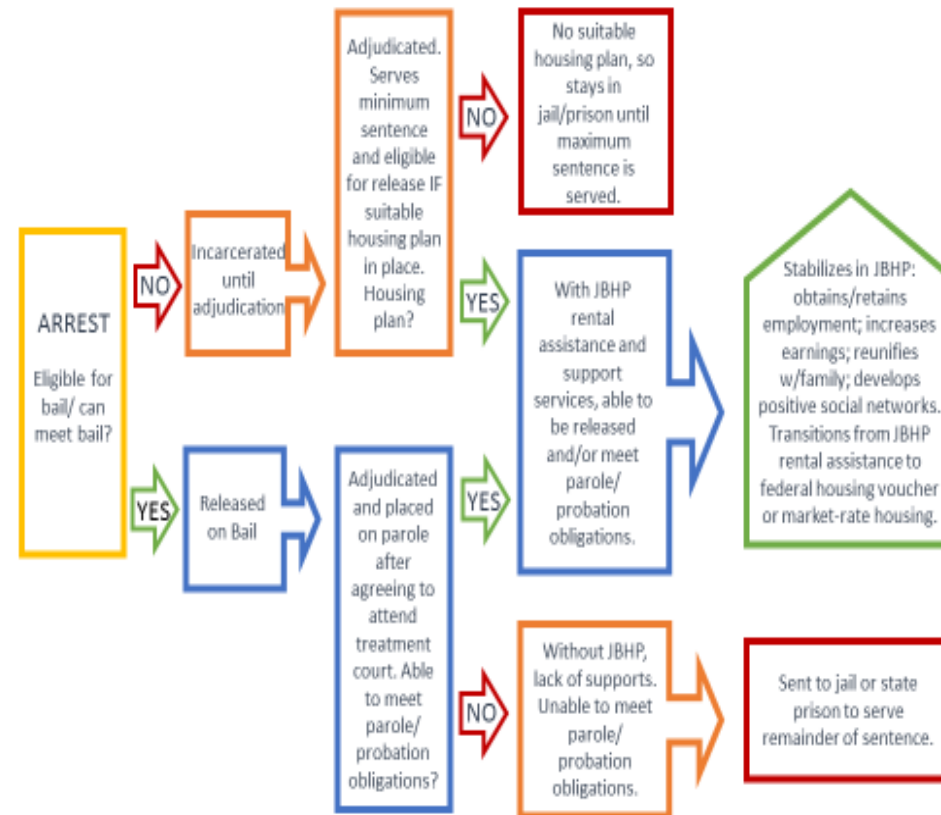
Hassinger says he couldn't have adhered to terms of his probation without the program. A violation would have meant re-sentencing, potentially, for all of his original charges (20-something, 12 of which were felonies) to a state prison term.



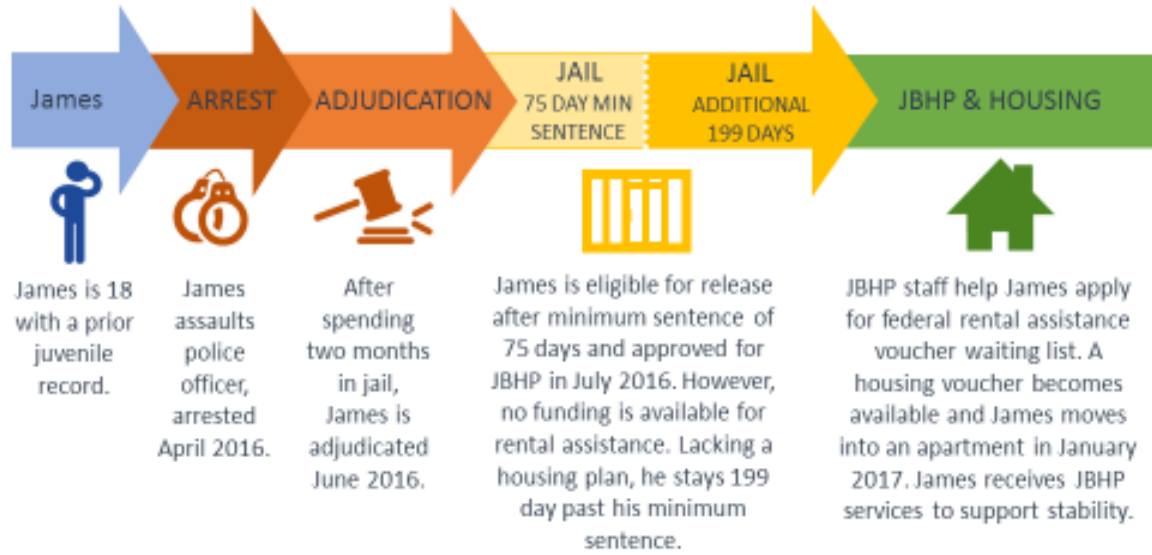
Funding

Our supposition is that this program model promises such significant net savings that monies should be redirected from the areas where the savings occurs -in the justice system- to support program replication and establish permanent funding

Basic JBHP Process Map



JBHP IS COST EFFECTIVE & IMPROVES OUTCOMES CASE STUDY: JAMES

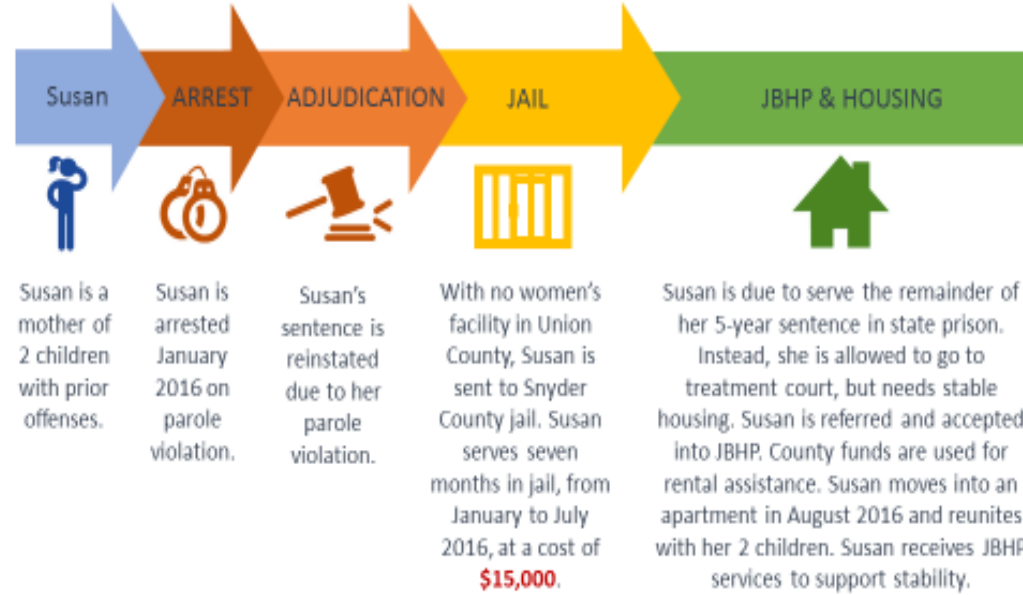


JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES

The total cost of James's 274 days in jail at \$72/day was **\$19,728.**
 The **199 days** James spent in jail past the minimum cost **\$14,328.**
 At \$25/day, JBHP rental assistance could have saved the county **\$9,353.**

JBHP IS COST EFFECTIVE & IMPROVES OUTCOMES

CASE STUDY: SUSAN



JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES

At \$25/day, JBHP rental assistance for one year costs **\$9,125** compared to **\$41,000** for one year in state prison. Susan's 5-year state prison sentence could have cost up to **\$205,000**. In addition to reducing prison costs, JBHP allowed family reunification to occur.

JBHP IS COST EFFECTIVE & IMPROVES OUTCOMES CASE STUDY: TIM



JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES

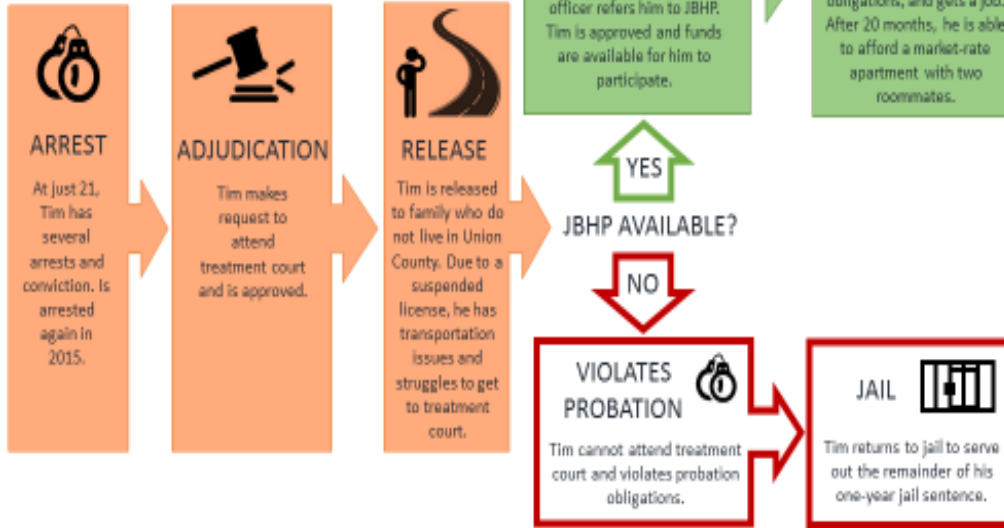
Without JBHP, Tim may have recidivated and returned to prison at a cost of **\$112/day**.

Not only does JBHP rental assistance cost less at **\$25/day**, participants have better outcomes, including employment and the development of positive social networks.

JBHP HELPS REDUCE TIME SPENT IN JAIL & RELATED COSTS

TIM WITH & WITHOUT JBHP:

Justice Bridge has made a difference in Tim's life. Without the program, it is likely he would have returned to jail given his lack of stable housing and transportation. JBHP provided Tim with housing and services, enabling him to gain employment, connect to positive social networks, achieve self-sufficiency and avoid recidivating.



JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES

Without JBHP, Tim may have recidivated and returned to jail at a cost of **\$72/day** or prison at a cost of **\$112/day**. Not only does JBHP rental assistance cost less at **\$25/day**, participants have better outcomes, including employment and the development of positive social networks.



Pennsylvania

Department of Corrections



HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR
PENNSYLVANIA STATE REENTRANTS:
Overview of the HAP and REACH Programs

Overview of Department of Corrections Non-Residential Contracts



- Treatment Programming
 - Drug and Alcohol Treatment
 - SDTP – State Drug Treatment Program
 - SUD – Substance Abuse Disorder
 - Mental Health Treatment
 - Batterer's Intervention
 - Sexual Offender Treatment
 - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
- Additional Needs Based Programming
 - Family Reunification
 - Mentoring
 - Workforce Development
 - Day Reporting
 - Housing Assistance
 - HAP – Housing Assistance Program
 - ReACH – ReEntrants Achieving Community Housing

HAP (Housing Assistance Program)



HAP Eligibility:

- Under supervision of state parole or special probation;
- Unable to secure housing;
- Currently residing in a CCC/CCF or group home
- Currently residing in a place not meant for human habitation
- Secured verifiable employment (a minimum of 20+ hours per week for 4 weeks); OR secured verifiable source of income (Social Security, Disability, Pension, etc.)

HAP Requirements and Details:

- Income (employment or entitlements/benefits-SSI/SSDI, pension, etc.)
- Rental cost not less than 30% or greater than 45% total household income
- Needs assessment determines level -
- Service providers contract with the state and provide case management services, assistance in obtaining suitable housing, and additional supports

NOTE: Reentrants mandated for placement in residential program as a condition of parole are excluded



Pennsylvania
Department of Corrections

HAP (Housing Assistance Program)



The HAP program has been funded by the Commonwealth for multiple contract cycles and is primarily designed for reentrants with employment of similar types of income.

The next slide will focus on ReACH, the program designed for those without such income.

Any questions before moving to the ReACH program?

ReACH (ReEntrants Attaining Community Housing)

The central question that continued to arise with the HAP program for years was...

"What about the reentrants without income?"

The DOC obtained a grant to explore this and has launch the pilot phase of the ReACH program.



Pennsylvania
Department of Corrections

ReACH - Target Populations



Adults with Disabilities or Limited Income:

- Older than age 18, AND
 - Has a diagnosed disability that prevents full-time employment as determined by a doctor's certificate;
- OR
- Unable to earn income equal to or more than 100% of the poverty guideline including any public assistance/benefits, after DOC-funded supports have been exhausted

Older Adults with Limited Income

- 55 and older, AND
 - Unemployed or on a fixed income (SSI/SSDI, pensions, retirement savings);
- OR
- Unable to secure income equal to or more than 100% of the federal poverty income guideline including any public assistance/benefits

ReACH (ReEntrants Attaining Community Housing)

With incentive payments built in for the providers, increased stipends for reentrants, and additional supports provided to the reentrants, the ReACH program is designed to address short term and long term housing for unemployable and underemployable reentrant populations.

Currently available in the Lackawanna, Allegheny, and Dauphin county areas, there is hope to expand to the Philadelphia area in 2025.



Pennsylvania
Department of Corrections



Pennsylvania

Department of Corrections

**Questions about the PA DOC's
HAP or ReACH programs?**

NAVIGATING HOUSING FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS: *Appeals and Advocacy*



INGLIS SELF-DETERMINATION HOUSING OF PENNSYLVANIA


Mission: To promote self-determination and control in housing for persons with disabilities and older adults in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

INGLIS SDHP works to:

- **Bridge the information gap** between the housing and disability/older adult communities
- **Promote partnerships** that enable people with disabilities/older adults to choose and control housing
- **Increase access** to affordable, accessible and integrated housing

KEEP IN MIND

Before we get into the specifics, **please keep in mind** the following points:

- **Housing is a Human Right** 
- **Housing impacts all aspects of life**
- Check out our [calendar](#) and register or request a training today

Appeals

AUTOMATIC DENIALS

Before we get into some best practices for how to appeal a housing denial, let's touch on what **automatic denials** in government subsidized housing such as Public Housing, Section 8, and other voucher programs:

The following are automatic denials in government subsidized housing:

- Methamphetamine production on federally assisted property
- Megan's Law lifetime registration
- Drug conviction within 5 years of applying

Have you ever helped a
client appeal a housing
denial?

APPEALING DENIALS

Reminder: Each property will have different appeal procedures. Be sure to follow the resident selection criteria, tenant selection plan, administration plan, etc.



Should be in writing and kept brief



State the decision that is being appealed



Attach a denial explanation and/or case manager statement



State the desired resolution

APPEALS CONTINUED

Denial Explanation

- If the applicant **disputes** their record, offer proof of inaccuracy.
- If the applicant **acknowledges** their record, offer proof of rehabilitation such as character references, clean record since the offense, and/or participation in services in the community.

Example Questions to Consider:

- What was the length of time since the last offense? Successfully completed probation or parole/paid court costs and fines?
- Are there positive references from a previous landlord to keep as proof of being a good tenant?
- Are they involved in the community? Have they engaged in services? Did they set up a payment arrangement with the previous landlord?

CONSIDER REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

If a conviction was related to a disability, a **Reasonable Accommodation** may be requested

Examples:

- A conviction as a result of a prior drug addiction
- A conviction as a result of behavior now being treated by medication or other treatment
- A conviction as a result of a medication issue (incorrect dose, side effects, etc.)

This is not an easy or instant solution, but clients working with their long-term doctors that have knowledge of their medical histories have a better chance of success.

Solutions and Action Steps in Navigating Housing for Formally Incarcerated Individuals

Systemic

BIG PICTURE SOLUTIONS

Advocacy

- At every level, ensure that you are advocating
 - Local meetings
 - Supporting legislation

Policies

- End hyper-criminalization and over-policing
- "Ban the Box" type of initiatives
- Widespread investments in affordable housing for this population

Partnerships

- Example: Cumberland County Reentry Strategic Plan
 - Representatives from various systems
 - Designed to reduce barriers

HUD CHANGES in 2023

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reviewed their regulations and found that many of their regulations could be improved to ensure that PHAs and HUD-affiliated owners are following recognized best practices, such as:


- Not automatically denying an applicant housing assistance simply based on the presence of a criminal conviction, other than where explicitly prohibited by federal law.
- Disregarding criminal history that is unlikely to bear on fitness for tenancy, such as arrest records, sealed or expunged records, older convictions, and convictions not involving violence or harm to persons or property

Organizational

HOUSING PROVIDERS




- **Review Organizational Policies**
 - Disparate Impacts- Example Fair Housing Act
- **Implement HUD's 2022 Guidance**
 - Limits lookback period to 3 years
 - Eliminates convictions for minor offenses
 - Removes blanket bans on people with criminal records
 - Excluding automatic denial offenses
- **Create Local Anti-Discrimination Reentry Policies**
 - Consistent background checks

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

- Separate housing coordinator and case manager
- Keep and maintain a landlord/property list
 - Highlight those that do not do background checks
 - Build relationships with these landlords
- Develop a Master Leasing program 
- Help reduce justice system contact
 - Refer and utilize community services to respond to mental health crisis, support behavioral health needs, etc. before police do
- Strengthen cross-system collaboration
 - Bring multiple systems together- Criminal Justice, housing, Mental Health systems, etc. to form coalitions and committees

Individual

OVERVIEW OF SOLUTIONS

- Help clients obtain a copy of their record 
 - Records should be reviewed and checked for accuracy
 - Dates
 - Charges
- Help clients write a rental cover letter 
- Assist clients in gathering references 
 - Case managers, previous landlords, Parole Officers, etc.
- Encourage additional steps if applicable
 - Pardon
 - Expungement
 - Clean Slate Law

KEY TAKE AWAYS/WRAP UP

- Housing is a Human Right
- Criminal Backgrounds are a major barrier to affordable, safe, and stable housing but there are creative solutions at every level.
- Major change can start at the bottom- leverage your relationships and client stories to push for change.

FEEDBACK NEEDED

Please let us
know your
thoughts by
filling out a
short survey:

Your feedback is used to enhance our
~~internal trainings and staff~~
development. Thank you for
participating!



GET IN TOUCH

Robin Reed, MSW
Regional Housing Coordinator
Robin.Reed@inglis.org

Sign up for our newsletter,
learn more about our
programming, and contact
us directly at
[Inglis.org/SDHP](https://inglis.org/SDHP)

