

A photograph of a city street scene. On the left is a modern building with large glass windows. On the right is a historic red brick building with many windows and fire escapes. A street with a cobblestone pattern runs in front of the buildings. There are trees, a white SUV, and a person walking in the scene.

**Advancing Supportive Housing
Solutions to Reduce Homelessness
for People Impacted by the
Criminal Legal System**

A Report for New York City Leaders

Winter 2022



TRINITY CHURCH WALL STREET

This report was produced with the generous support of Trinity Church Wall Street to help guide New York City leadership in better aligning housing resources for justice impacted populations. The report lays out the three main actions New York City leadership needs to take to expand supportive housing and reduce homelessness and racial disparities for people impacted by the criminal legal system. The contents reflect the authors' views and do not represent an endorsement by Trinity Church Wall Street.



About CSH

CSH is the national champion for supportive housing, demonstrating its potential to improve the lives of very vulnerable individuals and families by helping communities create over 335,000 real homes. CSH funding, expertise, and advocacy have provided \$1 billion in direct loans and grants for supportive housing across the country. Building on nearly 30 years of success developing multi and cross-sector partnerships, CSH engages broader systems to fully invest in solutions that drive equity, help people thrive, and harness data to generate concrete and sustainable results. By aligning affordable housing with services and other sectors, CSH helps communities move away from crisis, optimize their public resources, and ensure a better future for everyone. Visit us at csh.org.



Executive Summary

This report lays out immediate actions the Eric Adams' Mayoral Administration, the Affordable Housing Leadership team, and New York City Council should take in 2022 to make humane, innovative, and fiscally responsible policy changes and investments in supportive housing.

Several thousand people on Rikers Island are experiencing homelessness and struggle with ongoing behavioral health needs. When released, these community members struggle to find adequate support, cycle through crisis systems (including shelter and emergency departments), and likely return to Rikers Island.¹ This group needs an intervention that includes permanent, affordable, stable housing combined with supportive services to help them thrive in their communities. **Supportive housing combines affordable, permanent housing with voluntary, individualized services for people experiencing homelessness.**² Data from initiatives like [CSH's Frequent Users System Engagement \(FUSE\)](#) program shows that supportive housing works by reducing incarceration, homeless shelter stays, emergency department use, and increasing housing stability for people leaving jail or prison.

We congratulate Mayor Eric Adams for appointing the Affordable Housing Leadership team that includes Jessica Katz as Chief Housing Officer, Adolfo Carrion Jr. as Commissioner of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and Eric Enderlin as President of the Housing Development Corporation. We are confident that Mayor Adams, the Affordable Housing Leadership team, and New York City Council will make significant investments and policy changes in supportive housing and other housing types to end homelessness for people reentering communities after incarceration. While doing so, they will reduce significant racial disparities within our homeless and criminal legal systems.

This report outlines the fiscal costs of supportive housing to serve the criminal-legal impacted population, specifically by making changes to NYC 15/15 and Justice-Involved Supportive Housing (JISH). These investments will support the decarceration of Rikers Island, reduce significant racial disparities in the criminal legal and homeless systems and end the cycle of homelessness and institutionalization for **an estimated 2,589 people in one year** struggling with untreated or complex behavioral health needs who are incarcerated on Rikers Island.*

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*Note: Please refer to Appendix G for more detailed information.



Key Actions

1. Significant Investment in Supportive Housing

- Dedicate **500 of NYC 15/15** apartments to those who do not meet homeless chronicity criteria because of their incarceration history and enhance rental subsidy to align with **current Fair Market Rent (FMR)** and increase service funding for scattered site units to **\$17,500 per person**
- Improve and reissue the **Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH)** RFP to align **current FMR** rates and increase service funding to **\$20,669 per person for scattered site units and \$25,596 for congregate units. *These changes must apply to the existing 120 JISH units and for the 380 newly proposed units.***
- Create a plan to develop **high-quality supportive housing** through **hotel conversions**

2. Improve Access to Supportive Housing

- **Prioritize** supportive housing re-rentals for the criminal legal impacted population
- **Sustain and fund the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) Hotels** as part of the continuum of housing to connect to supportive housing

3. Develop Data & Reporting Infrastructure

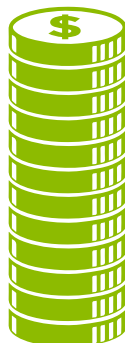
- Enhance the use of the **Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS)** to improve reentry services
- **Increase transparency** by creating a reliable data and reporting infrastructure with key city agencies





What is the cost
of 2,589 people on
Rikers Island versus
in Supportive housing?

\$1.4 Billion



*Total Yearly Cost of 2,589
People on Rikers Island
in one year who need
supportive housing
= \$1.4 Billion*

\$108 Million



*Total Yearly Cost of 2,589
People in Supportive Housing
= \$108 Million*

IMPACT:

Housing the estimated 2,589 people incarcerated on Rikers Island in a given year that need supportive housing would cost NYC **\$1.2B less** than incarcerating the same number of people in one year.

*Recognizing that expanding supportive housing to meet the needs of people currently cycling through Rikers Island and other crisis systems would require a multi-year commitment by city leadership, please see [Appendix G: Deep Dive Into CSH Estimates for an 8 year cost estimate](#). The total cost of providing supportive housing (including operations, services and new construction) is nearly \$10B less than the cost of incarceration for the same number of people over 8 years.

With decreasing barriers to existing supportive housing and increasing the development of supportive housing, many people can be diverted from jail and other institutional settings. We know that continual investment in shelter and jail is expensive and does not help keep communities safe, people healthier, nor does it reduce homelessness.

Lastly, while these actions target New York City's leadership, both the city and state should work together to end homelessness for the population impacted by the criminal legal system. This partnership is imperative because many people released from state prisons enter the NYC shelter system. According to the State of the Homeless 2020 report by the Coalition for the Homeless, releases from state prisons directly to NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters are partly to blame for the increase in adult homelessness. Between 2015 and 2018, more than 15,000 such individuals were sent to the city shelters by the state.³ Thus, collaboration and funding commitments from both city and state must happen for these efforts to be successful.



Introduction

Access to a safe, affordable, and permanent place to live is key to obtaining stability and maintaining health. The need is more significant for those cycling between Rikers Island, streets, and shelters and experiencing behavioral health needs. Several studies have demonstrated that housing promotes stability, improves connections to health and behavioral health services, reduces recidivism, and ends institutional cycling.

In addition, we have analyzed several data sets and read many heart-wrenching stories that tell us that people on Rikers Island experience homelessness at higher rates and often have undiagnosed/untreated mental health needs. We know that supportive housing can provide these New Yorkers with the backing they need to re-enter society and thrive in their communities. Yet, there is a limited supply of supportive housing in New York and an even smaller supply of supportive housing dedicated to this population.

Rikers Island Population and Supportive Housing Needs

Jail admissions in 2020⁴

23,317

Unique admissions in 2020

13,624

Average daily population in 2020⁵

5,841

**222
days**

**is the average length of stay
for the general population on
January 13, 2022⁶**

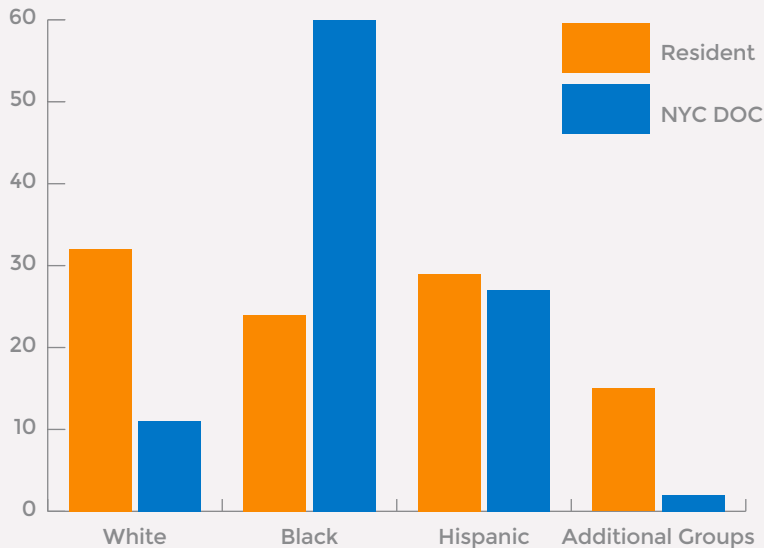
**357
days**

**is the average length
of stay for the
Brad H* population⁷**

***What is Brad H?** Discharge planning services are available to everyone who is designated a Brad H. class member. The class includes all people who are incarcerated in a NYC Department of Correction (DOC) facility (City jail) for 24 hours or more and receive mental health treatment during their incarceration. Individuals seen by mental health staff no more than twice and assessed as not needing further treatment are excluded from the class. Class members are entitled to an individualized assessment of their need for continued mental health treatment and supportive services, public benefits, housing or shelter, and transportation and assistance obtaining those services and resources. Source: [Discharge-Planning-Handout-2021.pdf](#) (urbanjustice.org)

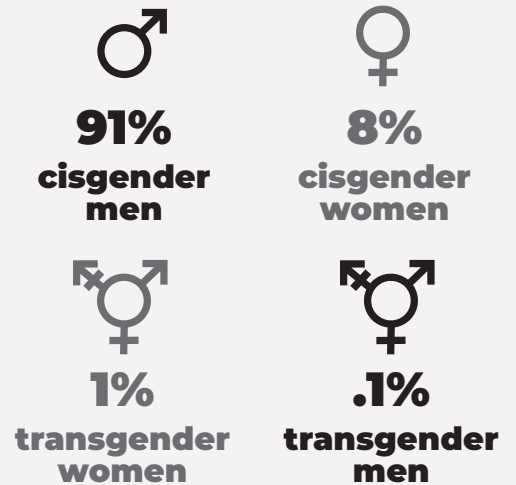


Percent of Resident Population⁶ and NYC DOC Population⁷



Gender Identity at “Rikers Island”

*based on a one-day snapshot on 6/1/2021⁸



Homeless

2,930

people between 2015-2018 self-reported homelessness while incarcerated on Rikers Island⁹

Behavioral Health¹⁰

*Qualitative evidence tells us that behavioral health needs are often unreported

54% Jail population with a mental health diagnosis (January – April 2021)

17% Jail population with a serious mental illness (January – April 2021)

Additional reports state that people discharged from a NYC jail in 2018 reported the following:¹²

Struggle with Substance Use **63%**

Mental Health Needs **26%**

Severe Mental Illness **11%**



CSH estimates that **2,589** people held at Rikers over a one year period need supportive housing. About **777** people meet the current eligibility criteria for supportive housing, and an additional **1,812** people would qualify if not for the city's restrictive homeless criteria eligibility through NYC 15/15. To qualify as "chronically homeless" a person must be homeless for at least one of the past two years or two of the past four years. However, if a person has an institutional stay, like in jail, for longer than 90 days, they are no longer considered "chronically homeless". This makes it challenging for people in Rikers to maintain the "homeless chronicity" status, who are usually there on average for 222 days at a time.¹³

There are several [supportive housing programs in NYC](#). However, these recommendations will focus on two main supportive housing opportunities in NYC: **Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH)** and **NYC 15/15**. JISH is the only supportive housing program tailored to meet the needs of this population. The JISH program serves people with significant behavioral health needs and long histories of incarceration who require intensive case management to stabilize their lives. There are only 120 apartments (currently all at capacity) dedicated to this population, but we know that the demand is much higher than supply. To expand this program and serve 500 people, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) released an RFP in 2019. Unfortunately, few providers submitted proposals due to the rental and services funding being too low for providers, resulting in no RFP awards. Given that JISH serves a high needs population, this is a crucial program to sustain and expand. JISH is also part of the Points of Agreement document created by the Mayor's Office and aligned with the [Commission on Community Reinvestment established in connection with the plan to close Rikers](#). For additional information, program feedback and recommendations from providers, see [Appendix F: Reimagining JISH](#).

While formerly incarcerated people can qualify for supportive housing under NYC 15/15, the homeless chronicity requirement makes it difficult for people with a history of incarceration to get approved for housing. And the system for evaluating and referring incarcerated individuals into supportive housing is underutilized at Rikers Island.

In summary, there are only 120 units available for thousands of people in Rikers Island who need supportive housing. Therefore, these recommendations are critical to creating access to supportive housing for people impacted by the legal system. **How can NYC leadership expand supportive housing for those who need it at Rikers Island? The most crucial step is to invest in supportive housing.**

1. Significant Investment in Supportive Housing

- **NYC 15/15. Dedicate 500 units of supportive housing through the city's annual commitment:**¹⁴ NYC currently creates 1,000 units of supportive housing each year under the NYC 15/15 Supportive Housing Initiative. With the need for supportive housing growing and old buildings deteriorating, leaders at the Supportive Housing Network of New York are urging the city to double its annual commitment by developing and preserving **2,000 units** each year. CSH agrees with the recommendation and request that at least **500 units**



per year should be allocated to people leaving jails and prisons who do not meet the homeless chronicity criteria. Access to these units should be both for singles and families to accommodate men and women released from Rikers Island who are or will reunite with their children.

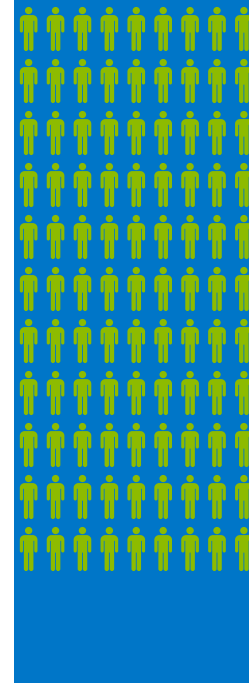
- **Enhance NYC 15/15 operating and services rates in scattered-site units:** The current rate for the operating subsidy uses the FY2017 Fair Market Rent (FMR). Additionally, service rates for single adults with Serious Mental Illness/Substance Use Disorder (SMI/SUD) are typically \$10,000 per person. Providers cannot find apartments in NYC that are high quality and provide appropriate case management at these inadequate rates. Aligned with the Supportive Housing Network of NY, CSH recommends that scattered-site rates align with **current FMR**, with an annual escalator, and that service rates match congregate rates at **\$17,500**. Increasing these rates will benefit the 500 formerly incarcerated people per year who will live in these units.
- **Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH). Improve and reissue JISH RFP to enhance operating and services rate in scattered and congregate:** The existing JISH units and current RFP uses the FY2017 FMR to determine subsidy. Both the current units and new units under the RFP allocate \$10,000 in services per person. Again, providers cannot obtain high quality apartments with the operating subsidy. Additionally, the population served by the JISH program is high-need, with a long history of homelessness, incarceration, and with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders. This population requires intensive case management and connection to clinical services. Therefore, CSH recommends that DOHMH change their current contracts and update the RFP reflecting scattered site rates aligned with **current FMR**, with an annual escalator, and that service funding increase to **\$20,699 and congregate service funding at \$25,596. These rates need to be applicable for the current units in operation (120) and the additional units on the 2019 RFP (380).**
- **Create plan to develop high quality supportive housing through hotel conversions:** While CSH is not recommending a total amount of hotel conversions into supportive housing, we agree that hotel conversions can increase the development of supportive housing, but it must remove existing barriers and follow supportive housing standards. The most significant obstacles are existing zoning restrictions and building code regulations. However, there are clear opportunities for common sense waivers to avoid costly major renovations for hotels to be move-in-ready.¹⁵ Moreover, converted units need to have convenient access to community services, transportation, food, and healthcare. Lastly, hotels should be converted to studio apartments (with kitchenettes) instead of Single Room Occupancy (SROs), if feasible. These hotel conversions can add to the additional stock of supportive housing units and fulfill the demand highlighted above.

2. Improve Access to Supportive Housing

- **Prioritize formerly incarcerated population in supportive housing re-rentals:** When current tenants of supportive housing apartments move, the City prioritizes specific populations to fill these apartments. Anecdotal evidence tells us that there is about a 5-10% rate of vacant supportive housing apartments. Given the supportive housing needs for people leaving jail and prison, CSH recommends that this population be given priority access to these re-rentals.



- **Sustain MOCJ hotels as part of the transitional housing continuum:** While we are focused on developing additional supportive housing, CSH believes that transitional housing is essential within the housing continuum for this population. While the Mayors Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) hotels were created in response to the COVID pandemic, they serve a critical need that existed well before. Program like the Fortune Society's Castle program service as a model a transitional setting that is focused on connecting its clients to permanent housing. Transitional settings are helpful for people who are on a waiting list for permanent housing and refuse to enter the shelter system. These hotels and programs provide a safe transitional space before a permanent housing option is available to them. According to Exodus Transitional Community that operates several of the MOCJ hotels, their contract will end in June 2022 **leaving around 800 individuals homeless**. Many of these individuals will likely choose to live on the street compared to congregate shelter settings. Therefore, the City will see an increase in both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness if this transitional setting closes. CSH recommends that the MOCJ hotels remain part of the housing continuum and supports the development of transitional housing settings responsible for helping its residents find permanent housing and include comprehensive services.

5,841**800**

800 people **represent approximately 14%** of Rikers Island daily population

3. Data & Reporting Infrastructure

- **Enhance the use of the Coordinated Assessment And Placement System (CAPS) to improve reentry services:** An increase in the use of CAPS surveys for clients served by the MOCJ Reentry Providers will ensure that individuals held at Rikers Island who need supportive housing can access supportive housing. Although access to housing is limited, completing the CAPS survey allows providers to determine eligibility for supportive housing and vouchers and provides access to prior homeless and housing data, which can be helpful for discharge planning. Thus, the utilization of CAPS is critical to understand who is experiencing homelessness, who needs housing, and who is getting access to it. Please visit the [CAPS website](#) for more information on the system's capabilities.
- **Increase transparency by creating a reliable data & reporting infrastructure:** The Mayor's Office does not publicly release information around the overlap on those who are incarcerated and are also experiencing homelessness. Without this ongoing data, we are undercounting the need for housing for the criminal-legal impacted population. Establishing regular cross-system data matches across city agencies, like the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), Department of Corrections (DOC), and MOCJ and creating an ongoing public report to share the housing and behavioral health needs of people held at Rikers Island will inform broader resource discussions.



Conclusion

Expanding access to supportive housing would positively impact **approximately 20 percent** of the people cycling in and out of Rikers Island in a given year. It is important to note that New York City and New York State have coordinated supportive housing funding unlike most places in the country. This advantage behooves the new City leadership to leverage these crucial resources and policy recommendations as part of a coordinated effort to close Rikers Island, reduce homelessness in New York City, and eradicate racial disparities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Additionally, recognizing that supportive housing is not the solution for everyone experiencing homelessness in the carceral system, it is important that policymakers direct additional resources to other essential areas including but not limited to:

- **Increasing access to affordable housing by:**
 - Reforming criminal background check policies to prevent housing discrimination against people with conviction records and allow them equal access to safe and stable housing
 - Amending State and local human rights law to incorporate ‘arrest and conviction records’ as a protected class, to ban housing discrimination based on an arrest and conviction record
 - Prioritizing the development of housing for people with a conviction record when issuing RFEIs or RFPs to revitalize/develop vacant lots or buildings owned by public agencies
 - Expanding the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan preferences to include people with a conviction record
 - Allocating agencies can expand their Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualification Action Plan (QAP) to include people with a conviction record a “special needs” population.
 - Investing in innovative initiatives that open up units in the private market, such as the Homecoming Project in California
 - Supporting expansion of services and service partnerships for non-supportive housing
 - Investing in case management, referral, and advocacy services to connect individuals leaving the criminal legal system to services and housing
- Increasing funding for Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs as recommended by the [ATI Reentry Coalition](#)
- Expanding [NYCHA's Family Reentry Program](#) by sustaining funding as per the [Points of Agreement](#)
- Uplifting and supporting the [Osborne Associations' Kinship Reentry Program](#)
- Amplifying [Women's Community Justice Association](#) to provide services tailored to women who are in the criminal legal system
- Ensuring as part of discharge planning, individuals who need Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) are directed to reentry service providers who provide MAT or make referrals to appropriate healthcare providers. Many people in Rikers Island have a substance use disorder, so we need to ensure that the city has a robust network of MAT providers.

For information on other organizations doing great housing and justice work in NYC, see [CSH's 2020 New York Housing and Justice System Change Platform](#).



Acknowledgments

CSH would like to thank the [Supportive Housing Network of New York](#) for contributing to this report by offering their invaluable expertise on the NYC supportive housing landscape. A special thanks to people who have participated in our focus groups, many of who have experienced homelessness and have been impacted by the criminal legal system. We cannot thank you enough for your insights, recommendations, advocacy, and thoughts. **Together, our goal is to ensure that all New Yorkers exiting and within the criminal legal system have access to the quality services needed to live in their communities, with housing being a determinant of their success.**

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Appendix A:

NYC Housing Continuum &
Permanent Supportive Housing

Appendix B:

Racial Disparities in the Homeless
and Criminal Legal Systems

Appendix C:

Benefits of Supportive Housing for
the Justice-Impacted Population

Appendix D:

Current Supportive Housing Resources in NYC

Appendix E:

Feedback from People with Lived Experience

Appendix F:

Reimagining JISH

Appendix G:

Deep Dive into CSH Estimates

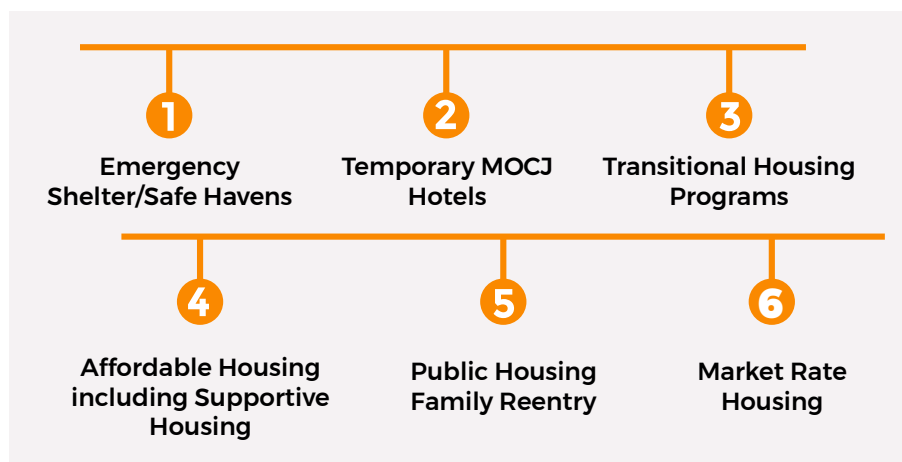


Appendix A:

NYC Housing Continuum & Permanent Support Housing

HOUSING is a human right and an essential part of a person's reentry into their community. In NYC, there is a continuum of housing from emergency shelter to market-rate housing that people experiencing homelessness can access. The continuum of shelter and housing available to people leaving jail or prison is detailed below. Although this report's focus is permanent supportive housing, it is important to note that there is not enough housing of any type for people leaving jail and prison, and this needs to change. [Please see Appendix E](#) for critical recommendations on removing housing barriers for people leaving jail and prison, including guidance gathered from people who have experienced incarceration.

NYC Housing Continuum



What is Supportive Housing?

Supportive housing is affordable housing paired with voluntary services – designed to support vulnerable populations. There are two types of supportive housing models. The “scattered” site model typically utilizes vouchers to rent units on the private market and case managers visit the tenants to connect them to any services they might need. For the “congregate” model, buildings include designated supportive housing units and typically have onsite case management.

Who is Supportive Housing for?

Supportive housing is for people with whom, without services, would not be able to keep housing, and without housing, meaningful service engagement would not be possible. Supportive housing has been successful for the following populations who experience homelessness:

- Chronically homeless adults
- Families involved in the child-welfare system
- People with criminal legal histories
- People with behavioral health needs
- Youth

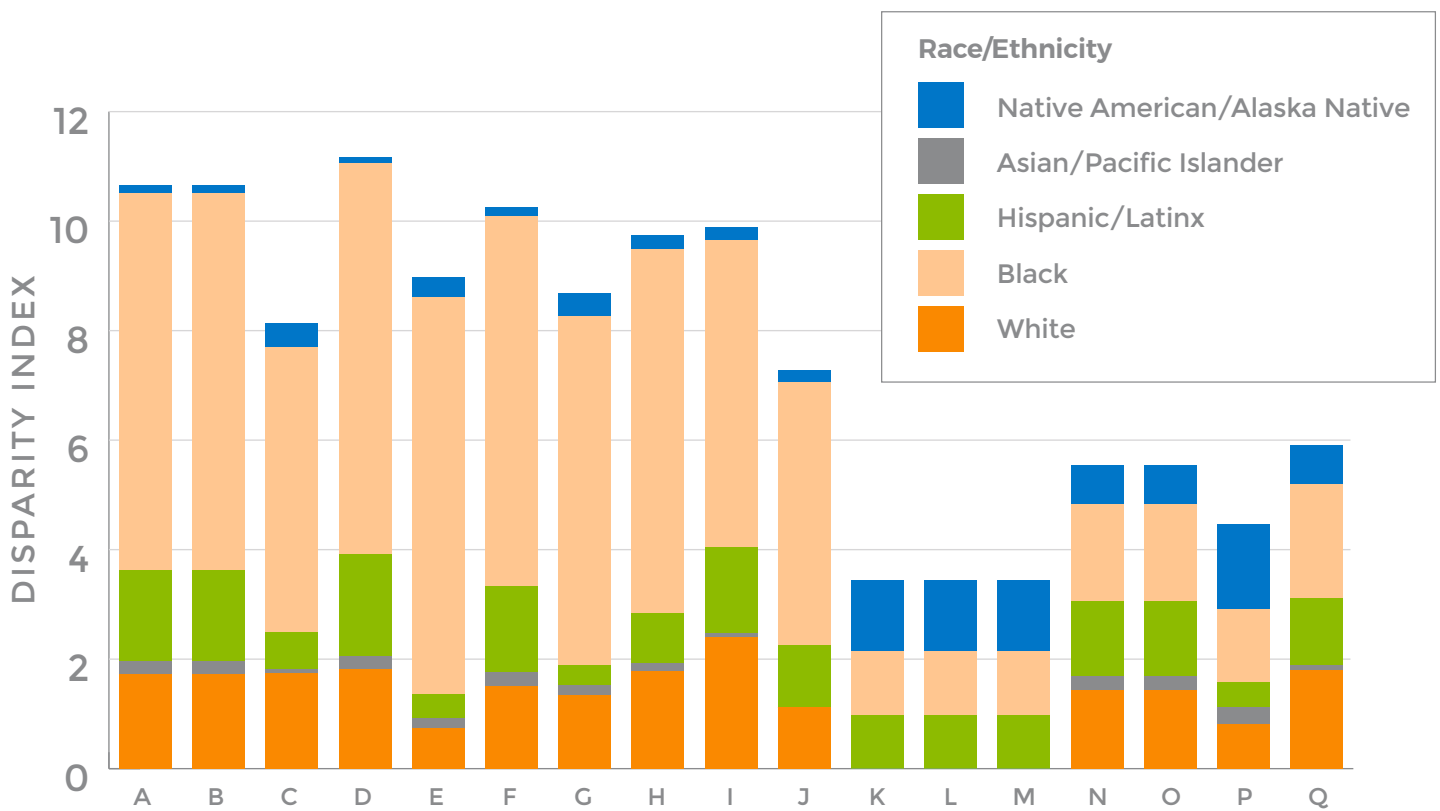


Appendix B:

Racial Disparities in the Homeless and Criminal Legal Systems

CSH's **Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index (RDDI) tool** highlights the racial disparities and inequities across 17 unique systems and categories in New York and measures whether a racial and/or ethnic group's representation in a particular public system is proportionate to, over, or below their representation in the overall population. The information outlined in the RDDI for New York reaffirms that, at a systems level, the City and State must move beyond silos between the shelter system and criminal legal system to address inequities with purpose and center race equity.

Disparity Indices in New York by Race/Ethnicity and Chronic Homelessness



A. Chronic Homeless B. Non Chronic Homeless C. Veterans D. Homeless Families E. Child Welfare Families
 F. Unaccompanied Transition Age Youth* G. Child Welfare Transition Age Youth H. Justice Involved Transition
 Age Youth I. Prison J. Jail K. Developmental Disabilities Waitlist** L. Developmental Disabilities Residential
 M. Developmental Disabilities Intermediate Care Facility N. Mental Health*** Institutional O. Mental Health
 Residential P. Aging Q. Substance Use



Appendix C:

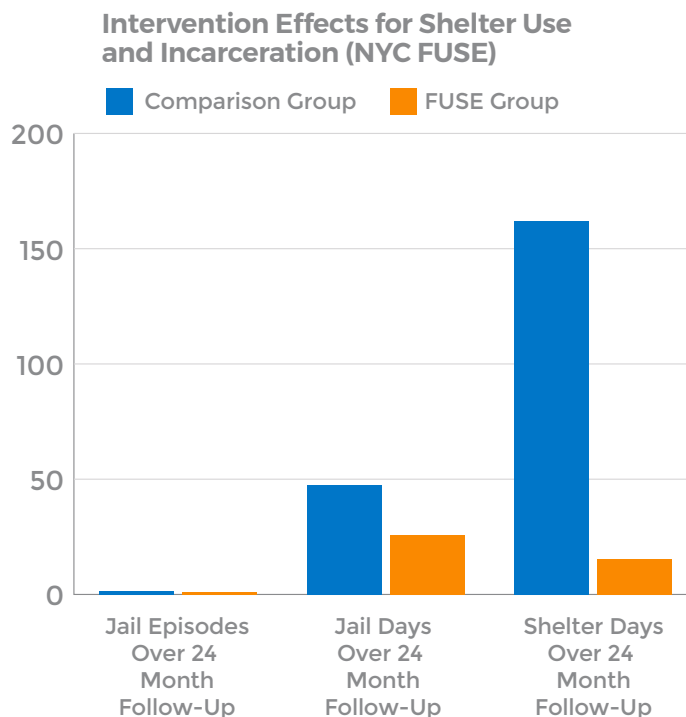
Benefits of Supportive Housing for the Justice-Impacted Population

Supportive Housing Works for this Population

There are several successful permanent supportive housing programs in NYC that people leaving Rikers Island have accessed in the recent past:

FUSE (Frequent Users Systems Engagement) Program

CSH's NYC Frequent Users Systems Engagement (FUSE) II, which was piloted about 12 years ago, showed positive outcomes for people who were housed in supportive housing. FUSE II was able to identify the highest utilizers of jail, shelter, and healthcare system use, and assist them in stabilizing their lives through engagement in supportive housing services. The NYC demonstration project showed that permanent supportive housing with enhanced services can break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration.

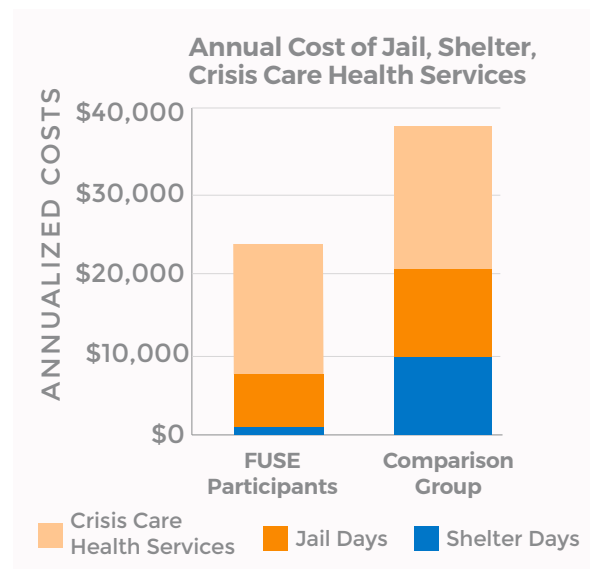


Approximately 200 participants who had at least 4 incarcerations and 4 shelter stays 5 years prior to the program received permanent supportive housing as an intervention. Outcomes showed not only cost neutrality but also reductions in recidivism. Participants spent less time in both shelter and jail and if incarcerated and had shorter lengths of stay (see charts to the left and below). Rigorous academic analysis showed that permanent supportive housing can pay for itself, resulting in avoided costs from lower use of jails, hospitals, and homeless services. Although no longer an active program, FUSE influenced the national conversation and over 30+ communities across the country have created FUSE inspired programs, all using supportive housing as an intervention for people who are high utilizers of crisis systems (i.e. jail, shelter and emergency room).



A few key points from the FUSE evaluation that was conducted by Columbia University Mailman School of Public Policy were:

1. **Housing Stability:** At 12 months, over 91% of FUSE II participants were housed in permanent housing, compared to the 28% of the comparison group who was not housed by FUSE.
2. **Jail Use:** FUSE II participants spent 19.2 fewer days incarcerated, a 40% reduction over the comparison group.
3. **Homeless Shelter Use:** On average, FUSE II participants spent 146.7 fewer days in shelter than did comparison group members.
4. **Behavioral Health:** The FUSE II program had a significant and positive effect on substance use outcomes for FUSE II participants. The percentage of FUSE II participants with any recent use of hard drugs (heroin, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine) is half as high as the comparison group and current alcohol or substance use disorder is one-third less for FUSE II participants at followup than among comparison group members. This is despite similar histories for FUSE II participants and the comparison group of chronic, relapsing addiction and recent substance use treatment.



Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH)

JISH is designed for people with the highest jail and shelter use who also have a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder. This frequent user cohort is created through a data match between the NYC Departments of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), and overseen by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Initial data from DOHMH and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) show positive **outcomes** in their initial scattered-site model. In the last quarter of FY18 (April – June 2018), almost half of those with reported substance use were connected in substance use treatment or other supportive services, and NYC DOHMH data show that 60% of those with mental health issues were connected to mental health services. Fewer than 5% of tenants had an emergency room visit or hospitalization that same quarter. Currently, there are 120 JISH beds in NYC and the City would like to expand the program to 500 beds.

There are additional supportive housing programs in NYC, however each program has different eligibility criteria and a limited number of available units in the community. Some examples of other housing programs for this population include the Fortune Society's supportive housing, Providence Housing's supportive housing residences, HousingPlus and Hour Children.



Appendix D:

Current Supportive Housing Resources in NYC

New York is leading the country with city and state governments committing to long-term supportive housing development and coordinating funding cycles to support its operations and services. However, the justice impacted population has not been a priority population. Both the state and city must remove existing barriers so these resources can be used to support the decarceration of Rikers Island. Below is a summary of the existing supportive housing resources and key challenges for serving people leaving Rikers Island.

NYC's permanent supportive housing (PSH) funding resources can be better leveraged for people leaving Rikers Island.

Resource	NY 15 / 15	ESSHI	JISH	Past Supportive Housing Campaigns
Eligibility Restrictions	Adopts HUD chronic homeless definition that excludes people held at Rikers Island for more than 90 days; requires DHS documentation of homelessness (shelter or in touch with DHS outreach; placement in some temporary COVID hotels also exempt)	Does not include chronic homeless definition and prioritizes the justice impacted population in proposals.	Must be one of the highest risk individuals based on generated list overseen by DOHMH that looks at frequent shelter and Riker admissions.	Varies by funding source, original FUSE program supported through a financial enhancement and vouchers from these previous supportive housing campaigns. NY/ NY I and II units are mainly for people with a mental illness.
Available units	Funding available to support new projects Advocacy interest to ask new administration to add additional units for populations currently excluded.	Funding available to support new projects.	Currently 120 units are online. There is a plan to expand to a total 500 units, however, a limited numbers of organizations have applied for the RFP.	Although funding for new units is not available, when existing SH tenants move out, unit are available for re-rentals.



NYC 15/15

In 2015, the Mayor's Office committed to fund the creation of 15,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 15 years. A Supportive Housing Task Force was formed to recommend which populations should be eligible for this type of housing. The Task Force included chronically homeless single adults and families,¹⁶ with the head of household having severe mental illness (SMI) or a substance use disorder (SUD); chronically homeless families with children with the head of household having a SMI or SUD; young adults (18-25) at risk of homelessness or currently homeless; and young adult families (18-25) with children or pregnant women who are at risk of homelessness or currently homeless.

The New York State Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI)

Through ESSHI, the Governor committed to create 20,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 15 years. This is the first time that government funded supportive housing operating and services money has been made available to providers outside NYC. The funding for the first 6,000 units was allocated in 2016 and released awards to providers through five annual RFPs of 1,200 units. This RFP is administered by the ESSHI Interagency Working Group, which is comprised of all State agencies involved in housing and services for people experiencing homelessness and co-chaired by the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) and NYS Housing and Community Renewal (HCR) agency. In 2021, \$250M has been allocated for FY2021/22, enough for one year of funding for about 1,300 units.

ESSHI has a wide range of eligible populations, most notably adults or young adults reentering the community from incarceration or juvenile justice placement, particularly those with disabling conditions (i.e. behavioral health or chronic medical conditions). The benefit of ESSHI is that these populations are eligible regardless of meeting HUD homeless chronicity, unlike NYC 15/15. This relief from the HUD¹⁷ chronicity criteria greatly benefits those with incarceration history in that anyone institutionalized for 90-days or more no longer meets the HUD chronicity threshold.¹⁸

Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH)

The Mayor's Taskforce on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice System made a \$130-million-dollar commitment to reducing the number of people with behavioral health needs cycling through the criminal justice system. Through the Taskforce, JISH was developed. The JISH cohort is identified through a data match between the NYC Department of Corrections (DOC) and NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to identify people with the highest jail and shelter use. The individuals who are identified are then directly connected to supportive housing with supportive services. The initial JISH program created 120 scattered site units managed by three service providers. Given the high demand, specifically for congregate settings for those with significant needs, JISH 2.0 was released in 2019. The goal of JISH 2.0 is to secure 380 units through a combination of scattered and congregate placement – to serve people with current criminal legal involvement and who are homeless. In October 2019, as part of the plan to close Rikers Island, New York City committed to adding these 380 units of JISH housing. The JISH 2.0 RFP was released late 2019. Some initial data from DOHMH and MOCJ[†] show some positive outcomes in their initial scattered site model. In the last quarter of FY18 (April – June 2018), almost half of those with reported substance use were engaged in substance use treatment or other supportive service, and NYC DOHMH data show that 60% of those with mental health issues were engaged in mental health services. Fewer than 5% of tenants had an emergency room visit or hospitalization that same quarter.

For a detailed landscape on justice and housing in NYC, please see [CSH's 2020 New York Housing and Justice System Change Platform](#)

[†]. Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) 2019 RFP, page 7



Appendix E:

Feedback from People with Lived Experience

The following recommendations are from New Yorkers who have been incarcerated and have experienced homelessness or housing instability. CSH held conversations, including a focus group, with people with lived experience to learn what they would like the new Mayoral Administration and City Council to do to help make the systems better.

Challenges:

- Landlords do not accept city vouchers
- Landlords who use criminal background checks refuse to consider renting apartments to them, or even participate in dialogue to understand their unique situations
- Landlords discriminate against people of color, people in substance use treatment, people who have bad credit or no credit, etc.
- NYCHA background checks prevent them access to public housing
- Long shelter stays: Typically staying in shelter for 2 years before you can find an apartment
- Lack of quality housing options: Typically, what is available to people with criminal histories are rooms for rent; minimal to no city oversight because often there is no formal lease and rent is required in cash. Conditions are often terrible and people are taken advantage of
- Multiple rejections for housing applications can lead to a feeling of hopelessness and impact mental health and wellness
- Some supportive housing programs feel intrusive, and require disclosure of sensitive information, including in looking at bank statements / financials.
- Scope of housing needs: There are many people who need access to permanent housing – not necessarily supportive housing, who are leaving Rikers Island.
- “Affordable Housing” does not always mean that it is affordable to everyone. The Area Median Income (AMI) is out of reach for many who are re-entering communities and who have experienced/are experiencing homelessness.
- Discrimination based on criminal legal history can have a significant and lasting impact, regardless of socio-economic status: Even people that are home owners who have been impacted by the criminal legal system face discrimination—police constantly stopping at their home, being surveilled, etc.
- Lack of Choice: Housing is not a one size fits all. Options for those experiencing homelessness, in particular those who have also been involved with the criminal legal system are very limited and more often than not, people are moving into housing options that are less than ideal for their needs and desires in an effort to get off the street.



Recommendations:

- **Homeownership Assistance Programs:** Help people who have been incarcerated who have struggled to be able to buy a home; many of these people will help other people who have been formerly incarcerated by giving them a room to rent / place to stay.
- **Incorporate the Target Population in System Design and Implementation:** Create an application platform with input from people who are formerly incarcerated that shows what current housing is available.
- **Create a 311** for reentry help / resources.
- **Increase Training and Support for Coordinated Assessment and Placement System (CAPS):** There needs to be more training and resources to help educate people on the CAPS system, access CAPS surveys and to be able to apply for supportive housing through CAPS.
- **More Robust Planning Around Housing that is Available for People at Their Time of Discharge:** It is so important for people to be able to have a home to come to that is stable and safe and this doesn't exist for so many who are released from Rikers Island.
- **Consider Legislation that Protects the Housing Rights of Community Members Involved in the Criminal Legal System:** Just as gender and race/ethnicity are protected classes, there should be a similar protection put in place for people who have been impacted by the criminal legal system.
- **Bolster opportunities** for peers with lived experience to give input in program and service design and delivery.
- **Support Multiple Supportive Housing Models:** There is a need for both scattered site and congregate supportive housing for people impacted by the criminal legal system.

These organizations and institutions have been supporting our community and should be recognized and listened to by city leaders:

- Women's Community Justice Association, Columbia Justice Center, Cheryle Wilkins Center for Justice at Columbia, Fortune Society, Osborne Association, CEO, Exodus Transitional Community, Providence House, New Hour, Fair Chance for Housing Campaign



Appendix F:

Reimagining JISH

Re-Imagining Justice-Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH)

Last updated: November 2021

Through multiple focus groups with current and potential JISH providers, CSH and the Supportive Housing Network of NY summarized a list of recommendations for DOHMH to support JISH operations and expansion. The recommendations provided below are based on lessons learned from the first iteration of JISH.

Before reviewing these important recommendations, please note that recommendations are not only for the current open RFP, but must be applied to the current 120 JISH contract to make the program sustainable and to address its current issues. If the current contracts cannot be amended for whatever reason, we recommend that the new RFP (380) make explicit that current providers can apply to continue the program at the new rates and then providers are able to terminate the old contracts when the new contracts take effect.

ISSUE 1: Current JISH scattered-site rates are insufficient to obtain appropriate apartments

RECOMMENDATION: Use the current NYC Fair Market Rent (FMR) to determine housing subsidy

The current RFP uses the FY17 FMR and we recommend JISH uses current FMR with an annual escalator. Current JISH rates force providers to double up high-need tenants in two-bedroom apartments, a model that has proven unsuccessful for this population. The funding should be enough for individuals to have their own apartment.

ISSUE 2: Services funding is insufficient to appropriately serve this high need population

RECOMMENDATION: Increase service funding to \$25,600 matching services funding for both scattered and congregate

- The current JISH RFP and previous JISH funding allocates just \$10,000 per unit for services in scattered site.
- Currently, NYC 15/15 offers enhanced funding for their young adult population that is another high-need population.
- To successfully engage this population, providers need a substantial operating and service budget.
- Many of the clients referred have not been engaged by the housing provider before release and are often less willing to truly engage in services. Providers are often working hard to find clients, sometimes for weeks or even months, as well as needing to often reengage them in services.
- The services team needs to include both licensed mental health professionals as well as peers
- Finally, based on supportive housing best practice for this population, the recommended ratio of staff to clients should be 1:8 to appropriately provide comprehensive services.



ISSUE 3: Poor referral and coordination between Rikers Island discharge planning and providers.

RECOMMENDATION: Ability to provide in-reach services to JISH referees at Rikers Island.

- Currently providers receive referrals for clients post Rikers Island discharge with little to no information on needs.
- Not having engagement at referral makes it challenging to accurately assess clients and determine housing readiness/appropriateness.
- Therefore, where possible, the JISH program should actively work with jail discharge planners to ensure that early engagement and assessment happens before release. This can be done by actively reviewing the data-set to determine eligibility and upcoming release.

ISSUE 4: Lack of flexibility in program model

RECOMMENDATION: Prioritize this population for vacancies and allow providers to innovate based on resources available including using vacant congregate units for clients as needed.

- Have the ability to determine if a client needs congregate vs. scattered with the ability to allow providers to move clients between these models, preferably using NY/NY III or NYC 15/15 units.
- Have the ability to briefly use other resources such as congregate emergency or transitional beds to anchor appropriate clients in services and meet crisis needs.
- Lastly, providers do not have the ability to “refer into” their program so there should be a process to determine eligibility and assignment and/or ability for specific provider organizations with high needs to refer.

Providers included in developing these recommendations:

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services

Exodus Transitional Community

Fortune Society

Urban Pathways

Women’s Community Justice Project – led by HousingPlus



Appendix G:

Deep Dive into CSH Estimates

Estimated Need for Supportive Housing

Given that currently there is no current public information on shared clients between NYC's criminal legal, homeless (shelter and street outreach) and behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorders) systems, CSH's national estimate on the need for supportive housing for jail populations was utilized to estimate the supportive housing need for people held on Rikers Island. CSH's estimates that nationally, 19% of jail populations need supportive housing. For more information on how this was calculated, [please see this brief](#).

In 2020, there were 13,624 unique individuals admitted to Rikers Island jail and CSH estimates that at least 2,589 individuals need supportive housing. It is important to note that this a conservative estimate. Rikers Island jail stands apart nationally in several trends, including an extraordinarily higher average length of the stay, and it is likely the supportive housing need is greater than the national estimate.

Of the 2,589 people held at Rikers Island over a one-year period who need supportive housing, CSH estimates that while about **777** people meet the current eligibility criteria for supportive housing, an additional **1,812** people would be eligible for supportive housing if not for the City's homeless criteria eligibility through NYC 15/15. This estimate is based on past CSH supportive housing eligibility analyses in NYC, as well as its current role of co-chair of [NYC's Coordinated Assessment and Placement System \(CAPS\) Committee](#), part of NYC's Continuum of Care.

Estimated Costs and Modeling

Annual cost of incarcerating the Rikers Island population with supportive housing needs:

\$1,408,971,900B
(2,589 individuals)

Assumptions include:

Annual Individual NYC Jail Costs (per person):

\$556,539
(\$1,525 cost per day)

Source: [NYC Comptroller. \(2021\) Comptroller Stringer: Cost of Incarceration per Person in New York City Skyrockets to All-Time High. New York, NY.](#)

Average days incarcerated per year:

357 days

Source: [A More Just NYC and Center for Court Innovation. \(July 2021\) Closing Rikers Island, A Roadmap for Reducing Jail in New York City. New York, NY.](#)



Please note we did not include cost of shelter in our annual cost, recognizing the average LOS for people held at Rikers Island is nearly 1 year. However, for quick reference for policy makers, below is both the shelter cost as well as the average length of stay of shelter days for people who are likely cycling between Rikers Island Jail and city shelters:

Annual Individual NYC DHS Shelter Cost (per single person):

\$47,680
(\$130.63/day)

Source: Department of Homeless Services. (2021) Mayor's Management Report. New York, NY.

Average Shelter Length of Stay for Single Adults:

476 days

Source: Source: Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health (2014) Frequent Users Service Enhancement 'FUSE' Initiative, New York City FUSE II Evaluation Report. New York, NY. Report available at: https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/FUSE-Eval-Report-Final_Linked.pdf

Table 1. Average Yearly Cost of Supportive Housing (SH) For One Individual vs The Average Yearly Cost of Incarceration

Average Cost of SH for One Individual per year in NYC		Cost of Average Stay in jail (357 days) for One Individual on Rikers Island
Rent/Operating Costs*	Services**	\$1,525 per day 357 (Average LOS)
\$20,568	\$21,265	
Total: \$41,833		\$544,425
Cost Difference: \$502,592		
IMPACT: For \$502,592 less than the cost of a typical jail stay, we can get people into permanent homes and reduce recidivism and cycling through homelessness/shelter and jail systems		

*Rent based on 2020 FMR, takes tenant portion and maintenance of unit into consideration

**Average services cost for each model (NYC 15/15 Scattered-Site, JISH Scattered and Congregate)



Table 2: Comparing One Year of Supportive Housing for 2,589 people (the number of individuals currently in Rikers Island that need would qualify or benefit from SH)

Average Cost of Supportive Housing for 2589* Individuals for One Year at \$41,833 per person (for housing and services)	Average Cost of Incarceration of 2,589 Individuals for One Year (based on Average LOS of 357 days) at \$544,425 per person
\$108,305,637	\$1.4 Billion
Cost Difference: \$1.2 Billion	
IMPACT: Housing the estimated 2,589 people on Rikers Island in a given year that need Supportive Housing would cost NYC \$1.2B less than incarcerating the same number of people	

Table 3: Year One Costs of JISH and NYC 15/15 to House 1,000 Individuals Re-Entering From Incarceration (with recommended FMR and Service Rates for JISH and current cost estimates for 15/15):

120 Existing JISH Beds (Scattered Site)		380 New JISH Beds (Scattered Site)		500 New NYC 15/15 Funded Beds (Scattered Site)	
Rent/ Operations	Services	Rent/ Operations	Services	Rent/ Operations	Services
\$20,568	\$20,699	\$20,568	\$20,699	\$20,568	\$17,500
Total Per Individual: \$41,267		Total Per Individual: \$41,267		Total Per Individual: \$38,068	
Total for 120: 4,952,040M		Total for 380: 15,681,460M		Total for 500: 19,034,000M	
Total Cost for Year One: \$39,667,500M					
Total Cost of Incarceration for 1,000 for that same year: \$544,425,000M					

**Table 3a. Costs for Scattered Site and Congregate Site with JISH**

120 Existing JISH Beds (Scattered Site)		95 New JISH Beds (25% Scattered Site)		285 New JISH (75% Congregate Site)	500 New NYC 15/15 Funded Beds (Scattered Site)	
Rent/ Operations	Services	Rent/ Operations	Services (Scattered)	Services (Congregate)	Rent/ Operations	Services
\$20,568	\$20,699	\$20,568	\$20,699	\$25,596	\$20,568	\$17,500
Total Per Individual: \$41,267		Total Per Individual: \$41,267		\$46, 164	Total Per Individual: \$38,068	
Total for 120: \$4,952,040M		Total: \$3,920,365M		\$13,156,740M	Total for 500: \$19,034,000M	
Total Operations and Services Cost for One Year of SH for 1,000 units with both scattered and congregate sites: \$41,063,145M						

Eight Year Estimate:

Recognizing that expanding supportive housing to meet the needs of people currently cycling through Rikers Island and other crisis systems would require a multi-year commitment by city leadership, below is a cost estimate of spreading out this cost over **8 years**. This assumes that for bringing online new supportive housing apartments, 75% of units would be through a mix of development, acquisition and rehabilitation, with capital cost assumption of \$440,000 per unit.

Table 4. Total Estimated Eight Year Costs Comparisons for Supportive Housing for 2,589 Justice-Impacted Individuals vs Cost of Incarceration*

Source	Estimated Rent/Operations	Estimated Services Costs	Estimated Construction/Development Costs	Cost of Incarceration
JISH Scattered	\$12,783,915M	\$11,798,430	\$0	\$11,276,130,600
JISH Congregate	\$38,351,745M	\$43,769,160	\$125,400,000	
NYC 15/15	\$309,716,288M	\$242,130,000	\$728,970,000	
Totals	\$360,851,378M	\$297,697,590	\$854,370,000	
Grand Total	\$1,512, 918,968B			\$11,276,130,600
IMPACT	The total cost of providing supportive housing (including operations, services and new construction) is nearly \$10B less than the cost of incarceration for the same number of people over 8 years.			

*Includes 2% rent increase for operations each year



End Notes

1. Coalition for the Homeless. (2020) State of the Homeless 2020, Governor and Mayor to Blame as New York Enters Fifth Decade of Homelessness Crisis. New York, NY. Report available at: <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/StateofTheHomeless2020.pdf>
2. The key components of quality supportive housing allow people to thrive and integrate into their community. While one of the key components of supportive housing is that services are voluntary, most tenants work with their case managers to find employment, connect to physical and behavioral healthcare, integrate with their community, and establish relationships with family members, while consistently ensuring that their housing is safe and maintained.
3. Coalition for the Homeless. (2020) State of the Homeless 2020, Governor and Mayor to Blame as New York Enters Fifth Decade of Homelessness Crisis.
4. NYC Comptroller. (2021). FY 2022 Agency Watch List: Department of Correction. New York, NY. Report available at: https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Watch_List_DOC_FY2022.pdf
5. Ibid.
6. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: New York City, New York
7. A More Just NYC and Center for Court Innovation. (July 2021) Closing Rikers Island Island, A Roadmap for Reducing Jail in New York City. New York, NY. Report available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6de4731aef1de914f43628/t/60f5c1af1a4e121640f8564f/1626718640158/Roadmap_for_Reducing_Jail_NYC.pdf
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. NYC Comptroller. (2021). FY 2022 Agency Watch List: Department of Correction.
11. Ibid.
12. Legal Action Center. (2022) Transforming Criminal Legal System Outcomes in New York City: A Blueprint for NYC's Next Generation of Political Leaders. New York, NY. Report available at: <https://www.lac.org/resource/transforming-criminal-legal-system-outcomes-in-new-york-city-a-blueprint-for-nycs-next-generation-of-political-leaders>
13. A More Just NYC and Center for Court Innovation. (July 2021) Closing Rikers Island Island, A Roadmap for Reducing Jail in New York City.
14. It is important to acknowledge that recommendation discussions have ranged from removing the homeless chronicity definition from all NYC 15/15 units and replaced with eligibility criteria where the vulnerability of the person trumps chronicity, to adding additional units to NYC 15/15 that do include the homeless chronicity requirement but with no specific priority populations
15. Chen, Stefanos. (December 3, 2021). "Is the Chance to Turn Hotels Into Affordable Housing Slipping Away?" New York Times. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/03/realestate/affordable-housing-nyc-hotel-conversions.html>
16. For additional information on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s definition of homelessness, please see: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf
17. For more information on HUD's definition of chronic homelessness final rule, please see: <https://files.hudexchange.info/course-content/defining-chronically-homeless-final-rule-webinar/Defining-Chronically-Homeless-Final-Rule-Webinar-Slides-2015-01-05.pdf>
18. To view a flow chart of HUD's definition of chronic homelessness, please see <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Flowchart-of-HUDs-Definition-of-Chronic-Homelessness.pdf>