

Update

***Addressing the Unique Needs
of Individuals Impacted by
Justice Involvement,
Behavioral Health Challenges
and Homelessness***



Update Since July 2019

- CCJBH is drafting a Policy Brief on the Intersection of Criminal Justice, Behavioral Health and Housing Outcomes
- Hosted a Workshop in September to explore these issues with local experts and vet current draft recommendations
- Sought partnership and support from HCD and HCFC staff
- Nearly 100 people in attendance, 67 in person, from communities across the state and state organizations/ departments
- Disciplines ranged from probation and public defenders to local CoC operators, community based providers and administrative staff



Goals for Workshop

Purpose: Through dialogue with critical system partners in policy and program implementation, identify strategies to increase housing outcomes, and funding resources for justice-involved individuals experiencing behavioral health challenges.

Outcome: Develop recommendations to improve housing outcomes for a CCJBH policy brief on the intersection of criminal justice, homelessness, and behavioral health.



Housing Instability and Criminal Justice Involvement: A Cyclical Relationship

1. Law enforcement policies and procedures that contribute to arrest for behaviors associated with experiencing homelessness.

2. Lack of stable housing viewed as a risk factor and reduces courts' willingness to divert individuals from jail or prison.



4. Lack of stable housing upon exit from jail contributes to supervision failure, increases risk of recidivism.

3. Criminal history serves as a barrier to housing, contributing to housing instability and homelessness.

Example to Illustrate Relationship

Sacramento County

Mental illness among homeless, chronically homeless and unsheltered chronically homeless is substantial

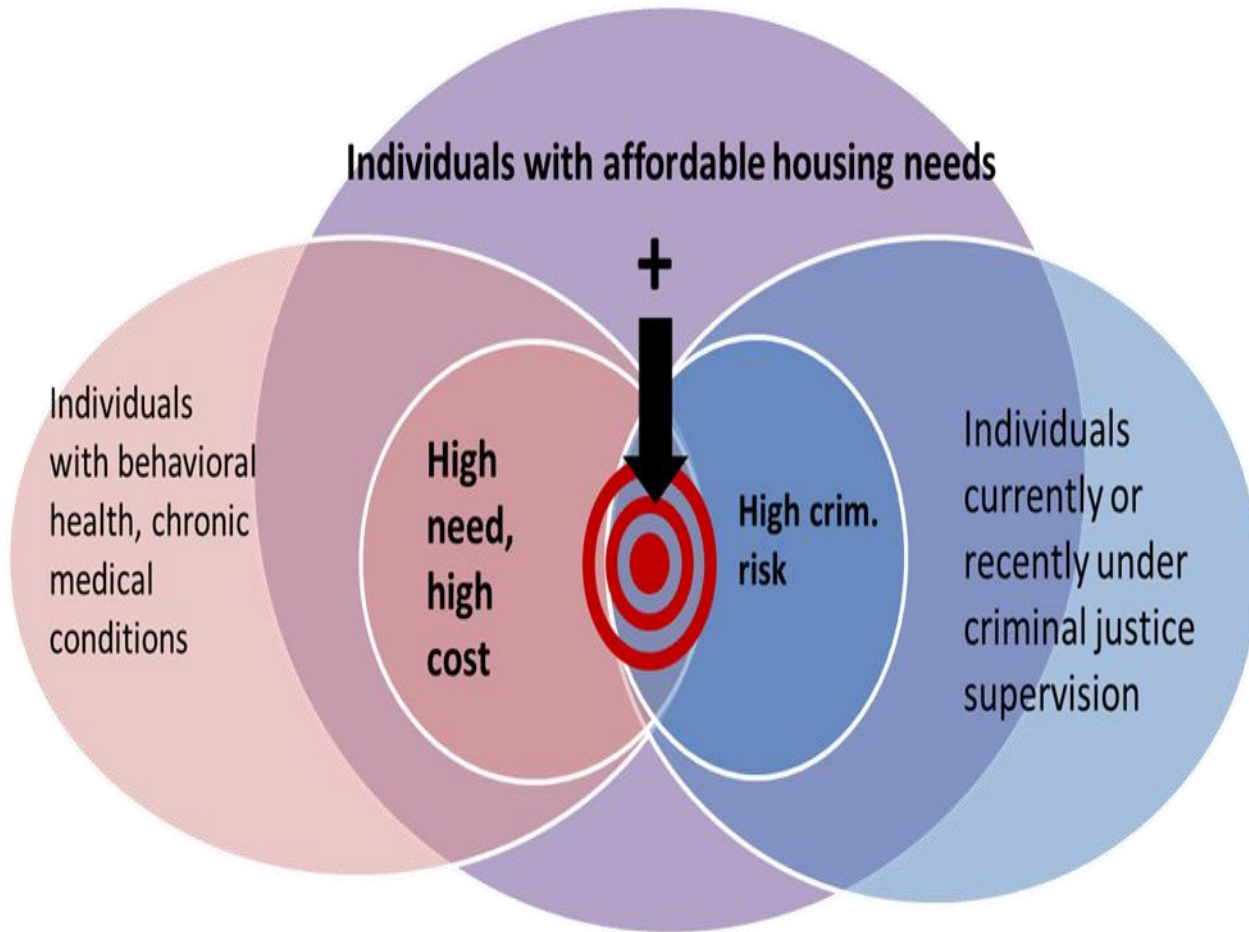
- 35% of persons that are homeless in Sacramento County report having mental illness/co-occurring condition
- 64% of chronically homeless persons report having mental illness/co-occurring condition and
- 71% of the unsheltered chronically homeless population report having mental illness/co-occurring condition

Link between criminal system is even more significant

- 50% of those experiencing homelessness were facing misdemeanor charges, and according to a study by the Sacramento County Public Defender's office



Housing, Criminal Justice, & Behavioral Health



Key Themes and Takeaways



Key Themes and Takeaways

We need a **“all hands on deck”** mentality (shared housing, converted garages, housing flexibility pools, etc.) from preventing those most at-risk of homelessness (rapid re-housing) to serving individuals who use the most services and are the hardest to serve (permanent supportive housing)

We cannot forget to continue to address the **“drivers”** of homelessness even though we are in a crisis

- Poverty
- Lack of Education and Employment Opportunities
- Disability/ Poor Health (Behavioral Health)
- Marginalization
- Disenfranchisement
- Discrimination (Racism)
- Trauma



Key Themes and Takeaways

Everyone needs to contribute to solving the crisis creatively bringing their own resources to leverage

To do this effectively at the state-level or the local-level, partners need to know what is their role in improving housing outcomes

- Criminal Justice (Courts, Corrections, Law Enforcement, Probation)
- Health and Behavioral Health
- Social Welfare Services
- Education/Employment
- Housing



Responses from the Field

What actions can the State take to ensure that the collaborations between criminal justice and the homelessness crisis response system produce positive housing outcomes?



Responses from the Field

Structure Issues:

- It would be helpful to have more flexibility to invest in building the capacity of CoCs and other housing service providers to deliver best practices and meet community needs
 - Funds for administrative duties
 - Funds for technology, data collection, and evaluation (need to support investments in quality coordinated entry systems)
 - Funds for strategic planning and developing long-term goals and targets
 - Funds that support collaboration



Responses from the Field

Funding Flexibility vs. Required State Priorities:

- Some participants felt that % set asides for specialty populations (i.e. youth, older adults) was problematic and did not allow for local needs to be met
- Some participants felt that the only way that the criminal justice population in particular would be prioritized for housing strategies and resources would be to require a dedicated %
- Some participants felt the state should align priorities with federal programs to ease confusion on a variety of things like who is a priority and who should get what kind of housing supports
- Some participants felt that when programs are funded by the state, they should identify which local partners must be part of a collaborative approach to addressing homelessness and plans submitted to receive funding must demonstrate commitment to on-going collaboration



Responses from the Field

Collaboration, Coordination and Commitment:

- Overwhelming recognition that complex issues create complex needs and require the **Triple C – Collaboration, Coordination and Commitment**
- The state should model the **Triple C** ... Examples of doing so include the HCFC
- State can do more to foster the **Triple C** among the Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Systems and entities charged with improving housing outcomes
- State can supply the kind of comprehensive training and on-going technical assistance critical to support effective **Triple C** work locally that supplies the skills needed to serve complex population



Responses from the Field

Actions that make sense at the State-Level:

- On-going funding source to address specific state needs and priorities, not federal and not necessarily local, although they could be similar in some cases
- Raise the bar on data and evaluation efforts to ensure investments in strategies that work and to target populations with the right interventions
- High Quality Technical Assistance, Oversight and Evaluation



What best practices should the State support to facilitate the housing of homeless individuals involved in the criminal justice system?



Responses from the Field

- Care Coordination
- Strong and Well-Resourced Coordination Entry Systems
- Support for Individual Choice in Housing including Recovery Housing
- High-Quality and Sensitive Assessments/ Instruments

Note: Much discussion regarding the need for state to lead efforts to improve upon the assessment currently used as they are not necessarily accurately assessing need for individuals who are exiting incarceration

- Housing First

Note: there was not a lot of discussion about this, it seems more like a given but people recognize that realizing this is difficult due to our current housing crisis



Responses from the Field

- Community engagement with local community members and persons with lived experience to determine programming
- System navigators (housing, criminal justice, health/behavioral health and social services)
- Peer navigation, support, certification, and paraprofessional opportunities
- Untraditional collaborative partnerships, cross-system liaisons



Recommendations to Addressing the Needs of Individuals, Justice Involved with Behavioral Health Needs Experiencing Homelessness or at Risk of Homelessness



Recommendations/ Key Themes

- State leadership and investment in “raising the data floor” such as providing guidance to agencies and departments regarding what basic information about housing status should be collected, address regulatory barriers to data-sharing and provide guidance and direction on how data-sharing locally can improve outcomes.
- Recognizing the unique challenges and economy of scale issues for small and rural communities, develop implementation guidelines and provide tailored on-going technical assistance for creating housing options for the justice involved population.



Recommendations/ Key Themes

- Conduct an analysis of how policies at state agencies and departments may play a role (likely unintended) in increased rates of homelessness, identify how state entities can embark on their own initiatives to contribute to addressing the crisis.
- Significant and sustained investments in affordable housing, allow access to affordable housing for individuals 30% above the federal poverty level.
- Prevent homelessness for the most vulnerable through exploring how safety net programs can be patched to meet cost-of-living challenges (i.e. Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance is low, can California provide a patch or address gaps).



Recommendations/ Key Themes

- State-level multi-point plan to tackle NIMBYism from social marketing, to enlisting volunteers to educating communities and local decision-makers, & increasing enforcement and sanctions.
- Provide creative and innovation opportunities for families, care-givers and community providers to supply “whatever it takes” housing for those most at-risk and in need like respite care, supplemental income, etc.
- Education and employment opportunities are critical to long-term solutions. State can invest in quality programs and model best practices by employing individuals with criminal backgrounds. Counties, cities, and private companies will follow suit ... more rapidly with incentives.



Next Steps

- CCJBH will synthesize the information gathered during the workshop and update the recommendation worksheet
- CCJBH will send a copy of the meeting summary report and proposed recommendations to all attendees for comments and approval
- CCJBH policy brief will be published and disseminated no later than December 2019

