

EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING MODELS FOR PEOPLE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS

*B. Diane Williams**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the United States, people with criminal records spend their lifetimes working to overcome personal and structural barriers to community integration and full participation in society. The prevalence of criminal record checks in background screening procedures, the availability of substantial amounts of criminal record information to the public, and lack of protection against discrimination poses many obstacles for people when a person with a criminal record applies for jobs or housing. Most employers and landlords conduct criminal record checks as part of their background screening and selection processes. Depending on their jurisdiction, they may obtain information directly from a government criminal record repository or from a private commercial reporting agency. Criminal records conjure a negative reaction from the public because of concerns about the risk of a person reoffending. At the point that individuals have to undergo a criminal record screen, the hope is when the criminal record is reviewed the applicant would have the opportunity to present evidence of rehabilitation that would be considered and weighed against and above the fact that a criminal record exists.

These structural barriers operate as social and legal exclusions that prohibit or limit opportunities for people with criminal records to move forward and strive to be productive members of society. Though many of these barriers may only be addressed with law and policy changes that promote second chances, some restrictions may be overcome with the help of community service providers that serve as intermediaries and can make strategic connections for their clients. Many justice-involved individuals who lack resources and support will need assistance to address their personal challenges as well as achieve their goals to retain a job and affordable and safe housing.

In the United States, government agencies provide some direct services but they also rely upon community based organizations to help provide reentry assistance to the justice involved population because of the great numbers of people in need of service and the intensity of their service needs. This paper will discuss employment and housing programme models and services that support the re-entry needs of people with criminal records. While it is not an exhaustive list of programmes operating in the United States, these are some that have been recognized nationally for their efficiency, longevity, and successful approaches to helping their clients, many of whom face significant personal challenges and have numerous needs.

II. EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment among the formerly incarcerated is as high as 50 percent, costing the United States' economy up to \$65 billion annually in lost productivity and harming growth.¹ People who are out of work are more likely to commit new crimes and less likely to support their children or other dependents. Therefore, ensuring everyone who is willing and able to work has a job is an economic and public safety priority for the U.S. The high demand for services requires collaboration between the public and the private sectors.

The United States Department of Labor is the federal agency responsible for fostering, promoting, and developing programmes and services that build and strengthen the economy. The agency provides grants

*President Emeritus, Safer Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, United States.

¹Schmitt, J. & Warner, K. (November 2010). Ex-offenders and the Labor Market, p. 2. *Centre for Economic and Policy Research*. Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <<https://cepr.net/documents/publications/ex-offenders-2010-11.pdf>>.

for various types of workforce development programming to respond to the needs of community residents and special populations. A division of the agency, the Employment and Training Administration, manages the agency's Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) initiatives, which are a portfolio of grant projects that provide pre- and post-release services to both eligible youth and adult formerly incarcerated populations.

The REO programme provides funding that is authorized as Pilot and Demonstration Projects under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, a federal law that focuses on building the nation's workforce system. Adult REO programmes are designed to serve urban centres and areas with the greatest need. These pilots and demonstration projects are designed to test the effectiveness of successful models and practices found in community and faith-based environments and other government systems, but have not been tested for their adaptability in the public workforce system. The agency works to develop strategies and partnerships that will facilitate the implementation of successful programmes at the state and local levels with the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism and improving the workforce outcomes. REO is designed to strengthen communities through projects that incorporate mentoring, job training, education, legal aid services, and other comprehensive transitional services.

Grants are awarded through a competitive process open to any not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status, unit of state or local government, or any Indian and Native American entity eligible for grants under the Workforce Investment Act, particularly in areas with high poverty and crime rates. However, the U.S. workforce system is also supported by other federal agencies that administer grant programmes to providers who serve justice-involved populations including the U.S. Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education. Additionally, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons that provides training in leadership, management and specialized corrections topics for state, local and federal corrections agencies and for community organizations that partner with corrections agencies. NIC covers a broad range of correctional disciplines and topics, including leadership, jail and prison programming, re-entry, and mental health.

Supporting innovation that strengthens and improves community services for the re-entry population is a major contribution of government. The U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Labor recently partnered with private philanthropic organizations to fund The Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies Pilot Project that brought together researchers and expert advisors from corrections and workforce development fields to create a Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching tool. The tool is expected to help workforce providers focus on the use of assessments to determine a person's level of job readiness and risk of reoffending. These assessments also detect individuals' responsivity needs (such as mental illness or learning disorders) that can interfere with workforce interventions, and can be used to inform how supervision and programming resources can be properly prioritized for higher-risk individuals. Employment programmes across the country are testing the tool and the results will be used to help policymakers, system administrators, and practitioners collaboratively determine whether resources are being efficiently used to connect the right people to the right workforce interventions at the right time during the provision of employment services.²

Programmes that serve workers who are considered "hard to employ" or "hard to serve"³ are typically equipped to help their clients manage personal challenges that may interfere with getting and keeping a job. These personal challenges, which are not necessarily unique to people with criminal histories, may affect their employability and possibly their commitment to work. Many individuals who come from low income communities will have a need for immediate income in order to survive and may have unrealistic expectations about their wage-earning potential. Some clients may have mental health needs and/or drug

²See the Council of State Governments Justice Centre's two-page description of the pilot programme at <<https://csgjusticecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Employment-Pilot-Site-Two-Pager.pdf>>; The corresponding White Paper, *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness* is available at <https://csgjusticecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Final.Reentry-and-Employment.pp_.pdf>.

³Danziger, Sandra K. & Seefeldt, Kristin S. (2002). "Barriers to employment and the 'hard to serve': Implications for services, sanctions, and time limits." *Focus Vol. 22, No. 1*, Special Issue. Available at <<http://fordschool.umich.edu/research/poverty/pdf/foc221-part3-danziger.pdf>>.

or alcohol addiction issues that have to be managed. Some may have limited or no documented work experience while others may be undereducated with low reading and math skills. Finally, they may need assistance securing stable housing, getting identification, transportation, or addressing civil legal issues such as child support and other family court problems.

When clients are under community supervision and have criminal records there are additional issues that programmes must be prepared to address. Individuals who are under community supervision may have competing mandates and agency obligations like reporting to parole or probation, or participating in certain treatment programmes that could interfere with maintaining a fixed work schedule. They may also have restrictions that limit where they can work or the hours they are available to work. For example, an individual may have a curfew and cannot take second or third shift jobs. Clients also need to understand their criminal record, what they are obligated to disclose to employers and how to appropriately answer questions during interviews and on job applications. When considering job opportunities and career options, programmes must understand the impact a criminal record may have on occupational licensing and industry standards, otherwise career planning and job placement efforts can be futile. Therefore, employment programmes must have service delivery designs that incorporate comprehensive assessment tools.

A. Employment Programme Models

There are three employment programmes that provide model examples that work for large numbers of people in need of employment. The Safer Foundation is a workforce organization that exclusively serves individuals with criminal histories. The organization operates a traditional workforce development programme model with demand skills training as its newest growing component. Pioneer Human Services provides employment and other essential services to individuals considered “hard to employ” and has significant corporate partnerships, blended training, and business operations as part of its workforce development model. Finally, the Center for Employment Opportunities exclusively serves justice-involved populations and provides subsidized transitional work to recently released prisoners.

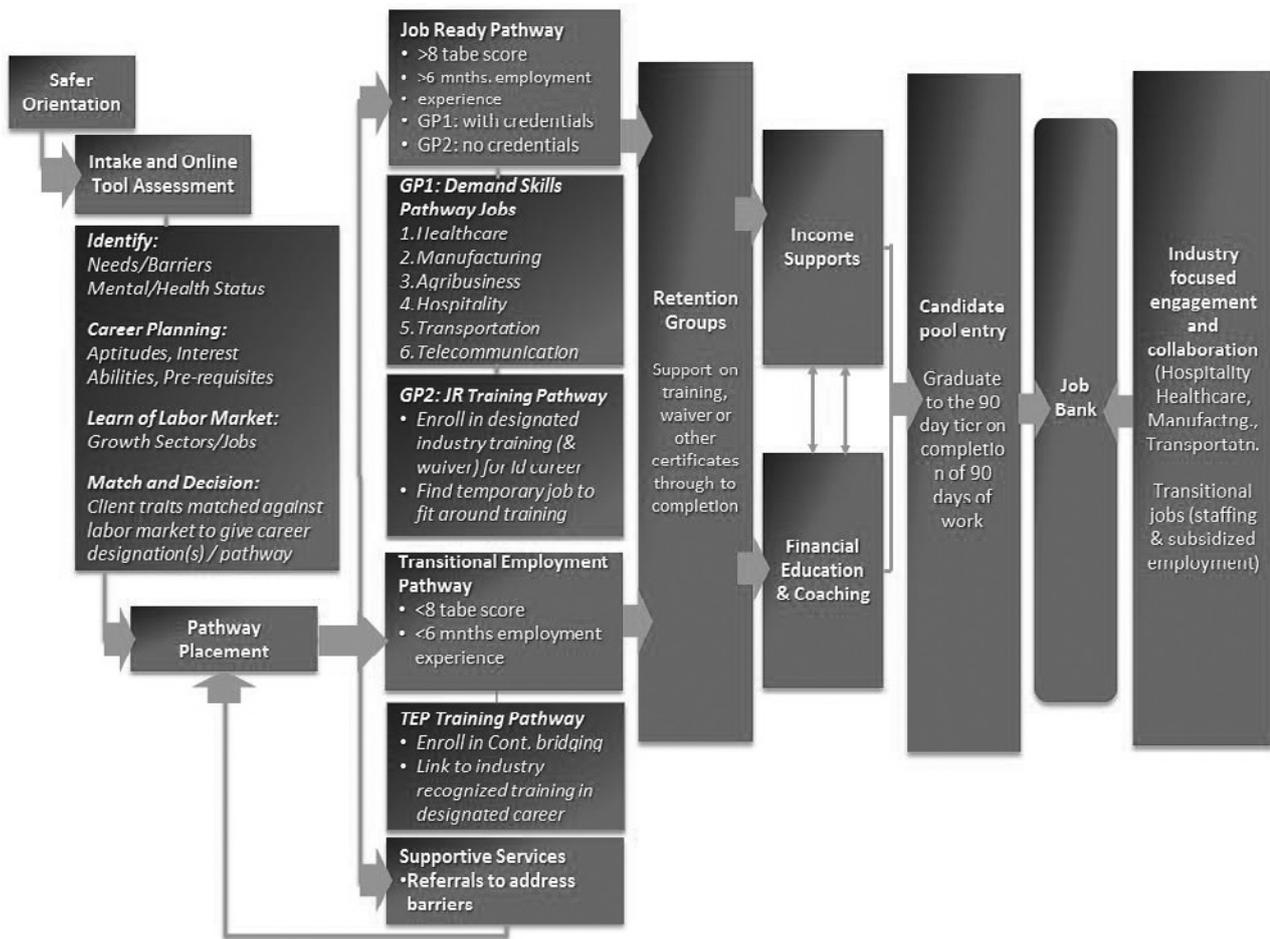
1. Safer Foundation

Safer Foundation⁴ (Safer) is a not-for-profit agency headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. Safer’s mission is to assist people with criminal records to become law abiding employed citizens in the community thereby reducing the rate at which they return to prison. While not all of Safer’s clients have been incarcerated, they have all been found guilty of committing crimes. Like many agencies, Safer’s clients are predominantly male, minority (in the case of Safer, African American), undereducated, coming from communities with high rates of unemployment, high rates of crime, and single family households. Safer provides an array of services that include:

- Case Management
- Mentoring
- Educational Intervention
- Service Learning
- Industry Training
- Employment Services
- Expungement
- Follow-Up
- Substance Abuse Treatment

⁴The Safer Foundation’s website is www.saferfoundation.org.

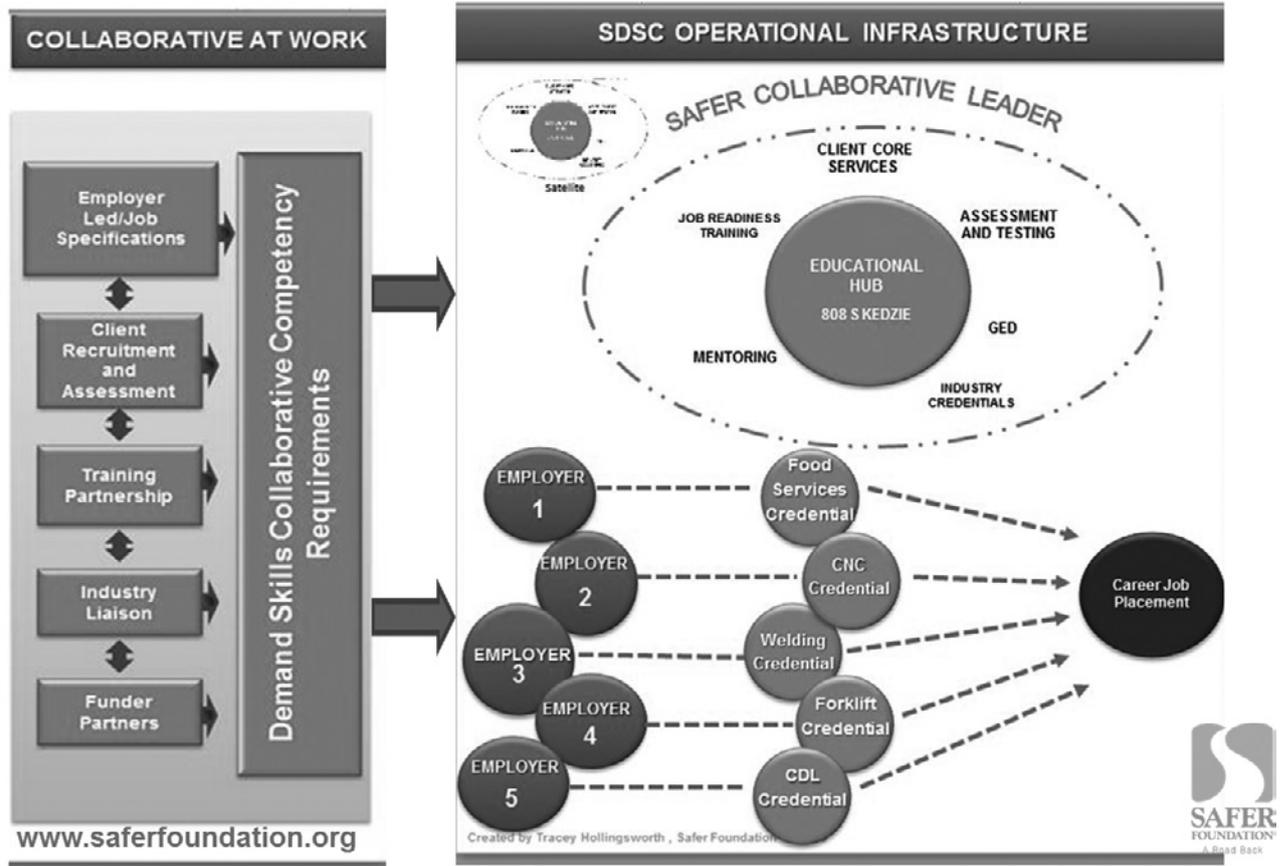
Safer Foundation’s Screening Process: Retention Services Model



● Mental Health Services

Private sector employment is the organization’s goal and is accomplished primarily from Safer’s demand-driven workforce development model where the agency helps employers find qualified workers, retain them and increase their skills to increase their effectiveness on the job after placement. Safer’s orientation process includes assessing the client’s needs and identifying any issues that may impede its ability to place the client in a traditional job. In this phase the client is also tested to determine his/her aptitudes, interests, abilities, and pre-requisites. Clients are then placed on one of three pathways to determine their employment service track: “job ready” with or without credentials; transitional employment; or supportive services to first address employment barriers. A “job ready” client who has credentials and a work history is matched to current real-time job opportunities. Clients who do not have credentials but some work history are placed in a skills training programme and connected to temporary employment opportunities that fit around the training schedule. Clients who do not have any skills or work history are placed in time-limited, wage-paying jobs that combine real work, skill development, and support services. The transitional employment provides an opportunity to help them overcome substantial barriers to employment and establish a work record. The transitional employment is through Safer’s staffing company or through other subsidized employment opportunities. Upon completion of the transitional employment phase, the client’s pathway is reassessed for career planning to begin. All of Safer’s clients receive job preparedness training and job coaching services in addition to skills development.

Safer’s Demand Skills Collaborative integrates both its demand-side and supply side workforce development services. Although Safer already has strong relationships in most industries, a strategic decision was made to target industries that needed skilled candidates and had opportunities that could be open to its clients if they received important services like academic bridge programmes⁵, job readiness training,



industry recognized credentials and job placement services. The sectors are categorized as hubs—healthcare, manufacturing, agribusiness, food service/hospitality, transportation, and telecommunications. For example, in Chicago, IL there are thousands of open healthcare positions. In fact, in the United States the healthcare industry is forecasted to have significant worker shortages because of a lack of skilled workers to meet the growing demand for healthcare services.⁶ High-tech manufacturing companies are also concerned about trained workers to fill key positions. Safer's clients have the opportunity to earn credentials and secure careers in fields as diverse as advanced manufacturing, commercial truck driving, welding and new fields like cellular wireless tower engineering and urban and rural farming.

This employer-driven employment model has key processes that lead to job placement, which include identifying high-growth occupations, preparing justice-involved individuals to compete for those jobs by focusing on employers' expectations for skilled, productive, and dependable employees with good personal management skills, and providing industry-standard training and certifications.⁷ The Demand Skill Collaborative partnership consists of businesses that have a demand for labor; training organizations that can deliver industry recognized credentials; a workforce development intermediary to identify and screen qualified candidates and deepen employer relationships; funders to bring resources to the demand-driven model; and industry experts who can provide understanding of terminology, trends, certifications and industry needs. The success of the Collaborative requires the partners to have a deep (and mutual) understanding of the labor market, its needs, issues and potential solutions. This workforce model provides a

⁵Academic bridge programmes provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills that will increase their transfer eligibility and academic success in a particular field or industry.

⁶Lennon, Chauncey. "Jobs in Health Care on the Rise, but Skills Gap Prevents Hiring: Companies and civil leaders need to collaborate on employment-training opportunities." Editorial. *USNews.com*. N.p., 17, Feb. 2015. Web. 14, Jan. 2016. <<http://www.usnews.com/news/stem-solutions/articles/2015/02/17/op-ed-jobs-in-health-care-on-the-rise-but-skills-gap-prevents-hiring>>.

⁷National Institute of Corrections. "The Employer-Driven Employment Model for Justice-Involved." Accessed January 14, 2016. Web. <<http://nicic.gov/employerdrivenemploymentmodel>>.

deeper level of employer engagement, is driven by employers' need to increase outcomes, and is designed to put candidates on a career pathway with a strong outlook that would lead to financial stability. Safer, in the end, can successfully train and place its clients in high demand, higher paying occupations.

2. Pioneer Human Services

Pioneer Human Services (Pioneer)⁸ is a nonprofit organization that serves people released from prison or jail in Washington State who are in need of treatment, housing and employment services. Pioneer operates re-entry centers and work release facilities to help individuals with a successful transition through an array of services focused on finding and retaining employment, reconnecting with families, overcoming a substance use disorder and other issues.

Pioneer provides job readiness and occupational training through its *Roadmap to Success* programme, a 150-hour training course that is given over a four-and-a-half-week period. The training includes personal management training, including reviewing the importance of punctuality and attendance, appropriate attire, the ability to accept criticism, working collaboratively, and work ethic. It also focuses on skills needed to look for work, including developing job search strategies, navigating questions about criminal history, writing effective resumes and cover letters, and interviewing effectively. The course consists of skill-building exercises to help trainees learn to make better decisions, both within their personal lives and at work, and to maintain a clean and sober lifestyle.

Pioneer's occupational training programmes focus on three industries:

- Manufacturing Academy – provides pre-apprenticeship training to men and women interested in manufacturing. This 10-week course offers the basics in manufacturing and safety to better position candidates for entry-level positions. The Academy uses an accredited curriculum sponsored by the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) and all graduates receive the following certificates: basic manufacturing; LEAN; forklift driving; flagger; OSHA/MSDS; first aid/CPR.
- Food Services – Training focuses on the specific culinary skills needed to work in a food services position. During the 16-week programme, students receive hands-on training to master the skills needed for planning and preparing food for a restaurant, caterer or commercial kitchen. All graduates receive a ServSafe Certification upon completion.
- Warehouse and Transportation Logistics – Provides training in the basics of inventory and product management, which are needed to successfully work in a distribution center environment. Students earn certificates in the following: OSHA/MSDS; first aid/CPR; and forklift driving. All applicants must be graduates of the *Roadmap to Success* training programme to be eligible for any of the occupational training programmes. This ensures that clients have been prepared and assessed for work readiness.

Pioneer operates two social enterprises that yield both a financial and social return. It has Pioneer Industries, which is an aerospace and commercial manufacturing company that is a full-service sheet metal fabrication and machine shop that operates 110,000+ square feet of manufacturing space. Pioneer Industries' capabilities include comprehensive sheet metal fabrication, machining, finishing, water jet and assembly services for a wide range of current products in the aerospace and commercial industries. The business has access to workers who come through Pioneer Human Services' employment programme who get to receive skills training, receive relevant credentials, and move straight to full-time employment. Pioneer also operates two food services lines of business. Its food buying service provides groceries to food banks and organizations across Washington State, Idaho, Oregon and several surrounding states. Its prepared food division delivers fully cooked meals to many of Pioneer Human Services' residential programmes and other food centers. Both food service lines of business provide work experience for its clients.

⁸Pioneer Human Service's website is: <<http://pioneerhumanservices.org/>>.

3. Center for Employment Opportunities

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)⁹ is a not-for-profit workforce development organization that provides employment assistance to people who are under community supervision. The programme includes a five-day pre-employment workshop; resume and interview help with job coaches; three to six months of transitional employment; and job search and job placement. CEO operates a large network of work crews, providing maintenance, janitorial and grounds-keeping services to both public institutions and private companies. CEO participants work on these crews, supervised by CEO staff, and CEO is the employer of record. CEO's work crews serve as an employment lab; teaching participants/employees how to work while they perform valuable tasks and earn a pay check. The employees get paid each day at the end of each shift.

The CEO transitional jobs model has been independently proven to increase public safety: a three-year random assignment evaluation conducted by MDRC showed that CEO made statistically significant impacts on all measures of reducing recidivism.¹⁰ In addition to increasing public safety, the CEO model also demonstrated a return on investment to the taxpayers; for every \$1 spent on CEO's programme there was a \$4 savings through reductions in recidivism and increased employment.

A critical function of transition jobs is the immediate income received by participants and the ability of people who have little to no work experience to have an immediate positive experience that their family can witness. Individuals with recent convictions or who are recently released very often face severe joblessness, have an immediate need for income, and have family responsibilities to take up again. CEO targets this population because these crews provide structure and income, as well as skill-building opportunities that prepare individuals for full-time participation in the workforce. Finally, participants get to work with CEO's team of job development professionals that provide one-on-one job coaching to address any problems or job readiness challenges including a lack of commitment to work, interviewing skills, resolving outside commitments that would prevent full-time work, developing a resume and getting appropriate interview attire.

III. HOUSING

The United States is working to address the lack of affordable housing facing low income individuals and families living in its urban centers. There are limited numbers of low income housing programmes and affordable housing options, which is the nation's primary cause for homelessness. Homeless individuals who have a criminal history face even greater challenges to securing permanent housing since private landlords and public housing agencies have wide latitude and discretion on their selection criteria for tenants. They may conduct criminal record checks and deny housing to individuals with conviction records no matter how old or minor the criminal record. As a result of these limitations, federal, state and local governments and community-based organizations have had to come up with creative solutions to meet the needs and demands for housing homeless individuals with criminal records.

A programme that serves homeless individuals and families in Boston best describes the challenges faced by many homeless individuals who need, in addition to housing assistance, additional help addressing issues that are attributed to homelessness.

Many homeless individuals have cycled for years between foster homes, DYS [Department of Youth Services], DSS [Department of Social Services] (as youths), shelters, correctional facilities, and marginal housing. Many have also experienced abusive family lives and relationships. Many have never known opportunity or stability and have experienced repeated failure.

Those experiencing homelessness also most often have inadequate health and mental health care, education, job skills, work experience, social supports, and life and coping skills necessary to succeed

⁹The Center for Employment Opportunities' website is: <<http://ceoworks.org/>>.

¹⁰ Redcross, C., Millenky, M., Rudd, T. & Levshin, V. (2012). *More Than a Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Programme*. OPRE Report 2011-18. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Human Services. Available at <http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_451.pdf>.

independently in the community. Lasting success is difficult without also helping people address these issues.¹¹

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the federal agency responsible for strengthening the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meeting the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilizing housing as a platform for improving quality of life; and building inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination. HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD oversees several housing programmes and provides grant support to state, local, and tribal governments to provide services directly to their residents. HUD's Continuum of Care Programme, which was authorized under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) of 2009,¹² competitively awards grants for new construction, acquisition, rehabilitation, leasing, rental assistance, supportive services, and operating costs for housing units; homeless management information systems, project administration costs; and Continuum of Care planning and Unified Funding Agency costs. The HEARTH Act consolidated and amended three separate homeless assistance programmes into a single grant programme. The three consolidated programmes are:

- **Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Programme:** Under the SRO programme, HUD enters into annual contributions contracts (ACCs) with public housing agencies (PHAs) in connection with the moderate rehabilitation of residential properties. These PHAs make Section 8 rental assistance payments to participating landlords on behalf of homeless individuals who rent the rehabilitated dwellings. Owners are compensated for the cost of rehabilitation (as well as the other costs of owning and maintaining the property) through the rental assistance payments. At the same time, each unit must need a minimum of \$3,000 of eligible rehabilitation to qualify for the programme.
- **The Shelter Plus Care (S+C) programme** provides rental assistance for homeless people with disabilities, primarily those with serious mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and related diseases. Rental assistance grants must be matched in the aggregate by supportive services that are equal in value to the amount of rental assistance and appropriate to the needs of the population to be served. Rental assistance is provided through four S+C components: (1) Tenant-based Rental Assistance (TRA) provides rental assistance to homeless persons who choose the housing in which they reside. Residents retain the assistance if they move; (2) Sponsor-based Rental Assistance (SRA) provides rental assistance through contracts between the grant recipient and a private not-for-profit sponsor or community mental health agency established as a public not-for-profit entity that owns or leases dwelling units in which participants reside; (3) Project based Rental Assistance (PRA) provides rental assistance to the owner of an existing structure where the owner agrees to lease the units to homeless people. Residents do not take the assistance with them if they move; and (4) Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Dwellings provides grants for rental assistance.
- **The Supportive Housing programme** is designed to promote the development of supportive housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons in transitioning from homelessness, and to promote the provision of supportive housing to enable homeless persons to live as independently as possible. Grants under the Supportive Housing Programme are awarded through a national competition held annually.

Some large public housing authorities in urban areas around the U.S. have begun to change their policies or develop pilot programmes that allow formerly incarcerated individuals, who were otherwise

¹¹ Friends of Boston's Homeless. "Moving Beyond Shelter." Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <<http://fobh.org/what-we-support/>>.

¹² On May 20, 2009, President Obama signed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act into law (Pub.L. 111-22), reauthorizing HUD's Homeless Assistance programmes. It was included as part of the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009. The HEARTH Act allows for the prevention of homelessness, rapid re-housing, consolidation of housing programmes, and new homeless categories.

classified as ineligible for housing, to return to their family's household. The Chicago Housing Authority is testing a pilot programme that will allow 50 convicted felons to obtain apartments or vouchers.¹³ The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) initiated a two-year pilot to provide 150 formerly incarcerated individuals with supportive services and permission to be added to their family's lease upon completion of the programme.¹⁴

A. Housing Programme Models

1. Fortune Society

The Fortune Society is a New York City not-for-profit social service and advocacy organization, founded in 1967, whose mission is to support successful re-entry from prison and promote alternatives to incarceration, thus strengthening the fabric of communities. Fortune has a holistic, one-stop model of service provision that includes: Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI), drop-in services, employment services, education, family services, health services, housing services, substance abuse treatment, transitional services such as the Rikers Island Discharge Enhancement (R.I.D.E.) programme, recreation, and lifetime aftercare. However, it is its housing programme that is notable for this paper.

Many of Fortune's clients were released from incarceration and could not return home to their families for two reasons; the families were either unwilling or unable to accommodate them. It was difficult to place individuals in their own housing because the private rental market New York City, like in other urban centers in the United States, was high and landlords have the discretion to deny housing to applicants with criminal histories. Moreover local public housing for low income individuals and families deny access to individuals with certain criminal convictions.

The Fortune Society decided to develop its own affordable and supportive housing for its clients. It created Fortune Castle Gardens, a \$44 million environmentally friendly building in West Harlem that is Fortune's first permanent housing complex. In 2010 they opened the 11-story building, which has 114 apartments with more than half occupied by people who were formerly incarcerated or homeless; the rest are reserved for low-income residents. Castle Gardens provides its tenants support services such as counseling, case management and financial planning. Castle Gardens adjoins the Fortune Academy, also known as "the Castle." The Castle is a halfway house that provides emergency transitional living space for up to 62 individuals who are recovery from drugs or alcohol and many residents are recently released from prison. The Fortune Society has been providing transitional housing since 2002.

The programme faced community hostility when it attempted to purchase the property for Castle Gardens and faced what is called, "Not in my Back Yard" (NIMBY) challenges. People with criminal histories, particularly with drug and sex crimes, are the most reviled populations. Therefore, Fortune recommends supportive housing developers consider the following:

- Recruiting Board of Directors with expertise in areas such as real estate, project capital management and financial planning;
- Strategically securing a blend of public funds to finance the project that would not interfere with decisions about which clients to serve and what programmes and types of housing to offer;
- Hiring legal, architectural and co-developer partners with appropriate experience and outstanding reputations;
- Developing detailed operational and programme details, including intake and screening procedures, services to be offered, staffing requirements, security needs and operating budgets for the development;

¹³ Bowen, L. (2015, May 23). "Public Housing Initiative Offers Second Chance to Some with Arrest Records." *Chicago Tribune*. Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-housing-ex-offenders-met-20150523-story.html>>.

¹⁴ See Corporation for Supportive Housing. "NYCHA Family Reentry Pilot." Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <<http://www.csh.org/csh-solutions/serving-vulnerable-populations/re-entry-populations/local-criminal-justice-work/nycha-family-reentry-pilot-csh/>>.

- Looking ahead to long-term funding possibilities to sustain the housing programme over time;
- Visiting existing supportive housing facilities to witness first-hand the way they work and their power to transform lives;
- Selecting a suitable location for a congregate supportive housing facility, and;
- Planning a comprehensive community outreach effort.¹⁵

2. Returning Home Ohio

Returning Home Ohio is a supportive housing re-entry pilot that was developed jointly in 2007 by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) and the Corporation for Supportive Housing for disabled prisoners returning from state prison to five Ohio cities. The goal of the initiative is to prevent homelessness and recidivism for people identified as being most likely to require housing linked to support services in order to maintain housing such as people who are seriously mentally ill, have a developmental disability, severe addiction, co-occurring disorders, or who have custody of minor children. ODRC has committed over \$5 million that has been used for rental subsidies, tenant assistance, supportive services, programme evaluation, and project management.¹⁶

ODRC has partnered with eight not-for-profit organizations in five communities to identify a minimum of 84 units of housing for single adults and families. Providers connect programme participants to scattered-site (public housing units spread around a city) and single-site housing and also coordinate the provision of additional services and resources through other community-based organizations. However, in order to support the development of the programme and enhance the housing services provided to individuals in need of support, there were policy changes that needed to take place. The pilot allowed ODRC to fund permanent housing and services and to also serve individuals who were not currently under ODRC supervision. Also, a policy was amended to allow people with conviction records to be an eligible to participate in the rental subsidy programme through the Ohio Housing Finance Agency.

The evaluation of this pilot was completed by the Urban Institute and it found:

- Participants were significantly less likely to be rearrested for misdemeanors.
- Participants were significantly less likely to be re-incarcerated.
- Very few individuals – in either the treatment or control group – used emergency shelter.
- Participants received more community-based services, particularly mental health and substance abuse services.¹⁷

3. Just In Reach

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is a not-for-profit organization that has for more than 25 years been providing training and education, lending, consulting, and advocacy to provide housing and important services for individuals and families to achieve stability and transform their lives.¹⁸ In 2014, CSH implemented the *Just In Reach* initiative to connect chronically homeless, frequently incarcerated individuals to permanent housing in order to reduce rates of re-incarceration and to end the cycle of homelessness. The initiative is a revamp of a two year demonstration programme that was funded with public

¹⁵ Fortune Society and John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "In Our Backyard: Overcoming community resistance to re-entry housing (A NIMBY Toolkit), p. 7. (2011). Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <http://fortunesociety.org/wp-content/files_mf/14313083881395803928137882725004_TOOLKIT1NIMBY_FINAL_Emailable_110413.pdf>.

¹⁶ Corporation for Supportive Housing. "Returning Home Ohio." Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <<http://www.csh.org/csh-solutions/serving-vulnerable-populations/re-entry-populations/local-criminal-justice-work/returning-home-ohio/>>.

¹⁷ Fontaine, J., Gilchrist-Scott, D., Roman, R., Taxy, & Roman, C. (August 2012). "Supportive Housing for Returning Prisoners: Outcomes and Impacts of the Returning Home—Ohio Pilot Project." *Urban Institute*. Web. Accessed 2016, January 10. <<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412632-Supportive-Housing-for-Returning-Prisoners-Outcomes-and-Impacts-of-the-Returning-Home-Ohio-Pilot-Project.PDF>>.

¹⁸ More about Corporation for Supportive Housing is available at <<http://www.csh.org/about-csh/>>.

162ND INTERNATIONAL SENIOR SEMINAR
VISITING EXPERTS' PAPERS

and private funds in 2008 in Los Angeles but was abandoned. The *Just In Reach* project also operates in the Los Angeles, California county jail and targets individuals who:

1. Are currently incarcerated and sentenced;
2. Are expected to be discharged from jail in 60-120 days;
3. Have been incarcerated at least 3 times in the past 3 years;
4. Prior to entering jail were homeless continuously for at least 1 year OR on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years; AND
5. Has a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of 2 or more of those conditions.

The programme uses an intensive case management model to connect the most vulnerable inmates to permanent housing. Staff identify participants and start working with them 2-4 months prior to discharge from jail, release, through temporary housing, into permanent housing and for as long as necessary. The goal is to get participants into permanent housing as soon as possible without the need for them to show "housing readiness" because they work with a multi-agency and inter-disciplinary team that provides wrap-around support. Finally, the programme is data-driven and outcome-oriented. Support services include:

- Needs assessment and intensive case management
- Temporary housing immediately upon release from jail
- Permanent housing placement and short-term rental assistance
- Employment assistance (individualized and group)
- Benefits enrollment
- Mental health services
- Connection to drug and alcohol treatment
- Mentoring and other community support
- On-going services even once placed in housing

4. Pioneer Human Services

Pioneer Human Services, the not-for-profit organization also featured in the employment section of this paper, owns and operates more than 850 housing units in four counties in Washington State. Pioneer provides transitional and permanent housing rental programmes for people with criminal histories or participating in recovery programmes. Its transitional housing programme provides services to homeless adult men and women exiting jails, hospitals, crisis centers, or inpatient treatment facilities. Individuals are required to pay a service fee of 30% of their income, or zero with no income and must be committed to compliance with case management and individual case management plans for more permanent housing. Case management includes counseling and treatment, vocational programmes and employment services are available to help residents successfully join the workforce. Pioneer's transitional housing, also called sober housing, requires residents to agree to be monitored through urinalysis and breathalyzers.

Pioneer has a number of permanent housing options in neighborhoods across the state. Their flats are for single-, double-, or family occupancy and some are set aside for special populations including those with re-entry needs, mental illness, chemical dependency, and veterans. Individuals with criminal histories may

qualify for their housing if committed to an individual re-entry plan and if they comply with participation requirements. The properties are income producing and support many of the services provided by the organization.

5. St. Leonard's Ministries

St. Leonard's House is an example of a smaller community-based programme that has found its niche and expertise with a specific population. The programme provides interim housing and supportive services for formerly incarcerated men returning to the community from Illinois prisons. The programme opened in 1954 and today has two facilities in Chicago, Illinois that serve 40 residents. The rooms vary from six-person occupancy to single-resident rooms. The facilities have on-site amenities in the buildings, including a weight room, recreation rooms, a library, a laundry room with free washers and dryers, and a chapel. The programme provides three meals a day, and residents participate in special events, holiday activities, and large group gatherings. Through St. Leonard's extensive community partnerships, residents receive the following services:

- Individual and group psychological counseling and group activities through the Adler School of Psychology
- Programmes to promote the development of life skills
- On-site intensive out-patient substance abuse treatment
- Addiction counseling and relapse prevention
- Assistance in connecting with community supportive services
- Housing placement assistance (transitional and permanent)
- Education and employment services
- Social and recreational opportunities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Daryl Atkinson, the first-ever Second Chance Fellow¹⁹ to serve at the U.S. Department of Justice is an advisor to the Federal Reentry Interagency Council.²⁰ He was selected because of his personal experience, expertise, and leadership in the criminal justice field — he is a practicing civil rights and criminal defense attorney and is a formerly incarcerated individual. Mr. Atkinson says it best when describing what works in re-entry:

In hindsight, the most critical component in my successful re-entry was a viable support system, a loving family who provided food, clothing, shelter, and nurtured my dreams. Having those immediate physical and emotional needs met gave me the opportunity to pursue higher education and gainful employment... Of course, not all of the people with criminal records are blessed with a support system similar to mine and this BRI [Boston Re-entry Initiative] graduate.²¹ But society can facilitate successful re-entry by continuing to create secondary support systems with evidence-based re-entry programming and public policies that remove obstacles to reintegration, thereby giving

¹⁹ U.S. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch. (2015, July 30). "Justice Department Announces First-Ever Second Chance Fellow." Blog. Access 2016, January 15. <<http://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/second-chances-vital-criminal-justice-reform>>.

²⁰ The Federal Interagency Reentry Council, established by Attorney General Holder in January 2011, represents a significant executive branch commitment (20 federal agencies) to coordinating re-entry efforts and advancing effective re-entry policies. A chief focus of the Reentry Council is to remove federal barriers to successful re-entry, so that motivated individuals — who have served their time and paid their debts — are able to compete for a job, attain stable housing, support their children and their families, and contribute to their communities.

²¹ On January 13, 2016, Daryl Atkinson, the U.S. Department of Justice Second Chance Fellow accompanied U. S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch on visits to three re-entry programmes in Boston, MA — the Common Ground Institute (CGI), the Boston Reentry Initiative (BRI), and Community Reentry for Women (C.R.E.W.).

formerly incarcerated people a real opportunity at a second chance.²²

The employment and housing programme models presented in this paper are just some of the many ways public and private organizations can work together to develop services that respond to the immediate and long-term needs of people with criminal histories. A common theme among many of the programmes is the ability to help clients address and manage mental health and behavioural health problems such as substance use and alcohol addiction. Although not every person with a criminal history has an addiction problem, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence reports that 80 percent of people with criminal histories abuse drugs or alcohol, nearly 50 percent of people incarcerated in jail and prison are clinically addicted, and approximately 60 percent of individuals arrested for most types of crimes test positive for illegal drugs at arrest.²³

Jerry, a former Safer Foundation (Safer) client, often speaks about how pleased he is to have opportunities to assist Safer given the role he feels Safer played in his life. Jerry is currently the Chair of the Social Work Department at a southern university and holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.), Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Social Work (MSW) degrees. When he was younger, Jerry did not make all the right decisions. He was involved with drugs and drug-related crimes. He served two prison sentences before he realized that staying in the revolving door to prison was not how he wanted to live the rest of his life. When asked about how he transitioned from a life of crime to getting a Ph.D. and ultimately becoming the Chair of his department, he tells the story of going to the Safer Foundation when he was released from prison the first time. With Safer's assistance he found a job. However, at that point, the pull of his friends and drugs was greater than the pull of living the life he knew he should. After his release from prison the second time he went back to Safer, received support in finding another job and with encouragement and assistance in researching educational opportunities, he also went to college. He never looked back.

Jerry not only earned several advanced degrees but also benefitted from changed employment policies that allowed him to compete and secure a job with the federal Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD) prior to joining academia. As one might expect, while Jerry was employed with HUD, he assisted in establishing housing programmes for low-income residents and ensured people with criminal records qualified for those programmes.

There are many success stories that epitomize the effectiveness of re-entry support in the lives of justice-involved individuals. When employment and housing programmes not only focus on the personal needs of their clients but provides support and services that eliminate structural barriers to re-entry, the service model works. Programmes must be flexible, responsive and able to change or build partnerships that address the ever-changing needs of their clients. At the end of the day, programme services are an investment in people, and the return on investment for saving one person's life can be to save hundreds or even thousands more as seen by Mr. Atkinson and Dr. W.'s stories and accomplishments.

²² Atkinson, D. (2016, January 15). "Return on a Chance." Blog. Accessed 2016, January 15. <<http://www.justice.gov/justice-blogs>>.

²³ National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (2015, June 27). Alcohol, Drugs, and Crime. Web. Accessed 2016, January 16. <<https://ncadd.org/about-addiction/alcohol-drugs-and-crime>>.