

This document is the result of 5-7 months of meetings and research by the 10 State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC) workgroups and presents draft recommendations. The SRCC welcomes your comments and feedback on these draft recommendations. **Note: Budget numbers in these recommendations are estimates only and have not been verified.**

All feedback will be reviewed and considered. Once the final recommendations are approved by the SRCC, they will be submitted to the NC General Assembly and the Office of Governor Roy Cooper.

In submitting your feedback, please include the following information:

- Your name
- Organization (if applicable)
- Workgroup and recommendation to which your feedback applies

We welcome any feedback submitted prior to the deadline, but all comments must be emailed to Irene Lawrence at irene.lawrence@ncNCDPS.gov by 5pm on October 31st.

SRCC Housing Workgroup Recommendation #1

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Create Reentry Housing Assistance fund that include three components: a pilot landlord risk mitigation project to engage landlords, short-term rental assistance to help stabilize people quickly in permanent housing, and long-term rental assistance to help people with disabilities maintain stable independent housing in the community.

- **Responsibilities**

- Risk mitigation pilot program

- Reimbursement of Unpaid Damages by the Tenant: If the tenant causes damage to the unit, the landlord can be reimbursed for a capped amount to cover the costs.
- Reimbursement of Unpaid Tenant Portion of Rent and Late Fees: If the tenant abandons the unit, a reimbursement claim may be filed for any uncollected tenant portion of rent and late fees.
- Reimbursement of Loss of Rent Due to Tenant Abandonment: If a tenant abandons a unit, landlords may be reimbursed for capped amount to cover the loss of rent while the unit is empty.
- Housing Stability Bonus: Landlords receive \$500 per tenant after one year and the renewal of lease.

- Short-term rental assistance:

- Short-term rental assistance should be provided for up to 6 months, if eligible.
- Tenants would be expected to pay 30% AGI of their income toward rent.
- Short-term rental assistance should be paired with housing search services and tenancy supports, as described by the Housing Workgroup's proposal for housing support services.
- Tenants should also be connected to other community services, especially employment services, to help increase their income and address other barriers to maintaining stable housing once assistance ends.

- Long-term rental assistance:

- Long-term rental assistance should use existing partnerships and systems that currently operate the Key Rental Assistance and Transitions to Community Living Vouchers (TCLVs) to assist people with disabilities exiting prison.
- Regional housing coordinators, Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization (LME/MCOs), and other reentry service providers should coordinate to provide long-term housing tenancy support, health care, mental health supports, and other services to help tenants maintain stable housing and improve their health and quality of life.

- **Budget:** 10 Million

- **Type of Action:** Executive and Legislative (appropriation)

- **Timeline:** Short to Mid-term

SRCC Housing Workgroup Recommendation #2

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Allocate dollars from existing sources, and new appropriations to add (50) new supportive services staff (Reentry Navigators/Peer Support Specialist) at the local level, following the homeless services model, to provide justice-involved people the opportunity to access and maintain permanent housing opportunities. Services are designed to support clients who move into housing units for up to one year after their initial residency.

- ***Responsibilities***
 - Expand Rapid Rehousing model to focus on Returning Citizens
 - Redefine the chronically homeless and homeless definition to include people returning from prison
 - Provide permanent supportive housing specifically for Returning Citizens, with a focus on landlord and neighbor mediation, mental health support, substance misuse treatment, budgeting/financial class, housing maintenance class, and mentoring.
 - Reallocate funds, and appropriate new funding, to hire at least (50) new reentry housing supportive services workers, including peer support specialists.
- **Budget:** The budget for this project is [\$2.5] million for [50] new supportive services staff across the state. If implemented with matching funds or in-kind resources from local stakeholders, additional positions could be leveraged.
- **Type of Action:** Executive and Legislative (reallocation/appropriation)
- **Timeline:** Short to Mid-term

SRCC Housing Workgroup Recommendation #3

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Expand transitional housing units for short term reentry residents. Focus will be returning citizens, individuals that are required to register in the sex registry in North Carolina. Review certifying transitional housing standards. Recruit and educate new housing partners on the public safety benefits or transitional housing. Change local zoning ordinances that will consider returning citizens. Empower local reentry councils to coordinate residential placement.

- **Responsibilities**
 - Expand residential and commercial transitional housing units for short term reentry residents. Focus will be given to returning citizens, individuals that are required to register in the sex registry in North Carolina.
 - Establish NCDPS oversight committee/department to create housing certifications and inspections.
 - The NCDPS, along with the local reentry councils, will market and educate the community to expand housing partners, and to work with local government regarding zoning ordinances.
 - The local reentry councils will be used to help coordinate resident placement and concurrent care.
 - Sell/lease properties for \$1 (owned by: City/County Municipalities or The State of NC) to credible non-profits with reentry experience in development to create transitional housing.
- **Budget:** The budget for this project is \$3-5 million for expansion of current and new housing programs. A portion is to fund NCDPS oversight for certification and inspection of housing. State funding would be in part and portion with community and non-profit partnerships.
- **Type of Action:** Local, Legislative, and Executive.
- **Timeline:** Short to Mid-term

BACKGROUND

In North Carolina, individuals transitioning back into society after serving time for a criminal offense face a blockade and there is virtually no reasonable pathway for reentry. Individuals that have served their time and have determined to make a life change, need a positive and supportive pathway to become part of their communities again.

Risk mitigation programs help to recruit landlords to work with groups they may normally screen out by covering potential property damage and loss of rent due to unit vacancy. Local reentry councils and other agencies serving people returning from prison could use this tool to increase the housing options available to people returning from prison. Most people exiting prisons will be able to maintain stable housing on their own with only the help of short-term assistance and some services, but some people with disabilities, especially those with mental illness, may need longer-term housing assistance and supports. Without appropriate longer-

term support, this group may fall into chronic homelessness or become institutionalized in adult care homes or other health care institutions. Supportive housing, which pairs long-term rental assistance with appropriate services and supports, is extremely effective at helping people with disabilities maintain stable, independent housing.

A robust supportive services component is an essential element of any program to recruit private landlords and public/non-profit housing providers in serving vulnerable populations like people in reentry. Housing supportive services models have proven effective with other vulnerable populations and should be expanded to serve more people in reentry. This could be done through local reentry councils, existing homeless service providers, or other agencies in local communities who are dedicated to serving people in reentry. It also offers an opportunity for training peer support counselors to provide jobs for justice involved people with lived experience helping others currently in the process of reentry.

STAKEHOLDERS

- This recommendation provides an opportunity for collaboration between housing, criminal justice, and health care stakeholders.
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Justice Involved Individuals
- Community Colleges
- Local Universities
- Developers
- Apartment Complexes
- Hotels/Motels
- NC Housing Finance Agency
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Public safety
- Local Reentry Councils
- Local Non-profit Agencies
- Probation/Parole
- Real Estate Companies
- Board of Realtors
- Landlords
- Urban Planners
- Homeless Continuums of Care (CoCs)
- NC Coalition to End Homelessness
- Private Foundations
- County Government
- City Municipalities
- Sheriff/Police Department
- Public Housing Agencies
- Faith Communities
- Legislators