Chicago Housing Authority
REENTRY PILOT

Proposal Presented to CHA Board of Commissioners
October 21, 2014

by the
Reentry Committee of the
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
And CHA CEO Michael Merchant

Proposal authored by Rachel Leonor Ramirez
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

The CHA Reentry Pilot Working Group
Photo from our March 18, 2013 meeting at CHA
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


INTRODUCTION

The CHA Reentry Pilot Working Group is pleased to present this proposal for the CHA Reentry Pilot to the CHA Board of Commissioners. This proposal has been endorsed by Rahm Emanuel, Mayor, City of Chicago and by CHA CEO Michael Merchant (pending approval by the CHA Board of Commissioners). The work of the Reentry Committee and the CHA Reentry Pilot also enjoy the support of over 125 organizations and stakeholders from across the City of Chicago, including 16 Alderman. See List of Endorsers, pp. 8-14.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) Reentry Committee members who negotiated this proposal with CHA as part of the Pilot working group are:

Anthony Lowery, Safer Foundation
Lynne Cunningham, St. Leonard’s Ministries
Michael Peoples, St. Leonard’s Ministries
Reverend Valerie Riley, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
James Field, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Julie Dworkin, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Rachel Ramirez, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Pastor Charles Austin, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Sonvia Petty, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) staff members who formed part of the Pilot working group are:

Ellen Sahli
Amy Degnan
Michael Merchant
Jessica Porter
Anna Lee
Andrew Teitelman
Deonna Wheeler
Melissa Freeman Cadoree

ABOUT THE CCH REENTRY COMMITTEE

CCH convened its Reentry Committee in 2007. The Reentry Committee combines the expertise of formerly/currently homeless individuals with criminal backgrounds, attorneys, professors, advocates and service providers to address housing barriers that prevent individuals with criminal records from finding stable housing. Addressing reentry barriers is key to ending homelessness. A 2011 CCH report found that 48% of people utilizing Chicago’s shelter system have a criminal background. Additional research has also shown that stable housing is key to preventing recidivism, which in Illinois hovers at 50%.

Members of the 2013-2014 Reentry Committee: Dr. Thomas Kenemore (Chicago State University), Pam Ward (Illinois Department of Corrections), Jeremy Bergstrom (Shriver Center on Poverty Law), Kevin
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

Patterson, Evan Griffith, Latrice Johnson, Darryl Johnson, Johnna Lowe (Supportive Housing Providers Association), Khalid Bilal, Victor Gaskins (St. Leonard’s Ministries), Jeffrey Nelson, Dalia Almanza (Legal Assistance Foundation), Lynne Cunningham (Michael Barlow Center), Reverend Vicky Curtiss (Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago), Steven Langston, Larry Joe Robinson, Bernie Dyme, Ryan Cameron, Sonovia Petty, Charles Austin, Jim Field, Julie Dworkin, Rachel Ramirez.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”

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CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS - Reentry Committee
70 East Lake Street, Suite 720 / Chicago, IL 60601 / (312) 641-4140

Page 5
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CHA Reentry Pilot was designed by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) Reentry Committee and the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). The CHA Reentry Pilot has the potential to improve CHA’s responsiveness to community needs through an innovative approach to housing ex-offenders who have truly turned their lives around and who receive continued support from reentry service providers once housed.

The CHA Reentry Pilot will position CHA as a leading agency in the national trend to better support the reentry processes of returning citizens. Other PHAs have already instituted similar programs, including the Los Angeles City Housing Authority and Seattle Housing Authority. See Best Practices, pp. 29-30.

The 3 participating Chicago-based reentry service providers have over 100 years combined experience providing services to ex-offenders. Their providers offer a rigorous curriculum of job skills, life skills and counseling to their program participants. Participation with one of these agencies can reduce a participant’s likelihood of recidivism from 50% to 10%.

Service providers will award CHA Reentry Certificates on an extremely selective basis to individuals based on their dedication to their own reentry process and their excellence in key reentry service programming. Not every returning citizen is an appropriate candidate for a Reentry Certificate, but we are confident that those who are will be outstanding tenants of CHA.

CHA will use the Reentry Certificate to demonstrate mitigation of past history and allow the individual to access CHA housing and HCV through normal application channels. CHA will weigh the individual’s status as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate highly against other factors, and will admit the individual for housing barring extreme circumstances. Providers agree to provide one year of wraparound services at minimum to their participants who are housed in CHA with a Reentry Certificate. The CHA Reentry Pilot aims to house 50 individuals in 4 years.

A Reentry Certificate may be used as evidence of mitigating circumstances to house individuals with criminal backgrounds in two scenarios:

1. Individuals who wait on the CHA Public Housing or HCV Wait List until their number is called.
2. Individuals who wish to reunify with family housed in an existing CHA or HCV household, when that household is in agreement and welcomes that individual home.

There are further restrictions regarding CHA Reentry Pilot candidate eligibility. See pp. 15-33

Housing is one of the most critical components of successful reentry. A study done with 177 Illinois residents found that supportive housing decreases the likelihood of jail and prison time by 87% and 100% respectively. See Appendix 5.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

The CHA Reentry Pilot’s **126 endorsers** call upon CHA to respond to the needs of the community and undertake the CHA Reentry Pilot as a means of housing deserving ex-offenders in HCV and Public Housing.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”

ENDORSERS OF THE CHA REENTRY PILOT

Alderman Walter Burnett, 27th Ward
Alderman Howard B. Brookins Jr., 21st Ward
Alderman Will Burns, 4th Ward
Alderman Rey Colon, 35th Ward
Alderman Pat Dowell, 3rd Ward
Alderman Jason Ervin, 28th Ward
Alderman Toni L. Foulkes, 15th Ward
Alderman Deborah Graham, 29th Ward
Alderman Emma Mitts, 37th Ward
Alderman Joe Moreno, 1st Ward
Alderman Ricardo Muñoz, 22nd Ward
Alderman Ameya Pawar, 47th Ward
Alderman Roderick T. Sawyer, 6th Ward
Alderman Debra Silverstein, 50th Ward
Alderman Joann Thompson, 16th Ward
Alderman Scott Waguespack, 32nd Ward
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Commissioner Earlean Collins, 1st District
Cook County Commissioner Robert Steele, 2nd District
State Representative Ken Dunkin
State Representative LaShawn Ford
State Representative Connie Howard
State Representative Kimberly Lightford
State Senator Mattie Hunter
State Senator Patricia Van Pelt Watkins
U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis, 7th Congressional District
A 100 Plus Men
Action Now
Albany Park Neighborhood Council
Arlene Jones - Columnist Austin Weekly News
Ashunti Residential Management Systems
Association for Child Development
Association House of Chicago
Austin CBC
BEHIV, Better Existence with HIV
Breakthrough Word Harvest Church
Brighter Behavior Choices Inc. NFP
Career Advancement Network
The Cara Program
Connections for Abused Women and their Children (CAWC)
Centers for New Horizons
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


Chetwyn Rodgers Faith Memorial COGIC
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation
Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness
Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers
Chicago Streetwise
Christian Community Health Center
C.L.I.C.K. Services, NFP
Cook County Sherriff’s Department of Women’s Justice Services
Commission for Community
Community Renewal Society
Community Service Advisory Council (CSAC)
Covenant United Church of Christ (Prison Ministry)
Deborah’s Place
Developing Justice Coalition
DOOR Chicago
ENLACE Chicago
Faith Community of St. Sabina, Rev. Dr. Michael Louis Pfleger
Faith Incorporated
Family Rescue Inc.
Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago
Garfield Counseling Center
Grassroots Collaborative
Hispanic Housing Development Corporation
Housing Opportunities for Women
Howard Area Community Employment Resource Center
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

Humboldt Park Social Services
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Department of Corrections
Illinois Institute for Community Law
Inner City Muslim Action Network
Inspiration Corporation
Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs
The Inner Voice, INC
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization
Koan Enterprises
La Casa Norte
The L.E.A.P. Organization
Legal Assistance Foundation
Leslie’s Place
Life Institute
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
A Little Bit of Heaven
Mansfield Institute
Matthew House, Inc.
Mental Health Court Association of Illinois
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Metropolis 2020
Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church
Mujeres Latinas en Accion
New Foundation Center
North Side Housing and Supportive Services
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


Organization of the North East
Protestants for the Common Good
Project Irene
Rainbow Push Coalition
Renaissance Collaborative
Respond Now
RITAS Ministry--Restoring Inmates To America's Society
Roosevelt University – Life Skills Re-entry Program
Safer Foundation
A Safe Haven
A Safe Haven Foundation/CCIL
Service Employee International Union
Shut-Up Ministries
St. Leonard's Ministries
St. Luke’s Missionary Baptist Church
Supportive Housing Providers Association
Target Area Development Corporation
Thresholds
Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities
True Way of Life World Ministry
Sisters of the Hood
Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation
Southwest Organizing Project
Southwest Youth Collaborative
Supportive Housing Providers Association
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

Uptown People’s Law Center
Walk By Faith to Freedom Ministry, Inc.
Warcore
Westside Health Authority
Westside Ministers Coalition
Women of Power Alumni Association
Women's Re-Entry/ Look Up and Hope Program, Volunteers of America
XFFH Job Placement, Inc
You Can Make It Shelter II

LETTERS OF SUPPORT
FROM CHICAGO ELECTED OFFICIALS
On pages to follow
November 7, 2013

Michael Merchant
CEO,
Chicago Housing Authority
60 E. Van Buren
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Merchant:

I want to say congratulations on becoming the CEO of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). It’s good to know someone who understands the needs of my community is heading an organization that can assist many of our residents.

However, I am writing to you today to indicate my support for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ *CHA Reentry Pilot*. The pilot program was crafted under the previous CHA administration (see enclosed letter) in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Reentry Committee. The program gives deserving men and women who have an arrest record, but have turned their lives around, a chance to access subsidized housing.

Many of our community’s men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives.

I encourage you to review the merits CHA Reentry Pilot and implement the program by January. 2014. I understand there is considerable support among my colleagues in City Council. Considering the positive impact this program would have for the constituents in wards throughout the city, I am willing to speak with other alderman to garner further support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or my assistant, Robert Elchert at (773) 373-9273.

Sincerely,

Pat Dowell
Alderman, 3rd Ward
November 14, 2013

Michael Merchant
President and CEO
Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)
60 East Van Buren
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Merchant:

This letter comes to you in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot program presented by the Reentry Committee of the Chicago Coalition of the Homeless. This much needed program provides access to subsidized housing, mentoring and other social services to men and women with criminal backgrounds across several neighborhoods in the city of Chicago. In order for our various communities to thrive residents need adequate housing, employment and other resources to sustain their lives. This program allows those individuals who possess and have displayed strong desire to change their lives a real opportunity to do so. The CHA Reentry Pilot program is one that not only embraces time-tested models of services, but also incorporates the knowledge of team members own lived experience of successfully overcoming incarceration and substance addiction.

I respectfully request that CHA provide favorable consideration and support for this project.

Please feel free to contact my office at (773) 536-8103 should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

William D. Burns
Alderman, 4th Ward
June 17, 2013

Mr. Charles Woodyard  
C.E.O.  
Chicago Housing Authority  
60 East Van Buren  
Chicago, Il 60605

Dear Mr. Woodyard,

I write in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

This program will achieve an important goal for many of our residents, but it will require strong leadership from the Chicago Housing Authority. All parties involved in the implementation of this program must be truly committed to working in partnership with the community to achieve housing for low-income residents without destabilizing neighborhoods. Many aspects of the Re-entry Pilot such as the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families can greatly assist someone in the transition back to being a productive member of society if it is accompanied by adequate support and oversight.

Many of our community’s men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance, and I again urge you to implement it with your staff.

Respectfully,

The Honorable Roderick T. Sawyer  
Alderman, 6th Ward
May 29, 2013

Charles Woodyard, CEO
Chicago Housing Authority
70 East Van Buren Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Charles Woodyard,

It is my pleasure to write to you in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

We look forward to seeing that you are a different kind of leader at CHA – one who is truly committed to working in partnership with the community to achieve housing for low-income residents.

I ask that you and your staff support the Reentry Pilot, particularly the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families. I am willing to speak with my colleagues in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

Many of our community’s men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance, and I again urge you to implement it with your staff.

Respectfully,

Alderman Toni L. Foulkes
15th Ward
May 29, 2013

Mr. Charles Woodyard  
C.E.O., Chicago Housing Authority  
60 E. Van Buren  
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Woodyard:

It is my pleasure to write to you in endorsement of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless' Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

We look forward to seeing that you are a different kind of leader at CHA – one who is truly committed to working in partnership with the community to achieve housing for low-income residents.

I urge you and your staff to implement the Reentry Pilot, particularly the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families. I am willing to speak with my colleagues in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jason C. Ervin  
Alderman - 28th Ward

"Moving the 28th Ward to the Next Level"
May 17, 2013

Dear Mr. Charles Woodyard, C.E.O., Chicago Housing Authority,

It is my pleasure to write to you in endorsement of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

We look forward to seeing that you are a different kind of leader at CHA – one who is truly committed to working in partnership with the community to achieve housing for low-income residents.

I urge you and your staff to implement the Reentry Pilot, particularly the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families. I am willing to speak with my colleagues in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

Many of our community’s men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance, and I again urge you to implement it with your staff.

Sincerely,

Joe Moreno
Alderman, 1st Ward
May 29, 2013

Mr. Charles Woodyard,
C.E.O., Chicago Housing Authority

It is my pleasure to write to you in endorsement of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

We look forward to seeing that you are a different kind of leader at CHA – one who is truly committed to working in partnership with the community to achieve housing for low-income residents.

I urge you and your staff to implement the Reentry Pilot, particularly the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families. I am willing to speak with my colleagues in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

Many of our community’s men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance, and I again urge you to implement it with your staff.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ricardo Muñoz
Alderman, 22nd Ward
May 14, 2013

Charles Woodyard
C.E.O
Chicago Housing Authority
60 E. Van Buren
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear C.E.O Woodyard,

It is my pleasure to endorse the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. Many of our community's men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. Those that have successfully demonstrated a positive turn-around in their lives deserve the opportunity to access subsidized housing.

I know you are a leader who is committed to providing quality housing for low-income residents. By piloting this Reentry program, you and your staff will make it possible for individuals in need to reunite with families, secure meaningful employment and an opportunity to rebuild their lives. I am willing to speak with my colleagues in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

People who have changed their lives for the better are worthy of a second chance.

The safety and security of the community are enhanced when individuals are constructively mainstreamed into society. I urge you to give the CHA Reentry Pilot your most favorable consideration.

Respectfully,

Rey Colón
Alderman, 35th Ward
June 5, 2013

Mr. Charles Woodyard
C.E.O.
Chicago Housing Authority
60 East Van Buren
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Woodyard:

Please accept this letter as my endorsement of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless' Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

Many of my fellow legislators and I urge you to implement the Reentry Pilot, particularly the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families. I am willing to speak with more of my fellow aldermen in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

Many of our community's men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance. Thank you in advance for your consideration of the pilot program.

Respectfully,

Scott Waguespack
Alderman
June 18, 2013

Charles Woodyard
C.E.O., Chicago Housing Authority

Dear Mr. Woodyard,

It is my pleasure to write to you in endorsement of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

We look forward to seeing that you are a different kind of leader at CHA – one who is truly committed to working in partnership with the community to achieve housing for low-income residents.

I urge you and your staff to implement the Reentry Pilot, particularly the piece that allows individuals to move back in with their families. I am willing to speak with my colleagues in order to garner their support for the Pilot and for future work done to benefit returning citizens.

Many of our community’s men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of my community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance, and I again urge you to implement it with your staff.

Respectfully,

Ameya Pawar
Alderman, 47th Ward
June 20, 2013

Charles Woodyard  
CEO  
Chicago Housing Authority  
60 E. Van Buren  
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Woodyard:

It is my pleasure to write in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot is designed to allow individuals who have changed their lives access to subsidized housing.

Many of our communities’ men and women face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of our communities depends on these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. It is my belief that the CHA Reentry Pilot is such a program.

I am encouraging you and your staff to strongly consider implementing this program.

Should you have any questions, contact me at (773) 261-4646.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Graham  
Alderman—29th Ward

DLG: sj
October 8, 2013

Mr. Charles Woodyard
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Housing Authority
60 E. Van Buren
Chicago, Il 60605

Dear Mr. Woodyard,

I am writing in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, crafted in partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless’ Reentry Committee. This pilot gives deserving men and women who have truly turned their lives around a chance to access subsidized housing.

I urge you and your staff to implement the Reentry Pilot, particularly in support of family reunification.

My administration is working hard to reduce recidivism among people released from the Cook County Jail. Successful reentry requires stable housing. CHA’s pilot will contribute to increasing public safety by offering a stable housing option to people who will make excellent use of this opportunity. The pilot program includes recognized service providers with sterling records of successfully helping people become contributing citizens. I urge you to support their work and become a valued partner in the cause of reducing recidivism.

Every community includes men and women who face housing barriers due to their criminal backgrounds. The safety of every community depends upon these individuals being able to access housing, jobs, and the other opportunities that will allow them to continue to rebuild their lives. The CHA Reentry Pilot allows individuals who have changed their lives just this chance, and I again urge you to implement it with your staff.

Sincerely,

Toni Preckwinkle
President
REENTRY PILOT OVERVIEW

The CHA Reentry Pilot was created through a collaborative effort between the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) Reentry Committee, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), and the Administration of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The purpose of this pilot program is to explore a mechanism through which ex-offenders who have truly turned their lives around can be housed through CHA’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Public Housing programs.

The CHA Reentry Pilot is an opportunity for the CHA to respond proactively to a critical need within Chicago’s communities – to bring people with criminal records out of the shadows and allow them to become role models and productive members of our society.

SUMMARY

The CHA Reentry Pilot is implemented through a partnership between CHA and 3 key reentry service providers with over 100 years combined experience providing services to returning citizens in Chicago. Participants in these providers’ programs are returning citizens who take on a rigorous curriculum that includes job skills, education, life skills and mental health programming. The recidivism rates among returning citizens who complete a reentry program is significantly reduced; in the case of St. Leonard’s Ministries, from 50% of all Illinois ex-offenders to 10% of St. Leonard’s participants. Service providers of the CHA Reentry Pilot will award their outstanding program participants with a CHA Reentry Certificate based upon these participants’ excellent efforts at completing their reentry programming. CHA will use the Reentry Certificate to demonstrate mitigation of a CHA applicant’s prior background, with the exception of the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) mandatory criminal background exclusions and murder, attempted murder, and terrorism convictions. See Appendix 6

The following strategic considerations are detailed later in this proposal (See Strategic Importance, pp. 32-34).

- The CHA Reentry Pilot will support the CHA Plan Forward (CHA, 2013) by establishing new partnerships between CHA and key reentry service providers; organizations with excellent reputations that have over 100 years combined experience serving ex-offenders.
- The CHA Reentry Pilot will align CHA with local and national initiatives to decrease reentry barriers for ex-offenders, including Mayor Emanuel’s Plan 2.0 to End Homelessness (See Appendix 2) and HUD Secretary Donovan’s call for Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to unite returning citizens with their families living in federally subsidized housing (See Appendix 1).
- The CHA Reentry Pilot has the potential to create new financial and other opportunities for CHA by establishing CHA as an innovator in the area of reentry.
- The CHA Reentry Pilot will reduce recidivism and make CHA’s residences, and Chicago communities on the whole, safer.
- The CHA Reentry Pilot will fulfill the hopes of 126 endorsing organizations and elected officials, including 16 Chicago Aldermen.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
— Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

SCOPE OF THE CHA REENTRY PILOT: 50 individuals in 4 years

CHA Reentry Pilot Participants will be housed under a 2-year conditional tenancy agreement or conditional lease agreement, which may subsequently be renewed for an additional 2 years. Following the 4 year period, the individual may become a permanent resident of CHA housing.

TWO TRACKS TO HOUSING UNDER THE CHA REENTRY PILOT

There are two scenarios in which individual CHA Reentry Pilot candidates may seek housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot.

On either track, a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate will have completed a minimum of one year with a CHA Reentry Pilot service provider; will be drug-free; will be current on their rent (if applicable); and will be compliant with CHA’s work requirements for residents.

CHA has the final say on admitting a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate as a CHA Reentry Pilot Participant. CHA will weigh the individual’s status as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate above other factors that may exist, and will admit the individual as a CHA Reentry Pilot Participant barring extreme circumstances.

TRACK 1:

A CHA Reentry Pilot candidate is on a Public Housing or HCV wait list, waiting to be called for an intake interview with CHA. Less than five years have passed since the individual has completed their sentence for a criminal conviction. If the individual has truly turned their life around, and has completed at least one year of services, is drug free, current on their rent (if applicable), and compliant with CHA’s work requirements, they can be recommended by one of the three CHA Reentry Pilot service providers as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate. The CHA Reentry Pilot candidate receives no preference for housing over other applicants.

Under current CHA policy, an individual who has completed their sentence for a criminal conviction less than 5 years prior to being called for intake would be ineligible for housing (See Appendix 6). The CHA Reentry Pilot allows CHA to consider CHA Reentry Pilot candidates for housing despite this restriction, except in cases where the individual may have a conviction that is a mandatory exclusion under HUD guidelines. The CHA Reentry Pilot candidate receives no preference for housing over other applicants for subsidized units. Rather, they may present their CHA Reentry Pilot Certificate to CHA at the time of their intake interview. Barring extreme circumstances in which CHA determines the individual would not be an acceptable tenant, CHA will use the CHA Reentry Pilot Certificate as proof of mitigation of the individual’s criminal record, and will accept the individual for housing.

TRACK 2:

A CHA Reentry Pilot candidate has a spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling or adult child currently housed in CHA Public Housing or under the HCV program with whom they wish to reunify. If the individual has truly turned their life around, and has completed at least one year of services, is drug free, current on their rent (if applicable), and compliant with CHA’s work requirements, they can be recommended by
When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.” – U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, 2012

one of the three CHA Reentry Pilot service providers as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate. In order to accept a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate as part of their household, the receiving household must sign an agreement accepting the terms of the Pilot. The receiving household’s lease will not be altered in any way to accommodate the individual. The household will not receive a larger subsidy to accommodate the CHA Reentry Pilot participant.

A CHA Reentry Pilot candidate, once approved for housing by CHA and/or other representatives of CHA (including a landlord or public housing property manager where applicable), may be housed with their spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, or adult child. An HCV household participating in the CHA Reentry Pilot will be allowed to follow existing HCV policy which allows a household to choose a larger unit. However, the household will not receive a larger subsidy from CHA to pay for this larger unit nor can the household exceed 40% of their income towards rent. The household must also remain compliant with their existing lease, including lease end date.

After two years of conditional tenancy, the CHA Reentry Pilot receiving household may choose to renew the conditional tenancy of the CHA Reentry Pilot participant. After the second two-year period is over, the receiving household may choose to permanently add the individual to their lease. The receiving household is responsible for the CHA Reentry Pilot participant, and all residents in the household (including the CHA Reentry Pilot participant) must abide by CHA regulations.

ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT SUITABILITY AS A CHA REENTRY PILOT CANDIDATE

CHA Reentry Pilot Service providers will assess their program participants in the following areas for suitability as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate. Only their best program participants will be recommended to CHA as CHA Reentry Pilot candidates. CHA must approve an individual for housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot.

1. MINIMUM OF ONE YEAR OF REENTRY SERVICES WITH A CHA REENTRY PILOT SERVICE PROVIDER

2. AGREES TO 2 YEARS OF FOLLOW-UP SERVICES ONCE HOUSED UNDER THE CHA REENTRY PILOT

3. DRUG-FREE

4. COMPLIANT WITH CHA WORK RESIDENT WORK REQUIREMENT

5. UP-TO-DATE ON RENT (if applicable)

6. DOES NOT HAVE A CONVICTION FOR A DISQUALIFYING OFFENSE
   • Includes HUD mandatory exclusions (See Appendix 6) and murder, attempted murder, and terrorism convictions

7. TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESSFUL REENTRY BEFORE RELEASE FROM PRISON
   • No history of discipline
   • Prison work assignment
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

- Academic program participation (A.B.E./ G.E.D./ College Credit)
- Vocational training
- Treatment participation (mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment

8. COMMITMENT TO COMPLETION OF REENTRY PROGRAM
  - Development of job skills
  - Development of life skills
  - Establishing personal certification (ID, social security card, birth certificate)
  - Support groups (Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous)
  - Mentoring

9. SURROUNDED BY AFTERCARE SERVICES
  - Continuation of programs/services initiated
  - Makes wise decisions about relationships with family, friends and community members
  - Community supervision compliance
  - Community forum participation (reentry summits; expungement summits)

10. RELIABLE SUPPORT NETWORK
  - Family support
  - Mentoring/sponsorship
  - Volunteer/academic
  - Faith-based

REQUIREMENTS OF CHA REENTRY PILOT ENTITIES
**Step 1:** Participant enters social service agency, goes through intake process.

**Step 2:** Participant goes through agency programming for a minimum of one year. For Pilot purposes, the three participating agencies are St. Leonard’s Ministries, Safer Foundation, and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.

**Step 3:** When it becomes clear that the participant is exceptionally committed to their reentry process, they are asked if they are on a CHA waitlist or if they have family living in CHA housing.

**Step 4:** If the participant is on a CHA waitlist or has family in CHA, and the provider determines that the participant meets all criteria for the CHA Reentry Certificate, the provider recommends the individual as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate.

**Step 5:** If participant has family in CHA, service provider asks participant if moving in with their family would be an ideal living situation for them.

**Step 6:** If participant is in agreement, service provider and participant meet with the participant’s family members to determine if reunification would be a positive, appropriate fit for the family.

**Step 7:** Service provider, participant and participant’s family meet with landlord for approval (if applicable). If this landlord does not approve, a new landlord must be identified.

**Step 8:** Service provider contacts CHA.

**Step 9:** CHA conducts intake meeting with providers, family (if applicable) and participant.

**Step 10:** Service provider continues follow-up services for a minimum of years with participant once they are living in CHA housing.
The CHA Reentry Pilot will be successful through a partnership and close working relationship between multiple entities that are committed to the success of the Pilot. The entities responsible for the success of the Pilot are: the 50 CHA Reentry Pilot participants, CHA Reentry Pilot service providers, CHA, existing CHA households who elect to receive a CHA Reentry Pilot participant (hereafter “receiving household”), HCV landlords (if applicable), CHA Public Housing property managers (if applicable) and the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Reentry Committee.

The responsibilities and requirements of each of these CHA Reentry Pilot entities are as follows.

**Section 1: CHA REENTRY PILOT PARTICIPANTS**

**1a. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT PARTICIPANTS**

As a participant in the CHA Reentry Pilot, you have been recognized as someone who has turned your life around based upon the criteria found in “ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT SUITABILITY AS A CHA REENTRY PILOT CANDIDATE” above. You are an excellent candidate for stable housing through CHA Public Housing or HCV programs. Your service provider is willing to stake their reputation on your continued success. Your success could mean the continuation and expansion of housing and other opportunities for returning citizens in CHA and in Chicago; likewise your failure could mean that doors close for the deserving returning citizens who come after you.

CHA has the ultimate authority in deciding to admit you as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant. However, CHA will weigh your status as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate above other factors, and will admit you as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant barring any extreme circumstances.

1.1. Until CHA approves your application, you are a *CHA Reentry Pilot candidate*, meaning you are still not approved for housing with CHA. Once CHA approves your application, you are a *CHA Reentry Pilot participant* and are eligible to be housed in CHA housing for the duration of your time with the CHA Reentry Pilot and longer if approved.

1.2. You are expected at all times to comply with the terms of your conditional tenancy or lease agreement. Also, the rules governing all CHA residents apply to you, including the CHA work requirements.

1.3. You must be current on your rent and not have any arrearages.

1.4. You must have completed at least one year of reentry programming with one of the three CHA Reentry Pilot service providers (St. Leonard’s Ministries, Safer Foundation, or Lutheran Social Services of Illinois).

1.5. You must be drug-free and comply with drug testing as deemed clinically necessary and administered by your service provider throughout your participation in the CHA Reentry Pilot.
1.6. If you have a murder or attempted murder conviction, you are ineligible for housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot at this time. Other ineligible offenses are: terrorism, and the mandatory HUD exclusions (see Appendix 6)

1.7. You are housed under a conditional lease or tenancy agreement that will be in effect for two years. After the two year period, you may have the opportunity to renew for another two years. After four years housed under the CHA Reentry Pilot, with CHA’s approval, you will be able to be permanently housed under CHA.

1b. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT PARTICIPANT REUNIFYING WITH A RECEIVING HOUSEHOLD

This section describes the responsibilities of CHA Reentry Pilot candidates (not yet approved for housing by CHA) and CHA Reentry Pilot participants (approved for housing by CHA) who hope to live or who live with a relative already housed in CHA Public Housing or HCV programs.

In addition to complying with the general responsibilities required of all CHA Reentry Pilot participants (Section 1a), you must also complete the following to the satisfaction of your reentry service provider and CHA.

Once identified as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate, before approval for housing by CHA:

1b.1. Accurately represent to your service provider and to CHA the nature of your relationship with the potential receiving household.

1b.2 If you believe that the relationship is not conducive to your continued success as a returning citizen, discontinue the process of attempting to gain housing with this particular household through the CHA Reentry Pilot.

1b.3. You must be related to a member of the receiving household in one of the following ways: spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, or adult child.

1b.4 Complete all services and/or drug screening that may be required of you by your reentry service provider while waiting to be housed.

1b.5. Provide CHA and/or CHA contractors with all necessary information during intake screening.

1b.6. Once accepted by CHA, agree to and sign a conditional tenancy agreement. This agreement will require the following of you in order for you to remain housed under the CHA Reentry Pilot:

- You must complete all required follow-up services with your service provider to the satisfaction of your service provider. This includes drug testing as recommended and administered by your service provider.
- You must comply with all existing CHA housing guidelines, including the CHA work requirement, to the satisfaction of CHA staff.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


Once accepted by CHA as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant and housed with the receiving family:

1b.7. Comply with all follow-up services required for a period of two years, including:
   • Weekly contacts from your service provider for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, monthly contacts
   • Monthly in-home visits with your service provider for the first 90 days of your participation in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, quarterly in-home visits
   • Monthly in-home visits from a CHA FamilyWorks representative
   • Any drug testing that your service provider deems clinically necessary
   • Any additional meetings, contacts or home visits that your provider determines to be clinically necessary

1b.8. Utilize your relationship with your service provider to seek any support or guidance you may feel appropriate to you at different times.

1b.9. If at any moment you feel unable to comply with your conditional tenancy agreement you must communicate this directly and immediately to your service provider and comply with their recommendations.

1b.10. Fully participate in any meetings with CHA and/or your service provider regarding the status of your conditional tenancy.

1b.11. If your conditional tenancy agreement is terminated, you must leave the household.

1c. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT PARTICIPANTS SEEKING THEIR OWN HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER OR PUBLIC HOUSING UNIT

This section applies to those CHA Reentry Pilot candidates (not yet approved by CHA) and CHA Reentry Pilot participants (approved for housing by CHA) who are on a CHA waitlist and are seeking housing via the traditional waitlist process. These individuals will not receive any priority for housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot. In addition to complying with the general responsibilities required of all CHA Reentry Pilot participants (Section 1a), you must also complete the following to the satisfaction of your reentry service provider and CHA.

Once identified as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate, before approval for housing by CHA:

1c.1. Continue to wait on the CHA Public Housing or HCV waitlist to be called for an intake interview with CHA.

1c.2. Complete all services and/or drug screening that may be required of you by your reentry service provider while waiting for your intake interview and to be housed.

1c.3. Agree to and sign a conditional tenancy agreement. This agreement will require the following of you in order for you to remain housed under the CHA Reentry Pilot:
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

- You must complete all required follow-up services with your service provider to the satisfaction of your service provider. This includes drug testing as recommended and administered by your service provider.
- You must comply with all existing CHA housing guidelines including the CHA work requirement to the satisfaction of CHA staff.

1c.4. Fully participate in any intake interview or appeal hearing with CHA.

**Once accepted by CHA as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant and housed in your own unit:**

1c.5. Comply with all follow-up services required, including:
- Weekly contacts from your service provider for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, monthly contacts
- Monthly in-home visits with your service provider for the first 90 days of your participation in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, quarterly in-home visits
- Monthly in-home visits from a CHA FamilyWorks representative
- Any drug testing that your service provider deems clinically necessary
- Any additional meetings, contacts or home visits that your provider determines to be clinically necessary

1c.6. Utilize your relationship with your service provider to seek any support or guidance you may feel appropriate to you at different times.

1c.7. If at any moment you feel unable to comply with your conditional lease agreement you must communicate this directly and immediately to your service provider and comply with their recommendations.

1c.8. Fully participate in any meetings with CHA and/or your service provider regarding the status of your conditional tenancy.

1c.9. If your conditional tenancy agreement is terminated, you must leave the household.

**Section 2: CHA REENTRY PILOT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

For the duration of the CHA Reentry Pilot, the three participating reentry service providers will be St. Leonard’s Ministries, Safer Foundation, and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. These service providers have over 100 years of combined experience that they will use to identify CHA Reentry Pilot candidates using criteria outlined elsewhere in this proposal, and to support CHA Reentry Pilot participants who are housed in CHA Public Housing or HCV programs.

CHA must approve any individual before they can be housed as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant. However, CHA will weigh your recommendation above all other factors and will admit a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate barring any extreme circumstances.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


2.1. Until CHA approves an application, an individual that you recommend is a **CHA Reentry Pilot candidate**, meaning the individual is still not approved for housing with CHA. Once CHA approves the individual’s application, the individual is a **CHA Reentry Pilot participant** and is eligible to be housed in CHA housing for the duration of their time with the CHA Reentry Pilot and longer if approved.

2.2. The CHA Reentry Pilot is a temporary program that requires all parties to work together for the success of the CHA Reentry Pilot participants. It is of utmost importance that the CHA Reentry Pilot participants are successful, otherwise, the Pilot will be put in jeopardy. When deciding to recommend an individual for the CHA Reentry Pilot, ask yourself, “Would I stake my agency’s reputation on this individual?”

**2a. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**Before recommending a program participant to CHA as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate:**

2a.1. Designate a staff person who will be the primary point of contact for CHA and CHA affiliates including property managers and HCV landlords if applicable.

Designate a staff person who will be the primary point of contact for CHA Reentry Pilot receiving families.

2a.2. Only recommend as CHA Reentry Pilot candidates those individuals with whom you have worked in the context of your reentry program for a minimum of one year.

2a.3. Only recommend as CHA Reentry Pilot candidates those individuals who are current on any rent agreement they may hold with you or with another landlord if applicable.

2a.4. Use the specific guidelines outlined in this proposal to determine whether an individual is an appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot candidate. **See ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT SUITABILITY AS A CHA REENTRY PILOT CANDIDATE pp. 17-18**

2a.5. Continue to identify CHA Reentry Pilot candidates until 50 individuals are identified and housed as CHA Reentry Pilot participants between the three participating CHA Reentry Pilot service providers.

2a.6. Obtain appropriate releases of information from the prospective CHA Reentry Pilot participant.

**After recommending a program participant to CHA as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate:**

2a.7. Inform the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Reentry Committee each time a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate is identified for purposes of Pilot monitoring and evaluation. Keep the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless up to date on the progress of the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate’s application for housing.

2a.8. Inform the designated CHA staff person each time you identify a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

2a.9. Assist CHA Reentry Pilot participants in accurately representing themselves to CHA during intake interviews and denial processes (if applicable).

**Once a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate is approved by CHA as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant:**

2a.10. Provide follow-up services for a period of two years, including:

- Weekly contacts for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, monthly contacts
- Monthly in-home visits for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, quarterly in-home visits
- Any drug testing that you deem clinically necessary
- Any additional meetings, contacts or home visits that you determine to be clinically necessary

2a.11. Maintain open lines of communication with CHA Reentry Pilot participants. Respond in a timely manner to any request for services or assistance from one of the CHA Reentry Pilot participants.

2a.12. Conduct drug testing on CHA Reentry Pilot candidates and participants when clinically necessary. Include the request and observations of the landlord or property manager when determining whether drug testing is clinically necessary.

2a.13. Inform CHA of any changes in a CHA Reentry Pilot participant’s engagement with you that might signal to you that the individual is no longer an appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot candidate or participant.

**2b. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT SERVICE PROVIDERS IN CASES OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION**

This section describes the responsibilities of CHA Reentry Pilot service providers who have identified a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate who wishes to reunify, or are providing follow-up services to CHA Reentry Pilot participants who have already reunified with one of the eligible family members living in a CHA Public Housing or HCV program.

In addition to complying with general CHA Reentry Pilot service provider responsibilities (Section 2a), you must also complete the following in cases of individuals who wish to reunify with family members:

2b.1. Confirm that the individual is related to a member of the potential receiving CHA household in one of the following ways: spouse parent, grandparent, sibling, or adult child. At this time these are the only familial relationships eligible under the CHA Reentry Pilot.

2b.2. Work closely with the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate to confirm that the potential receiving household is conducive to the continued success of the individual in their reentry process.

**2c. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT SERVICE PROVIDERS IN CASES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THEIR OWN CHA UNIT OR HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER**

This section describes the responsibilities of CHA Reentry Pilot service providers who have identified a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate who is currently on a CHA Public Housing or HCV waitlist, or are providing
follow-up services to CHA Reentry Pilot participants who have already been housed in their own CHA Public Housing or HCV unit.

In addition to complying with general CHA Reentry Pilot service provider responsibilities (Section 2a) you must also complete the following in cases of individuals who wish to obtain their own unit:

2c.1. Maintain regular contact with the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate until they are called by CHA for an intake interview.

2c.2. If a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate is waiting to be housed by CHA but fails to uphold standards that show they have turned their lives around, revoke that individual’s candidacy for the CHA Reentry Pilot. See ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANT SUITABILITY AS A CHA REENTRY PILOT CANDIDATE pp. 17-18

Section 3: CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY (CHA)

3a. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA

Since 2012, CHA has engaged with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Reentry Committee in crafting this CHA Reentry Pilot, which will allow CHA to explore a mechanism whereby returning citizens who have turned their lives around may be housed in CHA housing. In order for the CHA Reentry Pilot to be successful, CHA must work closely with all entities involved and must complete the following responsibilities.

Before implementing the CHA Reentry Pilot:

3a.1. Obtain approval from the CHA Board of Commissioners, and perform all other administrative duties necessary to initiate, administer, amend and evaluate the CHA Reentry Pilot.

3a.2. Train CHA landlords and property managers in the proper handling of applications for housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot. They must be trained to weigh an individual’s status as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate above all other information. They must be instructed to accept a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate’s application, barring other extreme circumstances of which they are aware.

During the period of the CHA Reentry Pilot:

3a.3. Designate a primary point person with whom CHA Reentry Pilot service providers may communicate in correspondence with CHA regarding the CHA Reentry Pilot. Establish a succession plan should that contact be reassigned or leave so that there is no gap in communication or continuity.

3a.4. Receive applications for housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot from the CHA Reentry Pilot service providers. Forward these applications to the relevant CHA property managers and HCV landlords and ensure that the receiving property managers or HCV landlords are fully trained in how to handle these applications. The property managers and HCV landlords should be instructed to heavily weigh the individual’s status as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate against other factors, and that they should accept the individual barring extreme circumstances.
3a.5. Consider each recommendation from a CHA Reentry Pilot service provider on a case-by-case basis. Waive criminal background restrictions except for the mandatory HUD restrictions and murder, attempted murder, fraud and terrorism convictions for all CHA Reentry Pilot candidates who you deem otherwise appropriate candidates for housing in CHA.

3a.6. Before accepting or denying a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant, confer with landlords, property managers, and any other appropriate entities as to the acceptability of the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant based upon their previous conduct in CHA housing or under the HCV program.

3a.7. Provide a written, detailed explanation of any denial of a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate to the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate and CHA Reentry Pilot service provider.

3a.8. Participate in a denial hearing that includes a member of the CCH Reentry Committee, the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate, service provider, and receiving household.

3a.9. Maintain open lines of communication with CHA Reentry Pilot service providers.

3a.10. Follow the ACOP and Administrative Plan or other approved Tenant Selection Plan for guidance on drug testing policies.

3a.11. After 1 year of the CHA Reentry Pilot’s implementation, re-open discussions about the issue of non-eligibility of individuals with murder and attempted murder convictions for the CHA Reentry Pilot. Obtain additional CHA Board of Commissioners approval for any adjustments agreed upon.

3a.12. Have the CHA CEO, COO, and any other appropriate CHA staff participate in quarterly meetings with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Reentry Committee for the purposes of monitoring and evaluating the CHA Reentry Pilot.

After the completion of the CHA Reentry Pilot, or after the CHA Reentry Pilot has been running for 4 years:

3a.13. Upon completion of the first 4 years of the CHA Reentry Pilot, meet with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to explore further programming within CHA that might be instituted to better serve returning citizens.

3b. CHA RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASES INVOLVING HCV

This section outlines CHA’s responsibilities in working with CHA Reentry Pilot participants who are housed under a new or existing Housing Choice Voucher. In addition to general responsibilities (Section 3a), CHA must, in all cases:

3b.1. Obtain a written agreement from each potential participating HCV landlord.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


3b.2. Maintain open lines of communication between participating HCV landlords and the designated CHA staff. If necessary, communicate any concerns identified by a landlord to the relevant CHA Reentry Pilot service provider.

**In cases of family reunification:**

3b.3. Allow a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate to seek reunification with the following types of family members: spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, and adult child.

3b.4. Allow a participating CHA Reentry Pilot HCV household to accept a CHA Reentry Pilot participant even if the addition of this participant causes the household to exceed the CHA occupancy standards.

3b.5. Allow a participating CHA Reentry Pilot HCV household to follow existing HCV policy which allows a household to choose a larger unit to accommodate the addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant. Participating HCV households will not receive a larger subsidy to accommodate the CHA Reentry Pilot participant.

**3c. CHA RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASES INVOLVING PUBLIC HOUSING**

This section outlines CHA’s responsibilities in working with CHA Reentry Pilot participants who are housed in a new or existing CHA Public Housing unit. In addition to general responsibilities (Section 3a), CHA must, **in all cases:**

3c.1. Allow a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate to seek reunification with the following types of family members: spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, and adult child.

3c.2. Maintain open lines of communication between participating CHA property managers and the designated CHA staff. If necessary, communicate any concerns identified by the CHA property manager to the relevant CHA Reentry Pilot service provider.

**In cases of family reunification:**

3c.3. Allow a participating CHA Reentry Pilot receiving household to accept a CHA Reentry Pilot participant even if the addition of this participant causes the household to exceed the CHA occupancy standards.

**Section 4: CHA REENTRY PILOT RECEIVING HOUSEHOLDS**

This section applies to households currently residing in CHA Public Housing or HCV programs who wish to participate in the CHA Reentry Pilot by accepting a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate into their households.

4.1. No more than one CHA Reentry Pilot participant may reside in a receiving household at any time.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

4.2. Note that your existing lease will not be altered in any way by your agreement to participate as a receiving household in the CHA Reentry Pilot. Rather, a CHA Reentry Pilot participant will be added to your household via a conditional tenancy agreement that lasts for 2 years and is renewable for an additional 2 years. Following the 4 year Pilot period, you have the option to permanently add the CHA Reentry Pilot participant to your existing lease.

4.3. Though the addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant will not alter your existing lease, you are responsible for that individual to the same degree as for the other members of your household. The individual is required to adhere to CHA policy. In the case of a policy infraction the same channels will be made available to you to remove a CHA Reentry Pilot participant from your household if necessary.

4.4. CHA will have the ultimate say in approving a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate for housing as a CHA Reentry Pilot participant. However, CHA will weigh the individual’s status as a CHA Reentry Pilot candidate above any other factors. They will admit the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate barring extreme circumstances.

**4a. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT RECEIVING HOUSEHOLDS**

CHA Reentry Pilot receiving households are uniquely positioned to offer a stable home to a CHA Reentry Pilot participant where such an offer would have violated the household’s lease in the past, or would have been impossible due to CHA criminal background policies. It is thus crucial that CHA Reentry Pilot receiving households complete the following responsibilities.

**Before agreeing to house a CHA Reentry Pilot participant**

4a.1. Prospective CHA Reentry Pilot receiving households must be current on their rent and in good standing on their lease, including complying with CHA work requirements.

4a.2. One member of the household must be related to the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate in one of the following ways: spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, and adult child.

4a.3. CHA will not provide a larger HCV subsidy or larger Public Housing unit in order to accommodate the addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant.

**After agreeing to house a CHA Reentry Pilot participant**

4a.4. The addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant to your household can only occur if CHA and your landlord or property manager agrees. If necessary, participate in any intake or denial hearing required.

**While housing a CHA Reentry Pilot participant**

4a.5. Continue to be compliant with your lease. Though the CHA Reentry Pilot participant is not on your lease, but is rather added by a conditional tenancy agreement, you are responsible for the actions of this individual. They are held to the same standards as all members of the household. Any violation
of CHA rules should be handled via existing channels, including the necessity of removing the individual CHA Reentry Pilot participant from your household in order to maintain housing under CHA.

4a.6. You are allowed to exceed the maximum occupancy standards required by CHA.

4a.7. Maintain open communication with the CHA Reentry Pilot service provider working with the CHA Reentry Pilot participant. If you are in need of any assistance regarding the CHA Reentry Pilot participant, communicate directly and immediately with the appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot service provider.

4a.8. Immediately inform the relevant CHA Reentry Pilot service provider of any behaviors on the part of the CHA Reentry Pilot participant that may indicate that they are in need of assistance in order to comply with their conditional tenancy agreement.

4a.9. Allow a staff person from the appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot service provider to visit your home on a quarterly basis for a period of 2 years.

4a.10. Allow a Family Works staff from CHA to visit your home on a monthly basis. You are not required to participate in Family Works services.

4a.11. CHA Reentry Pilot participant must comply with follow-up services for a period of 2 years while they are housed in your home. Support the CHA Reentry Pilot participant in completing all services:

- Weekly contacts from the reentry service provider for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, monthly contacts
- Monthly in-home visits from the reentry service provider for the first 90 days of participation in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, quarterly in-home visits
- Monthly in-home visits from a CHA FamilyWorks representative
- Quarterly home visits to the CHA Reentry Pilot participant from their service provider
- Any additional meetings, contacts or home visits that the CHA Reentry Pilot service provider determines to be clinically necessary

4a.12. HCV landlords (where applicable) and Public Housing property managers (where applicable) may communicate with the appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot service provider regarding their observations about drug testing being clinically necessary for the CHA Reentry Pilot participant.

**4b. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT RECEIVING HCV HOUSEHOLDS**

This section applies to receiving households who are housed under a Housing Choice Voucher and must be completed in addition to completion of general responsibilities of receiving households. You may move to a larger unit in order to accommodate the addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant, However:

4b.1. You must remain compliant with your existing lease including lease end date.
It's not just the door of employment. It's the door of housing that's been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

4b.2. You may exceed existing CHA occupancy standards

4b.3. You will not receive a larger subsidy from CHA in order to move to a larger unit.

4b.4. Your household may not exceed 40% of its income towards rent.

Section 5: RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA REENTRY PILOT HCV LANDLORDS

It is expected that CHA Reentry Pilot participants conduct themselves according to the same standards as all HCV tenants. As a landlord agreeing to allow the addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant to one of your units, you will be afforded direct communication with one of 3 CHA Reentry Pilot service providers (St. Leonard’s Ministries, Safer Foundation, or Lutheran Social Services of Illinois), as well as additional communication with CHA via CHA’s staff person in charge of administering the CHA Reentry Pilot. You may utilize these lines of communication as necessary.

5.1 Your renter under the HCV program who wishes to participate as a receiving household under the CHA Reentry Pilot must continue to comply with their lease, including the lease end date.

5.2. The CHA Reentry Pilot participant will be added to a household under a conditional tenancy agreement. The current lease that you hold with your HCV renter will not be affected in any way.

5.3. The addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant may mean that the household will exceed CHA’s occupancy standards.

5.4. The CHA Reentry Pilot participant will receive regular follow-up services for a period of two years. These follow-up services will not in any way interfere with your existing lease agreement with your HCV household, nor will they present a nuisance to any of your other tenants. The follow-up services are:

- Weekly contacts from the reentry service provider for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, monthly contacts
- Monthly in-home visits from the service provider for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, quarterly in-home visits
- Monthly in-home visits from a CHA FamilyWorks representative
- Any additional meetings, contacts or home visits that the CHA Reentry Pilot service provider determines to be clinically necessary

5.5 You may refuse to participate in the CHA Reentry Pilot.

You also have the following responsibilities related to the CHA Reentry Pilot:

5.6. Attend any trainings or meetings provided by CHA regarding the CHA Reentry Pilot.

5.7. Maintain current knowledge of how the CHA Reentry Pilot works.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


5.8. During intake, inform the appropriate CHA staffperson of any prior history the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate might have in your property that would warrant them being excluded from the CHA Reentry Pilot. However, weigh the recommendation of a CHA Reentry Pilot service provider above all other factors.

5.9. Sign an agreement that states your consent to have an existing HCV household participate in the CHA Reentry Pilot.

5.10. Communicate with the appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot service provider regarding any change in behavior in your existing household or in the CHA Reentry Pilot participant that may indicate a need for services and/or drug testing.

5.11. Continue to communicate with CHA regarding any issues that affect your existing lease with an HCV tenant.

**Section 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHA PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGERS**

6.1. Consider each recommendation from a CHA Reentry Pilot service provider on a case-by-case basis.

6.2. Consider the recommendation of a CHA Reentry Pilot service provider above all other factors that you weigh in making your determination.

6.3. Waive criminal background restrictions except for the mandatory HUD restrictions and murder, attempted murder, and terrorism convictions for all CHA Reentry Pilot candidates who you deem otherwise appropriate candidates for housing in CHA.

6.4. It is expected that CHA Reentry Pilot participants conduct themselves according to the same standards as all Public Housing tenants. As a CHA Property Manager who will have a CHA Reentry Pilot participant residing in one of the properties under your purview, you will be afforded direct communication with one of 3 CHA Reentry Pilot service providers (St. Leonard’s Ministries, Safer Foundation, or Lutheran Social Services of Illinois), as well as additional communication with CHA via CHA’s staff person in charge of administering the CHA Reentry Pilot. You may utilize these lines of communication as necessary.

6.5. Public Housing tenants who wish to participate as receiving households under the CHA Reentry Pilot must continue to comply with their leases, including the lease end dates.

6.6. The CHA Reentry Pilot participant will be added to a household under a conditional tenancy agreement. The current lease held by the CHA Reentry Pilot receiving family will not be affected in any way.
6.7. The addition of a CHA Reentry Pilot participant may mean that the household will exceed CHA’s occupancy standards.

6.8. The CHA Reentry Pilot participant will receive regular follow-up services for a period of two years. These follow-up services will not in any way interfere with an existing Public Housing lease agreement of a receiving family, nor will they present a nuisance to any other Public Housing residents residing in CHA Public Housing. These follow-up services are:

- Weekly contacts from the reentry service provider for the first 90 days in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, monthly contacts
- Monthly in-home visits from the service provider for the first 90 days of participation in the CHA Reentry Pilot; after 90 days, quarterly in-home visits
- Monthly in-home visits from a CHA FamilyWorks representative
- Any additional meetings, contacts or home visits that the CHA Reentry Pilot service provider determines to be clinically necessary

You also have the following responsibilities related to the CHA Reentry Pilot:

6.9. Attend any trainings or meetings provided by CHA regarding the CHA Reentry Pilot.

6.10. Maintain current working knowledge of how the CHA Reentry Pilot works.

6.11 During intake, inform the appropriate CHA staffperson of any prior history the CHA Reentry Pilot candidate might have in your property that would warrant them being excluded from the CHA Reentry Pilot.

6.12. Communicate with the appropriate CHA Reentry Pilot service provider regarding any change in behavior in your existing household or in the CHA Reentry Pilot participant that may indicate a need for services and/or drug testing.

6.13. Continue to communicate with CHA regarding any issues that affect your existing lease with a Public Housing household.

Section 7: RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS REENTRY COMMITTEE

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Reentry Committee will offer continued support and guidance to CHA and CHA Reentry Pilot providers as they implement and run the CHA Reentry Pilot. CCH is pleased to see CHA and the Emanuel Administration move forward on this vitally important measure that will increase community stability and safety.

7.1 The CCH Reentry Committee is not involved in the recommending of CHA Reentry Pilot candidates, in approving CHA Reentry Pilot candidates as CHA Reentry Pilot participants, in assisting landlords or property managers, or in providing follow-up services to CHA Reentry Pilot participants or their families.
When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.


The main role of the CCH Reentry Committee will be in monitoring and evaluating the Pilot. As such, the CCH Reentry Committee assumes the following responsibilities:

7.2 Convene quarterly meetings between the CCH Reentry Committee, CHA CEO, CHA COO, other appropriate CHA staff, and a member of the Chicago Mayor’s staff for the purposes of discussing the progress of the CHA Reentry Pilot.

7.3 Make any changes to the CHA Reentry Pilot proposal that arise out of the quarterly meetings between CHA and the CCH Reentry Committee.

7.4. Plan and execute a formal evaluation of the CHA Reentry Pilot, including procuring funding for the evaluation.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE REENTRY PILOT

- The CHA Reentry Pilot will support the CHA Plan Forward (CHA, 2013) by establishing a new collaboration between CHA and key reentry service providers; organizations with excellent reputations that have over 100 years combined experience serving ex-offenders.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

Goal 3 of the CHA Plan Forward emphasizes the importance of services and commits CHA to provide more targeted services to its residents in the areas of jobs and education. CHA Reentry Pilot service providers will provide these services to Pilot participants at no cost to CHA.

- **The CHA Reentry Pilot will align CHA with local and national initiatives to decrease reentry barriers for ex-offenders, including Mayor Emanuel’s Plan 2.0 to End Homelessness (See Appendix 2) and HUD Secretary Donovan’s call for PHAs to unite returning citizens with their families living in federally subsidized housing (Appendix 1).**

In August 2012, Mayor Emanuel released Chicago’s Plan 2.0 to end homelessness. The Plan specifically identifies ex-offenders as a target population through multiple strategic long-term and ongoing action items (See Appendix 2). One of these action items calls upon CHA:

“Work with the CHA to develop new ways of serving persons with criminal backgrounds, including through the Property Rental Assistance program.” (Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012. P. 21.)

In 2011, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan released two memos to all PHAs, stating that HUD “encourages you to allow ex-offenders to rejoin their families in the Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs, when appropriate.” (Donovan, 2011) Secretary Donovan specifically urges PHAs to consider an individual ex-offender’s evidence of rehabilitation in making their decision, which is the core of the CHA Reentry Pilot.

- **The CHA Reentry Pilot has the potential to create new financial and other opportunities by establishing CHA as an innovator in the area of reentry. Foundations are looking to fund work on this issue.**

- **The CHA Reentry Pilot will reduce recidivism and make CHA’s residences, and Chicago communities on the whole, safer.**

Stable housing is the building block of individual lives and of whole communities. The CHA Reentry Pilot will give a small number of highly qualified, deserving and supported returning citizens an opportunity to avoid homelessness and recidivism by accessing housing through CHA.

The likelihood of recidivism is significantly decreased when a returning citizen has stable housing. Unfortunately, 75% of West and South Side parolees surveyed by CCH in 2012 indicated that they are homeless or unstably housed. See Appendix 4.

Service provider involvement greatly decreases recidivism. For example, the recidivism rate among all returning citizens in Illinois is 50%; among participants at St. Leonard’s Ministries, that rate is reduced to 23%. CHA Reentry Pilot participants will be the best participants in these programs, and the recidivism rate among these participants is likely to be none (see Potential Challenges and Concerns, below).
When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


• The CHA Reentry Pilot will fulfill the hopes of 125 endorsing organizations and elected officials, including 14 Chicago Aldermen as of June 21, 2013.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless is a non-profit agency with very high visibility in Chicago. Other organizations, the media, and the public look to us to set popular opinion on matters concerning homelessness in the City.

Several Chicago Aldermen represent wards that have both Public Housing developments and among the highest numbers of returning citizens to their ward annually (See Appendix 3). These Aldermen have signed on to endorse the Pilot program because they know that with housing opportunities and greater support, ex-offenders returning to their wards can become productive community members and good neighbors.

Aldermen that represent areas of Chicago that CHA has designated “Opportunity Areas” have also signed on in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot.

Reentry Pilot endorsers are updated regularly on the progress of the Pilot. A number of the endorsers are organizations that have traditionally seen CHA as unresponsive to community needs. We hope that the CHA Reentry Pilot will improve their relationship with CHA and demonstrate to them that CHA is an agency that will collaborate with community groups on important issues.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

• Overcoming negative perceptions of the uninformed public.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless will partner with CHA in mitigating the risk of public resistance to the CHA Reentry Pilot. Among the measures CCH is willing to undertake: press conferences and cultivating positive media, highlighting reentry success stories; using our relationships in City Hall and in the Illinois Legislature to hold town hall meetings on the CHA Reentry Pilot; using our endorsers network of over 100 community organizations to educate the public on the CHA Reentry Pilot.

• Gaining support from City Hall.

The CHA Reentry Pilot has the support of Mayor Emanuel as well as substantial Aldermanic support. Several Aldermen have expressed their commitment to passing resolutions and/or ordinances that will support the CHA Reentry Pilot and its cause of reducing reentry barriers to returning citizens.

• Ensuring the success of CHA Reentry Pilot participants.

CHA Reentry Pilot participants are exceptionally qualified individuals who enjoy immense support from reentry service providers. The likelihood of their non-completion of the CHA Reentry Pilot is mitigated by continued wraparound services provided by reentry service providers after Reentry Certificate awardees
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

are placed in CHA housing, and by the fact that these individuals have stellar track records of success in their reentry efforts as determined by the reentry service providers.

Reentry Certificate awardees will make outstanding CHA tenants. The three Pilot reentry service providers, who are among the most respected and well known in the region, are staking their reputations on these individuals.

**PROFILES OF PARTICIPATING REENTRY SERVICE PROVIDERS**
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


Three key Chicago reentry service providers have come together to develop this certificate program. **St. Leonard’s Ministries, Safer Foundation and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois** together have over 100 years of experience working with the ex-offender population.

These agencies provide intensive rehabilitation and supportive services to individuals reentering society after incarceration or after a felony conviction. Their programs focus on education and vocational training, mental health services, job skills, life skills, housing counseling and family reunification. Participation in a reentry program can reduce an individual’s likelihood of recidivism by 30%. Pilot reentry providers believe that the recidivism likelihood will be reduced to virtually zero for Reentry Certificate holders, as they are the most outstanding participants in their programs.

All three reentry service providers agree that obtaining housing is one of the most crucial elements to their participants being able to reenter successfully post-program completion. This is why they have put many hours into crafting this Pilot, and have agreed to provide at minimum one year of follow-up services to CHA Reentry Pilot participants.

**ST. LEONARD’S MINISTRIES**

Founded in 1954, St. Leonard’s Ministries provides comprehensive residential, case management, and employment services for those released from prison without resources needed to rebuild their lives. Recidivism rates for former residents are impressive — only 23%, while the Illinois state average exceeds 50%.

Believing individuals want to lead productive and whole lives, St. Leonard’s Ministries provides a setting in which men and women recently released from prison can achieve such a life.

**SERVICES:**

- Three housing programs serving approximately 250 participants each year
- The Michael Barlow Center, an educational and vocational center, serving over 300 participants each year
  - Employment preparation programs
  - Education (Literacy, tutoring, GED, High School Diploma, College courses), vocational training
  - Housing Placement Assistance (transitional and permanent)
  - Case management
  - Life Skills Programs
  - Spiritual Development
  - Medical health assessment and treatment
  - Mental health assessment and treatment
  - Individual and group psychological counseling and group activities
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Addiction Counseling & Relapse Prevention
- Connections to Community Supportive Services
- Education & Employment Services
- Social & Recreational Opportunities
- Language skills
- Advocacy training
- Parenting skills
- Workshops on Self Image, Self Esteem, Relationships, & Stress Management
- Support & Companionship through Mentoring Program
- Open Invitation for Ongoing Counseling & Support
- Service Work & Volunteer Opportunities

SAFER FOUNDATION

For more than 40 years, Safer Foundation's mission has focused on reducing recidivism through a full spectrum of services by supporting the efforts of people with criminal records to become employed, law-abiding members of the community.

- Two adult transition centers serving approximately 1,300 clients per year.
  - Orientation, Intake, and Retention
  - Job Readiness
  - Supportive Services
  - Retention Services
  - Market Cultivation
  - Green Jobs Programs
  - PACE Institute
  - Youth Education Program
  - Project Safer Youth
  - Transition Centers
  - Case Management/ Assessments
  - Employment Services/Job Readiness/Retention
  - Cognitive-Based Programming
  - Basic Skills, GED
  - Substance Abuse Treatment
  - Mental Health Counseling/ Evaluations
  - Community Service
  - Life Skills
  - Family Support
  - Parenting Skills
  - Off-Site Educational Programs
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


- Faith-Based & Community-Based Initiative
- Housing Initiative
- Addiction prevention and education
- Anger management counseling
- Family-inclusive case management
- Job-appropriate clothing and transportation
- Community-based mentoring and legal assistance

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

Responding to the Gospel, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois brings healing, justice and wholeness to people and communities.

- Case management
- Anger management
- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Connections to local resources: Food pantries, job training, vocational/employment training programs, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, housing referrals
- Family Reunification Planning: 1 year to six months before a woman’s release from prisons, LSSI begins working with the individual and her family to help facilitate a smooth transition back into her family, community and society. This done through conferences with family and the woman to develop a family reunification plan.
- Relatives As Parents Program (RAAP)-provided for caregivers while children are visiting their moms at Decatur and Logan prisons which is a "circle of support" that provides peer to peer support, holistic care, resources are provide during the sessions as well.
- Visits to Moms Program: Free transportation to children whose mothers are incarcerated. Free bus transportation is available to Decatur, Logan and Greenville correctional centers.
- Family Services: Family Services are available for women returning from prison to Chicago. Children's groups, family events, caregiver support, as well as family reunification services are available to qualified families at no cost.

REENTRY SUCCESS STORIES
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

LATRICE JOHNSON

Latrice Johnson
June 6, 2013

My name is Latrice Johnson and I am an alumna of St. Leonard’s Ministries/ Grace House. St. Leonard’s Ministries is a program designed to assist with the entry of men back into society, and Grace House is the sister Program that provides entry for women. I was a resident of Grace House in 2005, and lived at Grace House for 5 months. Upon completing the program here at Grace House in March of 2006, I then moved into Sanctuary Place where I resided for 6yrs.

While living at Grace House I was given the chance to attend High School at the Michael Barlow Center, and as of May 6, 2006 I received my High School Diploma. Grace House has been so good to me and has allowed me to be good to myself as well. Grace House has helped to build my self-esteem, helped with schooling and training, as well as jobs in the past and the present. I’m currently employed at Grace House and have been since 2008.

Since being released in 2005 I haven’t been in any kind of trouble with the law and have been a productive part of society. Yet I’m still not able to obtain a lot of housing opportunities simply because I have a background. When is enough going to be enough? I’ve done the time, and haven’t been in any kind of trouble since being let out over 9 years ago. I’ve got excellent credit thanks to the help of different programs at Grace House. We learned the importance of finding out if you owe for utilities, school loans, etc. to take care of these things and I have.

I have a section 8 CHA number and I’m grateful, but at the same time it’s so hard whether you’re trying to get low income housing, or market rent housing with a background. This isn’t only for me, but for others that are like me who have been in jail and or prison who have turned their lives around and now want to better them by having stable housing. I’d like to pay it forward and help others as well. This one of my biggest goals for now, but believe me it’s not over. I’ve also been taught that when you complete the goals that you’ve set then it’s time to set new goals and accomplish them.

Thank you.
Latrice

MAURICE HAYES
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Maurice Hayes. I am a former resident of St. Leonard’s house and a Current resident of St. Andrew’s Court through St. Leonard’s Ministries. I was released from the Illinois Department of Corrections on February 2, 2012 after serving a continuous term of 17.5 years. Needless to say, freedom has never been as freeing!

The journey that led to my incarceration is not unlike many of the men and women who find themself in or near prison, the place that I recently called home.

In prison, my transformation began. There, the art of thinking introduced itself to me and it was at that time I vowed not to return to my children and my community the same as I left. I educated myself. I took advantage of the education system IDOC provided by receiving a degree in business as well as electronic technology. I wrote and published 4 books. I started a company entitled SPIT With a Purpose (SPIT being an acronym for Social Problems Intellectually Translated). I found PURPOSE in prison, I found a reason to exist and with this new mentality I began preparing myself for the inevitable freedom that awaited me. In a place where society told me I would fail and become the status quo, I succeeded.

One of the biggest worries I stressed about as my released date approached was: where will I go? My relatives weren’t in a position to lend support on the scale that I needed so the fear of my parole being violated before my release for lack of a stable address caused many sleepless nights.

But thank GOD for St. Leonard’s. I don’t know where I would be had it not been for the support of St. Leonard’s House. One of the fundamental things that anyone needs is housing. Leaving prison to an uncertain place can cause a person to once again go into survival mode. This reality forces a person who otherwise would work his or her plan, to return to what they know. St. Leonard’s was pivotal in preventing that thought from ever arising for me. Now 15 months into my freedom I am in managerial training at my job which is at Epic Burger on Clark and Kinzie. I’ve also told my story for many colleges but, the most rewarding of all this was when I had the opportunity to speak to a bunch of young men who already found themselves institutionalized by DCFS.

So many people simply need help. It’s not a hand out, it’s help. I am one of those individuals like many other men and women who fell victim to bad decision making. I grew from the choices I made and learned from those all important lessons of life. I can now live modestly because I now realize that I am a HAVE even if I HAVE-NOT. My life is mine and I choose to live it one day, one triumph, one progressive step at a time.

Sincerely,
Maurice Hayes

CHARLES AUSTIN
June 18, 2013

My name is Charles Austin; I am a former resident/house manager of Ashunti R.M.S. (Adom House). I am also a formerly homeless, formerly incarcerated and formerly addicted person. Ashunti’s program is designed to assist persons transitioning from any of these life-hindering barriers to being productive members of our society, using a holistic as well as a recovery and supportive service approach.

After losing my job in 2006 due to the company closing, I found myself homeless. Finding employment has been difficult due a to twenty year-old drug conviction and a very nasty divorce with multiple arrest and convictions.

Having overcome all this to now be a twice Licensed and Ordained Minister, a founding member of the Reentry Committee at CCH, a member of their Speakers Bureau. Having spoken to thousands on homelessness and reentry issues. Speaking at universities such as Norte Dame, Loyola, DePaul, UIC, University of Chicago, multiple CPS schools, building core teams and teaching students to set up and complete meetings with elected officials and to lobby in our state capital.

I have been crime and drug-free for ten plus years and yet still face these extended sentences under the guise of housing and employment discrimination solely based on past criminal convictions. There are many more like me all we need is opportunity to continue and build upon the strong foundation we have already started.

In closing if the Chief Judge of the second largest criminal court in America can deem me as rehabilitated and issue me a Certificate of Good Conduct, no employer, landlord or housing authority should deny me access.

Sincerely,
Charles Austin
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”

1. **Making individual determinations** about an applicant’s eligibility and having different criteria for different crimes, can identify those who are qualified for public housing without compromising public safety.
   - Delaware State Housing Authority
     - Uses a Criminal Activity Matrix to determine admission for people with criminal backgrounds, which outlines different ineligibility periods for different types of convictions
       - For example, a Class F, nonviolent conviction has a 1 year ineligibility period, while a Class B conviction has a 2 year ineligibility period.
     - Considers a range of factors in making admission decisions, including the level of violence, length of time since the conviction, and rehabilitation efforts

2. **Collaboration with the City, Department of Corrections, and reentry service providers** helps to ensure successful reentry outcomes.
   - Burlington Housing Authority (Vermont)
     - The Offender Re-Entry Housing Program provides a set-aside of Housing Choice Vouchers for people with criminal records.
     - Burlington Housing Authority hired an Offender Re-Entry Housing Specialist. This person collaborates with the Parole Officer, the landlord, and treatment providers to ensure successful reentry into the community.
     - Organized a Regional Advisory Group, comprised of municipal officials, law enforcement professionals, corrections personnel, and service providers, to develop a plan to provide housing for people returning to the community.

3. **Allowing an applicant with a criminal record to return to his or her family** creates a support network for people at a vulnerable time and maximizes critical resources.
   - The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)
     - Their Pilot Re-Entry Program “is designed to allow ex-offenders leaving the criminal justice system to reunite with their families” who are receiving Housing Choice Vouchers (p. 3-16)
     - HACLA may waive the criminal background check requirements where permitted by HUD to establish admission criteria
     - Ex-offenders are required to participate in reentry supportive services provided by community-based organizations and/or public agencies

4. **Minimizing periods of ineligibility** for applicants with criminal records can reduce recidivism by getting people into housing quicker.
   - Seattle Housing Authority
     - Only has a 12 month period of ineligibility for any applicant or family member that has been convicted and incarcerated for a Class A felony
   - Housing Authority of Portland in Oregon
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

- Uses a Criminal History Guidelines Matrix, which has different standards and procedures for different kinds of convictions
  - For instance, for a Category 1 crime, the applicant will be admitted to housing. For a Category 2 crime, the applicant will be asked to explain the criminal record for further consideration.

5. Providing supportive services to participants with criminal records, with the assistance of the PHA, can ensure successful reentry into the community.

- Housing Authority of Baltimore City
  - Set aside 200 Housing Choice Vouchers for people with criminal records participating in the Ex-Offender Program, which links permanent housing with supportive services.
  - A service provider offers supportive services for two years, including housing search assistance, substance abuse treatment, and case management services

- Burlington Housing Authority (Vermont)
  - The reentry program is located in the Resident Services Department, which enables the program to receive Resident Services funding
  - The housing authority participates in the provision of supportive services through the creation of a Housing Specialist position

- Move to Work grants can provide funding for supportive services

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Appendix 1 contains two letters from Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun Donovan. In these letters the Secretary encourages Public Housing Authorities to implement policies that reunite families by allowing ex-offenders to be housed in HCV and Public Housing. The CHA Reentry Pilot responds to this call.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2 contains excerpts from the City of Chicago Plan 2.0 to end homelessness. These excerpts show that the city has identified the reentry population as a target population for the Plan. They state that as part of the plan, the City will explore ways to house ex-offenders through CHA.
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3 shows the relationship between reentry and public housing by overlaying information about the location of mixed-income and family public housing developments and the number of returning citizens coming back to different areas of Chicago each year. Many Wards that have public housing developments also experience a high number of returning citizens coming back to the area each year.
“It's not just the door of employment. It's the door of housing that's been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

APPENDIX 4

Results from a Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (2012) housing survey of West- and Southside IDOC Parolees. Significant findings show that most parolees returning to Chicago from prison are homeless or unstably housed, and a portion of them would be eligible for HCV and Public Housing under the CHA Reentry Pilot.

CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS
REENTRY COMMITTEE

SECTION 8 HOUSING SURVEY for INDIVIDUALS WITH CRIMINAL BACKGROUNDS

155 surveys were collected from West- and Southside parolees attending the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Summit of Hope events in September and November 2012.

The intent of this survey is to collect information on returning citizens and their housing statuses upon release, and to analyze the potential impact of the Reentry Pilot by finding out how many of these parolees are either on a Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) housing waitlist or have family living in CHA housing.

SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 155 parolees surveyed:

• 86% are concerned about obtaining housing or different housing (134 out of 155)
• 75% are homeless or unstably housed (117 out of 155)
• 25% have permanent housing (39 out of 155)
• 61% fear violating their parole because they do not have a permanent address (95 out of 155)

• 8% are on the CHA HCV waitlist (12 out of 155)
• 18% are former CHA tenants (29 out of 155)
• 20% have a family member living in CHA housing that they would live with if they could (31 out of 155).

TOTAL SURVEYS COLLECTED = 155

1. Is obtaining housing/obtaining different housing currently a concern of yours?
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


- YES = 134
- NO = 20

2. What is your current housing situation?
   - MY OWN PLACE = 19
   - WITH RELATIVES/FRIENDS PERMANENTLY = 20
   - WITH RELATIVES/FRIENDS TEMPORARILY = 63
   - AN INTERIM HOUSING PROGRAM = 22
   - OTHER = 32

3. Have you ever worries about violating your parole because you don’t have a stable address?
   - YES = 95
   - NO = 60

4. Are you on the Waitlist in Chicago for Section 8?
   - YES = 9
   - NO = 145

5. Have you ever had an interview with CHA regarding a Section 8 Voucher? If so, what was the result?
   - NO = 35
   - YES, MY APPLICATION WAS ACCEPTED = 9
   - YES, MY APPLICATION WAS DENIED = 2
   - YES, MY APPLICATION WAS DENIED AND I SUCCESSFULLY APPEALED THE DECISION = 1
   - YES, MY APPLICATION AND APPEAL WERE DENIED = 0

6. Have you ever lived in CHA housing?
   - NO = 87
   - PUBLIC HOUSING = 16
   - SECTION 8 = 3

7. Do you have family member with a Section 8 voucher that you would return to live with if you could?
   - YES = 31
   - NO = 124
APPENDIX 5

Appendix 5 outlines research on the connections between housing and reentry. Significant findings show that reentry barriers are highly correlated with homelessness; homelessness and unstable housing conditions contribute to recidivism; providing supportive housing is far less expensive than incarceration; obtaining stable housing significantly lowers an individual’s chance of recidivating.

CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

More Housing Options are Needed for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals to Prevent Recidivism

An Unprecedented Number of People are Exiting from Prison into Homelessness

- The number of people released from prison has increased 350 percent over the last 20 years.¹
- During that same time period, the number of people who are homeless has swelled dramatically, to the current level of up to 850,000 people on any given day.²
- Nationwide, of the approximately 650,000 individuals released from state and federal prisons annually, and seven million individuals released from local jails, an estimated 10 percent are released into homelessness.³
- In Chicago, approximately 1,200 formerly incarcerated individuals are discharged from state prisons to homeless shelters each year because they have no other place to go at the time of their release.⁴
- 48% of people in Chicago emergency shelters reported having a felony conviction.⁵

Homelessness Makes it Difficult to Comply with Parole Conditions and Contributes to the Cycle of Recidivism

- A qualitative study by the Vera Institute of Justice found that people released from prison and jail to parole, who entered homeless shelters in New York City, were seven times more likely to abscond during the first month after release than those who had some form of housing.⁶
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


- City ordinances frequently serve as a prominent tool for criminalizing homelessness: There has been an 11% increase in laws prohibiting loitering and a 7% increase in law prohibiting “camping” in particular public places.7

- Arrest of homeless persons for “lifestyle” offenses such as trespassing frequently lead to felony charges such as burglary, which are more likely to result in a prison sentence.8

- Supportive housing has been documented to drastically reduce criminal justice involvement, reducing jail incarceration rates up to 30% and prison incarceration rates up to 57%.9

It is More Cost Effective to House Someone and Stabilize Their Live, than to Allow them to Cycle through Prison

- In Illinois, it costs approximately 22,000 per year, to incarcerate an adult prisoner, and 60,000 per year, per youth prisoner.10

- By contrast, it cost $15,275 per year on average to provide supportive housing.11

- It cost $65 per bed per day in jail compared to a permanent supportive housing cost on an average of only $30 a day.12

In a Study of 177 Residents of Supportive Housing in Illinois:

- Living in supportive housing decreased the time spent in prison by 100%.13

- Living in supportive housing decreased the cumulative cost of time spent in state prisons with a cost savings of over $215,000 from pre-post supportive housing.14

- Living in supportive housing changed the amount of time spent in county jails by a significant decrease of 86 percent.15

- Living in supportive housing decreased the cumulative cost of time spent in county jails with a cost savings of $27,000.16

End Notes


“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014


(5) http://www.thechicagoalliance.org/research.aspx


“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”

APPENDIX 6—------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix 6 summarizes the current (June 2013) HUD and CHA criminal background policies, and outlines how the CHA Reentry Pilot interacts with those policies.

CURRENT CHA CRIMINAL BACKGROUND POLICY

In 2011, CHA adopted CCH’s recommendation and now considers every applicant with a criminal background individually. Applicants can present mitigating circumstances that demonstrate their rehabilitation, and CHA has discretion in deciding to admit that individual based upon their evidence. In 2012, CHA adopted CCH’s language recommendation in their letter inviting housing applicants for an interview and stating clearly that while applicants must undergo a criminal background check, CHA will consider any mitigating circumstances that applicants present.

HUD’s criminal background policy requires PHAs to exclude ex-offenders in only a few cases.

Mandatory HUD exclusions:
- Evicted from federally-assisted housing in the last 3 years for drug-related criminal activity
- Methamphetamine manufacture, arson or sex offense convictions
- Current drug abuse, or current alcohol abuse that may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents

CHA has placed additional restrictions into its criminal background policy for its HCV and Public Housing programs.

CHA’s additional discretionary restrictions on individuals with criminal records:
• Any household that has engaged in drug-related or violent criminal activity within the past 5 years, including being paroled or released from a facility for violent criminal activity within the past 5 years.

HOW THE CHA REENTRY PILOT WILL AMEND CURRENT PRACTICE

• Utilize the expertise of reentry service providers to identify candidates with who will be successful in the HCV and Public Housing programs.

• Grant ex-offenders who have truly changed their lives new opportunities to access CHA housing, based upon a selective recommendation from an experienced reentry service provider and the approval of CHA.

• Allow ex-offenders who receive a Reentry Certificate from one of the Pilot providers to use the Certificate as evidence of mitigation of prior history during their intake hearing.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

- Allow ex-offenders with a Reentry Certificate to move in to the household of their spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling or adult child with the Certificate used as evidence of mitigation of prior history.

- CHA will allow a CHA Reentry Pilot household to exceed the CHA guidelines, but will not give CHA households a larger subsidy or to move to a larger public housing unit.
APPENDIX 7

Appendix 7 shows the HUD-approved language included in the Housing Authority of Los Angeles’ (HACLA) Administrative Plan. This language explains HACLA’s reentry program, implemented in 2013, which relies upon experienced service providers recommending clients to be housed by HACLA, and emphasizes the importance of family reunification in achieving appropriate public housing opportunities for the Los Angeles ex-offender population.

This language may be used as a model for CHA’s revised Administrative Plan and ACOP language.

Appendix 7 also includes the Memorandum of Understanding between HACLA and the Los Angeles partner reentry service provider.

3.2.1.2.14 Pilot Re-Entry Program
This program is designed to allow ex-offenders leaving the criminal justice system to reunite with their families receiving S8 housing assistance. The assisted family must approve the admission. HACLA may waive criminal background check requirements only for permissible prohibitions where HUD grants the HACLA discretion to establish admission criteria. Ex-offenders will be required to participate in re-entry supportive services provided by community-based organizations and/or public agencies. These organizations and agencies will have been preselected by the HACLA through an RFP process. Program size and parameters are subject to approval by the HACLA Board of Commissioners. HACLA will evaluate the pilot and make changes to the program depending on the outcomes.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND
A NEW WAY OF LIFE
RELATING TO THE
SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER
PILOT RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is hereby made and entered into this _____ day of 2013 by and between the HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES (hereinafter referred to as “HACLA”), and A New Way of Life (hereinafter referred to as “the Contractor”).

GENERAL PROVISIONS

I. PURPOSE
The purpose of this MOU is to define the roles and responsibilities of HACLA and the Contractor with regards to Case Management and Supportive Services for Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Pilot Re-Entry Members and their Participant Families. Case management and supportive services focus on services that will assist the Re-Entry Member to remain stably housed and reintegrate with their Participant Family.

II. SERVICES AND DUTIES

1. HACLA has agreed to waive those background screening admission requirements that are permissible to provide admission for Re-Entry Members to join HCVP Participant Families during this Re-Entry Pilot Program.

2. Consistent with the Re-Entry Program requirements, as fully set forth in the Scope of Work (Exhibit A), the Contractor shall conduct a comprehensive screening of potential Re-Entry Members to determine that they are sound candidates for the Re-Entry Program and capable of complying with HCVP requirements prior to referral to the HACLA.

3. The Contractor will ensure that assistance to 25 participating Re-Entry Members and their Families is provided in a timely and expeditious manner throughout the term of this MOU.

4. HACLA will determine eligibility for the Re-Entry Member in a timely and expeditious manner and maintain all terms of this MOU in accordance with the rules of the HCVP.

III. COMPENSATION

The Contractor agrees to provide the services required, as described in this MOU and the Scope of Work, with no compensation from HACLA.

IV. TERM

This MOU shall commence on June 1, 2013 after all parties have signed the MOU and shall remain in full force and effect until May 31, 2014, at which time it shall expire unless extended by a written instrument executed by both parties.

V. MODIFICATION

Modifications of this MOU shall be made by mutual consent of the parties, by the issuance of a written notification, signed and dated by both parties, prior to any changes being made.

HACLA may grant modifications to this MOU if such modifications:

a. Do not change the Re-Entry Program goals or Scope of Work;

b. Are in the best interest of HACLA and the Contractor with regard to their performance of the services required under this MOU and the Scope of Work; and

c. Are consistent with the regulatory and funding limitations prescribed by HUD.

“It's not just the door of employment. It's the door of housing that's been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”

– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014
VI. TERMINATION

The HACLA and the Contractor reserve the right to cancel this MOU for any reason upon thirty (30) days prior written notice to the other party to this MOU.

VII. SUBCONTRACTING

The Contractor may subcontract supportive services covered by this MOU to a qualified agency(ies) selected by the Contractor. The Contractor shall not permit subcontracted work to be further subcontracted without the prior written approval of HACLA.

VIII. ASSIGNMENT

This MOU or any provision thereof or any right or obligation arising hereunder is not assignable by the Contractor in whole or in part without the prior expressed written consent of HACLA.

IX. NOTICES

Notices provided for in this MOU shall be in writing and shall be addressed and mailed with postage prepaid to the party intended to receive the same, at the following address:

HACLA:

Peter Lynn, Director of Section 8
Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
2600 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90057

Contractor:

Susan Burton, Executive Director
A New Way of Life
P.O. Box 875288
Los Angeles, CA 90087

X. INDEMNIFICATION

HACLA and the Contractor shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless each other, their elected and appointed officers, employees, and agents from and against any and all liability, including but not limited to demands, claims, actions, fees, costs, and expenses (including attorney and expert witness fees), arising from or connected with any acts and/or omissions by either HACLA or the Contractor relating to this MOU.

“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”

XI. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

The Contractor shall perform the services as contained herein as an independent Contractor, not as an employee of HACLA or under HACLA’s supervision or control. This MOU is by and between the Contractor and HACLA, and not intended, and shall not be construed, to create the relationship of agent, servant, employee, partnership, joint venture, or association, between the HACLA and the Contractor.

XII. CONFIDENTIALITY OF REPORTS

The Contractor and any service subcontractor shall keep confidential all HACLA reports, information and data received, prepared or assembled pursuant to performance hereunder. Such information and program data may be made available to relevant Contractor and subcontractor staff for purposes of program planning, reporting and administration, but shall not be made available to any other person, firm, corporation or entity without the prior written consent of HACLA.

XIII. APPROPRIATIONS

The United States of America, through HUD, may in the future place programmatic limitation(s) not presently anticipated. Accordingly, HACLA reserves the right to revise this MOU in order to take into account actions affecting HUD program changes.

XIV. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The Contractor and its service subcontractor(s) shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local law, including requirements of HACLA and other related regulations applicable to this MOU.

XV. HACLA PROGRAM MONITORING

HACLA will monitor the Contractor’s performance under this MOU to ensure mutual program goals are achieved, such as client referrals and provision of supportive services.

XVI. SAFETY STANDARDS AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION

The Contractor, and its service subcontractor(s), shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws governing safety, health, and sanitation. The Contractor shall provide all safeguards, safety devices and protective equipment and take any other needed actions, as its own responsibility, reasonably necessary to protect the life and health of employees on the job and the safety of the public and to protect property in connection with the performance of this MOU.

XVII. SEVERABILITY

In the event that any provision herein contained is held to be invalid, void, or illegal by any court of competent jurisdiction, the same shall be deemed severable from the remainder of this MOU and shall in no way affect, impair or invalidate any other provision contained herein. If any such provision shall be
deemed invalid due to its scope or breadth, such provisions shall be deemed valid to the extent of the scope or breadth permitted by law.

XVIII. INTERPRETATION

No provisions of this MOU are to be interpreted for or against either party because that party or that party's legal representative drafted such provision, but this MOU is to be construed as if drafted by both parties hereto.

XIX. WAIVER

No breach of any provision hereof can be waived unless in writing. Waiver of anyone breach of any provision shall not be deemed to be a waiver of any breach of the same or any other provision hereof.

XX. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This MOU with attachments supercedes any and all other agreements between the parties, and constitutes the entire understanding and agreement of the parties. This MOU includes the following attachments:

"Exhibit A: Scope of Work for Re-Entry Pilot Program"

SIGNATURES

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the HACLA and the Contractor, by and through their duly authorized representatives have caused this MOU to be subscribed to on the day and year first above written.

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

___________________________________________
Douglas Guthrie
President and CEO

___________________________________________
Susan Burton
A New Way of Life

___________________________________________
Date

___________________________________________
Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM
CARMEN A. TRUTANICH,
CITY ATTORNEY
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

Michael V. Custodio
Deputy City Attorney

EXHIBIT A
SCOPE OF WORK

PILOT RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Pilot Re-Entry Program is to allow families assisted by the HACLA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program to voluntarily reunite with Re-Entry Members who are post-release supervised persons under the sponsorship of the Contractor by waiving permissible admission requirements that would otherwise prevent the Re-Entry Member from joining the assisted household. Participation in the Pilot Re-Entry Program should be voluntarily agreed upon by both the Participant Family and the Re-Entry Member. Of primary concern to the HACLA is the long-term stability of the participant family and their ability to observe all Section 8 program rules and lease provisions. The intent of the program is to enable the Re-Entry Member to successfully re-integrate into family and community by providing permanent housing along with relevant supportive services.

The Contractor will conduct a preliminary assessment of potential referral candidates for participation in the program to determine whether

• Candidates have family assisted by the HACLA Section 8 program
• Candidate’s family will voluntarily admit the candidate to the household
• Candidates have no mandated denial offenses in their criminal background check
• Candidates are appropriate to refer for the Pilot Re-Entry Program

The Contractor will link such candidates with case management and supportive services appropriate to their needs with an emphasis on services that will assist the candidate to remain stably housed and reintegrate with their family. The Contractor will approach the family to determine whether the family voluntarily agrees to accept the candidate into their household. If the family freely and voluntarily wishes to add the candidate to the household composition under the terms of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the HACLA will determine eligibility for the candidate, including a criminal background screen for mandated denial criteria, but will waive all permissible denial criteria listed in the HACLA Section 8 Administrative Plan for otherwise eligible candidates who agree to the Program parameters and to participate in appropriate supportive services from the Contractor. In this way, the Contractor and the HACLA intend to assist with the re-entry of those released from the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the program will provide them with supportive services that will enable them to stabilize their living conditions and remain successfully housed in the long term.

DEFINITION OF TERMS
"When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities."


1. **Sex Offender:** A person subject to lifetime sex offender registration.

2. **Participant Family:** An individual or family which has been admitted to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) and is currently assisted in the program. The family becomes a Participant on the effective date of the first day of initial lease term.

3. **Re-Entry Member:** An individual who has been released from the criminal justice system within the past 12 months, and has been referred by the Contractor to the HACLA under the terms of the Pilot Re-Entry Program, and who meets the criteria for additional family member per the HACLA Section 8 Administrative Plan (Section 6.1 and Section 6.11).

**CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Contractor shall:

1. Prior to referral of Re-Entry Members and their Participant Families, submit to HACLA a detailed description of the outreach to be conducted to locate eligible candidates. Also submit a detailed description of the case management and supportive services to be provided to Re-Entry Members and their Participant Families. Include any agencies you plan to refer clients to for services.

2. Conduct outreach to locate Re-Entry Members and their Participant Families.

3. Conduct a preliminary assessment of each potential Re-Entry Member to determine that they are an appropriate referral for the Pilot Re-Entry Program. The assessment will determine the case management and supportive services to be provided to the Re-Entry Member that will enable them to be successful in joining the Participant Family. The assessment will result in a case plan specific to the needs of the Re-Entry Member.

4. Conduct a home visit to the unit of the Participant Family to determine that the environment is appropriate for the Re-Entry Member to enter.

5. Identify the Re-Entry Member and the Participant Family to the HACLA by submitting the Participant Family referral form after obtaining voluntary acceptance of the Re-Entry Member by the Participant Family.

6. Provide all Re-Entry Members and Participant Families with case management and supportive services appropriate to their needs as identified in the assessment and case plan.

7. Continue to provide case management and supportive services for at least one (1) year, including, at a minimum, monthly contacts and quarterly home visits with the Re-Entry Member and Participant Family.

8. If problems arise during the post-release supervision period that would indicate that the
Re-Entry Member is no longer suitable for the program, notify the HACLA that the person no longer qualifies for housing.

9. Require attendance of appropriate staff at HACLA meetings or training sessions.

10. Immediately notify the HACLA in writing of changes in key personnel for the Program.

11. Submit a monthly report to HACLA of the Contractor’s outreach and supportive services efforts to Re-Entry Members and their Participant Families, along with providing any ad hoc information that HACLA may find necessary for administration of the program.

HACLA RESPONSIBILITIES

The Authority shall:

1. Provide training for Contractor staff on HACLA program rules, regulations, and policies.

2. Notify Contractor staff of any changes in HACLA program rules, regulations and policy or key personnel for the Program.

3. Communicate the availability of the program to currently assisted Section 8 families through mailings, flyers, staff contact and/or the HACLA website.

4. Develop a Participant Family referral form to be used for the program.

5. Receive the Participant Family referral form from the Contractor and verify the status and good standing of Participant Families for potential Re-Entry Member referral.

6. Contact the family to counsel them on the requirements and expectations of the Program.

7. Provide Contractor all forms and documents necessary for processing referrals.

8. Process all Re-entry Member referrals in accordance with HUD guidelines and the HACLA Section 8 Administrative Plan, including waiver of those screening criteria that the HACLA can waive. For reference, those screening criteria that the HACLA cannot waive are listed below:

   a. HACLA cannot admit lifetime registered sex offenders
   b. HACLA cannot admit persons who have been convicted of the manufacture of methamphetamines in federally-assisted housing
   c. HACLA cannot admit domestic violence felons
   d. HACLA cannot admit persons who have been evicted from federally-assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity within three (3) years from date of application, unless the HACLA determines that
      i. the evicted household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity

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– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014
“When reentry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high. Our joint commitment is to eliminate barriers to successful reentry by improving employment, housing, treatment and education opportunities for individuals who have been incarcerated so they can support themselves and their families and contribute to their communities.”


has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program; or

ii. the circumstances leading to eviction no longer exist

9. Retain the sole authority to determine eligibility for all referrals submitted by the Contractor per HACLA’s Section 8 Administrative Plan.

10. Work closely with Contractor to monitor Participant Family standing in the HCVP during the initial year of the program.

11. Notify the Contractor of problems jeopardizing the Participant Family’s assistance in the HCVP.

12. If there is a problem with the Re-Entry Member or the Participant Family, the HACLA will notify the Contractor for assistance in resolving the situation. If the problem cannot be resolved and the Participant Family faces termination of assistance, the HACLA will follow Administrative Plan procedures and attempt first to sever the offending family member before terminating assistance altogether to the family.
“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life they have a place to live.”
– Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, speaking in support of the CHA Reentry Pilot, March 28, 2014

APPENDIX 8

Appendix 8 contains major media coverage of the CHA Reentry Pilot from March 28, 2014, when Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced his support of the Pilot.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s March 28, 2014 press conference at St. Leonard’s Ministries garnered extensive media coverage.
Arguing that the doors to both housing and jobs must be opened to ex-offenders, Mayor Rahm Emanuel moved Friday to relax the Chicago Housing Authority’s rigid restrictions on residents with criminal records.
The change will start small, by allowing 50 former inmates to move back in with family members living at the CHA for what the mayor called “a year’s transition” provided they have “made the choice to work” and received “intense training and preparation” from re-entry programs like the Safer Foundation.

But Emanuel said if it works, he’s determined to permanently lift a rigid remnant of the days when CHA high-rises like Cabrini Green and Robert Taylor Homes were overrun with gangs terrorizing law-abiding residents.

“It’s not just the door of employment. It’s the door of housing that’s been closed, and we want to make sure that both of those doors are open so people when they make a choice . . . to lead a responsible life” have a place to live, the mayor said.

“The truth is — and we know this — there are more people than we have the resources [to help]. So, we’ve got to make every one of these count. My ultimate goal is that CHA, while we’re starting as a pilot, we prove it right, and it’s not a pilot a short time from now.”

Emanuel announced the CHA policy change—and touted his decision to more than double the number of ex-offenders served by city jobs, training and support programs—during a roundtable discussion with ex-offenders at St. Leonard’s Ministries, 2120 West Warren Boulevard.

The ex-offenders who poured their hearts out to the mayor told harrowing stories of abusing drugs, bouncing in and out of prison and, in some cases, from shelter to shelter.

But they all had chosen a different path after getting a helping hand.
CTA coordinator Alphonso Johnson said he grew up at Cabrini Green in a “culture of crime and violence, gangs, guns and drugs” to which he admittedly contributed.

“I told myself when I came home it was gonna be hard. But, so is prison. So is sitting in the visiting room watching your family leave. So is getting up when somebody tells you to get up and going to sleep when somebody tells you to go to sleep,” Johnson said.

“My mission [now] is to work hard and provide for my family. You don’t understand the impact when my wife is sitting there with the bills laid out and I can say, ‘Hey, let me pay it.’ Or I can say, ‘Let me do the grocery shopping.’ Now we’re a team. When you give a man an opportunity to provide for his family, it completes him.”

Emanuel was clearly moved by the discussion. He later told a news conference that his own effort to prevent ex-offenders from becoming re-offenders “doesn’t equal the moral courage we just heard.”

Still, it was enough to win high praise from U.S. Rep. Danny Davis (D-Il.), who has made championing the cause of ex-offenders his life’s work.

“Every year, more than 750,000 of them come home from jail or prison. They need to be welcomed. They need to have barriers removed. I want to commend the mayor of Chicago for his recognition and sensitivity to that issue,” said Davis, who made many of those same comments about former Mayor Richard M. Daley.

“The city of Chicago is leading the way on this issue in America."
Proposal would ease CHA ban on ex-offenders

March 28, 2014 | By Annie Sweeney, Tribune reporter

The long-standing ban on letting Chicago residents with criminal records live in public housing would be partially lifted under a proposed pilot program to allow ex-offenders to move in with family members living in CHA properties, a city official said.

The program, which still needs Chicago Housing Authority board approval, would initially be extended to just 50 people. But social service advocates applauded the move, saying the proposal acknowledges a very basic need for people trying to steer clear of a past criminal life — a safe, stable home.

"If we continue to slam doors in the faces of people who are trying to turn their lives around, people will revert back to the street," said Rachel Ramirez, a community organizer for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. "And that is when we see the problem of recidivism."

Housing and social service advocates lobbied over the past two years for a revision to a rule that generally required ex-offenders to wait five years after leaving prison to be admitted to CHA properties.

They formed a committee, which included ex-offenders, drafted a pilot and even drew the support of then-CHA head Charles Woodyard, pointing to studies that show that 48 percent of the people using Chicago's homeless shelter system are felons. They also noted the high risk of re-offending during the first few years out of prison.

Then, after Woodyard's sudden departure in October, the advocates went public with their concerns that the idea would falter, even descending on Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office to leave a list of 125 organizations and 16
aldermen who had endorsed the idea.

The advocates, though, found a new partner in Emanuel, Ramirez said. On Friday, the mayor and CHA Chief Executive Officer Michael Merchant will be joined by advocates to announce the Family Reunification Pilot, mayoral spokeswoman Tarrah Cooper said.

Under the proposal, former inmates who have shown a commitment to leaving their criminal lives behind would be chosen after an intense screening process with long-standing Chicago agencies that specialize in transitioning ex-offenders back to society.

"The best way to keep people out of trouble is to have a supportive home with a family," said Merchant, who has worked on ex-offender issues. "I understand the trials and tribulations out there. A safe, healthy environment is key."

Anyone convicted of an offense that is on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's list of banned crimes would be excluded. Those crimes include sex offenses, arson, methamphetamine production and corruption of the federal housing program.

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