



Housing Solutions Lab

Building and sharing knowledge to advance equitable local housing policy.



2025 Housing Justice Peer Network

Call for Applications

Click here to apply by February 14 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Overview

People who have been involved with the criminal legal system face numerous obstacles in securing stable, affordable housing. Similarly, those who do not have stable housing are more likely to be arrested and have worse outcomes within the legal system. Government actors working to address housing needs and reduce engagement with the criminal justice system are often stymied by the interconnected nature of these problems. Yet, these systems frequently operate in silos, creating barriers to progress. To overcome these challenges and support policies, investments, and partnerships that expand access to housing for justice-involved people, the Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) is partnering with the Housing Solutions Lab (Lab) at the NYU Furman Center. Both organizations bring deep experience in criminal justice and housing policy, respectively, and are committed to working with state and local government partners interested and ready to do this work.

The 2025 Housing Justice Peer Network, convened and supported by CJI and the Lab, will provide technical assistance and policy guidance to justice and housing agencies interested in partnering to tackle the housing needs of the people they serve. Our team of housing and justice reform researchers and practitioners will support agencies as they identify and develop solutions. We will also assist in gathering the necessary data and partnerships needed to execute them at the intersection of the justice and housing systems.

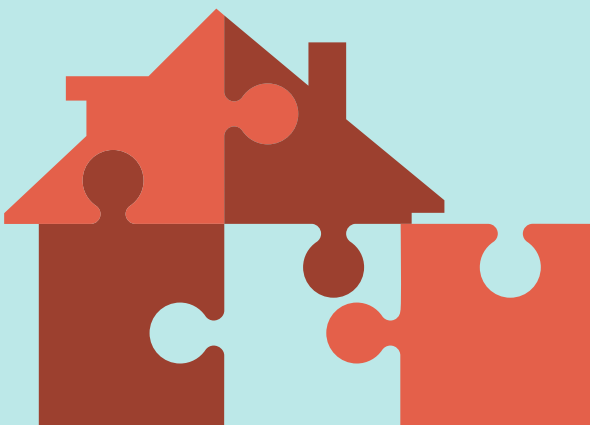
The Opportunity

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, the Lab and CJI will bring together housing and criminal justice government agencies, either at the local or state levels, and their partners. The aim is to further the development of their partnership and to learn about potential solutions to improving access to housing for this specific population. Participants will also receive technical assistance in strategic and implementation planning to make progress on their goals. The program will include interactive learning sessions with peers, insightful presentations from research and policy experts, and personalized technical support to address barriers.

Ultimately, the goal of the Network is two-fold: (1) to support the learning, collaboration, and planning needed to design and implement effective policy, and (2) to help create and support the enduring, multi-sectoral partnerships that jurisdictions need to effectively address these linked challenges into the future.

While any partnership between housing and justice system actors is eligible for the Network, here are some examples of possible partnerships and goals:

- A collaboration between a homelessness response agency and a local jail system to address people cycling between these systems.
- A partnership between a criminal court and a housing court focusing on preventing evictions that result from involvement in the justice system.
- A diversion program working with a local housing agency to prioritize program participants for housing resources in order to facilitate successful participation and case resolution.
- A partnership between a parole agency and a public housing authority to establish a pilot program supporting individuals re-entering society.
- A law enforcement agency teaming up with a local Continuum of Care to develop a new approach that connects people living on the street to services instead of making arrests.



Network Format

Selected communities will participate in a two-phased process for 16 months.

Phase 1 (six months)

During Phase 1, Network communities will participate in monthly virtual sessions lasting from 60 to 90 minutes. Sessions will include brief presentations from housing and justice researchers and practitioners followed by facilitated discussions to provide progress updates, reflect on challenges, ask questions, and share lessons learned from local innovations. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about and reflect on the housing and criminal legal systems nationally and in their localities; the housing needs and challenges faced by people with justice involvement; and government reforms around the country that aim to address these needs and challenges. Additionally, they will hear from communities working to implement some of these reforms, with a focus on the importance of including people with direct experience of these systems in the development process. Lastly, Network communities will identify their own needs within this area, informing their efforts to develop a specific initiative to advance in their own communities during the second half of the Network.

At the end of Phase 1, jurisdictions will have identified a specific area of focus in their jurisdiction for the implementation planning that will take place in Phase 2.

Phase 2 (10 months)

During Phase 2, with support from CJI and the Lab, jurisdiction teams will create an implementation plan to achieve the innovation goal identified during Phase 1. While the activities in this phase will depend on the unique needs of each initiative and locality, activities may include ecosystem and resource mapping; stakeholder engagement; identifying and strategizing around legal, financial, and regulatory barriers; and planning for data collection and analysis to target resources or evaluate impact. The goal is to develop a clearly articulated innovation, such as a policy or practice change, and a detailed work plan to support its successful implementation.

At the end of 16 months, jurisdictions will leave the cohort with (1) a nuanced understanding of the problem they are trying to solve, informed by people who have experienced the problem firsthand and supported by relevant data; (2) knowledge of the relevant resources, partners, and systems involved; (3) an identified, clearly articulated solution to implement; and (4) a customized, detailed work plan to guide their efforts. Additionally, there may be an opportunity for an in-person gathering of peer communities during the project period.

Eligibility

The Lab and CJI plan to select eight teams, each consisting of three to four members, to participate in the Network opportunity. Each team must include individuals working in the housing/homelessness sector and the criminal justice system. Teams may include participants from relevant sectors, including but not limited to criminal justice agencies, housing agencies, other government agencies, and/or community-based partners with an understanding of the issues, connections to impacted people, and localized subject matter expertise.

As the project developed by the team must relate to innovations in government policy or practice, we anticipate that a criminal justice and/or housing government agency will be the team lead. However, we are open to considering a different structure if a compelling case is presented.

Selected participants must commit to (1) attending virtual monthly Network meetings for the first six months; (2) engaging with CJI/the Lab on a regular basis; and (3) completing preparatory work between sessions in Phase 1 and throughout Phase 2 of the Network.

The strength of the application will be determined by the following:

- A demonstrated ability of both housing and criminal justice leads to bring relevant stakeholders to the table for discussion and ongoing collaboration.
- Interest in and preliminary ideas about how best to involve people who have experienced the systems at issue, along with other relevant stakeholders, in a planning process.
- Team capacity and commitment to advancing the jurisdiction's housing and criminal justice goals.
- Enthusiasm for collaborating with peer jurisdictions to foster shared learning, resource sharing, and innovation.

Benefits of Participation

The Network will support local housing and criminal justice agency leaders interested in strengthening cross-sector partnerships and collaboration to address housing issues affecting justice-involved individuals. This includes:

- **Peer networking and support:** Network participants will join a community of peers across the county and an ongoing forum for shared learning, support, and innovation.
- **Cross-sector partnerships:** Participants will build new and refine existing partnerships among housing and criminal justice actors in order to design solutions.
- **Technical assistance:** Participants will have access to support in identifying challenges and potential solutions, engaging stakeholders, and planning for implementation.
- **Evaluation support:** Participants will develop strategies for collecting data and tracking the outcomes of their efforts. On a case-by-case basis, the Lab may partner with Network participants to evaluate new and promising interventions.

Application Process and Timeline

Each team must identify one leader to serve as the primary point of contact for the Network and for completing the application. Applications will be accepted until **11:59 p.m. ET on February 14, 2025**. Lab and CJI staff will review all submissions and conduct follow-up calls with promising applicants. We also created a list of [frequently asked questions](#) to help make the application process easier.

For individuals and teams interested in learning more about the Network, the Lab and CJI will host a webinar introducing the opportunity on January 16 at 3 p.m. ET. The event will include an overview of this new initiative, highlight some of the Lab and CJI's work on housing and criminal justice to date, and feature a live Q&A session with the organizers of the Housing Justice Peer Network. [Register for the webinar here.](#)

[View the Application.](#)

January 8, 2025	Call for applications released
January 16, 2025	About the Network webinar
February 14, 2025	Application deadline
Week of February 17, 2025	Finalist interviews
March 7, 2025	Notification of selection
March 2025	Network kickoff and pre-work
April to September 2025	Phase 1 (Peer learning)
October 2025 to July 2026	Phase 2 (Technical assistance)

We welcome questions about the Network opportunity and ways to develop a successful application. Please contact Jess Wunsch (jess.wunsch@nyu.edu) and Jessica Yager ([jyager@innovatingjustice.org](mailto: jyager@innovatingjustice.org)).

About the Housing Solutions Lab

The Housing Solutions Lab at the NYU Furman Center works with cities across the country to plan, launch, and evaluate evidence-based local housing policies that promote racial equity, increase access to opportunity, and support resident health and well-being. With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Lab serves cities of all sizes, with a focus on small and midsize cities (those with populations of 50,000-500,000 residents).

About the Center for Justice Innovation

The Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) works with communities and justice systems to advance equity, increase safety, and help individuals and communities thrive. CJI's approach involves collaboration among its three main teams: direct service programming, research and evaluation, and training and expert assistance. With on-the-ground and macro-level expertise, CJI targets how systems impact the people they serve. For the last quarter century, CJI staff have planned, implemented, supported, and evaluated innovative projects, including community courts, reentry programs, alternative-to-detention programs, anti-violence projects, eviction prevention initiatives, and more.

