



FY2008 RECOMMENDATION/FY08-GP25 EDUCATE HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Status: Partial Implementation

Actions/Updates

2012 UPDATE

The State of Colorado is addressing housing through better coordination and oversight. Given the current level of attention to housing issues, we feel that the State Homeless Plan needs to first be finalized before further CCJJ action can occur.

The consolidation of 2 State housing authorities, the Division of Housing (DOH) and the Supportive Housing and Homeless Program (SHHP), is currently administered by DOH Director Pat Coyle. We understand that efforts are in place to review the administrative plans, with the goal to establish greater programmatic effectiveness and cost efficiencies.

The Governor's office has established a draft of a State Homeless Plan with an emphasis on establishing greater working relationships with State Housing Authorities. Significant input has been obtained from stakeholders throughout the State. Currently it is being reviewed by the Governor's Executive Leadership and will soon be released for public comment. Gary Sanford is the Governor's point person.

The Task Force for the continuing Study of the Treatment of Persons with Mental Illness Who are Involved in the Criminal Justice System (MICJS), a sub-committee of a Legislative Oversight Committee, has the issue of housing as a priority. It has stalled of late as the chair of that committee resigned from MICJS. The committee chair is in the process of seeking a new chair.

HUD recently, Summer 2011, released a letter allowing persons with criminal history's greater access to housing.

2011 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ACTION STEPS

Each housing authority has an administrative plan. CCJJ's Regina Huerter will work with the Transition Task Force leader Louise Boris to convene a meeting and report back to CCJJ staff.

2010 UPDATE

Partial implementation. The Department of Corrections reports that housing requirements and regulations for HUD/Section 8 is reviewed with staff and posted on its Community Re-Entry Q-Drive which provides information related to community resources to DOC staff assisting individuals with transition into the community. Officials also report that the Department facilitated two meetings (October and November 2009) with the Colorado Community and Interagency Council on Homelessness to discuss barriers to securing housing for offenders.

These meetings included staff representing CDOC facility and community operations, mental health and community corrections.

DOC officials also report that its community re-entry specialists continue to seek out felon-friendly landlords to house homeless offenders statewide. Parole officials are part of the Colorado Community and Interagency Council on Homelessness which collaborates with agencies such as the Colorado Behavioral Health Council, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Colorado Disability Determination Office, Colorado Health Care Policy and Financing, Social Security Administration and the Veterans Administration. Parole officials collaborated with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing's Second Chance Act Adult and Juvenile Offender Reentry Demonstration Project grant application.

In December 2009, Interagency Council on Homelessness members began working with DOC staff to identify areas of collaboration and to increase support for homeless offenders. One result of the collaborative effort with the council was the August 2010 report created, in conjunction with the Harvard Kennedy School, titled "Addressing Homelessness among People Transitioning out of State Corrections." In March 2010, DOC collaborated with, and provided a letter of support to, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Division of Housing for a Second Chance Act grant titled Colorado Second Chance Housing and Re-Entry Program (C-SHARP). In August 2010, the Department of Local Affairs received the grant and in September participating agencies met to discuss implementation policy and procedures. The grant provides DOC with a re-entry specialist who will work with team members to secure housing, benefits acquisition, substance/mental health and healthcare services.

In March 2010, DOC issued a Request for Information on housing statewide. One potential vendor responded in Colorado Springs but required guaranteed monthly funding. In September 2010, another RFI was issued; to date the DOC has not received a response.

2009 ACTION/IMPLEMENTATION

The Department of Corrections reports that it will identify the total capacity of existing housing resources statewide and the housing needs of the parolee population. It plans to develop a housing committee by July 1, 2009. DOC staff plans to meet with officials at the state Division of Housing (DOH) and to provide information on parolee housing needs to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by September 1, 2009. It also plans to explore the DOH and HUD appeal processes. DOC plans to develop a database that identifies housing authorities and landlords willing to accommodate individuals with felony convictions by October 2009. DOC reports that further action will require additional staff resources.

2009 IMPACT

DOC's progress on its implementation plan, and the impact this effort has on the availability of housing for offenders, will be reported in future Commission reports.

2009 BARRIERS

Lack of willingness of officials and landlords to reduce current housing restrictions is the greatest potential barrier. The Department of Corrections reports that a sustained focus on

housing for parolees by DOC would require an FTE to consistently update statewide housing information and attend the necessary meetings, at a cost of approximately \$57,000.

Description

Educate and encourage housing authorities to be no more restrictive than the HUD guidelines in refusing public housing to people with criminal records.

Agencies Responsible

Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services

Discussion

A stable residence is a fundamental component of successful offender re-entry. A proactive effort to expand the availability of housing for individuals with criminal records is consistent with the Commission's mandate to reduce recidivism.