

In 2006, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) collaborated with CSH to design **Returning Home Ohio (RHO)**, a permanent supportive housing program for individuals in state prison with a disability and homeless at prison entry or at risk of homelessness upon release. A rigorous, quasi-experimental evaluation involving a treatment and comparison group was conducted by a team of researchers at the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center. The research yielded positive results, demonstrating the impact of supportive housing on reduced rates of re-incarceration and re-arrest and increased use of supportive services. These findings spurred the state to expand the program by 40% in 2013 with another planned expansion by 40% in 2014. The [full report](#) citing the results of this evaluation as well as a [two page](#) executive summary can be found on [CSH's website](#) or [Urban's website](#).

Recently, a follow up article by the lead evaluator from Urban, Jocelyn Fontaine, titled "[The Role of Supportive Housing in Successful Re-entry Outcomes for Disabled Prisoners](#)," was published in *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, a publication of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research. Whereas the original report emphasized differences between the treatment and comparison groups, the *Cityscape* article explores the importance of selected participant characteristics within the treatment group, between those who were rearrested and those who were not, as well as different programmatic experiences within the treatment group.

The piece begins by summarizing some key findings from the original research; such as the significant reductions in the rate of re-arrest and re-incarceration associated with RHO participation, and then goes on to highlight some exciting new results, and areas for future research. Excerpts from the journal article include:

- ❖ **Successful re-entry is facilitated through a coordinated and seamless re-entry process that requires strong partnerships between correctional agencies and a sizeable network of experienced community-based providers.** RHO participants that were identified and enrolled while incarcerated (the ideal pathway) and housed immediately upon release experienced fewer re-arrests than those who were enrolled after prison discharge. Results also indicated that the ideal pathway into the program may have been particularly beneficial for those who were homeless before their most recent incarceration (that got them into the program). However, other program structure measures (e.g., scattered site versus single site) were not related to re-arrest outcomes. Given the diverse needs of participants and the diverse array of provider settings/capacities, the overall positive findings suggest that, through effective partnerships and inter-agency coordination, RHO was able to match the "right" participants with the "right" provider to meet their needs.

❖ **Some participants seem to fare better in supportive housing than others.**

Among those housed through RHO, individuals with a substance use disorder or personality disorder as their primary disability were significantly more likely to be rearrested. The study did not have sufficient data to explore whether this outcome was related to provider experience and capacity for serving these different populations or if individuals with addictions or personality disorders are particularly hard to serve and/or house.

The overall success of RHO, as discussed in the original evaluation and the *Cityscape* piece, provides clear empirical evidence that permanent supportive housing is a platform for successful re-entry outcomes for prisoners with disabilities and histories of homelessness. These findings provide support for broadly incorporating permanent supportive housing as a routine part of re-entry programming for this high-need/high-cost population. In terms of programmatic implications, the article also highlights the **importance of effective partnerships** between correctional agencies and community-based providers for facilitating successful reentry outcomes. CSH provided expert technical assistance and ongoing oversight of providers and overall operations while ODRC provided pre-release access to and information about prisoners eligible for the program to partnering housing agencies. These partnerships facilitated effective inter-agency coordination and information sharing, leading to an effective “pathway” to housing and provider-client matching process.

ADDITIONAL REENTRY RESOURCES
ARE AVAILABLE AT csh.org

According to the author, future research should address how participant characteristics, specific program components and service quality are related to re-entry outcomes and also track outcomes for a longer follow-up period (the RHO evaluation focused on post release outcomes of up to 1 year). Given the substantial proportion of the U.S. prison population with complex psycho-social needs, the provision of supportive housing for this subset of the re-entry population could translate into significant cost savings for state correctional institutions and other public crisis systems of care.