



We, the undersigned, are writing today to express our strong and unwavering support for the Just Home project, a partnership between NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H), NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and The Fortune Society (Fortune). Just Home will provide much-needed housing for New Yorkers who were formerly incarcerated and have complex medical needs. We ask the City Council to approve the ground lease of the project so that it can move forward in developing quality, affordable and supportive housing, which is so desperately needed in New York City.

Located in a vacant building on the campus of Jacobi Hospital in Morris Park, the Bronx, Just Home will provide quality supportive housing with onsite services for people who would otherwise be homeless and who were released from city jails with serious medical needs. The housing units will be designed for tenants who have serious chronic illnesses such as congestive heart failure, stage 4 cancer, end-stage renal disease, oxygen dependence, or needing help with activities of daily living.

We estimate that each year over 2,500 people in city jails need supportive housing due to their ongoing homelessness and service needs. Supportive housing is a combination of permanent, affordable housing with voluntary, individualized services. Supportive housing is a solution to not only end homelessness, but that also improves community safety, disrupts cycling through costly crisis systems, reduces jail recidivism, and improves health outcomes for many populations, especially those with health needs and criminal legal histories.

Currently there are only 120 units of supportive housing through NYC DOHMH's Justice Involved Supportive Housing Program (JISH), which clearly does not meet the need or demand. The 2022 report, "[Advancing Supportive Housing Solutions to Reduce Homelessness for People Impacted by the Criminal Legal System](#)" outlines the full scope of need for the thousands of people on Rikers Island are experiencing homelessness and struggle with ongoing behavioral health needs. Approving the ground lease for Just Home will be one step towards addressing this need.

We also know that Black and Brown people are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and the criminal justice systems (see CSH's [Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index \(RDDI\)](#) tool. Therefore, developing housing and programs that address both the need and the inequities faced by people of color is critical for our city. We need programs like Just Home.

Just Home will also play a role in addressing the affordable housing gap in City Council District 13 compared to other City Districts. From 2014 to 2022, District 13, where Jacobi Hospital is located, produced a dismal 95 affordable housing units, ranking 47 out of 51 Council Districts, according to the New York Housing Conference. Notably, in addition to 58 permanent supportive apartments for medically complex people released from city jails, Just Home also will include 24 apartments of affordable housing for other members of the community, as well as one apartment for a live-in superintendent, for a total of 83 units.

As the developer of the project, The Fortune Society has a mission to support successful re-entry from incarceration and has a strong track record of supporting residents who benefit from supportive housing remain housed, improve their overall wellness, and help them thrive in their communities. They are well-positioned to lead the Just Home project, which will be modeled after their successful West Harlem project, Castle Gardens, where 88% of supportive housing residents remain housed for at least two years. Fortune's work has repeatedly demonstrated that supportive housing meets people where they are, acknowledges their humanity and the common



human desire for a safe home, and drives equity while revitalizing neighborhoods afflicted by vacant buildings.

We strongly support the development of the Just Home project as a needed support for formerly incarcerated New Yorkers with complex medical needs. We urge City Council to approve the ground lease of the project so that New Yorkers returning from incarceration can find a safe, affordable place to call home. It is a vital part of the solution to New York City's affordable housing crisis and an opportunity to provide homes to some of our most vulnerable neighbors.