



Mayor Eric Adams

City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams,

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our support for a \$6.4 million appropriation to increase service funding for the fiscally responsible Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) Program. JISH combines affordable housing with tenant-centered supportive services to help people who face complex health challenges get and stay housed. It is specifically designed for individuals leaving Rikers who are at risk of homelessness and in need of behavioral health support. It aims to keep them stably housed and prevent further use of jails, shelter, or other emergency services.

Access to a safe, affordable, and permanent place to live is key to obtaining stability and maintaining health. The need is significant for those cycling between Rikers Island, streets, and shelters and experiencing behavioral health needs. Several studies have demonstrated that housing promotes stability, improves connections to health and behavioral health services, reduces recidivism, and ends institutional cycling. In addition, supportive housing improves public safety.

People on Rikers Island experience homelessness at higher rates and often have undiagnosed/untreated mental health needs. We know that supportive housing can provide these New Yorkers with the backing they need to re-enter society and thrive in their communities. Yet, there is a limited supply of supportive housing in New York and an even smaller supply of supportive housing dedicated to this population.

Approximately 51% of the population at Rikers, over 2,500 people each year, struggle with untreated or complex behavioral health conditions. Incarcerating these individuals [costs approximately \\$1.4 billion](#) annually. Without additional housing or support to address their health, upon leaving Rikers many of these individuals will become homeless or will be re-arrested and return to jail. Alternatively, supportive housing would cost [\\$108 million annually](#), saving the City significant money while also stopping the homelessness to jail cycle, decarcerating Rikers, and reducing the significant racial disparities in the City's criminal legal and homeless systems.

In 2019, City officials promised to fund 500 JISH units, but the funding levels were entirely insufficient to adequately staff or provide critical services to the units. Despite JISH serving some of the most complex clients in supportive housing, JISH units receive approximately \$17,000 less per unit compared to similar supportive housing units across the City. Because the rate is significantly below what is required, providers cannot adequately serve the 120 units that are currently operating, nor take on additional units. This leaves a staggering 380 units out of operation that should otherwise be helping individuals leaving Rikers return to their communities.

The New York City Council [has already taken steps to request a \\$6.4 million appropriation](#) to fulfill the City's commitment to sustain 500 JISH units for individuals leaving Rikers. **We call on you, Mayor Adams, to include the full funding amount in the FY25 City Budget.** This would bring all 500 units up to the current funding level of other supportive housing units across the City and increase rates for services and wages. **A separate line-item must also be created in the DOHMH budget to allow for better tracking of JISH funding.**

By taking action to invest in JISH, you, Mayor Adams, will demonstrate that you want our City and New Yorkers to thrive. Thank you in advance for your support.