

# Cook County Frequent Users of Jail and Mental Health — Chicago, Illinois

## Target Population

This demonstration project is targeted toward people with serious mental illness in Cook County Jail who cycle between jail, psychiatric hospitals, and homelessness for months or years on end. Specifically, the target population includes people who:

- Have a demonstrated history of repeated homelessness upon discharge from jail;
- Have been engaged by Cermak Health or the Illinois Mental Health system at least four times; and
- Have a diagnosed serious mental illness of schizophrenia, bi-polar, obsessive compulsive or schizoaffective disorder.

## Housing Resources

One hundred twenty (120) on-going rental housing subsidies are allocated for the project and will be provided to private landlords to set-aside units to house initiative participants and work with the initiative's service providers. See the list of service providers on back.



## Overview of the Initiative

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), in close collaboration with the Cook County Sheriff and other public agencies, is leading an initiative to house 120 individuals with intensive wrap-around services from four experienced community mental health agencies. The results of this intervention will be rigorously evaluated by The Urban Institute as part of a National Institute of Justice study, comparing these results to a matched sample group who will not receive these resources using a randomized control design. A comparison will be made as to changes in the experimental group's use of public emergency services, including state psychiatric hospitals, jails, prisons, and emergency health care.

Working closely with Cermak Hospital, Cook County Jail, and the Illinois Division of Mental Health — and using enhanced data-matching software designed specifically for this project — research staff will identify the most frequent users of both the Cook County Jail and the Illinois Mental Health System. This data will identify people cycling between both systems that can be identified for the study. Those persons identified and agreeing to be a part of the research will be assigned to either a control group with regular discharge services or will be assigned to the experimental group who will receive additional targeted housing and support services using new resources specific to this initiative.

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## Funding Sources

- JEHT Foundation and Open Society Institute: \$720,000 for service enhancements and client assistance.
- CSH's Returning Home Initiative (utilizing funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation): \$100,000 for data matching and landlord recruitment, and \$185,000 for Cermak case manager and study coordination.
- National Institute of Justice: \$400,000 for research performed by The Urban Institute.
- Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund / City of Chicago Department of Housing: \$600,000 per year for 120 long-term rental housing subsidies.
- Illinois Division of Mental Health: Funding for on-going mental health services post-study.

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## Program Partners

**COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE:** Assisting with data integration and coordination of in-reach services.

**CHICAGO LOW INCOME TRUST FUND:** Providing 120 rental support subsidies.

**CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING:** Coordinating rental assistance and city efforts.

**CERMAK HEALTH SERVICES:** Providing mental health services and supervision inside the jail facility.

**ILLINOIS DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH:** Administering and financing on-going mental health services.

**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION:** Philanthropic investment in re-entry supportive housing.

**JEHT FOUNDATION AND OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE:** Providing seed investment to finance service enhancements.

**THE URBAN INSTITUTE:** Conducting a rigorous evaluation of pilot program.

## Managing the Partnership

Responsible for leading this initiative, CSH is involved in planning and implementing all phases of the project. CSH worked closely with The Urban Institute to select the Cook County site after a CSH-financed national evaluability assessment. Once The Urban Institute was selected as the lead partner with CSH on a study funded by the National Institute of Justice, CSH funded an expansion of the data matching software by the Illinois Division of Mental Health. CSH also selected Trilogy, an experienced mental health provider, to work under the supervision of Cermak Health Service to assist with the initial identification of the experimental and control groups and to link the experimental group participants to the four CSH-contracted service partners. In order to help facilitate the participants' access to housing, CSH also contracted with Catholic Charities to recruit landlords to accept the rental subsidies and set aside units for initiative participants. CSH will also work with The Urban Institute to coordinate data collection and dissemination of research findings.

## Service Providers

The experimental group will be assigned to one of four mental health partners:

- **Thresholds:** Illinois' largest private community mental health agency.
- **Community Mental Health Council:** A mental health provider on the south side of Chicago.
- **Trilogy, Inc.:** A mental health provider on the north side of Chicago.
- **Heartland Health Outreach:** A mental health agency specializing in homeless services.

All of the service providers have agreed to:

- Conduct targeted jail in-reach and discharge planning;
- Provide targeted, ongoing rent subsidies to ensure housing affordability;
- Provide sustainable comprehensive mental health and other support services to ensure housing stability; and
- Increase opportunities for employment and self improvement for these frequent users of jail, shelter, and mental health services.

## About CSH and the Returning Home Initiative

The **Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)** is a national non-profit organization and community development financial institution that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. Founded in 1991, CSH advances its mission by providing advocacy, expertise, leadership, and financial resources to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing. CSH seeks to help create an expanded supply of supportive housing for people, including single adults, families with children, and young adults, who have extremely low-incomes, who have disabling conditions, and/or face other significant challenges that place them at on-going risk of homelessness.

CSH's national *Returning Home* Initiative aims to end the cycle of incarceration and homelessness that thousands of people face by engaging the criminal justice systems and integrating the efforts of housing, human service, corrections, and other agencies. *Returning Home* focuses on better serving people with histories of homelessness and incarceration by placing them to supportive housing.



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