

Frequent Users Service Enhancement Initiative (FUSE) — New York, New York

Key Features and Innovations

- **Housing Resources:**
 - **Round I: 100 Units** — 50 sponsor-based Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) provided by NYCHA (scattered-site); 50 set-aside units in larger supportive housing buildings funded by DOHMH and DHS (single-site); and service enhancement funding of \$6,500 per unit for in-reach and support services from the JEHT Foundation.
 - **Round II: 101 Units (in lease-up)** — 50 sponsor-based HCVs provided by NYCHA (scattered-site); 36 HCVs provided by the HPD 15 set-aside units in larger DOHMH-funded supportive housing buildings; and 65 service enhancements provided by NYC DOC and DHS, and 50 provided by CSH's *Returning Home* Initiative.
- **Criminal Justice Waiver:** NYCHA granted a criminal justice waiver for "sponsor-based" vouchers that are linked with stabilization and support services that promote public safety and tenant success.
- **Frequent User Service Enhancement (FUSE):** Intensive services during the critical time period from recruitment through stabilization in housing are provided through FUSE — a one-time payment of \$6,500 in flexible service funding per tenant.
- **Public-Private Collaboration:** FUSE is funded with a blend of federal, state, local, and private philanthropic resources. Monthly program oversight meetings include the non-profit housing providers, government representatives, evaluators, and CSH.
- **Policy Implications:** FUSE has provided a national model for replication. Jurisdictions implementing or planning a FUSE program with modifications to fit local context include Hennepin County (MN), Seattle (WA), Hartford (CT), and Washington, DC.

Initiative Partners

- **Government:** NYC DOC, DHS, DOHMH, HRA, NYCHA, and HPD.
- **Non-profit housing and service providers:** BRC, The Bridge, Brooklyn Community Housing and Services, CAMBA, Common Ground, Community Access, Jericho Project, Palladia, Pathways to Housing, and Women's Prison Association.
- **Evaluation:** Columbia Center for Homelessness Prevention Studies and the John Jay College Research and Evaluation Center.
- **Philanthropy:** The JEHT Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Langeloth Foundation.

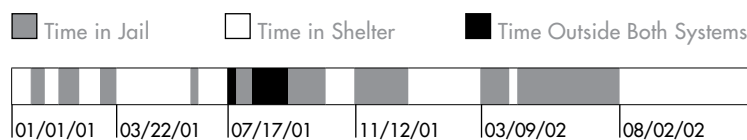
Overview of the Initiative

The New York City Departments of Correction (DOC), Homeless Services (DHS), and CSH, with assistance from the Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) are implementing the Frequent Users Service Enhancement Initiative (FUSE). This ground-breaking structured demonstration initiative has placed over 100 individuals into permanent supportive housing in an attempt to break their institutional circuit between jail, shelter, emergency health, and other public systems. One of the initiative's key features is a service enhancement which provides intensive services from recruitment through a stabilization period after housing placement.

Targeting the Population

Eligibility is determined through a quarterly data match between DOC and DHS to identify people with a minimum of four jail and four shelter stays over the last five years in the first round and a total of six stays in the second to accommodate deeper targeting of chronic health issues. This replenishing list of approximately 1,100–2,200 individuals is cross-referenced with weekly jail and shelter census to locate potential participants. The timeline below shows the utilization pattern of one individual with multiple incidents of jail (grey), shelter (white), and little time spent outside of both systems (black) over a two-year time period.

TWO-YEAR PERIOD OF THE USAGE PATTERN OF ONE INDIVIDUAL WITHIN THE FREQUENT USER SYSTEM



Demonstrating Success

FUSE I has been extremely successful in helping people maintain housing and avoid returns to homelessness. Provider housing retention data shows an 85% housing retention for all placements ranging up to 34 months in duration. An evaluation conducted by the John Jay College of the first year following placement demonstrates:

- 91% housing retention
- 53% reductions of jail days utilized
- 92% reductions of shelter days utilized

When viewed next to a matched comparison group, FUSE participants showed significantly increased resilience, extended time in the community, and a reduced rate of cycling between DOC and DHS, showing cost offsets to those systems of \$2,953 per person, per year.

FUSE Reduces Public Systems Utilization

A preliminary outcomes assessment, completed in 2008 by the John Jay College Center for Research and Evaluation, was conducted using a quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group. Days spent in jail and shelter before and after placement into supportive housing were compared for the subset of clients who were placed into housing at least one year ago (n=86), and a comparison group of individuals matched to this subset (n=102). From this analysis, the group who received FUSE housing and services had a 92% reduction in the number of days spent in shelter, whereas the comparison group only decreased their shelter use by 71% over the year following placement. With regard to DOC involvement, the group who received the FUSE intervention also reduced the number of jail days spent by 53%, whereas the comparison group decreased their jail use by 20%. The matched comparison group's results provide a reasonable assurance that the FUSE is having a positive impact.

A cost-effectiveness analysis of FUSE can be performed by using the per diem costs concluded by Dr. Dennis Culhane and colleagues in their authoritative 2002 study: \$129 per day for incarceration in a city jail and \$68 per client per day for municipal shelter (table). People placed through FUSE supportive housing reduced systems utilization of jail and shelter by \$7,231 in the first year of housing, \$3,586 from reduced jail days, and \$3,645 from shelter. However, probably only a portion of this offset is due to FUSE. Using a difference in differences methodology to isolate the effect attributable to FUSE in light of the comparison group's performance in the year after housing, more conservative cost offsets can be derived. This method shows a \$2,953 adjusted annual cost offset, \$2,224 in jail utilization and \$729 in shelter. Given this more modest projection the FUSE program shows the potential to break even after approximately two years and generate public savings in the third if it were taken to scale.

FUSE Cost Avoidance Relative to Comparison Group

| | DOC | | DHS | |
|--|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| | FUSE | Comparison | FUSE | Comparison |
| Average Days Pre | 52.8 | 45.0 | 58.2 | 26.6 |
| Average Days Post | 25.0 | 36.0 | 4.6 | 7.0 |
| Average Days Avoided | 27.8 | 9.0 | 53.6 | 19.6 |
| % Days Avoided | 53% | 20% | 92% | 74% |
| % Reduction Attributable to FUSE | 33% | | 18% | |
| Days Reduced Attributable to FUSE | 17.2 | | 10.7 | |
| Per Diem Jail/Shelter Cost from NY—NY Cost Study (Culhane, 2002) | \$129 | | \$68 | |
| Annual Cost Offset Per Person | \$3,586 | | \$3,645 | |
| Adjusted Annual Cost Offset Per Person | \$2,224 | | \$729 | |
| Annual DOC & DHS Cost Offset Per Person | \$7,231 | | | |
| Adjusted Annual DOC & DHS Cost Offset Per Person | \$2,953 | | | |

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.



50 Broadway, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10004
T: 212.986.2966
F: 212.986.6552

For information about how your community can learn more contact reentry@csh.org or visit our website www.csh.org