

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/coming-home-nycha-family-reentry-pilot-program-evaluation>

Campaign and Advocacy

Publication

Public housing authorities across the nation historically have barred many with criminal records from public housing residency. However, given evidence of the critical role stable housing and family reunification plays for people coming back to their communities from incarceration, some housing authorities are rethinking their practices. This report evaluates the Family Reentry Pilot Program (FRPP), launched in November 2013 by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) in partnership with city and state corrections agencies, the New York City Department of Homeless Services, and intermediaries including Vera and the Corporation for Supportive Housing. FRPP reunites formerly incarcerated men and women with their families in public housing and partners with community organizations to offer participants reentry services. Vera interviewed participants, family members, and staff from partner organizations to explore the programs effects on participants and family members lives and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the program's components. The research also produced first-ever estimates of people returning from incarceration who are affected by NYCHAs admission policies.

Public housing agencies such as NYCHA, partnering with reentry organizations and other criminal justice stakeholders, can support people with criminal records and have positive effects on formerly incarcerated people and their families.

Vera researchers found that effective collaboration between NYCHA, reentry service providers, and corrections agencies was crucial to helping the pilots participants gain stable housing and reconnect with their families, as well as to accomplish other goals such as securing work and continuing their education.

The study revealed that participants reuniting with their families both received support and supported others as they took on familial roles, especially as caregivers for elderly parents.

The evaluation showed that one of the major obstacles to increasing the pilots enrollment were public housing residents distrust of NYCHAs intentions and fear that the program would make them vulnerable to eviction.

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