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To: HOPWA-L@HUDLIST.HUD.GOV
Subject: HOPWA In Focus: Second Chance Month

HOPWA In Focus: Second Chance Month

Dear HOPWA Grantees, Project Sponsors, and Friends,

This April, the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing (OHH) is commemorating Second Chance Month. During this month, we reflect on the hardships and experiences of those re-entering society and recognize the vital role that we can play in alleviating those barriers. Second Chance Month was born out of a coalition of advocacy and civil rights organizations as a means to highlight the importance of second chances and reducing recidivism for previously incarcerated individuals. We share in the mission of serving a forgotten population. At OHH, we recognize the importance of housing as a stabilizing force and the difficulties that previously incarcerated individuals experience when accessing housing. We continuously strive to partner with and uplift organizations that provide unique programming that is tailored to addressing the diversity of people with HIV.

[Over 600,000](#) individuals exit the incarceration system in the United States every year. When reentering society, these individuals must navigate life after their sentence and face a unique set of barriers when accessing housing and healthcare. When attempting to connect with health providers, [formerly incarcerated people living with HIV](#) often face significant challenges due to uncertainty surrounding release dates and the necessary exchange of health forms and medical records. About [150,000 people](#) living with HIV are released from incarceration each year, and roughly half of those people will face difficulties with accessing housing.

In May 2023, OHH released a 10-part multimedia project, [Homecoming: Life after Incarceration](#), that showcases the complexities and lived experiences of people who have gone through reentry, as well as highlighting the work of community organizations and advocacy leaders. The series covers topics from housing, employment, wellbeing, trauma, policy, etc. and features a toolkit with additional information and resources. This series is intended to act as an educational resource for HOPWA grantees and project sponsors, individuals, and community organizations. Our hope is that the *Homecoming* curriculum inspires individuals and organizations to join us and other advocacy organizations in reducing the barriers that individuals face during reentry.

Housing is a stabilizing force for many people, and housing insecurity is a risk factor for both previously incarcerated people and people living with HIV. This Second Chance Month we recognize the importance of housing in providing second chances and reducing recidivism. OHH reaffirms our commitment to reducing barriers to housing for people with HIV.

We also want to recognize that April is Fair Housing Month and there are laws in place to protect people with HIV from housing discrimination. Individuals with disabilities, including HIV/AIDS, are protected from housing discrimination by the Fair Housing Act and Section 504. Anyone who has experienced discrimination because of their real or perceived HIV status can [file a complaint](#) with HUD. We also encourage HOPWA grantees, project sponsors, and other stakeholders to visit the [HUD Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity \(FHEO\) Outreach Tools Page](#) to download the HIV housing discrimination poster and business card. The direct links to the HIV Housing Discrimination downloads in English and Spanish are available below.

[Poster - English](#) | [Business Card - English](#)
[Poster - Spanish](#) | [Business Card - Spanish](#)

As always, thank you for your continued work with and support of the HOPWA program.

Respectfully,

Rita Harcrow
Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Housing



Housing is an effective structural intervention in ending the HIV epidemic in the United States. Each year, HOPWA ensures housing stability for more than 100,000 American households that are low-income and living with HIV.

Want to know more about HOPWA? Go to https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/hopwa

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