Opening Doors to Public Housing: Safely Increasing Access to Public Housing for People with Conviction Histories

Webinar: Request for Proposals

January 17, 2020

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The Vera Institute of Justice

Mission
To build and improve justice systems that ensure fairness, promote safety, and strengthen communities.

How We Work
Vera works in partnership with local, state, and national government officials to create change from within.

- **We study problems** that impede human dignity and justice.
- **We pilot solutions** that are at once transformative and achievable.
- **We engage diverse communities** in informed debate.
- **We harness the power of evidence** to drive effective policy and practice.
Today’s Agenda

• Welcome
  • Andre Bethea, Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

• Reflections from Site Partners
  • Laura Gregory, Oklahoma City Housing Authority
  • Julio Sanchez, Delaware Community Corrections

• RFP Document Walkthrough
  • Byron Kline, Vera Institute of Justice

• Q&A
Welcome from Andre Bethea

Policy Advisor, Corrections
Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice
Goals of Opening Doors

- Safely increase access to housing for people with criminal histories
- Improve the safety of public housing and surrounding communities through reentry housing strategies
- Promote collaboration between PHAs, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to reduce crime and improve reentry outcomes for people leaving prison and jail
Selected Sites

2017 Sites

- Colorado: Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing
- Massachusetts: Springfield Housing Authority
- Nebraska: Kearney Housing Agency
- North Carolina: Asheville Housing Authority
- Rhode Island: Providence Housing Authority
- Washington: Tacoma Housing Authority

2019 Sites

- California: Housing Authority of the County of San Diego, in collaboration with six housing authorities operating within the county
- Delaware: State consortium of five agencies led by the Delaware State Housing Authority
- Louisiana: Lafayette Housing Authority
- Oklahoma: Oklahoma City Housing Authority
Oklahoma City Housing Authority

Laura Gregory

Resident Services Manager,
Oklahoma City Housing Authority

lgregory@ochanet.org
Oklahoma City Housing Authority

- The **reasons for applying** to the Opening Doors initiative
  - Growing momentum for criminal justice reform at the state and local level
  - Concern about families losing their housing if a loved one returns home from incarceration
  - Openness to revisit admissions policies
Oklahoma City Housing Authority

• New policy approved
  • 3 year lookback period, from date of conviction
• Working group in place for the development of a Family Reentry Program, including partners from:
  • The Criminal Justice Advisory Council
  • Reentry service organizations
  • Oklahoma Department of Corrections
  • Local HUD Office
  • Continuum of Care
• Next Steps & Lessons Learned
Delaware Department of Correction

Julio Sanchez
Senior Parole & Probation Officer,
Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission

In-reach Coordinator, Georgetown Probation & Parole

Delaware Department of Correction, Bureau of Community Correction
Delaware Department of Correction

Why it matters for:

• the state of Delaware
• people in reentry and their families
• public safety
Delaware Department of Correction

- Developing Delaware’s **Family Reentry Program**
- Key partners in the **working group**:
  - All five housing authorities of the state
  - Reentry service organizations
  - The Department of Correction
- **Next Steps & Lessons Learned**
RFP Timeline

• Application deadline: **February 28, 2020 11:59 PST**
  • A team of BJA and Vera staff will review and score all of the proposals, and will conduct telephone conversations with short-listed applicants.
• Selected sites will be notified, and a public announcement of the selection will occur in **April 2020**
• Selected sites will receive up to **17 months** of technical assistance

[vera.org/projects/opening-doors-to-public-housing](vera.org/projects/opening-doors-to-public-housing)
Application Materials

- Send, in PDF, to Erica Crew at ecrew@vera.org
- A letter of intent and commitment
  - Signed by the PHA’s executive director
  - Indicating commitment to the goals of the initiative, collaboration with Vera and other stakeholders, availability, and data sharing. (See RFP document for specifics)
- An application narrative
- Letters of support

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Application Narrative

• Statement of the Problem
  • What are your reasons for applying?
  • What do your policies look like now?
  • Why is now the right time to engage in this work?

• Policy Change Process
  • What is the process to change/create policy?

• Staffing
  • Who would the site lead be?

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Letters of Support

• Applicants are required to provide letters of support from relevant criminal justice stakeholders and partners, specifically:
  1) the board chair of the housing authority
  2) community human services or reentry service providers
  3) housing authority police or other local law enforcement
  4) probation, parole, and or corrections officials

• Letters from other partners are allowed, but not required. (e.g. tenant associations, local criminal justice coordinators, business leaders)

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Questions?

Please enter your question in the Q&A box or email your question to: mdizerega@vera.org

The RFP is available on Vera’s Opening Doors project page or by visiting: https://www.vera.org/projects/opening-doors-to-public-housing/opening-doors-to-public-housing-opening-doors-request-for-ta-proposals

A recording of the webinar with the slides will be shared with all who registered for the webinar.