Description of the Justice Bridge Housing Model

The Justice Bridge Housing Program (JBHP) of the Housing Authority of Union County (HAUC) serves non-violent offenders from Union County, all of whom have a substance abuse (drug or alcohol) disorder, are at high risk of recidivism and unable to develop a suitable home plan. Participants receive monthly rental subsidies for up to 12 months or until they transition to permanent housing--- to either the County's federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program or market-rate housing. Participants also receive support services as long as they are on probation or parole.

The JBHP has clearly proven to minimize incarceration and reduce recidivism as illustrated in the two diagrams below. The first diagram shows a hypothetical case scenario of a model Justice Bridge Housing Program participant. It illustrates how under the program, the participant is released to supportive housing, first for a bridge period and then to permanent housing. The participant is in the program for the duration of his/her sentence, which significantly reduces both the cost of incarceration and the risk of recidivism.
The second diagram illustrates a hypothetical worst-case scenario for an individual who does not participate in the Justice Bridge Program; the individual remains incarcerated for her/his entire sentence. He/she is released with minimal support services into the same housing situation that contributed to the initial justice involvement, greatly increasing the risk of recidivism.

These two scenarios clearly demonstrate the benefits of JBHP; the program not only significantly reduces recidivism, but also saves many thousands of dollars.

**Justice Bridge: Program and Participant Outcomes**

In its first four years, the Justice Bridge Housing Program served a total of 46 individuals. It has demonstrated clear success, both as a program and for individual participants as follows:

**Program Outcomes**

- The JBHP *met its overriding goal of reducing recidivism*.
  - The recidivism rate among the 46 participants served was 20% compared to the Union County recidivism rate of 53% and the Pennsylvania state recidivism rate of 60%¹.

---

¹ JBHP, Union County, and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections use the same definition of recidivism: the first instance of any type of re-arrest or re-incarceration after the inmate is released.
The low recidivism rate for Justice Bridge is even more impressive considering that all Justice Bridge participants were determined to be high risk according to the RANT® risk/needs assessment tool. On the contrary, the county and state recidivism rates cited are the average for all returning citizens, including those with both high and low risk for recidivism. Although specific rates for high-risk individuals are not available, it is very likely that without the Justice Bridge Housing Program, individuals would recidivate at an even higher rate than average.

- The JBHP resulted in significant savings to the county:²
  - Since Union County's jail is at maximum capacity, offenders are sent to neighboring jails at a cost of $72 per day or approximately $2,160 per month per person. In just one year (2015), the county spent $800,000 for 30 inmates sent outside the county.
  - In contrast, the cost per participant for Justice Bridge is on average $25/person/day or $750 per month ($600 for rental assistance and $150 for administration).
  - The direct cost savings of Justice Bridge compared to incarceration is $47 per day or $1410 per month per participant.
  - Appendix A illustrates the cost benefit of Justice Bridge through case studies.

- In addition to the above key outcomes, by providing stable housing the program also addressed criminogenic factors of its participants: pro-social cognition, opportunity to develop positive peer and family relationships, opportunity to remain clean and sober, and access to employment. These factors are considered by the review panel and addressed to the extent feasible.

**Participant Outcomes**

Besides not recidivating, participants accomplished housing and employment goals:

- Of the 46 JBHP participants served, 28 participants moved from Justice Bridge to Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers, nine were financially able to move to non-subsidized permanent housing, and only nine (20%) recidivated.

---

² Due to the complexity of obtaining and analyzing associated variable costs and benefits, this report focuses on direct costs and benefits. The analysis does not take into account the many associated variable costs. In addition to the daily jail expense, incarceration costs include inmates’ health care, transportation by the sheriff’s department, and other expenses normally incurred. Upon release into Justice Bridge, associated variable costs include support services and other public expense such as entitlement cash or in-kind payments. Associated public benefits are also not included in the analysis, such as tax revenue as a result of program participants’ employment, and their contributions to the local economy through purchases and rental payments.
• 32 of the 37 participants who did not recidivate obtained and maintained employment and two were on disability.

• Participants achieved other individual goals such as meeting educational objectives, regaining custody of their children, and reuniting with family members.

Outcomes: Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice, Award No. 2013-DB-BX-0042

Distinct from the program outcomes described above, BJA’s award to the Housing Authority of Union County (HAUC) resulted in several significant deliverables.

• Program evaluation report with literature review, completed April 2016

• Toolkit for JBHP replication, completed March 2017. It was prepared by the HAUC and its consultant and reviewed by the Advisory Group and one of the potential pilot counties for possible modification.

• Two meetings of the JBHP Advisory Group, June 5, 2014 and April 16, 2015

• Formal presentations about housing and reentry in general and about JBHP in particular to multiple audiences, including:
  o Meeting of executive of directors of both urban and rural public housing authorities –convened by the Housing Authority of Union County
  o Two statewide conferences of Community Justice Advisory Boards
  o Statewide conference of the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities
  o Two statewide conferences of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

• New reentry housing programs are being operated by two different public housing authorities in Pennsylvania (Clinton and Columbia Counties). Although not exact replications of Justice Bridge, each authority conferred with the Housing Authority of Union County and their programs are based on the Justice Bridge approach.

• Replication pilot outreach:
  o On-site meeting in Warren County with the PHA executive director, her staff, and representatives from the county’s Department of Probation and Parole and community action agency to discuss program design and funding possibilities. Subsequently the PHA decided not to pursue replication due to a lack of capacity.
  o Presentation to the Centre County’s CJAB with follow-up on-site meeting to discuss program design and introduce the Toolkit for Replication. The county’s Deputy Administrator and Director of Human
Services is taking the lead, with support from criminal justice (planning, jail, judge, Probation and Parole, public defender) and the housing authority. Replication is expected this year.

- Presentation to Tioga County’s CJAB with telephone follow-up with the director of human services and PHA personnel. A program design meeting with potential Justice Bridge partners, with Toolkit review, is scheduled for spring 2017.

- A telephone consultation with the Butler County Commissioners, Housing Authority personnel, and Criminal Justice Planner took place in March 2017. Butler County expressed great interest in pursuing next steps.

**Strategy for Program Sustainability**

The idea of developing annual program funding is foreign to a small housing authority unaccustomed to writing grants and seeking resources other than through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Therefore, the initial strategy for sustainability of the Justice Bridge Housing Program (JBHP) was predicated on the supposition that the program would result in significant net tax-payer savings and that once the jail cost savings were identified, the logical path would be to allocate a portion of the savings to the JBHP. This approach is called a “cross system cost offset” by the National Reentry Resource Center.

Indeed, as demonstrated above, the Justice Bridge Housing Program has significant value. Justice Bridge costs significantly less per participant than incarceration; savings come in the short-term by reducing incarceration and recidivism, which further results in medium- and long-term savings.

As the value and viability of the program became apparent, the Housing Authority began to envision permanent funding options from a public single source funder such as HUD or the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. In addition, when it became clear that Union County was directly benefiting from reduced incarceration, the Authority hoped that county government would shift some of the savings to the Justice Bridge Housing Program.

The Authority, with consulting assistance, then turned to multiple small sources of funding. Although successful in the short term, this approach is challenging, especially for a small housing authority. It requires time, expertise and coordination to identify the many separate funding sources and to accommodate their disparate terms and reporting requirements.
Long Term Sustainability

As described below, while the Housing Authority is still in pursuit of a single source to fund the continuing operations of the JBHP, it has also carefully analyzed future funding needs and potential sources. Following is a summary of those funding needs, potential sources and status of each to date.

Funding Categories

Continuation of JBHP requires funding in three categories:

1. *Bridge Rental Assistance*
   Funds are needed to provide rental subsidies for the period from release from jail to when the participant comes-up on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program waitlist or is able to pay market rent. This includes security deposit, rent, and Justice Self-Sufficiency Program as needed. These costs average $20 per day per person.

2. *Permanent Rental Assistance*
   Funds are needed for participants needing longer term rental assistance to ensure affordability of their housing until 30% of their income exceeds the rental amount and they are no longer eligible for subsidy. “Rental assistance” includes money for utility allowances as well as for rent.

3. *Program Operating Expenses*
   Funds are needed to cover personnel and other costs of administering the program, which total $5 per person per day. This includes the cost of the JBHP Coordinator’s time, which is considerably higher than the average cost per participant for the Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher program. JBHP coordination activities include preparing for and attending JBHP meetings, working with landlords to identify appropriate affordable units, and providing assistance with household set-up and other supports for the JBHP participants. Supportive residential services are also included in the operating costs, which continue for as long as the participant is under court supervision, whether or not he/she is receiving rental assistance.
Funding Sources to Date

The JBHP initially received a $72,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). This covered bridge rental assistance and a portion of the program operations for 12 individuals for a two year period. The remainder of the operating costs were initially covered by internal unrestricted reserve funds of the Housing Authority.

Permanent rental assistance was and continues to be available through the County’s Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program. Additional permanent rental assistance was also available through the HealthChoices Reinvestment Program for persons with behavioral health issues. In addition to these funds, the program has also received funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance Programs through the FY 13 Encouraging Innovation: Field-Initiated Program, State, Local or tribal Projects Grant and the Union County Domestic Relations Section (described below).

Funding Needs to Sustain JBHP

For the years 2014 and 2015, JBHP provided an average of 1,773 program days of assistance (about 60 months) for 13.5 individuals. However, at the present time there is a longer wait for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, which means that JBHP participants need a bridge rental assistance for a longer period. In order to meet the same level of demand (assuming a similar recidivism rate and need for HCV rental assistance), it is anticipated that 2,128 program days (about 71 months) are needed to sustain the program.

In summary, to continue to support 14 persons per year in the JBHP, approximately $53,200 is required to cover rental assistance and program operations (2,128 participant days at $25 per day).

Progress to Date on Sustainability

The Housing Authority has taken the following steps in an attempt to assure the long term sustainability of the JBHP:

1. In early May, 2016 the consultant identified all potential funding sources for each of the three categories of funding. Appendix B, “Potential Funding Sources for the Union County Justice Bridge Housing Program,” includes the sources and status of each.

2. On May 25, 2016 the Housing Authority of Union County (HAUC) and consultant met with representatives of the Philadelphia Area Office of HUD to provide an update on JBHP and to explore the feasibility of obtaining increased fees for
administering the JBHP as well as other potential HUD sources for the operations and bridge rental assistance. Although in support of the program, the Area Office was unable to provide waivers or commit any additional resources to the program.

3. The HAUC and consultant made a presentation to the Union County Criminal Justice Advisory Board on May 26, 2016 to:
   a. describe the JBHP and its benefits to the county, the community and participants
   b. provide an update on the JBHP accomplishments
   c. explain the need for additional funding
   d. request CJAB support for submission of an application to the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency
   e. request ideas for other possible funding sources

4. The HAUC and consultant met with the President Judge to obtain his support for the program and to determine if he had any suggestions for alternative funding sources. He pledged his support to the program and referred the Executive Director to the Union County Domestic Relations Section, which has incentive funds to assist individuals with child support obligations.

5. The HAUC and consultant met with a representative of the Domestic Relations Section (DRS) who committed up to $12,000 of incentive funds to “finance a proportionate share of the costs for non-violent offenders with a child support obligation to participate in the JBHP.”

6. The project team met to determine if expansion of the program to serve additional populations was a viable option for attracting new resources. The team agreed that this could be an effective strategy to pursue. As a result, two expansions of the JBHP were explored, not only in order to sustain the program, but also to provide an opportunity to serve additional populations.

   a. Pre-entry
   Since the JBHP’s inception, there have been other individuals with justice involvement that might have benefitted from the program, but who were ineligible because they were at the pre-disposition stage. This includes:
   1) individuals after arrest and prior to sentencing who are pre-revocation and
   2) individuals who have violated terms of parole and are awaiting a revocation hearing.

   On June 24, 2016 the HAUC submitted a proposal to the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency for $39,595 for a Pre-trial Diversion Program (PTDP); the application was approved in December 2016. The PTDP will provide a
pre-dispositional alternative for 49 months of bridge rental assistance for individuals with serious mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorders who have committed non-violent offenses and are at high risk of recidivism due to a lack of stable housing. The program will target individuals who are unstably housed or homeless and most likely lack the resources to post bail. Without alternatives, these individuals would be incarcerated until the time of their trial, not only costing the county jail $72 per day per participant, but also depriving them of the ability to continue to earn a living. The PTDP will further reduce the demand on the county jail through 1) Bail-Modification and 2) Intermediate Punishment/Community Corrections. It will also help to provide the court more (non-jail) sentencing options so “they can better tailor a cost-effective sentence that fits the offender and the crime, protects the public, and provides rehabilitation.”

b. Universal Bridge
The Housing Authority witnessed the success of the JBHP model for one special needs population---individuals with justice involvement. They posited that the same approach---a combination of affordable housing and support services---would be successful for other special needs populations as well. Working with their community partners, the Housing Authority designed the Universal Bridge Program (UBP) to serve three new populations—survivors of domestic violence, individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and individuals with behavioral health issues.

As an expansion of Justice Bridge, Universal Bridge will provide bridge and permanent housing through the Housing Authority along with case management and other support services through community partners, including the Union Snyder Community Action Agency (USCAA), Transitions (the domestic violence provider) and CMSU (Columbia, Montour, Snyder, Union behavioral health service providers).

In addition to the direct benefits accrued to program participants, expansion to serve additional populations will have the benefit of increasing community and political support for the program. Funding for this expansion has been sought from the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) PHARE Program. USCAA, with the Housing Authority as a partner, submitted an application to PHFA on January 13, 2017 to fund the Universal Bridge Program as a demonstration expansion of JBHP. If approved, this will provide the HAUC with an opportunity to design and implement this program, which could have strong prospects for replication by other housing authorities throughout the Commonwealth.
7. The housing authority continues to pursue cross system cost offsets with:

a. **The PA Department of Corrections (DOC)** -- At a public meeting in March 2017, John Wetzel, Secretary of DOC, acknowledged the success of the JBHP and agreed to meet with the Housing Authority of Union County (HAUC). The HAUC will explore with him how funds available through DOC’s Housing Lot can be accessed to fund the JBHP. HAUC will also explore the feasibility of DOC funding a pilot that tests and demonstrates cost savings to the criminal justice system in anticipation of a statewide program that will shift additional dollars from the criminal justice system to housing.

b. **Evangelical Health System and Geisinger Health Plan** -- Health and hospital foundations can be strong proponents of the connection between housing and health, specifically housing as a social determinant of health, which JBHP clearly demonstrates. Discussions are beginning with these two local health care providers to explore housing as a social determinant of health in order to initiate cost offsets from the health system to housing. The Housing Authority is also requesting that they consider the provision of resources to collect data, conduct research and design and test the Bridge concept.

c. **The National Reentry Resource Center** – Conversations have also begun with Dr. Richard Cho of the NRRC to advocate for state and national cross system cost offsets from criminal justice to housing.

**Lessons Learned During the Replication Process**

A number of important lessons were learned in the course of program implementation:

1. A Local culture of collaboration is essential.
   - Community partners are key to success of the program.
   - It is critical to have the commitment and involvement of three systems: housing, criminal justice and human services.

2. The “local” nature of the program is a strength.
   - The requirement that participants must have existing ties to the county helps to reduce opposition.
   - The idea of Justice Bridge as a fiscally conservative program helps with public opinion.

3. The local Criminal Justice Advisory Board and/or Reentry Coalition can play a key role in initiation of a Justice Bridge program.
   - These entities can also be useful for building support for continuation funding.
4. Although participation by the local public housing authority (PHA) is critical, the housing authority does not have to be the lead entity.
   - PHAs can play a range of roles, from lead entity to simple administration of Housing Choice Vouchers.
   - The key role of the PHA is to work closely with the Justice Bridge Program to facilitate transition to permanent housing.

5. The externally determined selection protocol for acceptance into JBHP is a boon to the Housing Authority.
   - PHAs lack the expertise to adequately evaluate justice involved individuals.
   - Outside selection also increases the PHA’s catchment in a deeply appropriate way – by meeting HUD’s long-term goal of having public housing authorities serve more vulnerable populations.

6. The use of tenant-based rental assistance is a strength; it
   - Is generally popular
   - Reduces stigma
   - Allows for risk mitigation – through unit selection
   - Allows participants to remain in place across and beyond subsidy
   - Helps the participant to build social capital as a successful lease-holder

7. There was little or no resistance from landlords to renting to individuals with a criminal history.
   - The Housing Authority relied on strong long-term relationships with landlords.
   - With JBHP tenants under supervision by the Board of Probation and Parole and receiving case management, landlords found renting to them to be no riskier than renting to non-JBHP tenants.
   - The Housing Authority (or whoever plays the key coordinative role) must play an active role in coordination – particularly when a lease is terminated.

8. Participants tend to be enthusiastic and committed to meeting their personal goals and becoming independent.
   - They are likely to move quickly beyond subsidy.
   - Adaptation of the Housing Choice Voucher Program’s Family Self-Sufficiency to the particular situations of JBHP participants has been significant.
   - A Self-Sufficiency program component helps to reduce recidivism risk when rental subsidy ends and/or a JBHP participant moves.

9. Because of the points made in 8 (above), the lack of funding for permanent housing subsidy should not necessarily deter replication; the absolute need for permanent subsidy should not be assumed.
10. The provision of support services is critical to the success of Justice Bridge.
   • Even though service partners may be committed to the goals of the program, depending on their funding sources they may or may not need additional resources to provide services for the re-entry population.

11. There are major impediments to replication of JBHP by other housing authorities:
   • Long waiting lists for the Housing Choice Voucher program. PHAs are besieged with requests to serve special populations and it is extremely challenging for them to prioritize JBHP participants for vouchers over others who have been on the waiting list for long periods of time. For this reason some PHAs are using models other than tenant-based rental assistance, including public housing and project-based vouchers to serve this population.
   • It is challenging for PHAs to serve “harder to serve” populations without additional administrative resources; as described above, Increased fees are needed to administer a justice bridge program.
   • The lack of a sustained source of funds for the bridge rental assistance period is a major impediment since many PHAs are not accustomed to raising funds for special programs and purposes.

Recommendations

A major goal of the Bureau of Justice Assistance grant was to foster the replication of the Justice Bridge Housing Program in other communities. On principle, based on the savings in jail expense as a result of Justice Bridge, funding for the program should be allocated from the justice system.

In Union County a portion of the significant cost savings through Justice Bridge are attributed to a reduction in the $72 per day jail cost paid to other counties. If these savings were even partially allocated to JBHP, the program would be sustainable. While these savings may not be replicable in other counties, the mid- and long-term savings from reduced recidivism as well as the many other benefits accrued to JBHP participants can undoubtedly be realized in other counties.

At the same time, however, if BJA and HUD want to support replication of Justice Bridge programs in other communities, they will need to address the impediments discussed above in Lessons Learned.

*In order to ensure an effective and meaningful expansion of housing authority efforts to serve returning citizens, we recommend that BJA and HUD adopt one or a combination of the following approaches:*
• Enforcement by HUD of specific requirements for housing authorities to serve returning citizens, either through reunification or new housing opportunities (with reasonable provisions to assure the safety of staff and other residents)

• Targeted incentives to housing authorities for serving returning citizens, including the provision of additional administrative fees

• Most essentially, the provision of a dedicated source of funds for the bridge period. As discussed above, it is reasonable and preferable that these funds come from non-housing sources, most likely criminal justice resources through a “cross system cost offset” since they are the direct beneficiary of savings.

• We urge consideration of a program for returning citizens similar to the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (VASH), which has been highly successful in ending veterans’ homelessness by leveraging Veterans’ Administration resources with HUD funds. We recommend a similar partnership with the Department of Justice utilizing BJA dollars to supplement the HUD housing resources. We believe this will be a critical step in truly integrating returning citizens into their families and communities.
**JBHP IS COST EFFECTIVE & IMPROVES OUTCOMES**

**CASE STUDY: JAMES**

- **James**
  - James is 18 with a prior juvenile record.

- **ARREST**
  - James assaults police officer, arrested April 2016.

- **ADJUDICATION**
  - After spending two months in jail, James is adjudicated June 2016.

- **JAIL**
  - 75 DAY MIN SENTENCE
  - James is eligible for release after minimum sentence of 75 days and approved for JBHP in July 2016. However, no funding is available for rental assistance. Lacking a housing plan, he stays 199 day past his minimum sentence.

- **JAIL**
  - ADDITIONAL 199 DAYS
  - JBHP staff help James apply for federal rental assistance voucher waiting list. A housing voucher becomes available and James moves into an apartment in January 2017. James receives JBHP services to support stability.

- **JBHP & HOUSING**

---

**JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES**

The total cost of James’s 274 days in jail at $72/day was **$19,728**.

The **199 days** James spent in jail past the minimum cost **$14,328**.

At $25/day, JBHP rental assistance could have saved the county **$9,353**.
Susan is a mother of 2 children with prior offenses. Susan is arrested January 2016 on parole violation. Susan’s sentence is reinstated due to her parole violation. With no women’s facility in Union County, Susan is sent to Snyder County jail. Susan serves seven months in jail, from January to July 2016, at a cost of $15,000. Susan is due to serve the remainder of her 5-year sentence in state prison. Instead, she is allowed to go to treatment court, but needs stable housing. Susan is referred and accepted into JBHP. County funds are used for rental assistance. Susan moves into an apartment in August 2016 and reunites with her 2 children. Susan receives JBHP services to support stability.

**JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES**

At $25/day, JBHP rental assistance for one year costs $9,125 compared to $41,000 for one year in state prison. Susan’s 5-year state prison sentence could have cost up to $205,000. In addition to reducing prison costs, JBHP allowed family reunification to occur.
At just 21, Tim has several arrests and convictions. Tim is arrested again in 2015. Tim makes a request to attend treatment court and is approved. Tim is released to family who do not live in Union County. Due to a suspended license, he has transportation issues and struggles to get to treatment court. A return to prison to serve out his one-year sentence would cost up to $41,000. Knowing Tim’s housing instability is imperiling his progress, his probation officer refers him to JBHP. Tim is approved and funds are available for him to participate. Tim moves into an apartment, meets treatment court obligations, and gets a job. After 20 months of rental assistance at a cost of $15,000, Tim is able to afford a market-rate apartment with two roommates.

JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES

Without JBHP, Tim may have recidivated and returned to prison at a cost of $112/day. Not only does JBHP rental assistance cost less at $25/day, participants have better outcomes, including employment and the development of positive social networks.
JBHP HELPS REDUCE TIME SPENT IN JAIL & RELATED COSTS

TIM WITH & WITHOUT JBHP:
Justice Bridge has made a difference in Tim's life. Without the program, it is likely he would have returned to jail given his lack of stable housing and transportation. JBHP provided Tim with housing and services, enabling him to gain employment, connect to positive social networks, achieve self-sufficiency and avoid recidivating.

ARREST
At just 21, Tim has several arrests and conviction. Is arrested again in 2015.

ADJUDICATION
Tim makes request to attend treatment court and is approved.

RELEASE
Tim is released to family who do not live in Union County. Due to a suspended license, he has transportation issues and struggles to get to treatment court.

JBHP AVAILABLE?

YES

JBHP & HOUSING
Tim moves into an apartment, meets treatment court obligations, and gets a job. After 20 months, he is able to afford a market-rate apartment with two roommates.

NO

VIOLATES PROBATION
Tim cannot attend treatment court and violates probation obligations.

JAIL
Tim returns to jail to serve out the remainder of his one-year jail sentence.

JBHP: REDUCED COSTS, BETTER OUTCOMES
Without JBHP, Tim may have recidivated and returned to jail at a cost of $72/day or prison at a cost of $112/day. Not only does JBHP rental assistance cost less at $25/day, participants have better outcomes, including employment and the development of positive social networks.
APPENDIX B

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR
THE UNION COUNTY JUSTICE BRIDGE HOUSING PROGRAM

Following is a list of potential public and private resources by category of use.

BRIDGE RENTAL ASSISTANCE

The rental assistance funds for the bridge period for the Union County program initially came from a two year grant through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, which has expired. A description of that and other potential sources for bridge rental assistance follow.

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)

PCCD administers a number of federal grants in Pennsylvania, including the Mental Health and Justice Involvement Initiatives grant that was used to pay for the rental assistance and operations for the first two years of the JBHP. This is a competitive grant that is announced on an annual basis and needs to be supported by the local Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB). The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2016-07 grants is currently out and due on June 24, 2016. However, the RFP explicitly states that funds may not be used for program continuation.

Next Steps: Two strategies are being considered: 1) A request to expand the program for diversion, to serve individuals at the pre-sentencing stage rather than upon release. 2) To request funds to use the toolkit to train public housing authorities in how to operate a justice bridge housing program in other counties.

STATUS: On June 24, 2016 an application was submitted to PCCD for the “Pre-Entry” Justice Housing Program to provide permanent supportive housing as (part of) an alternative to incarceration for justice involved individuals predisposition. It was approved December 2016 and a first meeting of the Project team was held in February 2017.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Homeless Prevention

The PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) administers ESG funds for homeless prevention. These funds may be used to provide housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium term rental assistance necessary to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “homeless” definition in §576.2. This assistance may be provided to individuals and families who meet the criteria under the “at risk of homelessness” definition; have an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area; do not have
sufficient resources or support network available to prevent them from moving to a shelter or unsheltered situation; and meet other conditions, including exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care, including a corrections program. The costs of homelessness prevention are only eligible to the extent that the assistance is necessary to help the program participant regain stability in his or her current permanent housing or move into other permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

**STATUS:** It was determined that JBHP is not be eligible for ESG funds.

**Department of Corrections**

In PA the Department of Corrections has a program to provide housing for individuals leaving State Correctional Institutions (SCIs). DOC issues periodic IFB’s (Invitation to Bid) under “Lot 3: Housing Assistance Program” for contractors interested in providing “housing coordination for the purpose of assisting the offender, and where necessary, their dependents in attaining independent living by securing safe and affordable housing that complies with policy established by the DOC and the PA Board of Probation and Parole.” Winning contractors may conduct outreach, screening, case management, referrals and other residential services as well as up to 6 months rental assistance and housing support services to offenders referred to them by the DOC Bureau of Re-entry. A new IFB is due out soon. HAUC is preparing a memo to DOC about barriers to their applying for these funds and recommending changes. They plan to apply for these funds whether or not program changes are made.

**STATUS:** The Housing Authority has signed up in order to be eligible to bid on the Department of Corrections next IFB (Invitation for Bids). They are also in the process of scheduling a meeting with Secretary Wetzel to discuss the criteria for applying for the housing lot and the housing authority’s interest and expertise in providing reentry housing.

**PERMANENT RENTAL ASSISTANCE**

- **HUD Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program**
  The Tenant Based HCV program is the primary rental assistance program administered by most public housing authorities and is the primary source for permanent rental assistance in the JBHP following the bridge period. Union is and has been using these funds for permanency since the inception of the program. To date, 28 individuals have transitioned from the bridge to the HCV program and another nine have taken over their rent without assistance.

The Project Based HCV program is another possible resource. The PHA may allocate up to 20% of its voucher authority to designated units in the community.
However, in order to ensure integration, no more than 25% of the units in a single building can receive Project Based subsidies. In order to provide these vouchers, the PHA needs to advertise for proposals to fill specific needs of the community, making sure that they remain in compliance with fair housing laws. Although this has not been necessary to date, HAUC will consider this option in the future if necessary.

**STATUS:** The Housing Authority continues to make available tenant-based vouchers for the program. To date no program participant that has been eligible has either been denied or had to wait more than seven months to convert his/her bridge rental assistance into a permanent voucher.

- **Health Choices Reinvestment**
  Savings from Health Choices Plans may be reinvested in various housing activities including rental assistance. Persons with Serious Mental Illness must be the beneficiaries of the assistance and the specific amount and terms for the use of these funds is proposed by the County and approved by the state Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Three of the JBHP program participants have received permanent rental assistance through this resource, which will likely continue for this target population.

**STATUS:** The Housing Authority continues to work closely with CMSU to provide rental assistance for program participants who are eligible for the Health Choices vouchers. To date 10 participants have utilized this resource. Unfortunately, no additional resources are available under this program.

- **Other Federally Assisted Housing Providers**
  Another alternative for providing subsidized permanent housing for program participants is to establish a partnership with one or more private housing providers that have government subsidized units. Depending on their funding source, these entities may be able to give a priority, preference, or set-aside a certain number of units for the target population. Frequently if the bridge housing provider is able to vouch for an individual’s positive history in the bridge program, that can be an incentive to the private housing provider.

Specifically, through their Office of Multi-Family Housing, HUD has a new initiative to encourage its multifamily owners to establish homeless preferences for their properties. For example, in eastern PA, HUD has partnered with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), the Veterans Administration (VA), the Philadelphia Continuum of Care (CoC), nonprofits and others to build a team that assists owners and management agents to establish preferences to fill vacant units with individuals or families ready for permanent housing. When a vacancy occurs, homeless applicants are prioritized for that unit up to the number of units approved for a preference. All applicants must still meet program requirements and management company screening criteria.
**STATUS:** No developers in Union County are currently participating in this initiative, HAUC will consider contacting subsidized housing providers on an as needed basis to take JBHP participants.

**OPERATING EXPENSES**

Operating funds for housing programs are often the most challenging funds to secure since many sources, both public and private, prefer to provide funds for direct program or service activities.

Operating costs for the Justice Bridge Housing Program need to be covered for the bridge period as well as a portion of the permanent housing period for some participants. This is because it is the policy of the program to shift eligible participants to the Housing Choice Voucher Program as soon as their name comes up on the waiting list, which conserves the bridge rental assistance funds to enable more ex-offenders to be served. However, even though the source of the housing subsidy has changed, as long as the individual is under court supervision, he/she remains in the JBHP. Both support services and administration for these individuals continue, even though the bridge housing subsidy may have terminated.

Possible resources for operations include the following:

- **Union County Housing Authority Resources**
  Depending on the size of the authority’s current Housing Choice Voucher Program (especially if large) and the size of the bridge program to be operated (especially if small), the extra administrative tasks may be absorbed by the existing HCV staff. In addition, some PHAs have reserve funds that can be used for other purposes including the administration of the HCV or other eligible in-house programs.

  **STATUS:** While the Union County Housing Authority has used some unrestricted reserve funds to operate the JBHP, these funds are finite and are neither intended nor adequate for continuation funding.

- **City/County Revenue Sources**
  To ensure long term sustainability of the justice bridge program it may be desirable to seek local funding through the annual budgeting process. If the rental assistance costs can be funded through other government programs, all or a portion of the ongoing operating costs, which are a small portion of the total program costs, could be funded through general revenue sources.
Data collected so far from the JBHP clearly demonstrates that providing bridge housing is far more cost effective than the cost of incarceration. In many cases these savings will extend to other public systems as well, such as the homeless shelter, emergency room, mental health and other services. Therefore a shifting of county dollars from criminal justice to housing may be warranted. One alternative for shifting these dollars might be to determine the average cost per person per day for individuals served in the housing program versus the jail and to allocate the cost savings to JBHP for administrative costs.

**STATUS:** To date the County Commissioners have not approved the use of general revenues for JBHP. However, with the Housing Authority’s recently strengthened relationship with the Community Action Agency, the possibility of using this resource will be revisited.

• **Increased HUD Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Fees**
The Union County PHA estimates that the actual per person per unit cost of administering the Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) for the JBHP is more than 2.5 times the cost of the current administrative fee allowed by HUD ($150 versus $57). PHA staff engages in the following additional activities for the JBHP:

  o Chair and participate in the selection/review committee, including monthly progress review for all participants in the program
  o Increased role in apartment selection, landlord recruitment and relations
  o Coordination of supportive services

**STATUS:** HAUC met with the HUD Philadelphia Area Office on May 25, 2016 to discuss the possibility of an increased administrative fee for participants of JBHP as well as to identify other potential funding opportunities. The HUD officials explained that this is not currently an option.

**OTHER SOURCES**

In addition to the above targeted resources, there are a number of funding sources that are flexible and can be used for either operations or direct housing costs as well as for supportive services for program participants:

• **Housing Trust Funds**
  Housing Trust funds are dedicated funds to be used specifically to support affordable housing. These sources are generally the most flexible housing finance source and most responsive to local housing needs. As such, they can be used to fund direct or indirect program costs, including rental assistance and program operations. Justice bridge housing programs could be supported from county, state or national trust funds as described below:
**County Housing Trust Funds**
In PA, Act 137 was passed by the State Legislature in 1992. It permits counties to raise additional revenues to be used for affordable housing needs by increasing fees for recording mortgages and deeds. The additional funds can be expended for "any program or project approved by the county commissioners which increases the availability of quality housing, either sales or rental, to any county resident whose annual income is less than the median income of the county." Union County collects these fees which they have used to fund the County’s first time homebuyers’ program. Instead, a portion of the County housing trust funds could be used to fund JBHP. One strategy to facilitate this shift of dollars would be to work with a local bank to participate in the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh’s (FHLB) First Front Door Program. Under this program, the FHLB will match $3 for every $1 a qualified homebuyer contributes to down payment and closing costs.

**STATUS:** To date none of these funds have been diverted to JBHP.

**PHARE (State Trust Fund)**
Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE) was established by Act 105 of 2010 to provide the mechanism by which certain allocated state or federal funds, as well as funds from other outside sources, would be used to assist with the creation, rehabilitation and support of affordable housing throughout the Commonwealth. While funds were not initially allocated under the legislation, specific requirements were established to include preferences, considerations, matching fund options, and obligations to utilize a percentage of the funds to assist households below 50% of the median area income. PHARE is administered by the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA).

In October 2015, the legislature provided for a portion of the increased revenue from the Realty Transfer Tax to go to PHARE (capped at $25 million). We will know in July whether any funds will be available this year. If so, PHFA will amend its 2016 plan and issue an RFP. Uses of the funds are broad so JBHP will be an eligible project.

**STATUS:** On January 13, 2017 the Union-Snyder Community Action Agency submitted an application to PHFA for the Universal Bridge program that included funding for bridge rental assistance to be administered by the Housing Authority for Union County participants.

**National Housing Trust Fund**
The National Housing Trust Fund is intended to provide communities with funds to build, preserve, and rehabilitate rental homes that are affordable for extremely and very low income households. The NHTF is a permanent program, and will
have dedicated sources of funding not subject to the annual appropriations process. At least 90% of the funds must be used for rental housing. At least 75% of the funds for rental housing must benefit extremely low income households, and up to 25% can benefit very low income households. Initial funding to the NHTF is expected in late 2016, with an allocation of $3.8 million to be administered by PHFA. Although funds will likely be allocated to Tax credit projects this year, future allocations may be more flexible and a potential source for JBHP.

**STATUS:** The application for these funds has not been announced.

- **PATH**
  The Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program is a formula grant to the 50 states. In PA it is administered by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and passed through County Mental Health Offices to local provider organizations. Services are provided to people with serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. A variety of services can be provided, including: outreach, screening and diagnostic treatment; habilitation and rehabilitation, community mental health, alcohol or drug treatment services, and staff training. While Union is not currently receiving PATH funds, the state periodically opens up the process for new counties. While rental assistance is not an eligible cost, in the future Union might apply for PATH funds for related services under JBHP.

  **STATUS:** OMHSAS has not opened up this program for new applicants.

- **PA Human Service Block Grants (HSBG)**
  This program combines seven former state and federal funding streams to allow counties the flexibility to allocate funds where they are most needed. Funding streams include specified non-Medicaid and non-IDEA county appropriations including: Mental Health Community Programs, Intellectual Disabilities Community Base, County Child Welfare Special Grants, Homeless Assistance Program, Act 152, Behavioral Health Services and Human Service Development Fund. Within these sources a range of housing services are eligible for individuals with serious mental illness, including those being diverted or released from jail, individuals with intellectual disabilities, seniors, homeless and near homeless, children, and youth in transition. Bridge housing and other housing supports also eligible. Although Union County has not yet become a block grant county, it may consider applying in the future, which would give them more flexibility and potentially provide additional resources for the JBHP.

  **STATUS:** Union County is still not a block grant county.
• **Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP)**

PA’s NAP is a Tax credit program administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to encourage businesses to invest in projects which improve distressed areas or support neighborhood conservation. To be eligible, a project must fall under one of the following categories: affordable housing programs, community services, crime prevention, education, job training or neighborhood assistance. The project must have commitments from corporations that pay state corporate income taxes prior to applying to DCED for approval. Once approved, the corporations receive a 50% to 70% tax credit on each dollar contributed, depending on the type of program. Union could identify a local business interested in supporting the JBHP and receiving state corporate income tax credits.

*STATUS: No action has been taken on this resource.*

• **Local Foundations/Endowment Funds**

Local foundations can be an excellent resource for funding of a justice bridge housing program. Two uses of these funds are particularly critical; for program start-up, and to endow a rental assistance fund. For program start-up, national study findings backed-up with pertinent local data can be essential to justify a request. In such cases, the request should include funds for the collection of key outcome data during the program year, with the goal of demonstrating the cost effectiveness of the program.

Second, since it may be difficult to obtain ongoing funds for the bridge rental assistance, JBHP might consider establishing an endowment fund, which would require involvement of a non-profit entity to collect and manage the fund. The interest from such a fund could then be used to cover the rental assistance during the bridge period. The endowment fund could include funds from not only private foundations, but also from private corporations, government grants, local fund-raising activities, and individual donations. Faith-based organizations can also be excellent partners in such endeavors.

HAUC might consider use of a portion of the developer’s fee from the Penn Commons project to initiate such a fund for JBHP. Once operational, such a fund might be expanded to serve other special needs populations as well as expanded housing models such as master leasing or shared housing.

*STATUS: As described above, the Housing Authority has made an informal proposal to the United Way for presentation to the Geisinger Foundation to fund an in-depth analysis of the JBHP outcomes to date as well as to start up and evaluate the Universal Bridge program.*
• **Grant Opportunities**

In addition to the above, the New York Re-entry Resource Center lists the following websites containing information on public and private grant opportunities:

**www.grants.gov** (Grants.gov)

Access point for all federal RFPs. Can search for current grants by keyword, agency, or category. Can apply for federal grants online from this website. (Note: need to register in advance to apply for grants online. Otherwise, the grant application takes several days to process).

**http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/** (Office of Justice Programs, US DOJ)

Lists funding opportunities made available by the Office of Justice Programs, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

**http://www.samhsa.gov/grants06/fy2006.aspx** (SAMHSA)

Lists funding opportunities made available by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.


Lists drug-related funding opportunities, training and technical assistance, and other resources from public and private agencies.

**http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/pio/grantseekers.htm** (DCJS compilation)

Federal grants compiled by (not administered by) the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services

**http://www.jointogether.org/news/funding/** (Join Together)

Website maintained by Join Together, a center at Boston University School of Public Health focused on addiction policy, prevention and treatment. Posts recent funding opportunities related to drug and alcohol addiction.

**http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=685&nodeD=81** (Corporation for Supportive Housing)

Lists funding opportunities of interest to supportive housing developers and funding providers.
http://www.reentry.net/ny (Reentry Net/NY's Grants Clearinghouse)
Maintains a running list of new RFPs and lists foundations with an interest in reentry

Lists current RWJF RFPs.

https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:Join/signupid:6559 (HIRE Network)
Sign up here to receive funding announcements through its listserv and newsletters.

http://www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do (Grants.gov)
Sign up here to receive listings of new federal grants. One can customize the mailing as to eligible agencies, types of grants, etc.

http://foundationcenter.org/newsletters/ (The Foundation Center)
Sign up here to receive free mailings with funding announcements. Additional grantseeking opportunities can be accessed through paid membership.

http://www.ncjrs.gov/subreg.html (National Criminal Justice Reference Service)
Sign up here to receive a bi-weekly newsletter that includes, among other announcements, new criminal justice-related funding opportunities.

https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Secure/Registration/Register.aspx (US DOJ, Office of Justice Programs)
Sign up here to receive bi-weekly newsletters listing funding opportunities at the Office of Justice Programs (US DOJ)

Vendors can apply here to receive periodic notifications as to contracting opportunities