
Open Doors to Public Housing: Expanding Access for People with Conviction Histories

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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

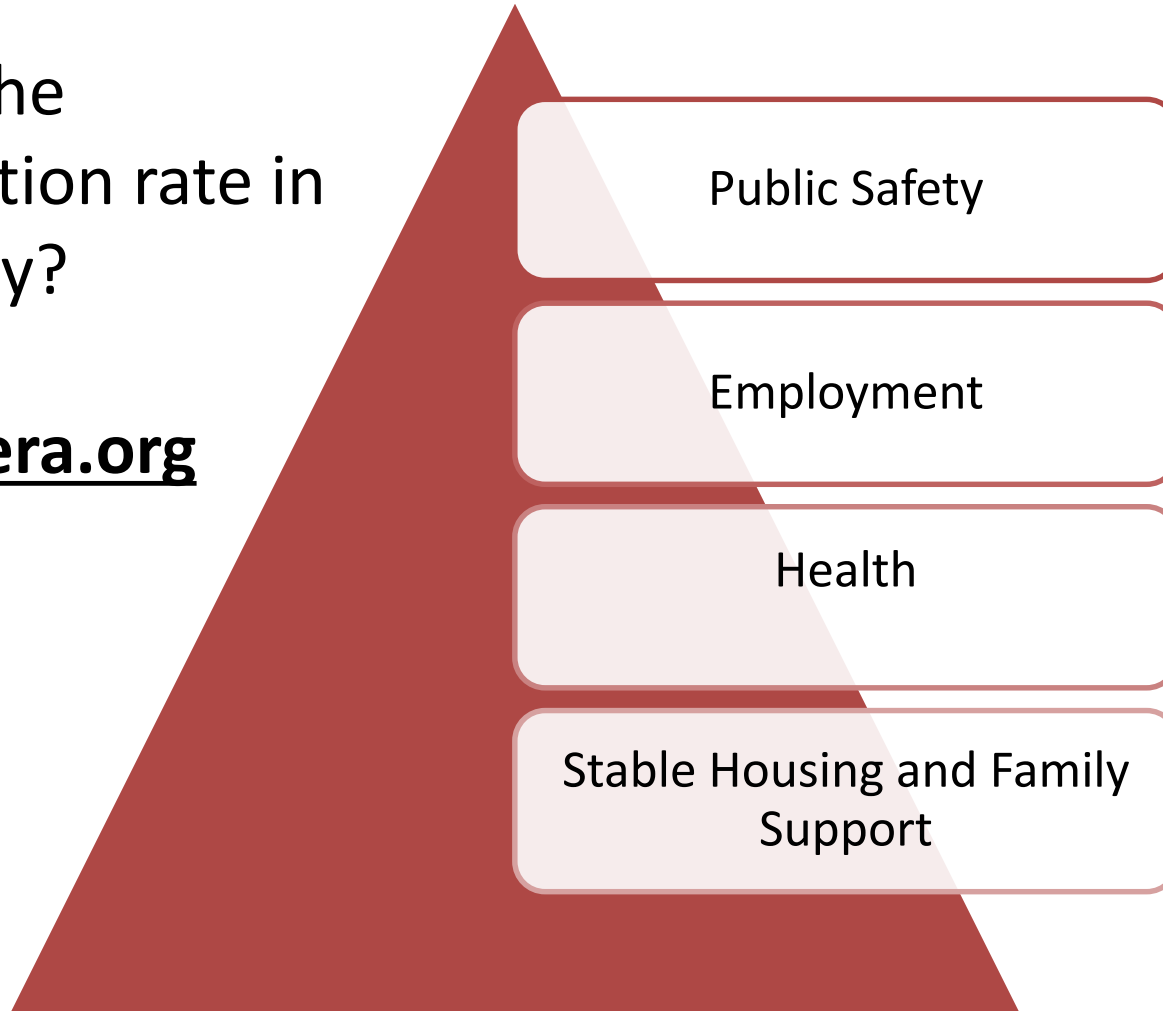
Vera works in partnership with local, state, and national government officials to create change from within.

- **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.

The Foundational Role of Housing

What is the
incarceration rate in
my county?

[Trends.vera.org](https://trends.vera.org)



Goals of Open Doors

Increase the number of housing authorities serving people with criminal histories

Strengthen partnerships between housing authorities and reentry stakeholders

Assist housing authorities in planning and implementing programs or changing their policies to better serve people with criminal histories while maintaining community safety

Educate and build public support for public housing access for formerly incarcerated individuals and families

The NYCHA

JOURNAL



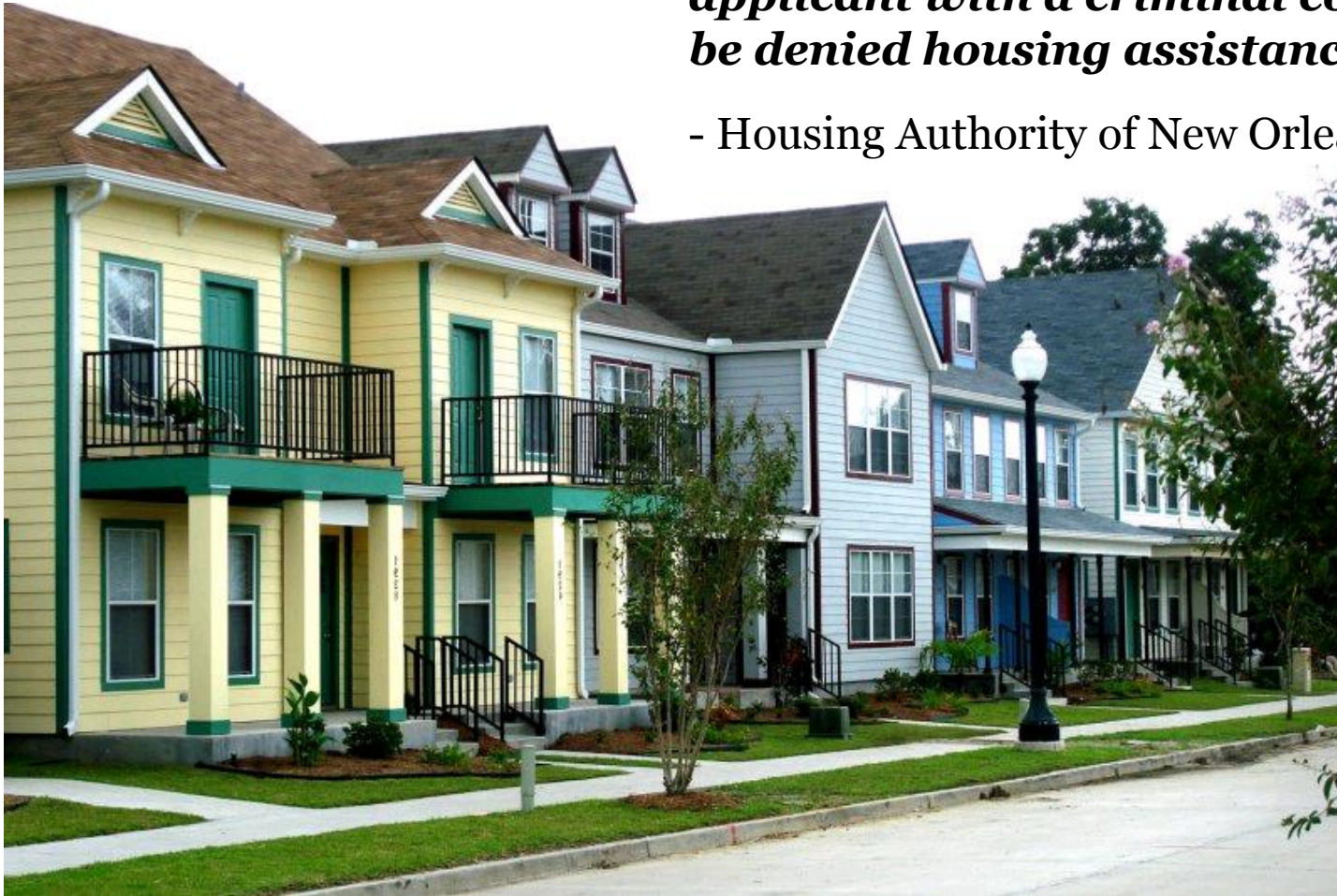
The New York Times



Expanding Housing Eligibility

“There is absolutely no presumption that an applicant with a criminal conviction should be denied housing assistance...”

- Housing Authority of New Orleans



Modifying Standards of Admission

Creating clarity around eligibility for people with convictions

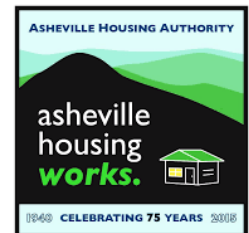
- Common language “activity that threatens the health and safety of residents and staff”

Types of revisions

- Consistency across third party property managers
- Shorten look-back periods
- Review convictions to see what contributes to public safety
- Individualized review of all applicants with records rather than automatic denial
- Quality checks of criminal background reports received

Partners

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



Resources

Opening Doors: How to develop reentry programs using examples from public housing authorities (Vera 2017)

<https://www.vera.org/publications/opening-doors-public-housing-reentry-guide>

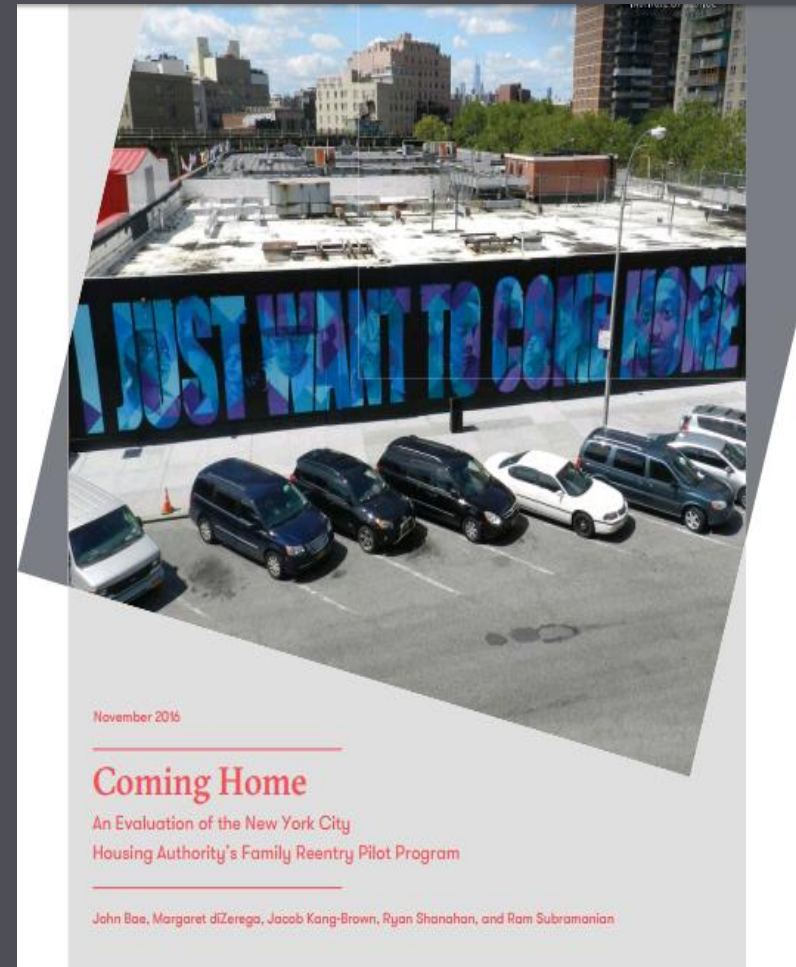


Resources

Coming Home: An Evaluation of the New York City Housing Authority's Family Reentry Pilot Program (Vera 2016)

Report to the New York City Housing Authority: Applying and Lifting Permanent Exclusions for Criminal Conduct (Vera 2017)

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



For more information

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