

August 2021



# **Housing First at the Intersection of Housing and the Criminal Legal System**

San Diego, CA

# Welcome

Tamera Kohler, Regional Task Force on Homelessness



# Introduction: Homebase



**Lily Harvey**  
*Senior Staff Attorney,  
Head of Criminal Legal  
Systems Initiative*



**Maddie Nation**  
*Policy Analyst*

*The content in this presentation is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Homebase does not enter into attorney-client relationships.*

# 2021 Training Series



# Training Goals

1. Examine equity issues underlying exposure to homelessness and the criminal legal system
2. Understand Housing First principles in the context of serving individuals impacted by the criminal legal system
3. Identify action steps for improving housing access and outcomes for individuals impacted by the criminal legal system

# Zoom Tips to Guide Discussion

We love to see your faces! If possible, please turn on your **video**.

As you have **questions or comments** during the presentations, please add them to the chat box.

You were automatically placed on **mute** when you entered the meeting.

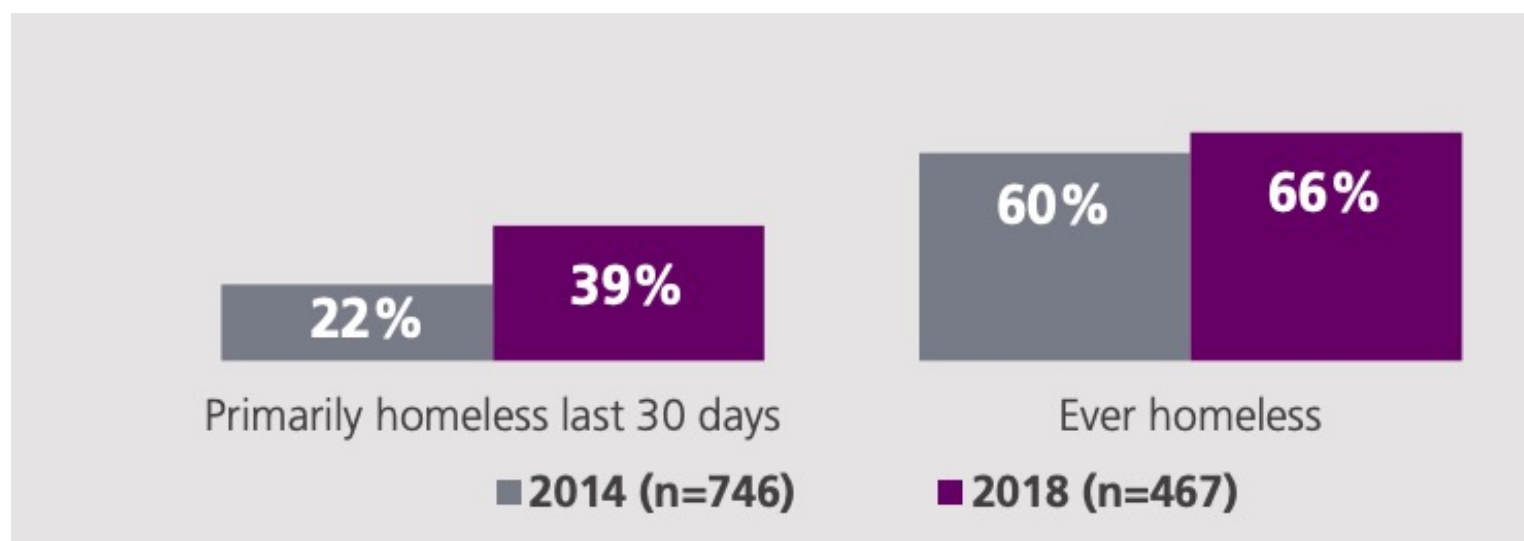
We will be **recording** today's session.

# Reviewing the Data on Intersectionality



# Homelessness & Jail Stays in San Diego (SANDAG)

*Between 2014 and 2018, the number of individuals in jail reporting experiences with homelessness increased.*





# Equity Issues

Formerly incarcerated community members are **nearly ten times more likely to experience homelessness** than the general population.

Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ individuals are **disproportionately represented** in both homelessness and criminal legal systems.

## Black Adults Make up 12% of the U.S. Population

but **33%** of the U.S. **prison** population,  
and **43%** of adults experiencing **homelessness** in our  
country.

## LGBT Individuals Make up 4.5% of the Population

but LGB people are **3x as likely to be incarcerated**,  
and one study indicated that LGBT young adults  
experienced prior-year **homelessness or housing  
instability** at a rate **over double** that of non-LGBT  
individuals.

# National Scope

Every year, over 600,000 people enter *prison* and 10.6 million people enter *jail*.

74% of people held by jails are not convicted of any crime.

Technical violations are the main reason for incarceration of people on probation or parole.

# Housing is the Solution

Housing =



# Housing First For Clients Impacted by the Criminal Legal System



# Housing First

*Empirical research has found that Housing First significantly reduces offending and homelessness over treatment as usual, including for individuals with mental disorders.*

([Clifasefi, et al, 2013](#); [Somers, et al 2013](#))

# Housing First

Immediate access to housing with no preconditions

Client choice and self-determination

Individualized and client-driven supports

Persistent engagement

**Poll Question:** Are you following Housing First principles for clients who are impacted by the criminal legal system, including individuals in reentry?



# What does it look like in practice?

- Housing will be at the center of any plan
- Rules are based on behavior, not sobriety
- Residents will get wellness checks and offered supportive services
- A housing program will not exit a client if they're arrested and released within 90 days (with few exceptions)
- A shelter or housing provider will not place blanket bans on someone entering because of a specific or general criminal background

# Chat Questions

- Does your shelter or housing program conduct criminal history screenings?
- If yes, how do you use that information?

# What does it look like in practice?



## Client-focused Interventions

Lowering barriers  
Client engagement and support tools



## Organizational and System Interventions

Building internal capacity for additional supportive services  
Leveraging system-wide resources to support participants

# It Works! Housing First:

- Reduces arrest rates
- Reduces municipal violations
- Reduces nights spent in jail
- Improves mental functioning
- Keeps substance use at about the same levels



# Local Expert: Community Care Coordination (PATH)

Becky Jester, C3 Program Manager

# Community Care Coordination (C3)

## **About C3:**

- C3 is funded by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency
- PATH is the contracted service provider for C3

## **C3 serves individuals who are:**

- Justice-involved
- Have a serious mental illness
- Currently homeless or at-risk of homelessness

# C3 Program Design

There are two C3 Teams, compromised of (1) Clinical Case Manager and (2) Peer Support Specialists.

---

The C3 Teams are supported by a Clinician and Housing Specialist.

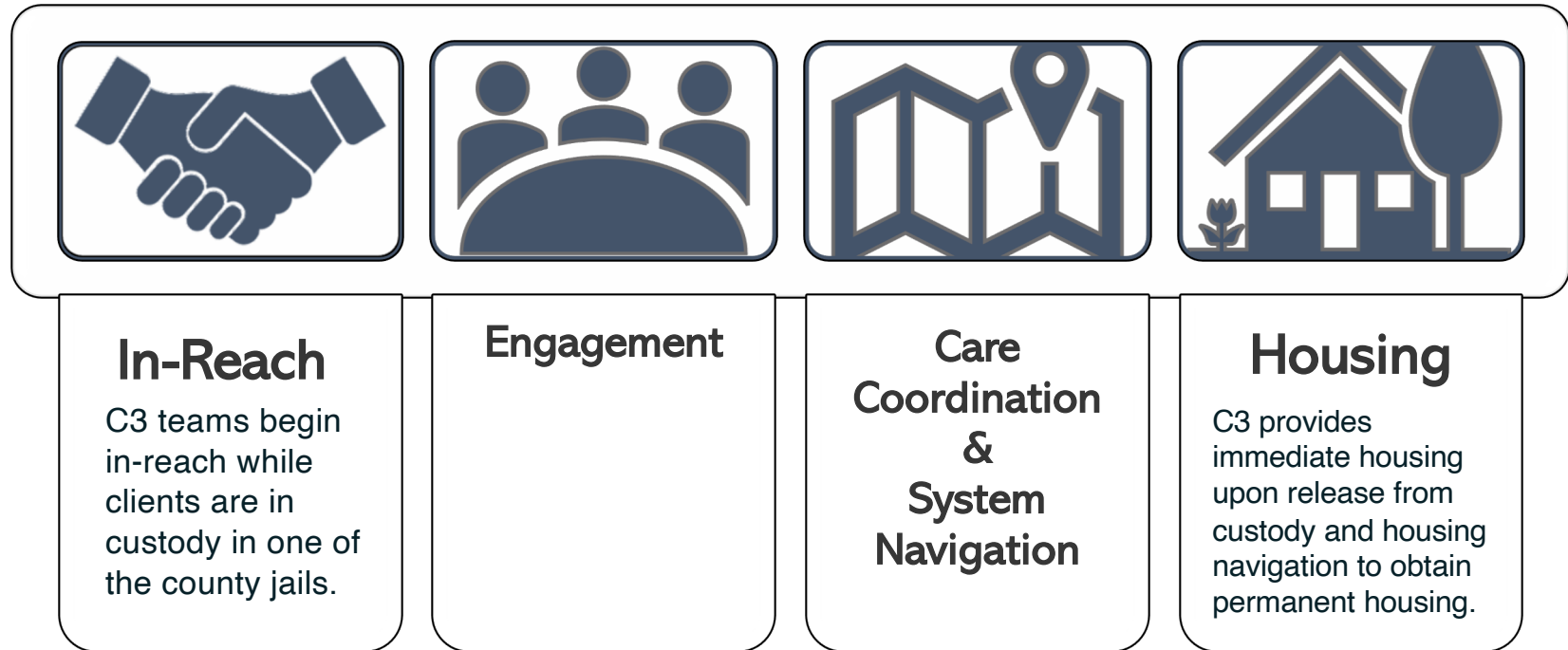
---

Referrals are received from the Sheriff's Department and the Office of the Public Defender.

---

C3 clients are provided with up to 12 months of care coordination, service navigation and housing assistance upon release from custody.

# C3 Program Design





# C3 & Housing First Principles

## Immediate access to housing with no preconditions

- C3 offers housing option(s) to all participants upon their release from custody regardless of substance use
- Advocacy with landlords and property managers

## Client choice and self-determination

- Harm reduction
- We will continue to work with clients even if they decline housing or do not want to participate in mental health treatment

## Individualized and client-driven supports

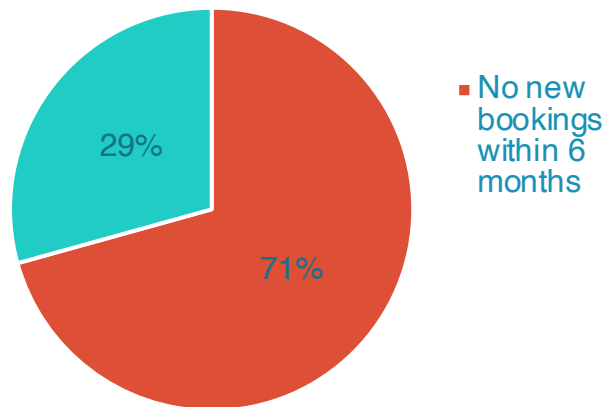
- Program length of 12 months is flexible and based on clients needs

## Persistent engagement

- Multiple in-reach meetings before a client enrolls or declines the program
- Assertive outreach in the community

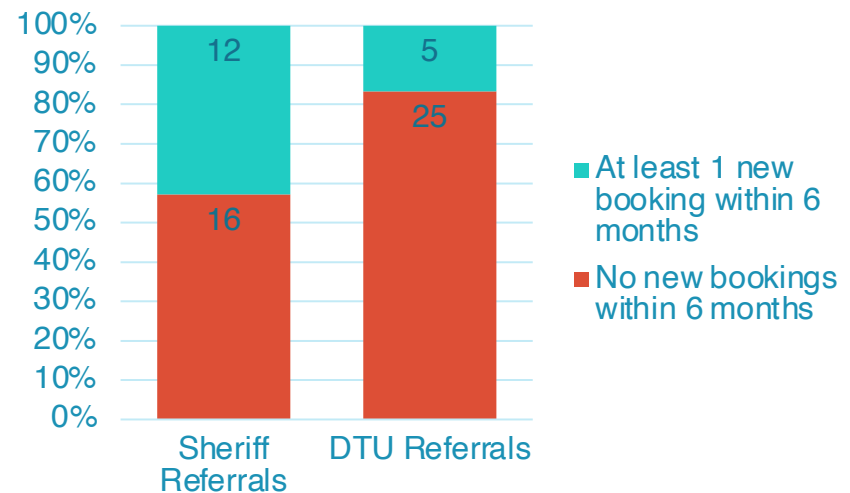
# C3 Housing First & Recidivism

Program Year 2 – Total Participants



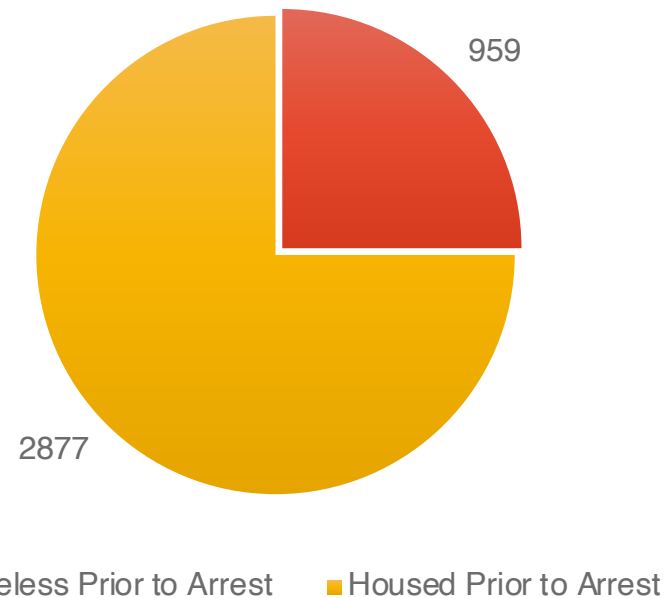
Total # of participants = 58

Program Year 2 – Per Referral Source



## SD County Jail Homeless Population on 8/11/21

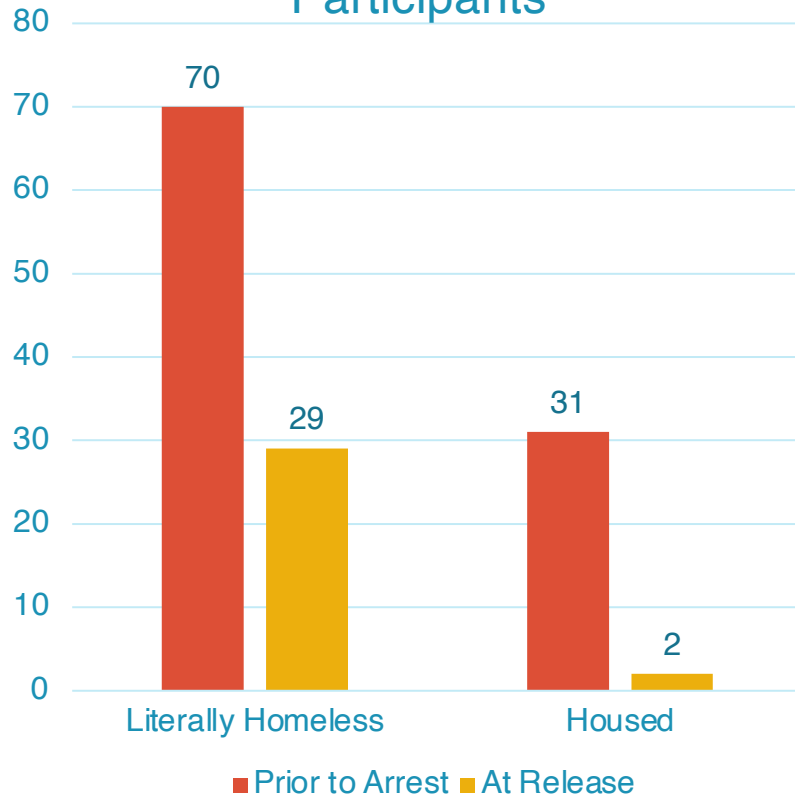
According to RTFH's "2020 We All Count Report," 25%\* of individuals surveyed in custody reported being homeless at the time of their arrest.



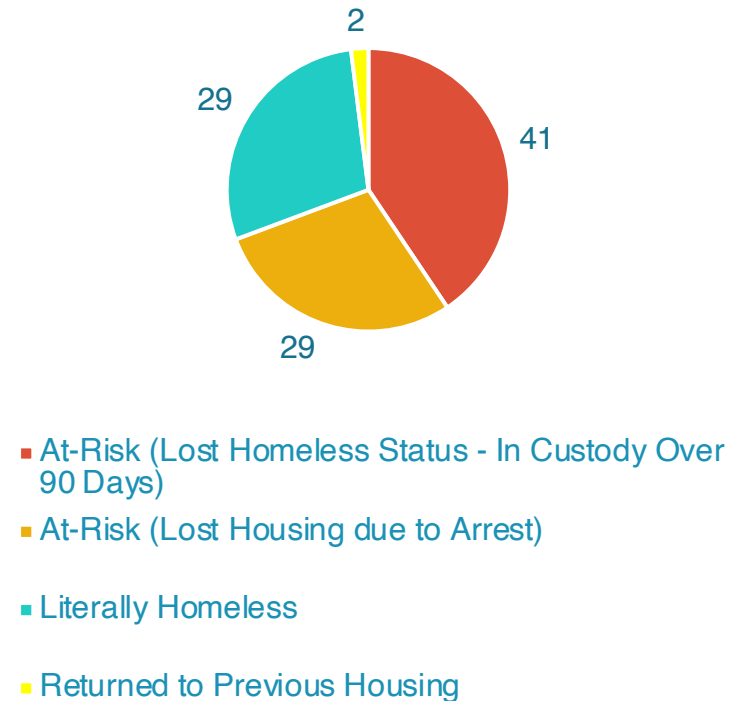
*\*This number only includes individuals who were literally homeless prior to their arrest. It does not include individuals who are at-risk or will lose their housing due to their arrest.*

# C3 Participants & Housing

Impact of Arrest on Housing and Homeless Status for C3 Participants



C3 Participant Housing and Homeless Status at Release



# Implementing Housing First Strategies with Clients Impacted by the Criminal Legal System



# Cultural Competency

- **Interpersonal and Structural Trauma**
  - ACEs: “Offender group reported nearly four times as many adverse childhood reactions in childhood than an adult male normative sample.”\*
  - Structural Trauma: Education, Child Protective Services, Mental Health, Medical, Legal, etc.
- **Common behaviors needed to survive in custody are often seen as resistance by providers**
  - Posturing, resistance to showing weakness to protect oneself can be seen as threatening in the community
  - Having freedom limited in custody can lead to an attitude of “I’ve already done my time” in the community
  - Difficulty being vulnerable, open and honest

*\*Reavis et. al, The Permanente J. 2013 Spring; 17 (2): 44-48.*

# Client Choice and Self-Determination

## Provide Choice

Improves rapport building & increases likelihood of engagement (e.g., motel vouchers vs. shelters)

## Reduce Requirements

Participation in specific services should not be a requirement for housing; accepting housing should not be a requirement for services

## Repeat Engagement

Some clients may initially decline services while others may accept any services offered

# Individualized and Client-Driven Supports

- Thorough, ongoing **assessment** that includes understanding the client's specific criminogenic needs
  - Trauma-informed assessment
- Client may need **additional support in connecting to other community services** including mental health, substance use, etc.
- Emphasize **engagement, social skills, and problem-solving** strategies
- Some clients may need **support with identifying leisure activities** and scheduling their time to avoid the people and places that led to their arrest(s)



# Immediate Access to Housing with No Preconditions

- **Advocacy** on behalf of clients with landlords, property managers and other housing providers
- **Harm Reduction**
- Clients may need **support with social skills** to maintain housing stability
  - Clients may need support with conflict resolution and learning new ways to communicate with providers, neighbors, property management, etc.

# Persistent Engagement

- **Assertive Outreach**
  - Frequent contact
  - Predictability with flexibility
- Building **rapport and trust may take longer** than with other clients
  - Authenticity
  - Transparency
  - Consistency
- Provide **multiple opportunities for a client to understand** a program, service or referral before deciding whether to accept or decline

# C3: Lessons Learned

## Client-Focused Interventions

- Frequency of contact varies based on client need
- Motivational Interviewing is helpful in increasing engagement and motivation for change
- Additional support with budgeting, identifying pro-social activities, managing free time may be needed

## Collaboration

- Utilize probation officers or parole agents from the start
- Include clients in the conversation
- Define roles early for better outcomes and reduced duplication of services
- Communication with other community providers, family and other informal supports

## Lived experience

- Appropriate self-disclosure of staff with lived experience can increase rapport, engagement and provide model of recovery
- Connect clients to re-entry programs who use staff with lived experience
- Program and agency leadership must prioritize support for staff with lived experience

# Improving Housing Access and Outcomes for People Impacted by the Criminal Legal System



# Considerations

Custodial or other trauma

Community supervision and requirements

Can "disappear" if reincarcerated

Coordination across systems

Discrimination, including restrictive housing policies

Challenges securing sustainable employment

Lack of family ties

Prevalence of Serious Mental Illness (SMI) or Substance Use Disorders (SUD)

**Chat:** Other considerations?

# Opportunities

Highly Motivated

Experience with Problem Solving

Skills in Unique Areas

Compelling Personal Story

Find Cross-System Complimentary Objectives

## Action Steps – Housing or Shelter Providers

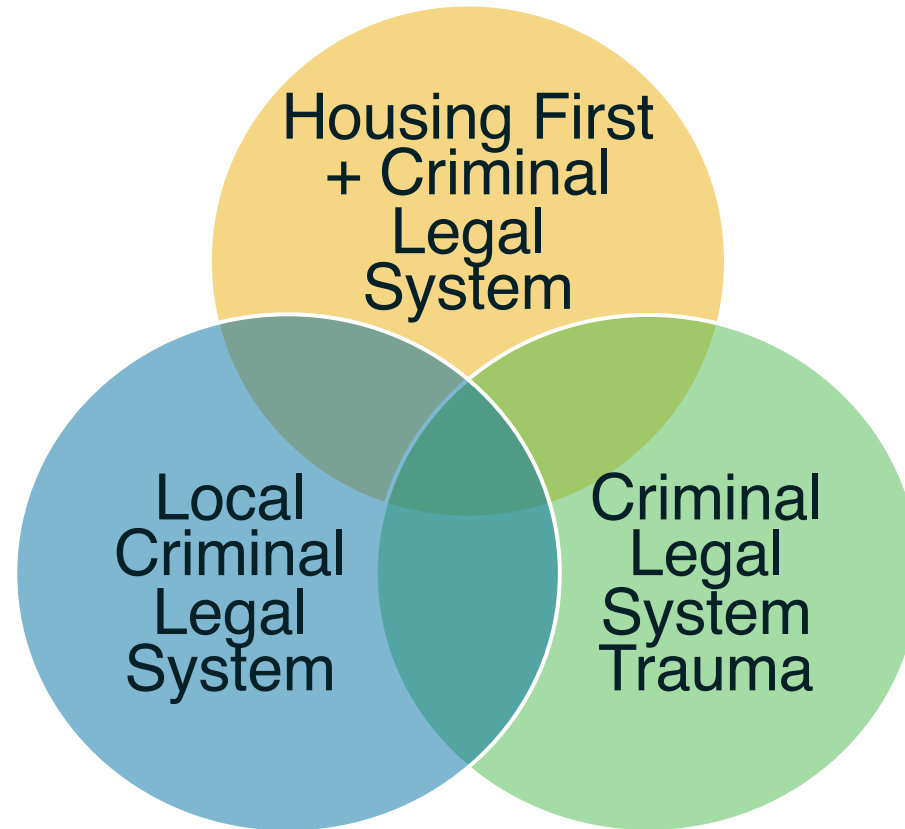
- Hire and create structures to retain staff with **lived experience** of both systems
- Develop partnerships and set-asides to include CLS impacted people in housing programs, particularly for **low-barrier TH, RRH, and supportive housing**
- Ensure that, regardless of type of placement, the following **services** are *accessible* to CLS-impacted clients: employment, education, life skills, transportation, mental health, and substance use treatment
- Explore **shelter and housing options** that provide a less institutional setting (e.g., non-congregate shelter) for persons recently released from custody
- Educate and partner with **landlords** to amend policies that create barriers to housing; offer landlord incentives to increase housing options for people impacted by the CLS

## Action Steps – Outreach

- Develop working partnerships focused on care coordination with the **Sheriff's Office** and **Probation Department**
- Hire and create structures to retain staff with **lived experience** of both systems
- Conduct “pop-up” or mobile homeless outreach and assessment efforts in **partnership with reentry services**.



# 2021 Training Series





# Thank You!

[clsi@homebaseccc.org](mailto:clsi@homebaseccc.org)

Training #2 - Local Lingo and Landscape - September  
Date Coming Soon!