

Housing Solutions Lab and the Center for Justice Innovation Launch 2025 Housing Justice Peer Network

The [NYU Furman Center's Housing Solutions Lab](#) ("the Lab") and the [Center for Justice Innovation](#) ("the Center") have selected eight communities to join the 2025 Housing Justice Peer Network — a 16-month-long program designed for housing and criminal justice agency leaders nationwide.

With support of the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) and the [Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies](#), the Network will bring together housing and criminal justice leaders from **Dane County, WI; Montgomery County, OH; Kansas City, MO; Memphis, TN; Oakland, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; Prince George's County, MD; and Toledo, OH;** to further cross-sector partnerships and explore solutions that improve access to housing for justice-involved people.

Participants of the Housing Justice Peer Network will receive technical assistance and policy guidance. Our experts will also assist them in gathering the necessary data and identifying the partnerships needed to achieve their goals. The two-phase program will launch on **April 29**. **Phase One** will include monthly virtual sessions, during which attendees will learn from national housing and justice researchers and practitioners about promising approaches to bridge gaps and implement reforms. In **Phase Two**, the Center and the Lab will assist each team in creating detailed implementation plans to achieve local objectives, such as establishing a community court, developing navigation systems to help individuals transitioning out of the criminal justice system locate housing, or designing eviction prevention programs.

"People who have been involved with the criminal justice system face [numerous barriers](#) to stable, affordable housing. Yet, despite the link between criminal justice issues and housing stability, these systems can often operate separately," said **Martha Galvez, Executive Director of the NYU Furman Center's Housing Solutions Lab**. "The Network's goals are to foster the peer learning, intentional collaboration, and individualized planning needed to design and implement innovative policies. We also aim to foster the lasting relationships that jurisdictions need to tackle these interconnected challenges."

Courtney Bryan, Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Justice Innovation, said the launch of the Housing Justice Peer Network is a vital step forward in disrupting the relationship between housing instability and involvement in the criminal justice system. "As the Center works to advance justice and safety across the nation, we're proud to partner with the NYU Furman Center's Housing Solutions Lab and collaborate with policymakers in these eight communities to solve housing issues for system-involved people," she added.

This initiative was made possible through support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies.

Hear From Our Participants:

"Dane County is the fastest-growing county in the State of Wisconsin. As we continue to grow, it's essential to establish a strong framework to plan for both current and future housing needs," said **Colleen Clark Bernhardt, Director, Dane County Office of Justice Reform (Dane County, WI)**. "By addressing the needs of our most vulnerable residents in a thorough and effective manner, we can enhance public safety and improve the well-being of individuals and families in the long term. We are thrilled to collaborate with local leaders, advocates, and national experts who are working towards these goals."

"A community court brings justice to the people, not the other way around," said **Barbie Miller, Community Engagement Coordinator, Office of Unhoused Solutions, Housing and Community Development (Kansas City, MO)**. "By addressing legal issues where people live and offering solutions instead of punishment, we break down the barriers that keep so many from seeking help. It replaces fear and anxiety with accessibility and trust, ensuring that past legal challenges don't stand in the way of someone's future."

"Montgomery County is proud to collaborate with partners like NaphCare, Homeless Solutions, and the Public Defender's Office to break down barriers and create real opportunities for the people we serve," said **Judy Dodge, Montgomery County Commission President (Montgomery County, OH)**. "Stable housing is the foundation for successful reentry and strengthens our entire community. Everyone deserves dignity, stability, and the chance to rebuild. That begins with a safe place to call home."

"As a community, we know that housing is the foundation of a safe and productive life," said **Guy Merritt, Deputy Director, Prince George's County Department of Corrections (Prince George's County, MD)**. "Through our participation in the Housing Justice Peer Network, we hope to learn from the sessions and from our peers across the nation how to best utilize the resources and data in our County to address housing needs for the justice-involved."

"The City of Oakland is proud to be working with the Lab and Center and seven other cities around the country to explore the intersections between housing and the experiences of justice system-involved people," said **Emily Weinstein, Director of Oakland's Housing and Community Development Department (Oakland, CA)**.

"Through data-driven strategies, Oakland's Violence Prevention and Housing and Community Development Departments have seen significant progress recently," said **Holly Joshi, Chief of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention**. "Even with that forward movement, we know there is still much work to be done to create a safe and healthy Oakland, and we are excited for the opportunity to innovate and deepen our internal collaboration through this exciting partnership."