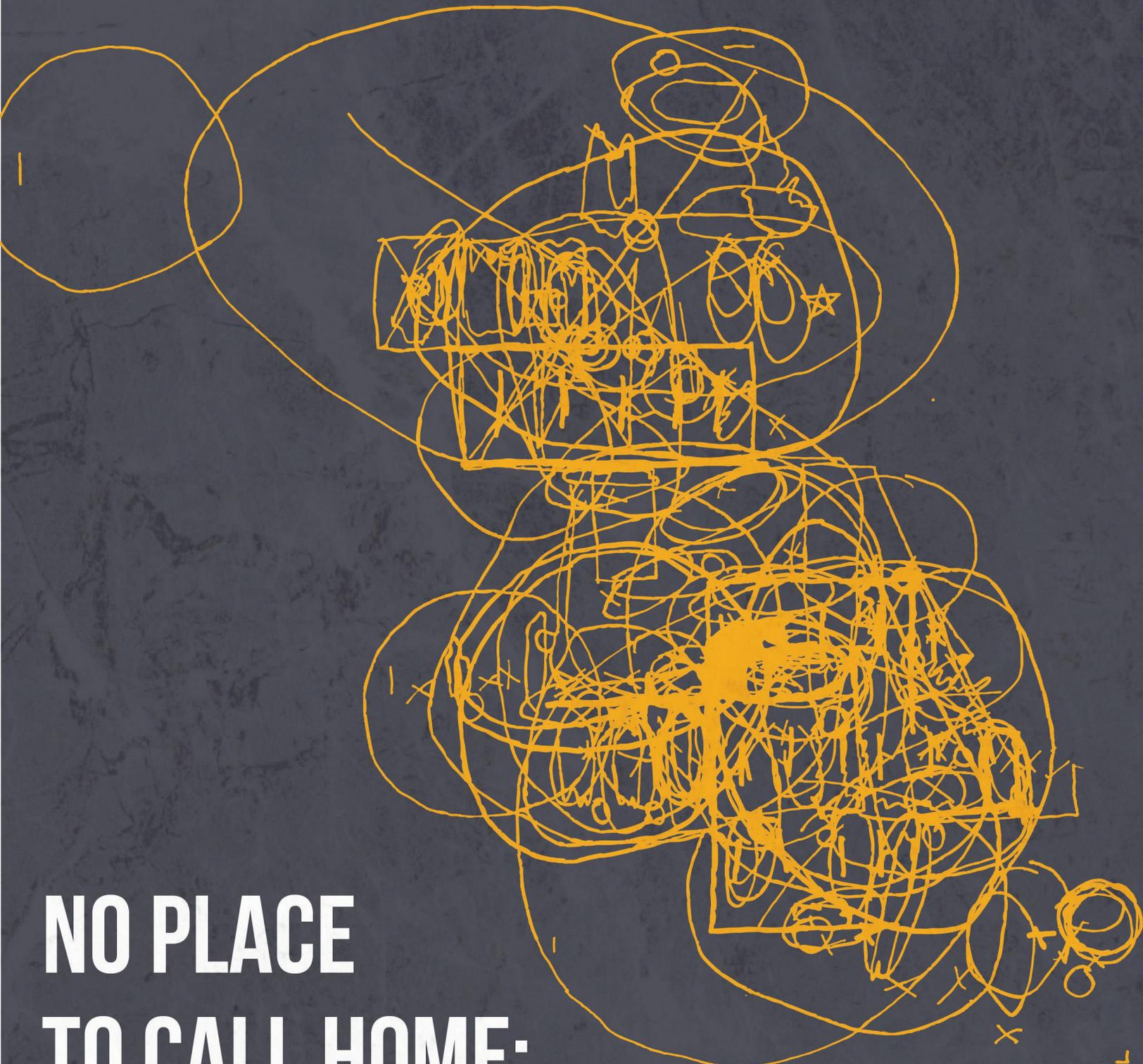




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For a Just Society



NO PLACE TO CALL HOME:

Navigating Reentry
Housing in Chicago

Roosevelt University Policy Research Collaborative

Policy Research Collaborative
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The Policy Research Collaborative is an interdisciplinary, applied research and technical assistance center at Roosevelt University working with community partners to address social inequities and strengthen communities through transformative policy research and advocacy.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For individuals with criminal records, finding a place to live in Chicago can be extremely challenging. Through interviews with 81 individuals with criminal records, this study shows how the presence of a criminal record creates barriers for individuals on the private housing rental market regardless of the individual's age or the age of the individual's record.

Participants were asked to sketch on a map where they think they could find a place to live. This report juxtaposes their answers with information about where they have experienced rental rejection in the past. The presence of a criminal record can multiply other forms of disadvantage, deepening racial, class, and gender divides. By discriminating against individuals with criminal records, landlords not only undermine individuals' attempts to build stable lives, but also reproduce and multiply large-scale social inequities.

Nationally, 95% of state prisoners will be released from prison at some point, while an estimated one in three Americans has a criminal record.¹ In Chicago alone, approximately 11,000 individuals return from Illinois prisons each year, so the challenges experienced by people with criminal records are widespread.² Moreover, in Illinois, about 48% of individuals released from prison will return within three years—a figure that reveals the pressing need for improved reentry opportunities and supports.³ Housing, in particular, comprises a crucial component of successful reentry—a key building block that promotes steady employment, fosters mental and physical health, supports individuals in their recovery from substance abuse, and provides the other advantages of stable shelter that are vital to basic human wellbeing.

No Place to Call Home proposes policy solutions to help overcome systemic discrimination against renters with criminal records and mitigate the ripple effects of that discrimination. Through a combination of reforms, this report proposes a pathway to expand housing access to those with criminal records in order to make Chicago and other cities more equitable and hospitable places for all residents to call home. This study was approved by the Roosevelt University Institutional Review Board: IRB No. 2018-028.

Note on Terminology

For the purposes of this report, “returning citizen” refers to anyone who has experienced incarceration in jail or prison (state or federal). This term is unrelated to national citizenship and uses “citizen” in the colloquial sense to refer to an inhabitant of a particular city—in this case, Chicago. We avoid using the terms “criminal,” “felon/ex-felon,” “con(vict)/ex-con(vict),” and “offender/exoffender” to avoid reproducing the stigma against individuals who have been convicted (rightfully or wrongfully) of a crime. We also use “justice-involved individuals” or “persons/individuals with criminal records” to discuss in a general way those who may or may not have been incarcerated, but who have an arrest, conviction, or other type of criminal record that could appear on a background check.

INTRODUCTION

For the approximately 11,000 individuals returning each year to Chicago from Illinois prisons, the transition to life on the outside can be difficult. Returning citizens must reestablish relationships with friends and family, reinstate expired licenses and identity cards, navigate complex bureaucracies to access social services, learn new technologies, and readjust to the social environment of the outside world.⁴ Unfortunately, far from helping returning citizens reenter society, many of our public policies impede their progress. Saddled with a criminal record, many returning citizens not only face stigma in everyday life, they also often face institutional discrimination—both public and private—in realms such as housing and employment. Currently, few laws exist to mitigate this stigma while others actively or passively further it. As a result, many of those returning feel that they continue to be punished in their home communities. Barred from accessing housing, jobs, or in some cases, social services like food stamps, individuals often struggle to create a stable life and may reoffend.

There is widespread acknowledgment that housing is particularly vital to the success of returning citizens and that failing to find safe, affordable, and stable housing has collateral consequences: scholarly research and common sense alike tell us that without a stable home, day-to-day survival proves difficult.⁵ Without an address or the social supports that housing provides, returning citizens struggle to secure and maintain employment (another arena where criminal background checks are commonplace) making them more likely to recidivate. In Illinois, about 48% of those released will return to prison within three years. Evidence suggests that individuals with criminal records are more likely to be homeless, while homeless individuals are more likely to be jailed, often for minor “quality of life” or “survival crimes.”⁶

“It’s like a new world. When I came out, there were flip phones— it was like the Flintstones. I don’t know how to work a flip phone. It’s overwhelming. You don’t know what the climate is for relationships or how to get jobs... When [people] came out and they’re looking for housing, they want to lay everything on the line and start new. Nobody wants to be an ‘ex’ anything.”

-Wanda,* age 63

** All participant names are pseudonyms.*

However, finding safe and affordable housing can present a particular struggle, as returning citizens are systematically excluded from both public and private housing markets. While public housing policies have been changing in recent years, most housing authorities maintain lookback periods (the length of time in the past that a person’s record is considered when making a tenancy decision) of three to seven years and many maintain blanket bans against certain convictions. In the mixed-income housing developments that are largely replacing traditional public housing in cities like Chicago, private management companies set their own policies concerning leasing to individuals with criminal records. Additionally, despite being overturned in 2011, the federal “One Strike Rule,”⁷ which encouraged housing authorities to evict all members of a household in which any member had a criminal record, set a strong ethos for public housing that has been difficult to overcome in practice: even today, many returning citizens do not realize that they might in fact be allowed to move in with relatives who live in public housing or who utilize housing vouchers.

Similarly, criminal background checks are a standard component of most applications on the private rental market. Despite recent guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) noting that blanket bans on renters with criminal records may violate the Fair Housing Act, it is still legal for a landlord to screen and reject applicants based on criminal record.⁸ This level of discretion, coupled with widespread prejudice against criminal justice involvement, can

make it extremely difficult for justice-involved individuals to rent an apartment.

While some attention has been paid in recent years to reducing the barriers for returning citizens seeking access to subsidized housing,⁹ this study focuses on the experience of returning citizens in the private rental market. Through in-depth interviews with 81 returning citizens, it seeks to illuminate the specific barriers facing individuals with criminal records when they search and apply for housing and show how ongoing, commonplace rental discrimination occurs across age, race, gender, and time since release. Interview responses highlight the ways that the criminal record interacts with and reinforces other forms of disadvantage.

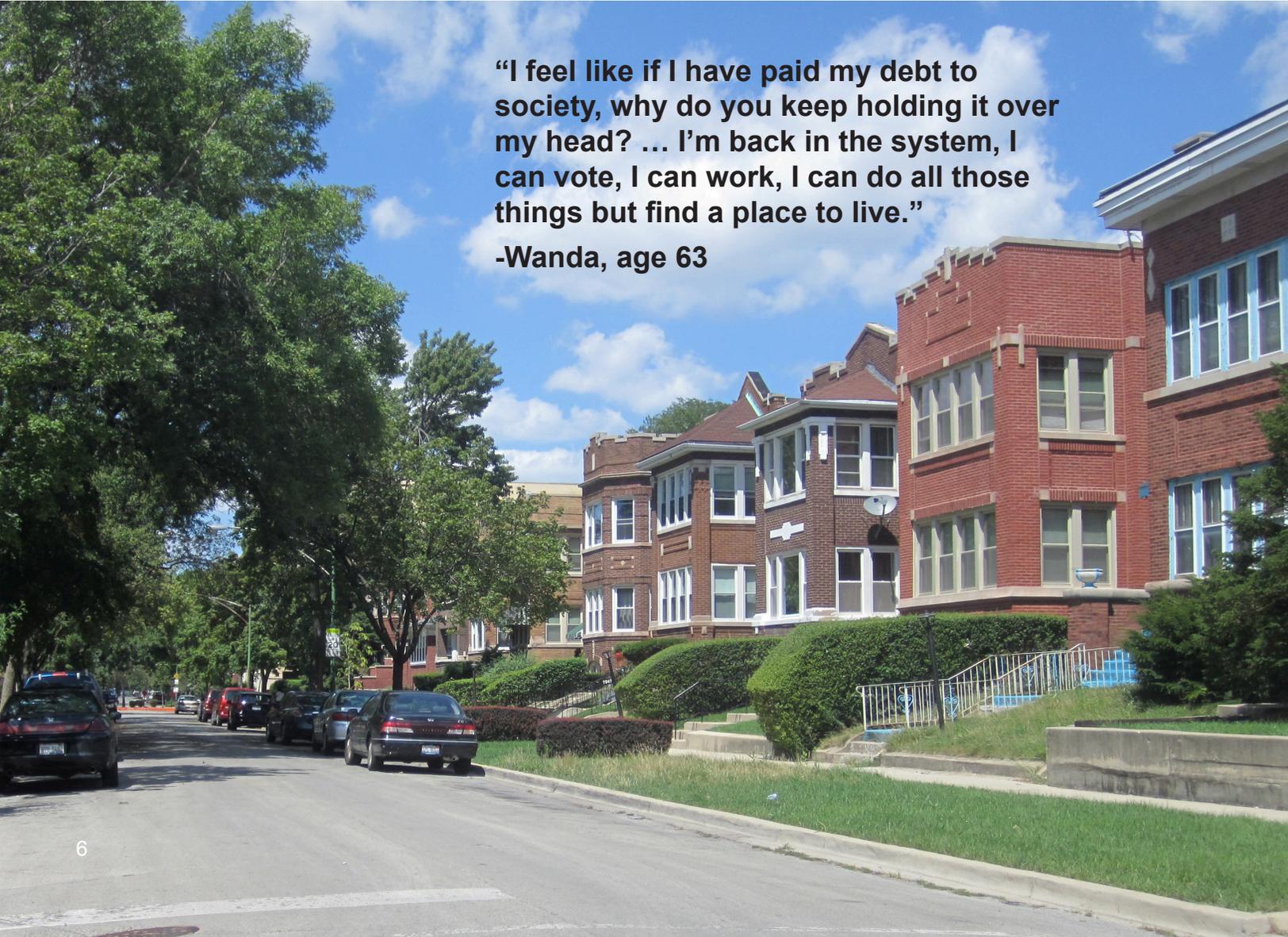
“I want to change my life, but without steady housing, it’s hard for me to keep a job. I don’t have a place where I can get some proper rest, set myself up to get transportation.”

-Clyde, age 48

Additionally, this study adopts a spatial lens, juxtaposing two key spatial questions: first, where in the city of Chicago have individuals faced rejection on the rental market in the past and second, where in the city do individuals believe they could find a place to live—that is, where they might start a housing search. In doing so, this study analyzes the implications of the criminal record beyond the individual experience, suggesting how discrimination against renters with criminal records contributes to the reproduction of other social inequities. Finally, it outlines a number of policy reforms that may begin to ameliorate some of these imbalances, empower returning citizens to successfully reenter society, and make Chicago a more just city for everyone.

“I feel like if I have paid my debt to society, why do you keep holding it over my head? ... I’m back in the system, I can vote, I can work, I can do all those things but find a place to live.”

-Wanda, age 63



FINDINGS

Where do participants live currently?

46% live independently.

When asked about their current living situation, 46% of respondents reported living independently in their own home or apartment while the other 54% live in a facility such as a shelter or rehabilitation center or stay with friends or family.

56% are not satisfied with their current living situation.

The main reason participants report dissatisfaction is because they would prefer to live independently and do not currently. Of those who were not living independently, 75% were dissatisfied with their current living situation.

The second most common reason for dissatisfaction was a sense that the neighborhood they were living in was unsafe, followed by poor living conditions at their place of residence.

Those who had been incarcerated five times or fewer were more satisfied with their current living situation than those who had been incarcerated more than five times.

Among participants who had been incarcerated five times or fewer, 44% reported that they were satisfied with where they live. For those who had been incarcerated over five times, only 22% reported that they were satisfied with their living situation.

Who has been rejected by a landlord and why?

74% have had a rental application rejected.

Of the 26% of participants who said they had not experienced rejection, one-third had not tried, either because they were too recently released and were required to stay in the location they were paroled to, or because they had moved in with family members or friends upon release.

“The agencies would tell me they would charge me \$50 for an application. I would just be up front and tell them I had a background, and they would advise me not to fill out the application. I did not want to fill out the application [and pay the] fee and get denied. It happened to me once and I wouldn’t let it happen again.”

-Jordan, age 49

“The application fee adds up so it becomes discouraging to keep applying and getting the door slammed in your face after spending \$50 or \$60 on the application fee.”

-Ron, age 54

“The sad part for a lot of brothers and sisters coming home is that those applications [cost] like forty to fifty dollars. Now, I wasn’t worried about it because I have a pretty steady paycheck, but I think about the people that don’t, that may need assistance, and to have to go through the application process time and time again puts a strain on the limited resources a person has already.”

-Joe, age 38

“[Landlords] tell you to give them \$40 to check your background, so right away they see you have a criminal background, and you don’t even get that money back, it’s just lost.”

-Juan, age 54

“I had to pay for a credit check and a background check, just to get turned down, and it was a loss of money and I didn’t get a place.”

-Daniel, age 52

“I always gave up when they asked for a criminal background check, because I didn’t want to be paying the money for the credit check and all that.”

-Leon, age 58

Of the 74% who had been rejected, 55% had been rejected five times or fewer, 28.3% had been rejected six to ten times, and 16.7% had been rejected over ten times.

When prompted to describe their experiences of applying for rental housing, many participants explained that they stopped applying after experiencing three or four rejections. Some were simply discouraged, while others could not afford to continue paying application fees.

Failing the background check was the number one reason that participants were rejected from housing.

63% of respondents who had been rejected cited the background check as the primary reason for their rejection. Other reasons (in order from most to least mentioned) included:

- failing the credit check;
- perceived racial discrimination;
- inability to meet the income requirement;
- perceived discrimination based on physical appearance, particularly tattoos; and,
- perceived age discrimination (too young), and/or limited employment history.

A few individuals reported being turned away based on their source of income, history of bankruptcy, large number of children, or because they were on parole or house arrest at the time of the application.

“I thought I had a good chance to get [an apartment] in the Bronzeville community, and I was denied. It wasn’t because I didn’t have a job— I actually had a cosigner that was willing to back me, which was my employer. And I still didn’t have the opportunity to get my own apartment. The only logical explanation was because I am a returning citizen. And that’s kind of sad because I think I have a pretty decent job, I thought I had paid my debt to society, but again, those four instances where I applied to apartments that I wanted, I was denied.”

-Joe, age 38

“People get a lot of negative vibes from me just looking at me, without even knowing me, without talking to me. A lot of people say I’ve got a thuggish look and I intimidate people just by the way I look— I’ve [had] problems with that before. I’ve [had] people coming outside asking me, ‘What are you doing standing here?’ and I’m just waiting for the bus or I’m waiting for someone to pick me up. I get a lot of that.”

-Eddie, age 51

“I would be discriminated against because of my tattoos. They would make me stand out. The cops would harass me because I have tattoos on my face.”

-Jorge, age 29

67% of participants who had been rejected felt that their rejection was the result of solely having a record, regardless of the nature of their conviction.

Most participants felt that just having a record was more important to landlords than the type of record. However, participants consistently expressed confusion about what a landlord can actually see on a background check, since most landlords did not provide details about why they were being turned away.

“A lot of landlords don’t think people change.”

-John, age 39

A criminal background check can reveal extensive information about an individual’s history of justice involvement. A criminal background check may contain, among other things, case numbers, descriptions of the crime, type/sentencing class, plea (guilty/not guilty), and disposition (punishment information, including length of sentence).

“We are judged on our paper and not on our person. The person I am is unrecognizable from the person I am on paper. I wish that would be the basis for me when I could get housing, but as soon as they run the background and the credit check, it’s over for me.”

-Larry, age 43

“They never got to know the nature of the crime, I just told them I was a returning citizen. I told them I was working two jobs, was a student, had a bank account with credit, but they don’t care about any of that.”

-Jordan, age 49

Rental discrimination based on criminal background impacted participants regardless of their age or the age of their record.

One participant, aged 65, has been out of prison for 38 years. He reports that he was rejected from an apartment as recently as one year ago due to his criminal record. Overall, there were no observable trends between participants’ age and the number of times they had been rejected, nor between the age of their record and the number of times they had been rejected.

“My Class C felony means I no longer have rights as a human being. I’ve been home 18 years now, but that still plagues me.”

-Elsa, age 57

“I was an adolescent [when I committed my crime], and I’m not the same person that I was at 17.” -Joe, age 38

“If you haven’t been in trouble for years and you’re working, but you’ve got a background because of the mistakes you made as a kid, I don’t think that should last forever.”

-Reggie, age 40

“Everybody deserves a second chance— especially guys that have been gone as long as I have. Breaking the law is the last thing I’m thinking about doing right now, but I’m still being held accountable for the things I did in my youth. There are so many barriers to me reintegrating properly.”

-AJ, age 46

Where do participants think they could live?

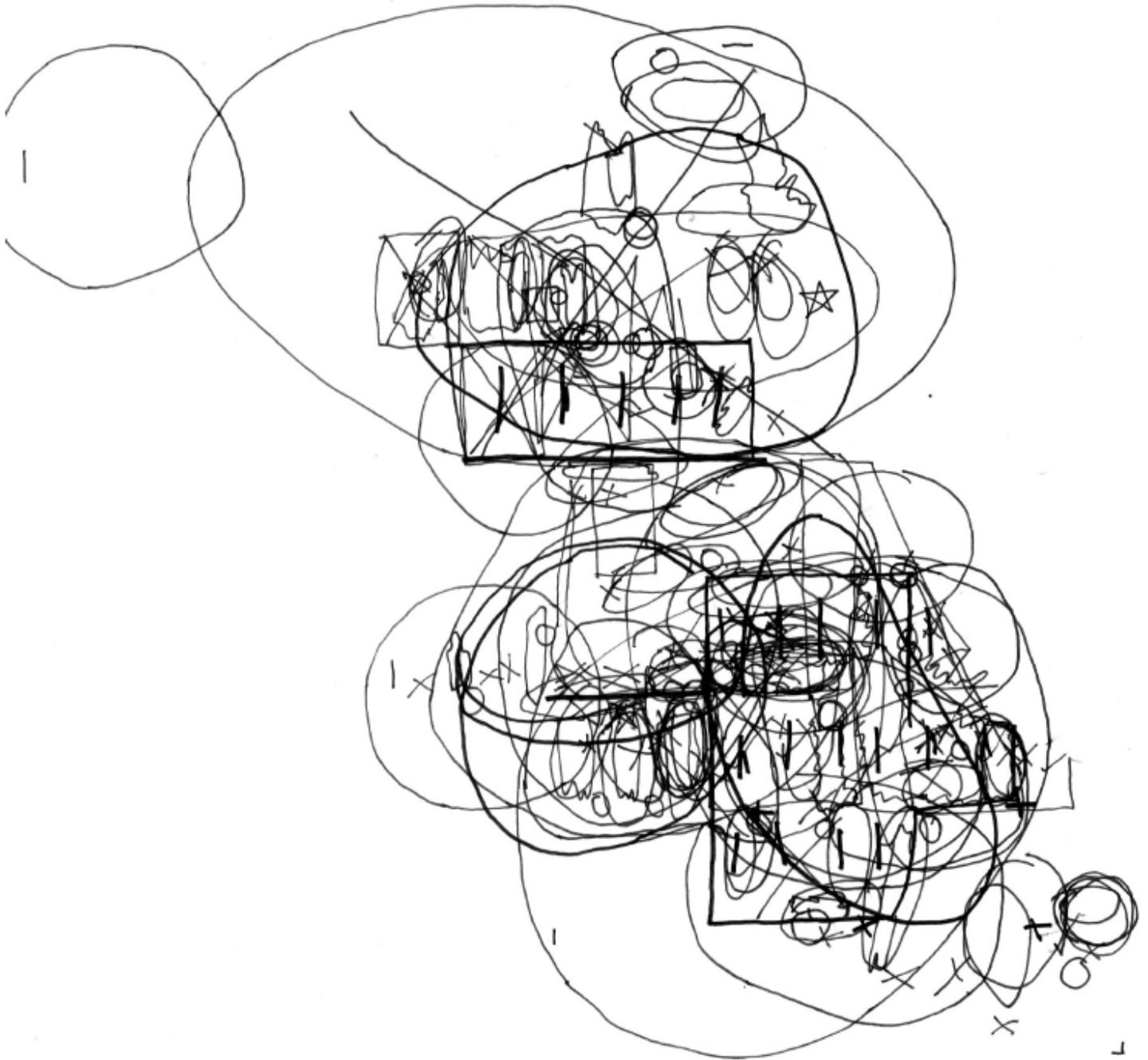
Participants most commonly reported that they think they could find housing in areas that are majority African-American and/or have high levels of poverty.

The most commonly indicated community areas were Chicago Lawn, Englewood, and West Englewood. Participants' responses to the question of where they think they could live reflect individual perceptions, but have concrete implications. For example, individuals' perceptions of where they believe they could find a place to rent directly affect where they will focus their housing search, regardless of whether landlords in these areas are any more likely to accept them.

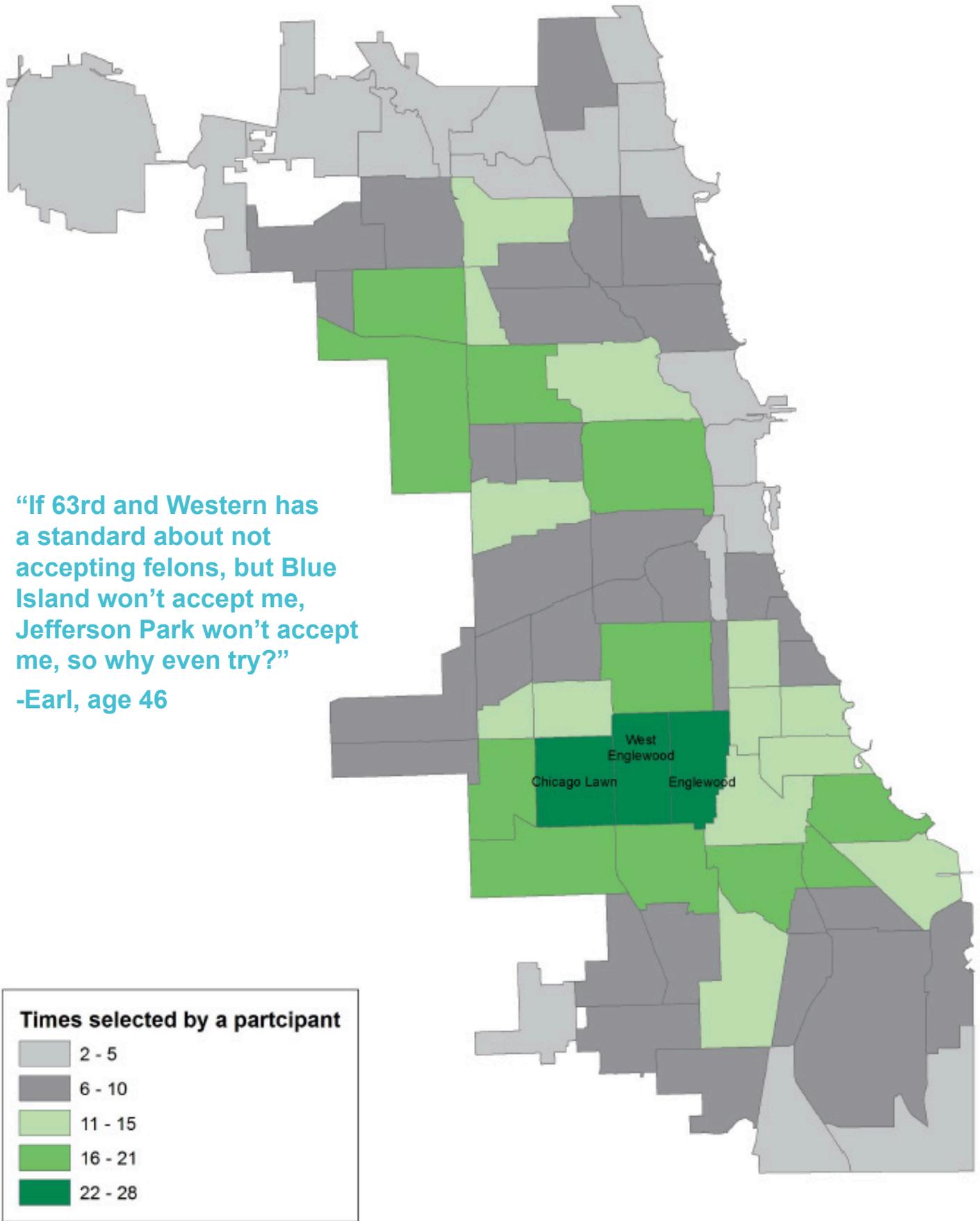
Two individuals did not think they could find housing anywhere in the city of Chicago, while one person did not think he could find a place in the city through large property management companies, but did think he might be able to find a place to rent from an individual landlord. This individual did not think any particular areas or neighborhoods of the city would be more accessible to him than others. Three people were unsure about where they would be able to find housing and therefore did not indicate any areas in particular.

	% African-American	Poverty Rate*
Englewood	95%	45%
West Englewood	93%	36%
Chicago Lawn	45%	31%

Data from the 2016 American Community Survey.
For comparison, the citywide average poverty rate is 21.7%.¹⁰
*last 12 months



Aggregated sketch map results, hand drawn. Each sketch map was overlaid and traced onto a single sheet of paper.



Aggregated sketch map results by community area. Darker green areas were the most frequently indicated by participants.

Participants believe landlords in areas they indicated would be more lenient about background checks.

Participants listed a number of reasons why they believe that landlords in the areas they indicated might not be as discerning about criminal backgrounds, or might not even conduct background checks. Most commonly, they said that these are low-income areas where landlords will accept anyone who can pay the rent or security deposit. They also indicated that these are higher crime areas where there is less competition for units; that these are areas where the housing stock is in disrepair so they believe there would be less competition for units; and/or that these are areas where landlords are familiar with the returning citizen population and therefore would be less prejudiced against individuals with criminal records.

“They are high crime areas. A lot of people in those areas have been to the penitentiary, so they kind of expect the background to pop up, and they’re fine with it. I wouldn’t want to live there, but I know I could if I had to.”

-AJ, age 46

“It’s the poverty stricken part of Chicago. The slumlords want to get you in. Because of all the gangs and drugs that have affected those areas, very few people want to rent there. They’re losing money by not moving tenants into their places. They’re desperate for rent.”

-Mary, age 44

“You think they would overlook your background on the South Side? They wouldn’t even check. A lot of people in those areas are slumlords, so there will be leaky faucets, and for the most part they just want rent money.”

-Edward, age 44

Other reasons participants indicated the areas that they did include:

- These areas are familiar to them, so they would know where to look or personally know landlords who they believe would rent to them;
- They believe more housing is available in these areas due to vacancies and lower occupancy rates; and
- People of their race/ethnicity lived there, so they believe they would not face racial discrimination.

Finally, other reasons include that these areas are more affordable; are closer to family who might be able to assist with the search; have more subsidized housing; that landlords in these areas are themselves are criminally involved; and that properties in these areas are controlled by more individual landlords and fewer property management companies.

“A lot of landlords on the South Side, they’re about the money and they don’t really care about your background.”

-Phil, age 45

Participants expect landlords in other areas of the city to be more discerning about criminal backgrounds, credit worthiness, and incomes.

Participants repeatedly indicated that they felt they would be unable to find an apartment to rent in neighborhoods where landlords are more selective about potential lessees—whether because the areas are more desirable, more expensive, or more competitive to live in.

The second most common reason participants provided was that these other areas are unaffordable to them. They also said they would avoid areas where they expected to experience racial discrimination. Finally, participants said they would avoid unfamiliar areas where they believed it would be harder to find a place to rent since they would not know where to start their search.

While participants feel they can only live in certain neighborhoods, they have experienced rejection all over the city.

While participants indicated clear trends in where they believe they could find a place to live, those who have experienced rejection have been turned away in neighborhoods that span Chicago and sometimes the suburbs. Many had been rejected at least once from the same neighborhoods that they or others thought they were more likely to find a place to live—not just in more expensive or majority-white parts of the city. However, this is also because participants were likely avoiding applying in those areas of the city where they did not expect to be accepted. Therefore, it is not that they are equally likely to be rejected everywhere, but rejections were nevertheless reported throughout the city.

KEY THEMES

Participants are dissatisfied with the quality and availability of transitional housing resources.

In some cases, individuals are paroled to shelters and must stay there for a period of time as a condition of their parole. Unfortunately, participants living in shelters reported deep dissatisfaction with their living environment. Many compared the available facilities to jail, complaining of overly restrictive rules and unsafe or unsanitary conditions. They report that all of these factors made it more difficult to search for employment and permanent housing. In some cases they were not allowed to leave the shelter for a set number of months as a condition of parole.

Meanwhile, participants also complained of a lack of alternative transitional housing resources. For example, participants lamented the lack of temporary residential facilities that provide counseling, job training, and other services in a supportive, rehabilitative environment.

“I’m totally unhappy with where I’m staying at. It’s because it’s just like being back in jail. It’s a very controlled environment. It’s extremely nasty.”

-Gregg, age 29

“As of right now I’m here [at a halfway house] and it’s a place to lay my head. But if something more opened up where I could get stable and without feeling like the rug could get pulled out from under me tomorrow or tonight, it’s an insecure feeling. To be honest with you I was more secure when I was locked up...I found a 44 magnum [bullet] just outside the halfway house where I’m living, just laying in the grass. So you know, I mean, that’s not a stable environment to live in.”

-Tim, age 56

“[I’ve been staying in a shelter and] it’s a drug-infested place. Everyone’s getting drunk and high in there and it’s a lot of criminal activity still going on. One guy just got killed in there. They had one guy get murdered inside there. There’s so much chaos in there.”

-Gus, age 57

“I was [at a shelter] for 90 days until I got off house arrest because I didn’t want [to] parole in my family’s house with the ankle bracelet. That felt disrespectful to them as a grown man.”

-Edward, age 47

“I’m not in a shelter, I’m in a concentration camp. They’re too strict. I need people I can talk to, but they constantly monitor my movement, tell me my phone has to be off at night, etc. It’s ridiculous the rules that they have.”

-Joseph, age 43

Participants favor small-scale property owners over large property managers

Participants recognize that many large property management companies maintain and strictly enforce blanket bans on individuals with criminal records, while smaller property owners may exercise greater discretion when considering a criminal record. Participants feel that landlords with whom they can speak personally are more likely to consider their individual circumstances. Many emphasized the importance of personal appeals and testimonies when trying to convince a landlord to rent to them.

“I always prefer if I can talk to a person instead of a real estate agency, because if it’s a person you can sit down and appeal to them.”

-Ron, age 54

“As long as it’s an agency that you have to go through, [I don’t think I could live anywhere] in the city. If somebody gave me an independent contractor, it may be worth the time [to apply], but as far as the agencies, all they’re doing is wasting our time.”

-Jordan, age 49

Men and women face different challenges on the rental market.

While additional research needs to be done, the results of this study indicate that men and women with criminal records experience different challenges on the rental market.¹¹ Several men stated that they think it is easier for women to find housing. They expressed views that landlords are more likely to overlook a woman’s criminal record whereas the stigma and fear associated with having a record is harder for men to overcome.

Women, on the other hand, reported that their criminal record compounded other challenges they faced on the rental market: specifically, that it is especially difficult to find housing with children, both because some landlords do not want multiple children living in a unit, and because personal finances may be more burdened, particularly if the father is not paying child support. One woman reported sexual harassment by a landlord who said he would not rent to her and even threatened to mar her housing record unless she performed sexual favors for him.

“I’m a single parent with no help from the father. I have to raise \$1000 every month for rent and other bills. It’s not easy but you continue to press and hope.”

-Elsa, age 57

“I was in Minneapolis and the landlord was trying to be sexual with me but I didn’t want nothing to do with it. He told me if I didn’t I wouldn’t get the chance to live in Minneapolis because he was a big realtor and whatever he say goes. And then he put some extra additional stuff on my lease . . . he was lying because I wouldn’t go to bed with him.”

-Christie, age 50

Parole officers can disrupt efforts to find a home.

Participants report highly uneven experiences with parole officers. While some cited parole officers who genuinely tried to help them reestablish a life on the outside, others recounted experiences with parole officers who were hostile or rigidly enforced rules limiting their movement and hindered their ability to seek housing or work. In some cases, individuals would avoid living at home with their families because they or other family members did not want a parole officer coming to the home. Finally, some reported fear that a parole officer could “out” them as a returning citizen, causing them to lose their housing.

“My parole officer would put me on lockdown, and that would make me lose my job. I would have to call him from my job to negotiate.”

-Joseph, age 43

CASE STUDY: WILLIAM, AGE 72

“Parole officers will make you take a day off of work for a meeting. They do stuff to hinder people. There are exceptions, but there are too many that are hindering people from making the transition. A lot of time it’s that kind of animosity that makes people recidivate.”

William said he moved in with family upon release, but had to find somewhere else to live because the parole officer assigned to him made life too difficult: “I moved away because I had problems with the parole officer. I moved out west to be with a different officer. A lot of people think the officer is going to help you make the transition, but that’s not always true. For some reason, the parole officer I had was very hostile. I came home and they put an ankle bracelet on me, telling me I couldn’t leave until the parole officer came and check[ed] on me, which didn’t happen for 4 or 5 days. . . . When he came, . . . [h]e said ‘we expect you to find a job and if you don’t, you get less time out [of the house].’”

After repeated altercations between William, his family, and his parole officer, William explains that, “Three weeks later I moved out to St. Leonard’s House. . . . As fate would have it, the parole officer I had [after I moved] turned out to be wonderful. Very tolerant and really trying to help people. The opposite of what I had initially.” By participating in programming and residential services at St. Leonard’s House, and without the hindrance of an aggressive parole officer, William was able to get back on his feet.

Discrimination against people with criminal records likely reinforces housing segregation.

Due to racial disparities in the justice system that result in the overrepresentation of people of color, discrimination against individuals with criminal records on the rental market likely reinforces housing segregation by race in the neighborhoods individuals return to upon release. More research is needed to make causal claims, but participants—themselves overwhelmingly people of color—suggest that returning citizens are funneled formally and informally into neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and high levels of racial segregation.

Segregation is complex and has many causes, both de jure and de facto. While some self-sorting may occur, housing segregation is largely the result of policies—historic and current—that maintain racial separation and further racial inequities.¹² State sanctioned rental discrimination against people with criminal records may well be one such policy.

Rental discrimination based on criminal records intersects with and reinforces other forms of disadvantage.

Participants' testimonies illustrate the ways in which their criminal records compound other forms of social disadvantage. For those already facing racial discrimination or struggling to afford high and seemingly ever-increasing rents, the presence of a criminal record made housing that much more difficult to obtain.

Furthermore, individuals with greater social privilege tend to have more social supports in the first place, such as a family they can rely on to take care of them, or money to obtain key services and take care of basic needs. Meanwhile, many participants reported that their support systems had diminished while incarcerated as friends or relatives died or lost touch over the years.

"We need to design a system where once you do your time, you are legitimately free, and you don't have to continue to pay every day for the rest of your life."

-Ron, age 54

"If you come out and you have bad credit that's tough. Even if I build my credit though, my background isn't going to change. It's the same way if I get pulled over by a police officer: they got a pink sheet on you. I have a pink sheet because I used to be gang-affiliated and I used to have a little status in the gang; therefore, the pink sheet never goes away. I'm 62, going on 63 years old, and even now if I get pulled over, they think I'm armed and dangerous. It's three or four cars. That's also because of my background. In the city of Chicago, man, 80% if you've got a background, you're not gonna get your apartment. Not in a decent neighborhood, anyway. Me living downtown—that would never happen, under no circumstance. I think because of my criminal background, it plays a big part."

-Ernest, age 62

"During my incarceration my whole family died except my mother."

-Clayton, age 59

When I came home, I just came home from doing eight years, so my whole life changed, I had nowhere to go, my mother had moved away to another state, friends I had had passed away while I was gone, so I had nowhere to go."

-Luis, age 39

"If there's nobody out there waiting for you when you get out, there's no format for you to know how to do this. I went to prison at 16 and came out 49. I had no housing history or credit history."

-Carl, age 50

Criminal records and poor credit go hand in hand.

Many individuals with criminal records also struggle with poor credit, but landlords commonly consider both background and credit score as basic components of a rental application.

Just as people of color are disproportionately incarcerated compared to the overall population, the justice system also disproportionately affects low-income individuals. Most people entering prison do not have significant means, and those exiting likely have even less. While incarcerated, people do not have the opportunity to work or build credit. In other words, people who are poor are more likely to have criminal records, and people with criminal records are more likely to be poor. By checking both criminal background and credit histories, landlords discriminate doubly against individuals who likely had few social advantages to begin with.

“After being gone for 21 years, of course my credit won’t be as good as everyone else’s.”

-Jimmy, age 47

Returning citizens are more vulnerable to predation and exploitation.

Because it has a compounding effect on other forms of social disadvantage, the possession of a criminal record makes justice-involved individuals more vulnerable than other low-income residents to predation and exploitation by landlords.

Desperate for a place to live, someone with a criminal record might accept an apartment that is sub-standard or make informal leasing arrangements. Few have access to legal representation or are likely to be aware of their rights as tenants.

“He gave us a place but it turned out to be a scam because . . . he had us paying rent but it was an abandoned building so people just came and told us we had to leave.”

-Tony, age 39

“They need to help us somehow—just give us the tools, don’t take us in. We don’t expect to be taken anywhere, to be given anything, but at least give us an opportunity to try to make it after we get out of jail.”

-Eddie, age 51

“Violent offenders seem to be always one of those populations of people that society is not yet ready to bring back into [society] . . . Politicians don’t want to touch it. Really, the narrative in society is: once a person commits a violent crime, it’s almost ingrained into our psyche to think that the person is already damaged and will always be damaged.”

-Joe, age 38

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

While no single action is sufficient, the following reforms would, in combination, help meaningfully increase housing opportunities for individuals with criminal records, end the practice of continued punishment for past crimes, and empower returning citizens to establish stable lives. Many of these would not only help returning citizens, but also other disenfranchised or low-income Chicagoans who face similar struggles on the housing market. Through a mixture of strategies, these policy recommendations aim to make Chicago a more welcoming place for returning citizens to call home.

1. BOLSTER LEGAL PROTECTIONS, AND THEN ENFORCE THEM.

Treat persons with criminal records as a protected class.

Laws that prescribe the treatment of certain populations as protected classes acknowledge the social inequities facing those populations and aim to remedy them. Human rights laws currently prohibit landlords from discriminating against tenants based on race, source of income, and other protected categories. These laws should be amended to be more equitable, so that persons with criminal records receive the same protections. If this change were implemented, landlords would continue to have some discretion over case-by-case rental decisions, but would not be allowed to maintain blanket bans on anyone with a criminal record.¹³

While such protections are often difficult to enforce, they are nevertheless meaningful. They set an important precedent and constitute official recognition that returning citizens have paid their debt to society and should not continue to be punished upon release.

Provide city-funded, universal legal representation for renters.

Currently, renters who face discrimination on the rental market are left to seek out (often pro bono) legal representation from a series of tenant advocate groups. In recognition of the power imbalance between landlords and most tenants, every tenant in need should be provided with robust, city-funded legal representation. Doing so would help not only returning citizens but others who are facing unjust rejection on the rental market. It would also help reduce housing instability and homelessness and their associated costs to taxpayers.

In San Francisco, recently-passed Proposition F is making universal legal representation a reality for all tenants facing eviction.¹⁴ Also known as the “No Eviction without Representation Act,” this initiative requires the City of San Francisco to provide every tenant in need with a city-funded attorney within 30 days of an eviction notice. Providing access to this legal representation will likely reduce costs associated with shelter and hospital services for the homeless, many of whom were housed in the city within the three years before they were evicted. In Chicago, a similar mechanism would be invaluable not only in helping tenants facing eviction, but for those struggling with their housing search as well.

2. REDUCE BARRIERS TO SUBSIDIZED HOUSING.

Lift remaining public housing bans based on type of conviction.

HUD rules only bar individuals with two types of convictions from subsidized housing: (1) individuals found to have manufactured or produced methamphetamine on the premises of federally-assisted housing and (2) sex offenders subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. Otherwise, public housing authorities have wide discretion when considering

individuals with criminal records for tenancy.¹⁵ Local housing authorities should remove any other blanket bans in favor of evaluating applicants with any but these two types of convictions on a case-by-case basis.

Eliminate prohibitions on returning citizens living with family members in subsidized housing.

Many returning citizens are familiar with public housing. They may have been raised in public housing or have family living in public housing or with a voucher on the private market. If the family is willing to take them in, returning citizens should be allowed to reunite with family members living in public housing or paying their rent with a housing choice voucher. Family can be an important support system for individuals readjusting to life outside of carceral institutions. If staying with relatives for a period of time helps individuals get back on their feet, housing authorities and private landlords alike should permit them to do so.

Strengthen state-level protections and promote education efforts.

Currently, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) does little to proactively protect individuals with criminal records from housing discrimination. In contrast, in New York State, the Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) program maintains an Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan, which specifies that property managers receiving funding from HCR cannot impose lifetime bans on individuals with criminal histories and must instead conduct individual assessments.¹⁶ These policies align with HUD guidance and encourage affirmative fair housing practices. HCR also provides educational materials to help property owners to understand the rules and people with criminal records to understand their rights. IHDA should implement similar guidelines and provide similar educational materials.

3. STREAMLINE REENTRY SERVICES.

Require the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to proactively identify housing opportunities for those being released.

Individuals should not be released from prison only to find themselves homeless. To avoid this, IDOC should be required to assist every inmate to identify a place to live upon release. This should be done with sufficient planning prior to release to ensure that if someone does not have housing to return to, IDOC will help them locate a place to live before they are released. Requiring and implementing this policy would assist returning citizens in accessing subsidized and affordable housing in particular, since there are often lengthy waitlists for these resources. It is important, however, that this policy is not used to justify keeping individuals incarcerated beyond their release date.

If a person has nowhere to go, IDOC should provide resources for housing on a temporary basis while individuals are establishing income stability and rebuilding their life on the outside. By lowering the likelihood of recidivism and reducing hospital and shelter costs, providing housing resources upfront is likely to be cost efficient in the long run. The Sentencing Policy Advisory Council estimates that it costs \$44,967 to incarcerate one person for a year in Illinois.¹⁷ By contrast, average rent for a studio apartment in Chicago is \$1,251 per month, or \$15,012 per year—nearly one-third the cost of incarceration.¹⁸

Washington State's Earned Release Date Housing Voucher Program provides a potential model for such an initiative.¹⁹ Under this program, individuals unable to leave prison strictly due to lack of funds for housing are given a voucher worth up to \$500 per month for a period of three months. While

additional investigation would be needed to determine the proper monetary subsidy and time period in the Chicago market, such a model is a promising, fiscally responsible way to foster successful reentry.

Stop paroling individuals to shelters.

Unless specific services (such as behavioral health or addiction treatment) are needed in a residential setting, such as a rehabilitation center, no one should be required to stay in shelters for a specified amount of time as a condition of parole. Throughout this study, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the city's shelters, citing dirty, chaotic, drug- and alcohol-ridden, and even violent conditions. Many complained that shelters functioned as pseudo-jails, carefully controlling residents' movements in overly restrictive and psychologically troublesome ways that provided yet another impediment to securing employment and accessing needed social services.

Align parole with evidence-based practices.

In Illinois, most individuals exiting state prison begin a period of mandatory supervised release ("MSR"), commonly referred to as parole. A parole officer monitors adherence to the conditions of release, maintains the power to revoke an individual back to the court for a new offense or a technical violation of the conditions of release, and acts as a broker or connector to needed services. Evidence shows that parole and other community supervision officers, like probation officers, must strike the right balance of supervision and service provision in order to achieve the best outcomes, in particular, desistance from crime and reduced recidivism.

For a variety of reasons, community supervision in Illinois and elsewhere often fails to adhere to best practices. All too often, officers emphasize the supervision aspects to the detriment of the service support side.

Given the importance of parole in the reentry process, supervision officers can play critical roles in assisting returning citizens to find stable housing, but as the testimonies in this study indicate, they can also hinder reentry. Participants indicate that their experiences with parole are uneven and conditions of release often inhibit housing access. Officers may lack information about housing resources and sometimes even provide misinformation. Restrictions on physical movement (such as electronic monitoring) can hinder the housing search or make it difficult to find and keep a job that would pay rent. Meanwhile, some fear that a parole officer might "out" them as being under community supervision or having a criminal record, causing them to lose their housing.

Additionally, individuals on parole in Illinois face a number of strict requirements to which they must adhere or risk possible re-incarceration for violations. One such condition mandates that individuals under community supervision must not knowingly associate with others under community supervision without first obtaining explicit permission from their parole officer.²⁰ Given the geographic concentration of parolees (see Appendix 1)—itself likely reinforced by discriminatory housing practices—this means that in practice, returning citizens might have to actively avoid interacting with their neighbors. These kinds of rules not only make daily life more difficult, but also set parolees up to fail.

Based on information generated in this study, as well as the growing evidence-base, community supervision officers should (1) receive the training necessary to serve as facilitators for needed services, including housing; (2) be responsible for ensuring that any form of electronic monitoring or restrictive movement does not inhibit access to housing, services, or employment; and (3) refrain from sharing information on an individual's status related to community supervision or a criminal record

except under specific limited circumstances. Finally, legislators should fully lift the non-association requirement embedded in current law.

Make the record sealing and expungement process easier and more transparent.

While it is possible to seal or expunge many criminal records, the process is complicated and opaque. Many returning citizens have to seek out their own legal representation to understand or complete the process. Before release, IDOC should educate exiting inmates about how to seal or expunge their records and connect them with resources to help them navigate the process. Illinois House Bill 2373, passed in August 2017, significantly expands the number of convictions eligible to be sealed under Illinois law.²¹ As with any new legislation, however, significant efforts will be required to successfully implement its provisions, including public education and community outreach.

For information on how to seal your record:
see http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/expungement/ExpungementSealing_Instructions_Approved.pdf
or contact Cabrini Green Legal Aid at intakes@cglanet.net

4. FORMALIZE AND EXPAND REENTRY ADVOCACY.

Create reentry steering councils at the city and state levels.

While it is impossible to know exactly how many Chicagoans have a criminal record, various measures indicate that Chicago's justice-involved population is vast. As of December 31, 2017, 40% of Illinois' active parole population resided in Chicago.²² Since one in three Americans has a criminal record, it is reasonable to expect that roughly the same proportion of Chicagoans do as well (about 900,000 people). Furthermore, the returning citizen population is largely disenfranchised. Excluded from most mainstream institutions, returning citizens are also politically fragmented. Nevertheless, despite having little voice in how things run, statewide criminal justice policies as well as city policies and practices deeply affect these returning citizens.

A reentry steering council at both the city and state levels, each with a devoted, full-time staff, could do much to counter these exclusions. Such steering councils could provide a central organizing body to represent and advocate for the needs of returning citizens at both the state and City of Chicago levels.

In Washington State, a statewide reentry council provides a model.²³ Comprised of 15 constituents appointed by the governor, the council seeks to increase collaboration between local and state programs relevant to reentering the community; improve safety for victims and their families; improve reentry outcomes; develop and monitor statewide reentry goals; recommend system and policy changes; and report to the legislature. Among its priorities, Washington's reentry council focuses efforts on expanding access to housing supports and educational opportunities, as well as removing employment and housing barriers based on criminal records.

CONCLUSION

Individuals with criminal records desperately want—and deserve—a fair chance to find a place to live. As documented in this report, a criminal record too often presents a nearly impossible hurdle for returning citizens to overcome. At the same time, it is also clear that widespread rental discrimination based on criminal records reinforces and reproduces other forms of social inequity.

This report not only illuminates the numerous barriers a criminal record raises for individuals attempting to secure decent, safe, and affordable housing but also provides a useful roadmap for effective policy change. The policy reforms recommended here would significantly reduce the stigma against individuals with criminal records and lessen both formal and informal barriers to reentry, making Chicago a national leader in responding to the urgent needs of its returning citizens and contributing to the overall public safety of all its residents.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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First, thank you to the justice-involved individuals who took the time to talk to us and share their stories so openly and candidly. BPI provided funding for this project, while BPI staff including Lindsey LaPointe, Adam Gross, Hoy McConnell, and Ellen Elias provided ongoing guidance. Simone Browne helpfully researched parole requirements. For preliminary conceptual guidance, the research team thanks Dr. Jonnell Robinson (Syracuse University/Syracuse Community Geography). Deidra Somerville at Roosevelt University's Institutional Review Board was instrumental in shepherding the project through its early stages. For assistance with participant recruitment, we are indebted to Tyrone Muhammed (Ex-Cons for Community and Social Change); Daisy Feidt, Dariusz Barwacz, and Wanda Lopez (Access Living); Christina McCain and Dan Hostetler (Above and Beyond Recovery Center); Carlos Vega (Rincon Family Services); Evelin Rodriguez (Communities United); Maureen Perkins (Target Area Development Corporation); Nasir Blackwell and Vera Davis (Inner-City Muslim Action Network); Phillip Burgess and Patrice Beamon (Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Centers); Amanda Hwu, Jamana Jamison, and Marilyn Pitchford (Institute for Nonviolence Chicago); Anna Mangahas (ONE Northside); and Ralph Edwards (Cease Fire). For timely and generous assistance with a few key criminal justice statistics, thank you to Nate Steinfeld (Sentencing Policy Advisory Council) and Dr. David Olson (Loyola University). For their assistance with the dataset on discriminatory Craigslist ads, thank you to Patricia Fron and Sarah Delgado (Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance). For mapping advice, thank you to Steven Vance. For insightful and timely feedback, Gianna Baker (Housing Action Illinois), Barbara Barreno-Paschall (Chicago Lawyers Committee For Civil Rights Under the Law), Patricia Fron (Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance), and Nasir Blackwell (Inner-City Muslim Action Network). Thank you to Stephanie Sommers (PRC) for her work on the layout.

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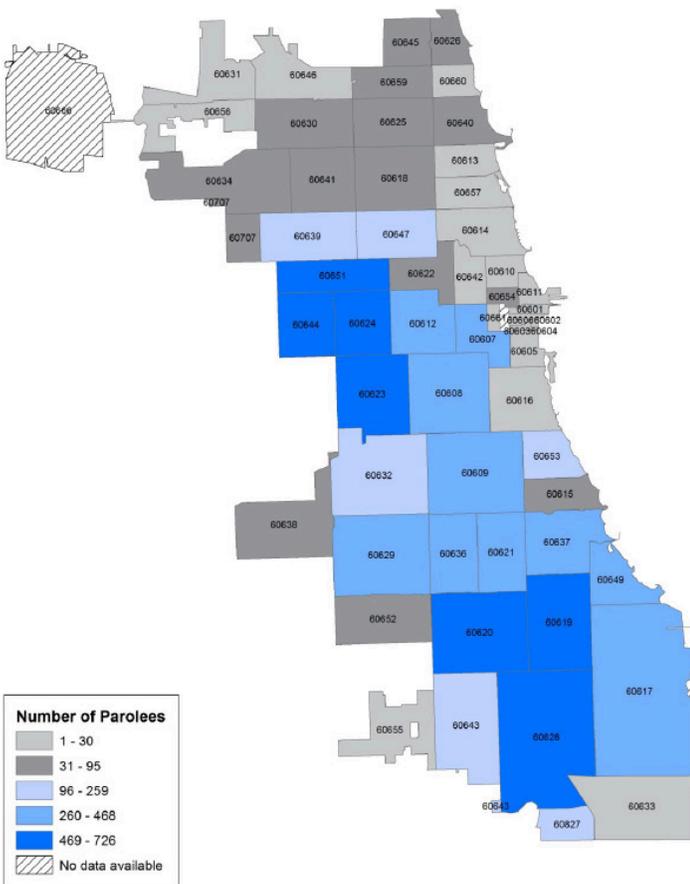
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APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH DESIGN

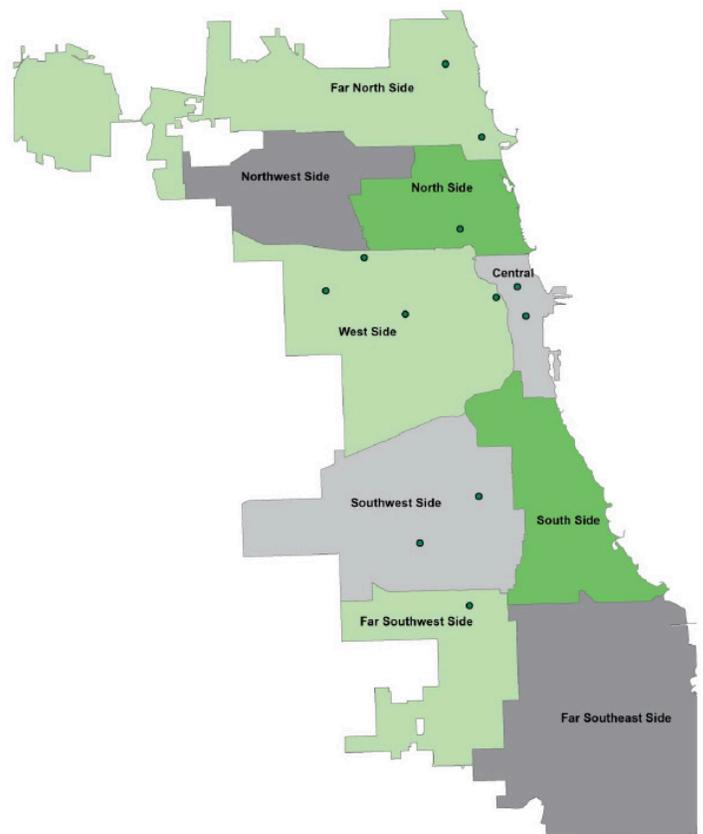
Participant Recruitment

Over the course of six months, our research team conducted one-on-one, in-person interviews with 81 individuals with criminal records who currently live in Chicago.

Participants were recruited from 10 organizations that work with returning citizens and individuals with criminal records. Using a snowball sampling method, we used references from initial organizations to identify others to assist with recruitment. Organizations advertised the study to their clients, participants, and/or employees, and set up a time for researchers to collect data at their respective locations across Chicago. Additionally, BPI hired a consultant who maintains an advocacy network of returning citizens to help recruit other participants who may be disconnected from service providers. In this case, interviews were conducted at BPI. Researchers made an effort to ensure that these organizations and their participants were drawn from each region of the city, with extra emphasis on heavily-impacted areas on the west and south sides of the city where most justice-involved Chicagoans come from and return to upon release.²⁴



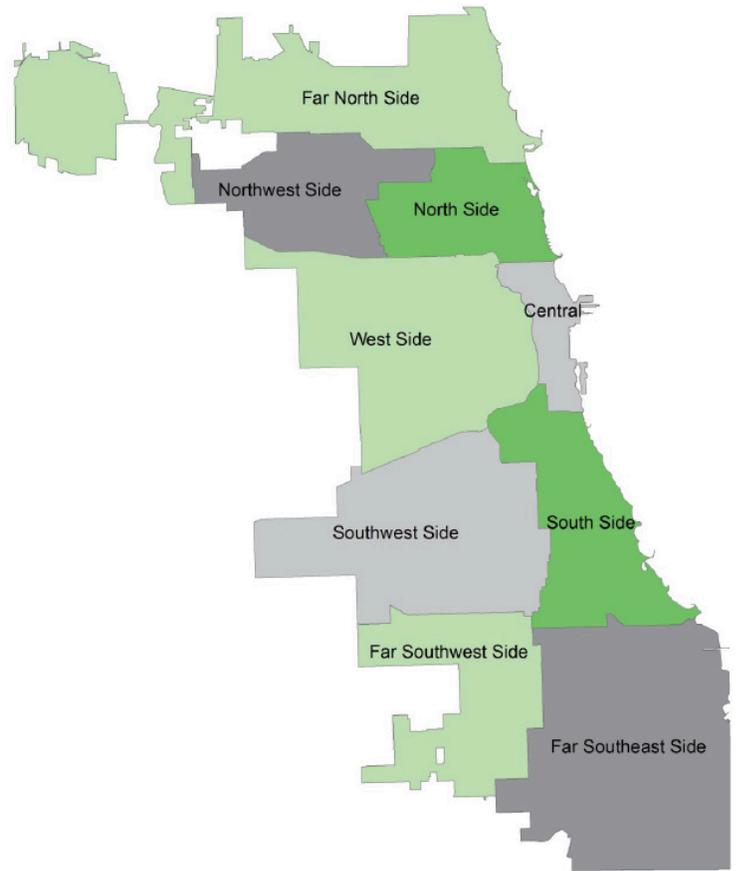
Location of Chicago parolees by zip code (December 31, 2017).



Data collection locations. One dot represents one location.

Data courtesy of Dr. David Olson.

Partnering with organizations facilitated the recruitment process and allowed many of the interviews to be conducted in spaces that were comfortable or at least familiar to participants. However, recruiting through organizations and existing networks also introduces bias as it overlooks those who are disconnected from such networks, either because they do not need assistance or because they have fallen through gaps in service provision entirely. For example, this study does not include the portion of Chicago’s returning citizen population that is street homeless,²⁵ though it does include many who are currently staying with friends, relatives, or in a shelter or halfway house on a temporary basis. As a result, it is possible that the responses underestimate the scope and urgency of the housing barriers facing returning citizens.



Participation in the study was voluntary. Just because a qualified individual was working in some capacity with an organization or receiving services from an organization did not compel their participation in the study. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and were asked for and provided their consent to participate before data was collected. To protect participants’ confidentiality, researchers did not collect interviewees’ names. All names that appear with quotes in this report are pseudonyms.

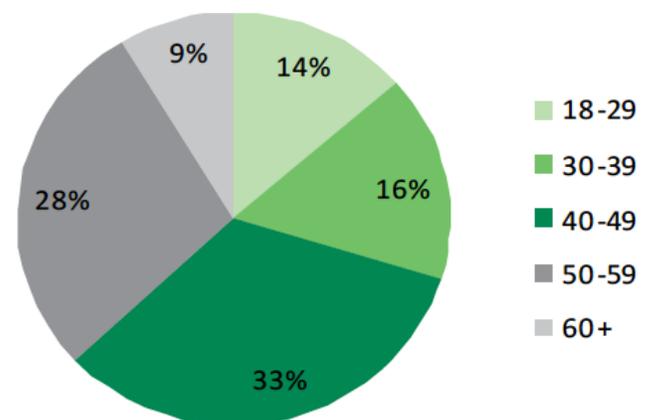
Participant Recruitment

Study participants span the generations: the youngest participants were 20 and the oldest was 72. The average was 45 years old compared to the average age of an inmate in Illinois, which is 38 years old.²⁶

Most participants identify as black or African-American. The second most common ethnic/racial identification was Hispanic/Latino, followed by white/Caucasian. In comparison, the racial composition of the prison population is 56% black, 30% white, and 13% Hispanic.²⁷

In an effort to draw some comparisons between the male and female experience, women are slightly overrepresented in the study compared to the Illinois prison population. 79% of study participants identify as male and 21% as female compared to the prison population, which is 94% male and 6% female.²⁸

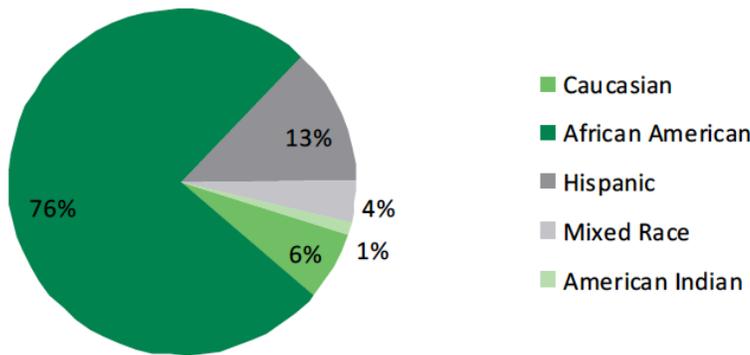
Age



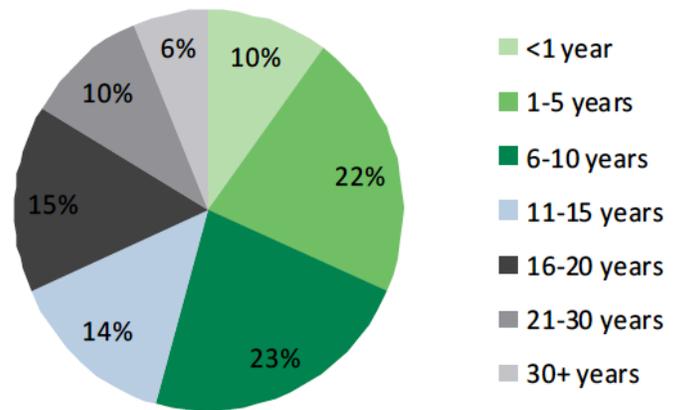
Participation in the study was open to anyone with a criminal record who could speak to the experience of trying to find rental housing in Chicago. As a result, recruited individuals had a range of incarceration histories. Some participants have been arrested many times; others only once. Some have spent many years locked up in jails or prisons; others may have only experienced a period of house arrest or as little as two weeks in jail. Interviewees spent an average of 12.1 years in prison and jail combined. At the time of the interviews, some had been released as recently as one week prior; others as long as 38 years ago. This openness allowed the research team to learn about the impact of a criminal record across varied types of justice histories.

The vast majority—97.5%—of participants grew up at least partially in Chicago.

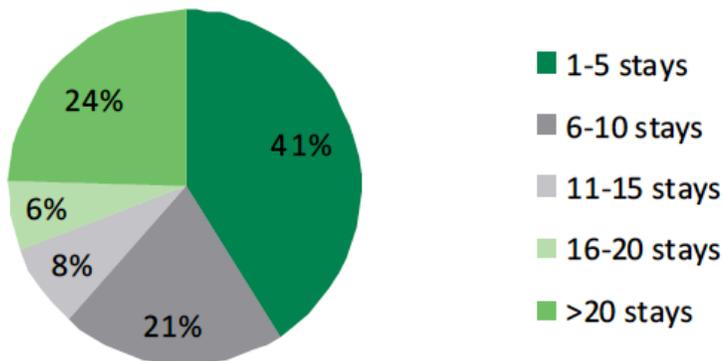
Ethnic/Racial Identity



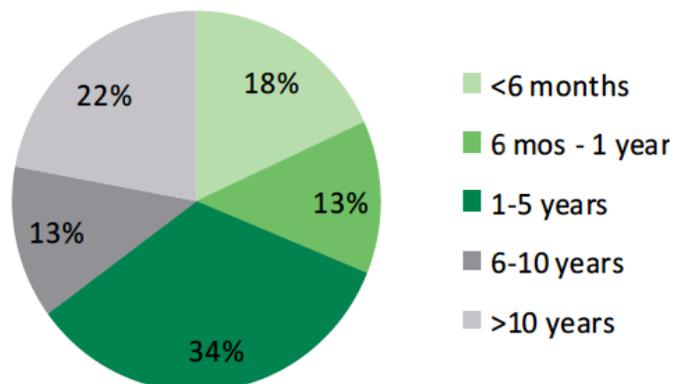
Number of Years Incarcerated



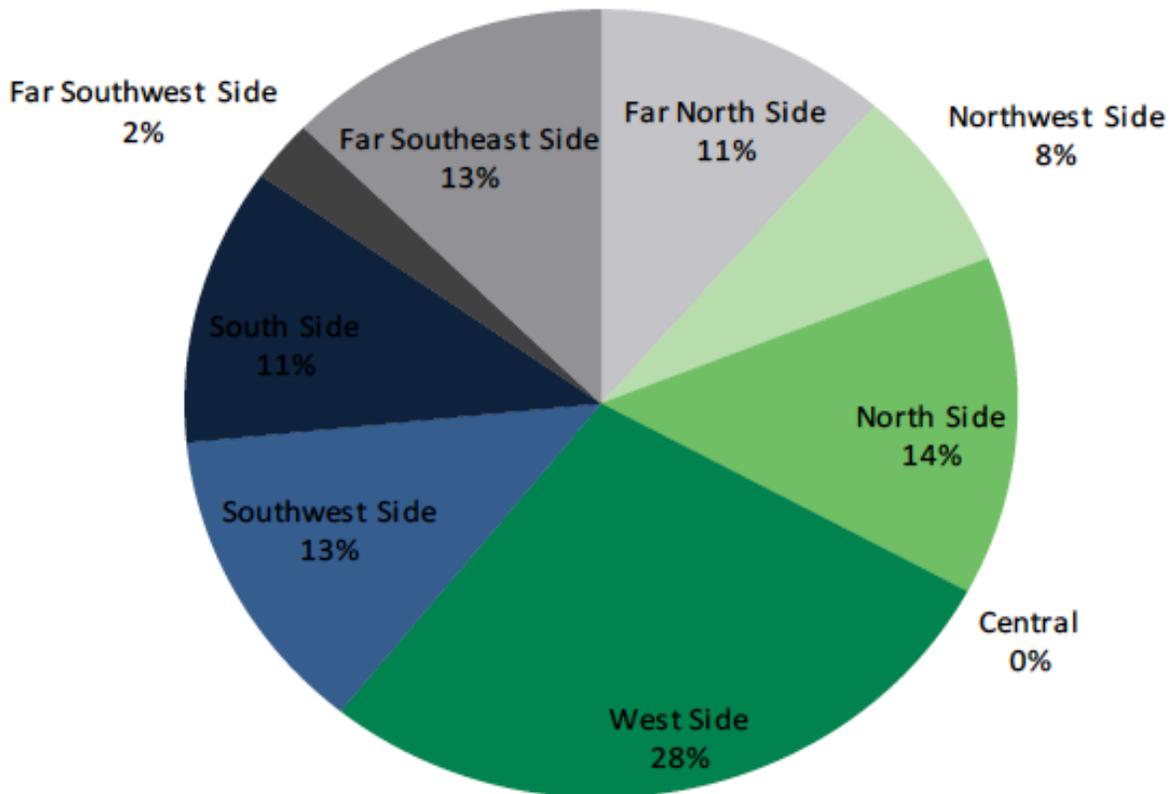
Number of Prison & Jail Stays



Time Since Release



Where Participants have been Rejected



DATA COLLECTION

Data collection consisted of two activities: a sketch mapping exercise followed by a semi-structured interview. First, each interviewee was asked to sketch on a map where they think they could find a place to live in the city of Chicago. Respondents indicated their answers with hand drawn circles, x's, shading, or, in some cases, writing.

By leaving the instructions open-ended, resulting responses reflect participants' mental maps of the city. Interviewers prompted participants to be as specific as possible and to answer the question of where they think it would be possible to find housing, rather than where they would prefer to live. Inevitably, a few of the maps reflected the latter answer rather than the former, but interviewers took every effort to tease out explanations to the former question in the interviews that followed.²⁹

Once the sketch mapping activity was complete, interviewers asked respondents a series of questions about themselves, their history of incarceration or other justice system involvement, and their experiences—if any—with rejection on the rental market. Interviewers asked follow-up questions as appropriate to probe each individual's specific experience and get as clear and detailed a sense as possible of that interviewee's experience. Finally, interviewers asked respondents to describe why they had filled out their map the way they had; that is, why they think they could find housing in the indicated parts of the city (if any) and not others.

All shapefiles used for the maps in this report are courtesy of the City of Chicago's Open Data Portal.

APPENDIX 2: HOUSING RESOURCES

Organizations Providing Housing Assistance

Access Living – This non-profit provides housing counseling to individuals with disabilities. For more information, see <https://www.accessliving.org/housing>.

Affordable Rental Housing Resource List – The City of Chicago maintains a database of affordable rental housing to help low-income renters find homes. See https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/affordable_rentalhousingresourcelist.html for listings.

City of Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund - This trust fund assists individuals with rental subsidies and also lists databases to assist individuals with their search for affordable units. See their website for more information: <http://www.chicagotruffund.org/affordable-housing-resources/>.

City Colleges of Chicago – City Colleges provides some of their own resources and supports for individuals in need of shelter, and also lists external resources at their website: <http://www.ccc.edu/departments/Pages/Housing-Resources.aspx>.

Coordinated Entry Access Points – The Corporation for Supportive Housing lists access points for those experiencing homelessness. Case managers working with the agencies listed on this site help place individuals in transitional, short term, or permanent supportive housing as needed: <http://www.csh.org/access>.

Heartland Alliance – This non-profit manages 850 housing units in Chicago and Milwaukee. See this site for more information about their income requirements, open waitlists, property descriptions, and information on how to rent an apartment: <https://www.heartlandalliance.org/housing/ourproperties/>.

Housing Action Illinois – This statewide housing advocacy group maintains a list of various affordable housing databases for low-income renters throughout Illinois. To see the list, go to <http://housingactionil.org/get-help/resources-for-renters/>.

Housing Opportunities for Women – This group specifically helps women in need of temporary or permanent supportive housing. They do not operate a shelter program and instead take all referrals from the city's Coordinated Entry System (see above). For more information, see <https://www.howinc.org/needhousing>.

Illinois Housing Search – This database helps tenants locate affordable and subsidized housing throughout the state. See <http://ilhousingsearch.org/>.

Illinois Department of Human Services – This statewide database directs individuals to various types of housing programs, as appropriate: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29723>.

La Casa Norte – This organization follows a housing first model, offering a continuum of housing resources for youth and families experiencing homelessness in Chicago. See their resources for getting help here: <http://www.lacasanorte.org/need-help/>.

St. Leonard's Ministries – Established in 1954, St. Leonard's houses approximately 125 individuals (including both men and women) at any one time across four housing programs. Though some are interim and some permanent, all four programs follow a treatment first model, so residents must be sober. Residents pay no fees for services and receive three meals a day. To qualify for housing, individuals must have justice-system involvement and be homeless or at risk of homelessness. See <http://slministries.org> for more information.

The Resurrection Project – This faith-based organization located in the Pilsen community provides a range of housing-related resources including foreclosure prevention counseling and home purchase counseling. It also maintains a stock of affordable, workforce, and single room occupancy housing. To learn more and find apartments for rent, see <http://resurrectionproject.org/trp-apartments-rent/rent-trp/>.

Rent and Bill Paying Assistance

Illinois Department of Human Services – This government agency runs a program called Illinois Housing Assistance, which provides families or individuals in crisis with grants to pay rent and/or utility bills. For information, see needhelppayingbills.com/html/illinois_housing_assistance.html.

Record Sealing and Expungement

Cabrini Green Legal Aid – Bring a copy of your rap sheet to one of the following locations to receive legal assistance with sealing or expunging your record:

- Daley Center
505 W Washington St, Room 1006
Open M-W 9 am – 12 pm, and Thursday 9 am – 12 pm and 1 pm – 4 pm
- Markham Courthouse
16501 South Kedzie Parkway Room 102J
Open Wednesdays 10 am – 2 pm

Rap sheets cost \$16 and can be obtained Monday – Friday, 8 am – 12 pm from the Chicago Police Department's Access and Review Division at 3510 S Michigan Ave.

Other Resources

Education Justice Project Reentry Guide – Now available in a searchable, online form, this reentry guide is assembled by the staff at the Education Justice Project, a college-in-prison program run through the University of Illinois. You can view the reentry resources they have assembled here: <https://map.reentrycolab.org/resources/>.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Hughes, T. and D. J. Wilson (2018), “Reentry Trends in the U.S.,” Bureau of Justice Statistics, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/reentry/reentry.cfm>; Sentencing Project (2015), “Americans with Criminal Records,” <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Americans-with-Criminal-Records-Poverty-and-Opportunity-Profile.pdf>.
- 2 This number, which represents our best estimate, derives from several sources. As of December 31, 2017, there were 10,474 individuals on mandatory supervised release (parole) in the city of Chicago (data courtesy of Dr. David Olson). Also, between 2010 and 2014, there were between 11,000 and 13,000 admissions to IDOC from Cook County annually (see Olson, D. & D. Stemen (2015), “Overview of Cook County Justice System Activities,” <http://www.icjia.org/cjreform2015/pdf/graphscookcountyforcommissionfromloyolafinalversion.pdf>). Admissions figures generally correlate roughly to exits, so this provides another estimate. The number of annual jail exits was not available at the time of this publication.
- 3 Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform (2016), “Final Report,” http://www.icjia.org/cjreform2015/pdf/CJSR_Final_Report_Dec_2016.pdf.
- 4 See Western, B. (2018), *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- 5 See, for example, Metraux, S., Roman, C. and R. Cho (2007), “Incarceration and Homelessness,” <https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/p9.pdf>.
- 6 Mayer, C. & J. Reichert (2018), “The Intersection of Homelessness and the Criminal Justice System,” Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, <http://www.icjia.state.il.us/articles/the-intersection-of-homelessness-and-the-criminaljustice-system>.
- 7 The “One Strike Rule” was issued on April 12, 1996 and rescinded on June 17, 2011. For a helpful overview, see Walter, R., Viglione, J. and M. S. Tillyer (2017), “One Strike to Second Chances: Using Criminal Backgrounds in Admission Decisions for Assisted Housing,” <http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/One-Strike-to-Second-Chances.pdf>.
- 8 HUD (2016), “Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Use of Criminal Records by Providers of Housing and RealEstate-Related Transactions,” https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/HUD_OGCGUIDAPPFHASTANDCR.PDF.
- 9 See in particular Tran-Leung, M.C. (2015), “When Discretion Means Denial,” Shriver Center, <http://poverty.org/wdmd>. See also Tesfai, A. and K. Gilhuly (2016), “The Long Road Home: Decreasing Barriers to Public Housing for People with Criminal Records,” Ella Baker Center, <https://humanimpact.org/hiprojects/the-long-road-home-decreasing-barriersto-public-housing-for-people-with-criminal-records/>; Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The Fortune Society, Corporation for Supportive Housing, and the Supportive Housing Network of New York (2017), “A Place to Call Home: A Vision for Safe, Supportive, and Affordable Housing for People with Justice System Involvement,” <https://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/publications/a-place-to-call-home-a-vision-for-safe-supportive-and-affordable-housing-for-people-with-justice-system-involvement/>; and Bae, J., Finley, K., diZerega, M., and S. Kim (2017), “Opening Doors: How to Develop Reentry

Programs Using Examples from Public Housing Authorities,” Vera Institute of Justice, <https://www.vera.org/publications/opening-doors-public-housing-reentry-guide>.

10 United States Census Bureau, “Quick Facts: Chicago city, Illinois,” <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/chicagocityillinois/PST045217>.

11 For a discussion of how race also impacts the experience of women with criminal records on the rental market, see EqualRights Center (2016), “Unlocking Discrimination,” <https://equalrightscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/unlockingdiscrimination-web.pdf>.

12 For a helpful overview, see Rothstein, R. (2017), *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright).

13 See Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (2018), “Just Housing Initiative,” <http://cafha.net/just-housing-initiative/>.

14 Ballotpedia (2018), “San Francisco, California, Proposition F, City-Funded Legal Representation for Tenants Facing Eviction,” [https://ballotpedia.org/San_Francisco,_California,_Proposition_F,_City-Funded_Legal_Representation_for_Tenants_Facing_Eviction_\(June_2018\)](https://ballotpedia.org/San_Francisco,_California,_Proposition_F,_City-Funded_Legal_Representation_for_Tenants_Facing_Eviction_(June_2018)).

15 See HUD (2011), Letter to public housing authorities, <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/SOHUDREENTRYLTR.PDF>.

16 New York State Homes & Community Renewal, (2018) “Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan,” <http://www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Offices/FairHousing/AffirmativeMarketing.htm>.

17 Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (2018), “2018 Update: Dynamic Marginal Costs in Fiscal Impact Analyses,” http://www.icjia.state.il.us/spac/pdf/Dynamic_Marginal_Costs_2018_Update.pdf.

18 Rentcafe (2018), “Chicago, IL Rental Market Trends,” <https://www.rentcafe.com/average-rent-market-trends/us/il/chicago/>.

19 State of Washington Department of Corrections (2014), “Earned Release Date (ERD) Housing Voucher Program,” <http://www.doc.wa.gov/information/policies/showFile.aspx?name=350210a1>.

20 A recent legislative change allows for participation in community programs, volunteering, worship, or family activities. See Illinois General Assembly, “Public Act 099-0698,” <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?name=099-0698&GA=99&SessionId=88&DocTypeId=SB&DocNum=2282&GAID=13&Session=>.

21 See Illinois General Assembly (2017), “Bill Status of HB2373,” <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2373&GAID=14&GA=100&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=103010&SessionID=91>.

22 Data courtesy of Dr. David Olson. 52% of the Illinois parole population resided in Cook County as of the same date, per Illinois Department of Corrections (2018), “Parole Population Data Sets,” <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Pages/Parole-Population-Data-Sets.aspx>.

- 24 State of Washington (2018), "Washington Statewide Reentry
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- 24 In addition to the map of parolees below, see Cooper, D. and R. Lugalia-Hollon (2018), "Chicago's Million Dollar Blocks," <https://chicagosmilliondollarblocks.com>.
- 25 According to a Chicago Coalition for the Homeless study, 48% of individuals in Chicago emergency shelters reported having a felony conviction, while about 1,200 are released from prison to homelessness in Illinois annually (see Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 2013, "Chicago Housing Authority Reentry Pilot" [proposal], <http://chicagohomeless.issuelab.org/resource/chicago-housing-authority-reentry-pilot.html>).
- 26 Illinois Department of Corrections (2017), "FY 2017 Annual Report," <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/FY2017%20IDOC%20Annual%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>).
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Study participants were asked to self-identify their gender. No study participants identified their gender as other than male or female.
- 29 The sketch mapping activity revealed participants' varying degrees of familiarity with the city of Chicago as well as varying levels of comfort with reading maps. To help overcome the latter challenge, researchers offered support to participants, for example, offering to help orient them to key landmarks, intersections, or neighborhoods on the map. For more on sketch mapping as a qualitative research method, see Giesekeing, J.J. (2013), "Where We Go From Here: The Mental Sketch Mapping Method and Its Analytic Components," *Qualitative Inquiry* 19(9) and Boschmann, E.E. and E. Cubbon (2014), "Sketch Maps and Qualitative GIS: Using Cartographies of Individual Spatial Narratives in Geographic Research," *The Professional Geographer* 66:2.



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