



## ReThink Justice DC Coalition

April 30, 2020

Mayor Muriel Bowser  
Mayor of Washington, DC  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Mr. Charles Allen  
Councilmember, DC City Council  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Ms. Eleanor Holmes Norton  
U.S. Congresswoman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2136 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Budget for safe housing for Returning Citizens in 2020 and 2021 & partnering with CSOSA

Dear Mayor Bowser, Councilmember Allen & Congresswoman Holmes Norton,

We the members of the ReThink Justice DC Coalition, bring a sense of urgency to address the gaps left by the sudden closure of Hope Village. Eighty individuals have been identified by CIC as “appropriate” for home confinement. Of the eighty Hope Village residents, some number do not have identified housing options in the District. We are alarmed by the uncertainty of next steps and the BOP’s stated intention that these men will be shipped to BOP locations not yet identified. We have no way to tell whether the next location will keep them at Coronavirus risk.

The members of the Pathways to Reentry Committee are asking you to identify current fiscal year direct funding to move individuals released from BOP custody, wherever that may be, into safe, temporary quarantine, either in available hotel space or vacant University dormitory rooms. We estimate the daily cost of hotels and meals would be \$130.00 per person with a one-time cost of \$525.00 for two COVID-19 test, clothing, hygiene supplies and sanitization of the temporary housing premises. The math can be adjusted to address the duration or number of individuals needing such accommodations.

The next step in the reentry process, transitional housing is highly cost-variable and would be incurred to support reentry under normal business-as-usual circumstances, but because of the COVID-19 threats, we request that an additional funding be specifically ear-marked in order to support returning citizens who face housing and employment uncertainty, and unimaginable challenges caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. This total, likely in excess of half a million dollars, should be directed to the Community Based Organizations who typically support returning citizens and who are also challenged economically and need the District’s assurances that their funding will continue in in 2020 and in 2021. As COVID-19 spreads through BOP locations, DC residents will continue to return home, whether because of compassionate release



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or having completed their sentences. Attentive case management and funded transitional and permanent housing is essential for a safe and successful life. Also, designated affordable housing should be a 2021 set-aside to support returning citizens and their families.

One last request is related to CSOSA, who has a large budget, and can deliver programmatic and housing resources. The Re-Think Justice Coalition is grateful for Congresswoman Norton's continuous engagement with BOP. We believe that continued communication and collaboration with CSOSA can benefit the returning citizens of the District; provide access to affordable housing, effective programs and enhance the ability of returnees to create stable lives. We would like to see responsibility for successful collaboration rest within the Mayor's office on an ongoing basis.

Respectfully,

Members of the Pathways to Reentry Committee of the ReThink Justice Coalition

Avon Hart-Johnson: President and Co-Founder, DC Project Connect

Rabbi Charles Feinberg: IAHR Executive Director

Courtney Stewart: Chair and CEO of The National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens

Geoffrey Johnson: DC Project Connect

Jon Cooper: DC Ward 1 Citizen

John Stanard: National Director, Social Betterment Programs & Policy, Church of Scientology  
National Affairs Office

Julie Petersmeyer: Volunteer Chaplain, DC Jail

Malcolm Young: Attorney and Founding Project Director, Project New Opportunity

Myra Woods, Co-Chair Pathways to Reentry Committee of the ReThink Justice Coalition