



SISTERHOOD
ALLIANCE FOR
FREEDOM AND
EQUALITY

SAFE Housing Network Platform

The SAFE (Sisterhood Alliance for Freedom and Equality) Housing Network is creating a national model for decarceration and building toward a future without prisons.

The SAFE Housing Network is a national collective of formerly incarcerated people working to decarcerate the US by bringing people home to stay, helping them to heal from the trauma of incarceration, and empowering them to lead in the fight to end mass incarceration. By providing supports and allowing individual healing, we are breaking the cycle of incarceration that is the result of immense and widespread barriers to life after conviction. Through leadership development, we are expanding, and centering the formerly incarcerated within, the movement to end mass incarceration and build a future without prisons.

The SAFE Housing Network centers women, LGBTQ people, children, and family within the movement to end mass incarceration and its mission to bring people back home.

The SAFE Housing Network advances decarceration through community-based, gender-responsive reentry pathways that affirm the identity and full potential of each individual returning home. We uplift a national model for wraparound reentry support services that are flexible enough to meet the unique needs of every person. The model is an innovative, holistic program, first envisioned and designed for women experiencing reentry by women who have experienced reentry.

As mostly women who have made the reentry journey ourselves, we know what it means to return home from incarceration and what it takes to succeed after incarceration. It takes healing, stability, and opportunity. The criminal legal system actively undermines all of these in countless ways, which not only impacts people's ability to stay free but also creates a second-class citizenship for formerly incarcerated people.

Funding must be reallocated from corrections and law enforcement to community programs that work to bring people home and support them through reentry. The criminal legal system – from law enforcement to courts to jails and prisons to probation and parole – has failed to recognize and embrace the reality of the lives of the formerly incarcerated and instead continue to stigmatize, marginalize, and further punish us long after we've served our time. Community-based reentry efforts acknowledge and actively address the trauma of incarceration, do not further traumatize people, and provide desperately needed trauma-responsive care.

All barriers to basic human needs and stability must be removed. People leaving prison or jail should have immediate access to identification and vital documents, safe and affordable housing, quality medical and mental healthcare, public assistance programs, educational programs, and decent jobs that pay livable wages.

We must end family separation by incarceration and ensure paths for speedy family reunification and alternatives to incarceration that keep families together. The criminal legal system and our social services systems, too often, reflect the ugly history of American institutions that have used policy to separate and destroy Black families. Departments of Child and Family Services must not treat formerly incarcerated women as the enemy, and instead value keeping families together.



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The SAFE Housing Network uplifts the leadership of formerly incarcerated people as the experts in ending mass incarceration and rebuilding lives, families, and communities.

As the most impacted people by the criminal legal system, formerly incarcerated people are necessary to transforming the criminal legal system. However, too often we are excluded from these conversations due to stigma, bias, and the thousands of collateral consequences that follow a conviction. We at the SAFE Housing Network know our voices are vital to the transformation of the criminal legal system as we work to build a world that is not dependent on police or prisons.

We identify and train formerly incarcerated leaders who will transform reentry services and the criminal legal system. The SAFE Housing network builds a network of experts that understand the diversity of needs people have coming home from incarceration, and more importantly we understand and embrace the need for community supports upon reentry. These community supports include people like us, who have personally experienced reentry back into the community and who can assist others as they return home from prison or jail.

We know that formerly incarcerated people working in reentry creates successful outcomes. However, to enable this to happen more, there must be an end to all restrictive post-conviction supervision conditions. These include parole conditions that prohibit formerly incarcerated people from associating with each other or living together. As reentry providers, we understand that having a supportive community that understands one's needs is vital to safe and healthy transitions home. We also recognize the damage that mass incarceration has done to specific communities, particularly Black, Brown and Indigenous communities. When supervision conditions dictate that people cannot interact with other formerly incarcerated people, this represents a systemic effort to separate people from their communities and families. We call for the end to these restrictive, counterproductive, and prejudicial policies.

Likewise, we call for an end to supervision violations which can send people back to prison or jail for minor, non-criminal behaviors. The types of technical violations that send people back to prison or jail include missing curfews, failure to get a job, or missing supervision meetings. We also call for an end to predatory supervision fines and fees that create cycles of debt. Reincarceration for technical violations and levying supervision fees do not allow success in the community and further stigmatize all formerly incarcerated people.



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The SAFE Housing Network is part of the national movement to restore civil rights, and social and economic justice to formerly incarcerated and convicted people.

As a network of formerly incarcerated people, we situate ourselves in the movement to end our society's addiction to prisons and punishment. While we build towards a world without prisons or jails, we call for a full restoration of rights for **all** formerly incarcerated people. We believe that no one should lose their rights due to a conviction. However, the current reality is that all people lose their rights, at least temporarily, due to a conviction. Some people lose their rights for a lifetime due to a conviction. This does not build healthy and safe communities and is, in fact, antithetical to the foundational principles of our democracy. All people, regardless of conviction history, should have the same opportunities to participate in, and succeed in, society.

We should never disenfranchise individuals due to a conviction. We recognize that felon disenfranchisement is situated in a long and racist history of institutional barriers to Black voting rights and citizenship. We believe that all incarcerated people, of voting age, should have the ability to cast absentee ballots during their incarceration. The vast majority of currently incarcerated people will eventually return to their communities. They have the right to participate in our democracy and determine the outcomes for themselves and for their families, children, and communities. For those people who have lost their rights due to a conviction, those rights must be restored.

Restoration of rights should include the full restoration of voting rights, and the end of all collateral consequences and lifelong barriers that follow a criminal conviction. These collateral consequences include overly broad prohibitions in public assistance, housing, rentals, licensure, and employment to formerly incarcerated people. Not only are these institutional stigmas after someone has served their time, we know that restrictions which impede individuals' abilities to succeed post-incarceration do not make any of us safer. The SAFE Housing Network knows that true public safety can only be established when **all** people in society are provided for and have equal access, opportunities, and rights.

We must shift from a status quo that strips rights away from humans, to one where we acknowledge and uplift everyone's access to the most basic of human rights. We know that healthcare, mental healthcare, housing, and ability to provide for oneself and family are human rights that **all** people should be afforded regardless of conviction history.