

# NEW JERSEY ADVOCACY NETWORK TO END HOMELESSNESS

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## Second Chance Act: Housing and Services for People Leaving Corrections Overview

One of the policy issues for 2nd Annual Congressional Reception is adequate funding for the Second Chance Act. The position of the New Jersey Advocacy Network to End Homelessness will be advocating for Congress to provide \$70 million for the Second Chance Act programs in fiscal year 2009.

Please read this entire policy position paper. To read it as a separate document click here. [Click here](#) for more information.

The Second Chance Act has been explicitly billed as a "first step" in developing a more effective federal response to the problem of people leaving corrections without adequate support. This act reauthorizes and revises an existing grant program within the Department of Justice, providing money to states for reentry programs, and it creates a federal interagency task force to study and coordinate policy. The act also commissions a number of research projects, including a study of barriers in federal policy to successful reentry, and authorizes grants from the Department of Justice directly to nonprofits for reentry programs.

Housing is a key part of any reentry strategy, and it is addressed in a number of ways in the Second Chance Act:

- Under the state grants program, housing activities are eligible uses of program funds, from providing housing directly to assisting people in securing housing from the private market or other housing programs.
- Another eligible use of funds is strengthening the capacity of prisoners' families to provide stable living situations.
- Housing is to be addressed in the strategic plan required of each state receiving funding.
- Housing is one of the performance outcomes that each state receiving funding is required to monitor and report to the Justice Department.

## Recommendation

The New Jersey Advocacy Network to End Homelessness urges Congress to provide \$70 million for the Second Chance Act programs in fiscal year 2009.

Further action by Congress will be necessary to incentivize good discharge planning and to ensure that resources are available for housing those leaving the corrections system.

## Current Status

The Second Chance Act was signed into law by the President in April, 2008.

The Second Chance Act received bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress and is supported by a broad spectrum of leaders representing diverse fields including law enforcement, faith-based organizations, and behavioral health and homeless service providers.

The House Appropriations Committee recently approved a funding level of \$45 million for programs under the Second Chance Act programs. The Senate Appropriations Committee included a funding level of \$20 million in their version of the fiscal year 2009 appropriations bill.