

**My name is Ben Howley. I am a case manager for the DRHAP program and work at Operation Hope of Fairfield. I fully support SB 875 and ensuring that DOC has a reentry process in place with housing supports for people returning to communities. Below are a couple of client testimonies that I think help prove that this program is working.**

I will start with Nick. Nick was incarcerated for 18 months. We looked at several studios in Bridgeport upon his release as he had some family and other natural supports in the area. He eventually chose one on the east side and we helped house him in mid-April 2020. Nick took to work right away and although we helped him by setting him up with a BRS appointment he was very good at finding employment on his own. After working at a fast-food restaurant for several months he was then offered a full-time job with benefits for a company called Building Blocks in Bridgeport on July 16th. I asked him a little bit about his job, and he reported "That he is the supervisor of a team of three and they are assigned jobs throughout Bridgeport for overall maintenance. Lately they have been shoveling snow and will be doing weed whacking and lawncare come spring." This client has done nothing but contribute and exceed expectations of the goals set when he was housed. We have had several discussions about him being able to be fully self-sufficient and pay for his studio's complete rent portion by this summer. He is also saving to buy himself a vehicle.

Another is Anthony. Anthony was incarcerated for 2 years. After a couple of studio viewings, he also chose a place on the East side of Bridgeport. Anthony suffers from several mental health conditions, the most severe being his schizophrenia. Our first couple meetings he seemed very paranoid and at one point mentioned seeing someone else in the room along with hearing voices often at his studio. With the help of Anthony's probation officer, we were able to connect him with Recovery Network Program in Bridgeport where they helped to stabilize his medication and provide intensive outpatient services for him. This seemed to help his mental state almost immediately (although there are struggles from time to time). He has since been able to turn back on his SSI from before his incarceration and he often uses our pantry at Operation Hope in Fairfield for both food and interaction. We are looking at the next steps of possibly finding him permanent supportive housing as he continues to do very well in the program.

Thank you for your time and have a great day.

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