



**Coming Full Circle: Building Successful Strategies for  
Offender Re-Entry in Austin/Travis County, Texas**

**Austin / Travis County Reentry Roundtable**

**Findings from the 2008/2009 Housing  
Providers Survey and Inventory for  
Persons with Criminal Backgrounds in  
Austin/Travis County**

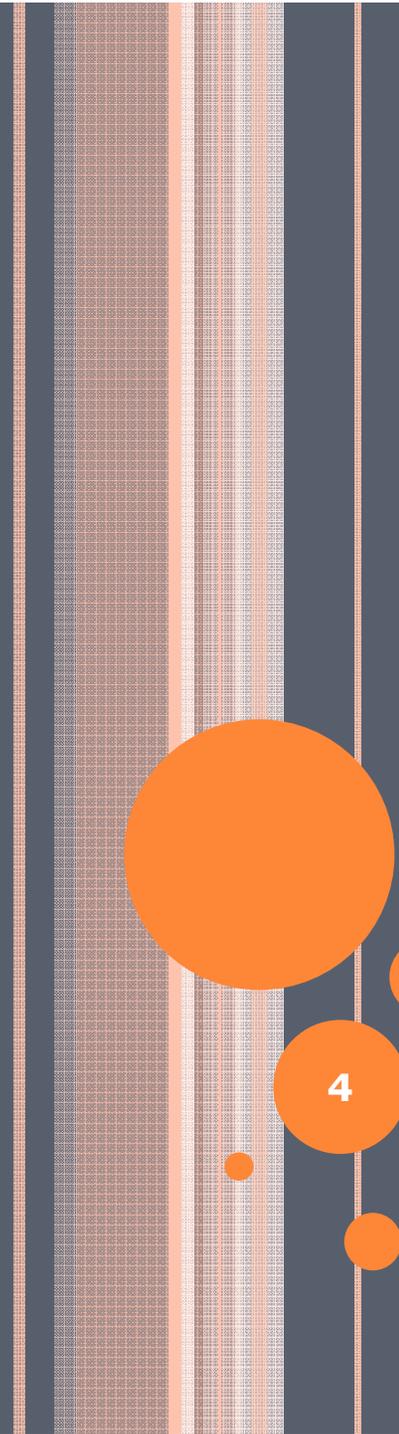
**August 17, 2009**

# AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Presentation and Discussion
  - Needs and Barriers
  - Findings from the Housing Inventory
- Distribution of Resource Guide
- Networking

# 2008/2009 A/TCRRT HOUSING INITIATIVE

- **Vision:** To develop strategies to significantly improve housing resources and services for persons returning to the community from incarceration and persons with a criminal history.
- **Goals**
  - Identify housing needs and barriers for former offenders
  - Produce housing provider and support services report and inventory
  - Provide gap analysis between needs and what exist



# WHY REENTRY MATTERS

4

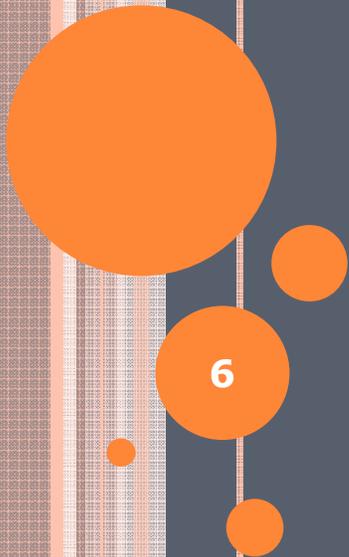
# TENS OF THOUSANDS ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED IN OUR COMMUNITY

- Travis County population in 2008 = 955,932
  - Population Source: Texas State Data Center at UT San Antonio, Population Migration Growth Scenario 2000-2007
- In Texas, 1 person in 32 (3%) is on probation or parole (federal or state) = approximately **29,873** in Travis County
  - Pew Center on the States. 1 in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections—Texas, 2009
- Approximately 1 in 11 (9%) Texans has a felony conviction on his or her record = approximately **86,903** in Travis County
  - Criminal Justice Policy Brief. Texas LULAC State Executive Office. August 2004

# DETERMINING NEEDS AND BARRIERS

Summer 2008

6



# 2008 A/TCRRT NEEDS AND BARRIERS FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED PERSONS IN TRAVIS COUNTY REPORT

## Quantitative and qualitative data from:

124 surveys

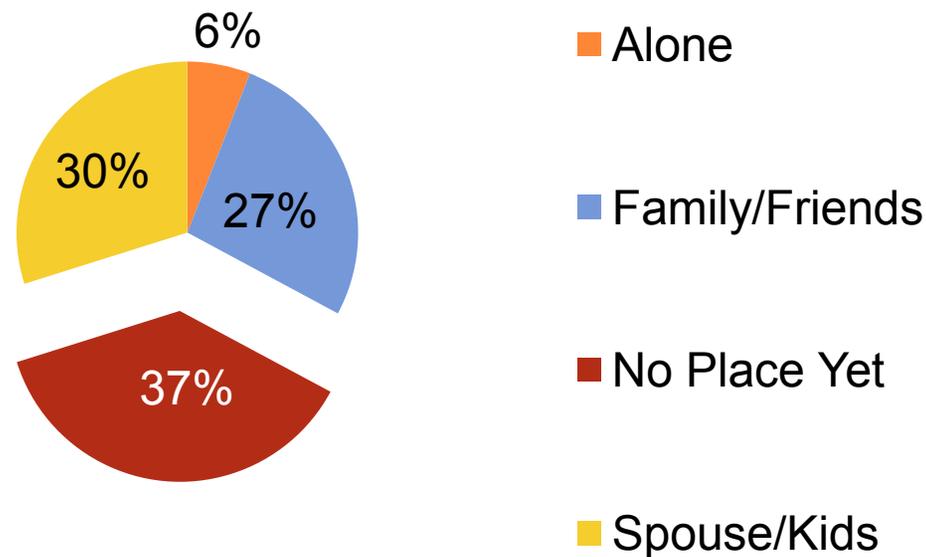
46 interviews

**Target population:** Offenders being released within 90 days and returning to Travis County from:

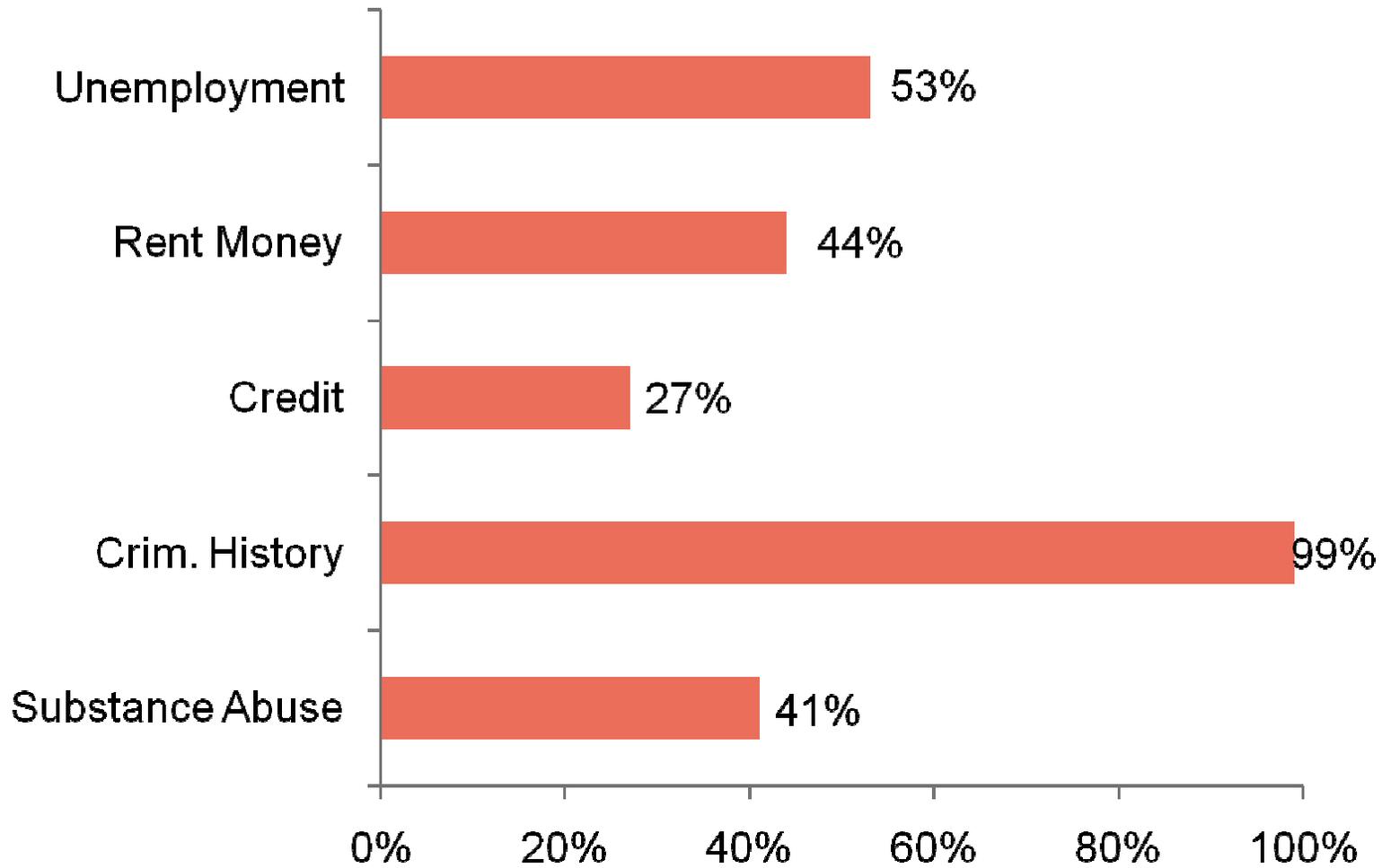
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice – Travis State Jail
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice – Woodman State Jail
- Travis County Correctional Complex (Del Valle)

# THE NEED

Where are you going to live upon release?

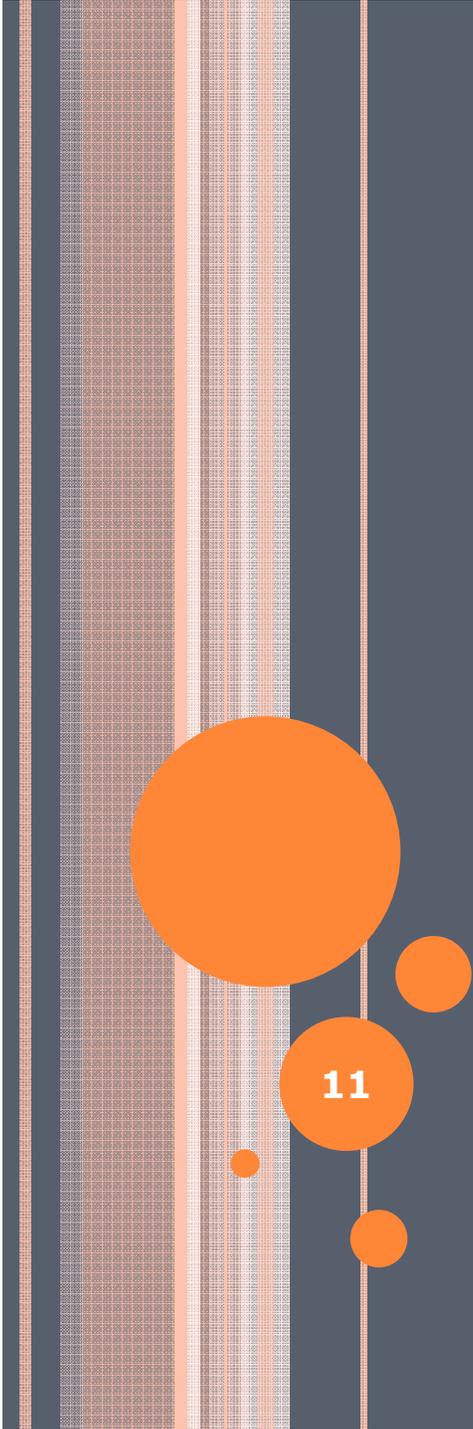


# PERCEIVED BARRIERS



## DISCUSSION

- How are the barriers identified here similar to what your clients experience?
- What additional barriers, if any, are your clients who have criminal backgrounds encountering?
- How are you navigating around the barrier of criminal history?



# INVENTORY OF HOUSING PROVIDERS

Winter 2008/2009

11

# WHERE DO PEOPLE WITH A CRIMINAL HISTORY ACCESS HOUSING SERVICES?

Based on the  
2009 Housing Provider Inventory for  
Persons with Criminal Backgrounds in  
Austin/Travis County, Texas

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How many providers in Austin/Travis County serve individuals with criminal histories?
- How many units and how many beds are available to individuals with criminal histories?
- How many beds are temporary vs. permanent?
- How many providers are equipped to provide services to people with developmental disabilities?
- How many providers are equipped to provide services to people with mental illnesses?
- How many providers will accept sex offenders?
- How many providers will accept individuals with a violent offense?

# COMPLETING THE INVENTORY

- Phase I: Online Survey
  - 324 housing providers were emailed directly
  - The survey was also sent to several databases
  - The survey was sent to over a thousand email addresses
    - 29 providers responded to the online survey

# Completing the Inventory

- Phase II: Follow Up Calls
  - Providers were called (using a shorter version of survey) and asked if they served individuals with a criminal background — 32 additional respondents
- In Phases I and II, a total of 61 providers who serve individuals with criminal histories were identified

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Self-reported findings
- Availability of housing in the private market needs to be considered
- No complete estimate of the size of the reentry population is available
- No complete estimate of the housing needs of people with criminal backgrounds is available

## FINDINGS: NUMBER OF PROVIDERS AND NUMBER OF BEDS

- 61 providers said they serve individuals with criminal history
- 5,809 provider beds for those with criminal history



## DISCUSSION

- Without naming names, how many additional providers who serve individuals with criminal histories can you identify?

## IDENTIFYING PROVIDERS WHO SERVE PERSONS WITH A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND

- In Phase I of the A/TCRRT Housing Provider Survey, 91% of housing providers responded “yes” to serving persons with criminal backgrounds but only 41% reported having served anyone from that population during the past year

## DISCUSSION

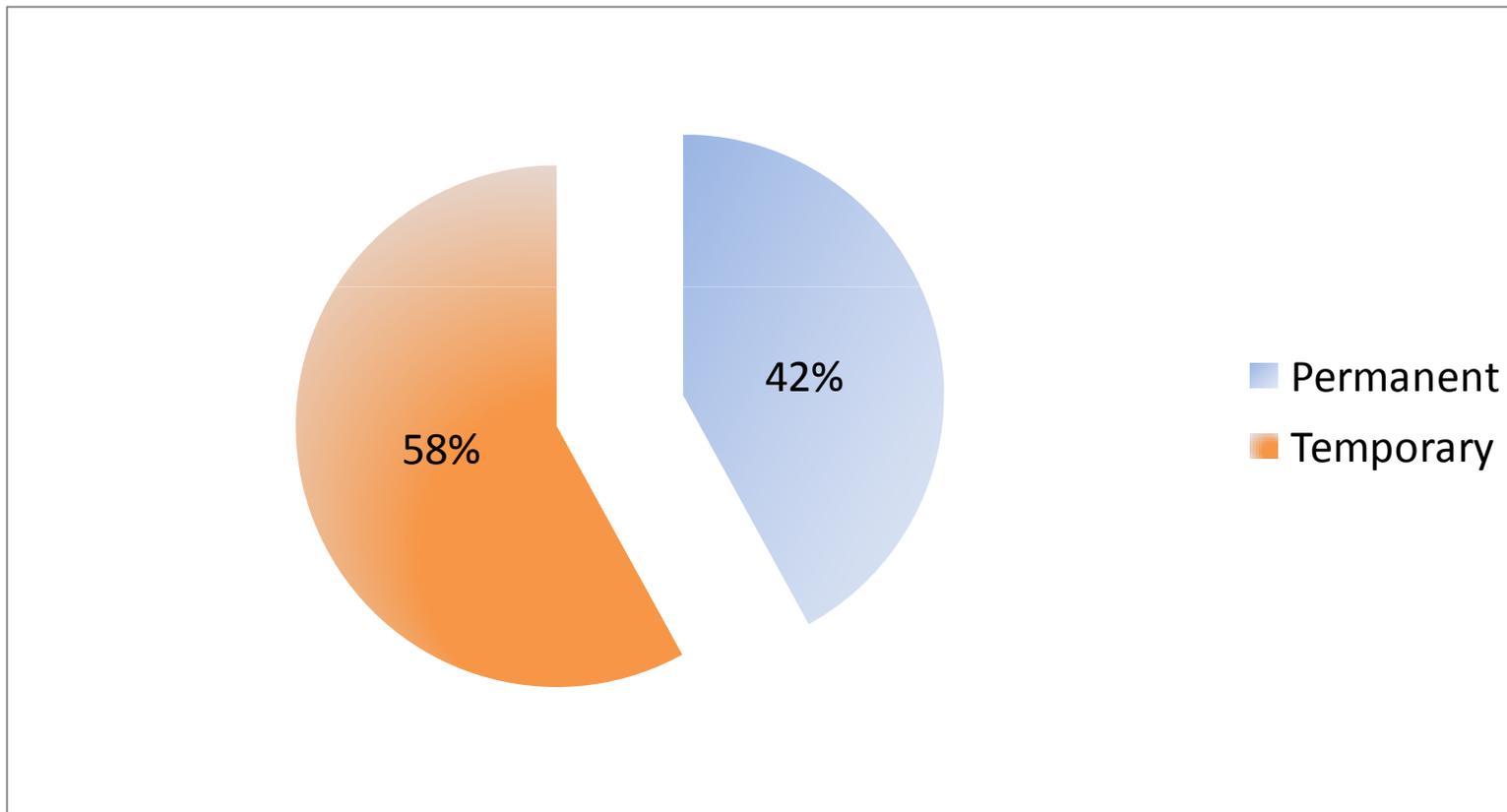
- Some providers who say they are willing to serve people with criminal backgrounds, report not having served anyone with a criminal background recently. Why might this be?

# TEMPORARY VERSUS PERMANENT

- What percentage of beds reported in survey are temporary vs. permanent?
  - Temporary beds have a time limit and/or are designed to channel individuals into permanent stable housing; no lease
  - A permanent bed is located in a unit with a lease\*

\*A bed was considered permanent when located in a unit with lease of 6 months or more.

# TEMPORARY VERSUS PERMANENT



## DISCUSSION

- What is the role of transitional housing?
- What are some strategies or ideas for moving people into permanent housing?

# SERVING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES AND DEVELOPMENTAL & INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

- In conversations with providers, many voiced concerns about serving these populations.
  - Most providers do not have on-site supportive services necessary to help individuals in these groups who are unable to live independently.

## DISCUSSION

- How can we strengthen our housing providers to enhance housing opportunities for people with disabilities?
- Are there other strategies we need to consider to ensure this population can access safe and affordable housing?

## OFFENDERS WITH VIOLENT AND/OR SEXUAL OFFENSES

- Violent Offenders/Sex Offenders
  - Beds available = 379 (7%)
  - Would consider a potential client on a case by case basis= 460 (8%)
- Number of Registered Sex Offenders in Travis County Zip Codes = 1,782\*
- Violent Offenses account for 17% of people released from TDCJ whose original conviction was in Travis County.\*\* 514 persons convicted in Travis County with violent offenses were released from TDCJ in the last fiscal year (FY 2008).

\*\*CAN's FAQ about Reentry from Incarceration

## DISCUSSION

- How are you navigating getting housing for people with violent or sex offenses?
- How should our community address this issue?

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

49 of 61 providers offered some type of on-site supportive services.

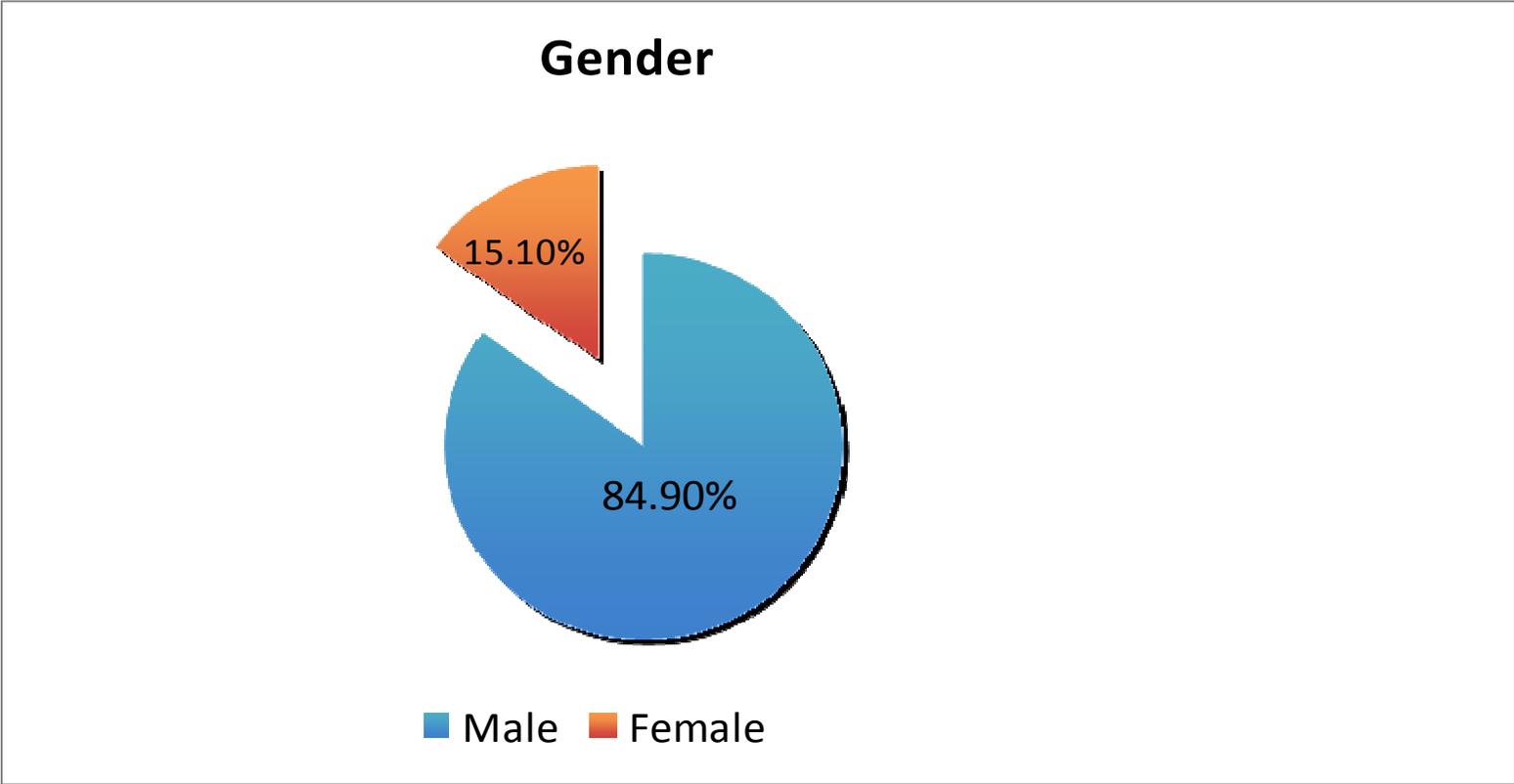
- Advocacy
- Clothing and/or Food Pantry
- Peer Support Groups
- Case Management
- Life Skills
- Assistance in Obtaining Identification
- Connections to Spiritual Supports
- Mentoring
- Free or Subsidized Transportation

12 providers did not offer any supportive services.

## DISCUSSION

- How important is it to have on-site supportive services as opposed to linkages or referrals?

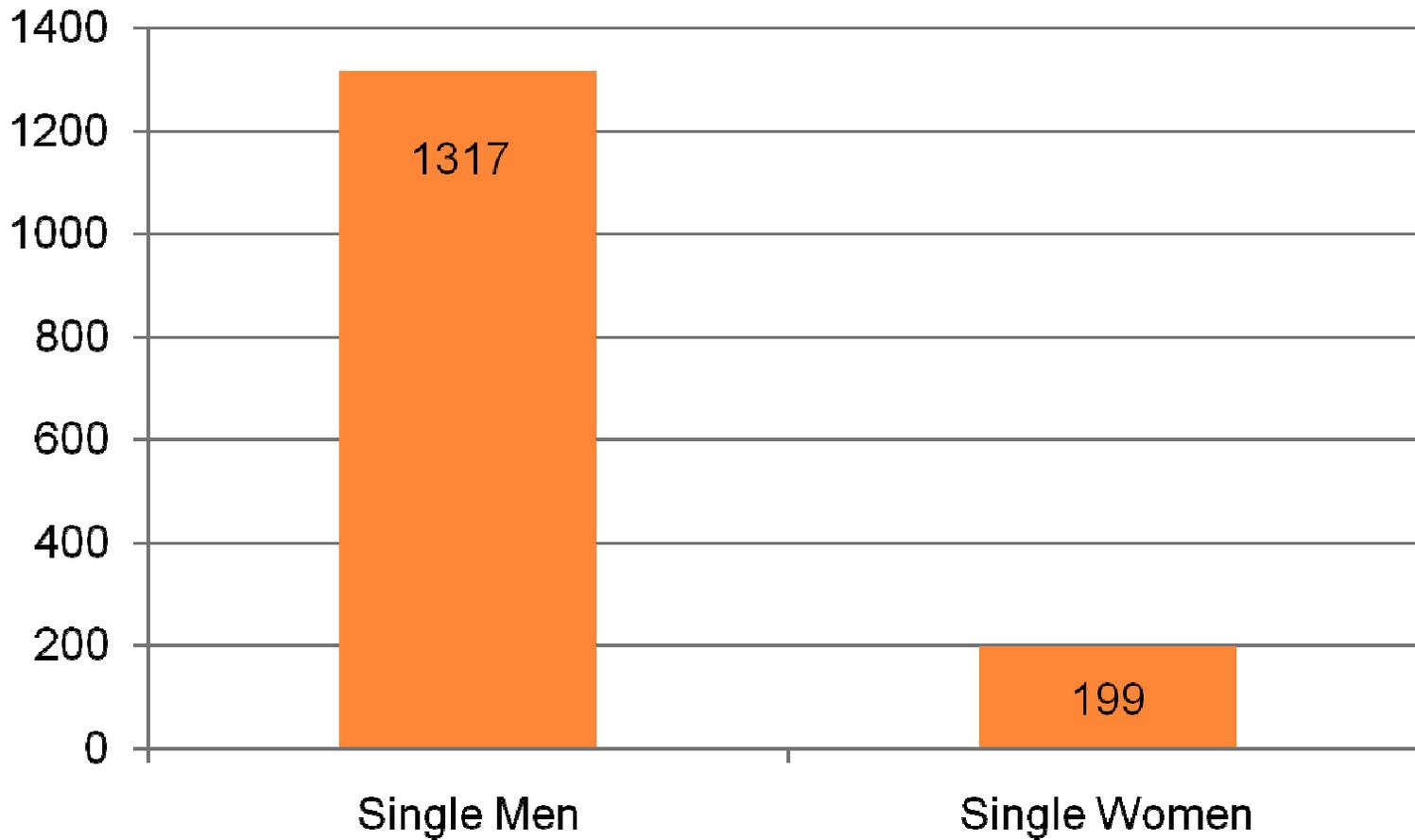
# % OF TDCJ RELEASES BY GENDER (FY 2008)



Source: TDCJ Statistical Manual (FY 2008)

# HOUSING AVAILABLE BY GENDER

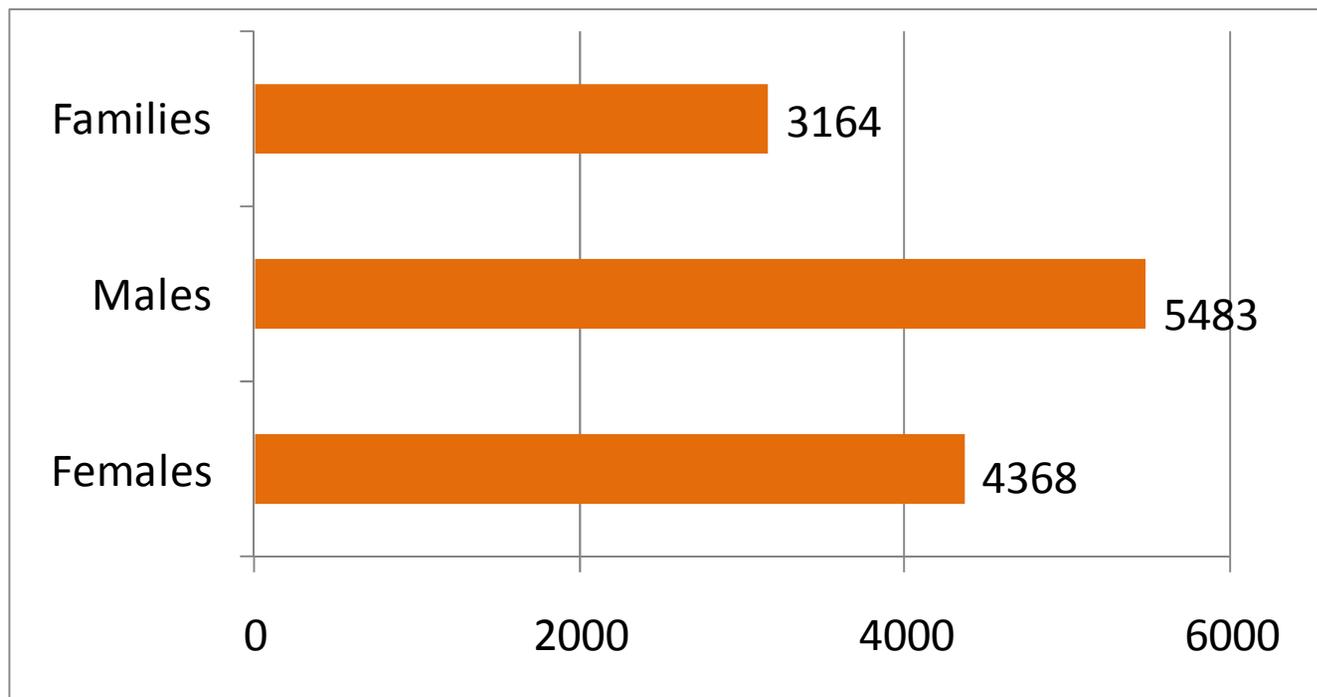
## Beds



# DISCUSSION

- What are the differences in housing options available to men and women?
- What are the implications of these findings?

# POTENTIAL BEDS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

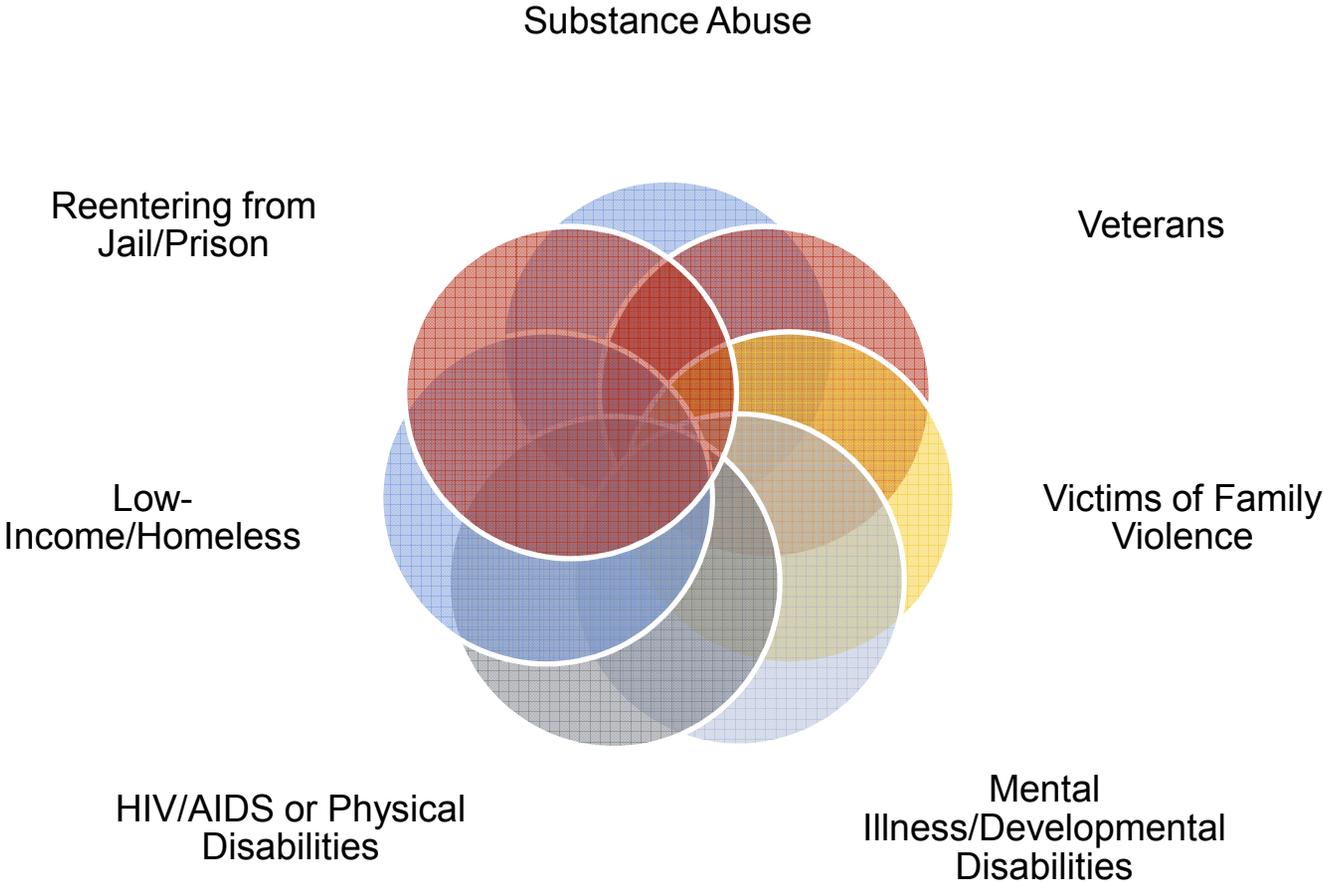


\*Categories are not mutually exclusive.

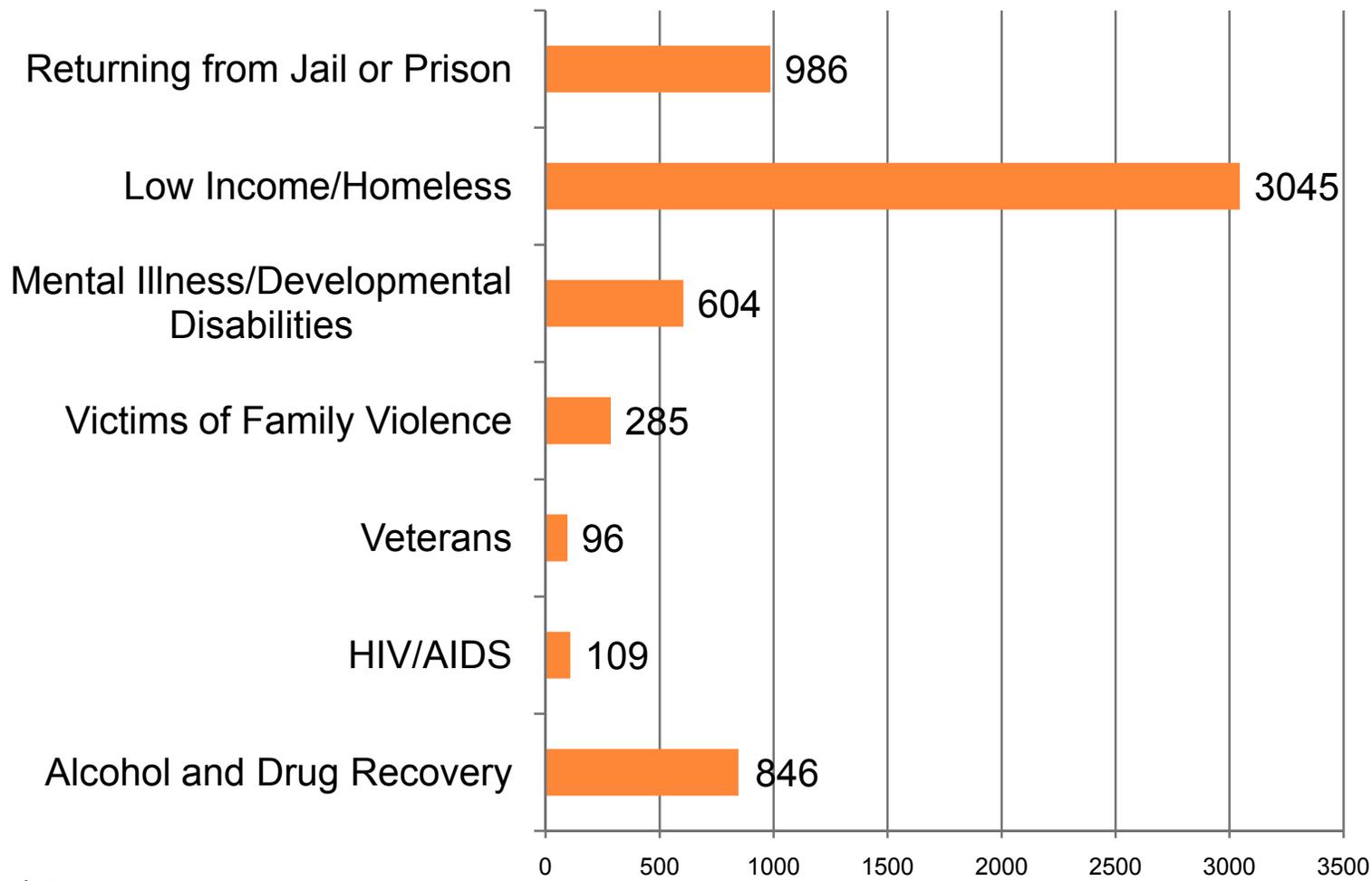
## DISCUSSION

- Given that family support has been identified as a crucial factor in successful reentry, is there enough housing in our community for ex-offenders and their families?

# POPULATIONS SERVED BY HOUSING PROVIDERS



# TARGET POPULATIONS FOR AVAILABLE BEDS\*



\*Categories are not mutually exclusive.

# LOCATION OF HOUSING PROVIDERS BY ZIP CODES

Top Number of Beds Targeted to People with a Criminal History (in order from greatest number of beds)

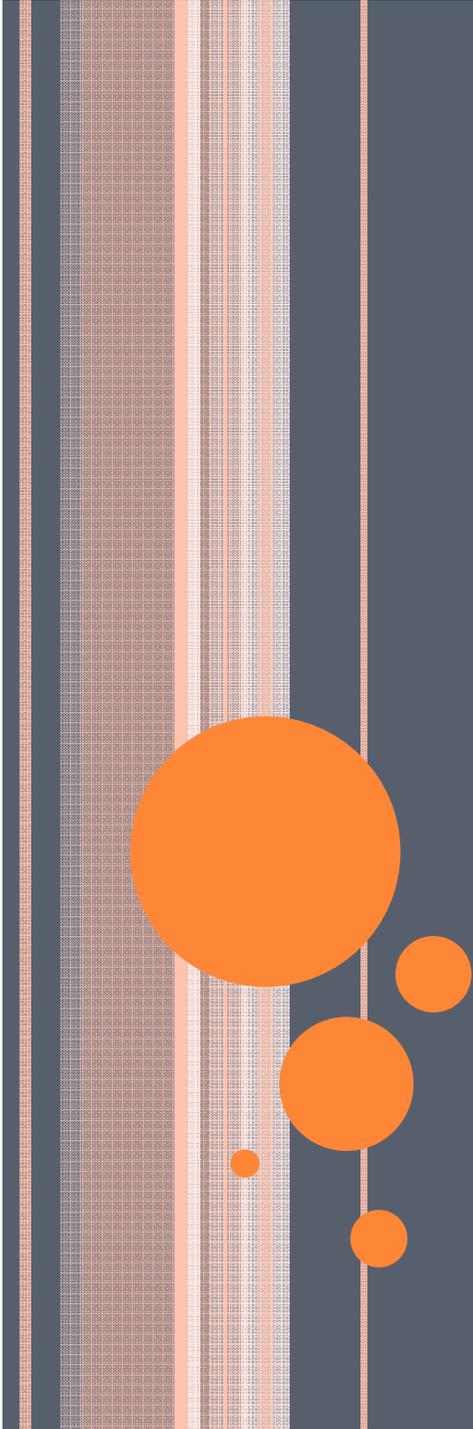
- 78741 (Southeast Austin)
  - 78617 (Del Valle)
- 78723 (Northeast Austin)
- 78744 (Southeast Austin)
- 78724 (Northeast Austin)

## DISCUSSION

- What are some strategies to diversify the placement of transitional/supportive housing in our community?

## DISCUSSION

- How can we disperse the reentry population throughout the community?



# **Other News in Housing for Persons with Criminal Backgrounds**

# A/TC Corporation for Supportive Housing Texas Re-entry Project

## ○ Goals:

- Recommendations for enhancing housing planning in our community with a focus on housing planning for homeless, re-entry, mentally and physically ill, and developmentally disabled persons (July)
- Identifying the scope of need for supportive housing for persons leaving correctional settings or involved in criminal justice programs (August)
- Recommendations on the best strategies for housing the populations identified (December)

## Right At Home Grant Award

- TDHCA \$600,000 grant award for 2 years
- Serves persons with a criminal history plus at least one of the following: chronic health maladies, substance abuse issues, mental health/developmental disabilities, and/or physical disabilities.
- Services provided include outreach/engagement, case management, data collection/evaluation, and legal services
- Collaborating Applicants: Caritas (Lead), AIDS Services of Austin, Crime Prevention Institute, and Wright Wellness Center
- Partner Agencies: 19 subcontracting and linking partners

# TDCJ Housing Vouchers

- HB 3226 (Madden)
  - Funds temporary housing costs for certain individuals on parole or mandatory supervision and releasees.
  - A/TCRRT is working with partners across the state to monitor development of policies on these vouchers as well as the implementation.

## INCLUSION INTO THE COMMUNITY

**City of Austin’s Neighborhood Housing and Community Development: Fiscal Years 2009-14 Consolidated Plan:** Included section on “Persons returning to the community from correctional institutions and/or with criminal histories” in the Person with Special Needs section of the plan.

**Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO) Ten Year Plan:** Identified persons returning to the community as a special needs population. New HUD definitions of homelessness are allowing additional opportunities to be added to their Plan.



# EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE COMMITTEE

- ❖ Jonathan Allen, Co-Chair
- ❖ Michael Balliro
- ❖ Sandra Eames, Ed.D, Co-Chair
- ❖ Rick Morley
- ❖ Laurie Najjar
- ❖ Emily Rogers

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