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Cost-benefit analysis shows that providing transitional housing for ex-prisoners could save millions of dollars in tax-payer's money while increasing community safety

TORONTO- A study funded by The Toronto Community Foundation and Commissioned by The John Howard Society of Toronto entitled, "Making Toronto Safer: A Cost Benefit Analysis" examined two specific groups of ex-prisoners; the homeless and those at high risk of re-offending sexually or violently against a minor.

The savings identified in the study were based on the projected costs of re-offending to victims, the criminal justice system, and the provision of additional transitional and emergency services. With transitional housing and support, ex-prisoners are less likely to re-offend and more likely to become contributing members of our society by benefiting from real rehabilitative efforts.

By using smarter spending strategies, community agencies can provide safe options that reduce reliance on expensive policing, corrections, health care and emergency system expenditures. "Extension of housing and supports saves money by making it less likely that the ex-prisoner re-enters the criminal justice system. The savings from prevention are impressive" said John Stapleton, the study's co-author.

"Transitional housing for these vulnerable populations saves money that could be better spent on community initiatives including housing and crime prevention", said Rahul K. Bhardwag, president and CEO of the Toronto Community Foundation.

Locally, few housing options are available to ex-prisoners, let alone those that provide support and supervision. However, the John Howard Society of Toronto is hopeful that this study will help pave the way for future housing projects that they are positioned to implement. Housing models that both reduce costs and increase community safety in other jurisdictions have proven records of success.

"Once they have a roof over their head, a bit of support to help handle their personal issues goes a long way towards protecting victims and neighborhoods", said Greg Rogers, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Toronto.

To view a full copy of the report including financial savings, go to <http://www.johnhowardtor.on.ca/> in the Research section.

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