

# ADVOCACY ASSESSMENT TOOL: THE WAR ON DRUGS MEETS THE HOUSING SYSTEM



## a Drug Policy Alliance publication

Ballooning jail and prison populations are only the most visible signs of the drug war in the United States. Despite the immense harm that has been done in the name of the drug war in the criminal legal system, the actual universe of devastation extends far beyond. The drug war seeps into our daily lives – and it's easy to lose sight of how much our world is shaped by it.

Surveillance and punishment are the default reactions to drug use and activity wherever it shows up, impacting our lives in profound but largely unrecognized ways. This assessment tool is designed to help organizers, advocates, and policymakers ascertain how drug war policies and practices appear in your local housing system.

### DRUG TESTING, ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICIES, AND PUNISHMENTS FOR DRUG-RELATED ACTIVITY

- If evicted from public housing based on drug-related activity or claims of nuisance, for how long is a resident banned? Can a resident be evicted based on drug-related activity of a guest?
- Can a resident be evicted from public housing if they or someone visiting their residence overdoses?
- If evicted from Section 8 housing based on drug-related activity or claims of nuisance, for how long is a resident banned? Can a resident be evicted based on drug-related activity of a guest?
- Can a resident be evicted from Section 8 housing if they or someone visiting their residence overdoses?
- If evicted from transitional housing based on drug-related activity or claims of nuisance, for how long is a resident banned? Can a resident be evicted based on drug-related activity of a guest?
- Can a resident be evicted from transitional housing if they or someone visiting their residence overdoses?
- Can a person be banned from a homeless shelter based on drug use or drug-related activity? If so, is the ban temporary or permanent?
- Can a person be banned from a homeless shelter if they overdose? If so, is the ban temporary or permanent?

### DRUG TREATMENT PHILOSOPHIES

- Does my jurisdiction have “Housing First” options available for people with serious drug use needs or substance use disorders?

### TRAINING AND RESOURCES

- Do homeless shelters in my jurisdiction have naloxone and safer use supplies on site? Are employees trained in overdose reversal?

### PUNISHMENTS FOR DRUG CONVICTIONS

- Does my jurisdiction allow temporary or permanent exclusion from public housing based on a drug arrest or conviction?
- Does my jurisdiction allow temporary or permanent exclusion from Section 8 housing based on a drug arrest or conviction?
- Can landlords in my jurisdiction ask a prospective tenant about their history of drug arrests or convictions?