

# Freed from Prison : Imprisoned from Freedom

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act signed by President Bill Clinton states in section 115: “Persons convicted of a state or federal felony offense involving the use or sale of drugs are subject to a lifetime ban on receiving cash assistance and food stamps.



As a result, there is a segment of the population that needs help finding the basic necessities to survive. A way to help alleviate some of the stress to find housing opportunities. An LEC poses a great solution. Since these women are ineligible for federal help to obtain an education their prospective job opportunities are limited, thus capping their economic mobility. These families need a rent stable option they can call home for a prolonged period of time.

People most effected are, African American and Latino communities are subjected to increased policing and enforcement for drugs and therefore are more likely to end up in prison. Second, they are more likely to need benefits in the first place due to historical conditions of disenfranchisement in the community and the intersection of race, gender and socioeconomic status

Approximately 92,000 (and growing) women are affected by the ban; the state of California has banned over one-third of these women from federal benefits, access to educational loans, and subsidized housing

*Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEC) Address Lack of Affordable Housing*

Ensures the lifetime of affordability  
 Once the mortgage is paid of the resident has an instant increase in disposable income.

*Limited Equity Cooperatives Pose Many Benefits*

Residents Develop Social Capital  
 Increased Levels of Community Safety  
 Better Building Maintenance

**Limited Equity Housing Cooperative for People Convicted of Drug Felonies**

*Financial Security of Residents Presents a Challenge*

A conventional LEC would require a substantial down-payment similar to one provided when purchasing a home. Those convicted of a felony may have a difficult time finding a job.

*Ideal Role of Limited Equity Cooperative*

Allows residents to pool their resources to cover the mortgage, operating expenses, and maintenance costs.

➤ Under the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988, public housing authorities are advised to deny entry to applicants with any criminal offense on their record, no matter how minor.  
 ➤ Under the “no-fault” clause in the Housing and Urban Development Department “One Strike Initiative,” tenants can be evicted if they, members of their household, or guests engage in any drug related activity.



instead of a down-payment of 10 or 20 of the purchase price; the resident would put down first month's rent similar to what is requested in a security deposit. Or Another form of payment could be similar to Habitat for Humanity or “sweat equity”. In the sense of not only working to rehabilitate their own dwelling, but also another housing cooperative so another family could move in.