



# **Mayors Challenge**

## **Desk Book**

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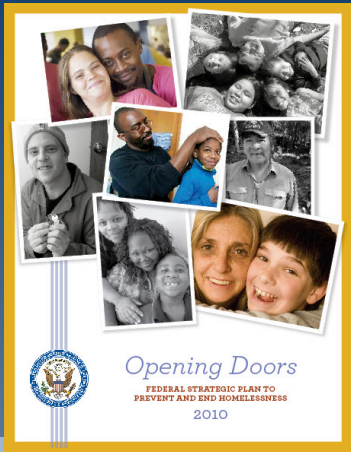
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# MAYORS CHALLENGE TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

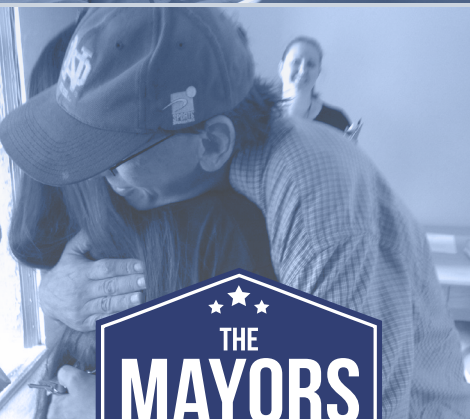


*Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* set a bold and audacious goal to end Veteran homelessness in the United States before the end of 2015. Over the last four years, the Obama Administration and our partners in states and communities across the country have achieved a 33 percent decrease in homelessness among Veterans. On June 4, 2014, as part of the *Joining Forces* initiative, First Lady Michelle Obama announced that a growing coalition of mayors, governors, and local officials are committed to ending Veteran homelessness in their communities by the end of 2015, and called on additional mayors and local leaders to join this effort. Today, hundreds of leaders have joined the challenge, and several communities, such as Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Houston, and others are already on track to meet or beat this goal. On January 7, 2015, New Orleans announced it had effectively ended Veteran homelessness, becoming the first major U.S. city to achieve the goal.

Through the **Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness**, local leaders across the country will marshal federal, local, and nonprofit efforts to end Veteran homelessness in their states and communities. Ending Veteran homelessness means reaching the point where there are no Veterans sleeping on our streets and every Veteran has access to permanent housing. Should Veterans become homeless or be at risk of becoming homeless, communities will have the capacity to quickly connect them to the help they need to achieve housing stability. When those things are accomplished, our nation will achieve its goal.

To aid mayors and communities in pursuit of the goal of ending homelessness among Veterans, the federal government has provided targeted resources and implemented strategies to strengthen our country's homelessness assistance programs. At the local level, mayors and their community partners can achieve the goal of ending Veteran homelessness through:

- ★ Using a **Housing First** approach, which removes barriers to help Veterans obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, without unnecessary prerequisites;
- ★ Prioritizing the most vulnerable Veterans, especially those experiencing chronic homelessness, for **permanent supportive housing** opportunities, including those created through the HUD-VASH program;
- ★ Coordinating outreach efforts to identify and engage every Veteran experiencing homelessness and focusing outreach efforts on achieving housing outcomes;
- ★ Targeting **rapid re-housing** interventions, including those made possible through the Department of Veterans Affairs' Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, toward Veterans and their families who need shorter-term rental subsidies and services in order to be reintegrated back into our communities;
- ★ Leveraging housing and services that can help Veterans who are ineligible for some of the VA's programs get into stable housing;
- ★ Increasing early detection and access to preventive services so at-risk Veterans and their families remain stably housed; and
- ★ Closely monitoring progress toward the goal, including the success of programs in achieving permanent housing outcomes.



To publicly commit to ending Veteran homelessness in your community and learn more about joining the Mayors Challenge, send an email to [mayorchallenge@hud.gov](mailto:mayorchallenge@hud.gov) and visit <http://bit.ly/mayorchallenge>.

## CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS BY MAYORS CHALLENGE COMMUNITIES

1. The community took steps needed to **identify all Veterans** experiencing homelessness, including Veterans who were unsheltered, as well as Veterans in shelter, in Grant Per Diem programs and other VA residential programs, in other transitional housing programs, and in other temporary institutional settings. This identification of Veterans included **both Veterans that meet the definition of chronic homelessness and Veterans that are experiencing homelessness but do not meet the definition of chronic homelessness**. The definition of Veteran used includes all persons who served in the armed forces, regardless of how long they served or the type of discharge they received.
2. There are **no longer any Veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the community**. Some Veterans may not yet be in permanent housing, but all are now in some form of shelter (emergency shelter, treatment programs, transitional programs, other temporary institutional settings, etc...)
3. The community has the resources and a plan and timeline for providing **permanent housing opportunities to all Veterans** who are currently sheltered but are still experiencing homelessness. The community has identified the programs and resources that will be used to provide those housing opportunities and can provide those housing opportunities quickly and without barriers to entry, **using Housing First principles** and practices.
4. The community has resources, plans, and systems in place for identifying (1) Veterans that may have been missed in initial efforts to identify Veterans, (2) at-risk Veterans and (3) Veterans newly experiencing homelessness in the future.
  - a. The community has adequate **outreach and engagement strategies** in place to be confident that they can identify such Veterans.
  - b. The community has an adequate level of resources and the capacity to provide appropriate services to **prevent homelessness for at-risk Veterans** in the future.
  - c. The community can provide options for shelter and has identified the programs and resources that will be used to provide **quick access to permanent housing** opportunities for these Veterans not addressed in the initial work.
5. The community has an adequate level of resources and appropriate plans and services in place to **ensure the housing stability of formerly-homeless Veterans currently in permanent housing** or who enter permanent housing in the future.



## DEFINING HOMELESSNESS AND CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

### Homelessness

While eligibility for specific programs may vary, the definition of homelessness used for the Mayors Challenge is from the "Final Rule on the Definition of Homeless" published by HUD in the *Federal Register* on December 5, 2011. While the HUD regulations maintain four categories for defining people who are homeless and eligible for certain homeless assistance programs, communities participating in the Mayors Challenge are encouraged to focus on identifying Veterans who meet the definition contained in Category 1 of the homeless definition; those persons that are literally homeless and lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

1. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
2. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
3. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

### Chronic Homelessness

It is critically important that communities participating in the Mayors Challenge ensure that their outreach and engagement efforts are reaching Veterans who are experiencing chronic homelessness. The definition of "chronically homeless" that should be used for the Mayors Challenge is contained within the Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule at 24 CFR 578.3, which states that a chronically homeless person is:

1. An individual who:
  - a. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
  - b. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years; and
  - c. Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability;
2. An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition [as described in Section I.D.2.(a) of this Notice], before entering that facility; or
3. A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition [as described in Section I.D.2.(a) of this Notice, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.



The goal to end Veteran homelessness is in reach and will require accelerated efforts from all partners to get the job done. To support communities as they progress towards the goal, USICH has identified 10 strategies that increase leadership, collaboration, and coordination among programs serving Veterans experiencing homelessness, and promote rapid access to permanent housing for all Veterans. Each strategy is accompanied by additional resources to help community leaders and stakeholders understand how to implement these strategies more effectively.

## 1) START AT THE TOP: RECRUIT YOUR MAYOR TO JOIN THE MAYORS CHALLENGE TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

Mayors and local leaders are essential to securing and aligning the resources and partners necessary to end Veteran homelessness in every community. If your Mayor, County Commissioner, or Governor has not yet joined the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, they should do so. Joining the Mayors Challenge is a great way to solidify partnerships and to promote coordination and ensure accountability across all partners. The Mayors Challenge also includes [criteria for success in ending Veteran homelessness](#) that can help define the vision and the goal for your community.

### Resources:

- [Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness Fact Sheet](#)
- [Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness](#) Information (HUD)

## 2) IDENTIFY ALL VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY NAME

By identifying Veterans by name, a community is able to ensure that they are effectively and efficiently serving all Veterans needing housing and homelessness assistance. A best practice has been to create a shared list of Veterans experiencing homelessness, created through data-sharing, assessment processes, and communication between the local VA Medical Center, the Continuum of Care, and other stakeholders. A VA Medical Center is able to share client-level information with CoC partners by asking the Veteran to sign a release of information (ROI) form that meets VA requirements. The community can then prioritize the list to match Veterans with the appropriate housing and services as quickly as possible.

### Resource:

- [Best Practices: Sharing Information to End Veteran Homelessness](#) (HUD; includes link to VA ROI form)

## 3) IMPLEMENT A HOUSING FIRST SYSTEM ORIENTATION AND RESPONSE

By using a Housing First approach, a community can ensure that Veterans experiencing homelessness can move into permanent housing, with the right level of services, as quickly as possible. Individual programs and projects can help accelerate entry to permanent housing by removing as many barriers as possible for accepting applicants regardless of their sobriety or use of substances, poor credit or financial history, or past involvement with criminal justice system.

In addition, to truly embrace Housing First, a community should create strong and direct referral linkages and relationships between the crisis response system and rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing, implement a coordinated entry system for matching people experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate housing and services, and use a data-driven approach to prioritizing people with the most significant needs for housing assistance.

### Resources:

- [The Housing First Checklist: A Practical Tool for Assessing Housing First in Practice](#)
- [Four Clarifications about Housing First](#) blog by Richard Cho

## 4) SET AND MEET AMBITIOUS SHORT-TERM HOUSING PLACEMENT GOALS

By setting concrete and ambitious short-term housing placement goals, your community can achieve bold outcomes around targeting Veterans experiencing homelessness and expediting entry to permanent housing. Many communities have established

ambitious monthly, quarterly, or 100-day housing placement goals to break down the larger goal of ending Veteran homelessness into focused blocks of time and effort, while pushing their systems to perform with maximum efficiency and better outcomes. These goals can be met by creating and sharing a community-wide list of Veterans, using a tested and validated assessment tool and process to prioritize and target interventions, using navigators and/or guides to address individual Veterans' needs and monitoring progress rooted in access to housing on a weekly or monthly basis.

**Resource:**

- [Best Practices: Sharing Information to End Veteran Homelessness](#) (HUD)

## **5) CONDUCT COORDINATED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS**

Communities experience the greatest successes in providing permanent housing to Veterans not by merely waiting for Veterans to show up for help, but by proactively seeking out Veterans in need of assistance, sharing information across outreach teams and sites, using a Housing First approach to focus on permanent housing connections, and collaborating with other systems, including law enforcement, prisons and jails, hospitals, libraries, and job centers. Partnerships and collaborations between VA Medical Centers and Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) grantees and Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) grantees may have a powerful impact on improving care coordination and optimizing resources.

In addition, communities should develop a strategy for conducting ongoing counts of people experiencing homelessness – perhaps on a monthly basis – to identify new Veterans who are either in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation.

**Resources:**

- [HCH-VA Collaboration Quick Guide: Joining Forces to Coordinate Care for Unstably Housed Veterans](#) (National Health Care for the Homeless Council)
- [Veterans Justice Outreach](#) Program (VA)
- [Assessing the Evidence: What We Know About Outreach and Engagement](#) (SAMHSA)

## **6) IMPLEMENT COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEMS**

In order to use the resources that are ending and preventing Veteran homelessness effectively, individual programs and resources need to work together as part of a coordinated entry system that matches individuals and households experiencing homelessness to appropriate housing and services, based on a common and shared assessment process performed consistently across partners. Your community should consider using housing navigators that are assigned to specific Veterans and can negotiate and expedite the entry process into housing by providing assistance with paperwork, identifications, appointments, and other critical steps to create a streamlined process for getting into housing.

**Resource:**

- [Coordinated Assessment Toolkit](#) (National Alliance to End Homelessness)

## **7) DEPLOY HUD-VASH/SSVF EFFECTIVELY**

Achieving the goal requires the efficient deployment and full utilization of targeted programs like HUD-VASH and SSVF. Continuums of Care can partner with VA Medical Centers, HUD-VASH and SSVF providers to ensure participation in the community's coordinated entry system, disseminate best practices, and remove barriers throughout the system so that when challenges related to the deployment of resources and performance of these programs do arise, strategies can be adjusted to increase the number of Veterans accessing permanent housing.

**Resources:**

- [HUD-VASH Best Practices](#) (HUD)
- [HUD-VASH Resource Guide for Permanent Housing and Clinical Care](#) (VA)
- [SSVF University](#) (VA)

## **8) IMPROVE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PERFORMANCE AND CONSIDER CONVERTING OR REALLOCATING RESOURCES INTO PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

Communities can reach the goal of ending and preventing Veteran homelessness faster by seeking to help Veterans currently residing in transitional housing move into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Transitional housing programs can help speed up exits to permanent housing by using permanent housing and housing stability outcomes as the key measures of success, eliminating or reducing entrance eligibility criteria, and reducing lengths of stay.



Every community should also use the VA gaps analysis tool to determine the inventory of resources needed locally to end Veteran homelessness, including the amount and types of transitional housing. If your community finds that it has a larger stock of transitional housing units than are needed to house Veterans, it may wish to convert those programs into other programs such as permanent supportive housing or modify the program model to serve another function such as bridge housing. Options vary by funding source and regulations.

**Resource:**

- [Guide to Reallocating Funds in the CoC Program](#) (HUD)

## **9) INCREASING CONNECTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT**

As President Obama said in the 2015 State of the Union address, “If you want somebody who’s going to get the job done, hire a Veteran.” Communities should work with employers to commit to hiring Veterans, including Veterans who have experienced homelessness.

Communities should also collaborate with Workforce Investment Boards and provide seamless points of referrals and contacts between the Continuum of Care, VA Medical Center, and workforce systems. CoC and VA case managers are integral resources in building referral relationships with supportive service providers, public system and can help navigate employment services and ensure that a Veterans’ employment needs are met holistically. Some communities have utilized the Employment Navigator model, where a case management team helps families experiencing homelessness through homeless assistance and housing, workforce systems, and income supports.

**Resources:**

- [Partnerships for Opening Doors Summit Page](#)
- [Practice Guides for Employment and Training](#)
- [Top Ideas on Integrating Employment and Housing Strategies to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)
- [Guides for Service Providers](#) (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans)

## **10) COORDINATE WITH LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS TO SOLVE LEGAL NEEDS**

One of the major reasons Veterans experience homelessness is due to unmet legal needs. Civil legal services attorneys are essential partners in removing barriers to housing and employment by solving civil legal problems such as preventing avoidable evictions, navigating outstanding warrants, expunging criminal records, and securing targeted and mainstream benefits. Legal Services attorneys should also engage in systemic advocacy (to the degree allowable by law) to promote Housing First practices among public housing authorities and housing assistance programs. Your community should ensure that homeless assistance programs coordinate with legal services organization to address individual and systemic legal needs.

**Resources:**

- [Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable Toolkit](#) (DOJ)
- [Five Best Practices for SSVF legal services](#) (VA)
- [Homeless Experience Legal Protection](#) (Project H. E. L. P.)



## **FIVE HIGH IMPACT STEPS**

### **Mayors Challenge to END Veteran Homelessness**

With First Lady Michelle Obama's announcement of the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, the race to zero is on. Mayors are uniquely positioned to accelerate progress in their communities. Here are five proven steps that mayors can take to ramp up and achieve the goal.

#### **ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING**

There are many partners in the movement to end veteran homelessness, and efforts are undoubtedly underway in your community. The partnerships are essential, but diffuse, uncoordinated leadership and decision-making can reduce impact. Agreed upon leadership and decision-making are essential.

- Convene the key players: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center Director; head of the relevant Continuum(s) of Care (Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]-funded homeless system); Public Housing Authority Director; and leading nonprofit agencies.
- Agree upon the core elements of the approach (see below), and upon decision-making structure.
- Dedicate significant staff, with authority to act on your behalf, to help disrupt the "business as usual" approach to homelessness within your own team.

#### **SET CLEAR NUMERICAL GOALS AND TIMELINE**

The goal of ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 is doable but ambitious. It requires clear numerical goals and a tight timeline.

- Establish the target: the number of veterans who are homeless, or will become homeless, by the end of 2015 (VA has data necessary to make these estimates).
- Set the trajectory for the goal of ending homelessness:
  - How much of each core strategy is needed (see Strategies below)?
  - Who will deliver it?
  - Who will pay for it?
  - When will it be done?
- Establish a time limit for homelessness (example: any homeless veteran, once identified, will be housed within **30 days**).

#### **CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

Solid, shared data and performance benchmarks measure progress toward the goal and hold participants accountable. At present, different partners may use different data and benchmarks.

- Establish the data system(s) to be used, and the entity(s) that will be responsible for collecting and reporting data – How many homeless veterans are being housed? How long is it taking? How many veterans remain homeless?
- Create a system of regular reporting on progress; identification of problems; and use of collective knowledge to address issues or make course corrections promptly. To whom will these reports be made (see Leadership and Decision-Making above)?

## EMPLOY CORE, EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Achieving the goal within the timeframe will require peak effectiveness from program interventions. Resources will need to be shifted from less effective to more effective interventions.

- Proven effective strategies are:
  - **Outreach** to identify and engage homeless veterans.
  - **Crisis housing** to keep people safe until they are quickly re-housed.
  - **Rapid re-housing** for those requiring less assistance, including linkages to services.
  - **Permanent supportive housing** for those with disabilities and long homeless histories.
  - **Coordinated assessment and entry systems** are necessary to get each veteran connected to the proper intervention.
- Other, less effective interventions should be phased out and resources shifted to solutions.

## HAVE A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A communications strategy is necessary to:

- Maintain momentum by articulating goals and reporting on progress.
- Engage key constituencies such as landlords, employers, veteran service organizations, philanthropy, the faith community, and the public.
- Define what ending veteran homelessness means (example: veterans may have crises and lose their housing, but none will live on the street, and none will stay homeless longer than 30 days).
- Challenge your local community's misperception that veteran homelessness is a problem that cannot be solved.

## PRINCIPLES

**HOUSING FIRST** – Housing is the platform veterans need to address their other challenges, so getting people into housing will be the first course of action.

**SERVICES AS NEEDED** – Some veterans require on-going services, some temporary services, and some just a little financial help. While housing solves homelessness, service needs must also be met. The choice of which services to use, however, should be left to the individual veteran.

**EMPLOYMENT IS KEY** – Veterans will require employment to afford housing and other basic needs and for personal fulfillment and well-being.

**LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND** – The goal is zero homeless veterans. There are strategies and resources to end homelessness for every veteran.

*We have shown that we can house anyone; our challenge now is to house EVERYONE.*

*Secretary Shaun Donovan*

*US Department of Housing and Urban Development*

## TOOLS

### ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

It is important to have a point-person who is responsible for convening stakeholders and creating forums for decision making. The sample job descriptions below describe this role, including one specifically related to veteran homelessness, and one that deals with homelessness more generally.

- [Sample Veteran Homelessness Initiative Coordinator](#)
- [Sample Job Description for Community Leader for Ending Homelessness](#)

### SET CLEAR NUMERICAL GOALS AND TIMELINE CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY

This toolkit provides an overview of system-level performance measurement.

- [What Gets Measured, Gets Done](#)

VA and HUD have different homelessness data systems. These are recommendations from four communities that successfully bridged the data and information gap.

- [Best Practices: Sharing Information to End Veteran Homelessness](#)

A proven strategy is to know every homeless veteran in the community. Registry Weeks are a way to do this.

- [100,000 Homes Resources](#)

A 100-day Housing Challenge utilizes weekly reporting to inspire service providers to quickly re-house people experiencing homelessness. This blog post describes how a 100-day housing challenge helped galvanize communities to sharply reduce the number of homeless families in one state. While this effort was not limited to veterans, its techniques carry over.

- [Virginia 100-day Housing Challenge](#)

### EMPLOY CORE, EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Rapid re-housing is a core strategy for ending veteran homelessness. It is funded by VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program, and other programs.

- [Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing](#)
- [Rapid Re-Housing: A History and Core Components](#)

These five short video training modules discuss the core components of rapid re-housing in further detail.

- [Rapid Re-Housing Training Modules](#)

This toolkit was developed to help communities plan for, implement, and evaluate a coordinated assessment system.

- [Coordinated Assessment Toolkit](#)

If you are interested in models of coordinated assessment and entry, you can follow the 25 Cities Initiative, where you'll find criteria those communities are using to set up and/or revamp their systems.

- [25 Cities Initiative](#)

In these conference presentations, HUD provides direction on how to develop standards for targeting permanent supportive housing.

- [Developing System-Wide Prioritization and Targeting Standards](#)

Permanent supportive housing must be targeted to those homeless veterans with the most severe housing barriers. The FUSE model was developed to ensure success for homeless people with mental illness and histories of incarceration, a challenging group that often includes homeless veterans.

- [CSH's Frequent Users Systems Engagement \(FUSE\) Model](#)

## HAVE A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Engaging and forging relationships with landlords is key to quickly housing homeless veterans. This blog post highlights landlord recruitment and engagement techniques.

- [Four Things SSVF Providers Can Do Now To Recruit Landlords](#)

These conference presentations provide an overview to the various employment programs for which veterans experiencing homelessness may be eligible.

- [Employment Strategies: Reducing Veteran Family Homelessness](#)

## **Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness**

### **Media Tool Kit**

*Gina Rodriguez, HUD Midwest Public Affairs Officer*

- **Find partners who want to do the right thing**—and are willing to look and work outside of the box to end veteran homelessness by helping veterans find housing, jobs and stability.
- **Don't Reinvent the Wheel**—templates, fact sheets, blogs, best practices and other resources are already available—USICH.gov, HUD.gov, VA.gov:
  - **HUD:**  
[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/veteran\\_information/mayors\\_challenge/mayors\\_and\\_staff](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/mayors_and_staff)  
  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Resources-to-Assist-Communities-in-Ending-Homelessness-Among-Vets.pdf>  
  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Best-Practices-Sharing-Information-to-End-Veteran-Homelessness.pdf>
  - **USICH:** <http://usich.gov/population/veterans>
  - **VA:** [http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/Prevention Fact Sheet 11-22-10.pdf](http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/Prevention_Fact_Sheet_11-22-10.pdf)
  - **White House: FACT SHEET:** President Obama hosts over 200 Mayors from Across the Country at the White House <http://wh.gov/iTkKd>
- **Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, Infographics, Blogs, Newsletters —use all available resources to tell your story over and over again. Find media partners who want to continue to profile future stories—announce your positive progress and milestones.
- **Use your media event to advance the work in a few different areas**—Rapid Results Boot Camps results, Military/Veteran employment events, special tours of nonprofits (CoCs) helping veterans, Habitat for Humanity, Veterans Housing Initiative.
- **Find a “real person”:** Someone who has been housed and is willing to tell his or her story—nothing can be better than a true-life story told from the heart.

## Available tools:

- **Template for teeing up your story (p. 6)**
  
- **Press Release Announcing Effort**  
[http://www.cityofscheneectady.com/pressreleases/Mayors\\_Challenge\\_to\\_end\\_veteran\\_homelessness.pdf](http://www.cityofscheneectady.com/pressreleases/Mayors_Challenge_to_end_veteran_homelessness.pdf)  
<http://pittsburghpa.gov/mayor/release?id=3059>
  
- **NPR Interviews**  
<http://www.npr.org/2014/09/16/348715076/homeless-vets-theyre-not-just-single-men-any-more>  
<http://wesa.fm/post/peduto-part-group-mayors-battling-homelessness-among-veterans>
  
- **Press Announcement, Rapid Results Boot Camp**  
<http://www.post-gazette.com/local/region/2014/11/18/Housing-provided-for-more-than-100-homeless-vets-in-Pittsburgh-area/stories/201411180192>  
<http://wesa.fm/post/pittsburgh-initiative-houses-125-homeless-veterans>
  
- **Resources to Assist communities in Ending Homelessness among Veterans**  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Resources-to-Assist-Communities-in-Ending-Homelessness-Among-Vets.pdf>
  
- **Hiring Our Heroes Forum**  
<http://www.uschamberfoundation.org/event/pittsburgh-forum>  
<http://www.wpxi.com/videos/news/hiring-our-heroes-valerie-smock-reports-from/vC3WLC/>
  
- **Data:** <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4074/2014-ahar-part-1-pit-estimates-of-homelessness/>
  - [2014 AHAR Report: Part 1 - PIT Estimates of Homelessness](#) (PDF)
  - [2014 CoC Populations and Subpopulations Reports](#) (HTML)
  - [2007 - 2014 Point-in-Time Estimates by CoC](#) (XLSX)
  - [2007 - 2014 Point-in-Time Estimates by State](#) (XLSX)
  - [2007 - 2014 Housing Inventory Count by CoC](#) (XLSX)
  - [2007 - 2014 Housing Inventory Count by State](#) (XLSX)



## Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness Publicizing your efforts

### PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

#### Mayor [NAME] Commits to End Veteran Homelessness in [CITY]

[CITY, STATE] - Today, Mayor [NAME] joined First Lady Michelle Obama in committing to end veteran homelessness in [CITY] by the end of 2015. With today's announcement of the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, [CITY] joins a growing number of communities across the country making the pledge.

"Veteran homelessness is not an intractable social problem that can't be solved," said Mayor

[NAME – QUOTE CAN BE ADAPTED TO MAYOR'S VOICE]. "By focusing our resources and renewing our communities' commitment to this issue, we can end veteran homelessness in our city and our country. I'm proud to join Mayors across the country as we work toward the important goal of honoring the service of our veterans by making sure all of them have a home to call their own."

[CITY] will work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), and the National League of Cities to leverage federal resources and develop a local strategy to make sure every veteran in the community has access to stable housing and the supportive services they need to stay off the street.

Since 2010, when the federal government launched *Opening Doors*, a strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, there has been a 33 percent reduction in homelessness among veterans. This reduction has been achieved through a partnership between the Obama Administration, local governments, non-profits, and the private sector – making the elimination of veteran homelessness an achievable goal.

To learn more about the *Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness*, visit [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/veteran\\_information/mayors\\_challenge/](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/).



# Links to HUD Resources for Persons & Families Experiencing Homelessness

## HUD Exchange Website:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/>

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## HEARTH Homelessness Programs

**CoC: Continuum of Care Program**

**ESG: Emergency Solutions Grants Program**

**RHSP: Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program**

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## Legacy Homelessness Programs

**Emergency Shelter Grants Program**

**S+C: Shelter Plus Care Program**

**SHP: Supportive Housing Program**

**SRO: Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program**

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## Other Homelessness Programs

**BRAC: Defense Base Closure and Realignment Program**

**HPRP: Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program**

**HUD-VASH: HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program**

**Title V: Title V Program - Federal Surplus Property**

**VHPD: Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration Program**

**HOPWA: Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS**

## Homelessness Assistance Systems

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***e-snaps*: Homeless Assistance Application and Grants Management System**

**HDX: Homelessness Data Exchange (PIT, HIC, AHAR)**

**HMIS: Homeless Management Information System**

**IDIS: Integrated Disbursement and Information System**



# Links to HUD Resources for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

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## HUD Exchange:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-veterans/>

## HUDVet

Ranging from homeownership to homelessness, this toll free hotline provides information to veterans seeking answers to housing questions. Additionally, the [HUDVet website](#) offers general veteran updates, as well as contact information for veteran service providers and federal, state, and city governments.

**HUDVet National Hotline: 1-877-424-3838.**

## Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration

HUD, in partnership with the Veterans Administration (VA) and the Department of Labor (DOL), implemented the [Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration \(VHPD\)](#). Through HUD housing assistance, VA case management services, and DOL employment counseling, this three agency partnership provides combined services for veterans who are at a high risk of becoming homeless. All 5 communities participating in this demonstration were strategically selected due to their proximity to a military base, concentration of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, and availability of resources.

[View VHPD sites and contact information](#)

## HUD VA Supportive Housing

An essential tool towards ending veteran homelessness, [HUD VA Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\)](#) is a joint program between HUD and the VA. HUD provides housing choice vouchers and VA provides case management and outreach. This program targets veterans who are currently homeless.

[Find a HUD-VASH representative in your area.](#)

**For more information, please visit:**

- [HUD Office of Housing Choice Vouchers: HUD-VASH Page](#)
- [VA: HUD-VASH Page](#)
- [HUD-VASH Resource Guide](#)

## Important Links and Memos

[CPD Memorandum: Guidance for Determining Eligibility for Permanent Supportive Housing for Persons Participating in Certain Department of Veteran's Affairs Programs](#)

[VA National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#)

[VA Center on Homelessness among Veterans](#)

[DOL Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program](#)

[United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Veterans Page](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Military Families Pages](#)

[Homeless Veterans Chat](#)



## Links to VA Resources for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

<http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/Programs.asp>

### 1. National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) has founded a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans hotline to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. To be connected with trained VA staff member call 1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838). [National Call Center Webpage](#)

### 2. Grant and Per Diem Program

The Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program is offered annually (as funding permits) by the VA to fund community-based agencies providing transitional housing or service centers for homeless Veterans. [Grant/Per Diem Website](#)

### 3. HUD-VASH

The Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) Program provides permanent housing and ongoing case management treatment services for homeless Veterans who require these supports to live independently. [HUD-VASH Website](#)

### 4. Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)

The core mission of HCHV is primarily to perform outreach, provided by VA social workers and other mental health clinicians, to identify homeless veterans who are eligible for VA services and assist these veterans in accessing appropriate healthcare and benefits. [HCHV Website](#)

### 5. VA Assistance to Stand Downs

VA programs and staff have actively participated in each of the Stand Downs for Homeless Veterans run by local coalitions in various cities each year. [Stand Down Website](#)

### 6. Compensated Work Therapy

In VA's Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) Program, disadvantaged, at-risk, and homeless Veterans live in CWT/TR community-based supervised group homes while working for pay in VA's Compensated Work Therapy Program (also known as Veterans Industries). [CWT Website](#)

### 7. CHALENG

The Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education, and Networking Groups (CHALENG) for Veterans is a nationwide initiative in which VA medical center and regional office directors work with other federal, state, and local agencies and nonprofit organizations to assess the needs of homeless Veterans, develop action plans to meet identified needs, and develop directories that contain local community resources to be used by homeless Veterans. [CHALENG Website](#)

## **8. DCHV**

The Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) Program provides biopsychosocial treatment and rehabilitation to homeless Veterans.

## **9. Supported Housing**

Like the HUD-VASH program identified above, staff in VA's Supported Housing Program provides ongoing case management services to homeless Veterans.

## **10. Drop-in Centers**

These programs provide a daytime sanctuary where homeless Veterans can clean up, wash their clothes, and participate in a variety of therapeutic and rehabilitative activities. Linkages with longer-term assistance are also available.

## **11. VBA-VHA Special Outreach and Benefits Assistance**

VHA has provided specialized funding to support twelve Veterans Benefits Counselors as members of HCMI and Homeless Domiciliary Programs as authorized by Public Law 102-590.

## **12. VBA's Acquired Property Sales for Homeless Providers**

This program makes all the properties VA obtains through foreclosures on VA-insured mortgages available for sale to homeless provider organizations at a discount of 20 to 50 percent, depending on time of the market.

## **13. VA Excess Property for Homeless Veterans Initiative**

This initiative provides for the distribution of federal excess personal property, such as hats, parkas, footwear, socks, sleeping bags, and other items to homeless Veterans and homeless veteran programs.

## **14. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

VA has built program monitoring and evaluation into all of its homeless Veterans' treatment initiatives and it serves as an integral component of each program.



## USING HUD'S COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CPD) RESOURCES FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	In Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing (ES/TH)
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) &amp; SECTION 108 LOAN GUARANTEE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire property, site preparation, clearance and pre-development costs for PSH will be built with other sources.</li> <li>Installation or reconstruction of public improvements.</li> <li>Rehabilitate housing for or convert an existing, non-residential building into PSH.</li> <li>Security deposits and supportive services for clients.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) &amp; SECTION 108 LOAN GUARANTEE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire property, site preparation, clearance, pre-development and construction costs for ES and TH operated as a facility.</li> <li>Installation or reconstruction of public improvements.</li> <li>Rehabilitate housing for or convert an existing, non-residential building into ES/TH.</li> <li>Supportive services.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (HOME):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire property, construct new housing and rehabilitate existing buildings or units.</li> <li>Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, including rent, utility costs, security deposits, and/or utility deposits.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (HOME):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire property, construct and rehabilitate housing for TH.</li> <li>Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, including rent, utility costs, security deposits, and/or initial utility deposits.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant-based and project-based rental assistance.</li> <li>Acquisition, rehabilitation, conversion, lease, and repair of facilities to provide housing and services; new construction (for single room occupancy only).</li> <li>Operating costs for housing facilities.</li> <li>Permanent housing placement to assist beneficiaries receiving rental assistance with the security deposits, first months rent and initial utility hook-up costs.</li> <li>Supportive services for clients.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquisition, rehabilitation, conversion, lease, and repair of facilities to provide housing and supportive services.</li> <li>Operating costs for housing facilities.</li> <li>Supportive services.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental application fees; security deposits; utility deposits &amp; utility payments; moving costs.</li> <li>Housing search &amp; placement.</li> <li>Housing stability case management.</li> <li>Mediation; legal services; credit repair.</li> <li>Short-term rental assistance (up to 3 months) and medium-term rental assistance (4-24 months).</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major rehabilitation of ES or conversion of a building into ES.</li> <li>Operate ES and limited TH.</li> <li>Provide essential services in ES and in limited TH, including case management, child care, education services, employment assistance, job training, outpatient health services, legal services, lifeskills training, mental health services,</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire property, construct, rehabilitate or operate.</li> <li>Rental assistance or leasing.</li> <li>Supportive services for clients.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OTHER USES OF CDBG, HOWPA, COC &amp; ESG</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated assessment.</li> <li>Street outreach.</li> <li>Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).</li> <li>Supportive Services.</li> </ul>



## **Philanthropic and Other Non-Profit Organizations**

### **Working to End Veteran Homelessness**

#### **Funders Together to End Homelessness**

<http://www.funderstogether.org/tags/veterans>

[http://www.funderstogether.org/homelessness\\_ends\\_here](http://www.funderstogether.org/homelessness_ends_here)

#### **Home Depot Foundation**

<http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/>

#### **National League of Cities**

<http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/housing-and-community-development/veteran-housing>

#### **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/>

#### **Building Changes: End Homelessness Together**

<http://www.buildingchanges.org/>

#### **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans – Corporate Connection**

[http://nchv.org/index.php/connect/connect/corporate\\_connection/](http://nchv.org/index.php/connect/connect/corporate_connection/)

#### **National Alliance to End Homelessness**

[http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/our\\_work](http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/our_work)

#### **United Way**

<http://www.uwkc.org/our-focus/homelessness/end-vet-homelessness.html>