

VETERAN HOUSING STABILITY ACT OF 2015

Legislation to Improve Programs for Homeless Veterans and Their Families

As communities around the country continue to work toward eliminating veteran homelessness, some are finding that insufficient availability of affordable permanent housing is limiting their ability to fully achieve this goal. Further, some communities are finding that as they reduce the number of homeless veterans, occupancy in transitional housing programs continues to decrease. This bill would focus on increasing veteran access to permanent housing by:

- Requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to collaborate with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), public housing authorities, tribally designated housing entities, and other entities such as realtors, landlords, property managers and developers to encourage more landlords to rent to veterans.
- Requiring VA to carry out a program to increase housing stability and retention by providing grants to community organizations that provide after-care to formerly homeless veterans. Priority would be given to organizations with a demonstrated capability to provide these services, particularly to current per diem grantees and those who decide to convert their transitional housing programs into permanent housing for homeless veterans. This provision would allow communities that are reaching critical junctures in the fight to end homelessness to repurpose existing transitional housing capacity for more pressing needs, such as permanent housing opportunities for veterans.
- Modifying a VA program that sells homes from VA's foreclosure inventory at a discount to nonprofit agencies. Currently these organizations can only acquire properties to use as transitional housing for homeless veterans. This provision would broaden uses to include housing stability for veterans who are very low-income, at-risk of becoming homeless, or homeless.

In addition, this bill would make necessary changes to existing VA programs to:

- Expand the definition of homeless veteran, for purposes of eligibility for benefits through VA, to conform to the HUD definition for homeless individuals. This would now include a veteran or veteran's family fleeing domestic or dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in their current housing situation.
- Require VA to set national performance targets for the housing placement rates and income improvements of veterans served by transitional housing grantees and examine the permanent housing placement rate and average participant income increase rate to determine whether the grantee's performance merits continued funding.
- Codify the VA's National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans to ensure its continued role in researching the most cost-effective approaches to ending veteran homelessness and disseminating them to the field.
- Create a new program to target homeless veterans who are health care "super-utilizers" for more intensive case management interventions, allowing VA to leverage existing data to improve the efficacy of its assertive community outreach teams. This approach is modeled after a highly successful program run by the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers in Camden, NJ that was able to reduce health care costs in a target "super-utilizer" population.