

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness Workshop

“Maintaining Zero for Veterans”

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The Federal Response

- 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**.
- Coordinating outreach efforts **to identify and engage every Veteran experiencing homelessness** and focus outreach efforts on achieving housing outcomes.
- **Leveraging other housing and services resources** that can help Veterans who are ineligible for some of VA's programs obtain stable housing.
- Meet each community where it is – and customize the support to the unique circumstances of the community and the level of development of its **Coordinated Entry System**.
- **Increasing early detection and access** to preventive services so at-risk Veterans remain stably housed.
- **Closely monitoring progress toward the goal**, including the success of programs achieving permanent housing outcomes.
- Aligning local goals and strategies with **Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness**.



Investing in the End of Homelessness: The President's 2017 Budget

Nearly \$6 billion in targeted homelessness assistance across Federal agencies – an 11% increase over last year's Budget.

- Achieving and Sustaining an End to Veteran Homelessness
- Fully Funding the Housing Resources to End Family Homelessness
- Finishing the Job of Ending Chronic Homelessness
- Strengthening Communities' Capacity to End Youth Homelessness
- Setting a Path to End All Types of Homelessness

VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program Update

- The Department's overall vision for the GPD Program is to shift the program to eventually support three different types of transitional housing models:
 - **Bridge Housing** – emphasizing short lengths of stay and rapid connections to permanent housing
 - **Service-intensive transitional housing** – transitional housing not being used as bridge housing, but in which Veterans are still actively working, with the assistance of appropriate services and supports, to achieve permanent housing as quickly as possible.
 - **Transition in Place housing** – a housing model where Veterans are provided time-limited transitional housing assistance with the lease converting to the Veteran as their permanent housing after a short period of assistance.
- GPD currently has 14,239 operational transitional housing beds.
- As of April 4, 2016 there were **12,023** Veterans in GPD transitional housing
 - Occupancy 84.4%
 - Under utilized capacity does present an opportunity for Bridge Housing

Employment

- Initiation of Homeless Veterans Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) at each VA Medical center suggests that a “three-pronged” approach creates the most opportunities for Veterans to obtain employment.

VA’s Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)

Community Employment Coordinators (CEC)

- Promote the development of community employment opportunities and partnerships to end Veteran homelessness.
- Provide direct assistance in connecting Veterans to the appropriate and least restrictive VAMC and/or community-based employment service leading to competitive employment with appropriate support.

HCHV and HUD-VASH Employment Specialists

- Responsible for assessing the vocational needs of homeless Veterans and providing direct services and referrals.

Employment

- Employment is one of the key elements in helping Veterans transition permanently out of homelessness or avoid it all together.
- Effective employment solutions for homeless Veterans must begin at the point of entry into services and be integrated into the overall housing plan.
- Federal, state and local agencies as well as leadership must work together to share resources and expertise.
- Local employers must be engaged and brought to the table through job fairs, hiring events and outreach.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program

- The SSVF program provides **supportive services** to **very low-income Veteran families** that are **currently in or transitioning to permanent housing**.
- SSVF is designed to **rapidly re-house homeless Veteran families** and **prevent homelessness** for those at **imminent risk** due to a housing crisis.
- **Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives** that will assist very low-income Veteran families by providing a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability.
- In FY 2015 alone, SSVF grantees served over 157,000 participants (with approximately 99,000 being Veterans), placing 79% in permanent housing.
 - **Nearly 14,000** Veterans served were female.
 - **Over 34,600** of all those served were **dependent children**.

Veterans Justice Program Services

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

- Gain access to the jail
 - Identify Veterans and Determine Eligibility
 - Conduct outreach, assessment, and case management for Veterans in local courts and jails
 - Provide/coordinate training for law enforcement personnel
 - Linkage to VA and Community Services/Resources
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- Number of VJO Specialists funded: 261
 - Number of 3,365 local jail facilities serviced: 1,284
 - Number of Veterans receiving VJO services (Oct. 2009 – Feb. 2016): 122,202

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

- Gain access to the prison
 - Educate Veterans' groups about VA and VA services
 - Identify Veterans and Determine Eligibility
 - Reentry Planning
 - Linkage to VA and Community Services
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- Number of HCRV Specialists funded: 44
 - Number of state and federal prisons serviced: 998 (81%) of 1,234 US prisons
 - Number of incarcerated Veterans receiving reentry services (Aug. 2007-Feb. 2016): 72,382

Selected Characteristics of Veterans Seen in Veterans Justice Programs, FY 2015

	VJO	HCRV
Psych. Problem	67%	46%
Substance Use Problem (Any)	69%	57%
Psych. <u>and</u> Substance Use Problem	47%	30%
HIV	1%	1%
HCV	9%	13%
Homeless, At Risk, Unstably Housed	41%	*

Source: VA North East Program Evaluation Center. Full reports available at: <http://vaww.nepec.mentalhealth.med.va.gov/PHV/VJP/VJPdescription.htm>

What Now?

- Meaningful and Sustainable Employment Opportunities
- Access to Affordable Housing/Landlord Engagement
- Improve Access to Mainstream Programs and Services through Community Partnerships
- Civil legal assistance, including eviction and foreclosure prevention, resolution warrants and fines, and driver's license restoration.
- Deployment of new technologies to make real-time survey data and results available.
- Link individuals ineligible for VA benefits and services to community-based housing and health care resources.
- Emergency, transitional, or permanent housing for homeless Veterans who are registered sex offenders.
- Connect Veterans with accessible and available transportation options.
- Food Security
- Access to available training and employment services.

Resources

- VA Homeless Veterans Internet site

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/>

- 25 Cities

www.25cities.com

- Community Solutions – Zero:2016

<https://cmtysolutions.org/what-we-do/zero-2016>

- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

<https://www.usich.gov/>

- Secretary McDonald Video Message on Veteran Homelessness

<https://youtu.be/tYY6h8bVuoY>

- Chris Gardner: U.S. Veterans Should Never Be Homeless (Video Interview & Blog)

<http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/24180/chris-gardner-veterans-should-never-be-homeless-in-america/>

- First Lady's Video to Landlords

<http://usich.gov/blog/first-lady-michelle-obama-releases-video-encouraging-landlords>

