



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

January 2017

VA Programs for Homeless Veterans

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) remains committed to the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. VA and our federal, state, and local partners, as well as non-governmental partners, recognize that ending Veteran homelessness is not a single event in time; rather, it is a deliberate effort made to achieve the goal, and continued follow-up efforts to make sure that progress toward achieving the goal is maintained.

Our goal is a systemic end to homelessness, which means communities across the country:

- Have identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Are able to provide shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants housing.
- Provide service-intensive transitional housing in limited instances.
- Have the capacity to help Veterans swiftly move into permanent housing.
- Have resources, plans, and systems in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future.

The ultimate goal is to make sure that every Veteran has permanent, sustainable housing with access to high-quality health care and other supportive services and that Veteran homelessness in the future is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

State of Homelessness

Significant progress has been made to prevent and end Veteran homelessness. The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States has declined by nearly half since 2010, and the unsheltered homeless population – those Veterans living on the streets, in cars, abandoned buildings or other places not meant for human habitation -- declined by 57 percent since 2010. The recently released U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point-in-Time (PIT) Count estimates that on a single night in January 2016, fewer than 40,000 Veterans were experiencing homelessness and just over 13,000 were unsheltered or on the street. The 17 percent decline in the number of homeless Veterans between 2015 and 2016 is four times the rate of decline between 2014 and 2015.

Since 2010, over 480,000 Veterans and their family members have been permanently housed, rapidly rehoused, or prevented from falling into homelessness through HUD's targeted housing vouchers and VA's homelessness programs.

In addition to the national snapshot provided by the 2016 PIT Count, as of December 31, 2016, nearly 37 areas of varying sizes — including three states — have effectively ended Veteran homelessness, based on criteria established by VA, HUD, and U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). To see a full and current list of communities that have achieved an effective end to Veteran homelessness based on these guidelines, go to www.va.gov/HOMELESS/endingVetshomelessness.asp.

This progress is illustrated by the steep decline in the number of homeless Veterans in Los Angeles. The city has historically been one of the U.S. cities with the largest numbers of homeless Veterans. With an influx of VA and community resources, the number of homeless Veterans in Los Angeles declined by more than 32 percent between 2014 and 2015 — about four times the rate of decline seen in previous years — in spite of an uptick in homelessness within the general population.

The results in Los Angeles reflect the overall progress being made across the nation and can be attributed to a combination of both proven and innovative practices — modeled by VA and by community-based partners — that are reducing homelessness among Veterans nationwide and ending it community by community.

Ending Veteran Homelessness Is Possible

To achieve this goal, we need continued leadership, collaboration, commitment and a sense of urgency from communities across the country. No one entity can end homelessness among Veterans.

There has been unprecedented support from every branch of government as well as from state and local leaders and agencies to provide both the funding and human resources needed to end Veteran homelessness. Communities continue to align those resources with the most effective practices, including Housing First, to ensure rapid, safe and stable housing for Veterans who need it.

Progress comes when community leaders implement proven practices that are reducing homelessness among Veterans nationwide and ending it community by community. Practices developed and implemented locally that are common among communities that have achieved an effective end to Veteran homelessness include:

- Use Housing First practices and approaches across every aspect of services for homeless Veterans. Essential to success, Housing First is a proven model that increases the chance that a Veteran will be housed and decreases emergency room costs for Veterans. It is a humane, dignified way to help Veterans achieve the stable, permanent housing they deserve.
- Identify all homeless Veterans by name and share a list of those names across systems so that no one is forgotten.
- Use and share data to find and serve every Veteran who needs homeless services.

- Create coordinated assessment and entry systems to make sure there is no wrong door for Veterans seeking help — coordinate people and services at every level to create integrated systems of care.
- Set concrete and aspirational monthly and quarterly goals and engage the community and associated systems to meet them. This requires the direct involvement of community leaders and focused political will. Also, benchmark progress against specific criteria.
- Synchronize programs to coordinate outreach and target the right type of resource to the right Veteran at the right time.
- Target communities with the largest numbers of homeless Veterans.
- Make sure outreach and engagement efforts are coordinated across service providers, law enforcement personnel, prisons and jails, hospitals, libraries, and job centers to proactively seek out Veterans in need of assistance with housing.
- Focus on creating connections from homeless services, housing organizations, and VA medical centers to workforce investment boards and employers so that Veterans can be quickly connected to jobs.

Veterans Health Administration Homeless Programs

All data on this fact sheet are as of Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 (September 30, 2016) unless otherwise stated. (Data for some programs are reported only by calendar year.)

Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRCs): CRRCs are a collaborative effort of VA, communities, service providers, and agency partners. Centers are located in strategically selected areas to provide both a refuge from the streets and a central location to engage homeless Veterans in services. When Veterans enter these centers, they are referred to physical and mental health care resources, job development programs, housing options, and other VA and non-VA benefits.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- In FY 2016, a little over 32,100 Veterans received services through VA's 30 CRRCs.

For more information, please visit: www.va.gov/homeless/crrc-list.asp .

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV): The DCHV program provides time-limited residential treatment to homeless Veterans with mental health and substance use disorders, co-occurring medical concerns, and psychosocial needs such as homelessness and unemployment.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- Over 7,600 Veterans received services through the DCHV program.
- The DCHV program provided homeless Veterans with more than 2,200 operational beds at 46 sites.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/dchv.asp.

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV): The central goal of the HCHV program is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by connecting homeless Veterans with health care and other needed services. This program provides outreach, case management, and HCHV Contract Residential Services, ensuring that chronically homeless Veterans — especially those with serious mental health diagnoses and/or substance use disorders — can be placed in VA or community-based programs that provide quality housing and services that meet their specialized needs.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- Over 7,800 Veterans exited the HCHV program to independent housing.
- The HCHV program supported 353 Stand Downs reaching more than 79,200 Veterans.
- HCHV provided outreach services to over 157,300 Veterans.
- HCHV provided case management services to over 10,900 Veterans.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp.

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV): The HCRV program is designed to address the needs of incarcerated Veterans when it comes to re-entering their community. The goals of HCRV are to prevent homelessness; reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance use problems on community readjustment; and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- The HCRV program served more than 16,400 Veterans.
- HCRV provided services to 890 state and federal prisons in the U.S.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp.

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACTs): H-PACTs provide a coordinated “medical home” tailored to homeless Veterans’ needs. At selected VA facilities, Veterans are assigned to an H-PACT that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff, and others who offer medical care, case management, housing assistance, and social services. The H-PACT provides and coordinates the health care that Veterans may need while helping them obtain and stay in permanent housing.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- H-PACTs provided care for over 18,800 Veterans in 61 locations.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp.

Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD): The GPD program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments. The purpose of the program is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or related services — with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain

greater self-determination. GPD-funded projects offer communities a way to help homeless Veterans by providing housing and other services and at the same time assist VA medical centers by augmenting or supplementing care.

In March 2016, an open letter from the VA deputy secretary formally encouraged GPD grantees to take steps to further align with Housing First approaches, including the adoption of lower barriers to entry and bridge housing models.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- VA's largest transitional housing program with over 13,800 beds nationwide.
- Over 25,000 Veterans entered GPD transitional housing.
- A total of 402 Transition in Place model housing units were operational.
- More than 16,500 homeless Veterans exited GPD to permanent housing.
- The average length of stay in the GPD program was **179 days** (*lowest since FY 2009*).
- In March 2016, an open letter from the VA Deputy Secretary formally encouraged GPD grantees to take steps to further align with Housing First approaches, including adoption of lower barriers to entry and bridge housing models.
- A total of 130 grantees worked with VA to adopt bridge housing models.

For more information, please visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp>.

Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP): HVDP helps increase the accessibility of quality dental care to homeless and certain other Veteran patients enrolled in VA-sponsored and VA partnership homeless rehabilitation programs.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- Over 16,600 Veterans were provided dental care through HVDP.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/dental.asp.

Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services (HVCES): To help improve employment outcomes and connect with homeless Veterans who are the most difficult to reach, VA continued to support the Vocational Development Specialists (VDSs) who serve as Employment Specialists and Community Employment Coordinators (CECs) within HVCES. Employment Specialists provide direct assistance to Veterans, and the CECs work closely with community partners and employers to connect Veterans with the most appropriate and least restrictive VA and/or community-based services, leading to competitive employment.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- About 7,500 Veterans exited homeless residential programs with employment (GPD, Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence, and DCHV). This represents a five percent increase over FY 2015 employment rates.
- In addition, employment rates for Veterans housed through HUD-VASH

exceeded the national target by four percent.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/employment_programs.asp.

Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH): Through this collaborative program between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and VA, HUD provides eligible homeless Veterans with a Housing Choice rental voucher, and VA provides case management and supportive services so that Veterans can gain housing stability and recover from physical and mental health problems, substance use disorders, and other issues contributing to or resulting from homelessness. HUD-VASH subscribes to the principles of the Housing First model of care. Housing First is an evidence-based practice model demonstrating that rapidly moving individuals into housing, and then wrapping supportive services around them as needed, helps homeless individuals exit homelessness and achieve housing stability, improving their ability and motivation to engage in treatment. The program goals are to help Veterans and their families gain stable housing while promoting full recovery and independence in their community.

Program highlights FY 2016 (data as reported to Congress):

- Vouchers allocated: 78,529
 - Vouchers in use: 80,686
 - Veterans housed: 72,481
 - Vouchers issued to Veterans seeking housing: 6,478
 - Vouchers reserved for Veterans undergoing Public Housing Authority (PHA) validation: 1,727
 - Vouchers available: -2,157

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp.

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV): The NCCHV — which can be reached at 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838) — was founded to ensure that homeless Veterans and Veterans at risk of becoming homeless have free, 24/7 access to VA staff. The hotline is intended to assist homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families; VA medical centers (VAMCs); Federal, state, and local partners; community agencies; service providers; and others in the community.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- The NCCHV received more than 127,800 total calls.
- The NCCHV assisted over 38,000 Veterans or their families through the Homeless Veterans Chat.
- Responders at the NCCHV made over 64,600 referrals to the VAMC point of contact.

National Center on Homelessness among Veterans (NCHAV): The NCHAV works to promote recovery-oriented care for Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by developing and disseminating evidence-based policies, programs, and best practices. The Center is active in research, model development, and education.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- The Center hosted the Homeless Evidence and Research Synthesis (HERS) Roundtable Series, with events focusing on aging and the homeless community as well as homeless women Veterans. These virtual interagency research symposia provide a platform for researchers and providers to discuss the impact of homelessness and the specific needs of homeless individuals.
- Researchers at the Center developed research briefs and published numerous articles on issues related to Veteran homelessness.
- The NCHAV continued to develop low-demand pilot transitional housing programs to offer options to Veterans with substance use disorders who are not yet ready to enter permanent housing.
- The NCHAV continued to develop Safe Haven programs — early recovery models of supportive housing that use harm reduction strategies to engage chronically homeless Veterans diagnosed with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorder.
- The Center developed a pilot program called Staying Housed to identify formerly homeless Veterans living in permanent supportive housing who can no longer live on their own and to provide them with home-based interventions to keep them independently housed and delay nursing home placement.
- The Center developed a pilot program called Hospital to Housing to test the feasibility of providing direct transfers from inpatient care to transitional housing for homeless Veterans with connected health care and care management support through their Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams. The program's goal is to use acute hospitalization as an entry point to housing while supporting the respite needs of these Veterans, ending their cycle of homelessness.
- The NCHAV collaborated with the Aaron T. Beck Psychopathology Research Center of the University of Pennsylvania to provide VA homeless program staff with intensive, competency-based training in cognitive behavioral therapy known as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – Homeless (CBT-H). The training is specifically designed for staff working with homeless and chronically homeless Veterans, such as clinicians.
- The Center used predictive analytics to achieve a population health management approach to understand the key factors that contribute to the cycle of homelessness and to predict when a Veteran is at risk for becoming homeless.

For more information, please visit: www.va.gov/homeless/nchav/index.asp .

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups): This project brings together consumers, providers, advocates, local officials, and other concerned citizens to identify the needs of homeless Veterans and work to meet those needs through planning and cooperative action. Local CHALENG meetings represent important opportunities for VA and public and private agency representatives to meet and develop meaningful partnerships to better serve homeless Veterans.

Program highlights, calendar year 2015:

- More than 6,100 people gave their input on the CHALENG survey. They include over 3,700 homeless Veterans and over 2,900 Veterans who were not experiencing homelessness (VA staff, state and public officials, community leaders, and volunteers).
- Of the homeless Veteran participants in the survey, 11 percent were women.
- Nine of the top ten unmet needs were the same for men and women Veterans: housing for registered sex offenders, child care, legal assistance in four separate areas (prevent eviction/foreclosure, child support issues, restore a driver's license, outstanding warrants and fines), family reconciliation assistance, credit counseling, and discharge upgrade. Men Veterans' other unmet need was financial guardianship, and women Veterans' other unmet need was dental care.
- Nine of the top ten met needs were also the same for men and women Veterans: medical services, testing and treatment in three separate areas (TB, Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS), case management, services for emotional or psychiatric problems, medication management, substance abuse treatment, and food. Men Veterans' other met need was personal hygiene, and women Veterans' other met need was clothing.

CHALENG data for calendar year 2016 will be available in spring 2017.

For more information about the project and to see the full details of the top ten unmet needs for Veterans, and the demographics of the participants, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/chaleng.asp.

Stand Downs: Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events providing services to homeless Veterans such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, including housing, employment, and substance use treatment. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated among local VA sites, other government agencies, and community groups that serve people who are homeless.

To see Stand Down program highlights, go back to the HCHV program section on page 4.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): This program, authorized by Public Law 110-387, provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. SSVF is designed to rapidly rehouse homeless Veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to a housing crisis. Funds are granted to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives, which then provide very low-income Veteran families with a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- A total of \$300 million was awarded to 275 organizations in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. An additional \$100 million was available to 92 grantees in 70 high-need communities (as part of three-year grant awards made in FY 2015).
- SSVF assisted over 148,000 individuals, including:
 - Over 95,000 Veterans (of those assisted, over 12,700 — or roughly 13 percent — were female)
 - Nearly 32,000 children in over 16,500 households
- Of those discharged from the SSVF program, 84 percent obtained permanent housing.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO): The purpose of the VJO program is to prevent homelessness and avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans. This is accomplished by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans encountered by police, and in jails or courts, have timely access to VHA mental health, substance use, and homeless services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

Program highlights, FY 2016:

- The VJO program provided services to over 50,800 justice-involved Veterans.
- VA provided support to 461 Veterans Treatment Courts and other Veteran-focused court programs.
- VA partnered with legal providers to offer 125 pro bono legal clinics to Veterans on site at VA medical centers.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp.

Contact Us and Additional Information

To find the VA facility nearest you, please visit
<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp>.

More details on all of VA's programs for homeless Veterans are available at
www.va.gov/homeless.

If you are at risk of becoming homeless — or know a Veteran who is — contact VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838) to speak to a trained VA responder.

#