



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Fact Sheet

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### VA Programs for Homeless Veterans

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made ending homelessness among Veterans a top priority, undertaking an unprecedented campaign to dramatically increase successful outcomes for Veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. VA remains committed to the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. VA and our Federal, state and local and non-governmental partners recognize that ending Veteran homelessness is not a single event in time, but rather is a deliberate effort towards achieving the goal, and then continued follow-on efforts to make sure that the goal is maintained.

Our goal is a systematic 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 it.
- Provide service intensive transitional housing in limited instances.
- Have capacity to assist Veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing.
- Have resources, plans and system capacity in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future.

The ultimate goal is that all Veterans have permanent, sustainable housing with access to high quality health care and other supportive services and that homelessness in the future is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

#### **State of Homelessness**

Tremendous progress is being made community by community since the launch of the *Opening Doors, the Federal Strategic Plan to End Veteran Homelessness* in 2010. As a result of the vision inspired by this goal, and the focused resources and drive applied towards achieving it, the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness has declined significantly and several communities throughout the country have achieved an effective end to Veteran homelessness. Since 2010, over 360,000 Veterans and their family members have been permanently housed, rapidly rehoused, or prevented from falling into homelessness by HUD's targeted housing vouchers and VA's homelessness programs.

Using new guidelines developed by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), HUD, and VA, states and localities are now able to get precise information about their progress in ending Veteran homelessness.

To see the guidelines, go to: <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-for-ending-veteran-homelessness/>

To see the most current list of communities that have achieved an effective end to Veteran homelessness based on these guidelines, go to: <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/endingVetshomelessness.asp>

### **Ending Veteran Homelessness is Achievable**

To achieve this goal, we need continued urgency and commitment from leaders in every community. No one entity can end homelessness among Veterans alone. There has been unprecedented support from the Administration, Congress, and state and local leaders to provide both the funding and human resources needed to end Veteran homelessness. Communities are continuing the work of aligning those resources with the most effective Housing First approaches.

Thanks to the efforts of communities across the country, our Veterans experiencing homelessness – whether they are in shelters or on the streets – are no longer just a number. Communities know their names. We must provide those men, women, and families with shelter and other crisis services when they want and need them.

When Veterans experiencing homelessness have the right opportunities, we know they can be successful. We've seen it happen time and time again. With full support from the Federal government, we are asking communities to:

- Finish the job of creating coordinated assessment and entry systems to ensure that there is no wrong door for Veterans seeking help.
- Make sure outreach and engagement efforts are coordinated across service providers, law enforcement, prisons and jails, hospitals, libraries, and job centers to proactively seek out Veterans in need of assistance.
- Identify all Veterans experiencing homelessness by name and share that list across systems so that no one falls through the cracks.
- Set concrete and ambitious monthly or quarterly goals for helping Veterans and their families get back into housing.
- Implement Housing First practices and approaches across every part of the homelessness services and housing systems.
- Focus particularly on collaborations among Workforce Investment Boards, homeless services and housing organizations, VA Medical Centers, and employers, so that Veterans can be quickly connected to jobs.

By sharing lessons and experiences, communities across the country can help finish the job of ending Veteran homelessness.

## VHA Homeless Programs

*All data on this Fact Sheet is as of Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 (September 30, 2015) unless otherwise stated. Where only calendar year data is provided, it is because the data for those programs is normally reported only by calendar year.*

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

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2015, over 32,000 Veterans received services through the CRRCs.

**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 including homelessness and unemployment. DCHV programs provide homeless Veterans access to medical, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment in addition to psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation treatment programs.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- The DCHV program provided services to over 8,400 Veterans.
- The DCHV program provided more than 2,400 operational beds at 47 sites in support of homeless Veterans.

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

**Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV):** The central goal of HCHV programs is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by engaging and connecting homeless Veterans with health care and other needed services. HCHV programs provide 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 the needs of these special populations.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- Nearly 7,600 Veterans exited the HCHV program to independent housing.
- HCHV supported 327 Stand Downs providing outreach to approximately 89,000 Veterans.
- HCHV provided outreach services to over 157,000 total Veterans.
- HCHV provided case management services to over 11,300 Veterans.

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

**Health Care for Reentry Veterans Services (HCRV):** The HCRV program is designed to address the community re-entry needs of incarcerated Veterans. HCRV's goals are to

prevent homelessness, reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse problems upon community re-adjustment, and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- HCRV program provided services to more than 15,500 Veterans.
- HCRV program provided services in nearly 1,000 United States state and federal prisons.

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

**Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACT):** H-PACT provides a coordinated “medical home” specifically tailored to the needs of homeless Veterans. At selected VA facilities, Veterans are assigned to an H-PACT care team that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff and others who provide medical care, case management, housing and social services assistance, to provide and coordinate the health care they may need while assisting them in obtaining and staying in permanent housing.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- H-PACTs provided care to over 18,200 veterans in 60 locations.
- Health outcomes for Veterans participating in H-PACTS showed a 28 percent reduction in emergency department visits and a 30 percent reduction in hospitalizations at VA facilities in the six months after being enrolled in an H-PACT compared to the six months prior.

For more information, please visit: [http://www.va.gov/homeless/h\\_pact.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp)

**Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (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 is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive 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 with housing and services while assisting VA medical centers (VAMC) by augmenting or supplementing care.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- VA’s largest transitional housing program with roughly 14,500 beds nationwide.
- GPD grantees provided services to nearly 44,000 Veterans.
- 402 Transition in Place model housing units operational.
- More than 15,500 homeless Veterans exited GPD to permanent housing.

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

**Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP):** The Homeless Veteran Dental Program 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 throughout the U.S.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- Over 19,500 HVDP Veterans were provided dental care nationally.

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

**Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES):** In order to help improve employment outcomes and reach the most difficult to serve homeless Veterans, in FY 2015 continued to support the newly hired Vocational Development Specialists (VDS) who serve as Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) within the Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES) framework. The new CECs are responsible for the ongoing orientation and training of the Homeless Services continuum to increase the role of employment in permanent housing and for providing direct assistance in connecting Veterans to the most appropriate and least restrictive VA and/or community-based employment service leading to competitive employment with appropriate supports.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- Employment Rates for Veterans exiting Homeless Residential Programs increased by approximately 3 percent over FY 2014 rates.
- 96 percent of the 155 CECs had been hired across approximately 150 medical centers.

For more information, please visit:

[http://www.va.gov/homeless/employment\\_programs.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/employment_programs.asp)

**Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program:** A collaborative program between HUD and VA where eligible homeless Veterans receive a Housing Choice rental voucher from HUD, paired with VA providing case management and supportive services to sustain housing stability and recovery from physical and mental health problems, substance use disorders, and functional concerns 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 that has demonstrated rapidly moving individuals into housing, and then wrapping supportive services around them as needed, helps homeless individuals exit from homelessness, remain stable in housing, and thus improving ability and motivation to engage in treatment strategies. Program goals include housing stability while promoting maximum Veteran recovery and independence in the community for the Veteran and the Veteran’s family.

Program Highlights (data as reported to Congress), FY 2015:

- Vouchers allocated: 78,133
  - Vouchers in use: 71,155
  - Veterans housed: 63,039
  - Vouchers issued to Veterans seeking housing: 6,501
  - Vouchers reserved for Veterans undergoing PHA validation: 1,615
  - Vouchers available for use: 6,978

**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV):** The NCCHV was founded to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to VA staff. The hotline is intended to assist homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families, VAMCs, Federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. The phone number is 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838).

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- The NCCHV received more than 118,300 total calls.
- The NCCHV provided assistance to over 25,000 Veterans or their families through “Homeless Chat”.
- The NCCHV made over 71,100 referrals to the VAMC Point of contact to receive services.

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

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- Ongoing support of the 25 Cities Initiative. The overall objective is to help 25 communities with high concentrations of homeless Veterans to intensify and integrate their local efforts to end Veteran homelessness, by 2015. This is a joint effort by VA, HUD, USICH and local community partners – city government, housing authorities, community providers – to work closely and identify by name all of the remaining homeless Veterans in their respective communities, and work together to identify permanent housing solutions for these homeless and chronically homeless individuals. The initiative focuses on three areas:
  - Building and strengthening the elements of a coordinated system for identifying, assessing, and matching homeless Veterans and chronically homeless individuals to the most appropriate housing and service interventions.
  - Strengthening and integrating the data systems used to end both Veteran and chronic homelessness.
  - Further integrate the work and assets of the VA with broader efforts to end chronic homelessness in the community.
- Continued development of the Homeless Registry which contains geographic, programmatic and Veteran specific information related to housing stability, treatment engagement, and VA benefit enrollment. Additionally the Registry is a comprehensive data management tool that provides longitudinal information designed to monitor VHA’s progress in obtaining the goal of ending Veteran homelessness.

**Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Educations and Networking Groups) for Veterans:** 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 2014:

- More than 10,650 people gave their input on the CHALENG survey.
- Fifty two percent of the 2014 participants were homeless Veterans.

The next update of CHALENG data for calendar 2015 will be available in Spring 2016. For more information and to see the full details of the top ten un-net needs for Veterans, and demographics of participants, please visit:

<http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/chaleng.asp>

**Safe Havens:** Safe Havens provide a transitional residence for hard to reach homeless persons with mental illness and substance use problems who have failed in traditional programs. The low-demand, non-intrusive environment is designed to establish trust and eventually engage the homeless Veteran in needed treatment services and transitional or permanent housing options.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- Safe Haven model development projects served nearly 1,400 unique veterans, including both males and females.
- Among those Veterans who exited the program, more than 68 percent were characterized as positive or neutral exits.
- Fifty percent left the Safe Haven to move into permanent housing and 39 percent experienced an increase in income during their time in the program.

For more information, please visit:

<http://endveteranhomelessness.org/programs/safe-havens>

**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, such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAs, other government agencies, and community agencies who serve the homeless.

Program highlights: See HCHV data above for Stand Down statistics.

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

**Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF):** This program was authorized by Public Law 110-387 and provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families 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.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- SSVF assisted more than 157,400 individuals.

- Nearly 99,000 Veterans assisted.
- Over 34,600 children assisted in over 18,200 households with children.
- Of the Veterans assisted, nearly 14,000, or roughly 14 percent were female.
- 78 percent of those discharged from the SSVF program obtained permanent housing.

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

**Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO):** The purpose of the Veterans Justice Outreach (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 abuse, and homeless services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

Program Highlights, FY 2015:

- The VJO program provided services to nearly 41,700 justice-involved Veterans.
- VA provided support to 351 Veterans Treatment Courts and other Veteran-focused court programs.
- VA partnered with legal providers to offer pro-bono legal services to Veterans on site at 85 VA Medical Centers.

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

### **Contact Us**

To find the VA facility nearest to you, please visit:

<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp>

More detailed information on all of VA's Programs for Homeless Veterans can be found on the internet at <http://www.va.gov/homeless>.

If you, or a Veteran you know, are at risk of homelessness 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.

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