

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

May 16, 2015

The Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans was convened for its first meeting of fiscal year (FY) 2015 at 8:00 am on May 13, 2015 through May 15, 2015 at 10:30 am in the offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 90K Street, Washington, DC 20002. Mark Johnston, Committee Chairman opened the meeting.

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 12:00 am to 5:00 pm on May 13, 2015; from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on May 14, 2015; and from 9:00 am to 10:30 am on May 15, 2015. Due to limited space and fire code restrictions, the meeting was made available to the public via open conference call. Signage was also publicly posted in the lobby in the event there were walk-in visitors directing them to the meeting location. There were no discussions that required the meeting to be closed to the public, with the exception of purely administrative discussions.

**Committee members present:**

Mark Johnston – Chair  
Craig Burnette  
Irvin Goodwin  
Eric Grumdahl  
Elisha Harig-Blain  
Peter Kelleher  
Phil Landis  
Mark Walker  
Connie Woods Winn  
Leon Winston  
Roger Woodworth

**Additional attendees present for a portion or all of the meeting:**

Lisa Pape, LISW, VA, Executive Director, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Homeless Programs Office (HPO) in the role of Designated Federal Officer

Other attendees (alphabetically by last name):

\* Nicholas Bales, VA, Deputy Associate Director, Clinical Services, National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

Purnima Boominathan, VA, Staff Attorney and Deputy Ethics Official, Ethics Specialty Team, Office of General Counsel

\*Sean Clark, VA, National Coordinator, Veterans Justice Outreach

Baylee Crone, Executive Director, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

\*Dennis Culhane, VA, Research Director, National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans

\*Eileen Devine, VA, Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) National Director

Matthew Doherty, Executive Director, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

\*Bob Hallett, VA, National Coordinator, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans

\* Dr. Keith Harris, National Director of Clinical Operations, VHA Homeless Programs

\*Carma Heitzman, VA, Director, Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services

Dr. Susan Kelly, DoD Transition Assistance Program

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

\*John Kuhn, VA, National Director, Homeless Evaluation on VA Supportive Services for Veteran Families  
Anthony Love, VA, Senior Advisor and Director Community Engagement, VHA HPO  
Jeffrey “Boomer” Moragne, VA, Director, Advisory Committee Management Office  
Ann Oliva, HUD Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs  
\* Tom O’Toole, VA, Homeless Patient Aligned Care team (H-PACT) Director  
Jeffrey Quarles, VA, Director, Grant and Per Diem Program  
Emily Rosenoff, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the  
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)  
Robert Reynolds, VA, Director, Benefits Assistance Services (BAS), Veterans Benefits Administration  
Nan Roman, President and CEO, National Alliance to End Homelessness  
Ben Seigel, DOL, Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships  
Charles Selby, VA, Program Analyst, VHA Holmes Programs Office  
Timothy Underwood, VA, Management Analyst, VHA Homeless Programs Office  
\*Jesse Vazzano, VA, LICSW, National Director, HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)

\* - Indicates individual attended via conference call.

For the record, it is noted that to avoid a conflict of interest, Committee members are required absent themselves from the meeting when the Committee discusses applications from their respective institutions or in which a conflict of interest may occur. Members are asked to sign a statement to this effect. This does not apply to "en bloc" actions. There were no discussions during this meeting that required any members to absent themselves from the meeting.

**May 13, 1015:**

08:00 am Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) called to order by Mark Johnston. General introductions made. Review of agenda and priorities.

**Board members make the following requests:**

- 1. That VHA Homeless Program Office (HPO) staff discuss current eligibility rules for VA homeless programs and how eligibility rules were determined. The board desires the ability to comment and provide advice on the rules and unintended consequences of possible rule changes.**
- 2. The board members desire a discussion on how VA central office can facilitate a decision on determining how communities that are doing an effective job can be recognized.**
- 3. The board requests a definition on what ending homelessness within a community looks like. There is government wide agreement on “functional zero” at the national level – what does “functional zero” look like ta the local level?**

08:45 am Remarks by Designated Federal Officer, Lisa Pape, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs.

09:00 am Overview of MyVA, a new initiative launched by VA to increase the effectiveness and satisfaction of Veterans as they access VA programs and benefits. Discussed how ACHV activities can be shaped to align with MyVA efforts in a positive manner.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- 9:45 am            Break
- 10:15 am            Ethics training by Purnima Boominathan, VA, Staff Attorney and Deputy Ethics Official, Ethics Specialty Team, Office of General Counsel.
- 11:15 am            Presentation by Jeffrey “Boomer” Moragne, VA, Director, Advisory Committee Management Office on the Federal Advisory committee Act and associated regulations. Follow on presentation on, “Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-Related (SMART) Training.” SMART is the recommended format for making recommendations to Federal Agencies.
- 12:00 am            Break for lunch
- 01:00 pm            “Ending Veteran Homelessness in 2015: Urgency,” a discussion led by Chairman Mark Johnston regarding what he observed to have been effective practices in ending Veteran homelessness in New Orleans. Key points of note for how New Orleans did it is as follows:
- Political will demonstrated by the Mayor played a key role in the effectiveness of efforts in New Orleans.
  - Effective partnerships were a necessary element of the program.
  - Getting all participants and providers committed to “Housing First” was essential.
  - The community was able to gain consensus on what “operational zero” meant within their community; this allowed all parties to work towards a unified and common goal.
  - The Mayor set the goal to end Veteran homelessness in New Orleans in June of 2014 and achieved the goal by December 2014
  - The program focused on outreach and housing identification.
  - The program included the effective use of Housing Navigators who are focused on permanent housing – nightshift and dayshift – working together to get the necessary steps completed to rapidly move into permanent housing.
  - The community didn’t receive any additional HUD or VA funding beyond current program grants and allowances consent with national funding levels.
  - The program leaders determined they needed to move beyond the Point-In-Time Count which focuses on enumeration of the population, and developed a by-name Master List of homeless Veterans and individuals. The Master List is constantly updated via a Google Doc. They further found that it was necessary and beneficial to have one designated individual to vet entries onto the document for quality control.
  - The program leaders exhibited intensity where the majority of stakeholders met on a weekly basis to track progress and activities. This intensity appears to have been a differentiating element that was essential to the effort’s success.
  - In November they determined that they were only at the halfway point and adjusted by moving to weekly meetings between Navigators.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- The program was able reduce the time period necessary for Veteran status determination to one day.
- The program was able to get access to Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Housing and Urban Development- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) awarded in a single day.
- Outreach efforts were enhanced by using 150 military members who wore their service physical fitness uniforms as outreach workers. Veterans displayed an increased sense of trust and acceptance towards these outreach workers. The outreach workers were also able to readily identify actual Veterans from those individuals who falsely claimed Veteran status by asking military specific questions such as, “Where did you go to boot camp?” and, “Who was your drill instructor?” Military outreach workers conducted quarterly outreach events.
- Community leaders stated that once functional zero was achieved, continued support through prevention and rapid rehousing efforts such as VA’s SSVF program are necessary to maintain functional zero.

**Board members made the following requests:**

1. **Consider promoting the use of the following website as an alternative to formal records checks to determine Veteran status for community program eligibility:**  
[https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/single\\_record.xhtml](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/single_record.xhtml).
2. **Consider promoting awareness of the following website among VA grantees and organizations working on ending Veteran homelessness:**  
[www.nlc.org/veteranshousing](http://www.nlc.org/veteranshousing) - a comprehensive document with best practices, statutory guides and more from VA, USICH, HUD and national organizational leaders.
3. **Consider promoting awareness and use of the Mayors Challenge Desk book developed by HUD Region 10.**
4. **Make public VA’s Gap Analysis in conjunction with VA’s Homeless Analytics website so any community can find out whether or not they are on track to end Veteran homelessness.**
5. **This is the year to end Veteran homelessness – VA should focus efforts on 25 Cities and Zero:2016 cities to encourage local political leaders to demonstrate the political will and demonstrated commitment similar to that displayed in New Orleans.**

02:00 pm

VHA Programs Presentation updates that include program outcomes, projections, and how ACHV can move their agenda forward: GPD; SSVF; HUD-VASH, and the National Center Research. Briefers were: John Kuhn, VA, National Director, Homeless Evaluation on VA Supportive Services for Veteran Families; Jeffrey Quarles, VA, Director, Grant and Per Diem Program, Jesse Vazzano, VA, LICSW, National Director, HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and Tom O’Toole, VA, Homeless Patient Aligned Care team (H-PACT) Director.

**Board members made the following requests:**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- 1. That VA consider developing checklists and best practices documents for Homeless Providers grant and Per Diem providers.**
- 2. That VA consider implementing a requirement for SSVF providers to maintain half of their staff as housing navigators**
- 3. That VA issue guidance regarding how and when GP, SSVF, and HUD-VASH providers change an individual's record as regards current homeless and chronic homeless status as such changes have drastic effects on individual eligibility for various programs.**

04:00 pm Housing and Urban Development Presentation by Ann Oliva, HUD Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs and updates on HUD-VASH, Continuums of Care (COC) policies, initiatives or technical assistance related to Veteran homelessness.

04:30 pm Presentation by Matthew Doherty, Executive Director, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

05:15 pm Adjourn for the day.

**May 14, 2015:**

08:00 am Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) called to order by Mark Johnston. General discussion of previous day follows.

09:00 am Presentation by Ben Seigel, DOL, Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnership on how DOL mainstream programs are or will be used for homeless Veterans; recent Innovations forum for homeless persons; Labor/Bureau of Prisons incarcerated prison program; and National Programs Veterans' Employment & Training Service.

**Board members made no requests.**

09:30 am Briefing by Emily Rosenoff, HHS Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) on how HHS encourages its block grant grantees to serve veterans; status on efforts regarding child support; and efforts to provide health care for non-eligible veterans through Health Care for the Homeless and the new health care program.

**Board members made no requests.**

10:00 am Break

10:15 am Presentation by Baylee Crone, Executive Director, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans on NCHV initiatives, technical assistance, and research related to ending veteran homelessness that also provides outcomes, projections. Key points of note for the record:

- There was a lengthy discussion on the various challenges regarding HUD-VASH case management caused by high rates of employee turn-over at the

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

caseworker level. These positions are entry level and as such individuals frequently move on to more senior positions once they have established a baseline performance period. Lisa Pape stated last month that 132 social workers were hired and 82 moved on to other positions. There was a detailed discussion about the possibility of contracting case management as an option

- Ms. Crone emphasized the continued need for other agencies to be involved at the federal and local levels as the issue of Veteran homelessness is not solely a VA function.
- NCHV encourages that DoD as a matter of routine practice begin making referrals to VA as is being done in some locations.
- There is a need for promoting understanding of how non-VA providers can provide services in areas not served by a VA facility.
- NCHV encourages better articulation of what functional zero means. Ms. Crone related numerous anecdotal instances of communities calling and saying that they think they have ended veteran homelessness but are not sure. Clear definitions are needed.

**Board members made no requests.**

- 10:45 am Presentation by Nan Roman, President and CEO, National Alliance to End Homelessness on NAEH initiatives, technical assistance, and research related to ending veteran homelessness that also provides outcomes, projections. Of note for the record:
- NAEH emphasized the importance of defining functional zero at the local level.
  - NAEH encourages that VA consider contracting case management as a possible solution to staffing challenges and a means to increase HUD-VASH utilization.

**Board members made no requests.**

11:30 am Lunch

- 12:45 pm Presentation by Dr. Susan Kelly, DoD Transition Assistance Program on Department of Defense Updates and 2015 Projections, progress and changes within the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and efforts to address the process for VA Homeless Programs to receive location and discharge type of Veterans.

**Board members made no requests.**

- 01:15 pm Presentation by Dr. Keith Harris, National Director of Clinical Operations, VHA Homeless Programs on VA's "Gap Analysis" initiative. Of note for the record:
- Board members asked if Gap Analysis was intended to replace the Project Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALLENG) survey. Answer: They're different but complementary. CHALLENG is largely related to consumer experience. Gap Analysis is a quantitative analysis of services needed and services available.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

**Board members made the following requests:**

- 1. VA consider sharing Gap Analysis information publicly and permit its use as a monthly scorecard.**
- 2. VA develop guidance on what functional zero means at the community level.**

01:45 pm Presentation by Robert Reynolds, VA, Director, Benefits Assistance Services on Veterans Benefits Administration on how the Benefits Assistance Service (BAS) provides assistance and programs involved with ending Veteran homelessness, their outcomes, projections.

**Board members made the following request:**

- 1. In order to more effectively link VBA's "Cash for Keys" and foreclosure avoidance processes to Veterans in need, consider some form of outreach to SSVF providers. SSVF is the VA program most focused on homeless prevention, and the board is concerned that not all SSVF grantees are familiar with "Cash for Keys" and VA foreclosure avoidance options.**

02:15 pm Discussion led by Nicholas Bales, VA, Deputy Associate Director, Clinical Services, National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV). Responsibility and operation of the NCCHV was recently moved to Clinical Services following release of an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report on inefficiencies in call center operations. ACHV members had asked for an update. Mr. Bayles provided an overview and answered questions regarding new call center procedures and operations.

02:45 pm Break

03:00 pm Open discussion of key issues raised by all Federal and other partners. Of note, for the record:

- At future meetings, the board will seek additional follow up information regarding the number of individuals going through Transition Assistance Program. There was general consensus that TAP should be mandatory and should have optional tracks based on the service members post-military plans. There was general consensus that the board should actively promote TAP and Tap enhancement efforts, and that an effective TAP program is an essential element of preventing future homelessness.
- The board members observed a great deal of confusion on what it means to have ended homelessness at the local level and will promote efforts that facilitate a unified definition. There was a general consensus that USICH should take lead on defining success at ending homelessness.
- The board recognized a need to integrate mainstream employment in CoC programs and to prioritize non-eligible veterans into mainstream efforts.

05:00 pm Adjourn

**May 15 2015:**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

08:00 am Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) called to order by Mark Johnston. General discussion of previous day follows. Voting as follows:

**VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That the next meeting of the ACHV shall take place in Houston, TX in the month of September, 2015. The meeting will include a public comment session.**

**VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That there be formed a sub-committee to explore recommendations for acute care of chronically homeless Veterans and effective use of project based vouchers (PBV). The committee shall meet as needed, conduct research, and provide a report to the ACHV at the next meeting in September 2015. Sub-committee chair: Leon Winston. Sub-committee members: Craig Burnette.**

**VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That there be formed a sub-committee to explore recommendations for encouraging data sharing and best practices. The committee shall meet as needed, conduct research, and provide a report to the ACHV at the next meeting in September 2015. The committee recommends and VA concurs that the sub-committee initiate contact with VA homeless programs employees Keith Harris and Adam Ruege who have been deeply involved in VA data management and analysis. Sub-committee chair: Eric. Sub-committee members: Elijah Peter.**

**VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That there be formed a sub-committee to explore recommendations the utilization of SSVF funding to provide Case Management and related services to Veterans upon and following exit from GPD programs. The committee shall meet as needed, conduct research, and provide a report to the ACHV at the next meeting in September 2015. The committee recommends and VA concurs that the sub-committee initiate contact with VA HUD-VASH Director Jese Vazzano. Sub-committee chair: Leon Winston. Sub-committee members: Roger Eric.**

**Board members also made the following request:**

- 1. That VA consider posting a monthly dashboard of progress in a publicly accessible website.**
- 2. That the VA Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Lisa Pape provide a report on progress at the next meeting of the committee in September 2015.**

11:00 am Adjourn

**SUMMARY OF VOTES:**

- 1. VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That the next meeting of the ACHV shall take place in Houston, TX in the month of September, 2015. The meeting will include a public comment session.**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

2. **VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That there be formed a sub-committee to explore recommendations for acute care of chronically homeless Veterans and effective use of project based vouchers (PBV).**
3. **VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That there be formed a sub-committee to explore recommendations for encouraging data sharing and best practices.**
4. **VOTE: Unanimous. Decision. That there be formed a sub-committee to explore recommendations the utilization of SSVF funding to provide Case Management and related services to Veterans upon and following exit from GPD programs.**

**SUMMARY OF REQUESTS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

1. That VHA Homeless Program Office (HPO) staff discuss current eligibility rules for VA homeless programs and how eligibility rules were determined. The board desires the ability to comment and provide advice on the rules and unintended consequences of possible rule changes.
2. The board members desire a discussion on how VA central office can facilitate a decision on determining how communities that are doing an effective job can be recognized.
3. The board requests a definition on what ending homelessness within a community looks like. There is government wide agreement on “functional zero” at the national level – what does “functional zero” look like ta the local level?
4. Consider promoting the use of the following website as an alternative to formal records checks to determine Veteran status for community program eligibility:  
[https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/single\\_record.xhtml](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/single_record.xhtml).
5. Consider promoting awareness of the following website among VA grantees and organizations working on ending Veteran homelessness: [www.nlc.org/veteranshousing](http://www.nlc.org/veteranshousing) - a comprehensive document with best practices, statutory guides and more from VA, USICH, HUD and national organizational leaders.
6. Consider promoting awareness and use of the Mayors Challenge Desk book developed by HUD Region 10.
7. Make public VA’s Gap Analysis in conjunction with VA’s Homeless Analytics website so any community can find out whether or not they are on track to end Veteran homelessness.
8. This is the year to end Veteran homelessness – VA should focus efforts on 25 Cities and Zero:2016 cities to encourage local political leaders to demonstrate the political will and demonstrated commitment similar to that displayed in New Orleans.
9. That VA consider developing checklists and best practices documents for Homeless Providers grant and Per Diem providers.
10. That VA consider implementing a requirement for SSVF providers to maintain half of their staff as housing navigators
11. That VA issue guidance regarding how and when GP, SSVF, and HUD-VASH providers change an individual’s record as regards current homeless and chronic homeless status as such changes have drastic effects on individual eligibility for various programs.
12. VA consider sharing Gap Analysis information publicly and permit its use as a monthly scorecard.
13. VA develop guidance on what functional zero means at the community level.
14. In order to more effectively link VBA’s “Cash for Keys” and foreclosure avoidance processes to Veterans in need, consider some form of outreach to SSVF providers. SSVF is the VA program

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING**

most focused on homeless prevention, and the board is concerned that not all SSVF grantees are familiar with “Cash for Keys” and VA foreclosure avoidance options.

15. That VA consider posting a monthly dashboard of progress in a publicly accessible website.

16. That the VA Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Lisa Pape provide a report on progress at the next meeting of the committee in September 2015.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am on May 15, 2015.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Mark Johnston  
Chairman  
Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans

These minutes will be formally considered by the Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.