

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING  
September 26-27, 2018**

The Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) convened for its second regularly scheduled meeting of fiscal year 2018 in San Francisco, CA, September 26, 2018 through September 27, 2018.

On September 26, 2018, the Committee convened an open session at the War Memorial 401 Van Ness Avenue (Room 210), San Francisco, CA from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from opening at 8:00 a.m. until adjournment at 5:00 pm. The agenda included briefings from officials at VA and other agencies regarding housing strategies that have been employed to address Veteran homelessness.

On September 27, 2018, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., the Committee convened closed sessions, as it toured the Stanford Hotel, 250 Kearny Street San Francisco, CA and Navigation Center, 15<sup>th</sup> & Mission Streets, San Francisco, CA. These sessions were closed in accordance with 5 U.S.C Sec. 552b(c)(6). Tours of VA facilities were closed to protect Veterans' privacy and personal information. The meeting opened to the public at 12:30 p.m. The Committee also discussed potential topics for its upcoming annual report and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

**Committee Members Present:**

Johnston, Mark – Chair  
Como, Steven – Member  
Frueh, Mike - Ex-Officio, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)  
Executive Director, Benefits Assistance Service  
Grumdahl, Eric - Member  
Guy, Dottie – Member  
Hall, Charlie – Member  
Kelleher, Peter -- Member  
Lee, Susan, Ph.D., RN– Member  
McLaughlin, John, Ed.D. - Federal Coordinator, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program  
Ex-Officio, Department of Education (via phone)  
Shriver, III, Robert “Bobby” -- Member  
Suchar, Norm – Ex-Officio, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (via phone)  
Winston, Leon – Member  
Woodworth, Roger -- Member

**Committee Members Absent:**

Doherty, Matthew -- Ex Officio, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)  
Executive Director  
Harig-Blaine, Elisha --Member  
Rosenoff, Emily – Ex-Officio, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)  
Acting Director, Division of Long-Term Care Policy  
Vessels, Gary- Alternate Ex-Officio, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING  
September 26-27, 2018**

**Committee Support Staff Present:**

Davis, Leisa - Program Analyst, VHA HPO

Love, Anthony – Senior Advisor and Director Community Engagement, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Homeless Programs Office, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Waitschies, Daniella - Administrative Officer, VHA Homeless Programs Office

**\*Additional attendees present for a portion or all of the meeting (alphabetically by last name):**

Some, but not all, attendees/presenters identified themselves by name. They are not required to identify themselves. The following identified themselves by full or partial name:

Presenters

Adish, Saralyn - Chief of Staff, USICH (via phone)

Allen, Molly – Housing Program Specialist, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (via phone)

Culbertson, Steve - Associate Director, Swords to Plowshares

De Coligny, Elaine - Alameda County “Everybody Home”

Diaz, Monica - Executive Director, VHA HPO (via phone)

Dones, Marc - Senior Lead for Equitable Systems, Future Laboratories (via phone)

Fitzgerald, III, Thomas - CHESP, Health Care System Director

Helget, Charles - Executive Director, California Association of Veteran Services Agencies

Hollywood, Kelly - Project Manager, Bridge Housing

Kuhn, John - Director, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), VHA HPO (via phone)

Lipka, Todd - President and CEO Step Up on Second

Marston, Heidi- Director, Community Engagement and Reintegration Service, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

McChesney, Burt - Executive Director, Veterans Housing Develop Corporation

Melendez Nash - Adrienne, Management Analyst, SSVF

Olivet, Jeff - jo Consulting (via phone)

Owens, Megan - CES Manager, San Francisco Department of Homelessness & Support Services

Pullar, Tracy Pullar - LCWS, Homeless Program Manager, VA Northern California Health Care System

Severin, Kate - Domiciliary and Homeless Program, VA Palo Alto

Shan, Rina – MD, Deputy Chief of Staff, San Francisco VA Health System

Son, Jia – LCSW - HUD-VASH Director, San Francisco VA Health System

Smith, De Carol -Project Manager, Office of Asset Enterprise Management

Stockwell, David -Director, VA Northern California Health Care System

West-Evans, Kathleen – VA Committee on Rehabilitation (via phone)

Wright, Tamara - Regional Management Analyst, SSVF (via phone)

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING  
September 26-27, 2018**

Attendees

Burney, Jelessa - Program Specialist, Advisory Committee Management Office

Emily Carduff – Executive Coordinator, Swords to Plowshares

Heitzmann, Carma - National Director Homeless Veterans Community Employment Service, HPO

\*Note – Titles, when known are listed. Members of the public who attend are not required to provide titles when they sign in.

For the record, it is noted that to avoid a conflict of interest, Committee members are required to excuse 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. No discussions were held that required committee members to excuse themselves.

**Wednesday, September 26, 2018**

**8:02 am Meeting Called to Order by Mark Johnston, Chair**

**8:10 am Welcome from Anthony Love, Designated Federal Officer**

- Anthony Love extended his appreciation to the Swords to Plowshares for hosting the meeting and working closely with his VA team to coordinate the meeting logistics.

**8:15 am Welcome from Michael Blecker, Executive Director, Swords to Plowshares**

- Michael Blecker welcomed everyone to San Francisco. He also commended the group and stated we all must work together to make the most out of the limited resources. He also reiterated that we are generally working to ensure a better quality of life for a population that is older with health and financial challenges.

**8:20 am Welcome from Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Program Office**

- Monica Diaz conveyed her appreciation for all of work that is being done and acknowledged that progress has been made; however, a lot of work still needs to be done. She also stated she's honored to be a leader of such a committed team.
- Leadership at local VAMCs and CoCs have contributed a lot and there are some good examples of what partnership can do.
- There was a 45% decline amongst Veterans since 2009 (today about 40,000).
- There are challenges such as the reality of unaffordable housing, so there is still more work to be done which is why "we" are convening meetings like this so we can continue to engage in discussions to build partnerships and make progress towards to help end Veteran homelessness.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

**8:45 am**

**VA, USICH, and HUD Community Planning Survey Results**

John Kuhn, Director, Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)

Adrienne Nash Melendez, Management Analyst, SSVF

Tamara Wright, Regional Management Analyst, SSVF

Lindsay Hill, Program Analyst, Clinical Operations, Operational Analytics

John Kuhn, Director, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) provided the following updates on SSVF funding status:

- Grant awards were announced a few weeks ago. There were many reductions to get to statutory of \$326 million.
- Cuts were made (resulting in 27 grants not being refunded). Some of the funds went back to other Grantees in the community. Every Grantee received a 5.7% cut. Grantees were asked to identify what should be cut, ensuring that most at risk Veterans are still being services.
- Question: How were cuts made? John Kuhn stated performance played a part. SSVF reviewed needs and looked at areas with greatest need and made sure those areas in the country were covered. Ensuring low demands within the country were addressed to expand level of access.
  - SSVF grantees were to report coordination of services within the community. VA is seeking ways to make services more efficient and more responsive to community demand. There was a 92% data response rate (slight decline from previous years at 94%)
- Question: What is being done with the Coordinated Entry System (CES) positions that are being implemented into the community?
  - John Kuhn indicated some strategies to develop and train and mentor (87 positions are being recruited); once on-boarded, plan is to connect them with Continuum of Care (CoC); and improve technical assistance to support community partners.
  - 17% of communities have a diversion programs; but, that is the highest request for technical assistance.
- Question: With the reduction of funding coming from prevention, how, can we ensure usage of funds are being used towards activities with larger impact?
  - John Kuhn stated, he is hopeful that the funding will come back; however, emphasis is needed in training. SSVF (in consultation with HUD and USICH) is planning to develop strategies on how to develop training and identify how to make the best use of the diversion efforts.
  - Coordinated Entry provides more prioritization and referrals; however, there are still challenges in rural areas
- Question: When were survey results returned?

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- SSVF released the survey in May 2018 and gave respondents 5-7 weeks to complete. It was due by the end of June 2018.
- SSVF Team Members expressed their gratitude to community partners for participating in the survey. The survey bridged gaps by learning from other communities because it provided an opportunity to share information.
- The purpose of the survey was to:
  - Collect information on the process of ending Veterans homelessness
  - Provide an opportunity for reflection at the community level including strengths and areas of development
  - Assist Federal Partners (VA, HUD, and USICH) with understanding successes and challenges to tailor training and technical assistance to effectively address local needs.
  
- Eric Grumdahl suggested initiating a warm handoff for communities to better facilitate sharing of resources and best practices versus asking of communities' knowledge of the resources. Mark Johnston commented that warm-handoffs are not typically provided; however, some consideration should be given to do a deeper dive on the fidelity and meaningfulness of warm-handoffs?
  
- Charlie Hall commented that community leadership are likely to be the weak points. Question: Who will come to our community and think this through to provide technical assistance?
  - John Kuhn stated that SSVF looked at how to develop training programs that will reach a broad range of people by providing trainings using a regional approach. SSVF will do the following:
    - Convene rounds of training in January/February 2019
    - Bring HUD, CoCs and others together to communicate what is discovered in the survey; face-to-face contacts at big conferences and smaller regional conferences (about 10) around the country
    - Provide online training using the SSVF University Website
    - Offer Mentoring Rapid Resolution Pilots
    - Incorporate feedback to tailor NOFAs and funding to be responsive to issues raised
    - Better link employment and benefits (SSI) to integrate with other services
  
- Mark Johnston stated that relatively few communities have implemented diversion programs. SSVF has tough funding decisions (particularly related to prevention). Nonetheless, the community is requesting a high level of technical assistance for diversion programs.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- John Kuhn added there is a significant need to focus on Rapid Resolution Diversion to help grantees to spend money on training to do this successfully. There was a 2 percent bump to Grantees to support trainings to support the NOFA.
- The survey revealed the following items:
  - Most communities have By Name Lists, which are updated at least monthly.
  - Data sharing, prioritization and diversion were the top requested technical assistance items.
  - VAMCs are sharing or have HMIS access at much higher rates than previously.
  - Most communities are seeking additional guidance on the Federal Criteria and Benchmarks
  - Survey could help not only with priorities across Federal partners but also more localized support and efforts. The team will look at how the survey information could be helpful in CoC System Planning.
  - More integration of the Grant Per Diem Program is needed
- The following items were suggestions for consideration that each partner could potentially work on to improve:
  - HUD: Diversion/Rapid Exit, Support with Coordinated Entry Implementation, Lessons Learned, Unsheltered, Rural and BOS
  - USICH: Diversion/Rapid Exit, Partnerships/Landlord Engagements/Rural Areas/Engage Political Officials/Sustain Systems/Federal Criteria and Benchmarks
  - VA: Diversion/Rapid Exit, Support with VA Integration into CES (especially dedication of resources and Rural/BOS); Support with CES positions (role, training, and collaboration with VAMC Homeless Programs and CoCs); VA Data Sharing (Advanced Practices and Analysis)

**9:15 am**

**Panel Discussion: CoC/Local Effort to End Veteran Homelessness**

- ◆ Megan Owen, CES Manager, San Francisco Department of Homelessness & Support Services stated they are launching the Coordinated Entry, direct access to housing programs and they are looking at single definitions of homelessness; and offering persons experiencing homelessness problem solving. Problem Solving redirects people who can resolve their homelessness without the need for ongoing support out of the Homelessness Response System. Problem Solving includes: eviction prevention, legal services, relocation programs (homeward bound), family reunification, mediation, move-in assistance, and flexible grants.
- ◆ They anticipate 10% of homeless population will be resolved through problem solving. For all others, they will use an assessment program. Community right-sizing is crucial. HUD-VASH Allocations need to be properly allocated because homelessness is steadily growing in San Francisco.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- Elaine de Coligny – Alameda County “Everybody Home” stated there was a 39% increase in homelessness in 2017, and about 429 homeless Veterans in Alameda County. She stated we know we can’t get this job done, unless we work together.
- The following challenges were highlighted:
  - Rent is accelerating at the same pace of higher markets such as San Francisco and Santa Clara (Silicone Valley).
  - Rents are too high, more VASH vouchers and resources are needed to match various needs. There is generally a lack of affordable housing as well as landlord engagement and retention challenges.
  - Prioritizing permanent supportive housing units for non-VHA-eligible chronically homeless Veterans. CoCs are making a commitment in this area.
  - Prioritizing housing units for chronically homeless Veterans
  - Building CoC capacity through contributions from SSVF partners.
  - Monthly dashboards are needed to track progress.
  - During the Coordinated Entry System (CES) Assessment, Veterans scored lower than compared to mainstream population. This discrepancy could be due to housing and resources geared specifically to Veterans. We are coordinating efforts to include Veterans in a CES in a more holistic approach so Veteran specific resources will ensure Veterans will be served.
- Alameda County has a great partnership, data sharing with local VA and coordination in East Bay area, so they could use data to shape their strategy.
- The following recommendations were highlighted:
  - Housing Markets continue to need resources for permanent housing (not necessarily ICM but subsidy).
  - Resources for landlord incentives and recruitment beyond paying rent.
  - Data demonstrates that most homeless Veterans are eligible for VA healthcare. Collectively, we need to consider the challenges associated with Veterans’ healthcare needs, which are making it increasingly more difficult to live in independent housing.
  - Landlords are concerned about the healthcare needs of Veterans; therefore, better access to information on how to mitigate concerns of landlords is needed.
- Steve Culbertson, Associate Director, Swords to Plowshares mentioned there are 335 homeless Veterans in San Francisco By Name List and 429 homeless Veterans in the Alameda County.
- We need centralized By-Name Lists for the 9 counties in the Bay Area. This will reduce duplication of Veterans.
- Assistance is also needed with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and the establishment of seamless handoffs between counties and CoCs to share data.
- Veterans are highly mobile and using all systems to get their needs meet. It’s challenging to serve them if they aren’t on the By Name List.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- At Drop-In Center, there are many Veterans each month from other states. There is an in-flow coming to Bay area and we need to figure out how to address this issue. Diversion can occur about 33% of the time but in other instances assistance is needed.
- Question: How likely are we able to create a multi-jurisdictional By-Name list that crosses districts?
  - Elaine de Coligny stated that would require a great deal of negotiating and time-consuming coordination amongst CoCs and VA and could be challenging operationally with data sharing.
  - Megan Owens suggested this would be great opportunity for VAMCs to lead. There are 9 counties in the Bay Area and 3 VAMCs connected to them. Based on the PIT Count, 30% of Veterans come from out of this jurisdiction. Data would be needed to identify the locations where the high volumes of homeless Veterans are coming from. If VA took the lead, this change could potentially move quicker.
  - Elaine de Coligny added she wasn't sure about the amount of the in-flow and out-flow but noted that several organizations are helping Veterans relocate to other areas of affordability in hopes of improving their housing outcomes.
  - Megan Owens suggested that we need to acquire a better understanding of the reason for this surge. There is a perception that the migration could be due to the resources or type of communities being sought. Housing navigation and higher levels of care are needed.
  - Some Veterans are not able to thrive in the HUD VASH model, due to them needing a level of care that is more intense (age; level of disability; etc...) so coordinating with communities who may be able to provide resources that can more effectively house the Veteran who may have difference needs.
  - Steve Culbertson stated everyone was using the same software; however, the irony is that the data is housed next to each other; however, something would be needed to see each other's data. MOU negotiations, ROI agreements, or some type of middle ground is needed that would provide visibility for a single dashboard for the Bay Area or something that could at least show what the numbers are.
  - Rapid Resolution / Diversion – Housing First. Initiatives are underway that are being called Housing First and others using the “housing solving problem” framework to address homelessness; however, it's in the early phase. It taps into inner resources vs rely on external resources.
  - The San Francisco implementation of the “problem solving” initiative is new; when tested in the family system; success is small, <2%.
  - Converting GPD to Permanent Supportive housing is another potential option that could be considered
  - Eric shared that Minnesota has a state-wide Veteran By-Name List. He mentioned this is likely not a technological issue, but, rather a people issue—in terms of control. He

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

suggested that they consider hosting a leadership meeting to identify common barriers and commonalities.

- Mark Johnston suggested that they look at residential requirements for each community to access available resources to identify requirements and factors to possibly consider some form of migration and opportunities for consistency.

**10:45 am      Panel Discussion: VA Directors and Homeless Program Leads**

- Rina Shan, MD, Deputy Chief of Staff and (Alice) Jia Son, LCSW, HUD-VASH Director, San Francisco VA Health System shared their innovative projects that were implemented, which included the development of the process maps; orientations convened by the public housing authorities; and streamlined the Lease Up and Housing Process by using a team approach with housing subject matter experts (Housing Coordinator, Social Workers, Community Integration Specialist, Housing Specialist, Occupational Therapist, Nurse Practitioner or Registered Nurse)
  - Veterans Steering Committee comprised of San Francisco VA Healthcare System Homeless Programs; City and County of San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing; San Francisco Public Housing Authority, and the Swords to Plowshares. This Committee meets weekly to address Coordinated Entry and working towards the goal of ending Veteran homelessness.
  - The following items were identified as challenges:
    - Increase in complex cases, especially with aging Veteran population (cognition/physical health decline; not able to live independently; require high level of services; lack of funding for assisted living and Board/Care facilities)
    - Housing stock limited in Northern Counties (rural counties; rent is unreasonable which presents a barrier to access)
    - High rent in San Francisco
    - Recruitment and Retention high cost of living; complexity of the job and finding the right fix that has multi-disciplinary team (Social Workers, OTs, RNs, NPs, Peer Support Specialists, Community Integration Specialists, Housing Specialists, Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist)
  - David Stockwell, MHA, Director and Tracy Pullar, LCWS, Homeless Program Manager, VA Northern California Health Care System.
    - High utilizer of case management, which focuses on providing case management to Veterans who don't qualify for HUD-VASH or fail out of HUD-VASH.
    - It was recommended that VA explore the potential collaboration with the Health and Human Services (HHS) to address the aging population needs along with housing
  - Thomas J. Fitzgerald III, CHESP, Health Care System Director and Kate Severin, Chief, Domiciliary and Homeless Programs, VA Palo Alto provided highlights for their Domiciliary (which is the only one in the VISN) that performs outreach to dozens of locations throughout the northern California area, including homeless encampments, shelters, soup kitchens, and detox facilities.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- The following challenges were noted: lack of affordable and safe permanent housing; revolving door of newly housed Veterans on a regular basis because landlord's raise rents beyond Section 8 rates or they simply have a stigma with renting to Section 8, and Gaps in services for homeless aging Veterans who are not able to live independently and require the need for caregiver assistance.

The following recommendations were noted:

- Strengthen partnerships, resources, and eligibility standards for aging homeless population (particularly for those that are not eligible for HUD-VASH)
- Strengthen existing landlord relationships to:
  - Influence processing time for landlord receiving their first Housing Authority rental payment to increase ongoing willingness to rent to Veterans with a VASH Voucher
  - Influence SSVF's ability to fund repairs to heavily damaged units from VASH tenants to preserve fragile existing landlord relationships
  - Consider media campaigns, local radio, TV newspaper ads to attract additional landlords
- Continue to emphasize the value of Lean methodologies to improve processes and outcomes in the homeless programs nationwide. VA Palo Alto Healthcare System utilizes Lean methodologies to improve processes and outcomes in the homeless programs nationwide. Morning huddles are held to systematically review and resolve barriers for that day's operations. This visual management creates opportunities to share goals, identify strengths, challenges at-a-glance, and celebrates short-term wins and increases morale.

**1:00 pm     Housing and Prevention Program California Department of Veteran Affairs**

Sean Johnson, Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention, Program Manager, California Department of Veterans Affairs Services Division suggested that focus been centered on areas with specific needs (especially revealed through the PIT Count). There is a desperate need to keep HUD-VASH Vouchers coming to California.

**1:25 pm     Veterans Homelessness and the State of Veterans Community Report – 2018**

Charles Helget, Executive Director, California Association of Veteran Services Agencies provided the following highlights from the report:

- 2018 is a base year to identify mental health needs of Veterans.
- Specialized services will be needed for the largest homeless population group which is now in the 50+ age group.
- For the Veteran Justice and Opioid Additions, there is a lack of information on how to address these areas and compile information in these areas.
- Actively working to increase Grant Per Diem rates from \$70 to \$90.
- There has been success in finding resources for mental health and homeless resources.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- Our organization is seeking both state and federal funding. We are hopeful Prop 1 and Prop 2 will provide the resources needed to provide housing from the allocation of those funds.

**1:45 pm Panel Discussion: EUL and Housing Development**

Todd Lipka, President and CEO Step Up on Second

De Carol Smith, Project Manager, Office of Asset Enterprise Management, VA

Kelly Hollywood, Project Manager, Bridge Housing

Burt McChesney, Executive Director, Veterans Housing Develop Corporation

- Todd Lipka stated their first EUL for supportive housing was Building 209; and recently awarded 205 and 208. Challenges in obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy due to lack of jurisdiction; as the property sits on federal land; however, housing authority will not issue unless a Certificate of Occupancy is obtained.
- The service price per Veteran is much lower than comparable market. VA offered \$5000 vs \$8-20K offered by the State.
- Permanent supportive housing model is much different than a medical model; however, the medical model dictates how services are provided on the permanent housing. VA should give consideration to the following items that are needed:
  - Better clarification of the various models
  - Integration of Veterans into the community. Building 209 location does not foster a sense of community.
  - There is a need to source all available housing types (scattered and centered) and this should be driven by Veteran choice.
- De Carol Smith described the workflow process associated with Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) Program, which allows VA to partner with the public or private sector to out lease its underutilized land and buildings for up to 75 years and then revert to VA.
- There are 6 types of EUL Projects (Housing, Consolidated/Regional Office/Parking, Research/Medical Services, Energy, Miscellaneous Private Sector and Terminated/Transferred.
- There are a total of 50 Housing EUL Projects with 3,277 Total Housing Units (62% of this total is comprised of Permanent Supportive Units)
- Total Capital Sources account for \$385.30M (53% of this total is comprised of Low Income Housing Tax Credits Equity)
- Developers (Lessee) are required to finance, develop, operate, and maintain the property in accordance with Federal, State, and Local requirements.
- Requesting expansion of EUL authority to allow for entering agreements into various services with providers who can provide services to address Veterans' unique needs.
- Expansion of HUD-VASH vouchers give assurances to developers to sign long-term leases since they know HUD-VASH and EUL funding will be available.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- EUL is exploring various models of permanent or supportive housing in the Bay Area. There is a EUL Project in Monterey, CA and a proposal for one campus in SFO.
- There was a brief discussion about various challenges associated with EULs and the following comments were shared:
  - Building housing on VA property has several items that must be taken consideration such as utilities, building specifications; petitioning for mailing address; dealing with other challenges and they all need to be addressed.
  - For example, some of the engineering staff lacked the subject matter expertise to make decisions needed to advance the project.
  - There were several legal issues that took years and money to address.
- The following recommendations were provided for consideration:
  - Pooling lessons learned as the expansion of EULs on government land may be useful to developers when working with EULs. VA needs to include more housing specialists to include changes to current EUL regulations to include housing developments.
  - Convening a meeting with VA Central Office and existing EUL developers/operators to identify issues or concerns that can be integrated into any blueprint for future EUL collaborations.
  - Consider assigning someone to be the National EUL Specialist (regarding homeless-related projects) who can review EUL (tenant selection plan/ lease agreements) to review EUL. This will allow engagement at both local and national levels. This may also develop a level of support for developers to help support parameters of tenant selection to alleviate those pressures from the developers who may be contending with other factors in developing EULs.
- Burt McChesney suggested VA considers acquiring support for tax credit financing.
- Kelly Hollywood, Project Manager, Bridge Housing Corporation provided a brief overview of the Berkeley Way Project, which was issued a RFQ in May 2014 to develop the Berkeley Way Site. This site will serve a diverse resident population (setting aside affordable housing units for permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals; transitional housing for Veterans; and temporary shelter housing for homeless individuals). The buildout will include the safe, secure and welcoming space for an emergency homeless shelter, administrative office, community space, and supportive services on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor; 44 transitional beds on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor and 54 permanent supportive studios on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor and public parking. The site is currently being redesigned for planning entitlement submittal to the City of Berkeley.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

**3:30 pm Panel Discussion: Master Leasing**

- Jennielynn Holmes, Senior Director of Shelter and Housing, Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa provided a brief overview of the underutilized hotel repurposing project, which is turning a master lease hotel to repurpose as permanent housing units for homeless. The program was built to meet the needs of those served. The success of the program is attributed to public-private partnerships, political buy-in, and alignment with the Housing First model.
- Funding with supportive services struggles the most. Five of the units are paid for by a medical hospital that served homeless Veteran and housed through this partnership.
- Question: Eric Grumdahl asked if it is possible to compile a document that may outline some best practices or guidelines for organizations interested in pursuing master lease agreements and a master leasing calculator.
- Jennielynn Holmes stated Catholic Charities has a procedure guide or guidebook for property owners to help share experiences and best practices.

**Thursday, September 27, 2018**

On September 27, 2018, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., the Committee convened closed sessions, as it toured the Stanford Hotel, 250 Kearny Street San Francisco, CA and Navigation Center, 15<sup>th</sup> & Mission Streets, San Francisco, CA. These sessions were closed in accordance with 5 U.S.C Sec. 552b(c)(6). Tours of VA facilities were closed to protect Veterans' privacy and personal information.

**12:30 pm Veterans with Lived Experienced Panel**

- Six formerly homeless Veterans (who currently reside in the San Francisco, CA area) shared their personal lived experiences about their journey after separating from the military. As a result of not receiving the proper assistance (when they initially separated from the military to civilian life), they found fell into homelessness after battling mental illness, substance and alcohol abuse; losing their jobs, and ultimately their housing.
- It wasn't until a family member, friend, or homeless service provider reached out to them did they acquire the housing, health, and benefit assistance they needed. They all agreed that once they were connected to the VA, their situations improved. Each formerly homeless Veterans stressed there needs to be more guidance provided to service members when they separate from the military to transition into the civilian world. In response, they were advised of the work that is currently being done with the Transitioning Servicemember Program (TAP) and more guidance is being provided to provide a warm handoff from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

- Several of the Veterans shared their feelings of hopelessness, suicide attempts, lack of motivation, and insufficient tools to help them recover or overcome their life barriers. However, when they connected with other Veterans with mutual experiences and Homeless Service Providers, they were hopeful that their quality of life could improve.
- Question: What can the VA do to inform Veterans of their benefits before they become homeless? One Veteran suggested that there needs to be a “team of people constantly reaching out to homeless Veterans living on the streets, in alleyways, etc on the recurring basis to take them by the hand because it is desperately needed.”
- All of the Veterans on the panel were extremely complimentary of the VA and Swords to Plowshares. They stated once they were connected, they received housing and the other wraparound services that they needed.
- The Veterans provided the following recommendations:
  - Dental is only offered to Veterans if 100% disabled. Consider options to provide dental to other service connected Veterans, who may have a lower percentage.
  - VA should consider more outreach to Veterans on the street to provide education to available outreach; providing guidance and support to establish trust, belonging. Veterans have to believe in themselves in order to want to make the necessary change in their lives to accept changes needed to improve their conditions.
  - Having good managers and people to run the system is needed to run the VA; but, no major issues to the services.

**1:30 pm**

**Racial Equity Discussion with Committee Members and Invited Guests**

- Eric Grumdahl opened the discussion by highlighting that the racial equity topic initially began at the April 2018 Meeting, when there was a consensus that the membership of the committee needs to reflect the composition of the Veterans experiencing homelessness. It was noted that the Veterans of color are overly represented in homelessness.
- Question: How are we addressing the need for diversity to fill the new membership of the committee?
  - The name of the nominees will be submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for approval. This year, we anticipate that the committee will be comprised of a diverse group. There has been significant improvement of the representation from people of color, women, Veterans and the LGBTQ, who are highly qualified and from various backgrounds (private sector, public sector, retired military, etc).

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

Jeff Olivet, Principal, jo Consulting provided the following highlights:

- Promote diversity on boards, advisory boards, staff, and leadership enhances the positive outcomes
- Look at inflow at over-represented Veterans and ask yourselves (What does data say about in-flow and support we are providing from discharge? Are we meeting their needs?)
- It would be valuable to take a look at communities' equitable solutions to narrow down the data (consider aggregating it by race, pair that with diverse advisory group and voices at table in terms of shaping program delivery can lead to improved outcomes). Listening to the voices of Veterans with lived experiences and social racism.
- Identify recommendations to Secretary of Veterans Affairs to outline the ways VA play a pivotal role in racial/ethnic disparities in Veteran homelessness.
- Eric Grumdahl mentioned he requested data from VA on how are we doing in terms of racial equity and outcomes; however, VA stated would not be a light lift to conduct the thorough analysis and they would need additional time.

◊ Action Item: Provide a list to describe how Jeff Olivet can assist VA with obtaining data?

- Marc Dones, Senior Lead for Equitable Systems, Future Laboratories provided some suggestions for opportunities for improvement for using internal data more robustly:
  - Consider the return rate (based on 2-month, 6-month, and 1-year later) after services have been provided
  - Consider the following in the analysis:
    - What services are being delivered?
    - Listen to folks not only on experiences but include them on solution by Co-creating solutions with those in the community that we serve. “
- Jeff Olivet added that VA should consider the capacity issue by designing matrix, process and frequency of analysis to look at something simple, easy to do and sustainable that could be tracked over time. It was recommended that it not be track too many but make it manageable.

◊ Action Item: Consider collaborating with Center for Minority Veterans Committee to discuss how to expand the minority presence on the committee to ensure that Veteran demographic is represented on the committee.

◊ Action Item: Consider as a recommendation to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that VA take its pulse to review racial equity. Expectation is that analysis will identify next steps to address racial inequity. Makes this ask crystal clear to the Department to include milestones, specific ask that is expected of the department.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS**  
**to the Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**September 26-27, 2018**

**2:15 pm Agency Updates**

Heidi Marston, Director, Community Engagement and Reintegration Service and her colleagues at the VA-Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System developed this video that showed how VA staff and partner organizations are collecting, sharing and using data more effectively to improve outcomes for the Veterans we serve. In the video, Veterans share their stories and partner agencies' highlights are included in the hope of encouraging other Veterans, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, to seek help. Link to video:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=KKtYgHskjAc&feature=youtu.be>

Frueh, Mike - Ex-Officio, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) (Executive Director, Benefits Assistance Service)

- The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) aid Veterans on benefits available at the VA. Homeless VBA claims are being processed 17% faster than regular claims. This is achieved by flagging incoming claims with a homeless indicator.
- Each of the 56 VBA regional offices has a Homeless Veteran Coordinator or Homeless Veterans Claims Coordinator. The Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinator is responsible for conducting outreach to homeless Veterans and the Homeless Veterans Claims Coordinator is responsible for case management and expediting the processing of homeless claims. Our goal is to increase personnel in the regional offices who service homeless Veterans and bring our processing homeless claims down to 90 days.
- There are currently 18 HVOC's who also serve as Justice Involved Veteran Coordinators providing outreach at Veteran Treatment Courts. Typically, it takes close to a year for VA to reinstate benefits upon a Veterans' incarceration release. VBA conducted an analysis which led to the following recommendations, which could reduce the number of days: increasing the amount of staff dedicated to outreach for homeless/justice involved Veterans and providing standardized training.

Molly Allen, Housing Program Specialist, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mentioned HUD has not publicly announced the FY18 HUD-VASH awards; however, she anticipates that they will be announced formally during the first week in October. The remaining FY18 HUD-VASH funds is scheduled to be awarded in November as "Round 2".

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING  
September 26-27, 2018**

John McLaughlin, Ed.D., Federal Coordinator, Education for Homeless Children and Youth program  
Office of Safe and Healthy Students Office of Elementary and Secondary Education,  
Department of Education

- The Department of Education released its 2016-17 school year homeless student enrollment data at the National/State and school district levels on September 6, 2018. A fuller 3-year trend report will be released this fall but our national total is 1,355,821 or a 7% increase from the 2014-15 school year. For the first time the Department of Education also has 4-year cohort graduation rates from State and local educational agencies for homeless students and chronic absenteeism data.
- The Department of Education are active in new United States Interagency Council on Homelessness workgroups on rural homelessness and employment. For the latter, our Office of Career, Technical and Adult education is collaborating with us and has new reporting on homeless individuals and runaway youth served by their programs such as WIOA Titles I and II and Perkins CTE.
- The Department of Education plans to issue a collaboration brief on the Department of Education and the Department of Labor programs that support youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in October with a USICH webinar on this topic this Fall.

Kathleen West-Evans, VA Committee on Rehabilitation offered her assistance to the Committee to work collaboratively on future projects.

Saralyn Adish, Chief of Staff, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, shared that the Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness was issued in July 2018. It was developed with extensive stakeholder input from across federal agencies, national organizations, state and local agencies and people with lived experiences of homelessness.  
Link: <https://www.usich.gov/home-together/>

**3:00 pm Committee Deliberations** This Committee Deliberations were a closed session.

**SUMMARY OF VOTES:**

N/A

**SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND RESPONSES:**

Action Items are included throughout this document. The Homeless Program Office will work with the appropriate points of contact to acquire responses and share them with the Committee.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS  
to the Department of Veterans Affairs  
SUMMARY OF MEETING  
September 26-27, 2018**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Mark Johnston thanked all those who participated and attended the Committee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm on September 27, 2018.

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

*Mark Johnston*

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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