



# WASHINGTON, DC

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**Community Partners:** Washington DC VAMC, Community Connections, Housing Counseling Services, Inc., Catholic Charities, The Community Partnership for Prevention of Homelessness, Miriam's Kitchen, U.S. Vets, DC Department of Human Services, Operation Renewed Hope Foundation, Friendship Place

## SYSTEM

Since the 25 Cities Effort started, Washington DC has had multiple 100-day initiatives to develop, refine, and work to sustain their system. These initiatives started with the goal to get all the right people to the table. Exciting community innovations have since been implemented. The Washington, DC Team describes some of these accomplishments below.



"Veterans NOW! strategically matches Veterans to housing resources so that we can meet as many needs as possible. For the most vulnerable clients who are not eligible for VA services, we use our local resources, so that we do not have to turn them away due to their discharge status. As a result of our strong partnership with a handful of landlords and the District's Housing Authority, we always have a handful of pre-inspected units available for immediate lease-up. This means that, as soon as our most vulnerable Veterans engage with us, we can show them 3 or 4 units that they can move into. This makes the offer of housing real and tangible and helps create and sustain momentum."

—District of Columbia Department of Human Services and Interagency Council on Homelessness

"By creating a by-name list, D.C. has been able to fully humanize the Veterans we serve. This has ensured that each Veteran has a partner agency designated as their teammate in ending their homelessness. Our case conferencing sessions [have also] transformed from being full of stories of how our system had failed our most vulnerable Veterans, to creative brainstorming sessions, solutions oriented approaches, and celebrations of great success."

—Housing Counseling Services

"The by name list has helped us to know every Veteran experiencing homelessness and allowed us to coordinate to figure out the best strategies to get them back in to housing quickly. It also keeps people from falling through the cracks. It has changed the dynamic in our community to where providers now reach out to those in need for services rather than them having to reach out to providers."

— Friendship Place

"Due to the 25 Cities campaign, our GPD providers have moved from solo artists to "One Band One Sound." Every Veteran is supported in choosing the housing plan they believe will make them most successful. There has been a decrease in length of stay from over two years to an average of 120 days. More Veterans are being exited to permanent housing than ever before. We are setting our standards high with the passion to make sure each and every Veteran receives the best service possible with housing their primary goal. By including our GPDs in the big picture, we have been able serve more Veterans in a stable and secure environment that believes in the mission to end Veteran homelessness."

— U.S. Vets



"We began working very close with all our community partners as Veterans NOW began. We learned how to solve problems that delayed Veterans from getting housed. We [also] began doing 'Meet and Lease' events with the Housing Authority in order to help Veterans obtain housing in days. The 'Meet and Lease' events are like a one-stop shop to expedite the entire process, to reduce the time from housing match to move-in to days instead of months."

—Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center

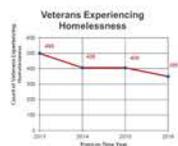
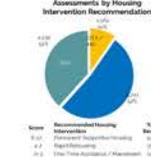
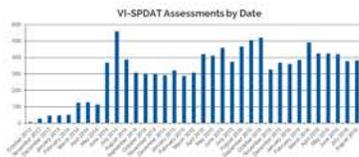
## OUTCOMES

**1,777**

Veterans housed from August 2013 to July 2016

**1,956**

Chronically homeless individuals (including 1,035 Veterans) housed from August 2013 to July 2016



## INFRASTRUCTURE

To accomplish these goals, Washington DC has:

- Utilized a Common Assessment across all provider (VI-SPDAT version 2)
- Trained **723 staff** from **101 agencies** on the process
- Adopted a HIPAA-compliant Release of Information, enabling the VA and healthcare providers to input assessment information directly into the system for three years
- Developed a Universal Registry to prioritize individuals based on vulnerability, for housing frequently/inrequently as it arises within HMIS
- Implemented a Housing Navigator and Case Conferencing Process to move people from assessment to housing and ensure no one slips through any technological or systemic "cracks"
- Successfully advocated for additional funding to match unmet need
- Built a website ([www.CoordinatedEntry.com](http://www.CoordinatedEntry.com)) to store all documents

Successful Funding Advocacy include:

- \$5.3 million in Rapid Rehousing assistance for non-Veterans (FY14: \$400,000, FY15: \$1.1M, FY16: \$1.5M, and FY17: \$2.3M)
- \$4.7 million in Permanent Supportive Housing for Veterans (FY14)
- \$9.3 million in outreach (FY16: \$500,000 and FY16-18: \$9M (\$3M per year allocation)

## PROGRESS ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

### CRITERIA

- Criteria 1 is met. All Veterans Experiencing Homelessness are identified in Washington, DC.
- Criteria 2 is met. Washington DC provides shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it.
- Criteria 3 is met. Washington DC uses service-intensive transitional housing (STH) in limited instances, and as a short-term housing to Permanent Housing.
- Criteria 4 is met. Washington DC has the capacity to assist Veterans to move swiftly into permanent housing.
- Criteria 5 is met. Washington DC has the resources, plans, and system capacity, should any Veteran become homeless or at-risk of homelessness in the future.

### BENCHMARKS

- Benchmark A is in progress. Washington, DC is working to effectively ended chronic homelessness among Veterans.
- Benchmark B is met. The average time from date of identification to date of move-in is below 90 days in Washington DC.
- Benchmark C is in progress. Washington, DC is working to increase the number of Veterans exiting homelessness and moving into permanent housing, compared to the number of newly identified homeless Veterans.
- Benchmark D is met. The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness who enter STH in Washington DC is less than the number of newly identified homeless Veterans.

## SUCCESS STORIES

"One female Veteran, in and out of hotels, the hospital and GPDs through the years was identified as a long-term stayer in one of our GPD programs. The VA VASH case manager, GPD case manager and SSVF provide met a couple of times to support her in picking housing and moving into her own place. It took all three programs working together to help the female Veteran achieve her goal of having her own place to call home."

—U.S. Vets

"In working with an 81 year old Veteran who had experienced over a decade of homelessness, we were able to put our full Veteran homelessness prevention system to the test! The Veteran was able to move in to a GPD program, get enrolled with HCS SSVF, be awarded a DHS subsidy, and gain great support from his VA Medical Social Worker. Within 90 days of asking for help, a decade long stint of homelessness had ended. When asked what he would say to another Veteran needing assistance, he stated "I'd send them to [our Eligibility Specialists]. They'll get them right!"

—Housing Counseling Services

"In working with Veterans who had experienced long-term homelessness at the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) shelter, we learned the power of calm persistence and relationship building. Our Eligibility Specialists worked with one gentleman who had been in the CCNV shelter for 3 years. Our Eligibility Specialists visited with him more than twenty times before an application for SSVF services was even completed. Communicating the same housing message and connecting the Veteran to various support services allowed the him to fully trust our staff and allowed him to direct the pace of his housing journey. After conducting outreach services for six months and consistently meeting with the Veteran, he trusted our Eligibility Specialists enough to leave the shelter and successfully move into permanent housing."

—Housing Counseling Services

"The DHS Outreach Team was able to meet up with one of our highest scoring Veterans on 5/23/2016, to complete his DHS Local Application and transport him to view units. This Veteran lived outside because he does not like going into shelter. He selected a first floor unit as his new residence, with a bus stop on the same block, subway station 4 blocks up the street and grocery store 6 blocks up the street.) He signed his lease, received his keys and moved into his new residence on 6/14/2016, three weeks from being matched to housing."

— District of Columbia Department of Human Services and Interagency Council on

