Bridge Housing and Program Co-Enrollment
One Element of a Community Plan to End Homelessness among Veterans

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Bridge Housing and Its Role Within Homeless Services

• To end homelessness, we must support evidence-based models of care. This is a moral and economic imperative.

➢ This has led VA to move from a “Treatment First” model to a “Housing First” model of care.

• Resource deployment has reflected this change (HUD-VASH and SSVF) and is being extended to GPD as part of its transformation.
Homeless Services continues to evolve. Success is gauged by progress towards federal benchmarks.

- Bridge Housing supports Housing First by providing safe, temporary housing while awaiting permanent housing placement through HUD-VASH and SSVF.
- Available services should reflect community needs, so mix of resources needs to change as the community changes.
- Collaboration essential to identify Veteran needs and then ensure that every Veteran is quickly matched to the right level of care.
Bridge Housing Definition

• What is Bridge Housing?
  – Bridge Housing is when a Veteran has been admitted to transitional housing (GPD) or HCHV Contract Residential Services (CRS) and this admission is being used as a short-term stay when a Veteran has been offered and has accepted a permanent housing intervention (e.g., SSVF, HUD-VASH, Housing Coalition/CoC) but, is not able to immediately enter the permanent housing.

  – Though length of stay in Bridge Housing can and should be individually determined based on Veteran need, in general it is not expected to exceed 90 days.
Developing Bridge Housing

- Have a conversation with your GPD/HCHV CRS programs, VA Homeless Programs and local community (i.e. Continuum of Care) to determine need and opportunity to develop Bridge Housing
  - Ultimately it is the GPD/HCHV CRS funded organization’s decision to pursue
  - Does your community have coordinated assessment/entry process, and if so, how will GPD/HCHV CRS be integrated?
  - What role will GPD/HCHV CRS play in the short stay Individual Service Plan?
Developing Bridge Housing

- **Lower Barriers/ Short term Expectations.**
  - Given the short time-frame of Bridge Housing, there should be an expectation that Veterans in this ‘track’ will not complete many some parts of the GPD/HCHV CRS program.
  - Goals in the Individual Service Plan should be very short-term with the focus on the move to permanent housing, rather than the completion of treatment goals.
  - Many Veterans in this track may also have unresolved mental health or substance abuse issues that might keep them from participating in a traditional GPD/HCHV CRS program.
    - Use of Low Demand approaches focusing on safety may be considered
    - Assisting Veterans access services as needed/requested by the Veteran (available of a menu of services)
Developing Bridge Housing

- Examine any policies and procedures that need to be added/adapted as a result of adding this new service.
- What type of training may need to be provided to staff?
  - As with any change, it will be important to have staff “buy-in”.
- Communication with Veterans who are currently in the program about the program change.
Developing Bridge Housing-GPD

- Keep in mind the entire GPD project cannot be converted to Bridge Housing
  - Would be major departure from original grant application, can be an additional service offered by the grantee
  - Up to 50% of transitional housing beds at any given time can be used for Bridge Housing
  - The Bridge Housing beds can be flexible and do not have to be used for Bridge Housing only
- A written change of scope by the GPD funded should be submitted by the organization to the GPD National Program Office
  - The GPD Office must approve any change to the original application. Program changes include: services provided, staffing, admission and/or discharge criteria, etc.
Moving from Bridge Housing to HUD-VASH

- Veterans who are participating in a HCHV CRS or GPD Bridge Housing track have been accepted into HUD-VASH and are being provided a safe place while going through the lease up process in HUD-VASH.
- HCHV CRS and GPD providers may assist Veterans who are going to be rapidly moving into HUD-VASH to gather the necessary documents and may also help with the housing search and initial lease up process.
- Veterans who are participating in a Bridge Housing track should still receive case management and support from the service provided but it should be coordinated with the HUD-VASH team.
  - Who is going to assist the Veteran with completing their housing authority application?
  - Who is going to assist with the housing search process?
  - How will the HCHV CRS/GPD provider and the HUD-VASH team communicate with each other? With the Veteran?
Role of VA Staff

• Coordinate services for Veterans
• Ensure that there is a warm hand-off between programs and the Veteran
• Continuity of care
  – Veteran goals
  – Treatment plan
• Assisting Veteran with housing application process
• Assisting Veteran with housing search
• Supporting Veteran with the transition from HCHV CRS/GPD setting to their HUD-VASH apartment
Coordinating with the Veteran

• Including the Veteran in the warm hand-off
  – Transition of lead service provider
  – Does the Veteran know who to contact

• Reviewing and updating goals
  – Short-term
  – Long-term
  – Treatment plan
Where Does Bridge Housing Fit?
The Advance of Homeless “Tech”

• We know what works!
Use of Housing First Approach

We use Housing First because it is evidence-based

Info:


• [http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housing_first](http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housing_first)
Works Within a Community Plan

Coordinated entry & assessment
  – No wrong door
  – Rapid, efficient engagement

• Creation of a Master List
• Regular case conferences to collectively review and plan interventions
• Matching available resources to demand
The Goal is to End Homelessness!

• Focus on how to use resources to best meet community needs.

• All program elements incorporated in overall strategy.

• Examples of developing community plans: www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/ssvf_university/community_coordination_and_plans
Community Plan Goals

• Success is measured by meeting federal benchmarks found at www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-for-ending-veteran-homelessness

• The goal is to create a well-coordinated and efficient community system that assures homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring and no Veteran is forced to live on the street.
Bridge Housing

• How much is needed?
• Who makes referrals to bridge housing?
• How does it meet current gaps in service needs?

Bridge Housing is a program that needs to be integrated into an overall strategy.
Available Resources

How long does it take between intake and placement? During this period:

• Access to safe, temporary shelter
• Condition and location of existing units
• Number of additional beds required to meet demand
SSVF Co-Enrolling with GPD or HCHV

- Bridge Housing provides safe, temporary housing while SSVF provides primary case management, including housing search.

- Even without formal Bridge Housing designation, GPD/HCHV and SSVF encouraged to co-enroll if within 30 days of program admission. Though LOS determined based on Veteran need, in general it is not expected to exceed 90 days.

- Bridge Housing generally for individual Veterans. Families will likely get temporary housing through SSVF (up to 45 days).

- Regular communication to coordinate service delivery.
Continuous Review of Needs

Ongoing Engagement

• Providers
• CoC
• VA
• Policy makers
• Technical assistance
Thank You!