U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Program

Housing Toolkit

Get the Ending Veteran Homelessness Housing Toolkit and more resources at *va.gov/homeless/get_involved.asp.*

Fall 2015

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Housing Partners and Community Providers Are Important To the Cause

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) issued a plan to end Veteran homelessness. The strategy for reaching the goal was included in "Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness." This unprecedented effort aims tomake sure Veterans are able to obtain permanent housing and that Veterans at risk of homelessness remain housed.

Today, community by community, we have seen significant progress. Mayors of several cities announced they are on track to end Veteran homelessness. Other local leaders across the United States are poised to make similar announcements.

These successes result from close collaboration among federal, state and community partners and from significant investments to help meet this important national priority.

Yet there is more work to do to address the many causes of homelessness among Veterans—particularly the lack of affordable housing. For many Americans, including Veterans, low-cost housing is out of reach.[1] One 2015 study found that just 25 percent of families eligible for housing assistance receive it. [2]

How Housing Partners Can Help

That's where you come in. Housing partners play an essential role in working with VA, city governments, mayors and community-based nonprofits on targeted efforts to end Veteran homelessness. VA in turn provides services that help Veterans secure housing and achieve greater independence, including health care, housing solutions, job training and other wraparound services.

All of this work is guided by the Housing First approach, which rapidly houses the homeless and provides services to help these Veterans maintain houisng.

Here are a few ways you can help:

- **Make a commitment.** Set aside a certain number of affordable housing units each year for Veterans who are homeless. Agree to house Veterans both eligible and ineligible for Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers and supportive services.
- **Work with VA.** Connect with VA to identify Veterans for available housing.
- **Take action.** Review your tenancy practices and identify ways you can lease units to Veterans who are homeless, including by reducing "preconditions" and other barriers to housing Veterans with challenged rental histories.
- **Lower the threshold.** Consider renting at the Fair Market Rent rate to Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Reduce fees.** Waive security deposits for a certain number of Veterans who are homeless or partner with community nonprofit organizations to make up the difference.
- **Make a pledge.** Agree to house a certain number of Veterans ineligible for VA housing vouchers and supportive services.
- **Spread the word.** Encourage others to get involved by talking about your success in helping Veterans exit homelessness at conferences and meetings and among your networks and peers. Serve as a conduit for VA information about ending homelessness among Veterans.

How Housing Providers Can Benefit

Landlords who house Veterans exiting homelessness may get tenants with an array of support services from VA and other organizations to enhance housing success, including:

- Case management support system for Veterans to lean on during stressful or difficult times
- Wraparound care, including health services, medical insurance and other VA benefits

Take Action

VA cannot end homelessness among Veterans alone. We need everyone—affordable housing providers, landlords and real estate agents, philanthropic groups and others—to help make sure every Veteran has safe, stable housing.

Ending Veteran homelessness can be done, one home at a time. You can help.

- Learn more about VA's homeless programs by visiting *va.gov/homeless.*
- If you know a Veteran who is homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, refer him or her to a local VA Medical Center at *va.gov/directory,* where homeless coordinators are ready to help. Veterans and their families can also call **1-877-4AID-VET** to get connected to VA services.
- Download and share this toolkit and other information available at *va.gov/homeless/get_involved.asp.*

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[1] "The State of Homelessness in America, 2015," National Alliance to End Homelessness, *http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/458837a0513453bec1_56m6zdnl3.pdf* (accessed July 14, 2015).

[2] "Out of Reach 2015," National Low Income Housing Coalition, *http://nlihc.org/oor* (accessed July 14, 2015).

Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home At a Time In Focus: 25 Cities

VA and other federal partners working to end Veteran homelessness are focused on these 25 priority cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Fresno (CA), Honolulu, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland (OR), Riverside (CA), San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Tampa, Tucson and Washington, DC.

VA Programs at a Glance

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has numerous programs and services that provide comprehensive, individualized care to promote housing stability among Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Advancing VA's Housing First Approach

The VA initiatives described below further the Housing First strategy, the primary goal of which is to put an end to homelessness among Veterans. The premise of this approach is to permanently house Veterans quickly and then provide services that help them maintain housing, including mental health care, substance use treatment and job training. Research shows that Housing First is the most effective and economical way to reduce homelessness.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)

This collaborative program between HUD and VA combines HUD housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help Veterans who are homeless and their families find and sustain permanent housing.

How It Works

Through public housing authorities, HUD provides rental assistance vouchers for privately owned housing to Veterans who are eligible for VA health care services and are experiencing homelessness. VA case managers may connect these Veterans with support services such as health care, mental health treatment and substance use counseling to help them in their recovery process and with their ability to maintain housing in the community. Among VA homeless continuum of care programs, HUD-VASH enrolls the largest number and largest percentage of Veterans who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. Since 2008, a total of 79,000 vouchers have been awarded, according to HUD.

More Information:

- *va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp*
- *va.gov/homeless/hud-vash_eligibility.asp*
- *portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash*

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

For very low-income Veterans, SSVF provides case management and supportive services to prevent the imminent loss of a Veteran's home or identify a new, more suitable housing situation for the individual and his or her family; or to rapidly re-house Veterans and their families who are homeless and might remain homeless but for this assistance.

How It Works: *Through referrals and direct outreach, nonprofit agencies and community cooperatives use SSVF funding to quickly house Veterans and their families who are homeless and keep others from slipping into homelessness by providing time-limited supportive services that promote housing stability. Case*

Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home At a Time In Focus: New Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Rules Mean Faster Services for Veterans

New rules in place since May 2014 help VA and its housing partners act faster—within a day or so, versus weeks under the old rules—to get more Veterans into HCHV bridge housing and on their way to a permanent home.

For one Veteran in Albany, New York, this flexibility was critical. The 48-year-old was healthy and working, but was evicted from his apartment because he didn't earn enough to afford his rent.

Operating under the new rules, the VA team in Albany secured the Veteran bridge housing through HCHV until more affordable housing could be found. Soon enough, a unit became available and after a brief stop in the HCHV program, the Veteran moved into a new home and is currently thriving in his career.

VA estimates this rule change has expanded HCHV services to roughly 2,300 additional Veterans per year, allowing VA to provide a total of 18,000 Veterans with safe, stable housing through the program.

Get the full story at VA's VAntage Point blog, *www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/20435/seizing-opportunities-to-serve-more-veterans-who-are-homeless.*

management includes help securing VA and other benefits such as educational aid and financial planning.

More Information: *va.gov/homeless/SSVF.asp*

Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
Under this program, each VA Medical Center (VAMC) has received funding to hire new vocational development specialists who are serving as Community Employment Coordinators (CECs) to boost employment outcomes for Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

How It Works: CECs work out of each VAMC to forge partnerships and create relationships with local community organizations and employers who have the ability to hire Veterans. Although these individuals are working hard to create partnerships and share the benefits of hiring Veterans, employers can also proactively reach out to their local CEC by visiting the CEC contact information page at *va.gov/HOMELESS/cec-contacts.asp.* CECs work with and pre-screen Veterans who offer a variety of skills and come from all education levels, and are backed by VA's entire network of services and providers.

More Information:

- *va.gov/HOMELESS/HVCES.asp*
- *va.gov/HOMELESS/cec-contacts.asp*

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)
This program offers outreach, case management and residential treatment services to help Veterans transition from living on the street or in institutions to stable housing situations (see sidebar at left).

How It Works: Operating out of many VAMCs nationwide, clinically trained providers locate Veterans who are living in precarious situations and connect them with VA bridge housing, health care and case management services that promote safe, stable living arrangements.

More Information:

- *va.gov/HOMELESS/hchv.asp*

Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program
State, local and tribal governments and nonprofits receive capital grants and per diem payments to develop and operate transitional housing and/or service centers for Veterans who are homeless.

How It Works: *VA funds an estimated 600 agencies that provide over 14,500 beds for eligible Veterans. Grantees work closely with an assigned liaison from the local VAMC. The VA GPD liaison monitors the services the grantees offer to Veterans and provides direct assistance to them. Grantees also collaborate with community-based organizations to connect Veterans with*

employment, housing and additional social services to promote housing stability. The maximum stay in this housing is up to 24 months, with the goal of moving Veterans into permanent housing.

More Information: *va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp*

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) Program
This program encompasses residential care for sheltered and unsheltered Veterans with multiple challenges, illnesses or rehabilitative care needs. DCHV provides a structured setting to foster Veterans' independence and mutual support.

How It Works: Either on VAMC grounds or in the community, participating Veterans receive interdisciplinary clinical care that includes medical, psychiatric, vocational, educational or social services. There are more than 2,400 beds available through 47 sites.

More Information: *va.gov/homeless/dchv.asp*

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) and Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV) Programs
VJO aims to prevent homelessness by helping justice-involved Veterans who have mental health or substance use issues access needed VA clinical services. HCRV specialists work with Veterans to ease their transition from prison back into the community.

How the Programs Work: VJO specialists provide direct outreach, assessment and case management for Veterans in local courts and jails and help them navigate the justice system. Every VAMC has at least one VJO specialist.

HCRV specialists meet with incarcerated Veterans before they're released and assist them in planning for reintegration into the community by accessing VA and community services as well as housing and employment opportunities.

More Information:

- *VJO: va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp*
- *HCRV: va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp*

Frequently Asked Questions

Use the information below to learn more about U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and community-based efforts to end homelessness among Veterans.

What is VA's Ending Veteran Homelessness initiative?
In 2010, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) issued a plan to end Veteran homelessness. The strategy for reaching the goal was included in "Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness." This unprecedented effort aims tomake sure Veterans are able to obtain permanent housing and that Veterans at risk of homelessness remain housed.

What is VA's role in the initiative to end homelessness among Veterans?
VA operates the largest integrated network of homeless assistance programs in the country. In the early phase of the initiative, VA worked to better understand the extent of the problem of Veteran homelessness, build a network of partnerships to reach more Veterans in need and expand the capacity to deliver targeted assistance. Along the way, VA assessed its progress, improved services, implemented best practices and worked to sustain successes.

VA continues to focus on proactively reaching Veterans in need of assistance and connecting homeless and at-risk Veterans with housing solutions, health care, community employment services and other required supports. VA's reach is extended through collaborations with federal, state and local agencies; employers; housing providers; faith-based and community nonprofits; and other partners who are essential to expanding affordable housing and employment options for Veterans exiting homelessness.

What programs exist to house Veterans who are homeless and prevent Veteran homelessness?
VA alone and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) operates a variety of specialized programs to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans, including:

- HUD-VA Supportive Housing, known as HUD-VASH
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
- Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)
- Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD)
- Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)
- Veterans Justice Outreach/Health Care for Reentry Veterans (VJO/HCRV)

How does VA define "ending" Veteran homelessness?
An end to homelessness among Veterans means that no Veteran is sleeping on our streets and that every Veteran who falls into homelessness is quickly able to access permanent and sustainable housing.

What is homelessness?

A Veteran is homeless if he or she …

- Lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence
- Uses as a primary nighttime residence a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Resides in a public or privately operated shelter or institution
- Resides in a place not designed for use as a regular accommodation for a human being

A Veteran is chronically homeless if he or she …

- Has been continuously homeless for one year or more, or
- Had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years and
- Has a disabling condition, such as a diagnosable substance use disorder, a serious mental illness, a developmental disability or a chronic physical illness or disability or the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions

What is Housing First?

Housing First is the most effective, economical approach to reducing homelessness among Veterans. The Housing First approach aims to provide housing to Veterans without "housing readiness" requirements, other than case management and compliance with standard lease agreements. Housing is not preconditioned on Veterans becoming clean and sober or resolving mental health issues, although it is usually accompanied by supportive services.[3]

VA uses Housing First because it works. Research shows[4] that Housing First reduces costs for temporary shelters, emergency room visits and hospitalizations and ensures that limited dollars benefit the maximum number of Veterans and their families.

By decreasing the frequency and duration of homelessness, Housing First means that more Veterans have a safe, stable place to call home.

How does VA reach and serve Veterans who are homeless?

VA works with communities to coordinate assessment and entry systems to ensure that there is no wrong door for Veterans seeking help.

VA outreach staff and community partners strive to identify Veterans who are homeless and connect them to the local VA or other available services. Veterans can also call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans—**1-877-4AID-VET**—for referrals to VA homeless services. VAMC personnel also use a homeless screener to assess the housing stability of the Veterans they serve, triage their needs and refer them to appropriate services.

Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home At a Time In Focus: Housing First Case Study

Moore Place Permanent Support Housing Evaluation in Charlotte, NC

Challenge: Establish whether tenants with long histories of homelessness and chronic conditions and disabilities can succeed under a Housing First program.

Fix: Open 85 permanent and supportive housing units to these individuals and assess outcomes.

Results: High housing stability after one year dramatically lowers hospitalizations and emergency room visits and dramatically fewer arrests and jail stays.

Source: Latricia Boone, "CHHS Study Demonstrates Housing Program Helps Save Lives, Money," Inside UNC Charlotte, March 24, 2014, *http://inside.uncc.edu/news-features/2014-03-24/chhs-study-demonstrates-housing-program-helps-save-lives-money#sthash.aG0ZW6v9.dpuf (accessed July 13, 2015).*

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[3] Ana Stefancic, "Fidelity to Housing First," Pathways to Housing presentation to the National Alliance to End Homelessness 2014, *http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/270b19536a84bfd736_enm6bfht4.pdf* (accessed July 13, 2015).

[4] Latricia Boone, "CHHS Study Demonstrates Housing Program Helps Save Lives, Money," Inside UNC Charlotte, March 24, 2014, *http://inside.uncc.edu/news-features/2014-03-24/chhs-study-demonstrates-housing-program-helps-save-lives-money#sthash.aG0ZW6v9.dpuf* (accessed July 13, 2015).

What are some obstacles to and solutions for ending homelessness among Veterans?

Lack of affordable housing.

- Housing developers and private landlords can use low-income housing tax credits to build and expand access to low-cost housing for Veterans, particularly in areas with extremely high costs of living and low affordable housing stock.
- More landlords can accept HUD-VASH vouchers or participate with SSVF grantees to house Veterans.
- Community resources can be used to provide down payment or move-in cost assistance and supplies to Veterans ready to move in to new housing.

Unemployment or underemployment among Veterans.

- Employers are needed to hire job-ready Veterans exiting homelessness.
- Housing developers can situate more Veteran housing near transportation and jobs.

Ineligibility for VA services.

- Communities can devise strategies for serving Veterans who are ineligible for VA services by connecting them to community-based housing, employment, health care and other resources.

How does VA determine community progress toward ending and preventing homelessness among Veterans?

VA has specific criteria to help communities determine if they've achieved the goal. VA assesses communities' progress by seeing if they are meeting the following criteria:

- Identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness in the community.
- Developed the capacity to provide shelter to any Veteran not yet permanently housed.
- Assembled the resources, a plan and a timeline to provide quick access to permanent housing to any Veteran not yet permanently housed.
- Have resources, plans and systems in place for continued efforts to identify at-risk Veterans or Veterans who fall into homelessness and to prevent and end their homelessness quickly.
- Have resources and plans to continue housing stability among Veterans.

What else can communities to do to end and prevent homelessness among Veterans?

- Share data with VA to better identify Veterans who are homeless or at risk and connect them to services.
- Engage in or increase joint outreach with VA's homeless program personnel to share information and strategies.
- Identify Veterans who are ineligible for VA health care and services, and have a comprehensive plan to serve these individuals.
- Locate community-based transitional beds where Veterans with vouchers can safely stay until their permanent HUD-VASH placements are available.
- Work with funders, businesses and organizations in your community to help Veterans pay deposits on, stock and furnish their new homes and apartments.

Where can you learn more?

Go to *va.gov/homeless* to find out how to help in the fight against Veteran homelessness.

Housing First Fact Sheet

The Situation

An outreach worker met an Army Veteran at a downtown bus stop, which was serving as his makeshift shelter. Diagnosed with mental illness years ago, the Veteran had been in and out of the local hospital, jail and temporary shelter, but always ended up back on the street.

The outreach worker asked the Veteran what type of help he could use. The Veteran said it would be nice to have a warm place to shower, fix a meal and sleep.

The local shelter was crowded and there was no privacy. The outreach worker assisted the Veteran with the housing voucher application process that day and was soon helping the Veteran move into a furnished apartment nearby. The Veteran's assigned care team stays in close touch to make sure he is receiving the appropriate services and benefits needed to remain stably housed.

Housing *First*, With Supportive Services

In the past, this Veteran may not have been seen as housing ready. His clinical history and criminal justice involvement might have led to a treatment-first approach, with counseling and a gradual move to permanent housing.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) takes a different approach with Housing First by quickly finding permanent housing for Veterans who are homeless and providing wraparound supportive services to help them maintain housing stability.

The successful completion of a mental health or substance use treatment program is not a requirement to access housing. Housing First instead rapidly engages with Veterans living on the streets—or in cars, in shelters or other unstable situations—and assists them with finding the housing of their choice, even if they struggle with alcohol or drug use, and providing them with supportive services.

Newly housed Veterans receive case management and individualized supportive services to sustain their housing and build their lives. Many services are provided in Veterans' homes and in their communities by multidisciplinary teams.

Why Housing First?

VA uses this approach because it puts an end to the Veteran's homelessness. Studies show that Housing First saves thousands of dollars, mainly by reducing the need for expensive temporary shelters and costly emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Housing First also decreases the frequency and duration of homelessness. Pioneered in the early 1990s, research shows that Housing First is the most effective and economical way to reduce homelessness among Veterans.

Teaming Up to Promote Success

Housing First uses a team case management model. The team may include a social worker, nurse, peer support specialist, substance use counselor, job developer and housing specialist to locate units for Veterans. The team individualizes and coordinates the right services for the Veteran so that he or she gets the precise assistance that will lead to a permanent home in the community.

More Information

Learn more by visiting *va.gov/homeless.*

Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Fact Sheet

The Situation

A Veteran had fallen on hard times, and for 10 years lived under a bridge alongside a river. He didn't want to be homeless, but the complexity of his circumstance made him reluctant to respond to offers of support.

A VA outreach worker eventually earned his trust and connected him to the HUD-VASH program and a voucher to rent an apartment. He was also assigned a HUD-VASH case manager to help him access VA services needed to maintain housing stability.

HUD-VASH Provides a New Start

For this Veteran—and thousands of others in similar situations—the HUD-VASH program is more than a rental subsidy. Each voucher recipient receives ongoing support from VA case managers for issues such as recovering from substance use, connecting with community support, finding a reliable source of income, dealing with barriers stemming from a legal situation or a poor credit history and maintaining permanent housing.

HUD-VASH staff members help the Veteran find safe, affordable housing and then make regular home visits to ensure that the Veteran is managing and benefiting from the services he or she might need to remain stably housed.

HUD-VASH Promotes Safe, Stable Housing

HUD-VASH is a joint HUD-VA initiative to move Veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing. Based on the area homeless population and past performance, public housing authorities receive rental assistance vouchers to provide to Veterans who are eligible for VA health care and are experiencing long-term homelessness.

VA also provides case management services to help Veterans stay housed. HUD-VASH case managers work with voucher recipients to connect them with health care, mental health counseling or substance use treatment, as needed and as requested. They also work with Veterans to establish a steady source of income so they can sustain housing in the community.

There is no wrong door to accessing HUD-VASH. Veterans are referred to the program from VA medical services; VA temporary housing or community shelters; or housing, counseling and social service agencies.

HUD-VASH Advances VA's Housing First Approach

The HUD-VASH program uses the Housing First strategy to end Veteran homelessness. The premise of this approach is to permanently house Veterans quickly and then provide services that help them maintain housing. For instance, a Veteran's eligibility for a voucher doesn't depend on length of sobriety or completion of a VA treatment program. Research shows that Housing First is a proven, cost-effective way to end homelessness.

More Information

- va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp
- *portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash*

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Fact Sheet

The Situation

An Army Veteran arrives at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) clinic for a routine medical checkup. After the doctor assesses her housing situation, he discovers that the Veteran is at risk of losing her apartment.

She can no longer rely on the informal side work she once had and is not eligible for unemployment benefits. With two small children at home, going out to look for a permanent job is difficult because she lacks reliable child care.

VA's SSVF Program Can Help

The SSVF program could prevent this Veteran from having to choose between caring for her children and looking for work so she can pay rent. Her doctor can contact the local SSVF case manager to determine whether the Veteran qualifies for the assistance she needs to stay in her home.

VA's community-based partners use SSVF to create safe, stable housing for very low-income Veterans who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless or to rapidly re-house those who are homeless.

SSVF Services Promote Safe, Stable Housing

Through referrals and direct outreach, nonprofits and community cooperatives that receive SSVF funding assist Veterans and their families with maintaining or obtaining safe, stable housing.

Funding is used in these main ways: to prevent the loss of a Veteran's existing home or identify a new, more suitable housing situation for the individual and his or her family; or to rapidly re-house Veterans and their families who are literally homeless and who might remain homeless but for SSVF assistance.

Everyone served receives case management, including assistance with obtaining and coordinating VA and other benefits—from educational aid to financial planning—to help Veterans and their loved ones reach their full potential.

SSVF funds can be used with local employment assistance or community supports to permanently house Veterans and their families and prevent thousands more from sliding into homelessness. SSVF can also fund time-limited payments to landlords and other third parties for services that promote housing stability.

SSVF Advances VA's Housing First Approach

By rapidly housing Veterans or keeping Veterans in their homes, SSVF furthers VA's Housing First strategy, the primary goal of which is to put an end to homelessness.

The premise of this approach is that when Veterans have a place to call home, they're best able to benefit from the services they've earned and need to succeed—whether it's mental health care, substance use treatment or vocational training. Research shows that Housing First is a proven, cost-effective way to end homelessness.

More Information

Learn more about SSVF at *va.gov/homeless/SSVF.asp.*

Myths vs. Realities About Housing Veterans

Ending homelessness among Veterans requires that we combat misinformation about the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program and other initiatives to provide Veterans with safe, stable housing. Here are the realities to dispel the myths.[5]

Myth 1: VA programs require Veterans to be sober or "ready" for housing.

Reality:

This is largely not the case. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working to end Veteran homelessness using a Housing First approach. That means admission to HUD-VASH and other VA programs does not require Veterans to demonstrate that they are clean and sober for any length of time or that they are otherwise "ready" for housing. Veterans are required to follow public housing authority and landlord rules, which may have parameters for drug or alcohol use. Veterans must also agree to work with assigned case managers, who help Veterans follow tenant rules and connect them with services to promote success in housing.

Myth 2: Veterans must go through treatment prior to entering HUD-VASH.

Reality:

Treatment completion is NOT a requirement to participate in HUD-VASH. Veterans must only be stable enough to participate in HUD-VASH (i.e., they are not a threat to themselves or others). VA case managers will discuss treatment options, which can assist in sustaining housing. Veterans drive their case management goals and elect to participate only in the treatment they feel would be helpful.

Myth 3: Veterans must have income to participate in HUD-VASH.

Reality:

Veterans do not need any income to qualify for HUD-VASH—zero income is allowable under the program rules. Localities may set minimum income requirements but this is not a required HUD-VASH practice. There is a cap on how much income a Veteran can earn and still qualify. Maintaining housing long term without income is difficult, and so VA encourages case managers to assist Veterans in identifying employment opportunities and other sources of income.

Myth 4: Any criminal history bars Veterans from participating in HUD-VASH.

Reality:

Lifetime sex offender registration status is the ONLY criminal background status barring Veterans' eligibility for HUD-VASH. (Offenses that require registration vary from state to state.) Some housing authorities do a preliminary check of a national sex offender database *(nsopw.gov)* and, if the Veteran is not on it, issue a provisional voucher so the Veteran can start his or her housing search.[6]

Myth 5: Veterans must have a birth certificate and Social Security card to complete the identification requirements for the housing application.

Reality:

Veterans must only submit a valid federal form listing a Social Security number. Some public housing authorities accept a VA-issued picture ID along with a DD-214, the form issued to many Veterans upon discharge from the military, which includes a Social Security number.

Myth 6: Veterans in transitional housing for more than 90 days are no longer eligible for HUD-VASH.

Reality:

Although Veterans who are in transitional housing for longer than 90 days are no longer considered "chronically homeless," as defined by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, they are still eligible for HUD-VASH if they meet the criteria: high vulnerability and need for case management services to sustain permanent housing. VA case managers are encouraged to get Veterans moving toward permanent housing early in any transitional stay, particularly those Veterans most at risk, vulnerable and in need of HUD-VASH.

Myth 7: Veterans whose HUD-VASH voucher was revoked cannot reapply for another voucher for one year.

Reality:

This is not true. HUD-VASH does not have a rule specifying the time between losing a voucher and reapplication. Veterans will be reconsidered on a case-by-case basis and the circumstances discussed among the Veteran, case manager and the housing authority. Factors may make immediate reapplication to the program appropriate.

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[5] "Mythbusters: Using HUD-VASH to House Homeless Veterans," Oct. 11, 2011, *http://100khomes.org/blog/mythbusters-using-hud-vash-to-house-homeless-veterans* (accessed July 14, 2015) and Federal Register notice, Docket No. FR-5596-N-01, Vol. 77, No. 57, March 23, 2012, *http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-03-23/pdf/2012-7081.pdf.*

[6] Becky Kanis, Erin Healy, Chris Ko and Christine Marge, "Top 9 Things You Can Do Right Now from 100K Homes," *http://usich.gov/population/veterans/veterans_homelessness_in_focus/top_9_things_you_can_do_right_now_to_move_homeless_veterans_into_housing_m/* (accessed July 15, 2015).

Resources for Housing and Community Partners

VA's Ending Veteran Homelessness website, *va.gov/homeless*
Get information about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) initiative to end Veteran homelessness and learn how to get involved. The website includes downloadable, sharable information; facts and news releases; videos; and information specifically for landlords.

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, *usich.gov/opening_doors*
The strategy presented to Congress in 2010 to end and prevent homelessness in America.

VA Medical Center Locator, *va.gov/directory/guide*
All VA Medical Centers are staffed by homelessness coordinators who are an excellent resource for learning more about how to help homeless Veterans find housing, receive information about applications for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and discover how VA's homelessness programs and services assist Veterans.

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

Stand Downs, *va.gov/homeless/events.asp*
Stand Downs are one- to three-day events organized by local VAs, government agencies and community nonprofits to connect Veterans in need with supplies and services that lead to permanent housing. Veterans who are homeless receive food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing solutions, employment assistance and substance abuse treatment. Chances are one is happening in a community near you.

VA on Social Media, *va.gov/opa/socialmedia.asp*
Keep the issue of ending Veteran homelessness front and center by following VA on social media and spreading the word about ending Veteran homelessness. Every post, tweet, blog or discussion about the issue builds to promote change. Discuss ending Veteran homelessness among your friends, families and coworkers and urge them to get involved.

National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans (NCHAV), *va.gov/HOMELESS/NationalCenter.asp*
The center promotes recovery-oriented care for Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by developing and disseminating evidence-based policies, programs and best practices. The Center is active in research, model development and education.

HUD-VASH Voucher Information, *http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash*
Information about the HUD-VASH program.

HUD-VASH Best Practices, *http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=VASH-BestPractices.pdf*
This 2002 paper by HUD has a number of innovative ideas and best practices from around the country for serving Veterans exiting homelessness.

Rural Housing Fact Sheet, *va.gov/homeless/docs/Rural_Housing_FactSheet.pdf*
Significant numbers of Veterans are homeless in rural areas. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing Service operates several programs that could help secure housing for rural Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This fact sheet describes various rural housing programs offered to Veterans.

Transportation Fact Sheet, *va.gov/homeless/docs/Transportation_Programs_FactSheet.pdf*
Transportation services are critical to housing stability for Veterans. Transportation links Veterans to steady work, regular health care and support services vital to success in housing. This sheet describes programs and resources that may assist in the development of a comprehensive plan to get Veterans where they need to go so they can remain in safe, stable housing.

The State of Homelessness in America, 2015, National Alliance to End Homelessness, *http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/458837a0513453bec1_56m6zdnl3.pdf*
This annual report reviews trends and data related to national and state homelessness.

Move-In Essentials Checklist

Newly housed Veterans are more successful long term when they have all the new or gently used items they need to make their house a home. Housing and community partners may use this sample checklist to help develop a move-in essential program for Veterans exiting homelessness:

Living Room/Dining Items

- [ ] Kitchen table
- [ ] Chairs
- [ ] Sofa
- [ ] Side tables
- [ ] TV stand
- [ ] Gift card to a home store

Bedroom Items (full- or queen-size linens)

- [ ] Sheet set
- [ ] Comforter
- [ ] Blanket
- [ ] Pillows
- [ ] Mattress
- [ ] Mattress pad
- [ ] Laundry basket
- [ ] Gift card to a home store

Kitchen Items

- [ ] Pot and skillet with lids
- [ ] Dishware *(4-8 place settings)*
- [ ] Drinkware *(8 glasses)*
- [ ] Flatware *(4-8 place settings)*
- [ ] Serving utensil set
- [ ] Measuring cups and spoons
- [ ] Oven pan (9x13) and/or cookie sheet
- [ ] Dishcloths
- [ ] Kitchen trash can and bags
- [ ] Gift card to a home store

Bath Items

- [ ] Bath towels *(4)*
- [ ] Hand towels *(4)*
- [ ] Wash cloths *(4)*
- [ ] Shower curtain, liner and rings
- [ ] Soap dish and toothbrush holder
- [ ] Bathroom rug set
- [ ] Gift card to a home store

Social Media Content

Use the content below to start a conversation on your blog site and social media accounts about the need for more partners to join in the fight to end Veteran homelessness, one home at a time.

Blog Post

Join Us In Ending Homelessness Among Veterans, One Home at a Time

No one who served this country should be without a place to call home—period. That's why our organization is lending our support to help end Veteran homelessness.

Our nation has set an ambitious goal to end Veteran homelessness. The goal is within reach, but we cannot let up until every Veteran has access to permanent housing.

Led by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), tremendous progress is being made. Community by community, localities across the country are on the path to ending homelessness among Veterans. These successes show that it's possible to end homelessness among Veterans and among all Americans.

But there is more work to do to ensure that every Veteran is stably housed or on the pathway to permanent housing. Every partner can do something to help end homelessness among Veterans. Join us by taking action in these ways:

- **Connect Veterans to VA.** Veterans who are homeless need to know help is available. If you encounter Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, encourage them to call or visit their local VA Medical Center, where homeless coordinators are ready to help. Veterans and their families can also get access to VA services by calling **1-877-4AID-VET** (1-877-424-3838).

- **Make a commitment.** Set aside a certain number of housing units each year for Veterans who are homeless. Agree to house Veterans both eligible and ineligible for Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers and supportive services.

- **Help with Veterans' security deposits and move-in costs.** Join with community partners that raise funds to help Veterans secure first and last months' rent and security deposits so they can exit homelessness as quickly as possible.

- **Participate in a Stand Down.** Stand Downs connect Veterans in need with supplies and services that lead to permanent housing. Chances are one is happening in your community. Consider contacting your area organizer (at *va.gov/homeless/events.asp*) to find out how to volunteer.

- **Work with the VA Voluntary Services office at your local VA Medical Center.** Join organizations in your area that are providing security deposits, furniture, cookware and other move-in essentials for Veterans exiting homelessness. Check with VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) at *www.volunteer.va.gov* to see if there are ways to help.

- **Work with VA to recruit and hire Veterans exiting homelessness.** Veterans have diverse experience, knowledge and abilities that are applicable to many different fields and levels of employment within an organization. Contact your local community employment coordinator at *va.gov/HOMELESS/cec-contacts.asp* to find out if job-ready Veterans exiting homelessness in your area have skills that fit your job openings.

- **Start a conversation.** Keep the issue of ending Veteran homelessness front and center. Every post, tweet or discussion about the issue builds to promote change. Discuss ending Veteran homelessness among your friends, families and coworkers and urge them to get involved. Share your many stories of success.

- **Get involved in other ways.** Explore *va.gov/homeless* to learn about VA programs for Veterans who are homeless. You can also visit VA's "Get Involved" page to download toolkits and information and share it with others.

No Veteran who wore the uniform should be without a safe, stable home. Together, let's end homelessness among Veterans, once and for all.

Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter Posts

Facebook, LinkedIn

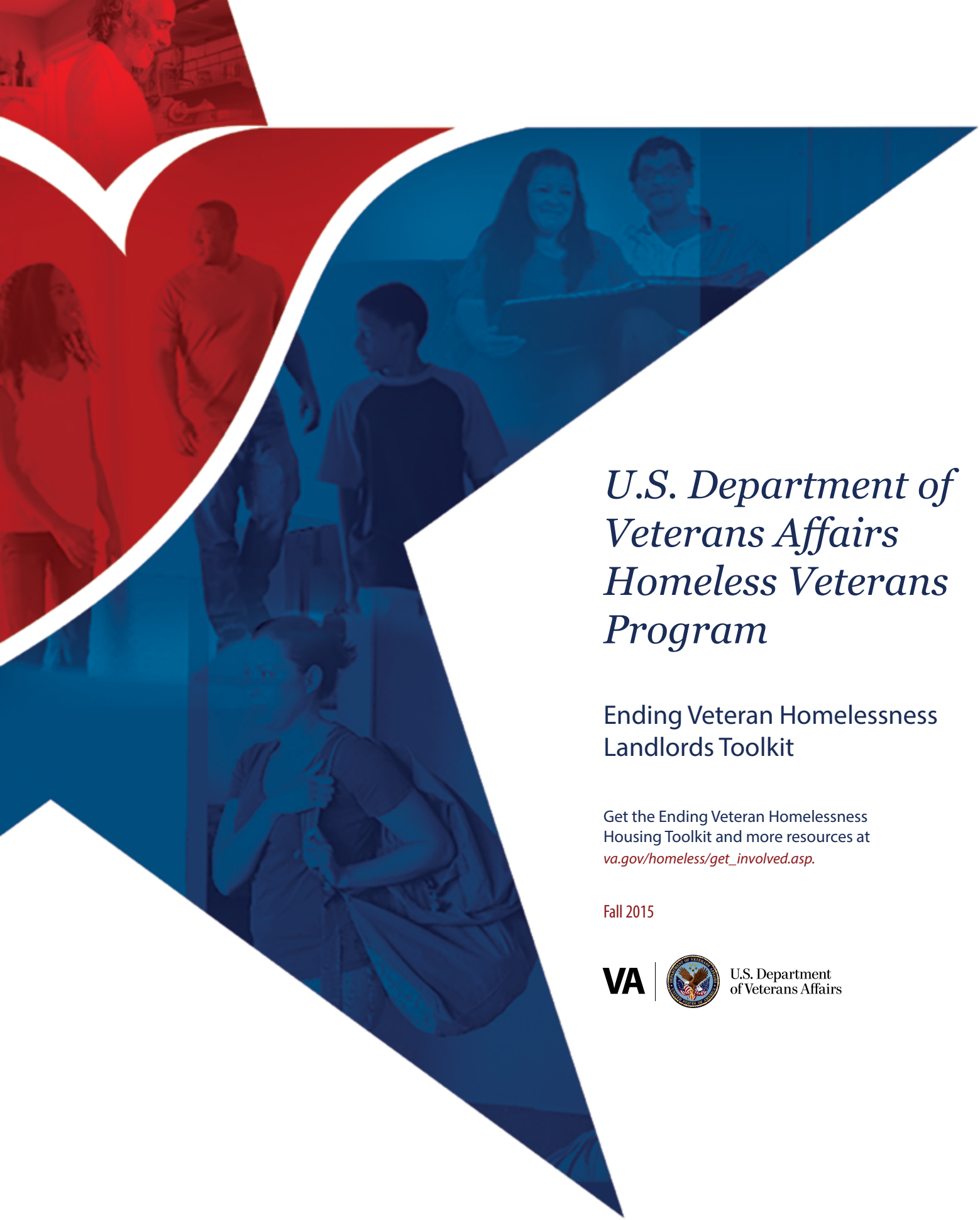
Post 1: No one who served this country should be without a place to call home—period. Join [insert your Facebook/LinkedIn address], the White House, VA and others to help #EndVetshomelessness. Participate in a Stand Down, start a conversation, connect Veterans to VA and get involved. Lend your voice and let's end homelessness among our nation's Veterans.

Post 2: Let's end Veteran homelessness, one home at a time. Housing and community partners can #EndVetshomelessness with more affordable housing, more landlord involvement and more move-in help to Veterans. Join [insert your Facebook/LinkedIn address] and VA today.

Twitter

Post 1: No one who served this country should be without a home. Join [insert your Twitter address] and @DeptVetAffairs to #EndVetshomelessness.

Post 2: Housing and community partners can #EndVetshomelessness, one home at a time. Join [insert your Twitter address] and @DeptVetAffairs today.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Program

Ending Veteran Homelessness Landlords Toolkit

Get the Ending Veteran Homelessness Housing Toolkit and more resources at *va.gov/homeless/get_involved.asp.*

Fall 2015

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Landlords Are Important to the Cause

Our nation has set an ambitious goal to end Veteran homelessness. Landlords across the nation hold the key to affordable housing for millions of Americans, including Veterans. According to rental statistics kept by the Rental Protection Agency, there are nearly 22.5 million landlords in the United States.[7] At the same time, thousands of Veterans are without safe, stable housing.

As a landlord, honor those who have served and become a part of the solution to end Veteran homelessness. By working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and nonprofit organizations to accept Veteran tenants holding Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers and putting affordable housing on the market, you can provide safe, stable housing for our nation's heroes.

Let's End Veteran Homelessness, One Home at a Time

VA and its federal partners have programs dedicated to ending Veteran homelessness. Landlords can make them stronger by offering rentals to Veterans using these programs. The result may be more stable rental income, reduced vacancy times due to quick connections with renters and access to support staff who can address many tenancy issues.

How Landlords Can Help

Here are a few ways that landlords can help end homelessness among Veterans:

- **Make a commitment.** Set aside a certain number of affordable housing units each year for Veterans who are homeless. Agree to house Veterans both eligible and ineligible for HUD-VASH vouchers and supportive services.
- **Work with VA.** Connect with VA to identify Veterans for available housing.
- **Take action.** Review your tenancy practices and identify ways you can lease units to Veterans who are homeless, including by reducing "preconditions" and other barriers to housing Veterans with challenged rental histories.
- **Lower the threshold.** Consider renting units at the Fair Market Rent rate to Veterans who are homeless.
- **Reduce fees.** Waive security deposits for a certain number of Veterans who are homeless or partner with community nonprofit organizations to make up the difference.
- **Make a pledge.** Agree to house a certain number of Veterans ineligible for VA housing vouchers and supportive services.
- **Spread the word.** Encourage others to get involved by talking about your success in helping Veterans exit homelessness at conferences and meetings and among your networks and peers. Serve as a conduit for VA information about ending homelessness among Veterans.

How Landlords May Benefit

Landlords who rent to Veterans exiting homelessness may get tenants with an array of support services from VA and other programs to enhance housing success and lower the risk of default, including:

- Case management support system for Veterans to lean on during stressful or difficult times
- Wraparound care, including health services, medical insurance and other VA benefits

Take Action

Use the resources in this toolkit to learn more and visit *va.gov/homeless* to get involved.

[7] Rental Statistics (Rental Clock), Rental Protection Agency, *www.rentalprotectionagency.com/rental-statistics.php* (accessed July 21, 2015).

Landlord Fact Sheet

The Situation

Community by community, the nation is making progress toward ending Veteran homelessness. Even so, with Veterans accounting for about 10 percent of all adults facing homelessness,[8] the need is great for more safe, stable housing. Landlords willing to rent to Veterans exiting homelessness or at risk of homelessness are critical.

Learn About Key VA Programs

- *Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) –* This program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) case management and clinical services.[9] It is a collaborative effort among HUD, VA and local public housing authorities. HUD-VASH tenants are distinct from HCV tenants in that they have access to ongoing services from a VA case manager.

- *Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) –* VA's community-based partners use SSVF to create safe, stable housing for very low-income Veterans who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless or to rapidly re-house those who are homeless. Funding is used in these main ways: to prevent the loss of a Veteran's existing home or identify a new, more suitable housing situation for the individual and his or her family; or to rapidly re-house Veterans and their families who are literally homeless and who might remain homeless but for SSVF assistance. SSVF can fund time-limited payments to landlords and other third parties for services that promote housing stability.

Get Involved

If you have a rental property, consider participating in HUD-VASH, a program that has helped tens of thousands of Veterans and their families overcome the challenges of homelessness and lead independent lives. To become a HUD-VASH landlord, you need units that can pass a HUD Housing Quality Standards[10] inspection and a willingness to rent to a Veteran voucher holder. To participate with SSVF, reach out to a local-area grantee to see if you can work together. Beyond these basic participation parameters, you should work with your local public housing authority or community-based homeless providers to receive more guidance on how to get involved, list units for rent and comply with other rules of the road.

Realize the Potential Benefits for Landlords

Participation in HUD-VASH [11]

Benefits to participating in HUD-VASH may include:

- **Reliable income.** Monthly rental payments through the local housing authority and Fair Market Rent on your property.
- **A say in security deposits.** Set your own amount based on local standards.
- **Annual property recertification.** Third-party inspections help maintain quality.
- **Benefit of VA services.** Ongoing case management provides a safety net for tenants and may lower default risks.

Participation in SSVF[12]

Benefits to participating in SSVF may include:

- **Landlord recruitment and retention.** Programs may actively recruit landlords who are willing to rent to program participants and work to retain their participation.
- **Tailored support.** Staff may provide landlords with customized, responsive support.
- **Income and other assistance.** Veterans may receive additional support through SSVF to facilitate rental success, including additional security deposits and/or last month's rent for high-barrier clients, dispute mediation, lease co-signing or damage repair assistance.

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[8] "Private Landlords: Partnering to End Homelessness," Joining Forces Fact Sheet, undated, *http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/SUM_Private_Landlord_Engagement_FINAL.pdf* (accessed July 14, 2015).

[9] Federal Register notice, Docket No. FR-5596-N-01, Vol. 77, No. 57, March 23, 2012, *http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-03-23/pdf/2012-7081.pdf.*

[10] Housing Quality Standards (HQS) – Frequently Asked Questions, HUD Fact Sheet, undated, *https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_9143.pdf* (accessed July 14, 2015).

[11] "HUD-VASH Program: Honoring Our Nation's Veterans One Home at a Time," VA Palo Alto Health Care Systems Brochure, undated, *http://www.paloalto.va.gov/docs/HUDVASH_Landlord_Brochure.pdf.*

[12] Homeless Veterans: Landlord Supports, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, undated, *http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/practice_areas_and_resources/practice_areas/landlord_supports* (accessed July 21, 2015).

Collaboration with VA

Other benefits to working with VA may include:

- **Reduced vacancies and turnover.** VA can quickly refer tenants to fill vacancies, reducing the expense of advertising units and the time spent screening and interviewing tenants. Referrals of stable tenants at the outset can reduce turnover long term.
- **Reduced costs.** Advertising, screening reports, unit turnover and tenant evictions are extremely expensive to landlords. VA services may help reduce or avoid these costs.
- **Reduced involvement in disputes.** Complaints by other tenants can be communicated to program staff, who can intervene and resolve problems.
- **A chance to honor those who served.** Landlords working to house Veterans in need are part of the solution to ending homelessness among Veterans and are giving back to those who sacrificed to keep our country safe and free.

Take Action

- Connect with your local VA at *va.gov/directory.*
- Contact your local public housing authority at *http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/localoffices.*
- Locate an SSVF grantee at *va.gov/HOMELESS/SSVF.asp.*
- Learn more at *va.gov/homeless.*

A Step-By-Step Guide For Landlords

Ending homelessness among Veterans relies on landlord partners like you to provide our nation's Veterans with greater access to affordable housing opportunities. Here are some ways you can help end Veteran homelessness, one home at a time.

Get the Facts

Landlords should be aware of the following key programs available to house Veterans and see if there are opportunities to get involved:

- **HUD-VASH** – Veterans may rent housing with the help of a HUD-VASH voucher. This subsidy provides Veterans with a combination of Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance and case management and clinical services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- **HCV** – Veterans may also rent housing with a stand-alone HCV. These vouchers let very low-income families lease affordable, privately owned rental housing.[13] Contact your local public housing authority for more information.
- **SSVF** – Veterans may gain access to housing assistance through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. For very low-income Veterans, the program provides case management and supportive services to prevent the imminent loss of a Veteran's home or identify a new, more suitable housing situation for the individual and his or her family; or to rapidly re-house Veterans and their families who are homeless and might remain homeless but for this assistance.

Consider Becoming a HUD-VASH Landlord[14]

The HUD-VASH program can provide landlords with guaranteed rental income, discretion on the amount of security deposits, annual third-party property recertification and the confidence of knowing that Veteran tenants are backed by VA's comprehensive support services that promote housing success. Here's a step-by-step guide for landlords:

1. Contact your local public housing authority to fill out the required paperwork, secure a spot on a list of approved HUD-VASH properties and find out more about the HUD-VASH program.
2. Schedule a HUD Housing Quality Standards inspection to make sure your property is up to code.
3. Find eligible Veterans by promoting your property as one that accepts HUD-VASH vouchers or by contacting a VA homeless coordinator at the nearest VA Medical Center *(va.gov/directory).*
4. Screen tenants and have them approved by the housing authority.
5. Have your tenant review and sign your lease. Initial lease terms are generally 12 months and cannot be broken without the owner's approval.

Take Action

Learn more about the resources available to help Veterans exit homelessness and how you can help by visiting VA's ending Veteran homelessness website at *va.gov/homeless.* You can also contact VA staff at your nearby VA Medical Center *(va.gov/directory)* to find out the needs of the local homeless Veteran population and how you can get involved.

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[13] Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet, HUD, undated, *http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet* (accessed July 14, 2015).

[14] The information here is based on common steps typically required by public housing authorities. Consult your local public housing authority for specific requirements.

Get Ready for Your Housing Inspection

Addressing important maintenance issues can help your property pass a housing inspection the first time around.
(Consult your local public housing authority for specific requirements.)

Make sure your unit has:

- [ ] Working smoke alarm(s)
- [ ] Proper ventilation in bathrooms *(window or fan)*
- [ ] Connected utilities
- [ ] A functional stove and refrigerator
- [ ] A window in every bedroom that can stay open without props
- [ ] A working water heater discharge line and pop/relief valves
- [ ] Handrails for steps
- [ ] Secure railings for porches and balconies

Make sure your unit does not have:

- [ ] Broken or missing locks
- [ ] Broken or missing windows
- [ ] Bugs or vermin
- [ ] Tripping hazards on the floor
- [ ] Exposed electrical wiring
- [ ] Chipping or peeling paint inside or outside

How Landlords Can Help: Resources for Ending Veteran Homelessness

VA's Ending Veteran Homelessness website, *va.gov/homeless*
Get information about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) initiative to end Veteran homelessness and learn how to get involved. The website includes downloadable, sharable information; facts and news releases; videos; and information specifically for landlords.

VA Medical Center Locator, *va.gov/directory/guide*
All VA Medical Centers are staffed by homelessness coordinators who are an excellent resource for learning more about how you can help homeless Veterans in need of housing, receive information about U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and discover how VA's homelessness programs and services not only help Veterans, but also can benefit you as a landlord.

Stand Downs, *www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp*
Stand Downs are one- to three-day events organized by local VAs, government agencies and community nonprofits to connect Veterans in need with supplies and services that lead to permanent housing. Veterans who are homeless receive food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing solutions, employment assistance and substance abuse treatment. Chances are one is happening in your community.

HUD-VASH Voucher Information, *http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash*
Information from HUD about the HUD-VASH voucher program.

HUD-VASH Best Practices, *http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=VASH-BestPractices.pdf*
This 2002 paper by HUD has a number of innovative ideas and best practices from around the country for serving Veterans exiting homelessness.

Mythbusters: Using HUD-VASH to House Homeless Veterans, Oct. 25, 2011, *http://100khomes.org/blog/mythbusters-using-hud-vash-to-house-homeless-veterans*
A blog with information about HUD-VASH.

Landlords – Frequently Asked Questions, *achsng.com/FAQlandlords.asp*
Frequently asked questions compiled by the Allegheny County (PA) Housing Authority about becoming a Housing Choice Voucher landlord. Contact your local public housing authority for specific rules in your area.

Innovative Program Profiles

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) housing and community partners pick up where VA leaves off by providing innovative solutions to end homelessness among Veterans and all Americans. Check out the ways these providers and landlords are working together to find new and creative ways to house those in need.

Landlord Liaison Program, *landlordliaisonproject.org*
The Landlord Liaison Project, a public-private partnership funded by the city of Seattle, is encouraging landlords and property managers to open up housing to those who are homeless. Participating landlords use alternative screening rules for applicants and receive certain "risk-reduction" benefits, including funds for damage or lost rent.[15,16]

Landlords also receive assistance in filling vacant units, access to a 24-hour helpline and free training and resources. Tenants are supported by a variety of services from local agencies to help them succeed. Families are visited monthly by a case manager to assess progress and resolve issues.[17]

New Lease, *newleasehousing.org*
New Lease, a Boston nonprofit, is an innovative collaboration among housing developers, social service providers and government to prioritize housing for homeless families. Housing owners commit to setting aside vacant units for families in shelters and motels. Supportive services are standardized to make sure newly housed families succeed.[18]

New Lease provides support for landlords who are committed to the project by making continuous training sessions available and streamlining the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) application process.

Member property owners are able to customize their participation in ways that best fit their circumstances, including by determining which developments will be opted in to the program and the rate at which tenants will be acquired for those developments.

As a result of New Lease's system, referrals of eligible families begin as quickly as four days after the tenant is fully onboarded. New Lease has a 100 percent housing retention rate to date for its 140 families.[19]

HomeStart, *homestart.org/about*
The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance launched HomeStart as a pilot project to test the idea that homeless individuals could be successful in finding and retaining affordable, permanent housing if they received the proper housing assistance and expertise.

HomeStart supports tenants in maintaining housing by means of flexible rent assistance, government-funded rent subsidies and employment assistance and by providing a network of other support services to help homeless individuals achieve stability and thrive.[20]

HomeStart works closely with its member housing providers to develop a mutually beneficial relationship and to fill units with approved, supported tenants. HomeStart also administers the Vacancy Clearinghouse, which matches tenants with mandatory set-asides for the homeless in new housing developments. In its 21 years, HomeStart has housed 7,241 tenants with a 96 percent retention rate.[21]

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[15] "Landlord Liaison Project," United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, undated, *http://usich.gov/index.php/usich_resources/solutions/explore/landlord_liaison_project* (accessed July 21, 2015).

[16] Alexa Vaughn, "Program shields landlords willing to rent to the homeless," The Seattle Times, Nov. 24, 2014, *http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/program-shields-landlords-willing-to-rent-to-the-homeless/* (accessed July 21, 2015).

[17] "Landlords," Landlord Liaison Project, undated, *http://landlordliaisonproject.org/landlords.html* (accessed July 21, 2015).

[18] "History," New Lease for Homeless Families, undated, *http://www.newleasehousing.org/about-us/history* (accessed July 21, 2015).

[19] "Property Owners: Join Us," New Lease for Homeless Families, undated, *http://www.newleasehousing.org/property-owners-join-us* (accessed July 21, 2015).

[20] "HomeStart," United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, undated, *http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/homestart* (accessed July 21, 2015).

[21] "Our Story," HomeStart, *http://homestart.org/about* (accessed July 21, 2015).