



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Tomah VA Medical Center

# News Release

Public Affairs Office  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Tomah VA Medical Center encourages landlords to advocate for Veterans

**TOMAH, WI** — In response to the ongoing affordable housing crisis, the Tomah VA Medical Center encourages local landlords to partner with its homeless Veterans program — which provides rental subsidies and landlord support for approximately 120 Veterans and their families in La Crosse, Owen, Tomah, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids, and surrounding areas.

The program is currently facing challenges due to increases in rent and growth in inflation rates and emboldens landlords to consider opening their homes up to a Veteran family.

“It’s important that communities nationwide work together to keep our Veterans in safe and stable homes,” said Desiree Parker, Health Care for Homeless Veterans Social Work Coordinator. Community efforts, collaborations and coalitions work tirelessly to address homelessness. The Tomah VA offers supportive case management through HUD-VASH, a vital component in supporting Veteran success and community integration.

Fair market rental rates have increased by approximately \$20-\$50 each year, requiring housing authorities to have payment standards equal to 100-110% of fair market rates in order to ensure low-income housing program participants have available rental opportunities. There is a greater need for affordable housing which is becoming scarce due to increasing housing costs and a higher general cost of living. Locally, as the income threshold has risen year after year, more and more people are finding themselves with a median income within the poverty guidelines. And that has created an essential need for accessible and affordable housing so that individuals and families can meet their basic needs.

There are benefits of renting to homeless Veterans:

- VA provides services to Veterans placed in permanent housing to support their housing stability. Reliable income from subsidies where a portion of the rent is automatically paid on time to landlords by a public housing authority or a VA grantee.
- Support from VA case management to connect landlords and Veterans with help they may need.
- Making a positive impact in changing a Veteran's life.

Since 2014, Tomah VA Medical Center has successfully housed over 250 Veterans within the community through permanent VA housing programs.

To support, revitalize and streamline VA's commitment to end Veteran homelessness and ensure at-risk Veterans are protected from this housing crisis, VA has established a [nationwide goal to house 38,000 homeless Veterans](#) during calendar year 2022.

Property owners interested in helping Veterans can reach out to [Desiree.Parker@va.gov](mailto:Desiree.Parker@va.gov) for more information.

The Tomah VA HUD-VASH Program serve Veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the Tomah and Wausau areas, as well as justice involved Veterans through the Veterans Justice Program.

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