

Surge to End Veteran Homelessness - Winter 2016

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) remains committed to the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. Homelessness among Veterans continues to decline, with unprecedented investments and partnerships with federal, state, local and non-governmental partners leading to a 47% decrease in the number of homeless Veterans since 2010. We believe that with focused effort, we can continue the steep decline in the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness. There is a short window of opportunity, and we seek to engage all of our federal, state and local partners to rally around the goal to end Veteran homelessness. The 2017 Point-in-Time counts will take place at the end of January, 2017. We propose the following targeted strategies for use by communities to accelerate their progress in ending Veteran homelessness.

- 1. Permanent Housing:** Our goal is to increase the number of Veterans moving from the streets into permanent housing over the next 60 days. Specific strategies include:
 - Fully utilize all HUD-VASH vouchers through enhanced VAMC and PHA processes.
 - Ensure that project-based housing units for Veterans are filled.
 - Increase the rate of permanent housing placements from VA's HCHV Contract Residential Services and GPD programs.
 - Maximize the rate of rapid re-housing in the SSVF Program.
- 2. The Right Services at the Right Time:** Our goal is to take unsheltered and chronically homeless Veterans off the streets, and ensure that those who do enter the homeless response systems in our communities need that level of service. Specific strategies include:
 - Ensure that Veterans are appropriately targeted for HUD-VASH.
 - Prioritizing unsheltered Veterans for immediate placement into safe housing.
 - Target VA's residential services only for those Veterans who are literally homeless or at imminent risk.
- 3. Maximize VA Resources:** VA is committed to ensuring staffing and bed resources are available to support this effort. These strategies include:
 - Ramp up VA staff to support this effort.
 - Ensure full utilization of residential program beds.
- 4. Community Engagement:** Partnerships are critical to continued success. Strategies include:
 - Engage landlords and developers in targeting units to Veterans.
 - Engage Community Veteran Engagement Boards.
 - Participate in Operation Reveille, taking Veterans off the streets immediately.
 - Plan and Participate in PIT counts to ensure that Veterans are accurately identified and housed rapidly upon identification.

Every community across the United States can end Veteran homelessness. It will require dedicated efforts from VA along with Federal, state, and community partners to achieve that goal. We believe that our collective efforts above can help accelerate the pace, and we welcome guidance, support, and participation from our partners in this surge effort.