

# SSVF: Community Plan Summary

**Date Completed/Revised:** 9/14/2015

<b>Continuum of Care Name:</b>	Maine Balance of State CoC	<b>CoC Number:</b>	ME-500
<b>CoC Representative:</b>	Cindy Namer	<b>Title:</b>	Director of Homeless Initiatives
<b>Phone/Email:</b> (207) 626-4632 <a href="mailto:cnamer@mainehousing.org">cnamer@mainehousing.org</a>			
<b>Person Completing this Summary:</b>	Carolyn Cutting	<b>Title:</b>	Veterans Inc. Regional Manager
<b>Phone/Email:</b> (207) 240-2566 <a href="mailto:carolyncutting@veteransinc.org">carolyncutting@veteransinc.org</a>			

**1. Primary Planning and Coordination Group:** Identify the primary group responsible for planning and coordinating efforts to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in the CoC. List the principal members of this group and their affiliation.

<b>Primary Group Name:</b>	Maine Homeless Veteran Coordination Team		
<b>Principal Members</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>		
Phil Allen	Preble Street Veteran Housing Services (SSVF Grantee)		
Jennifer Trowbridge	Washington Hancock Community Agency (SSVF Grantee)		
Carolyn Cutting	Veterans Inc. (SSVF Grantee)		
Carol Kulesza	HCHV Coordinator, VA Maine HCS		
Clif Graves	Maine State Housing Authority		
Bill Burney	U.S. Dept of HUD		
Susan Whittington	VA Grant Per Diem Liaison		
Eliza Quill	Bread of Life JTG Shelter Case Manager		
Michael Tilton	ESM, Inc.		
Alley Smith	Veterans Inc. Case Manager		
Ray Michaud	Veterans Inc. Site Coordinator		
Amber Barrett	Case Manager for Washington and Aroostook Counties		
Robbie Jones	Preble Street Veteran Housing Services, Bangor Supervisor		
Michael Merrill	Program Manager, Veteran Services Volunteers of America		

**2. Ongoing Review and Coordination:** Briefly describe how often (e.g., monthly) the above group meets to review progress and coordinate efforts. Include a summary of what information is reviewed during these meetings.

Although the SSVF Grantees meet regularly, the Maine Homeless Veteran Coordination Team was formed in Q2 and plans to meet quarterly, with immediate efforts to expand membership and to ultimately meet monthly. Also, the team will work with Maine Balance of State CoC Leadership to possibly develop a Veterans Sub-Committee at the Maine CoC. Our first goal will be defining functional zero in the community, focusing on Augusta, Bangor, Waterville, Saco and Biddeford.

The SSVF Grantees continue to hold regular conference calls (at least three a month) to be sure that all three grantees are coordinating on strategies to house more veterans and families. Information reviewed includes updates on housing authority veteran preference, rental inventories, voucher program availabilities to include HUD-Vash, sharing information regarding community agencies that have funding to assist with veteran needs, VA webinar and other training opportunities.

Besides reviewing progress toward overall goals this team continues to work to develop a current list of homeless veterans, so community partners can better target and coordinate efforts. We have made strides in this area, as outlined in our strengths update (Section 4). Discussions have begun in earnest about a coordinated release of information form, to support this endeavor. Meeting notes are shared with the group, so discussion continues and there is careful documentation of progress for future reporting. Defining functional zero is a top priority in Q4, at this point the goal is to decrease the number of days a Veteran is homeless from 90 to now 70 days.

**3. Annual Demand, Goals, and Strategies for Achieving and Sustaining Functional Zero:** Identify the estimated number of Veterans who are homeless annually and the community/CoC goals and strategies for achieving a functional end to Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 (overall community/CoC goals, not just SSVF grantees). If one or more of the goals and strategies below have not yet been established for the community, leave blank and identify the date by which they will be established. See the *Ending Homelessness Among Veterans Overview* for additional guidance.

**3A. Estimated Annual Number of Homeless Veterans:** Identify the total unduplicated number of Veterans expected to be homeless in 2015 using data from the SSVF Edition of the Veteran Homelessness Gaps Analysis Tool FY15Q3 or data assumptions that have already been adopted by the community, such as the *VA CoC Gaps Analysis Tool (GAT)*.

<b>Estimated Annual Total:</b>	282
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**3B. Community/CoC Goals:** Identify your community's/CoC's key goals and targets.

**A. Permanent Housing Placement Target & SSVF Rapid Re-Housing Placement Target:**  
 Complete and attach *SSVF Edition of Veteran Homelessness Gaps Analysis Tool FY15Q3 OR an CoC Gaps Analysis Tool – Strategy 4 (SSVF) Worksheet*

<b>B. Length of Time Homeless Goal (max or average days):</b>	70	days
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<b>C. January 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Goal</b>	<b>Sheltered</b>	<b>Unsheltered</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of Veterans expected to be counted as homeless during the CoC's January 2016 PIT count:	70	7	77
Of number above, how many will also be counted as chronically homeless:	21	4	25

**3C. Implementation Strategies: What strategies are being used to achieve and sustain functional zero?**

	Yes/No/Under Dev
A. Has your community identified every Veteran who is homeless right now by name?	Under Dev
B. Does every Veteran who is homeless now have a Housing Plan and access to safe (and low barrier as needed) shelter and/or permanent housing?	Under Dev
C. Is every Veteran who becomes homeless rapidly engaged and offered shelter and/or housing that meets their needs?	Yes
If so, is this true no matter where they are initially engaged in your community or what shelter or unsheltered location they may be in?	Under Dev
D. Are sufficient SSVF resources allocated to ensure there are no RRH gaps or turn-always?	Yes
E. Are you using SSVF to rapidly re-house Veterans who are waiting on VASH or other PSH assistance if VASH/PSH is not available immediately or in near future?	Yes

**4. Other Strengths and Challenges:** Briefly describe any additional strengths and/or challenges relevant to your achieving VA and local goals.

Strengths continue to be the dedication of most of the Maine Homeless Veteran Coordination Team members (certain members of the VA Maine Homeless Team have not been actively involved). There has also been open communication with the VA Homeless Coordinator Carol Kulesza. The MHVC Team grows stronger each quarter, however due to the expansive geographical area of the Maine CoC, in-person meetings continue to be limited. A key action step since the initial summary report in May was coordination with Maine State Housing to develop a report that provided the specific number of Veterans in each of the 40 shelters in Maine that report to HMIS; that was the first step in creating a list of every Veteran who is currently homeless. Since July, the three SSVF Grantees, in coordination with the VA Homeless Coordinator, have divided jurisdiction of all 40 shelters, with the goal to outreach them individually, which has begun. Plans for coordinated consent among SSVF Grantees are also under development. Identifying the housing authorities who have a Veteran preference has helped, as housing applications to those communities have increased. The MHVC Team will continue to strive toward expanding that preference in other housing authorities, but this is a challenge. More coordination and earlier referrals are helping Veterans receive services sooner, therefore the goal for the length of time a Veteran is homeless has been decreased to 70 days, but certain parts of the state have an increased need and continued strategizing with other SSVF Grantees is paramount to decreasing the time a veteran is homeless. Defining functional zero for the balance of state is ongoing, but we are getting closer in determining what that means in cities, such as Augusta, Bangor, Biddeford, Waterville, Lewiston and Saco. The unsheltered count for Veterans continues to be difficult to pinpoint, due to the rural landscape. When unsheltered Veterans move indoors they are generally prevention cases, as there are limited shelters. This is an ongoing challenge and with the weather turning colder soon, outreach efforts must increase. Another challenge has been the shortage of HUD-Vash Case Managers, there are vouchers but not enough Case Managers to serve the veterans who need them.



**2. Ongoing Review and Coordination:** Briefly describe how often (e.g., monthly) the above group meets to review progress and coordinate efforts. Include a summary of what information is reviewed during these meetings.

This group has met once in the last quarter and we are looking to meet at least two times in each of the coming quarters. During our first meeting we discussed the VA and CoC gap analysis. We discussed:

- Strategies to identify the literally homeless veterans that remain within the Portland CoC.
- We were able to identify 18 literally homeless veterans that are in our community.
- Our list was compiled from data Oxford Street Shelter provided and names not included in that data from Preble Street's VHS outreach worker.
- Of the 18 veterans identified, specific housing plans have emerged for all of them.

Our community has worked to establish a draft definition of functional zero as: every veteran that is on the street or in a shelter will be rapidly engaged within 7 days of homelessness, a permanent housing plan will be established within 14 days and a veteran will access permanent housing within 60 days.

**3. Annual Demand, Goals, and Strategies for Achieving and Sustaining Functional Zero:** Identify the estimated number of Veterans who are homeless annually and the community/CoC goals and strategies for achieving a functional end to Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 (overall community/CoC goals, not just SSVF grantees). If one or more of the goals and strategies below have not yet been established for the community, leave blank and identify the date by which they will be established. See the *Ending Homelessness Among Veterans Overview* for additional guidance.

**3A. Estimated Annual Number of Homeless Veterans:** Identify the total unduplicated number of Veterans expected to be homeless in 2015 using data from the SSVF Edition of the Veteran Homelessness Gaps Analysis Tool FY15Q3 or data assumptions that have already been adopted by the community, such as the *VA CoC Gaps Analysis Tool (GAT)*.

Estimated Annual Total:	99
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**3B. Community/CoC Goals:** Identify your community's/CoC's key goals and targets.

**A. Permanent Housing Placement Target & SSVF Rapid Re-Housing Placement Target:**  
 Complete and attach *SSVF Edition of Veteran Homelessness Gaps Analysis Tool FY15Q3 OR an CoC Gaps Analysis Tool – Strategy 4 (SSVF) Worksheet*

<b>B. Length of Time Homeless Goal (max or average days):</b>	60	days
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<b>C. January 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Goal</b>	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Number of Veterans expected to be counted as homeless during the CoC's January 2016 PIT count:	12	5	17
Of number above, how many will also be counted as chronically homeless:	3	1	4

**3C. Implementation Strategies: What strategies are being used to achieve and sustain functional zero?**

	Yes/No/Under Dev
A. Has your community identified every Veteran who is homeless right now by name?	Yes
Is this list updated regularly?	Yes
Is this list reviewed at least bi-weekly by key community partners to ensure Veterans have a permanent housing plan and those plans are achieved?	Yes
B. Does every Veteran who is homeless now have a Housing Plan and access to safe (and low barrier as needed) shelter and/or permanent housing?	Yes
C. Is every Veteran who becomes homeless rapidly engaged and offered shelter and/or housing that meets their needs?	Yes
If so, is this true no matter where they are initially engaged in your community or what shelter or unsheltered location they may be in?	Yes
D. Are sufficient SSVF resources allocated to ensure there are no RRH gaps or turn-aways?	Yes
E. Are you using SSVF to rapidly re-house Veterans who are waiting on VASH or other PSH assistance if VASH/PSH is not available immediately or in near future?	Yes

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**4. Other Strengths and Challenges:** Briefly describe any additional strengths and/or challenges relevant to your achieving VA and local goals.

Our most significant challenge continues to be transitioning veterans to HUD-VASH and our work with Maine VA Homeless Team. We have not had a voucher administered in the Portland CoC since February according to our records and outreach from the VA Homeless Team is sporadic and inconsistent.

Another challenge that we face is the availability of apartments. We are looking into ways to bring landlords into our community plans.

Our last and most recent challenge has been around recidivism. We have seen an increase the in the number veterans returning to the shelter after be Rapidly Re-housed. We attribute some of the recidivism to not being able to access more permanent housing resources such as HUD-VASH.

Our strengths continue to be:

- We have a strong list which includes data provided by HMIS, area shelters, and street outreach
- Consistent and regular outreach to the largest shelter
- Preble Street's SSVF grantee has contracted with the only homeless shelter that admits individuals under the influence of alcohol or other drugs in the state of Maine.
- Consistent and regular street outreach
- A list of homeless veterans in our CoC
- Multiple resources available for veterans that are interested in engaging and receiving services.
- Strong collaboration among SSVF grantees
- Strong collaboration with shelter and service providers in our CoC

We are at the point now where the groups is considering how we would announce the end of veterans homelessness within our