

ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF ENDING VETERAN HOMELES SNESS

Criteria and

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs have adopted a vision of what it means to end all homelessness and specific criteria and benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness in order to help guide communities as they take action to achieve the goal. Together, these criteria and benchmarks are intended to help to define the vision of ending Veteran homelessness within communities and to help align local efforts in support of that vision, with a focus on long-term, lasting solutions.

We recognize that all communities have unique attributes and will meet the goal in different ways. These criteria and benchmarks represent our best thinking at this time on what it looks like to end Veteran homelessness. We have been learning more as we have worked with communities to understand their progress and achievements; we have revised these criteria, and added these benchmarks, in order to provide more specific guidance to communities. We expect to continue to learn and think further as more communities approach and succeed in meeting the goal of ending Veteran homelessness and will continue to review and evaluate the effectiveness of these criteria and benchmarks over time.

CRITERIA

1. THE COMMUNITY HAS IDENTIFIED ALL VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The community has used coordinated outreach, multiple data sources, and other methods, to identify, enumerate, and engage all Veterans experiencing homelessness, including Veterans who are unsheltered, as well as Veterans in shelters, Grant and Per Diem programs and other VA residential programs, other transitional housing programs, etc. This identification of Veterans includes both Veterans that meet the definition of chronic homelessness and Veterans that are experiencing homelessness but do not meet the definition of chronic homelessness. The definition of Veteran used includes all persons who served in the armed forces, regardless of how long they served or the type of discharge they received.

Contact all of our homeless providers and let them know we want to follow-up on veterans.

We need to know their status immediately.

2. THE COMMUNITY PROVIDES SHELTER IMMEDIATELY TO ANY VETERAN EXPERIENCING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS WHO WANTS IT

While ending Veteran homelessness is primarily about the community's capacity to connect Veterans to permanent housing, the community also has the capacity to immediately offer some form of shelter (i.e., emergency shelter, bridge or transitional housing, other temporary settings) to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the community who wants it, while assisting the Veteran to swiftly achieve permanent housing. Access to shelter is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, criminal records, or other unnecessary conditions.

Permanent housing will have to come from Section 8 or VASH vouchers, or units set aside by the PHA. Once youchers are placed landlords will be contacted to see if they

aside by the PHA. Once vouchers are placed landlords will be contacted to see if they are willing to set aside units.

3. THE COMMUNITY ONLY PROVIDES SERVICE-INTENSIVE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING IN LIMITED INSTANCES

In instances when transitional housing is provided to a Veteran, priority is placed on the use of transitional housing as a short-term bridge to permanent housing. The community only provides service-intensive transitional housing to those Veterans who have indicated a preference for service-intensive transitional housing prior to moving to a permanent housing destination.

4. THE COMMUNITY HAS CAPACITY TO ASSIST VETERANS TO SWIFTLY MOVE INTO PERMANENT HOUSING

The community has identified permanent housing for all Veterans known to be experiencing homelessness, including those Veterans who have chosen to enter transitional housing, and are able to assist Veterans to move into their permanent housing quickly and without barriers to entry, using Housing First principles and practices.

5. THE COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES, PLANS, AND SYSTEM CAPACITY IN PLACE SHOULD ANY VETERAN BECOME HOMELESS OR BE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE FUTURE

The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place for identifying (1) Veterans entering or returning to homelessness in the future, and (2) Veterans at risk of homelessness.

- a) The community is routinely using multiple data sources and conducting comprehensive outreach and engagement to identify such Veterans.
- b) The community has an adequate level of resources and the capacity to provide appropriate services that will, whenever possible, prevent homelessness for at-risk Veterans.
- c) The community has an adequate level of resources and appropriate plans and services in place to promote the long-term housing stability of all Veterans who have entered permanent housing.

BENCHMARKS

In assessing whether a community has achieved these criteria, Federal agencies will also consider the following four benchmarks to help confirm if the goal of ending Veteran homelessness has been achieved. Taken together, these benchmarks are indicators of how well a community's system is working to ensure that Veteran homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. In considering these benchmarks, Federal agencies will take into account contexts and circumstances specific to local communities.

identifies all homeless Veterans, including those who are in unsheltered and as well as in sheltered locations (i.e., transitional housing, emergency shelter and safe haven). The community must be able to demonstrate the list is updated or refreshed at least monthly. The list may be populated by other data sources, such as HOMES, HMIS, or other comparable databases. This list is also updated at least monthly to reflect accurate status if verification shows that a person on the active list is not a Veteran.

Chronically Homeless – The definition of "chronically homeless" currently in effect for the CoC Program is that which is defined in the CoC Program interim rule at 24 CFR 578.3, which states that a chronically homeless person is:

- (a) An individual who:
 - i. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
 - ii. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years; and
 - iii. Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability;
- (b) An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition [as described in Section I.D.2.(a) of this Notice], before entering that facility; or
- (c) A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition (as described in Section I.D.2.(a) of this Notice, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Permanent housing destination – comprises the following response categories as defined in HUD's data standards (data element 3.12):

- Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA permanent housing (PH)
- Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
- Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (such as: CoC project; or HUD legacy programs; or HOPWA PH)
- o Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy
- o Rental by client, with GPD Transition-In-Place (TIP) housing subsidy
- o Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy
- Staying or living with family, permanent tenure
- Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure

Permanent housing intervention – Subsidy or other forms of rental assistance, with appropriate services and supports. Interventions can include HUD-VASH, SSVF, and CoC Program-funded rapid rehousing (where rental assistance is included), CoC Program-funded permanent supportive housing, Housing Choice voucher (HCV), or other form of permanent housing subsidy or rental assistance.

A. CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS HAS BEEN ENDED

The community has no Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness, with the exception of (1) any Veterans who have been identified and offered a permanent housing intervention, but who have either not yet accepted or not yet entered housing, and (2) any Veterans who have been offered a permanent housing intervention but have chosen to enter service-intensive transitional housing prior to entering a permanent housing destination. The community continues to outreach to Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness that have not yet accepted an offer of a permanent housing intervention, and continues to offer a permanent housing intervention to those Veterans at least once every two weeks.

B. VETERANS HAVE QUICK ACCESS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

Veterans who experience homelessness should have the opportunity to quickly move into permanent housing. An indicator of whether a community has a system in place for quickly and effectively connecting Veterans experiencing homelessness to permanent housing is the average amount of time it takes Veterans who become homeless to enter permanent housing. Some communities have been able to create housing assistance delivery systems for Veterans so effective that the average length of time from homelessness to permanent housing is as short as 30 days. We recognize that this length of time may be challenging for other communities, particularly in more competitive and higher cost rental housing markets.

We believe that a benchmark achievable by most communities for the average time from the identification of Veterans' homelessness to permanent housing entry is 90 days or less. These averages do not include: (1) any Veterans who have been identified and offered, but not yet accepted, a permanent housing intervention, (2) any Veterans who have accepted a permanent housing intervention but not yet moved in, and (3) any Veterans who have been offered a permanent housing intervention but have chosen to enter service-intensive transitional housing prior to moving to a permanent housing destination.

We recognize that this average time benchmark should also take into account, and may need to be tailored based on local housing market conditions. Taking into account these conditions, communities should aspire to do everything possible to streamline the delivery of housing assistance to make this timeframe as short as possible. As communities continue to innovate to improve the delivery of housing assistance, and as resources for housing assistance increase, we will continue to review what timeframe constitutes a short, but realistic benchmark.

C. THE COMMUNITY HAS SUFFICIENT PERMANENT HOUSING CAPACITY

The number of Veterans exiting homelessness and moving into permanent housing is greater than or equal to the number of Veterans entering homelessness.

D. THE COMMUNITY IS COMMITTED TO HOUSING FIRST AND PROVIDES SERVICE-INTENSIVE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING TO VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ONLY IN LIMITED INSTANCES

The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness who enter service-intensive transitional housing is less than the number of Veterans entering homelessness.

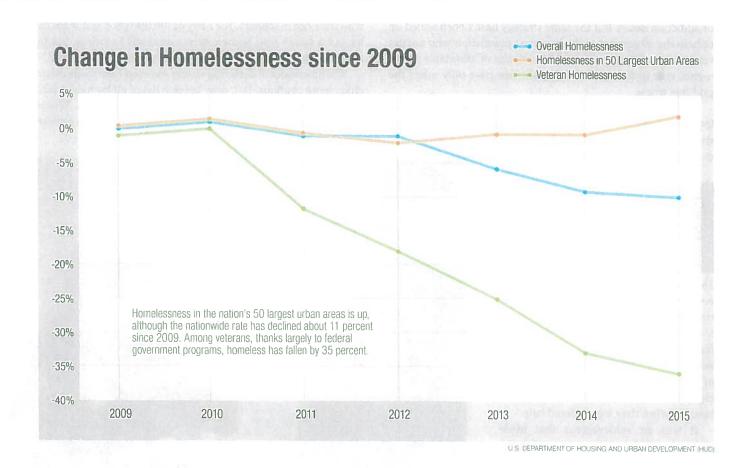
DEFINITIONS USED FOR CRITERIA AND BENCHMARKS

Active list – A community must have an active list (commonly referred to as a "by-name" list) that

Transitional housing -

- Bridge housing Transitional housing used as a short-term stay when a Veteran has been offered a permanent housing intervention but is not able to immediately enter the permanent housing. Generally provided for up to 90 days.
- Service-intensive transitional housing Transitional housing not being used as bridge housing, where Veterans are actively working, with the assistance of appropriate services and supports, to achieve permanent housing.

Veteran – An adult who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, including persons who served on active duty from the military reserves or the National Guard.



269,417

The number of homeless people in the 50 largest cities and surrounding counties on a single night in 2015, marking a 4 percent increase since 2012.

-Governing analysis of HUD data

veterans, especially in growing metropolitan areas. They aren't receiving it.

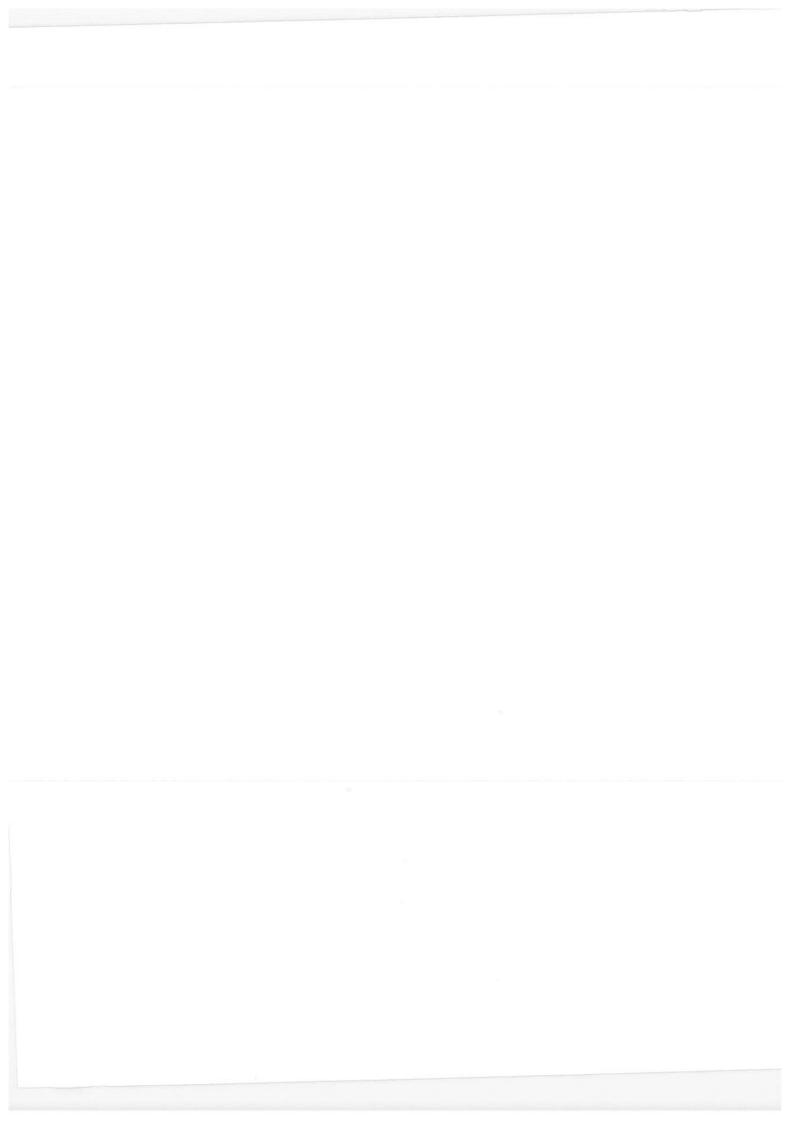
To some extent, general homelessness is tied to housing prices. In big cities and their surrounding areas, rental vacancy rates are the lowest they've been in more than a decade. The shortage of units has driven up rental costs, and wages haven't kept pace. In 2014, real rents in the country were 7 percent higher than they had been in 2001, but household incomes were 9 percent lower, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University.

Historically, federal vouchers have helped low-income renters afford apartment units in expensive real estate markets. But in 2011, spending cuts under the federal sequestration agreement resulted in the elimination of vouchers for roughly 100,000

households. (By comparison, rental vouchers for veterans actually received a funding boost.) Because these vouchers are not an entitlement, there is no requirement that spending meet the need. The result is that nearly three-quarters of the low-income households that qualify for assistance are not currently receiving federal rental vouchers.

Although the federal government still provides about 2.2 million rental vouchers to low-income households, the only vouchers that have increased in number under the Obama administration are those funded jointly by HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Since 2008, the federal government has awarded about 80,000 vouchers to 101,000 veterans and their families. In recent White House budgets, HUD officials have requested an expansion of "mainstream" vouchers for nonveterans, but Congress hasn't appropriated the money.

n the early 2000s, many cities and counties across the country released 10-year plans to end homelessness. These focused on the most pressing issue at the time, which was the small slice of the homeless population that lived in shelters or in public places for a year or more. To a large extent, this problem has been dealt with. Last year, about 42,000 unsheltered individuals were chronically homeless, marking a 44 percent decline from 2007. But in large metro areas, there has been a rise in family homelessness, a problem that is more difficult to solve. There are good reasons why the Obama administration sought to end homelessness for veterans first. It wasn't



Programs to Assist Communities in Ending Homelessness among Veterans

VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)

The primary mission of HCHV is to connect Veterans experiencing homelessness to needed health care and social service programs via extensive outreach, administered through VA medical centers.

VA Veterans Benefits Assistance Outreach Program

Veterans Benefits Assistance Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinators provide VA benefits access and information through outreach efforts to Veterans who are homeless and Veterans at-risk of homelessness.

VA Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)

HVRP is the only federal program that works specifically on employment issues for Veterans experiencing homelessness while using a client-centered case management model to connect Veterans with other social services and benefits.

VA Veterans' Workforce Investment Program

This program provides funds to assist Veterans experiencing homelessness in gaining meaningful employment through client-centered case management, including job counseling, training, and placement assistance.

VA Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program

This program provides case management and employment counseling services to Veterans who have been incarcerated or are soon to be transitioning out of incarceration and are at risk of becoming homeless.

VA Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans is a supportive residential rehabilitation and treatment service center for Veterans experiencing homelessness with multiple and serious medical conditions, mental illness, or addiction.

VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem

Program funds go toward the provision and maintenance of transitional housing facilities and service centers for Veterans (Grant Program), as well as for the operational costs for services provided to Veterans while in transitional housing (Per Diem Program).

VA Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) Program

This program works with nonprofit organizations to provide social services for low-income and very low-income veterans and their families currently residing in or transitioning to permanent housing.

HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program

HUD-VASH combines HUD Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by VA at VA medical centers and community-based outreach clinics.

This program is designed to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness and to provide the services needed to help such individuals move into transitional and permanent housing, with the goal of long-term stability. Program funds may be used for permanent housing, transitional housing, supportive services, Homeless Management Information Systems, and, in some cases, homelessness prevention.

Learn more about these and other programs at:

http://usich.gov/population/veterans

http://www.va.gov/homeless

http://hud.gov/veterans