

Ending Veteran Homelessness by 2015: Key Strategies and Federal Efforts

June 4, 2015





Roles of USICH

- **Coordinates** the Federal response to homelessness
- **Maximizes and leverages** the effectiveness of 19 Federal agency partners
- **Shares** best practices
- **Drives** collaborative solutions



Opening Doors

The Vision:

No one should experience homelessness and no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.

Four goals:

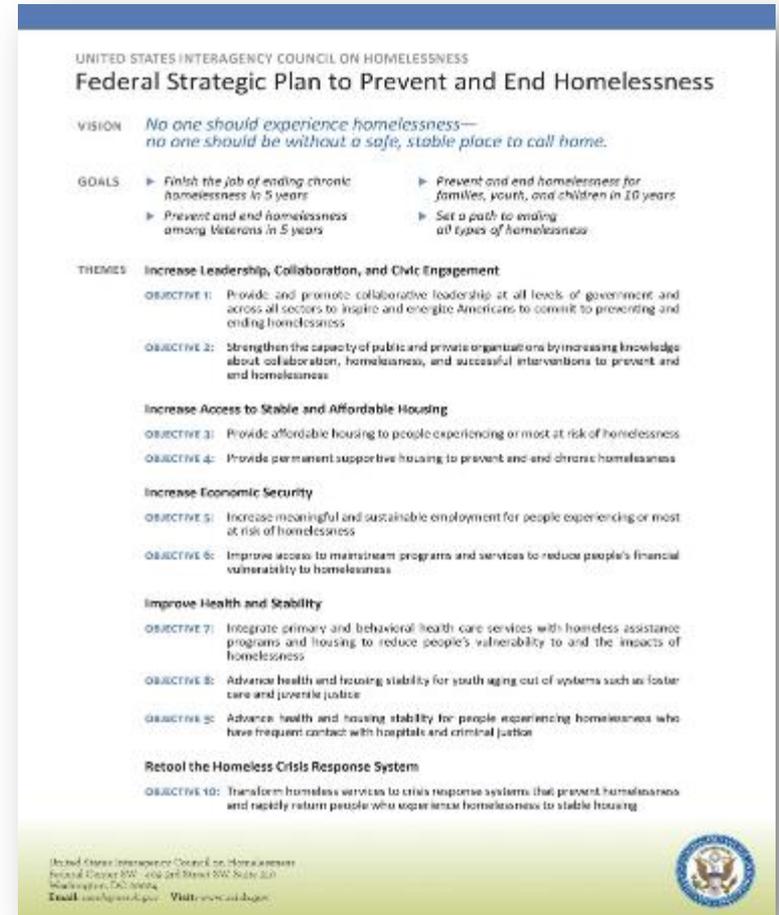
- 1. Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 2015**
2. Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017
3. Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 2020
4. Set a path to ending all types of homelessness

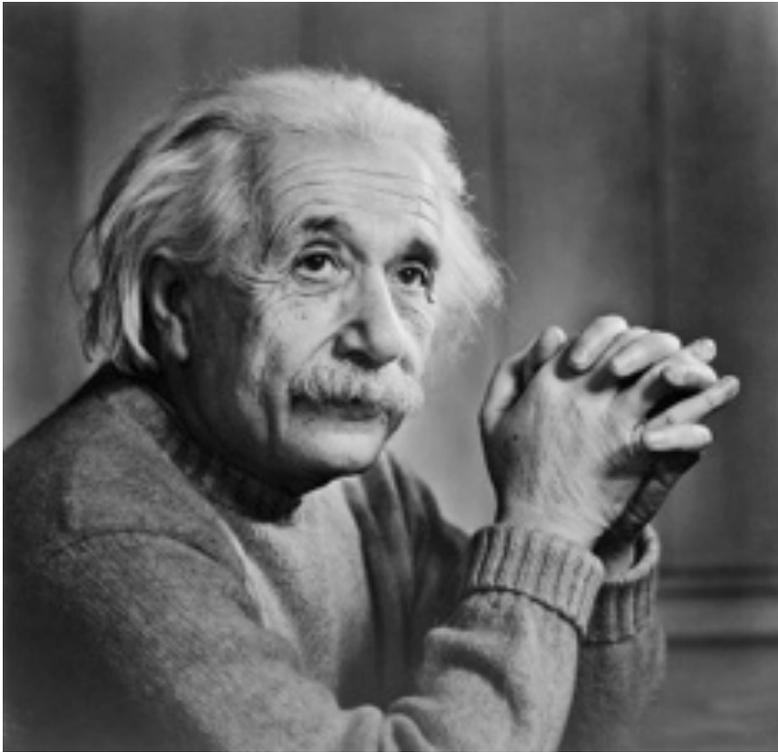
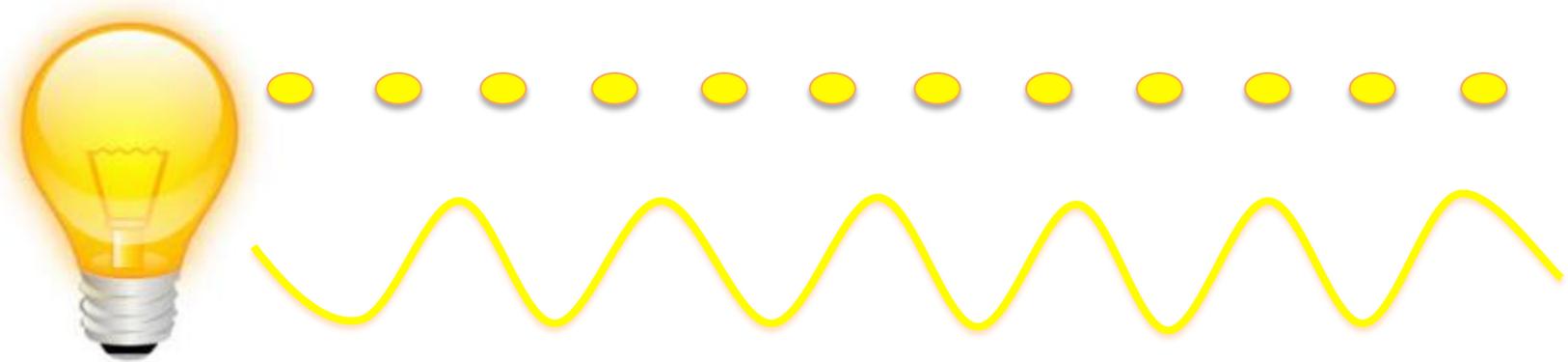


Opening Doors

Five themes and 10 Objectives

1. Increase leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement
2. Increase access to stable and affordable housing
3. Increase economic security
4. Improve health and stability
5. Retool the homeless crisis response system





“We have two contradictory pictures of reality; separately neither of them fully explains the phenomena of light, but together they do.”

- Albert Einstein



Duality of Ending Homelessness

Just as light cannot be fully understood as either a particle or a wave, so too can an end to homelessness not be understood only as a point-in-time number or as a system, but both.

An end to homelessness is about **bringing the number of people who experience homelessness down** by or to a specific number.

But it is also about **putting the enduring systems in place** to ensure that homelessness is prevented whenever possible or becomes and remains a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.



What It Means to End Homelessness

An end to homelessness does not mean that no one will ever experience a housing crisis again. Changing economic realities, the unpredictability of life and unsafe or unwelcoming family environments may create situations where individuals, families, or youth could experience or be at-risk of homelessness.

An end to homelessness means that every community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.



End to Homelessness = Creating a Systematic Response

Specifically, every community will have the capacity to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at-risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Intervene to prevent the loss of housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system.
- Provide immediate access to shelter and crisis services, without barriers to entry, while permanent stable housing and appropriate supports are being secured.
- When homelessness does occur, quickly connect people to housing assistance and services—tailored to their unique needs and strengths—to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.



New Orleans

- New Orleans became the first major city to effectively end Veteran homelessness.
- Community partners connected every Veteran living on the street or in emergency shelter who would accept housing with an apartment and supportive services.
- The community continues to house newly homeless Veterans within an average of 30 days.

Key Strategies

- **Enlisting the Mayor** to endorse the Mayors Challenge, setting a deadline for the community, and appointing an effective leader.
- **Making a Comprehensive Master List of All Homeless Veterans** to include Veterans identified in 2015 PIT Count, HMIS, and VA and maintaining it daily.
- **Targeting Housing Resources** by prioritizing Veterans on the Master List for SSVF, PSH, RRH, vouchers, and other resources.
- **Creative and persistent outreach and engagement strategies**



Houston

- Houston announced on June 1 that they created system that will bring an imminent end to homelessness among veterans
- Community partners have connected over 3,650 Veterans in over three years to housing and supportive services.
- Houston has the capacity and resources to respond to future needs by preventing homelessness when possible and rapidly rehousing Veterans.

Key Strategies

- **Holding Weekly Coordination Meetings** between all community partners, including CoC, GPD, SSVF, PHA, and VA representatives.
- **Creating Street Outreach Teams** to seek out Veterans in need of assistance and sharing information across teams.
- **Aligning and Prioritizing Federal, State, and Local resources.**
- **Implementing a High-Functioning Coordinated Entry System** that identifies, assesses, refers, and navigates Veterans to housing.



10 Strategies to End Veteran Homelessness

1. Start at the Top: Recruit Your Mayor to Join the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness
2. Identify All Veterans Experiencing Homelessness by Name
3. Implement a Housing First System Orientation and Response
4. Set and Meet Ambitious Short-Term Housing Placement Goals
5. Conduct Coordinated Outreach & Engagement



10 Strategies to End Veteran Homelessness

6. Implement Coordinated Entry Systems
7. Deploy HUD-VASH/SSVF Effectively
8. Improve Transitional Housing Performance and Consider Converting or Reallocating Resources into Permanent Housing
9. Increase Connections to Employment
10. Coordinate with Legal Services



Federal Efforts to Achieve the Goal

1. Supporting community level efforts
2. Ensuring the rapid and efficient deployment of Federal resources (HUD-VASH, SSVF)
3. Leveraging other Federal and private sector resources
4. Assisting Veterans not eligible for VA programs and services



Supporting Communities



Technical Assistance

- 25 Cities
- Zero: 2016
- SSVF Surge TA

10 STRATEGIES TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

IDENTIFYING & REFERRING VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The Obama Administration is committed to achieving an end to homelessness among Veterans, and

CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

USICH and our partners developed specific criteria for ending Veteran homelessness to help guide communities as they take action to achieve the goal. We have also adopted a vision of what it means to end all homelessness. We hope these standards help to define the vision of ending Veteran homelessness within communities and will help align local efforts in support of that vision, with a focus on long-term, lasting solutions.

- 1) **COMMUNITY HAS IDENTIFIED ALL VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**
 The community took steps needed to identify all veterans experiencing homelessness, including Veterans who were unsheltered, as well as Veterans in shelter, in Grant Per Diem programs and other VA residential programs, in other transitional housing programs, and in other temporary or institutional settings. This identification of Veterans included 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.¹
- 2) **COMMUNITY NO LONGER HAS ANY VETERANS EXPERIENCING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS**
 There are no longer any veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the community. Some Veterans may not yet be in permanent housing, but all are now in some form of shelter (emergency shelter, treatment programs, transitional programs, other temporary institutional settings, etc...)
- 3) **COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES AND A PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR PROVIDING PERMANENT HOUSING**
 The community has the resources and a plan and timeline for providing permanent housing opportunities to all Veterans who are currently sheltered but are still experiencing homelessness. The community has identified the programs and resources that will be used to provide those housing opportunities and can provide those housing opportunities quickly and without barriers to entry, using Housing First principles and practices.
- 4) **COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES, PLANS AND SYSTEMS IN PLACE FOR CONTINUED EFFORTS**
 The community has resources, plans, and systems in place for identifying (1) Veterans that may have been missed in initial efforts to identify Veterans, (2) at-risk Veterans and (3) Veterans newly experiencing homelessness in the future.
 - a. The community has adequate outreach and engagement strategies in place to be confident that they can identify such Veterans.
 - b. The community has an adequate level of resources and the capacity to provide appropriate services to prevent homelessness for at-risk Veterans in the future.
 - c. The community can provide options for shelter and has identified the programs and resources that will be used to provide quick access to permanent housing opportunities for these Veterans not addressed in the initial work.
- 5) **COMMUNITY HAS ADEQUATE LEVEL OF RESOURCES AND APPROPRIATE PLANS TO ENSURE HOUSING STABILITY**
 The community has an adequate level of resources and appropriate plans and services in place to ensure the housing stability of formerly-homeless Veterans currently in permanent housing or who enter permanent housing in the future.

THE MAYORS CHALLENGE TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IS A JOINT INITIATIVE OF JOINING FORCES, THE U.S. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.



Rapid Deployment of Targeted Resources

- Total of \$407 million deployed in Supportive Services for Veteran Families in FY 2015
- Final FY 2015 HUD-VASH awards in April 2015
- Filling HUD-VASH staffing vacancies and increasing referral rate
- HUD's Extraordinary Administrative Fee pool
- HUD-VASH chronic homelessness targeting exemption



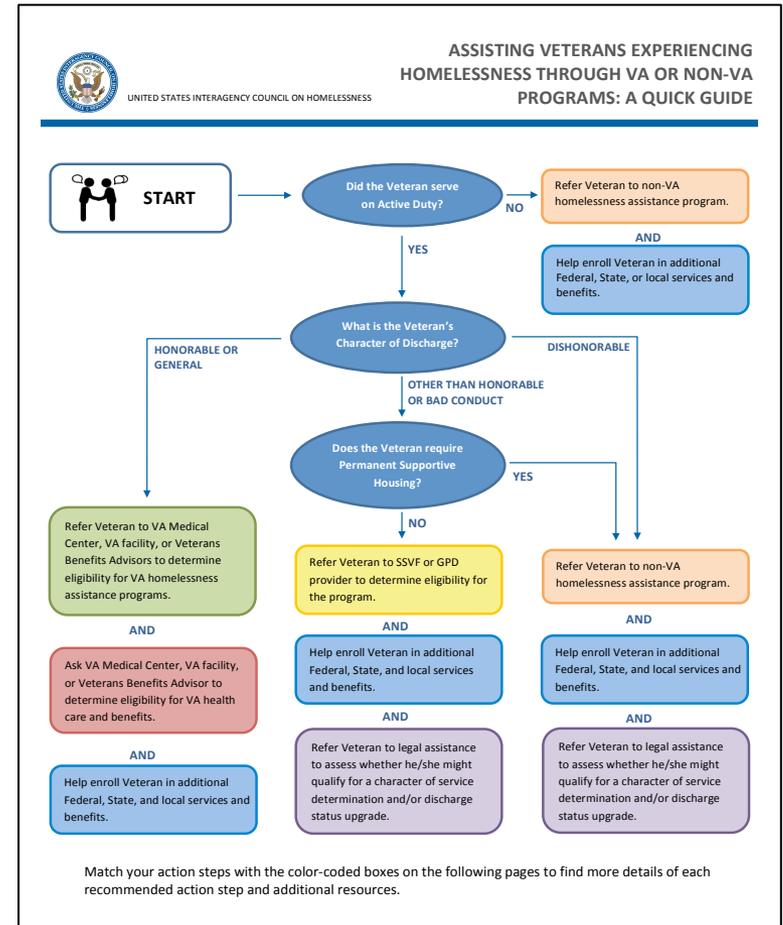
Leveraging Other Federal & Private Sector Resources

- Coordination with HHS homeless programs (Health Care for the Homeless, SAMHSA's PATH and CABHI/GBHI grantees, Medicaid)
- Employment services through Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, mainstream workforce system, and VA employment services
- DoD/VA homelessness prevention for transitioning service members
- Engaging private sector and philanthropic partnerships for rental housing, housing navigators, outreach specialists, Welcome Home kits



Assisting Veterans Not Eligible for VA Programs and Services

- Clarifying eligibility and appropriateness
- Prioritizing Veterans not eligible for VA programs and services for HUD CoC, PHA, and HHS programs
- Connection to legal services for discharge status review





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