



Ending Veteran Homelessness Highlights:

Nine Necessary Items for Your Community's Active List

This resource was developed through community efforts across the country to end homelessness among Veterans and reflects practices that local communities have successfully implemented toward achieving that goal. It is focused on strategies for Community Veteran Leadership committees to implement locally.

What is an 'Active List'?

A comprehensive process and tool that is used to track progress on community efforts toward ending Veteran homelessness and meeting the Federal Criteria and Benchmarks. Communities have used the Active List as a collaborative tool to track Veterans, identify needs and match them to permanent housing and needed services. An Active List may also be known as a By-Name List or Master List.

How does a community Veteran leadership team go about developing, using and maintaining an effective list and process for using it? What should it include? What are the goals the community hopes to achieve with the use of the list?

- 1** The first step of developing an Active List is to define the **data elements** to track on your Active List and which **stakeholders** will provide information for the Active List. An Active List does not need to contain all universal data elements collected on every Veteran being served; however, it should contain enough information from multiple sources such as HMIS, VA HOMES, coordinated entry data, or other sources (including those not connected to HMIS), so your community can track progress on pathways to housing for each Veteran. Engage stakeholders in the Active List process and determine if the list can be programmed in HMIS, which stakeholders can 'add' Veterans to the Active List, who has physical access to 'add' a Veteran to the list, and a protocol for updating information on the List.
- 2** Once an Active List process is established with the Veteran leadership team, document it with **written policies and procedures**. This will memorialize policies in the event of staff turnover, provide useful for training purposes, and will ensure consistency. Meet weekly or bi-weekly to coordinate efforts, make assignments, and work the list to drive down the numbers.

- 3 Develop an **inactive policy** that determines the length of time that a Veteran experiencing homelessness is missing or not able to be located (90 days is suggested in Federal Criteria and Benchmark guidance). An inactive policy simply means the Veteran's name is moved to an inactive tab or status on the list. If the Veteran is later located and/or returns to the community, their name is activated back on the list with a new date of identification.
- 4 Use **tools to evaluate the effectiveness** of your community goal and progress toward ending Veteran homelessness. The [Master List Template and Benchmark Generation Tool](#) can be used to develop or enhance your Active List, as well as to track progress toward meeting the Federal Criteria and Benchmarks to End Veteran homelessness. The [Criteria and Benchmark Review Tool](#) is helpful to gauge your community's status relative to the Federal Benchmarks and the overall effort to quickly identify and house Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- 5 Develop a **standard Release of Information (ROI) form** and process in collaboration with community partners that every agency uses that covers HMIS, the VA, and service providers. Consider VA and HMIS privacy guidance and consult with Veteran leadership partners to put in place protocols for sharing information across agencies. Determine if there are different levels of access to data needed by different stakeholders and how to include that on the ROI form.
- 6 Develop a **'Refusal of Services' policy and protocol** for Veterans experiencing homelessness that covers refusals of assessment, signing ROI, or offers of housing/services. The policy should reflect that a Veteran has the right to refuse signing the ROI/sharing data across agencies and still be able to receive housing/services. Define the process for adding 'Anonymous' or 'Unidentified' Veterans on the Active List, especially if the List is shared across multiple stakeholder groups.
- 7 Consider the **linkage between Coordinated Entry and your Active List**. Ensure your protocols for adding Veterans to the Active List is coordinated and aligned with your coordinated entry process, including any access point the Veteran may enter from.
- 8 **Case conferencing around the Active List** is necessary for discussion and prioritization of the Veterans that are most vulnerable, discussing inaccurate assessment scores, brainstorming challenges to engagement and/or housing Veterans, seeking flexible resources when needed, barrier busting, and reviewing length of time for those on the Active List. Meet weekly or bi-weekly.
- 9 **Build in choice** to every policy, process, and touch point for Veterans. Do not confuse refusal of a particular unit with refusal of a permanent housing intervention. Persistence pays off!

Disclaimer: This tool provides examples from communities without any edits from HUD. They are included only as useful examples or templates. HUD has not reviewed them to determine if they meet all funding requirements, including whether all costs depicted are eligible. HUD is not endorsing the examples as strategies that all communities should adopt. These are not official HUD documents.