



Ending Veteran Homelessness Highlights:

Making a Claim of Ending Homelessness among Veterans in Your Community

This resource was developed through community efforts across the country to end Veteran 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.

If your community is at the point of making a claim that you have effectively ended Veteran homelessness follow these steps to make the claim to the Federal Partners.

Preparing for a community claim:

Check in with community leadership to **assure commitment, partnership, readiness, and agreement** in pursuing a claim of ending Veteran homelessness. There needs to be evidence of a **strong joint effort** amongst a broad range of stakeholders across the community or region. Include jurisdictional or elected leaders, along with Veterans Administration (VA), Continuum of Care partners, and others that have been actively involved in the collaboration.

Establish processes for the Leadership team to routinely review progress. Progress should be measured on your data, processes, and policies. You can utilize the Federal [Master List Template and Benchmark Generation Tool](#) as a yardstick to gauge where your data stands and focus on the [Federal Criteria and Benchmarks Review Tool](#) as a cross check. Are there areas or processes that need to be revisited? **Set a goal for changes that need to be made and implemented** to the system prior to claim submission.

What narrative do the numbers represent?

- Review **system wide data** from your Active List, HMIS, and VA for the past 90 days. Review **recent PIT numbers** and **trends** in the Veteran population from the last few months. **Do the numbers make sense** and are they fairly stable or on a downward trend?
- Look at the **overall census** of Veterans experiencing homelessness. Have you permanently housed all of the Veterans defined as **chronic or long term homeless**? Are chronically homeless and long-term homeless Veterans **prioritized** for outreach, engagement, and housing?
- Review the number of Veterans who **choose to enter a transitional housing** project. How many Veterans are choosing this project type over an immediate permanent housing intervention? What are their reasons for doing that? Is there something in the way the **housing options are being presented** that have them leaning toward transitional housing over permanent housing?
- Consider how **choice has been factored into the system** in terms of housing location and type, amenities, services and supports. How is choice conveyed to Veterans?

Is the **homeless response system for Veterans sustainable**? Ensure an adequate supply of all types of housing resources for Veterans that may fall out of housing or experience homelessness in the future.

Asking for additional vouchers or using waitlists does not indicate the ability of the system to move people quickly into housing. Additionally, making the effort part of the CoC governance, with policies and procedures, leadership structures, and routine data review will help to ensure sustainability.

Contact your HUD, USICH or VA regional representative to make them aware of the impending claim. Ask for any **suggestions or guidance** they might have.

Writing and submitting the claim

You can use the Mayor's Challenge narrative **claim memo template** (obtained from USICH) to outline the work of your community. Be as specific and thorough as possible in describing the team, community activities, and all stakeholders contributing to the effort. Include team members from as many sectors as possible to show evidence of broad collaboration.

The **CoC should take the lead**, in concert with the Veteran leadership team, in the process of submitting the claim and filling out the claim memo template. Federal partner staff (HUD and VA) may not lead the effort. Have **several community partners** add to and review the claim memo to ensure it is accurate and succinct, yet fully describes all of the work and activities taken.

Benchmark data needs to be provided for the **most recent 90-day period**. All benchmarks need to be **measured within the same time period**.

Additional Tips

While the claim is being substantiated, **continue to push forward** with the work of identifying, engaging, and housing Veterans experiencing homelessness. The claim review process may take **several months of back and forth**, answering questions from the Federal team, and supplying additional data and information.

If the claim is confirmed, consider messaging for the general public celebrating that this is a milestone along the way, **not an end to the effort**. The community will need to continue operating the homeless response system, with on-going use of data, monitoring, and periodic adjustments.

Use the tools and available data to **review your system as a whole**. Some communities may meet the benchmarks, while still having a **high overall census of Veterans experiencing homelessness**.

If the claim is not confirmed, use the feedback received from the Federal Partners to **continue to improve the community process**, identify and house Veterans, and focus on the long term sustainability of the system overall.

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.