



Vets@Home Toolkit: Housing Stability



Vets@Home HUD technical assistance helps Continuums of Care (CoCs) meet the goal established in Opening Doors of ending veteran homelessness by December 31, 2015. This series of four toolkits serve as guides and resources for use by communities as they work to end homelessness for veterans.

The topics include:

Identifying and Engaging Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

Effective Homeless Crisis Response Systems for Veterans

Connecting to Permanent Housing

Housing Stability

The toolkits include identification of best practices, key strategies, action items and considerations for CoCs, Veterans Affairs (VA) partners, and local public officials that can be implemented immediately to focus efforts on ending homelessness for veterans.

Any CoC may receive TA through the Vets@Home initiative. To do so, a CoC should submit a TA request through the HUD Exchange's Request Technical Assistance form. HUD will provide all CoCs requesting TA through Vets@Home with remote TA.



ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

With the launch of [Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness \(Opening Doors\)](#) the Administration established goals to prevent and end homelessness, including ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Although this goal was ambitious, with vision inspired by the goal and new focused resources, communities across the country have made incredible [progress](#). The number of veterans experiencing homelessness has declined significantly since 2010, with a 33 percent reduction in veteran homelessness from 2010 to 2014, but there is a lot of work left to do. Communities are encouraged to double their efforts so that every veteran has a permanent place to call home. The goal of ending homelessness for veterans is within reach, and the path to achieving it is dependent upon communities implementing effective strategies that build systems that will ensure that veteran homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring in the future.

HUD designed this toolkit for CoC stakeholders, practitioners, and public officials to promote and implement housing stability strategies which greatly reduce the recurrence of homelessness for veterans and their families. Virtually all veterans who experience homelessness are poor and are still expected to be poor upon regaining housing. Homeless crisis response systems do not eradicate poverty and homelessness assistance generally does not result in veteran households securing housing that is significantly more affordable than what they had prior to becoming homeless. However, with effective housing supports and strategies to link veterans to appropriate mainstream resources as chosen by the veteran, fewer are expected to return to homelessness.

This toolkit is designed to address concerns related to housing stability and offer ideas, strategies, and tools to foster greater stability for veterans who experienced homelessness but are now housed. The Administration's goal is to end homelessness for **all** veterans, individual veterans and veterans in families with children; veterans experiencing chronic homelessness and those who have experienced homelessness only a short time; veterans with every type of discharge, including Reserve and members of the Guard following discharge from periods of active duty; and those veterans who are not eligible for VA benefits and services.

The toolkit includes:

- A discussion of the core concepts of housing stability
- Key strategies and related resources to increase housing stability for veterans moving out of homelessness
- Considerations for local public officials as they develop local strategies to support this national goal.
- Hyperlinks to related tools and resources, both embedded in the toolkit and assembled in a list at the end of the toolkit

About this Series: As part of Vets@Home, a series of four toolkits have been developed as guides and resources for communities to use in the effort to end homelessness for veterans. These toolkits can be used together or individually and topics include: 1) Using Data and Analytics to Identify and Engage Veterans Experiencing Homelessness, 2) Effective Homeless Crisis Response Systems for Veterans, 3) Connecting to Permanent Housing and 4) Housing Stability. Identification of best practices, key concepts and considerations for communities and local officials are highlighted within each.

KEY STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS TO PROMOTE HOUSING STABILITY

1. Promote a Common Understanding of “Housing Stability”

It's important for communities to share the same understanding of housing stability and the means of achieving it. “Stability” is a relative term and means different things in different contexts. For someone experiencing homelessness, housing stabilization represents the resolution of the crisis of homelessness. Achieving housing stability following homelessness means that the veteran has obtained permanent housing and the resources and capacity to be able to pay the rent, follow the lease and meet other housing requirements to maintain permanent housing for the foreseeable future. Thus, housing stability means they will not be on the verge of involuntarily losing their current housing soon after assistance ends. At that point, their homelessness crisis is resolved and they can resume their lives outside of the homeless system.

Having a common understanding of housing stability following homelessness (resolution of the homelessness crisis and the ability to pay the rent, understand the lease and meet other housing requirements in the near term) will lead to economically-efficient services that can assist a greater number of veterans who experience homelessness. By clearly defining their mission and results, the homeless crisis response system can advocate for other systems to be accountable for the basic needs of their clients, including stable housing.

- **CoC and program leadership define housing stability.** Seek endorsement by community agencies and promote use throughout the community.
- **Develop a system-wide understanding of achieved housing stability for all participants.** Promote consistency in provision of service and work to ensure that regardless of where a veteran is served the veteran will receive similar supports. This may assist in decisions regarding ending homelessness assistance. See figure 1 for a model that could be adapted or adopted.
- **Create a shared Housing Plan template for all agencies.** Focus the template on immediate housing stability to reinforce the role of the homeless system. Seek adoption by homeless crisis response system agencies.

Figure 1: Indicators of Housing Stability

This tool can be adapted to assist your community in defining when a household has achieved housing stability. This will assist staff in understanding when it is appropriate to close a household in your program.

Housing Stability Indicators (indicators for possible case closure)	Housing Instability Indicators (indicators of need for continued assistance)	Methods of Assessing Indicator
Client is not in violation of the lease, in arrears, or the subject of significant complaints	Lease violation, arrears, complaints	Contact landlord for update on tenancy status
Client can pay rent, even if severely rent-burdened or Client has a long-term subsidy	Without the housing subsidy, participant cannot pay the rent	Review income vs. housing costs and other necessary expenses
No material change in client's situation that jeopardizes housing or Client can resolve challenges without program assistance	New challenge that could result in near-time housing loss: job loss, serious medical problem	Review with client, current circumstances
Client is enrolled in VA/community resources critical to retaining housing: income, legal assistance, etc.	Services/financial assistance are not secured or Client is in immediate jeopardy of losing critical assistance	Review status with client and community/VA resources
Client believes crisis has ended and requests (or agrees with) ending assistance	Client can describe additional housing assistance needed—and need is justified or verified	Discussion with client

2. Promote Housing Focused, Progressive Case Management as a Primary Method of Achieving Housing Stability

Housing-focused case managers should be highly trained and skilled in understanding crisis intervention and stress response relative to assisting veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Case managers should understand how each community resource works and be able to assist veteran households to access the services and benefits they need and want.

Some veterans only need assistance with housing search and initial start-up costs (security deposit, first/last month's rent). They may be experienced renters who have few barriers beyond those directly caused by being very low income. Other veteran households need more help to achieve housing stability. Unless a veteran is immediately identified as needing permanent supportive housing, it can be difficult to predict who will need more help from the homeless crisis response system to avoid immediately losing their housing. One model to consider is progressive assistance, an approach that offers "light touch" interventions to start and then more assistance as needed and desired by the veteran.

- **Conduct joint training for case managers** to ensure that there is a consistent understanding of key concepts and practices related to housing stabilization assistance:
 - ✓ Impact of stress on the household's ability to recover from homelessness
 - ✓ Understanding the difference between housing stabilization in a homeless crisis response system and a poverty-reduction, self-sufficiency system
 - ✓ Progressive assistance model of case management (resource: [progressive assistance webinar](#))
 - ✓ Basic landlord tenant rights and responsibilities and how to make a win-win situation for both
 - ✓ Local community and VA resources

3. Identify Key Income-Related Services and Resources.

The most common barrier to housing stability is income, because housing stability requires the ability to pay the rent. Income stabilization can be achieved by various methods including: **acquiring public assistance**, such as through obtaining disability income (VA or SSI) or securing unpaid child custody payments; **increasing earned income** by obtaining employment or increasing work hours or wages; as well as **reducing spending** by obtaining free or subsidized goods and services. **Debt consolidation**, with or without lowered interest rates, by a certified credit counselor, can also have a significant impact on the monthly budget.

Homeless assistance providers should quickly link veterans to VA and public benefits, both cash and non-cash, and help them create a budget that minimizes, to the extent possible, severe rent burden. However, it is important to remember that without a permanent housing subsidy, most low income veterans will continue to live in homes that put them at rent burdens of 50-70% of income following their homeless crisis.

- **Develop expedited referral protocols that could be used by all agencies to link clients to income benefits**, such as TANF, Food Supports, state-funded General Assistance, Medicaid, and VA disability or pension benefits. This may include system-wide training on rapidly gathering information needed for applications.
- **Ensure that all veterans are connected to all benefits for which they are entitled.** This website provides excellent information on income, health, and other VA resources (see one page simple explanation of benefits at the end of this toolkit): <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>
- **Develop a local SOAR program.** Specially trained SOAR workers are able to get faster and more positive eligibility decisions for disabled clients applying for Social Security Disability or SSI. For information about this program see: <http://soarworks.prainc.com/>
- **Obtain/Create a community-wide budgeting class or guidelines for case managers** to use in working 1:1 with veteran households on budgeting their limited incomes. Budgeting classes or detailed budgeting would not be used as a precondition for obtaining permanent housing.
- **Create a directory of local free or reduced-cost goods and services that can be used by all providers in the community.** Resources might include food pantries, clothing shelves, utility subsidies, budgeting classes, child care scholarships and subsidies, school supplies and other resources. This is a great intern project that would save all agencies in your CoC a great deal of time and effort.

4. Identify the Tenancy Supports Needed by Clients

Landlord and tenancy supports are a critical part of assuring that veterans experiencing homelessness can obtain and retain housing. Such supports work to ensure that veterans who are placed in housing are not in jeopardy of immediately losing housing due to failure to comply with their lease – whether due to non-payment of rent, damaging the unit, or conflict with other tenants or the landlord. By catching problems before they result in eviction, case managers can create a win-win for both the tenant and the landlord. Home visits are an ideal opportunity for the case manager to identify red flags of tenancy issues, provide information on lease requirements, role play resolving complaints, and even offer teachable moments. Case managers or other housing specialists may need to maintain close communication with the landlord after a veteran has moved in to be able to head off any potential problems before they escalate.

- **Develop expedited access to legal assistance for tenancy issues.** Establish service partnerships with legal assistance and tenant organizations to: interpret requirements in a lease in language the tenant can understand; recognize violations of landlord or tenant responsibilities; mediate solutions to more serious conflicts between the tenant and landlord; and suggest methods for the client or the landlord to achieve compliance.
- **Consider adopting a variety of tenant education materials for tenants who have a demonstrated need.** The materials could be used by case managers on a 1:1 basis or through classes offered by another community provider. This would not delay securing permanent housing; the materials could be used after the client is housed.
- **Collect and encourage all agencies to utilize tenancy tools.** These may include guidelines for home visits, role plays for making or responding to a landlord complaint, simplified lists of lease do's and don'ts, etc. This sample form for explaining critical sections of a lease is a model that can be used:
https://www.onecpd.info/onecpd/assets/File/housingsearch/What%20Does%20My%20Lease%20Say_v2_Aug06.doc
- **Identify Housing Specialist roles in your community.** It is important to have someone who is responsible for focusing on the needs of landlords. This may be a Housing Navigator, Landlord Liaison, or other housing specialist position or a role that a case manager is also assuming. A role explicitly focusing on landlords usually makes it more likely that landlords will rent to veterans exiting homelessness. Additionally, by creating good partnerships with landlords, they are more likely to work out a solution when/if tenancy problems arise to help promote housing stability.

Housing Navigator or Case Manager?

There are different ways to recruit, retain and support landlords. Some communities have had excellent results from designating a specialized housing navigator who can engage with landlords and speak their language. A person with a background as a broker, real estate agent or other sales history allows case managers to do what they do best: support the client, while also having someone who explicitly supports the landlord and the program.

If you adopt this approach, it is critical that housing navigators and case managers have a protocol for how to share information back and forth as quickly as possible so as not to create any unnecessary delays in responding to needs of clients and/or landlords.

Case managers can also work directly with landlords. This enables case managers to understand landlord concerns and respond directly and quickly to resolve problems and appreciate landlord flexibility. Case manager job descriptions, training and supervision must ensure that case managers can balance their two roles.

5. Identify Employment Resources as Needed by the Veteran

Veterans with a recent work history may have lost their housing due to a job loss. Despite the stress of their situation, they may be willing or even eager to quickly secure new employment and pay their rent. Conversely, those with a long history of unemployment, disabilities, or high levels of stress overload symptoms may be able to work, but it may be a longer-term goal that requires education or job training, supportive employment programs or other resources. In some cases, disability benefits may be more realistic. Case managers must be sensitive to employment barriers and the local job

market. The community should be able to assure rapid access to suitable employment-related resources when appropriate.

- **Develop expedited access to community employment resources.** You can establish service partnerships with your community's one-stop employment center. This site enables you to connect to your state's Job Centers. <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/onestop/onestopmap.cfm>
- **Provide training to all Case Managers on the special challenges faced by veterans experiencing homelessness.** This guide provides information on this topic and identifies resources and includes a comprehensive list of employment assistance resources, both government and private organizations. http://www.nchv.org/images/uploads/EAG_1-10.pdf

MAYOR'S CORNER: HOW ELECTED OFFICIALS CAN HELP

Mayors, Governors, and county leaders are uniquely positioned to elevate and prioritize local efforts to end homelessness. When the Mayor or county commissioners are actively engaged in the fight to end homelessness, others will pay attention. While elected officials will likely not be involved in the day to day direct assistance to veterans facing homelessness, it is important to understand and vocally support the kind of housing stability work that is going on in their community.

- **Support Housing First:** Sometimes others in the community do not understand the research, ideas, and success around a Housing First approach to working with anyone who is experiencing homelessness. This can mean that sometimes providers get push back from neighbors, landlords, and others about not "fixing" a veteran before assisting them with housing. As an elected official, your voice of support for this evidence-based approach to homeless assistance is key to developing and maintaining support for the agencies doing this work in your community.
- **Manage expectations:** As with Housing First, achieving an end to veteran homelessness can be a difficult concept for others in the community to understand. High performing homeless crisis response systems are not able to prevent all homelessness, nor can they prevent future housing crises for veterans who have been homeless – many will continue to experience future housing instability due to low income and other housing retention barriers. Community leaders can help explain what is reasonable to expect from a homeless crisis response system.
- **Engage landlords and other housing providers:** Without sufficient affordable, permanent housing, it will be extremely hard for a community to reach its goal of ending veteran homelessness. Elected officials can help engage and recruit local landlords and other housing providers to increase housing options for homeless veterans. Officials can also help secure support for a flexible fund that can be used for landlord incentives or to pay for repairs in the event a unit is damaged – providing an important source of added assurance.
- **Help build partnerships between systems in your community:** Help forge partnerships between the homeless crisis response systems and key VA and community partners that can provide ongoing housing stabilization support. Key partners include the local VA Medical Center, public assistance programs, substance abuse and mental health treatment systems, county Veterans Services Offices, employment assistance providers and employers. Civic organizations, faith-based groups, and concerned citizens can also help.

HOUSING STABILITY TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Housing-Focused Case Management

- **Progressive Case Management:** The first half of this PowerPoint describes progressive case management, including the basic level of assistance that should be available to all program participants.
http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/ssvf/SSVF_Case_Management_Webinar_3212013_FINAL.pptx
- **Case Management in RRRH:** NAEH Conference Session. This set of three PowerPoints includes discussion on the differences between short-term and longer-term case management.
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/5.08-help-people-stay-housed-rapid-re-housing-case-management>
- **Reasonable Case Plans:** This PowerPoint from a Webinar on reasonable plans describes what makes a plan “unreasonable” and uses case examples to demonstrate reasonable planning.
http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/ssvf/SSVF_Reasonable_Plan_Webinar.ppt
- **Housing Stability Plan Template:** Describes the characteristics of a **Housing** Stability Plan, sequencing of Plans, what makes a Plan “reasonable” and offers a brief template for a case plan.
http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/SSVFUniversity/SSVF_Housing_Stability_Plan_Template.docx
- **On the Front lines - Strategies for Case Management from NAEH Conference 2014:** Two PowerPoints with some tips on using Motivational Interviewing, Harm Reduction and other approaches to working with people experiencing homelessness.
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/1.4-on-the-frontlines-strategies-for-case-management>

Income/Benefits

VA Income Benefits Resources:

- **Veteran Benefits Administration:** [See Figure 2 in this toolkit for a summary of types of benefits available for Veterans.](#) This Website describes income and other VA benefits, eligibility, application and location of closest regional office for VA Benefits.
<http://www.benefits.va.gov/>
- **Veteran’s e-Benefits Portal:** This Website allows veterans to access information about benefits and apply for income, health and other VA resources.
<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>

Other Income Benefits Resources

- **SOAR:** This Website is designed primarily for people who will help SSI/SSDI applicants gain expedited access to benefits for disabled persons. By using the SOAR in Your State button, you can identify the agencies with SOAR-trained advocates in any state.
<http://soarworks.prainc.com/>
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** The Office of Family Assistance locator allows users to find the address and telephone number for TANF offices (income support for families) in any state.
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/help>
- **SNAPS, WIC, etc.:** This Website describes different federally-funded nutrition programs and has links to online applications in many states.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/>
- **National Foundation for Credit Counseling:** This Website has links to consumer credit education, information about certified consumer credit counselors and a locator for finding a credit counselor in your area.
<https://www.nfcc.org/agency-locator/>
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** The Benefits.gov Website has income eligibility limits for LIHEAP, a locator for finding the nearest office to apply and frequently-asked questions.
<http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/623>

- **Lifeline Phone Service:** This is a free or almost free telephone assistance program for persons who are eligible for many federal assistance programs. The site has a link to state-by-state qualification information. https://www.safelinkwireless.com/Enrollment/Safelink/en/NewPublic/how_to_qualify.html

Employment

- **Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP):** A program of the Department of Labor, grantees provide an array of services utilizing a case management approach that directly assists homeless veterans as well as provide critical linkages for a variety of supportive services available in their local communities. The program is "employment focused" and veterans receive the employment and training services they need in order to re-enter the labor force. <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp/>
- **Employment Assistance Guide for Service Providers Helping Homeless veterans:** The guide provides an overview of special challenges faced by homeless men and women, and identifies the community resources in place to help them with housing, health, income supports, job search and placement assistance, substance abuse and family counseling, and other services they may need. It also includes a comprehensive list of employment assistance resources, both government and private organizations. http://www.nchv.org/images/uploads/EAG_1-10.pdf
- **America Job Centers (Department of Labor):** This site offers job and career information and enables connecting to your state's Job Centers. <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/onestop/onestopmap.cfm>
- **Employment and RRH (NAEH Conference):** PowerPoint on tips from two community programs about linking with employment. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/1.08-make-it-work-linking-rapid-re-housing-and-employment>
- **Improving Employment Outcomes (NAEH Conference):** Panelist PowerPoints on various aspects of employment, including community examples, research. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/pre-con-improving-employment-outcomes-exploring-research-funding-and-approa>

Landlord/Tenancy Supports

- **Sample Landlord-Case Manager Communication Agreement:** This document is a sample of an agreement between the client and case manager about how the case manager can speak to a landlord about the client's housing issues. http://www.hudhre.info/housingsearch/Landlord-Tenant-Case%20Manager%20Communication%20Agreementv2_Aug06.doc
- **Tool for interpreting lease:** This is a sample form for converting the critical requirements of a lease into clear, succinct language for a client. http://www.hudhre.info/housingsearch/What%20Does%20My%20Lease%20Say_v2_Aug06.doc

Healthcare

- **Locator: VA Medical Centers:** Find Vet Centers, VA Medical Centers and other resources in your state. Also enables veterans to enroll in data system to access their health information. <http://www.myhealth.va.gov/>
- **Webinar on health services for veterans:** Webinar recording describing healthcare resources for veterans. http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/practice_areas_and_resources/overview/tools_training_resources#module3_training
- **Community Health Care Resources:** Links to each state's Medicaid and CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) eligibility: <https://www.healthcare.gov/medicaid-chip/getting-medicaid-chip/>

Figure 2: A Sample of Veteran Benefits available by accessing

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/>



Health Care: <http://www.va.gov/health/>



Benefits: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/>

- Compensation and Pension
 - [Disability Compensation](#)
 - [Special Monthly Compensation](#)
 - [Special Compensation Claims](#)
 - [Veterans' Pension](#)
 - [Aid & Attendance and Housebound](#)
- Education and Training
 - [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)
 - [Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty \(MGIB-AD\)](#)
 - [Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve \(MGIB-SR\)](#)
 - [Reserve Educational Assistance Program \(REAP\)](#)
 - [Post-Vietnam Era Educational Assistance Program \(VEAP\)](#)
 - [VOW to Hire Heroes - Veterans Retraining Assistance Program](#)
- Home Loans
 - [Purchase Loan](#)
 - [Cash Out Refinance Loan](#)
 - [Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan \(IRRRL\)](#)
 - [Native American Direct Loan \(NADL\) Program](#)
 - [Adapted Housing Grants](#)
- Insurance
 - [Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance \(SGLI\)](#)
 - [Veterans' Group Life Insurance \(VGLI\)](#)
 - [Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance \(FSGLI\)](#)
 - [Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection \(TSGLI\)](#)
 - [Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance \(S-DVI\)](#)
 - [Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance \(VMLI\)](#)
- Voc Rehab and Employment
 - [Educational and Vocational Counseling](#)
 - [Independent Living Program](#)
 - [VOW to Hire Heroes - Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
 - [VetSuccess](#)
 -
- Additional Services including
 - [Career Center](#)
 - [Beneficiary Financial Counseling](#)
 - [Fiduciary Services](#)

EFFECTIVE HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEMS FOR VETERANS TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Veteran-specific Programs

Below is a list of key veteran resources that may be available to augment CoC, ESG and privately funded programs within your homeless crisis response system. Since the resources listed are not available in every community, it's important to follow the links provided to verify availability in your community.

Emergency Services for Veterans

- **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Street Outreach:** The VA's HCHV provides street outreach to reach the most vulnerable veterans who are homeless. HCHV seeks to engage these veterans in services and housing assistance. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp>
- **HCHV Contract Residential Treatment Program:** Ensures that veterans with serious mental health diagnoses can be placed in community-based programs which provide quality housing and services. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp>
- **Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program:** VA's GPD program provides short-term, transitional housing to veterans experiencing homelessness. During their stay, veterans are provided with services related to substance use disorders, life skills, and/or employment in preparation for independent living. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp>
- **Safe Havens:** Safe Havens provide a transitional residence for hard to reach homeless persons with mental illness and substance use problems who have failed in traditional programs. The low-demand, non-intrusive environment is designed to establish trust and eventually engage the homeless veteran in needed treatment services and transitional or permanent housing options. <http://endveteranhomelessness.org/programs/safe-havens>
- **VA Domiciliary:** The Domiciliary Care for Homeless veterans (DCHV) program provides time- limited residential treatment to homeless veterans with mental health and substance use disorders, co-occurring medical concerns, and psychosocial needs including homelessness and unemployment. DCHV programs provide homeless veterans access to medical, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment in addition to psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation treatment programs. <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/DCHV.asp>
- **Critical Safety and Health Services:** It is also critical for homeless veterans to be able to access other critical safety and/or health services. Examples of these services include emergency rooms and hospitals, and police departments. Contact 9-1-1 for an emergency need that requires these critical safety and health services.
- **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV):** The NCCHV was founded to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to VA staff. The hotline is intended to assist homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families, VAMCs, Federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. The phone number is 1-877-4AID VET (1-877- 424-3838).

Permanent Housing for Veterans

- **HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD- VASH):** (Permanent Supportive Housing) HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between HUD and VA where eligible homeless veterans receive a Housing Choice rental voucher from HUD, paired with VA providing case management and supportive services to sustain housing stability and recovery from physical and mental health problems, substance use disorders, and functional concerns contributing to or resulting from homelessness. HUD-VASH subscribes to the principles of the Housing First model of care. Program goals include housing stability while promoting maximum veteran recovery and independence in the community for the veteran and the veteran's family. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp>
- **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF):** (Rapid Re-housing) The SSVF program provides time-limited financial assistance and supportive services to very low-income veteran families in or transitioning to permanent housing. SSVF is designed to rapidly re-house homeless veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis. Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>

Other Veteran-Specific Resources

- **VA Locations:** Search by location for VA resources, including VA Central Office, Benefits Office & Intake Sites, Cemetery, VISN Office, Medical Facilities (Outpatient Clinics, Hospitals, Vet Centers). <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>
- **Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs (MH RRTPs):** Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (MH RRTPs) (including Domiciliary and RRTPs) provide residential rehabilitative and clinical care to veterans who have a wide range of problems, illnesses, or rehabilitative care needs which may include mental health and substance use disorders, co-occurring medical conditions and psychosocial needs such as homelessness and unemployment. All of these programs provide a 24/7 therapeutic setting utilizing both professional and peer supports. Treatment focuses on the veteran's needs, abilities, strengths, and preferences. <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/301>
- **Vets Centers:** Vet Centers across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat veterans and their families. Services for a veteran may include individual and group counseling in areas such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free of cost and are strictly confidential. <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>
- **Health Care for Reentry Veterans Services (HCRV):** The HCRV program is designed to address the community re-entry needs of incarcerated veterans. HCRV's goals are to prevent homelessness, reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse problems upon community re-adjustment, and decrease the likelihood of re- incarceration for those leaving prison. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp>
- **Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO):** The purpose of the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Program is to prevent homelessness, and avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among veterans. This is accomplished by ensuring that eligible justice-involved veterans encountered by police, and in jails or courts, have timely access to VHA mental health, substance abuse, and homeless services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp>
- **Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRC):** CRRCs are a collaborative effort of VA, the community, service providers, and agency partners. The CRRCs are located in strategically selected areas to provide both a refuge from the streets and a central location to engage homeless veterans in services. Veterans will be referred to health and mental health care resources, job development programs, housing options, and other VA and non-VA benefits. <http://endveteranhomelessness.org/programs/community-resource-referral-centers>
- **Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP):** The Homeless Veteran Dental Program helps increase the accessibility of quality dental care to homeless and certain other veteran patients enrolled in VA-sponsored and VA partnership homeless rehabilitation programs throughout the U.S. <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/dental.asp>
- **Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP):** The purpose of the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program is to provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force. HVRP projects provide an array of services to homeless veterans, including: job placement, training, job development, career counseling, resume preparation, and supportive services (e.g. clothing, transportation assistance and referrals to housing programs). <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp/>

Other Crisis Response System Resources

Clinical:

- Trauma-Informed Approach and Trauma-Specific Interventions (SAMHSA) <http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions>
- The Seven-Stage Crisis Intervention Model <http://btci.edina.clockss.org/cgi/reprint/5/4/329>
- Effects of Stress Exposure <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352289514000101>

Systems and Programs:

- Crisis Response System (conference presentation, NAEH)
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/1.3-crisis-response-system>
- A Closer Look: Opening Doors, As Amended in 2015 - Spotlight on Crisis Response Systems
<http://usich.gov/blog/a-closer-look-opening-doors-as-amended-in-2015-spotlight-on-crisis-response>
- Building Strong Connections to Rapidly House Veterans (webinar, USICH)
http://usich.gov/media_center/videos_and_webinars/opening-doors-to-innovation-building-strong-connections-to-rapidly-house-ve
- Identifying and Referring Veterans Experiencing Homelessness (fact sheet, USICH)
http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Veterans_Referral_Tool_2015_FINAL.pdf
- The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Opening Doors Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homeless, as Amended in 2015, http://usich.gov/opening_doors/
- Mayors Challenge: Homelessness Response and Housing System
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/service_providers
- SAMHSA's Expert Panel on the Prevention of Homelessness
http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_SAMHSA_expert_panel_on_prevention_fact_sheet_FINAL1.pdf
- Common Eligibility Criteria for Emergency Shelters: Best Practices for Entry into Emergency Shelters
https://100khomes.org/sites/default/files/Common%20Eligibility%20Criteria%20for%20Emergency%20Shelters%20FINAL_0.pdf
- Rapid Re-Housing: A History and Core Components
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rapid-re-housing-a-history-and-core-components>

Community Example:

- Ending Veterans Homelessness in New Orleans: the Importance of Partnerships and Shared Goals
http://usich.gov/population/veterans/veterans_homelessness_in_focus/ending_veteran_homelessness_in_new_orleans_the_importance_of_partnerships_a/

Veteran Homelessness:

- HUD SNAPs In Focus: Increasing Housing Placements of Homeless Veterans
<http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=87d7c8afc03ba69ee70d865b9&id=d5b7a8bae1&e=27c0063574>
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) University
<http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp>

IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING HOMELESS VETERANS TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Using Data to Identify Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

- **Working across data systems (HMIS and VA HOMES) to share data, HUD Exchange:** Examples from four communities.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3677/best-practices-sharing-information-to-end-veteran-homelessness/>
- **PIT Tools:** This website provides HUD guidance on implementation of PIT counts for communities to consider and includes HIC and PIT guides and tools.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4433/point-in-time-count-implementation-tools/>
- **HUD PIT and HIC guides:** This page contains information on PIT survey guidance and tools, including the mobile app. <https://www.hudexchange.info/hdx/guides/pit-hic/>

- **HMIS Data and Technical Standards:** These standards are a joint release of HUD, HHS and the VA. Guidance and documents are structured so that communities can easily determine which data elements are required for each federal partner's program.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/hmis/hmis-data-and-technical-standards/>

Outreach

- **Practice Areas for Outreach:** Guidance from the VA for programs to ensure a comprehensive outreach plan that can be implemented quickly.
http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/practice_areas_and_resources/practice_areas/outreach
- **Assessing the Evidence on Outreach and Engagement:** SAMHSA, Homelessness Resource Center guidance to educate program staff, funders and community members about the value and implementation of outreach and engagement.
<http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/Assessing-the-Evidence-What-We-Know-About-Outreach-and-Engagement-37555.aspx>
- **What Makes Good Outreach in a CES Blog by Iain DeJong:** Seven essential items that effective outreach must contain.
<http://www.orgcode.com/2015/05/04/what-makes-good-street-outreach-in-the-era-of-coordinated-entry/>
- **Veteran's Justice Outreach (VJO), VA:** A program for criminally involved vets, with VJO contacts across the country.
<http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>
- **Healthcare for Homeless (HCH)/VA collaboration guide:** NHCHC strategies for collaboration between HCH, VA, and community based organizations.
<http://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/HCH-VA-Collaboration-Quick-Guide.pdf>

Creating a By-Name List

- **Master list:** Details the benefits of maintaining a list of all homeless veterans in a coordinated entry system, and includes an example of a format for a master list of homeless veterans.
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/sample-veteran-homelessness-master-list>
- **Weekly meetings to include partners**
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/blog/entry/want-to-end-veteran-homelessness-in-your-community-get-all-your-partners-on#.VafLo7Vxj4x>

Coordinated Entry

- **Coordinated Entry Policy Brief:** HUD discusses the qualities and elements that need to be included in effective coordinated entry.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Policy-Brief.pdf>
- **CoC toolkit section on coordinated entry:** Designing a coordinated entry process.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/responsibilities-and-duties>
- **Coordinated Assessment Toolkit (NAEH):** A five part best practice toolkit which includes models, types of systems, information on intake and assessment, as well as suggestions for systems and program transitions.
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/coordinated-assessment-toolkit>
- **USICH summary of CE:** A short summary of CE, along with links to other resources.
http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/coordinated_entry
- **SNAPS Weekly Focus on Coordinated Assessment**
<https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-weekly-focus-why-coordinated-assessment-is-critical-to-ending-homelessness-locally/>

Sustaining the Effort

- **10 strategies to end Veteran homelessness (USICH):** USICH has identified 10 strategies that increase leadership, collaboration, and coordination among programs serving Veterans experiencing homelessness, and promote rapid access to permanent housing for all Veterans.
<http://usich.gov/population/Veterans/10-strategies-to-end-veteran-homelessness>

- **5 Steps to Ending Veteran Homelessness** (NAEH): NAEH has developed five steps your community can take to ensure that you are part of the January 2016 celebrations announcing an end to veteran homelessness. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/five-steps-to-end-veteran-homelessness>
- **Successful practices of communities that have met their goal of ending veteran homelessness:** Houston's story of ending veteran homelessness. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/01/houston-veteran-homelessness_n_7484498.html
- **"The US Declared War on Veteran Homelessness – And It Actually Could Win,"**: Aug 4, 2015, NPR; 6min NPR clip, and article on Homelessness, particularly highlighting New Orleans and Los Angeles <http://www.npr.org/2015/08/04/427419718/the-u-s-declared-war-on-veteran-homelessness-and-it-actually-could-win>

Collaboration across Teams

- **Working with local VAMC** (NAEH): This brief identifies five promising strategies that homelessness assistance systems have used to create or strengthen their relationship with their local VA Medical Center. http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/3633_file_Promising_Strategies_for_Working_with_Local_VAs.pdf
- **SSVF University - VA Homeless veterans practice areas and resources:** This Practice Area addresses the critical areas programs should always assess—and those that should be assessed only when indicated by the participant's specific barriers to housing stability. This Practice Area also addresses the characteristics of a good Housing Plan in a program that is driven by the Housing First philosophy, a crisis response strategy and participant choice. http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/practice_areas_and_resources/practice_areas/assessment_housing_plan
- **SNAPS Weekly Focus on Collaborating to Combat Homelessness Among Veterans** <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-weekly-focus-collaborating-to-combat-homelessness-among-Veterans/>

CONNECTING TO PERMANENT HOUSING TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Mainstream Public Resources

- **HUD-VASH:** This page identifies the eligibility criteria for the HUD VASH program. http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash_eligibility.asp
- **SSVF Webpage:** This page links directly to the most recent SSVF Program Guide from March 2015. http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/SSVF_Program_Guide_March_2015_Edition.pdf
- **HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing Program:** The Section 202 program helps expand the supply of affordable housing with supportive services for the elderly. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/mfh/grants/section202ptl
- **HUD's Section 811 for People with Disabilities Program:** The Section 811 program allows persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible in the community by subsidizing rental housing opportunities which provide access to appropriate supportive services. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/mfh/grants/section811ptl
- **HUD 811 Project Based Demonstration:** The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) Program seeks to identify, stimulate, and support successful and innovative state approaches to providing integrated supportive housing for people with disabilities. <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/811-pra>
- **Low Income Housing Tax Credit Property Directory:** This system allows selective access to data from HUD's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Database. <http://lihtc.huduser.org/>
- **Technical Assistance Collaborative Special Purpose Voucher Database:** Using all available federal data, TAC has developed a comprehensive up-to-date database of vouchers targeted to people with disabilities and other special needs. <http://www.tacinc.org/knowledge-resources/vouchers-database/>

Landlords and Housing Partners

- **SNAPS In-Focus Message** on establishing effective housing partnerships between homeless systems and permanent housing providers. <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-in-focus-increasing-housing-placements-of-homeless-veterans/>
- **Establishing and maintaining landlord partners** (USICH): A short two-page guide for landlords on the SSVF and HUD-VASH programs. http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/SUM_Private_Landlord_Engagement_FINAL.pdf
- **Landlord Liaison Project** (USICH): The Landlord Liaison Project of King County, Washington, creates incentives for landlords to relax screening criteria for people experiencing homelessness who have barriers to accessing permanent housing. http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/landlord_liaison_project
- **Sustaining landlord partnerships in creative ways** (NAEH): Landlord damage insurance funds – a tool some communities are using to incentivize landlords to take a chance on tenants. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/blog/entry/field-notes-building-relationships-with-landlords#.VeRVz8uFOM8>
- **Landlord benefits of working with homeless providers** (NAEH): This checklist is a tool to advertise your program to potential landlords. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rapid-re-housing-landlord-benefits-checklist>
- **Working with landlords** (HUD): This page provides tips on recruiting and cultivating relationships with landlords. These suggestions are based on the experiences of organizations around the country that have been providing housing search assistance for hard-to-place individuals. <http://www.hudhre.info/housingsearch/m2t2.htm>
- **Landlord outreach plan resources** (NAEH): This is the second of five short modules the Center for Capacity Building has developed on rapid re-housing. This module discusses how to locate housing by developing and maintaining landlord relationships. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/housing-search-location-and-landlords-module>
- **Forms and Templates for Landlord Engagement** (Community Solutions) provided as part the Zero: 2016 initiative. <http://cmtysolutions.org/additionalresources>
- **Housing Navigator Chart** (VA): The VA has created a chart showing different affordable housing solutions that may be available within a community. https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/SSVF_Housing_Navigator_Tool.pdf
- **SSVF University**: The VA has established the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) University as a resource for SSVF grantees seeking to develop, implement, and/or improve their program. The site includes information, tools, and training on program requirements and practices, which can be navigated through the menu above. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp>

Expediting Access

- **Streamlining access to housing** (USICH): Over the past several years, Rapid Re-Housing and Housing First programs across the country have tested a range of strategies to streamline access to housing. The most promising of these strategies include: lining up a supply of housing resources through landlord recruitment, master leasing, and the engagement of Public Housing Agencies; coordinating housing application processes and wait lists; using technology to match housing to people; and delivering individualized housing search and financial assistance. This tool identifies approaches communities have used to mitigate barriers to housing access, and are often used in combination. http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/streamlining_access_to_housing
- **HUD-VASH Utilization** (USICH): A blog from USICH that identifies strategies to full utilize HUD-VASH. <http://usich.gov/blog/fully-utilizing-hud-vash>
- **Support Resources for HUD-VASH Utilization, including EAF** (HUD): A letter from HUD to Public Housing Authority Directors providing further guidance and simplifies requests of HUD-VASH Extraordinary Administrative Fees (EAF) funding, and includes a sample budget request form. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Letter-from-HUD-to-PHA-Executive-Directors-on-HUD-VASH-Extraordinary-Administrative-Fees.pdf>

- **FAQ clarifying eligibility for PSH for clients enrolled in RRH programs** (HUD): A Frequently Asked Question on the HUD Exchange related to retention of homeless status for RRH project participants so they can access other permanent housing projects.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/529/is-an-individual-or-family-that-is-receiving-rapid-re-housing-assistance>
- **Housing First Checklist** (USICH): This user-friendly tool is intended for use by policymakers, government officials, and practitioners alike to help make a basic assessment of whether and to what degree a particular housing program is employing a Housing First approach. The tool can be used as a checklist that can be reviewed during a site visit, program audit, or program interview, or as a guide and checklist when reviewing funding applications or reviewing a program's policies and procedures.
http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing_First_Checklist_FINAL.pdf
- **Guide for partnering with Public Housing Authorities** (HUD): This guidance document provides CoCs with preliminary strategies and tips for starting or improving the partnership conversation and engaging their local PHA(s) in collaborative planning activities.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoC-and-PHA-Collaboration-Strategies-for-CoCs-to-Start-the-Partnership-Conversation.pdf>
- **FAQ discussing the prioritization of veterans for HUD-funded projects** (HUD): A Frequently Asked Question on the HUD Exchange about prioritizing veterans.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/1894/does-hud-expect-cocs-and-recipients-of-coc-program-funded-psh-to-also>
- **Expert discussion regarding common assessment** (HUD): A report from HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, in partnership with the National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance), summarizing a convening of a panel of experts to discuss assessment tools that communities are using to allocate homeless assistance and to consider the evidence base for the questions used in the tools.
http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/pdf/assessment_tools_Convening_Report2015.pdf

Coordination with Key Partners

- **PHA Guide to Ending Homelessness**: USICH Guidebook to Public Housing Authorities to end veteran homelessness through planning, policies and procedures, and partnerships.
http://usich.gov/usich_resources/pha_portal/
- **The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness**: Mayor's Challenge website specifically for Mayors and Staff to engage their community to end veteran homelessness.
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/mayors_and_staff
- **Five Impact Steps for Mayors to end homelessness**: From the National Alliance to End Homelessness five proven steps that mayors can take to ramp up and achieve the goal.
http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/1f3317b3b32e4f1c5f_ekm6bnwqc.pdf
- **HUD directory of CoC contacts by program and location**: A listing of Continuums of Care throughout the country and contact information for CoC and HMIS Leads.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/grantees/>

Rural and Tribal Land Resources

- **Letter to Tribal Leaders regarding the expansion of HUD-VASH into Tribal Lands**: A letter from HUD to Tribal Leaders announcing funding for the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program.
<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=deartriballeaderhudvash.pdf>
- **Section 515 Rural Rental Assistance Program**: Rural Rental Housing Loans are direct, competitive mortgage loans made to provide affordable multifamily rental housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income families, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities.
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=19565_515_RuralRental.pdf
- **Section 538 Rural Rental Housing Guaranteed Loan Program**: The program works with qualified private-sector lenders to provide financing to qualified borrowers to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families in eligible rural areas and towns.
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-loan-guarantees>

Community Examples

- **Atlanta Real Estate Collaborative (AREC) example of realtor partnership**
<http://www.arec.org/>
- **Examples of Mayor-driven Landlord recruitment in [Los Angeles](#), [Honolulu](#), [Portland](#) and [Chattanooga](#)**
 - Los Angeles: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/va-secretary-mcdonald-and-mayor-garcetti-call-on-landlords-to-join-in-ending-veteran-homelessness-at-homes-for-heroes-breakfast-300095077.html>
 - Honolulu: <http://www.kitv.com/news/mayor-asks-landlords-to-help-homeless-veterans/34090018>
 - Portland: <http://www.opb.org/news/article/portland-seeks-more-landlords-who-will-rent-to-veterans-with-vouchers/>
 - Chattanooga: <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2015/apr/19/berke-seeks-landlords-help-end-veterhomelessn/299520/>