Regional Council of Mayors Meeting

Homeless Veterans in Minnesota

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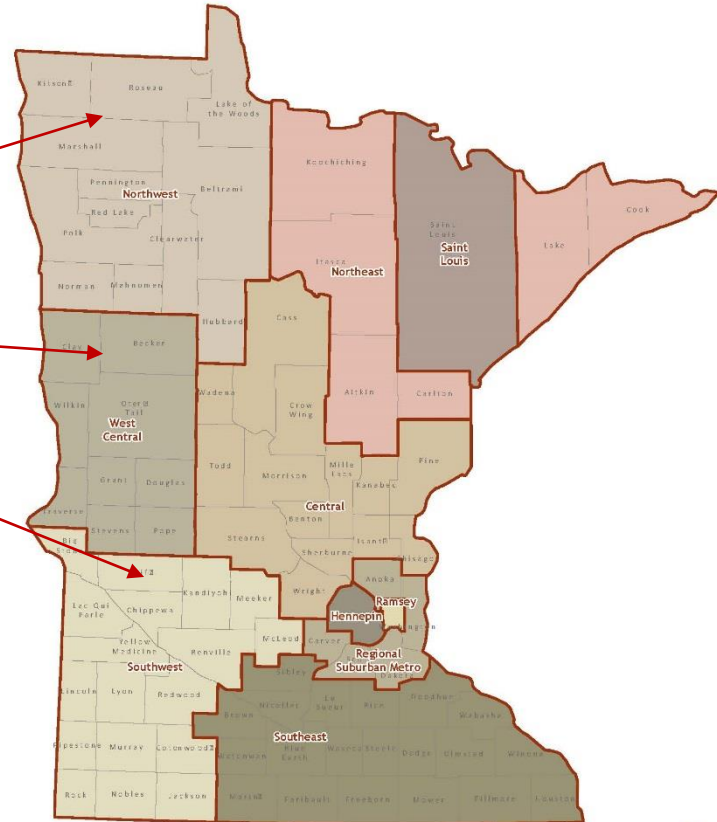**"THERE ARE NO HOMELESS PEOPLE, RATHER PEOPLE EXPERIENCING A HOUSING CRISES"**

Efforts to End Homelessness Among Veterans are paying off:

- Since 2010, there has been a **58%** reduction in homelessness among Veterans in Minnesota compared to a **47%** reduction nationally (2010-2016).

- As a state, we have stably housed over **1,225** previously homeless Veterans since the Registry kicked off in January 2015.

- All 10 of Minnesota's Continuums of Care (CoC) have aligned their efforts to end homelessness among all populations with the **Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness**.

- **3 of the 10** CoC's (representing **forty of eighty-seven Minnesota Counties**) have been confirmed through a Federal review process; that they have put robust systems in place to rapidly address the needs of any Veteran experiencing a housing crisis.

- **Ending homelessness does not mean that a Veteran will never experience a housing crisis. Financial hardships and the unpredictability of life mean that Veterans may face housing crises or may experience homelessness.**

The **Southwest**, **West Central**, and **Northwest** CoCs were confirmed through a Federal review process by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to have met the criteria of "functional zero", meaning they are able to house any Veteran experiencing homelessness as fast as they are locating them.

Minnesota's Continuum of Care Regions

Source: Minnesota Housing Created: April 2013

Path to end Veteran homelessness: Logic Model

Minnesota's Path to End Veteran Homelessness

Inputs

Evidence-based interventions
- Housing First
- Perm. Supportive Housing
- Rapid rehousing

Reliable identification
- Proven questions to identify Veterans and VHA-eligibility

Existing body of knowledge
- Triennial homelessness survey (Wilder)
- PIT data
- VA HOMES data

Resources
- Income supports
- Housing and service options for VHA-eligible Veterans (HUD-VASH, SSVF, GPD, etc.)
- Known approaches for reaching other Veterans (CoC and PHA resources)

Collaborators
- CVSOs
- Shelters
- Outreach efforts
- VA and State agencies
- Housing & service orgs
- CoCs

Interventions

Identification

Veterans needing housing solutions are identified across access points using reliable questions about Veteran status, and invited to sign a Registry Release of Information.

Street outreach	County VSOs
School liaisons	Food shelves
VA outreach and intake	Drop-in centers
	Standdowns
Shelter intake processes	In-reach efforts

Where available, Veterans participate in Coordinated Assessment to assess need and appropriate intervention(s).

Veterans needing housing interventions who sign the Release of Information are added to a centrally-managed **Veteran Registry** containing limited personally-identifying information:
- Name and how to contact
- Date of Birth & last four digits of SSN
- Assessment of needed intervention
- Duration & episodes of homelessness
- Disability
- Income
- Current provider(s) and housing status

Regional efforts

Regional teams representing access points and available service and housing resources manage and update **Veteran Registry** for their region, including :
- Assigning service responsibility for unassigned Veterans
- Monitoring progress of assigned Veterans into housing
- Identifying Veterans who may have resolved their homelessness without intervention
- Troubleshooting / collaborating

On a regional basis, leadership of involved partners implement region-specific strategies (e.g., rapid exit from shelter, increasing throughput of transitional housing to permanent housing outcomes) necessary to _triple_ existing rate of housing outcomes.

Promotion of Veteran identification across mainstream systems and increasing access to mainstream housing resources by, e.g., establishing preferences among PHAs, building assessment of Veteran and housing status into intake processes, etc.

Hosting & maintenance of **Veteran Registry**

Common dashboard of progress toward goal supports routine engagement of leaders

Statewide efforts

Outcomes

Veteran outcomes

Effective homelessness prevention for Veterans at risk of experiencing homelessness	Stable housing
	Improved health care utilization
	Improved employment
Perm. housing secured for Veterans experiencing homelessness & their families	Increased family stability
	Better educational outcomes for children and youth

Demonstrable impact on emergency, crisis, shelter, public safety, and institutional services from reduced Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Improved sense of community

Ending Veteran homelessness imparts momentum, confidence, and proven approaches into efforts to end homelessness for all populations.

Successful achieving leadership goal inspires additional leadership commitments to end homelessness.

Community outcomes

In June 2017, the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness established a framework for the next version of the Heading Home Plan organized around **seven principles** that reflect what it means to have an effective response to homelessness, including:

1. *Identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness.*

2. *Ensure that everyone confronting homelessness can access a form of safe and appropriate shelter through diversion, prevention, or crisis housing with appropriate services.*

3. *Link people experiencing homelessness with housing and services tailored to their needs through coordinated entry and prioritize the most vulnerable people for permanent supportive housing.*

4. *Assist people with moving swiftly into permanent housing with any needed supports.*

5. *Use a person-centered approach, trauma-informed, Housing-first orientation in our response to homelessness.*

6. *Help people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness increase employment and income.*

7. *Organize resources, plans, partnerships, and system capacity that are sufficient to prevent and end homelessness on an ongoing basis.*

Homelessness is a **solvable** problem. With the power of our ingenuity and "can do" spirit we can solve any problem. We need to throw our efforts behind real solutions. Homelessness is not a problem that should seem insurmountable.

- In Minnesota's tight rental housing markets, the primary challenge facing Veterans experiencing homelessness is identifying a landlord who will agree to accept Veterans, particularly for those with blemishes on their rental histories, or a criminal history. Landlord engagement events/awards from Chamber of Commerce.

- Homelessness looks different in Greater MN (couch hopping vs. shelter)
  - There is also a lack of immediate shelter for unsheltered individuals, and transportation barriers.
  - More difficult to identify and outreach to homeless Veterans in greater MN

- Establish municipal support and maintain accountability, to ensure a community-wide response (money invested in your communities is efficient and effective)

- Engaging local leadership, philanthropy, Veterans service organizations (CVSO, VFW, American Legion, etc.) and other organizations at the local level to solve local issues.
  - Creation of gap funds
  - Developing new affordable housing (private/public partnerships) and applying for housing grants
  - Emergency shelters/hotel vouchers, or other creative ways to provide immediate shelter
  - Coordinating community resources (listing resources available and working together to achieve common goals, and align with the seven principles).

Any Questions??

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Have veteran related questions? Call 1-888-LinkVet (1-888-546-5838)
www.minnesotaveteran.org or www.mn.gov/mdva

Every Veteran can Join the Registry by calling **1-888-LinkVet (888-546-5838)** or by completing the Registry application on MDVA's website:
https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/homelessnessandprevention/homelessveteranregistry.jsp