

NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Visit ncsha.org/awards to view the Annual Awards Call for Entries.

Instructions: Type entry information into the form and save it as a PDF. Do not write on or scan the form. If you have any questions contact Matt Cunningham at mcunningham@ncsha.org or 202-624-5424.

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

Entry Name: _____

HFA: _____

Submission Contact: (Must be HFA Staff Member) _____ **Email:** _____

Please provide a 15-word (maximum) description of your nomination to appear on the NCSHA website.

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page:

HFA: _____

Entry Name: _____

Select the appropriate subcategory of your entry and indicate if you are providing visual aids.

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
Annual Report	Empowering New Buyers	Federal Advocacy	Financial
Creative Media	Encouraging New Production	State Advocacy	Human Resources
Promotional Materials and Newsletters	Home Improvement and Rehabilitation		Operations
			Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
Encouraging New Production	Combating Homelessness	Special Achievement	Yes
Multifamily Management	Housing for Persons with Special Needs		No
Preservation and Rehabilitation			

Innovative

Historically, there has been a broad focus on addressing the issues surrounding homelessness. And, while there have been small gains in reducing the incidence of homelessness, we have not made the progress we would like to see.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the National League of Cities called on mayors across the country to make a commitment to end Veteran homelessness in their cities in 2015.

While the Mayors Challenge targeted cities and towns, Governor Jack Markell took the unusual step of joining the Challenge and expanded it to encompass the ending of Veteran homelessness in the entire state. In January 2015, he charged Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) Director Anas Ben Addi and Delaware Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf to develop a plan to end Veteran homelessness in our state by the end of the year. *Delaware's Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015* was unveiled on May 4, 2015.

The development of state Interagency Council on Homelessness and 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness brought together critical partners to plan to end homelessness, not just shelter the homeless. However, the scope of the challenge has in many areas just been too vast. By eradicating homelessness in a specific group, we can methodically reduce the size of the problem, and we intend on subsequently focusing on additional populations such as youth. This step-by-step effort will make meaningful and visible strides in reducing the number of homeless people, and give us confidence in the feasibility of the goal of ending homelessness

Replicable

In response to the Governor's charge to develop a plan to accomplish the goal of ending Veteran homelessness in 2015, we developed a state working group to work on state-level policy issues, data-sharing and coordination, and support the work of local groups.

It is DSHA's intent to use this state effort as a model to tackle policy challenges around homelessness in general – the model of having a narrowly focused review of needs, resources, and policy, and acting strategically to fill gaps.

Effectively Employ Partnerships

A State working group was formed that included the VA, statewide Continuum of Care and centralized intake agency, and statewide Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF) providers. A local working group brought together local caseworkers, housing agencies, Code Purple volunteers, local Veterans' organizations, and shelters.

Thus began a collaborative interaction between the state and local groups, with the state effort focusing on policy and strategic issues, allowing local groups able to focus on outreach, engagement, and housing the Veterans.

In the state working group, we reviewed the data on needs and gathered information on the resources available. VA-funded resources like SSVF and HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) are extensive, and there are generally adequate resources available for homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, and short-term housing.

Where we found gaps:

1. Permanent supportive housing (for Veterans with the most intensive needs, those who are chronically homeless, with disabilities, and many challenges to stability); and
2. Housing for Veterans who are not eligible for VA services.

Our immediate response to this gap is to create 20 rental assistance vouchers dedicated to Veterans through the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP), which provides integrated community housing with supportive services.

In addition to creating additional vouchers for this specific gap, we have identified several different strategies to house Veterans who are currently homeless in Delaware now and to ensure that Veterans facing homelessness in the future are housed as quickly as possible. Examples:

- Changes to www.delawarehousingsearch.org to include more Veteran resources;
- Increase targeting of the most intensive resources to homeless Veterans with the greatest needs for those services;
- Improve connections and coordination between Veteran-specific and mainstream resources for homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing;
- Offer targeted trainings on mainstream housing resources to caseworkers serving Veterans; and
- Develop consistent information on housing resources and referrals to ensure Veterans in need of housing can make the right connection to resolve their housing crisis the first time – places like Delaware Joining Forces website, etc.

Respond to an Important Housing Need

The 2014 Delaware Point-in-Time Count, which identifies the number of people homeless on one night in January, reported that 93 of the 901 people homeless on that night in 2014 were Veterans. Based on our preliminary research using available data, over the course of a year, an estimated 280 Veterans experience homelessness. We know many more Veterans and their families at high risk of homelessness are served by the VA-funded Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF) program, and that many Veterans go uncounted as Veterans because they are not eligible for VA services due to the nature of their discharge or time of service or otherwise do not consider themselves Veterans despite military service.

Demonstrate Measurable Benefits to HFA Targeted Customers

Our goals are both an immediate and systematic end to Veteran homelessness, which means there are no Veterans sleeping on the streets and every Veteran has access to permanent housing. If a Veteran is homeless in Delaware, the resources exist to quickly re-house the Veteran and streamlined and efficient

processes are in place to do so. While there may still be Veterans counted as homeless while they are in shelter, the number should be reduced dramatically and stays in shelter should be brief.

Benefits Outweigh the Costs

Veterans are more likely to be chronically homeless than general homeless population (33% compared to approximately 12% of the general population). When not stably housed, chronically homeless individuals tend to incur very high costs in other non-housing programs such as emergency medical care and the criminal justice system. Strong universal support for Veterans is also bringing new allies into the cause to end homelessness.

Demonstrate Effective Use of Resources

Focusing on ending Veteran homelessness caused us to take a careful and strategic look at needs and resources. Ending homelessness with placements in permanent housing means looking at more than just the number of people homeless compared to emergency shelter beds. Estimates of needs by type – Veterans needing rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, other short-term housing and supports were compared to available resources to identify where the real gaps are located.

We will also more strategically prioritize and place Veterans according to their needs. High-need, chronically homeless are prioritized for resource-intensive programs like HUD-VASH. Veterans homeless for the first time, with good employment prospects, etc., would be targeted for rapid rehousing or shorter-term transitional programs.

Two strategies in our State Plan are to 1) work with the VA to identify HUD-VASH voucher holders who may no longer need the intensive supportive services associated with the program; and 2) work with Public Housing Authorities, including DSHA, to transition those voucher-holders to regular Housing Choice Vouchers, thus freeing up HUD-VASH vouchers for other chronically homeless Veterans needing the permanent supportive housing and services.

Achieve Strategic Objectives

To end Veteran homelessness in Delaware, we must both ensure that Veterans who are currently homeless are placed in permanent housing, and make policy and other changes to ensure that Veterans who present as homeless or at risk of homelessness in the future are housed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Bringing this kind of strategic approach to the homeless system in the state is an objective for DSHA in our next Strategic Plan. Ending Veteran homelessness is also an objective of Delaware's 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. We are building partnerships and using this as a model to continue focusing on ending homelessness in The First State.

Delaware Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness

Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015

May 4, 2015

Too often, the return to civilian life can bring a cascade of challenges which can lead to homelessness for Veterans. Causes of homelessness among Veterans are similar to causes of homelessness among non-Veterans: interrelated economic and personal factors and a shortage of affordable housing. However, Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to be unsheltered and to experience homelessness for longer periods of time. About half of Veterans experiencing homelessness have serious mental illness, half have a history with the criminal justice system, and nearly 70 percent have substance abuse disorders. All of these factors contribute to challenges to resolving homelessness.

Nationally, focused effort from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to end homelessness for Veterans has led to a 30% decrease in homelessness among Veterans in the past four years. But still, on any given night 50,000 Veterans are homeless in our country, 100 of them here in Delaware. In 2015, an estimated 280 Veterans will experience homelessness in Delaware.

Even one Veteran homeless in our state is one too many. This is a problem that can be solved, and indeed has been solved in several cities around the country. By bringing together state and local partners, service providers and the community around this shared, highly focused goal, we can end Veteran homelessness in Delaware. In addition to directly benefiting Veterans, this initiative will also benefit the broader homeless system in the state as a pilot of a focused, collaborative effort to end homelessness for a specific population using evidence-based practices.

The Challenge

In 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. One of the specific goals identified in this plan is to end Veteran homelessness in the United States before the end of 2015. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have both directed resources to address Veteran homelessness, namely the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing

(VASH) program, which combines HUD’s Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the VA. VA provides these services for participating Veterans at VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics.

In June of 2014 First Lady Michelle Obama encouraged mayors and local leaders to join a coalition of leaders committed to ending Veteran homelessness in their communities by the end of 2015. This effort, known as the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, seeks to eliminate Veteran homelessness by ensuring that Veterans who are homeless are able to become stably housed quickly in permanent housing

and that those who are at risk of becoming homeless are quickly identified and provided with appropriate resources to prevent them from experiencing homelessness. With strong support from the National League of Cities, the initiative advances a community-based model of local working groups and cross-sector collaboration with the VA, nonprofit service providers, local government and housing agencies.

The Challenge in Delaware

On May 4, 2015, Governor Jack Markell is joining seven other Governors in signing on to the Challenge as a State, honoring Delaware’s commitment to ensure that Veterans have every opportunity to live full, healthy lives in our state. As of April 2015, New

Roles and Responsibilities	
State Working Group	Local Working Groups
Data Collection & Tracking	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use statewide data to inform the setting of targets and outcomes • Receive and compile local data • Track and report outcomes at state level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and track local data and housing outcomes • Report local data to state group
Housing Homeless Veterans	
<p>Planning & Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to local groups about strategies utilized successfully in other communities (research, best practices) • Develop solutions to policy and process issues that may be preventing or making access to housing challenging for homeless Veterans • Identify/map housing resources 	<p>Direct Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop local working group • Set local housing and outcome targets • Identify local housing and supportive services for homeless Veterans • Develop and implement local strategies to achieve housing goals • Report any policy and process issues to the state group
Coordination	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together primary partners at executive and state level to ensure coordination and shared goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve essential partners in local efforts (VA staff, homeless service providers, SSVF staff, etc.)

Castle County, the Cities of Wilmington, Newark and Dover, and Town of Georgetown have signed on to the Mayors Challenge, and several other jurisdictions may soon sign on.

Achieving the goal of ending Veteran homelessness in Delaware will require collaborative work across jurisdictions, service providers, and state and federal agencies. Local working groups are already up and running at various stages of their efforts. In January, a summit on veteran homelessness was held in Dover, followed up by a "boot camp" planning session and development of a working group committed to housing 22 veterans in Dover in 100 days. A collaborative group of New Castle County, the City of Wilmington and City of Newark are working together to host a Summit to kick off a similar 100-day challenge in northern Delaware.

These groups bring together local providers, volunteers, and officials to engage in the direct action of assembling local resources, conducting outreach, and housing Veterans. A state working group will provide statewide support in coordinating data-sharing, advancing state-level strategies, and supporting the local efforts. The local working groups' on-the-ground direct experience will help identify challenges and inform further state strategies.

Defining the Goal

Our goal is both an immediate and systematic end to Veteran homelessness, which means there are no Veterans sleeping on the streets and every Veteran has access

to permanent housing. If a Veteran is homeless in Delaware, the resources exist to quickly re-house the Veteran and streamlined and efficient processes are in place to do so. Residing in an emergency shelter or transitional housing is still considered homeless. While there may still be veterans counted as homeless while they are in shelter, the number should be reduced dramatically and stays in shelter should be brief.

We will measure our progress with the 2016 Point-in-Time count, an annual report which identifies the number of people homeless on one night in January. We will also engage in ongoing measurement through the Community Management Information System (CMIS), which tracks individuals served in the homeless assistance system, of Veterans in the system, lengths of stay, and exits to permanent housing.

What is the definition of homeless?

The Challenge is focused on those who are "Literally Homeless" as defined by HUD. This means an individual or family who lacks a regular and adequate residence. Living in a public or private place not meant for human habitation or in a shelter or other temporary living arrangements is considered homeless. This includes individuals who are exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less who was homeless immediately prior to entry into the institution. This also includes an individual fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

A chronically homeless individual is someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years and has a disability. A family with an adult member who meets this description would also be considered chronically homeless.

Who is considered a Veteran?

For purposes of the Challenge, a Veteran is anyone who has been a member of the armed services for any length of time. This includes Veterans who may not be eligible for VA services due to discharge status or length of service, and Veterans of the National Guard.

Need and Target

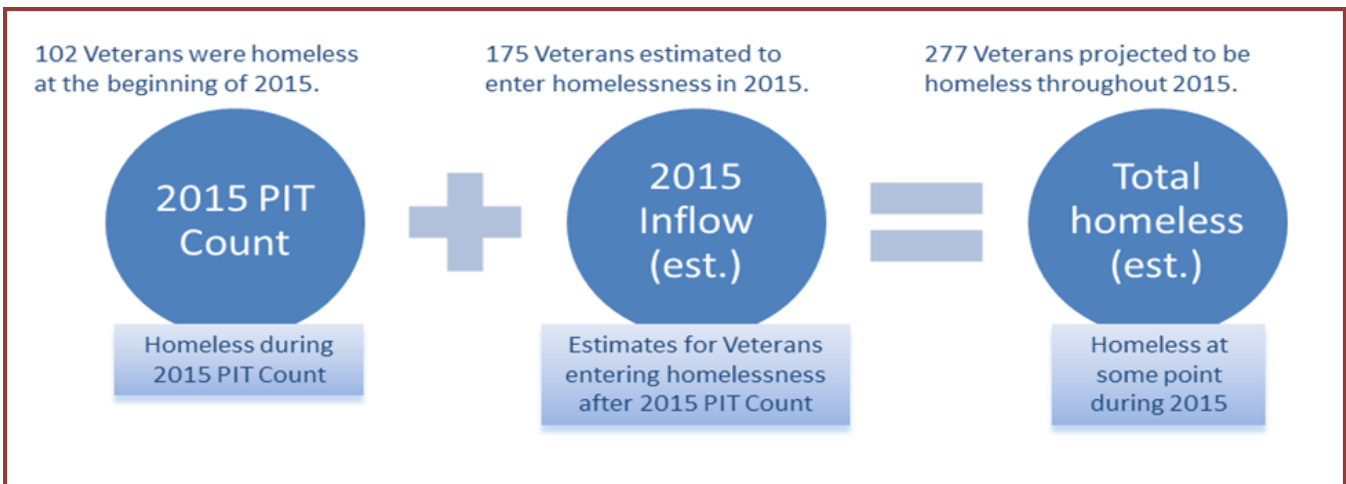
The 2015 Delaware Point-in-Time Count reported that 102 Veterans were homeless on that night in January, 2015. We know many more Veterans and their families at risk of homelessness are served by the SSVF program, and that many Veterans go uncounted as Veterans because they are not eligible for VA services due to nature of their discharge, time of service or otherwise do not

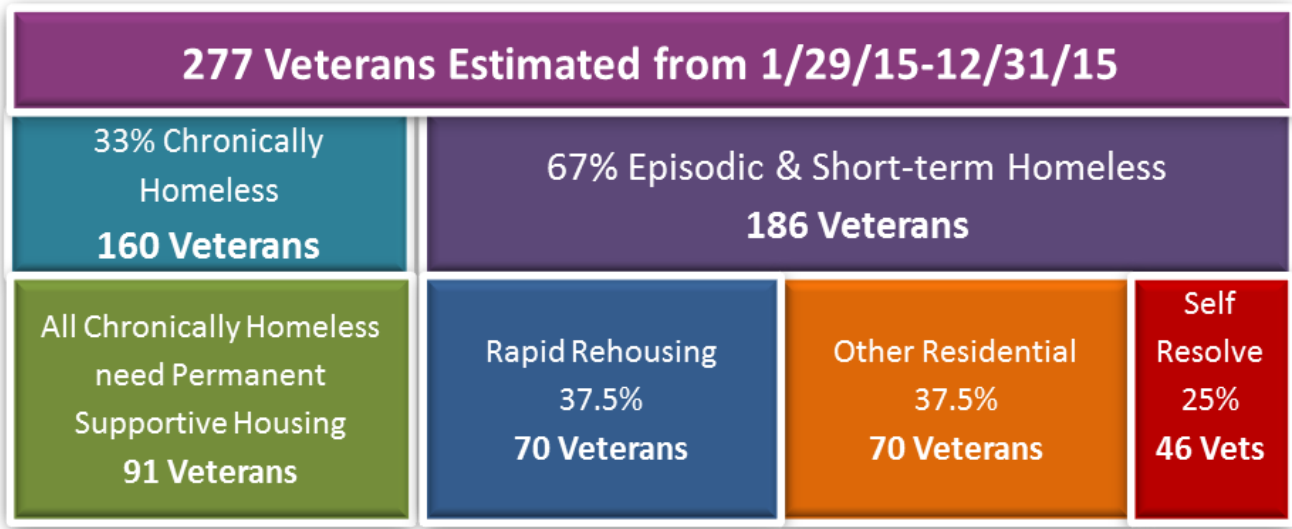
consider themselves Veterans despite military service.

Using methodology established by the VA and used in communities across the country based on the 2015 Point-in-Time count, 277 Veterans are estimated to become homeless in Delaware over the course of 2015. The estimated distribution is 60% in New Castle County, 24% in Kent County, and 16% in Sussex County. However, it is common for people experiencing homelessness to be concentrated in areas where there are services and facilities.

Based on national estimates, 33% of these Veterans (91) are estimated to be chronically homeless and need permanent supportive housing and 67% (186) experiencing episodic or short-term homelessness. These Veterans may need shorter-term housing; assistance to avoid becoming homeless such as utility payments, short-term rental assistance; or assistance securing housing such as security and utility deposits.

Some of the assistance needed could be addressed by mainstream programs. Dela-





ware’s Continuum of Care has a number of emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing resources. However, most are overtaxed and high demand for these resources may lengthen the time a Veteran experiences homelessness. Comparing these needs to both the Veteran-specific and mainstream resources available, the primary gap is for permanent supportive housing.

Veteran Housing Resources

The main resources available for Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are:

HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH): The VASH program provides a permanent rental subsidy and long-term case management for homeless Veterans with greater needs for longer-term supports. HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between HUD and VA where eligible homeless Veterans receive a Housing Choice Voucher paired with VA-provided case management and supportive services to sustain housing stability. HUD-VASH subscribes to the prin-

ciples of the Housing First model of care, an evidence-based best practice for assisting people experiencing chronic homelessness focused on getting clients into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Once housed, a team of caseworkers and clinicians work with clients to help them maintain their housing and improve their health and quality of life. In Delaware, HUD-VASH assistance is available via the Wilmington VA Medical Center’s Social Work Services.

Other VA Homeless Services: The Grant and Per Diem (GPD) and other Residential Rehabilitation programs provide short-term or transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness with structured supports and a focus on completing treatment and exiting to permanent housing. In Delaware, these services are available via the Wilmington VA Medical Center’s Social Work Services.

Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF): The SSVF program provides short-term assistance with a focus on making connections to mainstream assistance

Delaware Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness

to prevent homelessness for at-risk Veterans and rapidly re-house Veterans experiencing homelessness. SSVF is funded by and overseen by the VA and operated by community-based nonprofit organizations. SSVF providers in Delaware include Connections CSP and the Veterans Multi-Service Center.

Veterans Trust Fund: The Delaware Veterans Trust Fund, administered by the Delaware Commission for Veterans Affairs (DCVA), assists Veterans in need of help with reintegration, housing, utilities, and incidental expenses for health and welfare. The Veterans Trust Fund is often combined with SSVF or other resources.

Veteran Specific Housing Resources			
Permanent Housing or Housing Resources	Estimated Total Available	Estimated Avail. for Homeless Veterans	Estimated Need 2015
Permanent Housing			
HUD- VASH ¹	145	24	91
Delaware Center for Homeless Veterans	10	10	
Rapid Rehousing²			
SSVF—Connections	200	70	70
SSVF—Veterans Multi-Service Center	70	30	
Emergency Shelter, Transitional, or other Short-term³			
Home of the Brave	23	10	70
Connections Transition in Place	50	25	
VA Grant Per Diem contract beds - various	50	25	
Identified Units or Assistance	548	194	231⁴
Notes			
1) VASH vouchers administered by the Wilmington VAMC serve all of Delaware as well as three counties in New Jersey. Therefore, the total allocation is not available for Veterans in Delaware. The estimate here is based on assumed turnover and the typical distribution of vouchers in Delaware.			
2) These programs offer Prevention and Rapid Rehousing based on clients' needs. It is difficult to project how much will be rapid rehousing.			
3) As these are shorter-term placements, turnover of 50% is assumed. An additional up to 50 beds are currently under development at various stages.			
4) 25% of the 277 Veterans (46) estimated to enter homelessness in 2015 are estimated to have episodic or short-term homelessness that will self-resolve. This is based on national methodology provided by the VA.			

Strategies

To end Veteran homelessness in Delaware, we must both ensure that Veterans who are currently homeless are placed in permanent housing, and make policy and other changes to ensure that Veterans who present as homeless or at risk of homelessness in the future are housed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Strategies

To house Veterans who are currently homeless in Delaware, we will:		Responsible Entities
1	Use CMIS and Point in Time study to identify Veterans currently homeless or at high risk of homelessness and share this information with local groups for outreach.	HPC, VA, local groups and providers
2	Consolidate data from the VA and local groups to ensure all Veterans are tracked in CMIS.	HPC, VA, local groups & providers
3	Increase cooperation between the VA, SSVF, and Continuum of Care on connecting Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to the most appropriate resource to meet their needs. Permanent supportive housing resources such as VASH will be targeted to Veterans with the greatest needs for long-term support.	VA, HPC, SSVF providers
4	Create an additional up to 20 vouchers to serve Veterans through the State Rental Assistance Program, which provides rental assistance in conjunction with supportive services.	DSHA, DHSS
5	Make changes to the delawarehousingsearch.org website to increase visibility for Veteran housing resources.	DSHA

To ensure Veterans in the future are housed as quickly as possible, we will:		Responsible Entities
1	Work with the VA and local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to increase "graduations" from the VASH program to regular Housing Choice Vouchers for those no longer needing the more extensive VASH services.	DSHA, VA, local groups and PHAs
2	Improve connections and coordination between Veteran-specific and mainstream resources for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing.	DHSS, SSVF providers, HPC
3	Offer targeted trainings on mainstream housing resources for VA, SSVF and others who work with Veterans.	DSHA
4	Develop consistent guidance on housing resources and referrals to ensure Veterans in need of housing can make the right connection to resolve their housing crisis, to be uniform across all the various housing and Veteran resource websites, guides, and points of entry.	DSHA, DCVA, DHSS, 211
5	Use CMIS to track Veterans entering and exiting the homeless system and long-term outcomes.	HPC

Partners and Providers

Connections CSP

Delaware Commission on Veterans Affairs

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

Delaware State Housing Authority

City of Dover

Town of Georgetown

Homeless Planning Council of Delaware

City of Newark

New Castle County

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Multi-Service Center

City of Wilmington



Delaware State Housing Authority

<http://www.destatehousing.com>

(888) 363-8808

Homeless veterans get help



Special To The Delaware State News/Gary Emleigh
Gov. Jack Markell and other officials gathered in Dover on Monday to support the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness. Above, Delaware Secretary of Health and Social Services Rita Landgraf adds her signature to a proclamation of support. Story on Page 4.



From left: Anas Ben Addi, director of Delaware State Housing Authority; Rita Landgraf, secretary of Health and Social Services; Jane Vincent, regional administrator of the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development; and Gov. Jack Markell get ready to sign pledge to support the Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness during a ceremony Monday in Dover.

Special To The Delaware State News/Gary Emeigh

Officials sign on to help end veterans' homelessness

By Arshon Howard

Delaware State News

DOVER — Too often, the return to civilian life can bring a cascade of challenges that can lead to homelessness for veterans.

In an effort to resolve the issue, Gov. Jack Markell signed on to a challenge to end veteran homelessness during an event Monday morning at American Legion Post No. 2 on Bay Road.

The governor also addressed the state's effort to find homes for all homeless veterans in Delaware by the end of 2015.

"There is nothing that should disturb us more than the idea of veterans being homeless," he said.

Gov. Markell was joined by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Administrator Jane Vincent, Delaware State Housing Authority Director Anas Ben Addi, Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf, and Mayor Robin Christiansen, among others.

Last June first lady Michelle Obama encouraged mayors and local leaders to join a coalition of leaders committed to ending veteran homelessness in their communities by the end of 2015.

The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness seeks to eliminate veteran homelessness by ensuring those who are homeless are able to be placed in permanent housing. In addition, those who are at risk of becoming homeless are quickly identified and provided with appropriate resources to prevent them from experiencing homelessness.

DSHA and DHSS were tasked with developing the plan. On any



Dover Mayor Robin Christiansen speaking during the ceremony Monday as U.S. Marine veteran William Farley, vice-chairman of the Delaware Commission for Veterans Affairs, looks on.

given night 100 veterans in Delaware are homeless. In 2015 an estimated 280 veterans will experience homelessness in Delaware.

A working group including state and federal agencies, nonprofit providers and veterans service agencies has developed a plan to address the problem. The plan includes identifying veterans who are currently homeless or at a high risk of homelessness, improving connections and coordination between veteran-specific and mainstream resources for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing.

"Every veteran should have the opportunity and support to live a full, healthy life in our state," Mr. Addi said.

The agencies plan to measure their progress with the 2016 Point-in-Time count, an annual report which identifies the number of people homeless on one night in January, said Mr. Addi.

Also they plan to engage in ongoing measurement through the Community Management Information System.

Veteran Gary Dawkins served seven years in the Army and eventually became homeless due to the economy, he said.

He eventually found shelter at the Home of the Brave, a transitional housing facility for male and female veterans in Milford.

He became a model resident and assisted other residents with their health and spiritual well-being.

"There are many veterans out there that need help," Mr. Dawkins said. I hope each veteran takes advantage of the resources that are available to them."

He went to school through the Department of Labor WIA program to get his CDL truck endorsement license and became employed through the First State Community Action Senior Employment Program.

After being at the HOB for approximately 20 months he became eligible for housing through the DSHA Public Housing program for seniors. Mr. Dawkins believes the effort will help many veterans moving forward.

"You have to be persistent, patient and have a passion for where you want to go," Mr. Dawkins said. "When I left HOB there are people that are still there that can hear my story and may feel as they can get out their situation as well.

"It's great that the state is coming together to provide resources for veterans to help them like it helped me."

Staff writer Arshon Howard can be reached at 741-8230 or ahoward@newszap.com.



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Delaware 105.9 Events

Community Events

Monday, May 4, 2015 - 1:27pm

ONLINE EXTRA: Del. focuses on ending veterans' homelessness

By Mark Fowser

Delaware looks to put an end to veterans' homelessness, which impacts an estimated 100 veterans in The First State on a daily basis.

Governor Markell and state housing and health officials gathered Monday in Dover at American Legion Post Two to officially join a national challenge to address the issue of homeless veterans.

State and federal agencies as well as veterans groups and non-profits are developing programs to help members of the military past and present overcome financial and other challenges that can lead to homeless.

You can find more information about the program, and links to resources, at Delaware1059.com.

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Delaware program to end veterans' homelessness: [click here](#)

Resources for veterans dealing with homelessness: [click here](#)

National Mayors Challenge to End Homelessness: [click here](#)

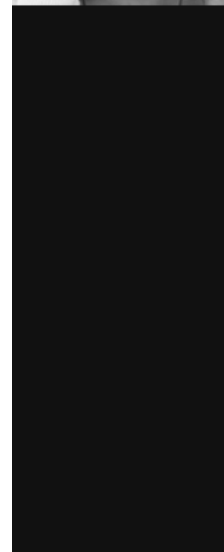
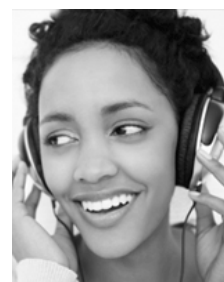
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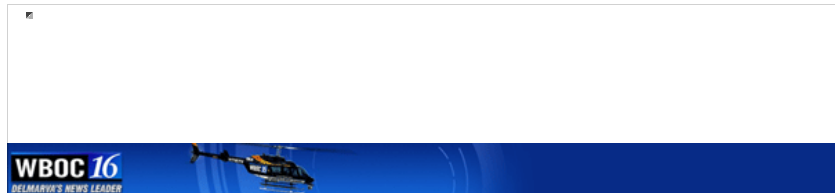
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Delaware Officials Commit to Ending Veterans Homelessness

Posted: May 04, 2015 1:50 PM EST

DOVER, Del. (AP/WBOC)- Gov. Jack Markell says state officials are setting a goal of ensuring that no military veteran in Delaware is homeless.

Markell said Monday that Delaware is signing on as state to a nationwide challenge to U.S. mayors to end veteran homelessness this year.

"Given our obligations to our veterans, nothing should disturb us more than the continued high rate of homelessness among former service members," Markel said.

Officials say 100 veterans in Delaware are homeless on any given night, and an estimated 280 will experience homelessness of the course of the year.

A working group including state and federal agencies, nonprofit providers and veterans agencies has developed a plan to address Delaware's homeless veterans.

The plan includes identifying veterans who are homeless or at high risk of homelessness, and improving connections and coordination between veteran-specific and mainstream resources for the homeless. It also includes creating 20 rental assistance vouchers dedicated to veterans through the State Rental Assistance Program.

The Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015 is available [online](#).

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Governor Markell Launches Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in Delaware

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Photos from the event (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/delawaregovernor/sets/72157652365876515/>)

Dover, DE – Following through on a charge announced during his State of the State Address (<http://governor.delaware.gov/speeches/2015StateOfTheState/index.shtml>) in January, Governor Markell today unveiled plans to end veterans' homelessness in Delaware. Joined by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Administrator Jane Vincent, Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) Director Anas Ben Addi, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Secretary Rita Landgraf, among others, the Governor signed on to a challenge to end veteran homelessness (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/), and addressed the state's effort to find homes for all homeless veterans in Delaware by the end of 2015. DSHA and DHSS were tasked with developing the plan (<http://destatehousing.com/FormsAndInformation/veterans.php>), which was presented during today's event at American Legion Post 2 (<http://www.wlfoxpost.org/>). On any given night, 100 veterans in

Delaware are homeless.



(http://news.delaware.gov/files/2015/05/fIMG_9257.jpg)

“Given our obligations to our Veterans, nothing should disturb us more than the continued high rate of homelessness among former service members,” said Governor Markell. “An estimated 280 Veterans will experience homelessness in Delaware over the course of 2015. With focused effort, along with collaboration between federal, state and local partners and the community, Delaware can and will be a state where no veteran is homeless.”

Last year, HUD, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National League of Cities called on mayors across the country to make a commitment to end Veteran homelessness in their cities in 2015. Today, Governor Markell officially announced the Delaware would join that effort statewide.

“Too many Americans who’ve answered the call of duty struggle to readjust to life after military service,” said HUD Regional Administrator Vincent. “This announcement represents an important step in fulfilling a sacred commitment—ensuring that all Veterans have a home in the very nation they served to protect.”

A working group including state and federal agencies, nonprofit providers, and Veterans service agencies has developed a plan to address Delaware’s homeless Veterans. The report, released today, details actions including: identifying Veterans who are currently homeless or at a high risk of homelessness; improving connections and coordination between Veteran-specific and mainstream resources for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing; and, creating 20 rental assistance vouchers dedicated to Veterans through the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP), which provides integrated community housing with supportive services.

“Every Veteran should have the opportunity and support to live a full, healthy life in our state,” said Director Ben Addi. “In this plan, we identify strategies to both house Veterans who are homeless in Delaware now, and to ensure that Veterans who may face homelessness in the future are connected to the resources they need quickly and

effectively.”

“While working with the Housing Authority to identify Veterans in need and to provide them with homes, we also are prepared to offer wrap-around social services to these men and women who have served our country,” said Secretary Landgraf. “For Veterans in need, a home is the foundation that will help to re-establish them in the community. The social services that DHSS can connect these Veterans to will provide further stability.”



(http://news.delaware.gov/files/2015/05/fIMG_9370.jpg)

Today’s announcement featured the story of Gary Dawkins, an Honorably Discharged Veteran who served seven years in the United States Army and became homeless Due to the economy and an unstable employment history. Dawkins found shelter at the Home of the Brave (HOB), became a model resident and assisted other residents with their health and

spiritual well-being. He also went to school through the Department of Labor WIA program to get his CDL Truck Endorsement License and became temporarily employed at the Milford Modern Maturity Center through the First State Community Action Senior Employment Program. After being at the HOB for approximately 20 months, Dawkins eventually became eligible for housing through the DSHA Public Housing program for seniors.

“My story is a prime example of how many resources coming together can bring a veteran from homelessness to stable housing,” said Dawkins. “I am glad to see Delaware committing to this challenge and to housing Veterans who are homeless.”

The Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015 (<http://destatehousing.com/FormsAndInformation/veterans.php>) is available online.

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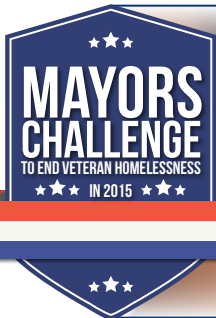


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Governor Markell's Website (<http://governor.delaware.gov/>). Journalists contact our press team (<http://smu.governor.delaware.gov/cgi-bin/mail.php?pressinquiry>) with inquiries. Also, feel free to use photos posted on Flickr. (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/delawaregovernor/collections>)

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Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness set a bold and audacious goal to end Veteran homelessness in the United States before the end of 2015. Over the last three years, the Obama Administration and our partners in states and communities across the country have achieved a 24 percent decrease in homelessness among Veterans, during a time when our country was facing the worst recession since the Great Depression. Several communities, such as Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Houston, New Orleans and others are already on track to meet or beat this goal. On June 4, 2014, as part of the *Joining Forces* initiative, First Lady Michelle Obama announced that a growing coalition of mayors, governors, and county officials are committed to ending Veteran homelessness in their communities by the end of 2015, and called on additional mayors and local leaders to join this effort.



Through the **Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness**, mayors and other state and local leaders across the country will marshal Federal, local, and nonprofit efforts to end Veteran homelessness in their communities. Ending Veteran homelessness means reaching the point where there are no Veterans sleeping on our streets and every Veteran has access to permanent housing. Should Veterans become homeless or be at-risk of becoming homeless, communities will have the capacity to quickly connect them to the help they need to achieve housing stability. When those things are accomplished, our nation will achieve its goal.

To aid the mayors in pursuit of the goal of ending homelessness among Veterans, the Federal government has provided resources and enforced programs to strengthen our country's homeless assistance programs. These resources and reforms, when implemented in local communities, can include:



- Using a **Housing First** approach, which removes barriers to help Veterans obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, without unnecessary prerequisites;
- Prioritizing the most vulnerable Veterans, especially those experiencing chronic homelessness, for **permanent supportive housing** opportunities, including those created through the HUD-VASH program;
- Coordinating outreach efforts to identify and engage every Veteran experiencing homelessness and focusing outreach efforts on achieving housing outcomes;
- Targeting **rapid re-housing** interventions, including those made possible through the Department of Veterans Affairs' Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, toward Veterans and their families who need shorter-term rental subsidies and services in order to be reintegrated back into our communities;
- Leveraging housing and services that can help Veterans who are ineligible for some of the VA's programs get into stable housing;
- Increasing early detection and access to preventive services so at-risk Veterans and their families remain stably housed; and
- Closely monitoring progress toward the goal, including the success of programs in achieving permanent housing outcomes.



To publicly commit to ending Veteran homelessness in your community and learn more about joining the Mayors Challenge, send an email to mayorschallenge@hud.gov and visit <http://bit.ly/mayorschallenge>.



A joint initiative of *Joining Forces*, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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