

# NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

**Deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

Visit [ncsha.org/awards](http://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](mailto: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.**

<b>Communications</b>	<b>Homeownership</b>	<b>Legislative Advocacy</b>	<b>Management Innovation</b>
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
<b>Rental Housing</b>	<b>Special Needs Housing</b>	<b>Special Achievement</b>	<b>Are you providing visual aids?</b>
Encouraging New Production	Combating Homelessness	Special Achievement	Yes
Multifamily Management	Housing for Persons with Special Needs		No
Preservation and Rehabilitation			

**Ending homelessness among veterans – one veteran at a time**

As part of *Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, Minnesota Housing, along with the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), have each shifted our approach from broad, population-based responses to Veterans to specifically understand the needs of each individual Veteran and their family. We call this approach ending Veteran homelessness *on a Veteran-by-Veteran basis*.

To accomplish this bold goal, we supported MDVA and MN.IT in creating the Registry established a **Homeless Veteran Registry** that provides Minnesota with two essential ingredients. First, it gives us a more accurate, real-time understanding of homelessness among Veterans, so that we understand and can address the needs of each Veteran household, as well as the aggregate needs of Veterans. Second, our Registry also provides a mechanism for unprecedented collaboration among organizations serving these Veterans, by allowing a large group of agencies participating in the Registry to create housing plans collaboratively that are specific to each individual Veteran and family. These plans are rarely the work of any one agency alone and typically enlist the skills, resources, and opportunities available from several organizations among the large group of agencies participating.

**How it works**

- 1) MDVA worked with [MN.IT Services](#), the State of Minnesota's central IT agency that provides mission-critical services that allows Minnesota government to run and aligned with stakeholders that work closely with veterans to develop the Registry. This included gathering the requirements to collect the right information to help best serve the broad spectrum of veteran needs. We directly engaged the homeless and caseworkers that serve them to develop a deeper understanding of the complex issue of veterans' homelessness. The Registry includes data fields such as:
  - Name
  - Information about their Veteran status and military service
  - Family size
  - Housing status
  - Monthly income
  - Referral agency and specific contact name who personally knows the veteran
  - Specific needs
  - Notes section to detail needs specific to each veteran
  - Several additional fields regarding location and services used
  
- 2) We launched the site in December 2014 and promoted it to the statewide network of non-profit and government service providers that serve our veterans who have served our country.
  
- 3) Every two weeks a group of dozens of service providers meet in one room to review every veteran listed on the registry to collectively work on how to best meet their specific needs.

In addition to leveraging existing housing options and previous state investments in affordable and supportive housing, we have also fostered significant new capacity for Veterans exiting homelessness, by dedicating capital investment and establishing policy priorities for competitively awarded affordable housing grants. In 2014, we added another 154 housing units for veterans, bringing us closer to our goal. **(See Attachment 1)**

## Minnesota Housing Ending Veteran Homelessness One Veteran at a Time

We have also leveraged our leadership position on housing issues with State government and shared information among our partners to emphasize the importance of collective action to achieve this goal. Our Commissioner serves as the Co-Chair of the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, a body comprised of the heads of 11 state agencies dedicated to coordinating state efforts and implementing the *Heading Home* plan. The active engagement of this high level group has been important in setting both the priority and the momentum in each agency to work with the State Director to Prevent and End Homelessness to achieve the goals identified in the state plan (See [Executive Summary](#), [Two-Year Action Plan At a Glance](#) or [Full Plan](#)). The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness members include:

- Commissioner, Department of Education
- Commissioner, Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Commissioner, Department of Public Safety
- Commissioner, Department of Health
- Commissioner, Department of Human Services
- Commissioner, Department of Human Rights
- Commissioner, Office of Higher Education
- Commissioner, Department of Corrections
- Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs
- Commissioner, Minnesota Housing
- Commissioner, Department of Transportation

### Replicating the model

We now know that where we focus our efforts, we make tremendous progress. Establishing funding preferences and articulating clear policy priorities that are communicated explicitly to applicants, developers, and other stakeholders are clear ways that fellow HFAs can indicate to the field where and what kind of development the HFA wants support.

Interagency partnerships, particularly with the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and with each state's department of Veterans affairs are also critical. In Minnesota's case, the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs provided two supportive housing projects with Enhanced Use Lease agreements, allowing the project to be developed on VA Medical Center campuses at no cost to the project. This significantly reduces the overall development costs for these projects. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has also been a great partner in developing and operating the Veteran Registry and providing continuity and focus on the goal across state agencies and community partners.

### Achieving measurable results

Our target audiences include Veterans experiencing homelessness, organizations serving Veterans, and affordable and supportive housing developers. Our Veteran Registry is the primary vehicle for engaging Veterans directly. To date, more than 325 individuals and families have joined the Registry, and approximately 50 new Veteran households are added each month. The Registry has also been a key vehicle for the State of Minnesota to engage with Veteran-serving organizations, who participate directly in case review meetings to establish housing plans for every Veteran on the Registry. A significant benefit of Minnesota's new approach with Veteran homelessness is access to real-time information about Veterans experiencing homelessness. For example, in helping a Twin Cities supportive housing developer to target its units to the most vulnerable Veterans facing homelessness, the State was able to identify specific cohorts of Veterans experiencing homelessness -- by name -- who would

## Minnesota Housing Ending Veteran Homelessness One Veteran at a Time

likely be strong candidates for this supportive housing development. Similarly, the Registry has allowed Minnesota to track inflow (new incidents of Veterans experiencing homelessness) and outflow (especially housing outcomes, but also including Veterans who have left the state). This information has helped focus on the additional housing resources needed to match demand.

### **Tangible benefits**

The most significant benefits have been an accelerated rate of Veterans moving into housing, which, when measured as a function of the number of Veterans housed each month, has nearly doubled since the inception of this effort. The most significant costs have been considerable staff time dedicated by the State and partnering organizations to coordinate care and access to housing on a Veteran-by-Veteran basis. For example, a team of twenty staff from a dozen agencies convene every two weeks in the Twin Cities to review every Veteran identified on the Registry and develop housing plans for each household. This represents a significant investment of staff time to achieve.

“One-stop-shopping” for services makes sense for both vets and service providers and uses resources much more effectively. While we have not formally evaluated this effort from a return-on-investment perspective, participants in the Registry process report that it has facilitated enhanced focus and unprecedented collaboration on the goal. We also believe that the increased Veteran-specific coordination has enabled more effective use of available resources, since previously, organizations serving the same Veteran were not always aware that they were doing so, and may not have had the legal permission in place (via a signed release of information) to discuss how their services could most effectively complement other available resources.

This effort is directly supporting the commitment in *Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* to consistently identify Veterans experiencing homelessness and to increase our pace in housing them on a Veteran-by-Veteran basis, so that we can end Veteran homelessness in 2015.

### **Rising to the challenge of ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2015**

In the 2014 Point-in-Time count that tracks people experiencing homelessness, Minnesota identified a total of 317 homeless Veterans. This represents a 47 percent decrease from the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in 2010. To use First Lady Michelle Obama's term, we believe that ending Veteran homelessness is the *proof point* that shows that it is possible to end all forms of homelessness when the right resources are deployed to evidence-based interventions and implemented well locally. In other words, by ending Veteran homelessness, we are also showing how we end all forms of homelessness in our state.

### **Effective partnerships**

Our partnerships with organizations have been critical to achieving the progress we have made in identifying Veterans facing homelessness and increasing our pace of housing them. Our key partners include:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Catholic Charities
- St. Stephen's Human Services
- Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
- MN.IT Services, the state technology office
- Dozens of non-profit social service agencies who have contributed to the Registry

## VETERAN HOUSING

### The Need

The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness launched an aggressive two-year plan to prevent and end homelessness statewide. Part of that plan includes preventing and ending homelessness for veterans by the end of 2015.

According to the plan, the most recent point-in-time count (2014) showed that just 317 veterans were identified as homeless on that day. Minnesota Housing and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs are working side-by-side to create and sustain supportive housing for these remaining veterans. The 2014 awards will finance more than 150 new units for veterans, bringing us even closer to accomplishing this goal.

### Our Commitment

#### 2014 Consolidated RFP Veteran Housing Funding:

- 2 Metro developments and 1 Greater Minnesota development totaling **154** units



#### Example: Veterans East - Hennepin County

- **Sponsor:** Community Housing Development Corporation
- **Units:** 100 new construction rental units  
- Efficiency units
- **Affordability:** Incomes less than approximately \$41,450
- **Highlights:** Just east of the VA Medical Center, this permanent service-enriched supportive housing development will serve low-income veterans, many with disabilities and/or histories of chemical dependency. The site has easy access to the Blue Line LRT. Residents will receive services including tenancy support, budgeting and financial management, and social recreation, while also providing referrals to other service providers.
- **Minnesota Housing Investment:** \$7,436,000 in Housing Infrastructure Bond proceeds



## 2014 VETERAN HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Name	Veterans Units	Developer	City
Veterans East	100	Community Housing Development Corporation	Minneapolis
VA Housing	35	SCI Associates, LLC	Saint Cloud
Higher Ground	19	Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis	Saint Paul
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>154</b>		

# Minnesota Housing Ending Veteran Homelessness One Veteran at a Time

## Attachment 2 – Screen Shot of Minnesota’s Homeless Veteran Registry

The screenshot displays the SharePoint interface for the Homeless Veteran Registry. The top navigation bar includes 'SharePoint', 'BROWSE', 'PAGE', and 'News'. The main header features the 'Homeless Veteran Registry' logo and navigation links: 'ROI Entry', 'MDVA', 'Regional Meeting', 'Maintain Lists', 'Housing Team', and 'Benefits'. A 'SharePoint List Filter' is set to 'Hennepin and Ramsey Counties'. The 'Housing Team' section contains a table of veterans and a 'Housing Notes' section. The 'Registry Info' section provides detailed fields for each veteran's information.

**Release Of Information allows for viewing within Region only**

**All organizations can view and add notes about contact, special circumstances, or opportunities for housing**

**Use double arrows to populate information on the left**

**Group entries by current status to expedite meetings**

**Display detailed information to assist with identifying housing opportunities**

Select	Full Name	VeteranID	Family Size	Review Status	Edit	Note
	[Redacted]	275	1	Not Reviewed		There are no items to show in this view of the "Housing Notes" list.
	[Redacted]	190	1	APB in place		
	[Redacted]	183	1	APB in place		
	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	Reviewed		
	[Redacted]	175	1	Housing Plan		
	[Redacted]	184	1	Not Reviewed		
	[Redacted]	186	1	[Redacted]		
	[Redacted]	256	1	[Redacted]		
	[Redacted]	253	1	[Redacted]		
	[Redacted]	265	1	[Redacted]		
	[Redacted]	180	1	Plan		
	[Redacted]	173	1	APB in		

Full Name:	Last Four:	Date of Birth:
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Family Size:	Region:	Gender:
1	Hennepin and Ramsey Counties	[Redacted]
Housing Status:	Continuum of Care:	Ethnicity:
Exiting Institution	Hennepin County	Non-Hispanic/Non
Monthly Income:	Other Eligibility:	Race:
\$1.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Homeless	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> White
Current Provider:	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Homeless	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Africa
Minneapolis VAMC	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian
Referral Organization:	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indi
Minneapolis VA Me	<input type="checkbox"/> Sober housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaii
Referral Contact:		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
	Intervention Need:	<input type="checkbox"/> Used
Best Way to Contact:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment assistance	Guard/Reserve called to Active Duty:
[Redacted]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial assistance	No
Intake Notes:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental health services	Entered Active Duty Before:
		No

**Minnesota Housing  
Ending Veteran Homelessness One Veteran at a Time**

**Attachment 3 – Photo below is a snapshot of the meeting that takes place every two weeks as dozens of service providers gather to review every veteran listed on Minnesota’s Homeless Veteran Registry to discuss how to best meet their needs.**

