

# Valor Pointe: Permanent Supportive Housing for Boise Veterans

**Idaho Housing and Finance Association**

Special Needs Housing: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

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## **Valor Pointe: Permanent Supportive Housing for Boise Veterans**

### **Responding to an important state housing need**

According to local data, in Boise, veterans account for 13% of the homeless population, while the same target group accounts for only 9% of homelessness nationwide. While many veterans receive vouchers provided by the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, the Boise/Ada County rental market is so fiercely competitive (with a vacancy rate for affordable units of less than 1%) many of these vouchers go unused while veterans remain homeless.

To address this pressing need, a collaborative effort of Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA), the city of Boise, Boise City/Ada County Housing Authorities (BCACHA), and numerous funders and partners led to the development of Valor Pointe, a 27-unit housing project designed specifically for veterans experiencing chronic homelessness. Valor Pointe opened in August 2020 and follows the Housing First philosophy, which emphasizes first providing a home to those experiencing homelessness and then providing wrap-around services to address the medical, mental health, and substance abuse issues that plague many members of this population.

### **Innovation**

The innovation involved in Valor Pointe is demonstrated through the collaboration and strategic partnerships that were developed and leveraged throughout the process, from conception through execution. Because this was a fairly small project located near the city center—and there were no state housing dollars or funds for services available—it required more than just federal tax credits to bring it to fruition. Partners included the City of Boise, which contributed \$1.5 million, BCACHA, and the VA, which now delivers an array of services onsite. Additionally, far from being a “create it and forget it” project, all partners including IHFA remain actively involved in the ongoing coordination of Valor Pointe, at a service support/site manager level, as well as at a financier/owner level.

When serving a high-need population, such as chronically homeless veterans, reducing barriers to access is essential. To that end, IHFA’s Foundation raised \$236,000 to support the construction costs of project amenities and furnishing units. Additionally, due to the high need tenants had for security deposit and utility hook up assistance, IHFA’s foundation partnered with Wells Fargo to capitalize a deposit and utility fund with \$20,000. Every aspect of Valor Pointe is centered around meeting the needs of the veterans who come to the project lacking resources and who need help regaining their wellbeing and remaining stably housed.

### **Replicability**

As the second permanent supportive housing (PSH) project that IHFA and its partner agencies have undertaken, Valor Pointe is itself a demonstration of the replicability of this housing model. The model has proven to be flexible to community needs and can be applied with the resources available. For example, not every community requires a large development exclusively for homeless individuals, so IHFA is incentivizing developers to create PSH units targeted at different populations within developments across the state in order to meet the needs of those communities. Canyon Terrace, located in Nampa, is one such project currently in development. Fifteen out of 80 units in Canyon Terrace will provide PSH targeted at families, with services provided by the local school district.

### **Demonstrating measurable benefits**

With residents now in place at Valor Pointe, the Boise VA Medical Center is providing ongoing onsite wrap-around services. These include medical care, substance abuse treatment, and mental health care. The VA has two staff who offer daily office hours at Valor Pointe. They are available to help tenants navigate issues that arise related to housing stability, and they have begun offering a variety of support and social groups. These include a quality of life group focused on substance support, an employment group focused on full-time community-based employment support, a cooking skills group, and a community resource group focused on providing up-to-date community resources. Recent “meet and greet” efforts have focused on developing stronger rapport among tenants and between tenants and staff. Other activities and supports have included a dental clinic and linkage to community food resources. A VA volunteer has also created a social event schedule for tenants.

Additionally, the Valor Pointe Advisory Committee (VPAC), made up of partner agencies, meets regularly to ensure that the project is running smoothly and to address challenges at the policy and finance levels. A different group, composed of case managers and representatives from the VA and the housing authority, meets weekly to address tenant issues and concerns.

Having opened less than a year ago, the positive outcomes of Valor Pointe have not yet been fully realized. It is, however, being run on the same model as IHFA’s first PSH development, New Path, which was independently evaluated<sup>1</sup> after its first year in operation and demonstrated significant benefits. For example, there was a 63 percent decrease in utilization of emergency services by New Path residents and a total annual savings/cost avoidance of approximately \$1.4 million. Similar eventual improvements and savings are expected of Valor Pointe.

### **Proven track record of success**

In 2015, IHFA began tracking national acceptance of site-based permanent supportive housing. Case studies and data showed PSH to be effective for homeless individuals, particularly for the chronically homeless, and IHFA and its collaborators tested and found success with PSH through the New Path Community Housing project. New Path opened in December 2018 and now houses 40 people who previously experienced chronic homelessness. As noted above, significant benefits among New Path tenants have been demonstrated.

Working with its partners, IHFA oversaw siting of the Valor Pointe property in a main corridor through the city in order to ensure economic opportunities were available to residents, as well as access to public transportation and key services and amenities. The property is part of a thriving and vibrant area that provides residents with close proximity to a multitude of opportunities and attractions, including the Boise River Greenbelt, offering pedestrian or cyclist access to downtown Boise.

### **Benefits outweigh costs**

The mission of Valor Pointe is to help the men and women who have proudly served this country reclaim their independence, health, and dignity. Valor Pointe is now home to 26 veterans who previously were

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<sup>1</sup> McGinnis-Brown, L., Hall, M., Larsen, B., & Crossgrove Fry, V. (2020). New Path Community Housing annual evaluation 2019. Idaho Policy Institute. Boise, ID: Boise State University.

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chronically homeless (a reduction of veteran homelessness in Boise of approximately ten percent). Residents have access to medical, mental health, and substance abuse services, as well as a variety of groups and support opportunities designed by the VA specifically for the Valor Pointe community.

Studies have demonstrated the high costs associated with neglecting to provide the basic needs of those experiencing homelessness, as well as the tremendous cost savings realized when preventative measures are deployed and targeted at chronically homeless individuals, who consume the greatest share of public service costs (e.g. health and welfare programs, emergency room visits, hospital care, and correctional facilities). Therefore, in addition to improving quality of life for residents, by allowing them to efficiently access appropriate social and health services, as noted previously, Valor Pointe is also expected to lead to significant tangible cost savings. Based on the \$1.4 million annual savings at New Path, it is projected that Valor Pointe should lead to savings of approximately \$910,000 per year.

### **Effective use of resources**

Valor Pointe was brought to life by leveraging funds from a number of sources. The total cost to develop Valor Pointe was \$6,287,000. The majority of funding came through low-income housing tax credits (totaling over \$4.4 million) awarded by IHFA. IHFA also contributed \$20,000 to cover deposits and utility hook-ups for all 26 units. The City of Boise contributed HOME, CBDG, and general funds. IHFA's Home Partnership Foundation also contributed \$236,000 (with support from Together Treasure Valley, Micron Technology, The Julius C. Jeker Foundation, JPMorgan Chase). Wells Fargo contributed \$115,000.

Residents who are employed are required to pay 30% of their income toward rent, but the majority of monthly rent for residents is covered by VASH vouchers from the BCACHA, totaling \$3 million in rental assistance over 15 years. Due to the extraordinarily tight rental market in the Boise area, this resource was previously going to waste as veterans with vouchers remained homeless. Social and health services are provided to tenants through the VA.

### **Effective partnerships**

Facing an unprecedented housing shortage and an alarmingly high rate of homelessness among veterans, Valor Pointe was created through a unique collaboration of stakeholders. With an awareness of the higher-than-national-average rate of homelessness among local veterans and a vision for an integrated system of support to meet the needs and challenges of that population, IHFA built on and leveraged the relationships formed through the development of New Path. For example, building on the established relationship with the City of Boise, IHFA brokered an agreement through which the City provided capital for Valor Pointe. IHFA also obtained approval of the Boise Regional Office of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide services onsite in order to simplify and streamline access to services for tenants.

### **Achieve strategic objectives**

Building on the success of New Path Community Housing, which reduced chronic homelessness in Boise by 20 percent when it opened in 2018, Valor Pointe has further reduced chronic homelessness in Boise by an additional 10 percent, specifically by housing veterans. Offering not just housing but also wrap-around services, this project is an integrated system of support to meet the needs and challenges of homeless veterans, decreasing societal costs while improving quality of life for a vulnerable population.

Valor Pointe: Permanent Supportive Housing for Boise Veterans – Visuals

2020 STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN IDAHO

## Characteristics of Homelessness

Homelessness interventions should be client-centered by offering programs that meet the needs of each person or family. To accomplish this, we must identify and understand the characteristics and circumstances of those experiencing homelessness. In doing so, we become more effective in our pursuit of making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring.

50%	MALE*
45%	FEMALE*
36%	DISABLED*
6%	ELDERLY*
17%	CHRONICALLY HOMELESS*
15%	SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*
13%	VETERANS*

FEATURED PROJECT

## Valor Pointe

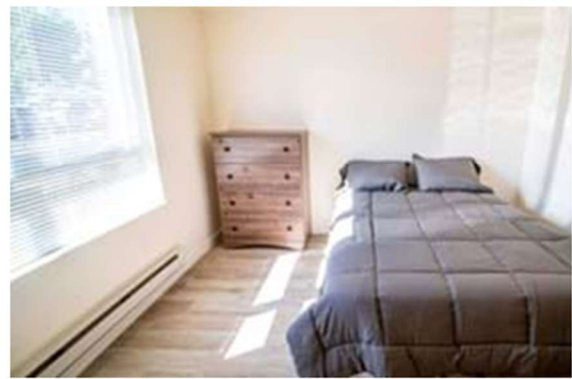
BOISE



In August, community partners celebrated the grand opening of Valor Pointe, a 27-unit housing development in Boise designed to assist veterans in the Treasure Valley experiencing chronic homelessness.



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Media Coverage:

<https://www.cityofboise.org/news/mayor/2020/august/valor-pointe-opens-its-doors-to-community-s-veterans-experiencing-homelessness/>

<https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/local/community/boise/article232981557.html>