

Combating Homelessness: A Decade of Commitment

Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Special Needs Housing: Combating Homelessness

HFA Staff Contact

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Introduction

For over a decade, the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) has been an integral and active partner in Nebraska's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Since its inception, NIFA has worked to ensure that persons with low and extremely low incomes have a place to call home.

After the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided the framework outlined in the HEARTH Act, Nebraska created three Continuums of Care (CoC): Omaha, Lincoln, and the Balance of State. Coordinated Entry systems were developed which created a front door approach to communities working together to assess individuals who are homeless, and maintaining a by-name list of the most vulnerable adults who need housing. The Governor's Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH) became responsible for managing our statewide plan to end homelessness. Since this framework was established, the Balance of State CoC in 2017 and Lincoln CoC in 2018 have officially declared an end to Veteran Homelessness.

Throughout the process, NIFA has been at the table. As the community evolved in streamlining efforts to prevent and end homelessness, NIFA has provided technical assistance, educational opportunities, fostered collaboration, provided financial support, encouraged housing development for special need populations, and linked statewide entities together.

Statewide Collaboration

The Nebraska Governor's Commission on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH) was created on May 13, 1998. The purpose of NCHH is to serve as the advisory body on housing and homelessness/near homelessness issues and to make recommendations regarding the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grant Program and the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund to the Governor and the Legislature. NIFA actively participates in the NCHH meetings through commissioner representation. NIFA also worked with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and hired consultants to establish the framework for the Nebraska State Plan to End Homelessness. NIFA staff currently act as co-chair of the CoC subcommittee and co-lead the biannual statewide CoC meetings to continually evaluate and update the plan.

NIFA has hosted the annual Housing Innovation Marketplace conference since 2001 with a focus on affordable housing including single family, multifamily and community development topics. Due to heavy interest and demand for collaboration around special needs housing topics and because of the alignment and focus of Nebraska's plan to end homelessness, NIFA committed to having a specific track dedicated to "Housing the Homeless" topics beginning in 2014. The sessions in the "Housing the Homeless" track have highlighted several challenging issues, including prison overcrowding and re-entry needs, domestic violence, human trafficking, youth aging out of foster care, and housing our most vulnerable adults. As a result, new partnerships have been formed. Supportive service agencies and nonprofits unfamiliar with housing development and financing were able to connect with housing resource providers and consultants to create new supportive housing units.

In 2009, the Lincoln Homeless Coalition in Nebraska held their first Project Homeless Connect. Created in 2004 by then San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and the Department of Public Health, Project Homeless Connect (PHC) is a way to bring necessary services to people experiencing homelessness. PHC uses a unique approach to service delivery to meet the needs of homeless individuals. NIFA has been a sponsor of this event since its inception not only as a financial donor, but also as a participant in logistical planning. NIFA staff also have the opportunity to volunteer on the day of the event.

In 2018, the Balance of State CoC was awarded \$3.28 million through the HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP) Grant. NIFA staff participated in the application process and helped foster the collaboration between NCHH, the grant applicant, and the lead agency. Since the award of grant funding, NIFA staff have participated in the implementation process by educating rural housing developers, city planners, and community leaders about the resources available to serve the youth homeless population. The YHDP was also featured at NIFA's 2019 Housing Innovation Marketplace conference in the "Housing the Homeless" track.

Effective Partnerships and Use of Resources

According to the federal plan to end homelessness, *Home Together*, collaborative partnerships are essential to addressing the complexities of preventing and ending homelessness by building lasting systems, increasing capacity and strengthening practices. Recognizing the need to build and strengthen partnerships for a shared goal, NIFA created the Collaborative Resource Allocation for Nebraska (CRANE) program. CRANE is a strategic allocation process between NIFA and other collaborating resource providers to accomplish difficult projects. The program is designed to encourage collaborative efforts among the multiple resource allocators including the Department of Economic Development, HUD, Local governments, non-profits and their various programs.

Together, NIFA and partnering agencies work with communities and neighborhoods, who have joined with both profit and non-profit entities, which commit to participate in the CRANE Program. There have been multiple developments that have been awarded resources through this process that have had a direct impact on housing people who are homeless. Examples of successful outcomes of the CRANE program include the Victory Apartment developments in Grand Island, Lincoln, and Omaha. These three projects alone created a total of 186 (90 in Omaha, 70 in Lincoln and 26 in Grand Island) units of subsidized housing using the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, HOME funds, and the HUD VASH program. The significant impact of project based, tenant based or scattered site rental assistance units created through the CRANE program cannot be overstated. Specifically, the rural Balance of State CoC and the Lincoln CoC effectively ended veteran homelessness in 2017 and 2018 largely due in part to the availability of these units through Nebraska's coordinated entry system. Other examples of CRANE program housing developments targeting those experiencing homelessness can be found in the Exhibits.

Responding to Nebraska's Needs

In addition to the creation of programs to reduce homelessness, NIFA has participated in numerous activities to strengthen partnerships to end homelessness throughout the state.

Housing.Ne.Gov and the Outreach Partnership Program are all examples of NIFA's dedication to assisting our most vulnerable population.

After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Nebraska recognized the need for an online database of available housing units and Housing.Ne.Gov was created. NIFA was on the planning, implementation and marketing committees for the creation of www.Housing.Ne.Gov. In 2015 NIFA took over the management of this website. Case managers throughout Nebraska utilize this resource to find housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This resource provides a linkage of case managers to landlords which starts a working relationship that greatly increases housing retention strategies for this population.

In 2017, a Regional Behavioral Health Authority requested that NIFA participate in a short term solution focused project called the Housing Action Team. The purpose of this team was to create a 24/7 peer supported housing program. Peer support refers to a method of supportive services provided by a person with "lived experiences". In other words, they have walked in the other person's shoes and can directly relate to a range of issues faced by those experiencing homelessness. Peer support is at the forefront of innovative housing solutions because it provides a less intrusive and more inclusive process for working with people who have behavioral health issues including mental health and/or substance abuse.

As a direct result of NIFA's participation on the Housing Action Team, NIFA added the Mental Health Association (MHA) to its award winning Outreach Partnership Program. MHA is Nebraska's pioneer of peer services and is 100% peer run. MHA currently operates Honu Home which is a 20-bed peer-supported facility that specializes in providing housing and supportive employment resources to the reentry population, from both State and County corrections, who also have behavioral health issues. With the funding from the Outreach Partnership Program, MHA has been able to secure a full time housing coordinator position at the Honu Home.

Conclusion

The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority recognizes the importance of housing - from homelessness to home ownership, from 30% AMI or below to 150% AMI and everything in between. As Nebraska works towards ending and preventing homelessness, NIFA continues to think outside the box when it comes to affordable housing solutions. NIFA will continue to lead Initiatives on homelessness through innovative programs and partnerships. Moving forward, NIFA is providing funding resources for a tiny home village for people who are chronically homeless; utilizing blockchain technology in relation to owner occupied rehab in a block by block of distressed neighborhoods; aligning strategies amongst state and local providers to address and encourage prison reentry housing development; providing technical assistance and training for LIHTC property managers in Nebraska about identifying the warning signs of human trafficking, and working towards housing solutions for that population. All of these efforts can become reality due to the continued successful collaborative relationships that NIFA has built in Nebraska.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Session</u>	<u>Description</u>
2014	Prisoner Re-entry	Ideas for successful transitions from prison to community living
2014	Homeless Youth	Efforts to provide safe, stable places for the growing homeless youth population
2014	Affordable Care Act	Overview of the Affordable Care Act for supportive housing providers
2014	Chronically Mentally Ill	Combining services with housing to meet the needs of the chronically mentally ill
2014	Domestic Violence	Housing that meets the security, independence and stability needs of domestic violence survivors
2014	Homelessness Roundtable	Local experts guide a discussion on today's most pressing issues
2014	Homeless Veterans	Serving the needs of those who have served us
2015	Vital Signs	Lincoln's report of key indicators that will assist with identifying strengths within their community
2015	Human Trafficking	Understanding the problem and finding solutions to end the cycle
2015	The 10-Year Deal	An update on Nebraska's 10-Year Plan to end homelessness
2015	Refugee Resettlement	Understanding refugee resettlement challenges and opportunities
2015	Native American Homelessness	Unique problems, unique solutions
2015	Street Outreach	Providing services for the hardest to reach

2015	Coordinated Access	Best practices for harmonizing services
2016	Paycheck to Paycheck in Your Hometown	Programs aiding the working poor
2016	VI-SPDAT and Coordinated Access	Learn how this powerful tool is helping identify the best type of support and housing intervention
2016	Re-entry Housing: Honu Home	A housing opportunity for those recently released from correctional facilities struggling with mental health issues
2016	Human Trafficking	Understanding the problem and finding solutions to end the cycle - back by popular demand!
2016	Creative Partnerships	Unique ways to coordinate resources and solicit partners
2017	Coming to the Rescue	Challenges of young adult homelessness
2017	Heroes for the Homeless	Update on the statewide plan to end homelessness
2017	Re-entry Housing	Housing opportunities for those recently released from correctional facilities
2017	Superhuman Feats	Challenges for the newly-housed - support and expectations
2017	The Real Heroes	Ending veteran homelessness
2017	Opportunities for the Next Step	Job training programs for incarcerated persons

2018	Deducing Your Needs: Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program	Find out about the work Nebraska is doing to develop public and private partnerships between the Medicaid and housing systems to foster additional community living opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries.
2018	Deciphering Your Immediate Need: Emergency Housing	Emergency assistance experts detail their programs and methods for providing assistance to those with immediate emergency need.
2018	Open Discussion: Hard to House Population	Join us for a guided discussion of programs and services provided to the Hard to House populations.
2018	The Secret of Transition: Young Adult Renters	Assisting young adults who have limited social safety nets with their housing needs.
2018	Continuum of Care Roundtable	Join us for a guided discussion of the most current topics in the fight to end homelessness.
2018	Re-entry Housing and Job Training Programs	Integrating back into society after incarceration is a challenge on many fronts, including housing options and job opportunities. Our panelists will discuss job training programs for incarcerated persons that can become careers upon release.
2019	Good Partnerships	What does it take to house the most vulnerable population? Collaborating with landlords toward housing solutions.
2019	Re-entry Housing	Helping people get back in the game - successful programs that integrate re-entry housing with peer services.
2019	Youth Homeless Demonstration Program Panel	Creating safety nets for homeless youth - efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness in rural Nebraska.
2019	Opioid Crisis	"A Dose of Reality" - Confronting the ongoing opioid crisis.
2019	Innovative Solutions to Ending Homelessness	This session highlights programs and ideas targeted to some of our most vulnerable populations, veterans and chronically homeless.
2019	Housing Our Newest Nebraskans	Creating an inclusive culture to provide safe and affordable housing.

PHOTOS

People's City Mission Homeless Shelter - Curtis Center
60 units - single room occupancy



PHOTOS

Open Door Mission Homeless Shelter
82 units - permanent supportive housing



PHOTOS

Committee to End Homelessness



Members of the Lincoln Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care, the Veterans Administration, and Housing and Urban Development posing with Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler during the Press Release declaration of Ending Veteran Homelessness in Lincoln Nebraska.

PHOTOS

Siena Francis House Homeless Shelter
48 units - permanent supportive housing



Ribbon Cutting event of the Siena Francis House Homeless Shelter CRANE LIHTC Housing Development featuring the Executive Director, Investors and residents.

PHOTOS

Siena Francis House Homeless Shelter
48 units - permanent supportive housing



PHOTOS

Skyline Apartments
Permanent Housing
92 units - elderly/disabled



PHOTOS

Pettigrew Emergency Shelter -
Stephens Center for homeless
78 units - permanent supportive housing



PHOTOS

Victory Apartments (Omaha)
Homeless Veterans
90 units - permanent supportive housing



PHOTOS

Victory Park (Lincoln)
Homeless Veterans
70 units - permanent supportive housing



PHOTOS

Victory Place (Grand Island)
Homeless Veterans
26 units - permanent supportive housing



PHOTOS

Nebraska Commission Housing and Homelessness—Hunger and Homelessness Awareness



Members of the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homeless, NIFA, Lincoln City Council, and the Veterans Administration posing with Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts during the 2018 Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Proclamation Signing Ceremony

PHOTOS

Project Homeless Connect



Members of the Lincoln Homeless Coalition and organizers of the annual Project Homeless Connect Event in Lincoln



Project Homeless Connect Lincoln 2018

Thank you to the many organizations, businesses, and community volunteers who came together to serve people who are homeless in our community! Your generous contribution of time, skills, and resources made the event a great success!



Project Partners

Lincoln Homeless Coalition Veterans Affairs Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

Event Sponsors

Ayars & Ayars	Lincoln Community Foundation	Pinnacle Bank Arena
Fiserv	NIFA (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority)	United Way of Lincoln & Lancaster Counties

Participating Organizations

A Warmer Day	I've Got a Name	Nebraska State Treasurer Unclaimed Property Division
ACLU of Nebraska	Job Corps	Nebraska Total Care
Aging Partners	Lancaster County Community Corrections	Nebraska WIC Program
American Job Center	Lancaster County General Assistance	Paul Mitchell The School Lincoln
Assistive Technology Partnership	Lancaster County Public Defender	Planned Parenthood of the Heartland
Atlas of Lincoln	League of Human Dignity	Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
Barnabas Community	Legal Aid of Nebraska	Project Recycling for Life
Blue Valley Behavioral Health	Lincoln Animal Ambassadors	Region V Systems
Bluestem Health	Lincoln City Libraries	ResCare Workforce Services
Bridges to Hope	Lincoln Commission on Human Rights	Salvation Army
Bryan College of Health Sciences	Lincoln Housing Authority	Seniors Choice, Inc.
Cedars Youth Services	Lincoln Lancaster County Health Dept.	Social Security Administration
Center for People In Need	Lincoln Literacy	St. Monica's
CenterPointe	Lincoln Public Schools	Stepping Stones for Families
Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership	Lincoln Vet Center	Southeast Community College Nursing Program
City of Lincoln Urban Development Clinic with a Heart	Lutheran Family Services	Super Blues Party- Jared Alberico
Community Action Partnership of Lancaster & Saunders Co.	Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach	The Bridge Behavioral Health
Consumer/ Family Advisory Committee	McDowell Law Office	Union College PA and Nursing Programs
Domesti-Pups	Monkey Wrench	UnitedHealthcare
Educare Lincoln	Narcotics Anonymous	UNL- Center on Children, Families, and the Law
Family Health Services	Nebraska AIDS Project	UNL College of Law Civil Clinic
Family Service Lincoln	Nebraska Appleseed	UNMC College of Dentistry
Food Bank of Lincoln	Nebraska Assoc for the Education of Young Children	UNMC College of Nursing
FoodNet	Nebraska Civic Engagement Table	US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)
Friendship Home	Nebraska Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing	Veterans Affairs Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System
From the Sky Down	Nebraska Dept of Education	Veterans Benefits Administration
Good Neighbor Center	Nebraska Dept of Health & Human Services	WellCare of Nebraska
Indigo Bridge Books	Nebraska Dept of Labor	YWCA of Lincoln
Internal Revenue Service	Nebraska Dept of Veterans Affairs	

Donor Businesses & Groups

A-4 Animal Hospital	HyVee	Lincoln DAV Auxiliary	United Methodist Women of the Blue River District
Casey's	John Walters & Julie Smith Charitable Fund	Pine Creek Farm	UNL School of Veterinary Medicine
Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association	Ladies Auxiliary Military Order of the Purple Heart	Raymond United Methodist Church	VSP Mobile Eyes
Concordia University		South Ridge Animal Clinic	Zoetis
Cruz Enterprises, Inc.		Union College Dining Services	

Volunteer Support Thanks to Fiserv employees; Concordia University & Crete High School students; Veterinarians Drs. Beth Galles, Catherine Nixon & Hal Smith; and many other dedicated individuals who gave their time and expertise.

PHOTOS

Youth Homeless Demonstration Project

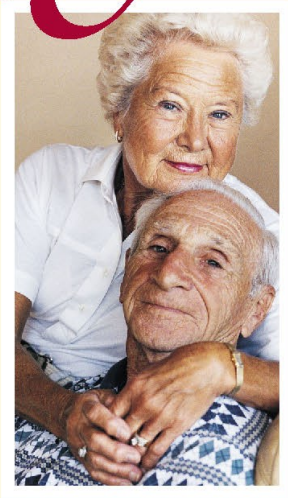


Staff from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, Center on Children Families and the Law receiving a check from Housing and Urban Development in the amount of \$3.28 million dollars for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant on behalf of the Nebraska Balance of State Continuum of Care

FLYER

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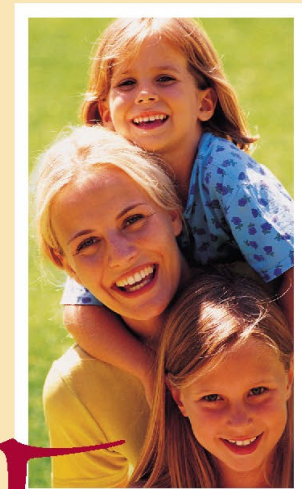
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 - rent amount
 - whether or not the rent is income-based
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 - acceptance of a rental subsidy
 - proximity to public transportation
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City lauded for homeless response system

Beutler says Lincoln effectively ended homelessness of veterans

NANCY HICKS

Lincoln Journal Star

Lincoln has effectively ended homelessness among veterans, Mayor Chris Beutler said.

The city's designation as "functional zero" by a federal coalition indicates its homeless response system has the capacity and coordination to immediately house any veteran who identifies as homeless, the mayor said at a Friday news conference.

And the work in Lincoln is a team effort of dozens of agencies.

"There are probably close to 20 agencies that are working on this every day because it takes a village," said Denise Packard, coordinated entry manager at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center on Children, Families and the Law.

"We cast our net wide to make sure we don't have any gaps," she

said.

Every week, the coordinated entry team runs a report, naming the veterans who have entered a shelter or are on the street.

Then the agencies review the list, determine what housing opportunities each person might be eligible for and develop a housing plan to get them off the streets as quickly as possible, Packard said.

Veterans often find housing through one of three organizations: CenterPointe's permanent supportive housing program for veterans, the Central Nebraska Community Action Program or the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing apartments that opened early this year on the VA campus near 70th and O streets.

That new apartment complex for homeless and near-homeless veterans "has been a huge asset in getting people connected with housing," Packard said.

The Lincoln agencies have the capacity to get the veterans housed as fast as possible, said Lee A. Heflebower, director of housing and supported living with Region V Systems.

"It's a very personalized service," Heflebower said.

Lincoln is the 62nd community in the country to achieve the

Please see **LINCOLN**, Page A5

Lincoln

From A3

benchmark.

The certification came from the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Veterans Affairs and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, which coordinates the federal response to homelessness in partnership with 19 federal agencies.

Certification does not mean that no veteran in Lincoln will ever again experience homelessness, but those events will be rare, said Jeff Chambers, project director at the UNL Center on Children, Families and the Law and a member of Lincoln's Homeless Coalition.

A collaborative group of 45 organizations developed a continuum of care plan to provide what individuals — veterans and others — need as they move from homelessness to self-sufficiency, Beutler said at Friday's news conference.

"This is a very proud milestone for our entire community," he said.

Ending Veteran Homelessness

The United States Inter-agency Council on Homelessness presented the Balance of State Continuum of Care with confirmation of effectively ending veteran homelessness. The Balance of State Continuum of Care represents the vast geographic majority of Nebraska (90 of the 93 counties in the state; all except for Douglas, Lancaster, and Saunders Counties).

What that means is, any veteran who wants a stable home in those 90 counties, can have one. A collective, cooperative effort among agencies across the continuum of care has made instances of homelessness among the veteran population rare, brief and non-recurring.

“The system is now in

place that allows us to identify and engage any veterans who come into homelessness. Some veterans choose to remain homeless, and for them, continued outreach and engagement is essential,” said Ryan Bailey, Blue Valley Community Action Partnership’s Family and Community Services Director. “Our priority is housing stability, and we are proud to say that through partnerships with the Veterans Administration and local resources, we are able to help veterans find and maintain stable housing.”

BVCA’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is dedicated to serving veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The program helps the veteran

locate safe and affordable housing and connects them to resources so they can remain in a stable situation. It’s a short-term crisis intervention that utilizes the “Housing First” model. Housing First focuses on getting the veteran in a stable living situation first, and then addresses any barriers to continued housing stability. Lack of income, mental health issues, poor rental history, substance abuse, etc. are all addressed after housing is secured, Bailey explained. It has been proven that once a person is stably housed and does not have to worry about basic needs, he or she can then address other issues more successfully, she added.

The Balance of State Continuum of Care implemented

a data collection system that allows any agency that comes in contact with a veteran (either through programs, referrals or outreach efforts) to identify and name every veteran in Nebraska. Not every veteran chooses to be housed but when they do the system allows the opportunity to provide the best foundation for their success.

For questions or more information, please contact your local Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) office at Blue Valley Community Action Partnership, 402-729-2278. BVCA serves Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York Counties.

Apartments in Lincoln are ready for veterans

By ELIZABETH REMBERT

WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

LINCOLN — Speakers praised veterans' service, the flag was raised and the ribbon was cut outside of 445 Honor Drive on Friday, opening the Victory Park apartment building on the Lincoln VA campus.

The three-story building, with 70 apartments, will be home to veterans at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

Duncan Fallon, site manager for the Department of Veterans' Affairs campus, said 40 veterans are awaiting lease approvals and would be moving in between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Victory Park will seek out other residents by working with other VA programs to identify homeless veterans in Lincoln, Fallon said.

The vision for Victory Park began in 2011 and gained steam in 2016 when the VA, Seniors Foundation VA Vision and Burlington Capital Real Estate finalized an enhanced use lease that allowed developers to build resources on excess VA land.

The project is the first step in a larger redevelopment of the VA's hospital campus at 70th and O Streets that eventually will include a new clinic, more housing and medical office buildings.

After the ceremony, people toured the apartments, running their hands across the stone countertops and praising the size of the rooms and the quality of the work.

Thomas Bowman, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, called the building and the effort behind it inspiring.

"It doesn't take a miracle to take care of veterans and recognize their service," Bowman told those gathered at Friday's ceremony. "It takes people like you."

Project Homeless Connect Lincoln event Tuesday

On Tuesday, Oct. 16, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., approximately 100 organizations will be at Pinnacle Bank Arena as part of Project Homeless Connect Lincoln, a one-stop event of the Lincoln Homeless Coalition where homeless individuals and families can receive a variety of immediate, on-site services for unmet needs.

The event has been combined with the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System's Stand Down

event. The following will be available: medical, dental, mental health and substance abuse services; support with legal issues, housing and social services applications, and personal care; employment, education, basic needs, and veteran services; bike repairs; and pet care.

Volunteers play a large role in this event, which is now in its 10th year. Volunteer navigators will be on site to help the estimated 400 guests assess their

needs and guide them to booths. Additional volunteers are needed.

Corporate and community partners also play a central role in the event each year. 2018 corporate partners include Fiserv, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County, Ayars & Ayars, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, Lincoln Community Foundation, Pinnacle Bank Arena and Raymond United Methodist Church.

Fiserv not only provides a financial contribution to support the event, but its employees also go through training provided by Lincoln Homeless Coalition to prepare them for their responsibilities at Project Homeless Connect. This year, Fiserv is further supporting Project Homeless Connect Lincoln by assembling 400 hygiene kits to be distributed at Project Homeless Connect Lincoln. "Over the course of a year, approximately 2,800

people will experience living on the streets or in shelters in Lincoln," said Dan Senft, Fiserv product manager. "That number, which doesn't even include those who are near-homeless, compels Fiserv team members to do what we can to help in this community we call home."

Learn more about Project Homeless Connect Lincoln or sign up to volunteer at lincolnhomelesscoalition.org.

Veteran homelessness drops in U.S. and Nebraska



By Press Release | Posted: Thu 11:55 AM, Nov 01, 2018

Veteran homelessness in the U.S. and Nebraska continues to decline according to a new national estimate announced today by U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson.

In Nebraska, veteran homelessness decreased nearly 2% since 2017. HUD's Annual Homeless Assessment Report finds the total number of reported veterans experiencing homelessness in 2018 decreased 5.4 percent since last year, falling to nearly half of the number of homeless veterans reported in 2010.

In announcing the latest annual estimate, HUD Secretary Ben Carson and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie noted that local communities are reporting reductions in the number of veterans in their shelter systems and on their streets.

"We owe it to our veterans to make certain they have a place to call home," said HUD Secretary Carson. "We've made great strides in our efforts to end veteran homelessness, but we still have a lot of work to do to ensure those who wore our nation's uniform have access to stable housing."

"The reduction in homelessness among veterans announced today shows that the strategies we are using to help the most vulnerable veterans become stably housed are working," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This is good news for all Veterans."

"In Home, Together, the new federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, we redouble our commitment to ending homelessness among Veterans and among all Americans," said Matthew Doherty, executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. "Working together at the federal, state and local level, we can and will continue to make progress until all Americans have a stable home from which they can pursue opportunity."



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Channel 10/11 News
1011now.com

Each year, thousands of local communities around the country conduct one-night 'Point-in-Time' estimates of the number of persons experiencing homelessness—in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs and in unsheltered locations.

This year's estimate finds 37,878 veterans experienced homelessness in January 2018, compared to 40,020 reported in January 2017. HUD estimates among the total number of reported veterans experiencing homelessness in 2018, 23,312 veterans were found in sheltered settings while volunteers counted 14,566 veterans living in places not meant for human habitation.

HUD also reports a nearly 10 percent decline among female veterans experiencing homelessness. In January 2018, local communities reported 3,219 homeless female veterans compared to 3,571 one year earlier.

The decrease in veteran homelessness can largely be attributed to the effectiveness of the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program, which combines permanent HUD rental assistance with case management and clinical services provided by the VA.

HUD-VASH is complemented by a continuum of VA programs that use modern tools and technology to identify the most vulnerable Veterans and rapidly connect them to the appropriate interventions to become and remain stably housed. Last year alone, more than 4,000 veterans, many experiencing chronic forms of homelessness, found permanent housing and critically needed support services through the HUD-VASH program. An additional 50,000 veterans found permanent housing and supportive services through VA's continuum of homeless programs.

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\$7 million project upgrades high-rise

92 apartments fully renovated, remodeled Skyline Manor in Norfolk viewed as 'poster child' for state program

By **NICK GEBHART**

ngebhart@norfolkdailynews.com

The official reopening of Skyline Manor Apartments — the high-rise building that towers over Norfolk Avenue near 13th Street — was celebrated with a ribbon cutting Wednesday afternoon.

The 92 apartments at Skyline have been fully renovated and remodeled, including new appliances, floors, countertops and windows. The entire facility also received upgrades to heating and cooling systems, its roof, sidewalk and parking lot repairs and asbestos removal.

The apartment complex serves seniors and renters with disabilities, and rent is income-based and subsidized in many cases.

The building was constructed around 1970 and was owned by Oddfellows of Norfolk until 2015, when it sold the building to the Wishrock Group, a Maine-based real estate development company that specializes in rehabilitating low-income housing.

From there, Wishrock Group immediately went to work to refurbish the

building.

Tyson O'Connell of the Wishrock Group said overall the renovation project cost more than \$7 million over four years, with a great amount of collaboration between public and private entities.

"This would not have been possible without great people, progressive thinking and great partnerships," he said.

Among the attendees at the ceremony Wednesday was Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, who extended his congratulations to the City of Norfolk and the many groups involved in the renovation project.

"I can only imagine all the meetings, the strategizing, the financing complexities to pull this together into the jewel of a project that it is," Foley said. "I hope other communities will look to Norfolk because I think Skyline could be a great model for what we need across the state of Nebraska."

Foley said a top priority for the state and his administration is working to develop housing for workers and retirees.

"With such a low unemployment rate, it's difficult for businesses to find workers, and part of that equation is housing," Foley said. "We need adequate

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Skyline

Continued from Page 1—

housing for our workers and our retirees."

Norfolk Mayor Josh Moenning also commended the completion of the project, noting the amount of collaboration and persistence needed to see the project through.

"It took everybody rowing in the same direction to make this work," he said.

Moenning said he saw for himself firsthand the amount of work that has gone into the building over the years, as his home is next door to the apartment building.

"I was very familiar with the facility before, and frankly, it was in rough shape," Moenning said. "It was in need of a lot of tender, loving care. It's not an easy process, but it got done."

The catalyst for funding the project, O'Connell said, was the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA), which helped procure more than \$6 million in federal tax credits and about \$2.4 million in state tax credits.

O'Connell said that, in particular, the NIFA's Collaborative Resource Allocation for Nebraska (CRANE) program

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Daily News - Norfolk
March 7, 2019



IAKE WRAGGE/DAILY NEWS

IT WAS TIME to celebrate the completion of renovations and improvements to the Skyline Manor Apartments on Norfolk Avenue with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday afternoon. Participating were those who had a vested interest in seeing the building upgraded as a housing option.

Vet apartments nearly finished at Victory Park

Complex being built for low-income veterans

NANCY HICKS

Lincoln Journal Star

When a friend first suggested he move to Nebraska, Rich Taylor said he reacted like a typical New Yorker.

"Nebraska? That's somewhere in the Midwest right," he thought.

But Taylor discovered that Lincoln is a friendly, not-too-big city, with great services for veterans.

Taylor will be among the first veterans to move into the almost-completed Victory Park Veterans Residence, a three-story apartment complex on the VA campus near 70th and O Streets.

The Marine Corps and Merchant Marine veteran led the Pledge of Allegiance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the project on Friday afternoon.

The apartment complex, for low-income veterans, is the first private project on the Lincoln VA campus, where developers hope someday to build rental town homes, additional apartments, office space, medical clinics and renovate the former VA hospital.

But redevelopment will not change the parade grounds on the campus. That is going to remain untouched, said Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke, a former adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard.

It's taken a number of groups and hundreds of people almost a decade to get to this first phase of redevelopment on the VA campus.

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Apartments

From A1

"There were times we thought the picture (of the apartment building) was the closest we would get to veterans' housing," said Mark Richardson, president of the nonprofit Seniors Foundation of Lincoln and Lancaster County, which has a lease for the VA campus property.

Burlington Capital, formerly America First Real Estate Group, is the project's developer. Sampson Construction of Lincoln is building the

apartments for low-income and homeless veterans.

The 70-apartment complex is Lincoln's first available VASH housing, named after the voucher program that helps subsidize the rent for veterans.

The apartment complex was expected to be an \$8.6 million investment, with about \$320,000 coming from local tax increment financing.

Victory Park apartments will be managed by Burlington Capital, which also manages a VASH complex called Victory Apartments in Omaha.

The partnership for operating the apartments includes the private developer, the VA and the Lincoln Housing Authority.

Case managers at the VA handle the assessment process, determining whether a veteran qualifies for the apartment, said Tom York, with Burlington Capital.

Veterans, who meet in-

come limits and other guidelines, are eligible for the subsidized apartments, where the rent is about 27 percent of the person's monthly income.

Almost 40 veterans have already qualified for an apartment and many will be moving in within the next month, York said in a telephone interview.

"We hope veterans can start moving in around Dec. 1," he said.

Taylor, who has done construction work, said he saw the apartments going up and found out from the construction workers it was to be an apartment building for veterans.

Taylor says his new apartment will be a little smaller than where he is currently living, but he will have much more peace of mind.

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NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Journal Star - Lincoln
November 4, 2017



ERIC GREGORY, JOURNAL STAR

A semitrailer makes a delivery to the new three-story apartment building for low-income veterans on the VA campus near 70th and O streets as it nears completion Thursday.

Lincoln has effectively ended homelessness of veterans, mayor says

NANCY HICKS Lincoln Journal Star Oct 5, 2018



Volunteers from Heroes Into Homes, a nonprofit dedicated to helping military veterans find housing, furnished the apartments on Lincoln's VA campus before 25 low-income or homeless veterans moved in earlier this year.

FRANCIS GARDLER, Journal Star file photo

Lincoln has effectively ended homelessness among veterans, Mayor Chris Beutler said.



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Journal Star - Lincoln
October 5, 2018

The city's designation as “functional zero” by a federal coalition indicates its homeless response system has the capacity and coordination to immediately house any veteran who identifies as homeless, the mayor said at a Friday news conference.

And the work in Lincoln is a team effort of dozens of agencies.

"There are probably close to 20 agencies that are working on this every day because it takes a village," said Denise Packard, coordinated entry manager at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center on Children, Families and the Law.

“We cast our net wide to make sure we don’t have any gaps,” she said.

Every week, the coordinated entry team runs a report, naming the veterans who have entered a shelter or are on the street.

Then the agencies review the list, determine what housing opportunities each person might be eligible for and develop a housing plan to get them off the streets as quickly as possible, Packard said.

Veterans often find housing through one of three organizations: CenterPointe’s permanent supportive housing program for veterans, the Central Nebraska Community Action Program or the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing apartments that opened early this year on the VA campus near 70th and O streets.

That new apartment complex for homeless and near-homeless veterans “has been a huge asset in getting people connected with housing,” Packard said.

The Lincoln agencies have the capacity to get the veterans housed as fast as possible, said Lee A. Heflebower, director of housing and supported living with Region V Systems.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Journal Star - Lincoln
October 5, 2018

“It’s a very personalized service,” Heflebower said.

Lincoln is the 62nd community in the country to achieve the benchmark.

The certification came from the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Veterans Affairs and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, which coordinates the federal response to homelessness in partnership with 19 federal agencies.

Certification does not mean that no veteran in Lincoln will ever again experience homelessness, but those events will be rare, said Jeff Chambers, project director at the UNL Center on Children, Families and the Law and a member of Lincoln's Homeless Coalition.

A collaborative group of 45 organizations developed a continuum of care plan to provide what individuals — veterans and others — need as they move from homelessness to self-sufficiency, Beutler said at Friday's news conference.

“This is a very proud milestone for our entire community,” he said.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

World Herald - Omaha
November 4, 2017

Apartment building in Lincoln is ready for veterans

By Elizabeth Rembert // World-Herald Bureau Nov 4, 2017

LINCOLN — Speakers praised veterans' service, the flag was raised and the ribbon was cut outside of 445 Honor Drive on Friday, opening the Victory Park apartment building on the Lincoln VA campus.

The three-story building, with 70 apartments, will be home to veterans at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

Duncan Fallon, site manager for the Department of Veterans' Affairs campus, said 40 veterans are awaiting lease approvals and would be moving in between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Victory Park will seek out other residents by working with other VA programs to identify homeless veterans in Lincoln, Fallon said.

The vision for Victory Park began in 2011 and gained steam in 2016 when the VA, Seniors Foundation VA Vision and Burlington Capital Real Estate finalized an enhanced use lease that allowed developers to build resources on excess VA land.

The project is the first step in a larger redevelopment of the VA's hospital campus at 70th and O Streets that eventually will include a new clinic, more housing and medical office buildings.

After the ceremony, people toured the apartments, running their hands across the stone countertops and praising the size of the rooms and the quality of the work.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

World Herald - Omaha
November 4, 2017

Thomas Bowman, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, called the building and the effort behind it inspiring.

“It doesn’t take a miracle to take care of veterans and recognize their service,” Bowman told those gathered at Friday’s ceremony. “It takes people like you.”



Husker initiative aims to end youth homelessness in Nebraska

by [Deann Gayman | University Communication \(/written-by/deann-gayman-university-communication/\)](#)



Shutterstock

Nebraska's Center on Children, Families and the Law has received federal funding to launch an initiative to curtail youth homelessness.

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is launching a project to help curtail youth homelessness in greater Nebraska.



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
July 13, 2018

Led by the university's Center on Children, Families and the Law, the development of a coordinated community plan is being funded through a \$3.28 million award from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Youth Homeless Demonstration program. The award, announced July 13, is one of 11 projects funded nationwide through the HUD program.

The Center on Children, Families and the Law will partner with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and the Nebraska Balance of State Continuum of Care on the initiative. The federal funding will directly serve youths and young adults under 24 years old across the state outside the Lincoln and Omaha metropolitan areas.

"We're going to look at where are the youth in need of homelessness services and do we have those services geographically dispersed to where they need to be."

— **Jeffrey Chambers**, *project manager, Center on Children, Families and the Law*

Nebraska has about 175,000 youths between ages 10 and 24, and more than 2,000 are homeless, according to counts by the Nebraska Balance of State Continuum of Care and the Nebraska Department of Education. Youths who are victims of abuse or familial strife, have aged out of foster care or who have been in the juvenile justice system are the most at risk for becoming homeless.

Jeffrey Chambers, project manager for the Center on Children, Families and the Law, said the funding will allow a continuation and strengthening of efforts already under way, such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing, as well as new and innovative approaches.

"We know that some efforts have worked and we're going to expand them," Chambers said. "This is a significant amount of funding over two years, and at the end of those two years, we will be able to apply for continued funding, based on



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
July 13, 2018

new projects developed."

The initiative also will better integrate current agencies, programs and systems, making them work better together to serve homeless youth.

"We're going to look at where are the youth in need of homelessness services and do we have those services geographically dispersed to where they need to be," Chambers said. "There are 76,000 square miles, so there is a lot of area that needs to be covered."

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
October 21, 2013



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

(<https://www.va.gov>)

VA (<http://www.va.gov>) » Health Care (<http://www.va.gov/health>) » VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (</index.asp>) » Features (</NEBRASKA/features/index.asp>) » Partnering to Help Homeless Veterans

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

Partnering to Help Homeless Veterans



VA NWHCS' new Community Resource and Referral Center is located at 825 Dorcas St. in Omaha, adjacent to the Victory Apartments, which is affordable housing for homeless and low-income Veterans. A grand opening was held for both Sept. 5.

By Will Ackerman
Monday, October 21, 2013

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
October 21, 2013

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System and America First Realty Group celebrated a combined grand opening for the new location of the Mental Health Specialty Service Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) and adjacent affordable housing development called Victory Apartments Sept. 5 at 825 Dorcas St. in Omaha.

"This is the best example of a private-public partnership," said Dr. Marci Mylan, NWHCS director, during the ceremony. "It provides Veterans safe, dignified housing."

Nearly 200 people attended the event including Sen. Deb Fischer, various community leaders, and representatives from Veteran service organizations, VA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city of Omaha, Douglas County Housing Authority, and the office of Rep. Lee Terry.

Staff at the CRRC provide an array of services for eligible Veterans including job skills assistance, Veterans justice outreach and casemanagement.

The CRRC also provides Veterans access to washers and dryers and showers on a limited basis.

VA NWHCS was one of the first pilot sites within the Veterans Health Administration to open a CRRC in 2011. The CRRC was located in Building D on the VA NWHCS, Omaha medical center campus at 4101 Woolworth Ave. However, the Mental Health Specialty Service outgrew the original space.

"Since 2008 when NWHCS first started its homeless services programs, we didn't have space to collocate a lot of services together for coordinated, collaborative care," said Linda Twomey, director of the Mental Health Specialty Service. "This center meets that need."

The operating hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, excluding federal holidays. An additional service available through the CRRC is a VA Food Pantry. The pantry is open on the first and third Wednesdays of every month from 10 a.m. to noon. Veterans with a need, especially those who are low-income, near homeless, or homeless and not living in a shelter are eligible to use the pantry. The pantry provides items that include canned foods, grains, meats and bread. Fresh produce is available in season. Hygiene products also are available upon request. Veterans who wish to use the pantry must show a valid state identification card or a piece of mail postmarked within the past 60 days that shows their name and Nebraska address.

For more information about the CRRC or the VA Pantry, call 402-995-4010.

Victory Apartments provides affordable housing to Veterans eligible for VA health care services. Veterans can rent the apartments through the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program, which was designed to move Veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing.

Twomey said the apartments help area Veterans overcome one of the major causes of homelessness—affordable housing – and they are adjacent to VA services.

"The Veterans who will be housed in Victory Apartments, receiving services through the VA center, often have greater barriers to accessing services that include transportation, affordable housing and the sense of getting lost in the bigger VA system," Twomey said. "Collocating services in the community will hopefully reduce these barriers."



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
October 21, 2013

The apartment complex features 65 one-bedroom units, 25 studios, a 7,000-square foot gymnasium, fitness facility and a resident community room.

U.S. Army Veteran and Victory Apartment resident Charles Pittman said if not for VA and this development, he wouldn't be where he is today.

"Thanks to the (VA), I'm here today, sober. I have a home and am a functional member of the community again," Pittman said.