

Ending Veteran Homelessness Together


A TRAINING FOR 3 COUNTY COC FRONTLINE STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

OCTOBER 20, 2016

PRESENTED BY THE 3 COUNTY VETERAN HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE

PRESENTERS: DAVE CHRISTOPOLIS, STEVE CONNORS, MIKE HAGMAIER, JADE LOVETT

Today's Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
 2. Intro to 3 County Continuum of Care Coordination Efforts to End Veteran Homelessness
 3. The Homeless Veteran By-Name List
 4. Housing First approach
 5. The role of frontline staff & volunteers
 6. Identifying homeless Veterans
 7. Resources to help homeless Veterans
 8. Simple steps for frontline staff to connect homeless Veterans to resources
 9. Q & A Session
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3 County CoC Coordination Efforts

1. Homeless Veteran Committee
2. Homeless Veteran By-Name List
3. Outreach & Shelter
4. Quick access to permanent housing

COORDINATION:

3 County CoC Homeless Veteran Committee

Goal of the Committee

To end and prevent Veteran homelessness in the 3 County region through better coordination of housing & services

Activities of the Committee

1. Bring together key stakeholders to create policies and take actions that will help end and prevent Veteran homelessness. Today's training is one example.
2. Identify all homeless Veterans in the region
3. Link homeless Veterans to permanent housing & services
4. Track housing outcomes for homeless Veterans

The Committee meets 1 to 2 times/month. The Committee started meeting in early 2016.



Homeless Veteran Committee

Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority

Central Hampshire Veteran Services

Craigs Doors

Eliot Homeless Services

Hilltown CDC—Homeless Continuum of Care Lead Agency

ServiceNet

Soldier On

Turner House

Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center

Veterans Inc.



COORDINATION:

Homeless Veteran By-Name List

- A list that attempts to identify **by name** ALL homeless Veterans in the 3 County area.
- Knowing Veterans by name helps service organizations better coordinate a housing and service plan for individual Veterans
- Having a complete list lets the community track positive outcomes and challenges for individual homeless Veterans and track outcomes towards ending Veteran homelessness.


Which homeless Veterans are on the list?

Any Veteran who is on the streets, in shelter or transitional programs who has had one day of Active Duty in the military. Discharge status and Veteran Affairs eligibility is irrelevant.

What Information Can the Homeless Veteran By Name List Provide?

- How many Veterans are homeless in the region
- How many unsheltered Veterans are in the region
- How many chronically homeless Veterans are in the region (have been homeless for a long time)
- Various sub-populations that may need tailored housing and services such as Veteran families, female Veterans, elderly or disabled Veterans
- How quickly Veterans are finding housing
- What kind of housing Veterans are moving to

COORDINATION: Outreach & Shelter

- The Homeless Veteran Committee works to make sure that ALL homeless Veterans are identified through outreach. Frontline staff & volunteers are critical to this effort.
 - The Committee works to provide partners in all parts of the region with the information they need to quickly connect homeless Veterans to housing & services.
 - Emergency shelter is available to any Veteran that needs it. **A key goal is to have Zero unsheltered Veterans.**
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COORDINATION:


Quick access to permanent housing

- The goal is to move homeless Veterans to permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- There are multiple permanent housing options for homeless households including some programs that are just for homeless Veterans
- Outreach efforts to quickly identify homeless Veterans and connecting them to the Veteran Committee groups and the by-name list helps shorten the time to permanent housing.

Housing First for Homeless Veterans

What Is Housing First?

Housing First is a **homeless** assistance approach that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible--and then providing voluntary supportive services as needed.

- There are no pre-conditions for housing. No income requirements, no sobriety or treatment requirements.
 - Homeless households are assisted to move to housing and provided with support services to help them maintain the housing.
 - Households have a range of service needs. Some won't need any services and some will need intensive services to maintain permanent housing.
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Key Role for Frontline Staff & Volunteers



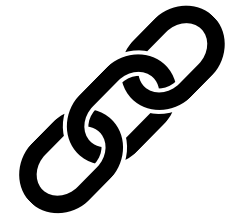
Usually the first to encounter homeless Veterans and start building trust with them



Can be the first to identify a homeless person as a Veteran



Quickly connect homeless Veterans to organizations that can provide permanent housing and other key services



Provide key link if a homeless Veteran disengages with other service providers or has disappeared



Who are Frontline Staff & Volunteers?

- Street outreach workers
- Librarians
- Shelter workers
- Case managers
- Police officers
- Town/city employees
- Shop & business owners
- Food pantry & meal program volunteers
- Hospital/clinic staff & EMTs
- Faith groups
- Senior Center Staff
- Any concerned citizen



Frontline Staff & Volunteers

Your efforts can help end a Veteran's homelessness fast!

The faster you identify them and refer them,
the faster they will move to housing



Identifying Homeless Veterans

Ask this simple question to identify if someone is a homeless Veteran:

Have you ever served in the military?

Active Duty

Branches of Service include: Air force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marines

Reserves

Army Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Resource, Coast Guard Reserve

National Guard

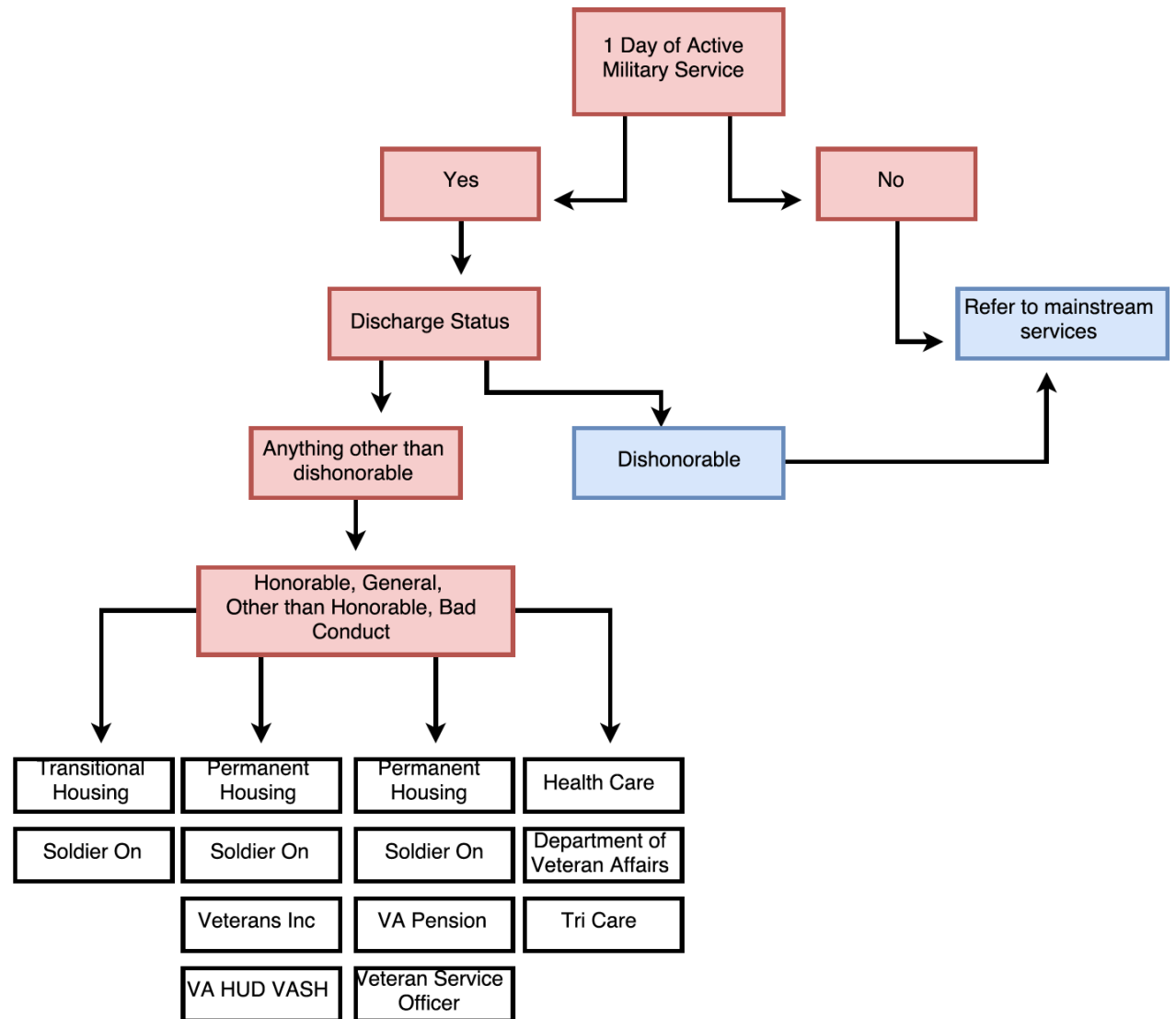
Army National Guard, Air National Guard



Veteran Facts & Resources

1. Overview chart of services
2. Veteran Discharge Status
3. U.S Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) eligibility status
4. Veteran income benefits
5. Veteran medical benefits
6. Veteran emergency shelter resources
7. Veteran housing programs

Overview of Veteran Eligibility & Services



Veteran Discharge Status

Appears on DD-214

- Honorable
- General
- Other than Honorable
- Bad Conduct
- Dishonorable

Discharge can be upgraded

- Form DD-293

Federal Veteran Affairs (VA) Eligibility

Basic Eligibility

- Served Active duty and separated under any condition other than dishonorable
- Reserves and National Guard that were called to Active Duty by a Federal Order
- Enlisted after 9/7/80 or entered active duty after 10/16/81- Must have 24 continuous months or full period called to active duty
- Enlisted or entered active duty prior to 9/7/80 1 day of active duty or were discharged with a disability, a hardship or “early out”

VA Central Western Massachusetts Health Care System has an eligibility specialist

<http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp>

Veterans Benefits in Massachusetts

CHAPTER 115 AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY
VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS (VSO'S)




Qualifying Veterans and their dependents can receive direct financial aid for...



Based on a formula which accounts for their number of dependents and all sources of income.

Who is a Massachusetts Veteran?

- War time service
 - Or peace time service
 - Honorable discharge
 - Either 90 or 180 days of active service
 - Check MGL c. 4, sec. 7
- 

Exception to the Minimum Service Requirement

As little as 1 (one) day of wartime service and



Service connected disability



Purple Heart



Died during service



Cash Assistance – Elder / Disabled

- Single and income below \$1,750 / month
- Married and income below \$2,313 / month
- Less than \$5,000 in bank accounts if single (\$9,800 for couple)



Check with your local VSO

Cash Assistance – All Other Veterans

- Single and income below \$1,430 / month
- Married and income below \$1,673 / month
- Less than \$5,000 in bank accounts if single (\$9,800 for couple)



Check with your local VSO

Medical Assistance

- Single and income below \$1,980 / month
- Married and income below \$2,670 / month
- Less than \$5,000 in bank accounts if single (\$9,800 for couple)



Check with your local VSO

Medical Insurance and Expenses

- Reimbursement for Medicare
- Payments made on Medigap insurance
- Reimbursement for all doctor / hospital / prescription co-pays
- Partial payments for dentistry, eyeglasses & some other needs



Check with your local VSO

Veteran-Specific Emergency Shelter Resources

- Soldier On Emergency Shelter
 - Eligibility: Must be eligible for VA Health Care
- Soldier On Grant and Per Diem
 - Must have a Discharge status of anything but “Dishonorable”
- Homeless Veterans can also access regular, mainstream shelters for homeless families and individuals.


Permanent Housing for Homeless Veterans

SSVF—Supportive Services for Veteran Families

Eligibility

- Discharge status of anything but dishonorable
- Income less than 50% of Area Median Income
- Homeless or at-risk of literal homelessness

Which organizations have SSVF in Western Mass?

- Soldier On, Inc - 1-866-406-8449
 - Veterans Inc.- 1-800-482-2565
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Permanent Housing for Homeless Veterans

Soldier On Permanent Supportive Housing

- Gordon H. Mansfield, Pittsfield, MA- 39 Units
- Gordon H. Mansfield, Leeds, MA- 44 Units
- Gordon H. Mansfield, Chicopee, MA-43 Units

Permanent Housing for Homeless Veterans

US Department of Veteran Affairs

- HUD-VASH

Local Veteran Service Officer

- Chapter 115

Permanent Housing for Homeless Veterans

What about Veterans who are not eligible for Veteran housing options?

Veterans may be eligible for mainstream housing options including:


1. Continuum of Care Permanent Supportive Housing (must typically meet the definition of chronically homeless)
2. Public housing
3. Section 8
4. HUD multifamily housing
5. Private market apartments

Now What?

You know about all these great resources. Now what?

Frontline staff and volunteers do not need to be experts in all these resources.

Your job is to:

- Identify Veterans
 - Refer
 - Follow-up on referrals if possible depending on your role
 - Support Veteran on follow thru if possible
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Review of how to Identify Veterans

Have you served in the United States Military Service?
Active Duty, Reserve or National Guard?

Next: Make referrals

Soldier On

- Transitional Housing
- Emergency Shelter
- Permanent Housing

Veterans Inc.

- Transitional Housing
- Permanent Housing

US Department of Veteran Affairs

- Health Care
- Benefits
- Housing

Local Veteran Service Officers

- Benefits for Housing



TIP: Use the referral card for Veteran Services to connect Veterans with Veteran-specific service providers.

Next: Follow Up

If you refer a Veteran for shelter, housing, health care . . .

If you have capacity, follow up with the receiving organization and Veteran to ensure the Veteran is receiving the help they need.



Q&A

What questions do you have today?

What are you seeing out in the community with homeless Veterans?

What ideas do you have?



Thank you for coming
and for your KEY role in ending
Veteran homelessness

