VA’s Strategy to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Veterans

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Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan

• Provide affordable housing
• Provide permanent supportive housing
• Increase meaningful and sustainable employment
• Reduce financial vulnerability
• Transform homeless services to crisis response systems

(USICH, 2010)
VA’s Strategy

• Primary – identifying Veterans experiencing homelessness or imminent risk

• Secondary – preventing or rapidly ending homelessness among Veteran families through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program

• Tertiary – providing permanent supportive housing to chronically homeless Veterans through the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program
Significant Scale Up in Resources

2013: VA Introduced Universal Screening for Homelessness & Risk

- HUD-VASH
- SSVF

SSVF Allocations (millions)

HUD-VASH Vouchers

- $0
- $200
- $400
- $600
- $800
- $1,000
- $1,200

HUD-VASH


$1,060
Identifying Veterans

Universal Screening

1. For the past 60 days, have you been living in stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household?

2. Are you worried or concerned that in the next 60 days you may not have stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household?

Responses, FY 2015

Among 3,529,695 Veterans who responded to the universal screen

- 0.65% (23,103) screened positive for homelessness
- 0.57% (20,230) screened positive for risk
Identifying Veterans

Identifying Veterans experiencing homelessness or risk is associated with

- Connection with followup social work and homeless services
- Enrollment in VA homeless programs including SSVF & HUD-VASH
- Resolution of housing instability

(Montgomery, 2016)
Positive Screens for Risk Decreased by 57.8%
Positive Screens for Homelessness Decreased by 32.9%

(Montgomery, 2016)
Prevention & Rapid Rehousing

• SSVF, modeled after the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP), awards grants to community-based agencies to provide
  – Outreach, case management, other supportive services
  – Temporary financial assistance

• Veterans must be very low-income and either
  – At imminent risk of losing permanent housing → homelessness prevention
  – Transitioning into permanent housing → rapid rehousing
SSVF: National Outcomes

• During FY 2012–2014
  – SSVF served 138,538 Veterans
    • 60% rapid rehousing
    • 40% homelessness prevention
  – 80% of Veterans served exited to permanent housing after approximately 3 months in the program

• During 2014
  – 34% of all homeless sheltered Veterans received SSVF
  – SSVF served a high-need population

(VA, 2016)
Avoiding Homelessness Post-SSVF

Homelessness Prevention

- 1 Year Post-SSVF: 89.7% Individuals, 93.5% Families
- 2 Years Post-SSVF: 82.1% Individuals, 89.1% Families

Rapid Rehousing

- 1 Year Post-SSVF: 84.0% Individuals, 90.6% Families
- 2 Years Post-SSVF: 73.4% Individuals, 84.5% Families

(Byrne, Treglia, Culhane, Kuhn, & Kane, 2015)
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- HUD-VASH is a collaboration between HUD and VA
  - HUD provides permanent housing subsidy through Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program
  - VA provides case management and clinical services
- Veterans must be homeless, eligible for VA healthcare, and require support to live independently in the community
- During FY 2013, VA shifted its model of PSH from a linear, “treatment first” approach to be consistent with Housing First

(HUD, 2014)
HUD-VASH: National Outcomes

During FY 2015

• 65.5% of Veterans who accessed HUD-VASH housing did so in 90 days or less
  – Housing First approach and frequency of VA case management associated with rapid access to housing
• 59.4% of Veterans admitted to HUD-VASH were chronically homeless
• 32.7% of Veterans living in HUD-VASH housing were employed
• 84.0% of exits were considered positive

(Montgomery & Cusack, in press; VA, Veterans Support Services Center, 2016)
HUD-VASH: Exits

A study of 4 HUD-VASH sites found

• 86.6% of Veterans retained housing for 1 year; 60.4% for at least 2 years

• Among Veterans who left housing, more than one-half appeared to have successful exits

• Almost 93% of Veterans who left housing did not access a VA homeless program within 1 year

(Montgomery & Cusack, in press)
Consistent with other research that has found a decrease in urgent and inpatient care after moving into HUD-VASH housing (Byrne, Roberts, Culhane, & Kane, 2014; Montgomery, Hill, Kane, & Culhane, 2013)
35% decrease in Veteran homelessness

HUD, 2015
References


