

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes – 12/13/18

*VI*n attendance: Steve Connor, Veterans Services, Craig Deraway, Soldier On, Justin Maynard, VA, Gerry McCafferty, City of Springfield, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kate Sweetster-Owens, VA, Stephanie Tonelli, FOH/CSO, Allie Wilson-Pierce, VA

Hampden County Update: 19 veterans currently on the by-name list.

Housing is identified for half. Will be using Chapin Mansion (through VOC) that has 8 vacancies and has changed its policies to low barrier (no longer sober housing). It will prioritize housing veterans.

The non-VA eligible HUD-VASH vouchers have been all but approved (awaiting final final approval after some minor changes to the agreement). There will be 11 vouchers to be used across the region. This will make a huge impact for hardest to house veterans.

A few veterans have returned to the area and are repeat voucher recipients. This raised the larger challenge, i.e., how to better serve veterans who need more support than VASH currently gives (due to case load and veterans' needs). The veterans involved here have thought disorders that make stability especially difficult. We will further research best practices on this challenge (Gerry will see what Built for Zero folks have to offer). We also discussed the value of

Critical Time Intervention (CTI) as a model that has proven success. We agreed that to train on this model would require regional and organizational buy-in (from top down to bottom up) and this is something the CoCs could encourage/require in their grant funding application process. We will discuss further.

Three county Update:

We discussed 3 County's by-name list. It does not include veterans living at Soldier On, just unsheltered veterans outside of Soldier On. We discussed the fact that because veterans in transitional housing at Soldier On are considered homeless and must be rehoused that it could be helpful in our regional work to have them on the by-name list; it would also allow for better tracking as veterans move in and out of Soldier On, and up and down 91, and providers would have a better chance of understanding history and needs when they enter the system again.

We also noted that Soldier On's permanent housing is allocated based on traditional fair housing criteria (first come first serve), and is not integrated into coordinated entry where vulnerability and chronic homelessness are the deciding factors. This creates a disconnect between VA requirements for allocating HUD-VASH (prioritization based on acuity of need). This issue has been discussed previously and we agreed it would be useful to get an update on where conversations are at with the VA and HUD. Pamela will reach out to Jim Seney to get an update.

We agreed it would be useful to meet across the CoC's to brainstorm how to build better collaboration and possibly one

by-name list. We agreed Pamela would reach out to:

3 County CoC – Brad and Lisa, co-chairs, and CommunityAction
as the incoming lead

VA – Jim Kate, Allie, Solider On – Craig, Mike

Hampden County CoC – Gerry

ServiceNet – Erin Forbush

Hilltown CDC – Nikki Riello, Dave C

Our goal is to identify the barriers to unified
coordinated entry – what are local and what are national – and
determine together next steps.

**Next quarterly meeting date: Thurs., March 14, 9:30-11 am,
Frost Building, Room 309**