

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 1/12/18

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - January 12, 2018

In attendance: Ben Cluff, DPH-Veterans, Steve Connor, Veterans Services, Keegan Hersey, Veterans Inc, Sue Moorman, VA, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kate Sweetster-Owens, Alison Wilson-Pierce, HUD-VASH

Discussion of new vouchers for VHA ineligible veterans: The group discussed HUD's recent decision to allow Soldier On to convert 25 HUD VASH vouchers to use for VHA-ineligible veterans. This is great news since many of the chronically homeless veterans are VHA ineligible. This also raises the question of how those 25 vouchers will be allocated across the region (Soldier On has its veterans in GPD beds who need to be permanently housed and most of Hampden County's remaining homeless vets are VHA ineligible). The group agreed it would be useful to have a meeting across both CoC's to discuss the allocation process and how best to collaborate. The group agreed Pamela will reach out to: Mike Hagmaier (Soldier On), Gerry McCafferty (Hampden County CoC), Dave Christopolis (Three County CoC) and Sue White (VA) to start scheduling (and welcome them to invite any one else).

The group also agreed that this meeting would be an opportunity to discuss sub-regional communication and coordination around each CoC's coordinated entry efforts in light of the veteran population's mobility up and down the Route 91 corridor.

Hampden County CoC veterans: Kate reported a meeting with After Incarcerated Support Services (AISS) to discuss housing options for sex offenders since there are several chronically homeless veterans whose sex offender status is creating a barrier to housing. Unfortunately, the options are so limited to virtually non-existent. Pamela shared the Network's working group experience on this issue - and how the group has become dormant due to a lack of statewide leadership on this (a commission to address the problems of leveling and housing barriers among other problems did not produce any meaningful results). The restriction of housing options for sex offenders on both the federal and state levels is an intractable barrier to permanent housing for this population. We agreed we should raise this issue in the Network's upcoming meeting with Bob Pulster of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Three County CoC: Soldier On is launching its 1-800 coordinated entry phone number next week! Stay tuned. Nikki Riello also provided this update by email on the current CoC veterans count:

192 homeless veterans

2 on the streets

9 chronically homeless

approximately 55 moves into permanent housing from 12/1-1/10

Meeting frequency:

The group decided to experiment with meeting every other month since there are monthly CoC-based veteran meetings happening focused on the by-name lists and housing efforts. The group agreed it would meet next as a sub-group around the Soldier On voucher issue and then pose meeting dates for March. Pamela will poll "regulars" in the group to help land on a date when people are able to attend.

Next meeting date: to be determined.