Built to Last: 4 Keys to Building a System to (Continually) End Veterans Homelessness

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Session Overview

Panelists
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Purpose
- Review 4 keys to building a sustainable *system* and related lessons learned from the field
- Share common challenges and solutions
4 Keys to Building a Lasting System

1. Veteran Core Leadership Team
2. Annual Demand and Resource Analysis
3. Community Plan
4. System-Wide Strategies
VETERAN CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM
Why does a Veteran Core Leadership Team matter?

• Assures accountability to the community
• Brings diverse stakeholders together in single oversight body
• Provides ongoing oversight of effort to achieve and sustain goals
• Facilitates information sharing and ensures communication and understanding of common goals
What are some common characteristics of an effective Core Leadership Team?

- Meet regularly (e.g., monthly)
- Effective team leadership and management
- Review and use data to drive decisions
- Focused on establishing and achieving community plan/goals
- Include ‘champions’ to drive the work
- Inclusive and diverse stakeholder representation
  - CoC
  - VAMC, NHC
  - Providers – Veteran and non-Veteran specific
  - Consumers
  - Funders (Private and Public)
  - Community partners
- Connected to CoC governing body and other planning networks
Audience Discussion

• Other examples or characteristics of an effective Core Leadership Team to share?
• Challenges with developing an effective Core Leadership Team?
• Solutions to those challenges?
ANNUAL DEMAND AND RESOURCE ANALYSIS
Why does annual demand and resource analysis matter?

Provides clear, documented analysis of...

• Estimate how many Veterans will need assistance in the coming year
  – # who will be imminently at-risk of literal homelessness
  – # who will become literally homeless
• Estimate specific types and amounts of assistance Veterans will need to successfully and quickly avoid or resolve their homelessness
• Current or expected resources/funding & assistance available to address projected demand
  • Targeted prevention (SSVF/other)
  • Street outreach
  • Emergency shelter
  • Transitional housing (GPD/other, including bridge capacity)
  • Rapid re-housing (SSVF, CoC, ESG)
  • Permanent supportive housing (HUD-VASH/CoC/other)
  • HCV or other public vouchers/rental assistance
• Resource gaps to address projected demand – helps inform community plan
What are some common characteristics of a useful annual demand/resource analysis?

• Use current annual data where possible, supplemented when needed with estimates for geography or programs for which data is lacking

• Use Housing Inventory Count (HIC) and other VA/non-VA data on existing outreach/shelter/housing assistance

• Include all types of homeless assistance, estimates for each type and combinations of assistance (e.g., how many Veterans will need GPD and RRH to be successfully/quickly re-housed?)

• Update annually or as changes become apparent

• Use to inform community planning decisions

Doesn’t have to be rocket science!!
Audience Discussion

- Other examples or characteristics of useful local demand and resource analysis to share?
- Challenges with estimating demand, understanding resources, and identifying gaps?
- Solutions to those challenges?
COMMUNITY PLAN
Why does a Community Plan matter?

• Articulates what the system aspires to achieve, including measurable goals, strategies, and actions
• Creates a written agreement among key system partners
• Guides resource allocation, resource development, policy advocacy, and operational decisions
• Supports partnership development and promotes service integration across systems
• Helps communicate to partners and the broader community what an optimized system that effectively and continually prevents and ends homelessness looks like
• Creates accountability and shared expectations
What are some common characteristics of a meaningful Community Plan?

- Includes:
  - Who ‘owns’ the plan (i.e., Core Leadership Team or other system or community entity)
  - Clear vision statement
  - System goals and indicators for knowing if goals are met
  - Strategies to achieve goals
  - Action steps to achieve strategies
  - Identified people/groups for each action
  - Time frames for each action steps
- Approved by Veterans Core Leadership Team AND CoC governing body
- Supported by local VA and other key stakeholders
- Publicly available
- Routine progress reports
- Periodic (e.g., annual) updates informed by updated demand/resource analysis

Not just a document on the shelf!
Audience Discussion

• Other examples or characteristics of meaningful Community Plans to share?
• Challenges with establishing a Community Plan?
• Solutions to those challenges?
SYSTEM-WIDE STRATEGIES
What system-wide strategies are key to ending Veterans homelessness?

• **Coordinated entry implementation**
  – Comprehensive geographic coverage/access and ongoing coordinated outreach, assertive/persistent engagement
  – Integration of GPD and HUD-VASH
  – Standardized screening, triage, assistance offers
    • Immediate access to shelter if can’t be diverted, offer of PH intervention(s), Veteran choice of ES or TH while being re-housed

• **Master list and case conferencing implementation**
  – Comprehensive, routinely updated (at least every 2 weeks)
  – Routine use for case assignment, resource matching, monitoring, and case conferencing more difficult to engage or house
  – Data sharing, privacy and security policies and procedures

• **Scaling up rapid re-housing and other housing interventions and options**
  – Full utilization of SSVF/RRH assuring no turn-aways of eligible Veterans not otherwise able to exit quickly on their own or with other assistance
  – Other RRH funding to close gaps
  – Creative housing and resource partnerships
What system-wide strategies are key to ending Veterans homelessness?

- **Housing First implementation (system and program-level)**
  - Lowering barriers to assistance, client-driven services, rapid resolution of homelessness/PH outcome focused
  - Adopt local standards/policies, update program design, train staff

- **GPD inventory adjustments**
  - Strategic use of GPD (and other TH) for Veterans who can benefit from GPD assistance while being re-housed *and choose GPD*
  - Increased use as ‘bridge housing’
  - Immediate housing planning even for those who choose TH

- **Targeting homelessness prevention assistance**
  - At system/shelter front door for Veterans diverted from shelter
  - At VA, community touch-points (rapid screening, referral protocols, prioritized access for more urgent/imminently at-risk)
Audience Discussion

• Other examples of key system-wide strategies to share?