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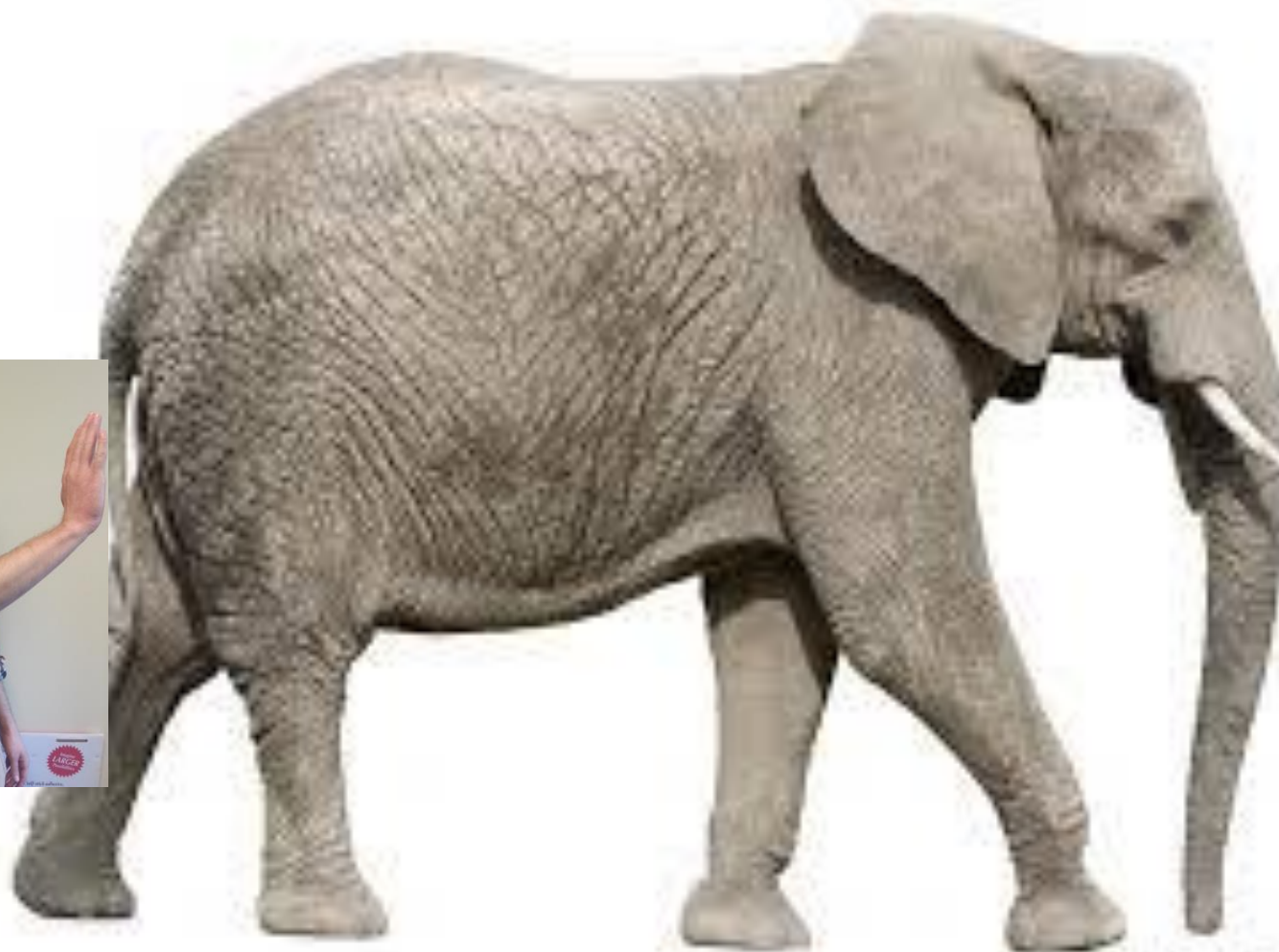
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HMIS & VA DATA SHARING: Measuring the elephant

How do we know what we know?



wiseGEEK



The Problem with the status quo:



- Community agencies use HUD's Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) to collect and report data on homeless persons
- VA uses the VA Homeless Management Evaluation System (HOMES)
 - not all Veterans are in HOMES- why?
 - designed to measure program effectiveness
- The use of separate systems makes data sharing a challenge specifically due to privacy concerns and technological incompatibilities

Challenge: How To Get Accurate Veteran Homelessness Data



- VA has used HUD Point in Time counts and HMIS data to estimate Veteran homelessness
- VACO and HUD-HQ have separate data collection processes and tools
- *“Communities are not able to optimize the allocation of scarce housing resources to the most vulnerable homeless population due to difficulties sharing data or information between CoC and VA programs.”*

2013 HUD's Best Practices Sharing

information to end Veteran Homelessness

- *It is critically important for homeless service providers to be able to share*

information 2013 HUD's Best Practices Sharing information to end Veteran Homelessness

- to reach every homeless Veteran
- to ensure that resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible
- This is all about the Veteran

Erie's simple solution



1. Let the Veteran choose to sign a Release of Information and the VA will fax the HOMES assessment form/universal data elements to HMIS-VA can't email
2. HMIS will take the universal data elements from the HOMES assessment form and enter them into the HMIS system
3. VA has read-only access to HMIS and gets alerts when a Veteran is seen in the community, with the Veteran's permission

- *“VA supports information sharing processes such as that formalized **by Erie VA Medical Center**. Please see <https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/Best-Practices-Sharing-Information-to-End-Veteran-Homelessness.pdf> for more guidance. [VHA Homeless Programs]”*

VA Magic to make it happen:



- At each VAMC facility the following individuals must be educated and endorse the process
 - Information Security Officer
 - Privacy Officer
 - Release of Information Supervisor
 - Medical Center Director
- Each facility must create a VA Release of Information (ROI) allowing for the HOMES form to be sent, and also allowing for 6 month follow-up on housing status
- A facility staff person faxes the HOMES form to HMIS

- Local CoC Charter and Governance Body allows HMIS to include non-CoC participants into HMIS
- Local HMIS is willing and able to expand to include VA clients
- Data sharing policies are already in place across the local CoC (UDE's at minimum)

- Facilitate the process
- Getting VA data into HMIS
- Educate the CoC, get them onboard
- HMIS is literally the bridge between VA and CoC
- Send reports to VA
 - Current Veterans list
 - Unexited Veterans
 - Analysis of data

How are YOU counting Veterans now?



- 25 Cities, 100K Homes, Bootcamps, Mayor's Challenge, etc....
 - require tracking and sharing data
- To understand the homeless Veteran population we must have the most complete picture
 - What was the starting point in your community?
 - Where are you now?
 - How can you use data to end homelessness?
 - How will you know when you have reached your goals?

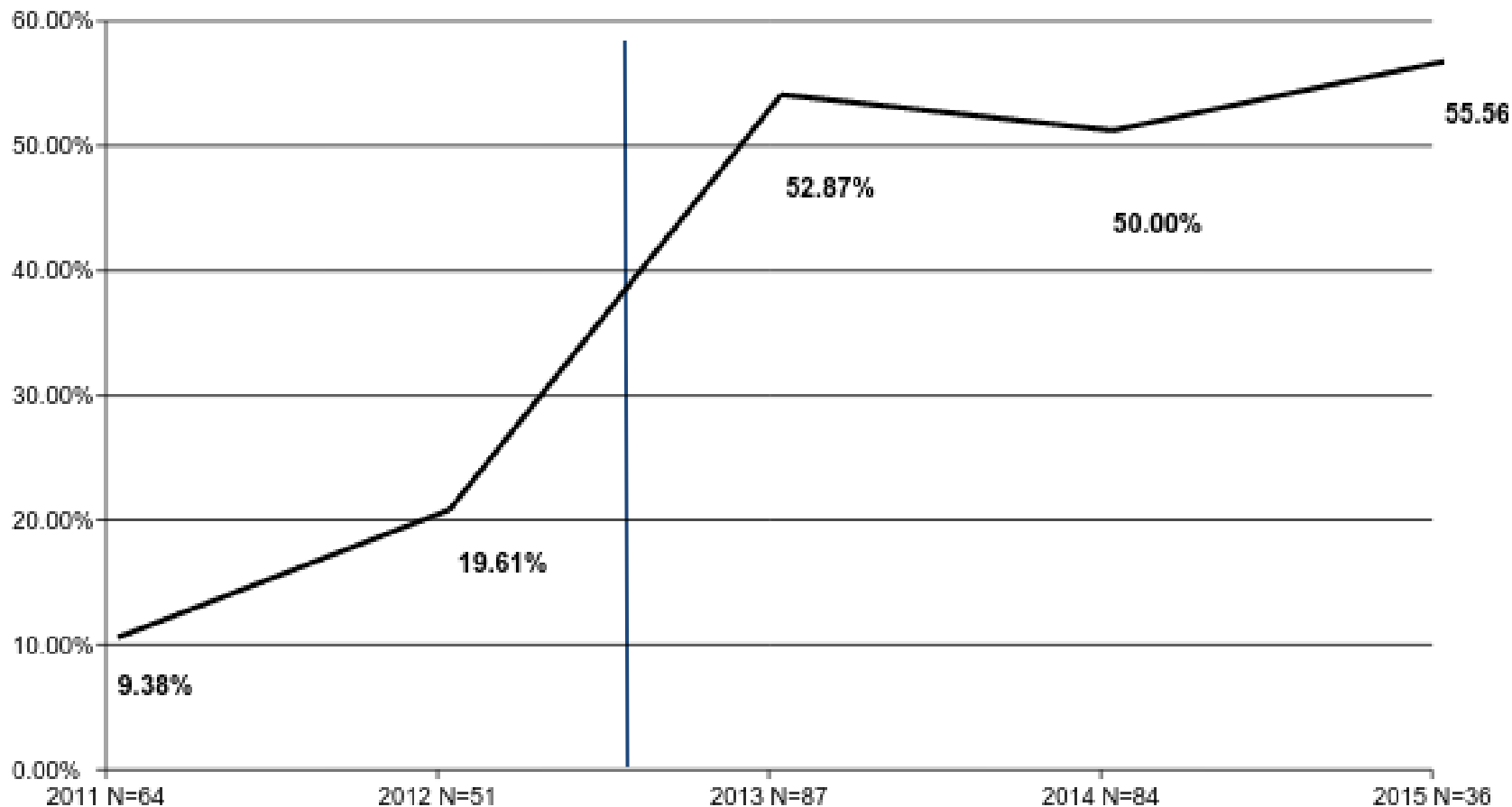
Erie's answer to the challenge:



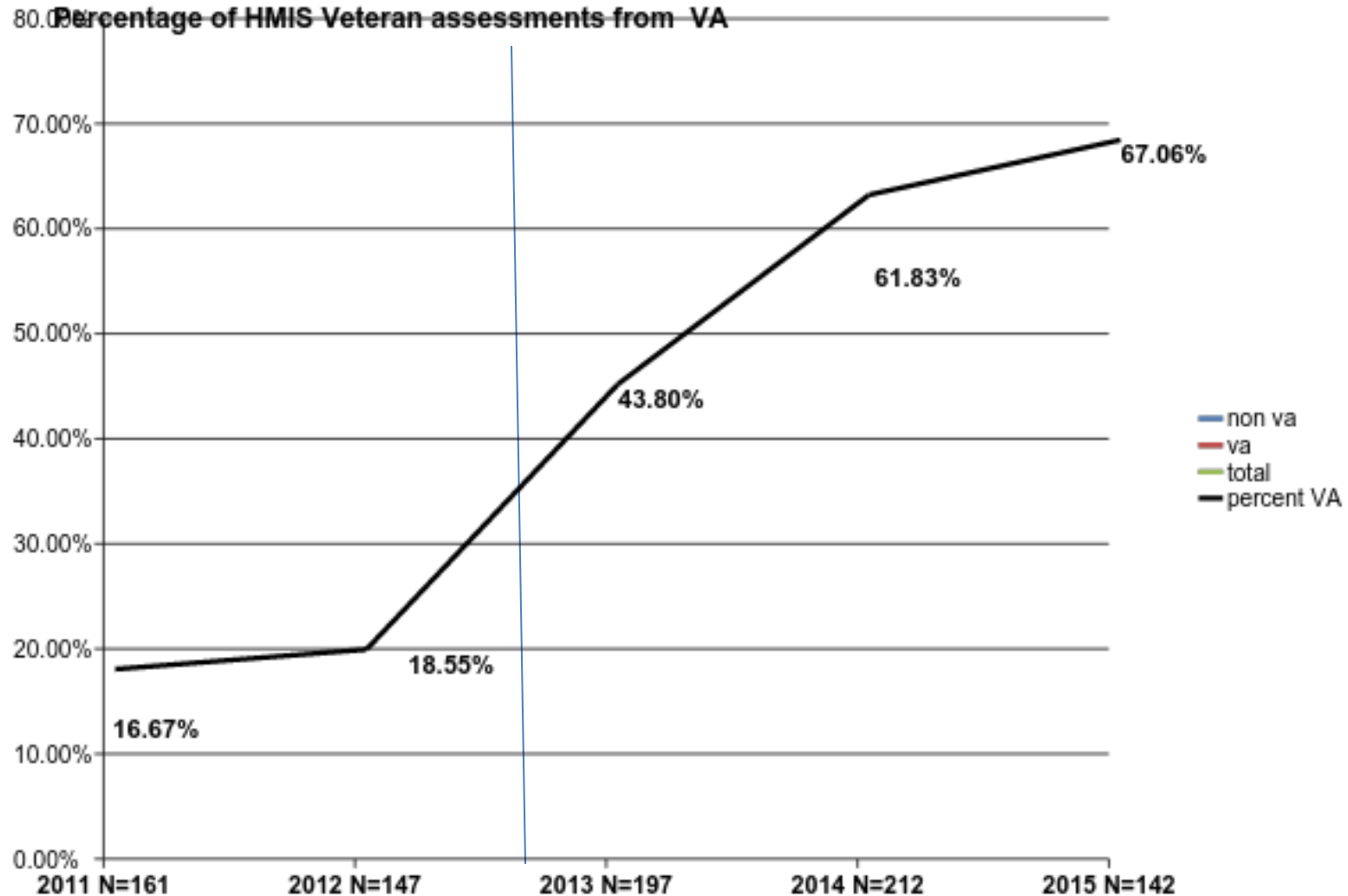
- Create an inclusive list of all homeless Veterans through a local data sharing process
 - Supported by VA facility, VISN and VACO leadership
<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/vhah/HR RTP/planning/HubLibrary/BestPractices/Erie%20Data%20Sharing%20and%20Coordination%20White%20Paper.pdf>
 - Supported by local Continuum of Care, HUD Regional Office and HUD-HQ
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3677/best-practices-sharing-information-to-end-veteran-homelessness/>
 - Supported by each Veteran through their *informed* agreement and signed Release of Information (ROI)

- 68 new unduplicated homeless Veterans were entered into HMIS through data sharing process
 - 10/1/2013 to present
 - 131 total unique Veteran intakes

Percent of Unique Veterans Added by VA to HMIS



Impact of Data Sharing



Benefits of data sharing



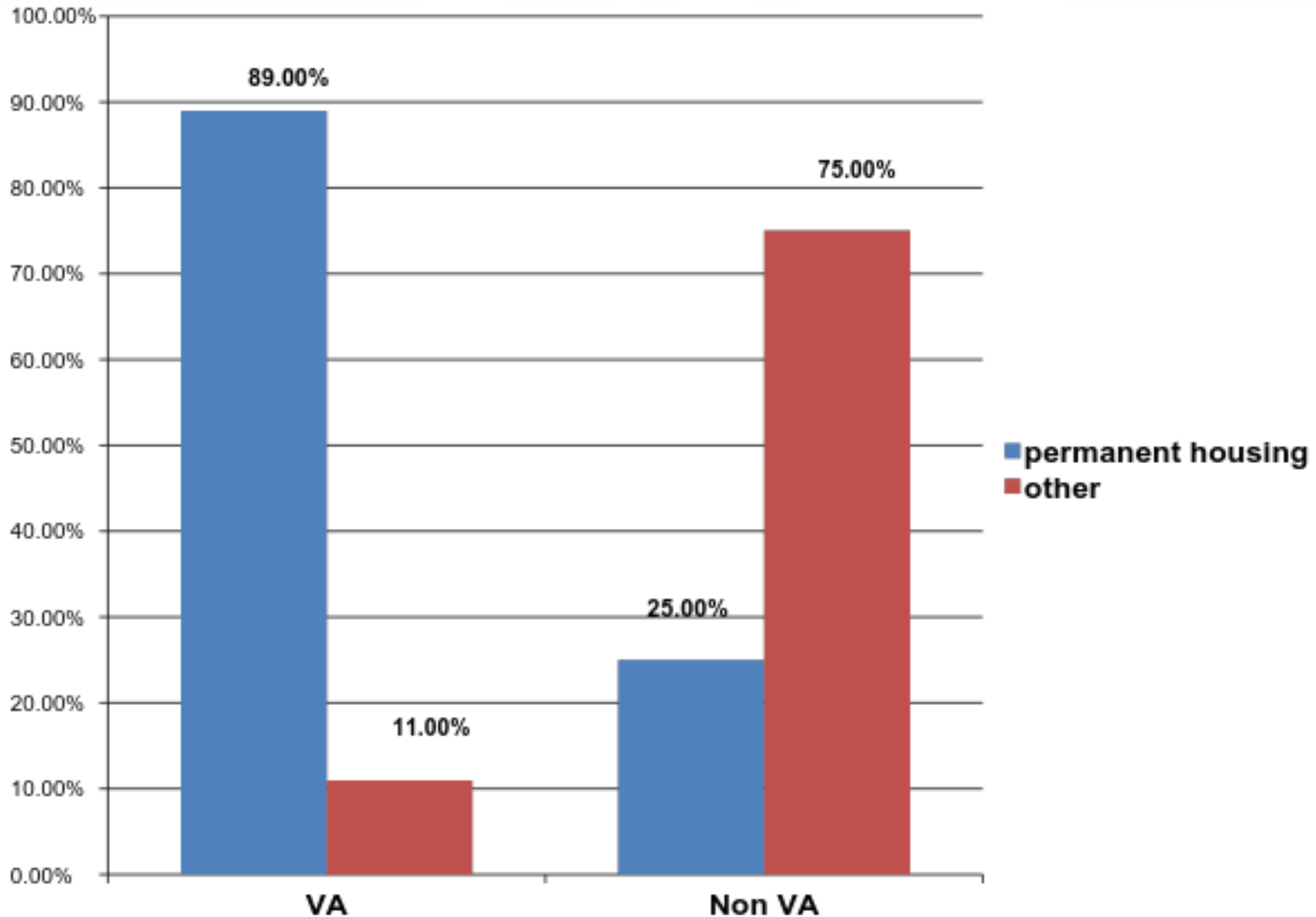
- Increased communication between CoC and VA
- Decreased barriers for Veterans receiving services in the community
- Increase in understanding of the homeless Veteran population
- Increased VA and HUD confidence in homeless Veteran data validity
- Increase in data driven interventions

Outcomes of data sharing

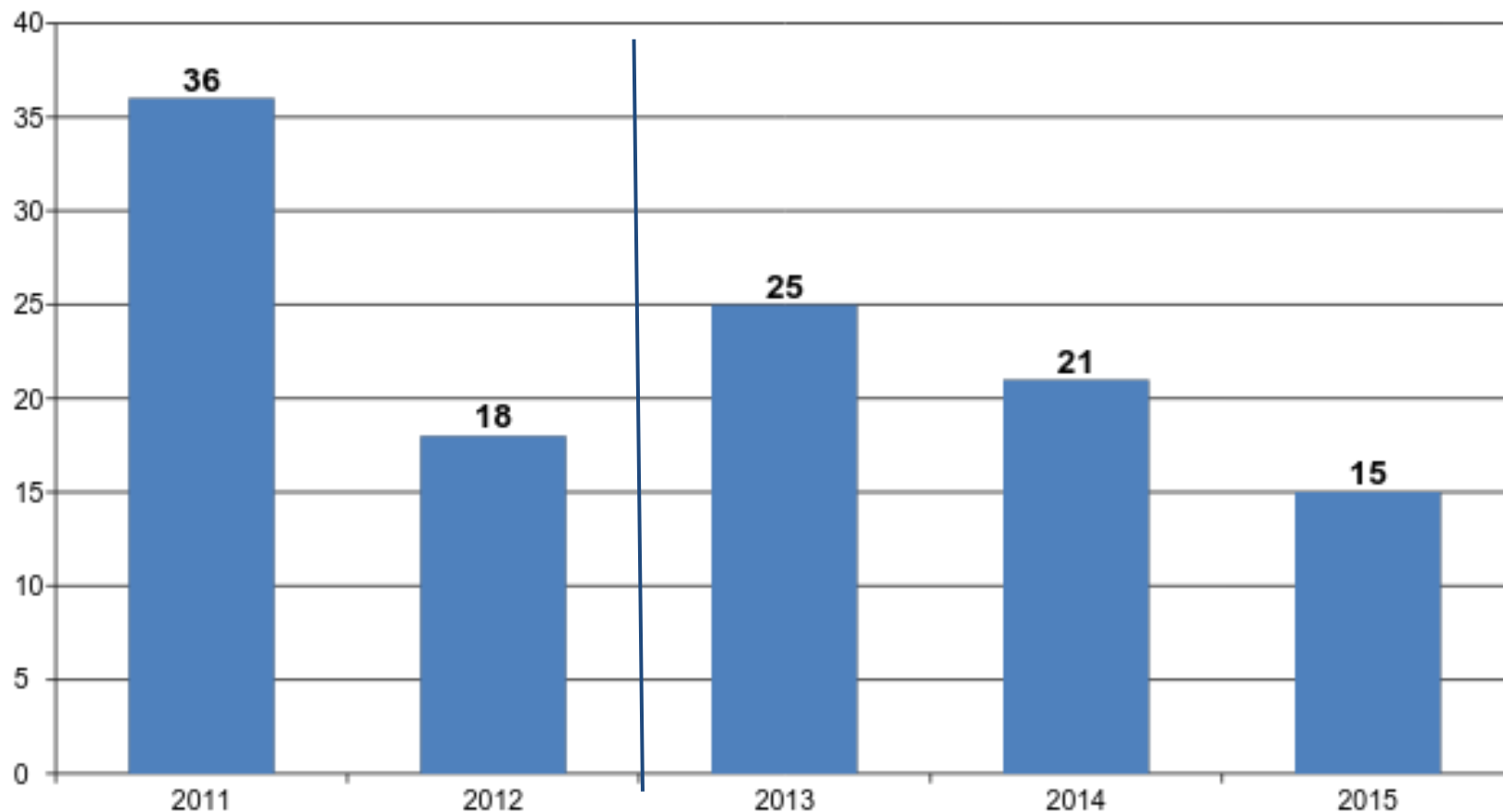


- HMIS identified number of *active* homeless Veterans number went from 100+ to less than 20 at any given time
- VA VSSC/HOMES number of identified *active* homeless Veterans went from 180+ to less than 20 at any given time
- Ability to calculate an accurate Permanent Housing Placement rate for Veterans of 52% in 2014.

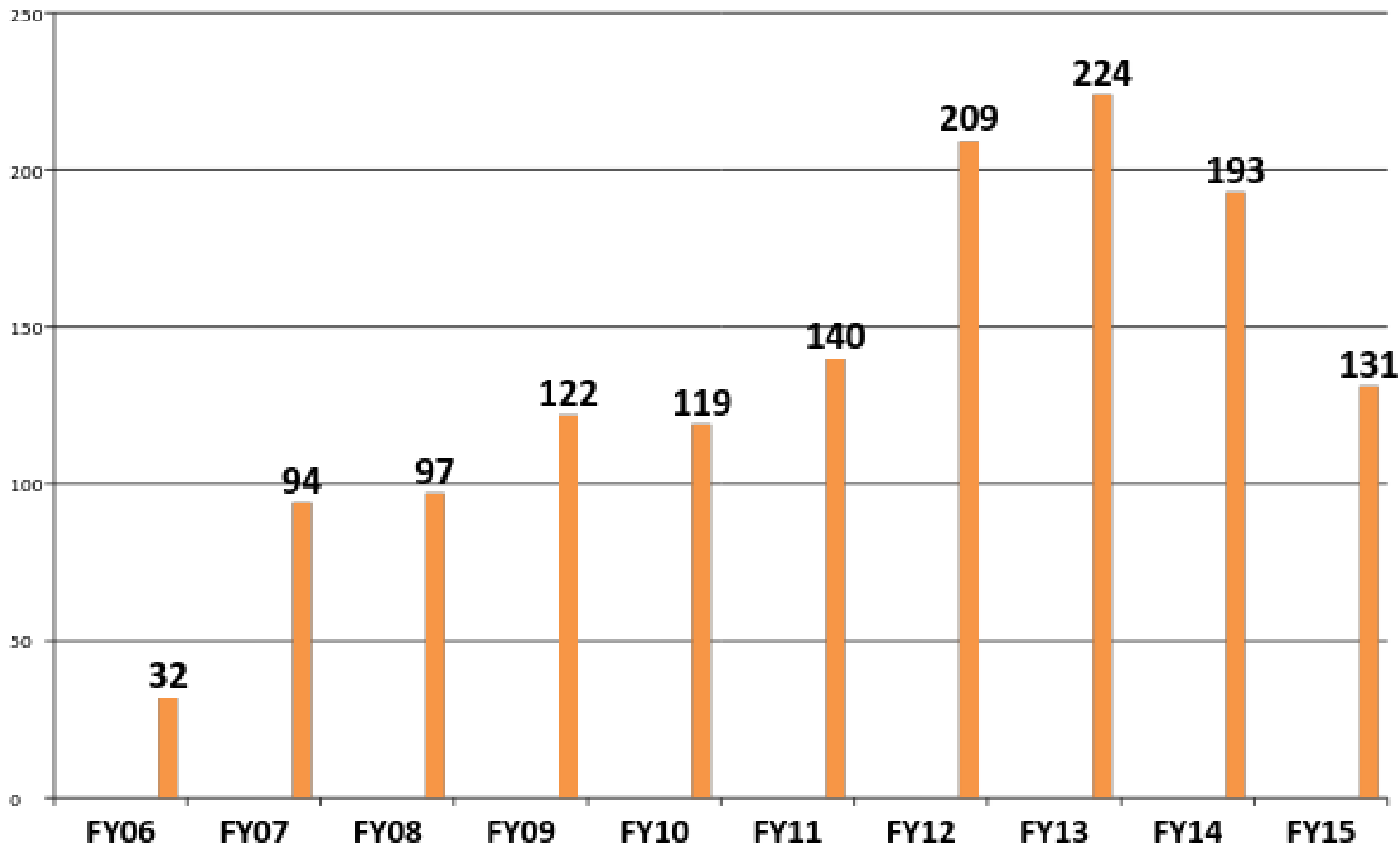
Veteran housing destinations (FY14)



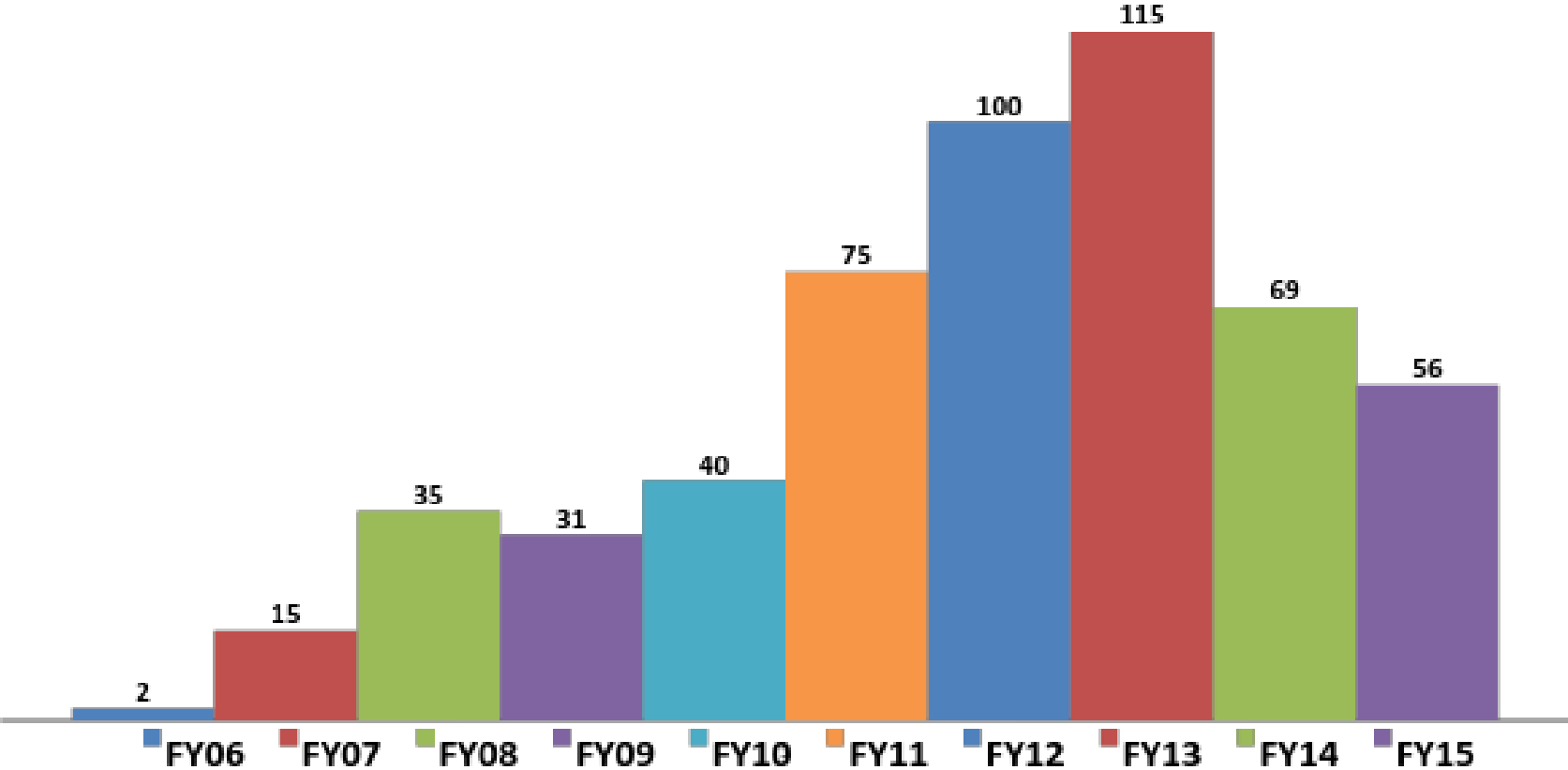
HUD PIT Veteran Counts



VA Homeless Assessments completed.



Prevention services



Qualitative outcomes of data sharing:

- Increased Veteran access to community resources
 - Decreased the need for the Veteran to provide duplicate answers to the “core data elements” shared by HMIS and VA’s HOMES reporting.
- Increased Veteran access to VA resources
 - Reduced barriers for community homeless agencies to make referrals to VA homeless services
- Allows Erie to be used for data validation

- Increased data validity in both HMIS and HOMES
 - HOMES data showed where Veterans listed as “Homeless” in HMIS were in fact housed in VASH
 - HMIS data showed where Veterans in HOMES were actually housed by community partners

- Some HMIS systems may be larger or more extensive than the Erie model
 - Create a scheduled data upload system?
 - Hire or designate one person or agency for the actual data entry process?
- Large communities may have multiple CoCs/VAs serviced by HMIS
- Resistance to sharing data
 - Veterans
 - Community
 - HMIS
 - VAMC

- Are we comparing apples to apples, or apples to oranges?
 - HMIS does not independently verify Veteran status or eligibility for VA services
 - HOMES does not independently verify chronic status

Problems yet to be solved:



- Maintaining the validity of HOMES and HMIS
 - HOMES is good at establishing that Veterans are homeless, but is limited in establishing when Veterans are housed
 - HOMES has to be correct in order to validate HMIS
- HMIS is limited to the Continuum of Care (CoC) catchment area.
 - VA's cover multiple CoC's.
 - Erie is working with the National Homeless Metrics committee to explore a national solution.

Magic Wand wish list:



- Improve data transfer process:
 - Electronic referrals between CoC and VA
 - Real time data entry
- Use the data sharing process to facilitate coordinated assessments between VA and CoC
 - Populate VI-SPDAT using HOMES forms
 - Generate immediate referrals to all appropriate services, including VA's HUD VASH, GPD, Emergency Shelter, etc...
- Generate real time reports
 - Manual review is required to determine details, such as shared Veterans, progress over time, housing outcomes
 - Real time Veteran eligibility testing

Can you copy this at home today?



- YES YOU CAN!
- VA Central Office and HUD HQ endorsed
 - VACO has published a “white paper” endorsing Erie’s data sharing process
<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/vhahl/HR RTP/planning/HubLibrary/BestPractices/Erie%20Data%20Sharing%20and%20Coordination%20White%20Paper.pdf>
 - HUD HQ has identified Erie’s data sharing practice as a “best practice”
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Best-Practices-Sharing-Information-to-End-Veteran-Homelessness.pdf>

Your turn!



Questions?

Suggestions?

What is working for you?

OneCPD Best Practices to End Veteran Homelessness

<https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/Best-Practices-Sharing-Information-to-End-Veteran-Homelessness.pdf>

Erie Data Sharing and Coordination White Paper

<http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/vhahl/HR RTP/planning/HubLibrary/BestPractices/Erie%20Data%20Sharing%20and%20Coordination%20White%20Paper.pdf>

HMIS-ERIE Assessments, Agency Forms, and Policies

<http://www.euma-erie.org/about-euma/hmis/>

*Thank you for allowing us to share the work we
are doing to end homelessness among
Veterans.*

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