



WASHINGTON DC'S SYSTEM INTEGRATION

100-Day Goals

- Increase entry rate from shelter and literal homelessness
- Increase exits to permanent housing
- Reduce average length of stay
- Prioritize longest stayers in GPD for housing resources

100-Day Results

68%

Increased exits from GPD to permanent housing from 55% of exits in previous 100 days to 68% of exits during the challenge

111 days

Reduced median length of stay from 126 to 111 days

14 Veterans

Exited 14 long-term stayers (270 days in GPD or longer) to permanent housing, accounting for 42% of all long-term stayers

BACKGROUND

The District of Columbia (DC), like many communities across the country, has been working tirelessly to end homelessness for Veterans in their city. Community and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) leaders in DC saw the pivotal role that Grant and Per Diem (GPD) programs play in supporting local Veterans and, thus, invited GPD programs to be an active leader in a coordinated access system designed to help end Veteran homelessness. DC participated in a 100-Day Challenge to integrate GPD into their community system and to reach specific and targeted goals. The challenge ran from August 24 to December 2, 2015.

STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

DC leaders held a pre-meeting with GPD executive directors to allow them to take the lead on integrating their programs into the greater system with the support of the Continuum of Care (CoC) and VA. As active leaders on this effort, GPD providers were able to drive innovation while still ensuring that their own program goals were being met. DC held a subsequent workshop with front-line staff from GPD, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), VA, CoC, shelters, and other community providers to set 100-day goals around the following:

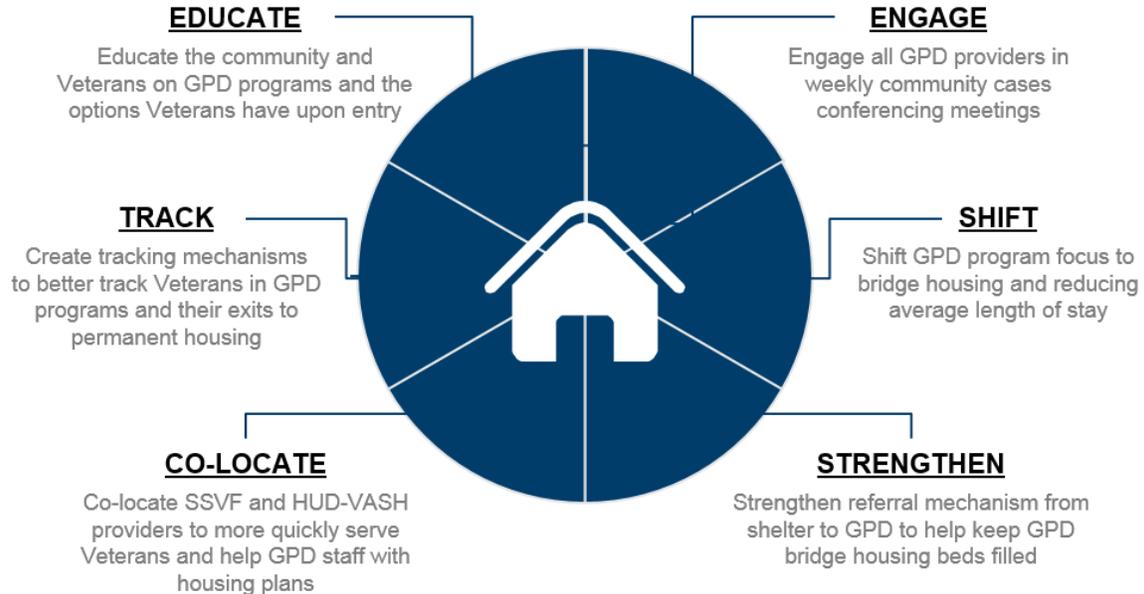
- Increase entry rate into GPD from shelters and the street;
- Increase overall exits from GPD to permanent housing;
- Reduce average length of stay through bridge housing practices; and
- Permanently house a majority of Long-Term Stayers (LTS).

Through community meetings during the 100-day effort, key relationships were built, which encouraged a supportive environment where all providers, including GPD, could express their program concerns and needs. Skepticism was met with support and understanding as all representatives were seen as vital to reaching the overall goals. Difficult conversations were seen as a part of the learning and growing process and, as a community, DC stepped up to ensure all needs were met.

100-Day Results Include:

- Increased exits from GPD to permanent housing by **13%** (from 55 out of 100 exits in the 100 days prior to the journey to 71 out of 105 exits during the 100 day journey);
- Reduced median length of stay by **12%** (from 126 to 111 days) indicating Veterans were connected to housing faster than before, in line with bridge housing model;
- Assisted 14 of 33 long-term stayers (270 days or longer in GPD) in entering permanent housing during the 100-day challenges;
- Two GPD providers put in for a change of scope to convert some of their beds to bridge housing; and
- Every Veteran entering GPD now completes a VI-SPDAT assessment to be entered into the coordinated entry system for assignment to a housing provider.

Key System Changes That Emerged and Others Can Implement Now!



LESSONS LEARNED

There is no blueprint for system changes such as these. What is needed is a spirit of experimentation, input from all providers, and to ensure everyone has a respected voice at the table. Difficult conversations are a necessary piece of the process, but community collaboration and support to address concerns collectively was key to success.

The core of the DC strategy was GPD leadership driving changes in partnership with the community. One benefit of being out in front of changes and being a leader in the community was that leaders are able to ensure that the changes work for them and their programs. GPD providers are no longer in it alone, they have connections to the system to help them evolve and survive as time goes on. Coordination with all other VA programs has helped connect Veterans from GPD to resources like never before and assist them in obtaining stable housing quickly with the supports they need to be successful.

NEXT STEPS

Though great progress has been made in DC, the community continues to strengthen the outcomes of their 100-day effort. They have initiated a quarterly meeting of all GPD providers to facilitate sharing resources and best practices. These providers are not seen as in competition but as a unified resource that can make a true impact on Veteran homelessness in DC. The providers continue to innovate and strengthen their own internal systems to meet the shifts happening at the federal level within the GPD program with community support. The concepts surrounding bridge housing (shorter GPD stays, quick connections to permanent housing) were central to DC's work. By shifting some GPD beds to bridge housing, the community was able to continue reducing lengths of stay and DC met the goal of housing Veterans in bridge beds within 90 days after the conclusion of the 100 days on April 1.

Veterans continue to exit to permanent housing at high rates (78% during March 2016), but the quantity of exits to permanent housing has dropped from during the 100-day challenge (from 71 to 50). The median length of stay has decreased from 126 days before the challenge to 90 days as of April 1, 2016, even as the percentage of long-term stayers exiting to permanent housing has decreased. By continuing to look at and respond to real-time data on key outcomes on a regular basis, the group has been able to track trends and identify areas for growth which will guide the way forward.

CONTACT

25 Cities Team at 25cities@atlasresearch.us for more info.