

NCHV eNewsletter

May 2014



Important Info for 2014 NCHV Annual Conference, Last Week to Register!

May 28-30 in Washington, D.C.

"Bridging the Gap" – May 28-30, 2014 | Grand Hyatt Washington | Washington, D.C.

Department of Labor Secretary Thomas Perez, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki and U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Laura Zeilinger are all confirmed guest speakers at the 2014 NCHV Annual Conference, May 28-30, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C. The conference theme is "Bridging the Gap," and will focus on how service providers working with homeless and at-risk veterans can better prepare for the "prevention" phase in the national campaign to end veteran homelessness.

With guidance from the VA, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, major cities are working to develop and implement "Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement Systems" to improve the referral of clients to the appropriate level of services they need community-wide, and to ensure placement in permanent housing as efficiently and rapidly as possible. Leadership teams in the participating cities include the VA Medical Center Directors, Public Housing Authorities, Continuum of Care officials, Health and Human Services Directors and public assistance agencies and nonprofits.

Several workshops will help organizations understand how to become fully involved in the newly launched 25 Cities Initiative, with technical and implementation leadership provided by Community Solutions, Atlas Research and the Rapid Results Institute.

Participants in the 25 Cities Initiative – Atlanta • Baltimore • Boston • Chicago • Denver • Detroit • Fresno • Honolulu • Houston • Las Vegas • Los Angeles • Miami • New Orleans • New York City • Orlando • Philadelphia • Phoenix • Portland • Riverside • San Diego • San Francisco • Seattle • Tampa • Tucson • Washington, DC

The Annual Membership Meeting and Public Policy Forums will offer attendees an up-close look at priorities in the NCHV Policy Strategic Plan, and the opportunity to weigh in on issues that will impact the transition from the "rescue mission" to the "prevention mission" in the campaign to end veteran homelessness. Increasing access to affordable housing, employment and health services are all on the table. And we will discuss the local angle to national policy issues – this is where service providers can be the most impactful in the advocacy arena.

During the NCHV Annual Awards Banquet the evening of May 29, The Home Depot Foundation and NCHV will present the first Peter Dougherty Award for Veteran Supportive Housing, named for the former VA Director of Homeless Programs and chief advisor to seven Secretaries of Veterans Affairs. Dougherty, now Sheriff of Jefferson County, West Virginia, will help present the award. The recipient organization will receive a \$50,000 grant from the Foundation to honor its contribution to creating supportive housing for homeless veterans and their families.

Important information:

- Early sign-in will be held **Tuesday, May 27**, from **5 p.m. to 7 p.m.** in the Constitution level of the Grand Hyatt. If you are able to, please take advantage of this opportunity to receive your Conference materials to beat the rush on Wednesday morning!
- The registration desk will open on **Wednesday, May 28**, at **7 a.m.** in the Constitution foyer. Breakfast will also be provided at this time. The **Opening Session** will begin promptly at **8:30 a.m.**
- Download the 2014 NCHV Annual Conference Program, which includes the full Conference schedule, by [clicking here](#).

To register online, [click here](#). To download a registration form to return by fax, [click here](#).

The discounted room block at the Grand Hyatt has sold out. To find an alternate hotel nearby, visit www.hotels.com.

All of the latest updates and information can be found on the [NCHV Annual Conference page](#).

Proposed Rule Change for SSVF Program

Comments accepted through June 23

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has proposed to amend its regulations concerning the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF). The proposed changes would clarify, consistent with existing regulations, that grantees must focus on providing permanent housing to eligible veteran families who, without SSVF assistance, would likely become homeless.

The proposed clarifications are intended to emphasize the intended goals of SSVF. The proposed rule would expand grantees' authority to provide certain services to all very low-income veteran families, and specifically to those veteran families with significantly lower economic resources, which we would identify as extremely low-income veteran families.

The purpose of this expanded authority is to address identified needs based on the administration of SSVF since its inception, and to provide greater incentive to grantees to assist these particularly vulnerable veteran families. Finally, the proposed rule would clarify that certain services are not permissible uses of SSVF funds.

To view the entire announcement of the proposed rule change from the May 9, Federal Register, which includes information on how to submit comments, [click here](#).

From Service to Shelter: Housing Veterans in Rural America

Webinar presented by the Housing Assistance Council on June 25

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) has announced a webinar on demographic changes regarding veterans in rural America. With two wars overseas winding down, and demographic changes within the baby boom generation, these factors have an impact on veterans' needs in rural America. In the next 10 years, over 70 percent of all veterans in rural America will be over the age of 65, placing increased pressure on the housing and health needs of rural veterans.

On the opposite end of the age spectrum, younger veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan, face different economic and housing challenges. Although these veterans comprise just 7.6 percent of the total rural veteran population, they are more diverse and face different challenges than their older counterparts. Minority and female veterans are a much larger segment of this population as well, and maintain differing needs than older veterans. Beyond this, younger veterans face higher unemployment and poverty rates than older veterans. Approximately 10 percent of veterans between the ages of 18 to 34 are unemployed and 12 percent have incomes below the poverty line.

After their service, it is imperative that all veterans have access to safe, affordable, and secure housing. This can be particularly challenging in rural America due to vast geographies, limited resources, and less social service infrastructure. **Join the Housing Assistance Council's webinar on June 25, at 2 p.m. ET**, to learn more about these challenges as well as the demographic shifts reported on in HAC's new publication *From Service to Shelter*, and the implications that these realities will have on providing affordable and appropriate housing to rural veterans.

For more information and to register for this webinar, [click here](#).

Housing First: Model for VA Supportive Housing

Research brief from National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has transformed its homeless program service model to be more "person-centered" and focused on solutions, including collaborative community-based treatment and supportive services. A primary example of this transformation is the adoption of a Housing First approach to care, which targets individuals who have experienced prolonged periods of homelessness and disabling conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, recurrent major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction. True to its name, Housing First provides permanent housing as quickly as possible and supportive services as needed, without prerequisites for abstinence, psychiatric stability, or completion of treatment programs. Community-based clinical case management teams provide 24-hour, 7-days-a-week access to services including crisis intervention, financial management, landlord and family mediation, employment, community reintegration, mental health and primary care, and addictions treatment.

The National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans initiated a 14-site VA Housing First demonstration project in 2012 within the HUD-VASH program. The project has shown that Housing First is both a clinically effective and fiscally efficient model of permanent supported housing that can be implemented successfully in VA Homeless Programs. Ninety-four percent of the veterans participating were chronically homeless; 87% had a mental health disorder, and 80% had a substance use disorder. Eighty-four percent of the participants are still housed and VA medical costs have been substantially reduced. Overall there was a 32% reduction in total direct VA healthcare costs and, specifically, intensive inpatient costs decreased by 54%.

For more information about the implementation of Housing First within VA and program outcomes to date, read the [full brief](#).

Funding Opportunities

The John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation awards about \$1.2 million in grants to nonprofit organizations in the Washington, D.C. area annually (including in Maryland and Virginia). First-time grants are typically \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the nature and size of the grantee. The Foundation focuses its giving on empowering the disadvantaged, with an emphasis on: homelessness, hunger, at-risk children, adult literacy, medical care, seniors aging in place, and job training and placement. Applications are accepted online throughout the year. For more information, [click here](#).

The Mabee Foundation's mission is to aid Christian religious organizations, charitable organizations, institutions of higher learning, hospitals and other organizations of a general charitable nature. The geographical area of interest of the Foundation includes the states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Most of the Mabee Foundation grants are made toward building and facility construction and renovation projects and to the purchase of major medical equipment. Applications for funding are accepted throughout the year. For more information, [click here](#).

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