



CRITERIA FOR ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

USICH and our partners [developed specific criteria](#) for ending Veteran homelessness to help guide communities as they take action to achieve the goal. We have also adopted a vision of [what it means to end all homelessness](#). We hope these standards help to define the vision of ending Veteran homelessness within communities and will help align local efforts in support of that vision, with a focus on long-term, lasting solutions.

1) **COMMUNITY HAS IDENTIFIED ALL VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

The community took steps needed to identify all veterans experiencing homelessness, including Veterans who were unsheltered, as well as Veterans in shelter, in Grant Per Diem programs and other VA residential programs, in other transitional housing programs, and in other temporary institutional settings. This identification of Veterans included both Veterans that meet the definition of chronic homelessness and Veterans that are experiencing homelessness but do not meet the definition of chronic homelessness. The definition of Veteran used includes all persons who served in the armed forces, regardless of how long they served or the type of discharge they received.¹

2) **COMMUNITY NO LONGER HAS ANY VETERANS EXPERIENCING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS**

There are no longer any veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the community. Some Veterans may not yet be in permanent housing, but all are now in some form of shelter (emergency shelter, treatment programs, transitional programs, other temporary institutional settings, etc...)

3) **COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES AND A PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR PROVIDING PERMANENT HOUSING**

The community has the resources and a plan and timeline for providing permanent housing opportunities to all Veterans who are currently sheltered but are still experiencing homelessness. The community has identified the programs and resources that will be used to provide those housing opportunities and can provide those housing opportunities quickly and without barriers to entry, using Housing First principles and practices.

4) **COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES, PLANS AND SYSTEMS IN PLACE FOR CONTINUED EFFORTS**

The community has resources, plans, and systems in place for identifying (1) Veterans that may have been missed in initial efforts to identify Veterans, (2) at-risk Veterans and (3) Veterans newly experiencing homelessness in the future.

- a. The community has adequate outreach and engagement strategies in place to be confident that they can identify such Veterans.
- b. The community has an adequate level of resources and the capacity to provide appropriate services to prevent homelessness for at-risk Veterans in the future.
- c. The community can provide options for shelter and has identified the programs and resources that will be used to provide quick access to permanent housing opportunities for these Veterans not addressed in the initial work.

5) **COMMUNITY HAS ADEQUATE LEVEL OF RESOURCES AND APPROPRIATE PLANS TO ENSURE HOUSING STABILITY**

The community has an adequate level of resources and appropriate plans and services in place to ensure the housing stability of formerly-homeless Veterans currently in permanent housing or who enter permanent housing in the future.



THE MAYORS CHALLENGE TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IS A JOINT INITIATIVE OF JOINING FORCES, THE U.S. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

¹ Please see page 2 for information regarding the definitions of homelessness and chronic homelessness.



DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS AND CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

HOMELESSNESS DEFINITION

While eligibility for specific programs may vary, the definition of homelessness used for the Mayors Challenge is from the [Final Rule on the Definition of Homeless](#) published by HUD in the Federal Register on December 5, 2011. While the HUD regulations maintain four categories for defining people who are homeless and eligible for certain homeless assistance programs, communities participating in the Mayors Challenge are encouraged to focus on identifying Veterans who meet definition contained in category 1 of the homeless definition, those persons that are literally homeless and ***lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence***, meaning:

- a. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- b. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); ***or***
- c. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS DEFINITION

It is critically important that communities participating in the Mayors Challenge ensure that their outreach and engagement efforts are reaching Veterans who are experiencing chronic homelessness. The definition of “chronically homeless” that should be used for the Mayors Challenge is contained within the Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule at 24 CFR 578.3, which states that a chronically homeless person is:

- a. An individual who:
 - I. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
 - II. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years; and
 - III. Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability;
- b. An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition [as described in Section I.D.2.(a) of this Notice], before entering that facility; or
- c. A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition [as described in Section I.D.2. (a) of this Notice, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.