

Ending Veteran Homelessness

AN EFFECTIVE END TO VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IN THE
HEART OF TEXAS



HEART OF TEXAS

HOMELESS COALITION

ADVOCACY · ASSISTANCE · ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition Mission

The mission of the Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition is to foster community awareness of the issues of homelessness and support a network of services for all homeless individuals in Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan Counties.



Presentation Overview

- What does Ending Veteran Homelessness mean?
- Has our community met this criteria?
- What are the next steps in this process?



Ending Veteran Homelessness: What does this mean?

- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Criteria and Benchmarks met by the community
- Community has a comprehensive response that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is RARE, BRIEF, and a ONE-TIME experience.
- An Effective End to Veteran Homelessness



USICH Criteria

- Identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness
- Provide shelter immediately to any who want it
- Service-intensive transitional housing used only in limited instances
- Have capacity to assist Veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing
- Have resources, plans, partnerships, and system capacity in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future



USICH Benchmarks

- A. Chronic and long-term homelessness among Veterans has “ended”.
- B. Veterans have quick access to permanent housing (under 90 days).
- C. The community has sufficient permanent housing capacity.
- D. The community is committed to Housing First and provides service-intensive transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances.



Who else has ended Veteran homelessness?

- As of May 2020, 78 communities and 3 states have achieved this status
- 4 communities have ended both Chronic and Veteran homelessness
- 4 communities in Texas have ended Veteran homelessness



Common Misconceptions

- This does NOT mean a Veteran will never experience homelessness in our area.
- This is not Functional Zero (a Community Solutions term).
- This does not mean we have reached a finish line but instead a significant location to plant a flag on this journey.



Homelessness and Veterans: Our Community Timeline

- March 2014: By-Name Master List started
- 2015: Waco joined USICH Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness
- August 2017-April 2018: HUD Technical Assistance on USICH benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness
- Summer 2018: Heart to Home Coordinated Entry System implemented
- February 2020: Work with USICH Regional Coordinator to finalize submission plans



Benchmark Progress: November 2019 – October 2020

- Newly identified Veterans Experiencing Homelessness: 83
- Average days to housing: 57 days
- 61% (51) moved into permanent housing
- 39% had other exits (i.e. treatment programs, relocated, moved in with friends/family on temporary basis, could not be located, continually declined re-housing services, etc.)



What does this mean for us?

- Demonstrates that those experiencing homelessness who have served our Country are valued by our community
- Confirms the importance of this work toward the collective vision of ending homelessness
- Affirms the quality of work we have been doing including implementation of best practices
- National recognition of our community's efforts



What is next?

- Submit final Memo to USICH for approval
- Increase homelessness prevention efforts
- Continue efforts to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time
- Public Announcement after approval by USICH



We want your support!

- We want to educate all stakeholders, local leaders, elected officials in our community of our plan for community submission to USICH.
- We want to make sure we have full support of community leaders and elected officials.
- We invite you to be a part of our announcement when we are granted this designation as a community.



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