

Policies and resources needed to continue to address and end veteran homelessness

North Carolina has achieved remarkable success and learned many important lessons through its work to address and end veteran homelessness, but without additional resources and sustained energy, the gains achieved could be lost. This report closes with recommended actions North Carolina can take to sustain this current momentum.

1. Expand capacity and support partnerships through coordinated efforts with all Continuum of Care. Work to ensure that when a veteran becomes homeless in North Carolina, there is a rapid response system and resources in place to ensure that the veteran is housed quickly and securely.
2. Continue and expand the capacity of the Operation Home: Task Force to End Veteran Homelessness. The Task Force should continue for at least one more year and should be expanded to create a full-time position to lead the statewide endeavor, which could be funded through a combination of state and private funds. The Task Force should also expand to include a subcommittee to address and provide solutions to the challenges in Buncombe County. Subcommittee members should include representatives of the US Congress, the North Carolina State Legislature, USICH, the national GPD program, the VA, and other state and federal leaders.
3. Expand capacity to serve homeless veterans in rural areas of the state.
 - A. Expand staff capacity with the Balance of State Continuum of Care to employ outreach and engagement staff to work with SSVF, VA, and other veteran service providers to implement linked coverage for all NC counties.
 - B. Convene a meeting of the Veteran Services Officers of North Carolina to explore both formal and informal commitments to engage with ongoing and developing initiatives to address and end veteran homelessness.
 - C. Create and implement a program design for hotel/motel utilization for areas of the state without emergency shelter services for homeless veterans.
4. Develop and implement a statewide landlord incentive program, which would do the following:
 - A. Make requests to all Public Housing Authorities and HUD multi-family developments to develop a homeless veteran preference for housing.
 - B. Provide support for communities to develop Mayor-led landlord roundtables to facilitate greater landlord participation.
 - C. Create a state-issued risk mitigation fund that would provide small payments to landlords for any excessive damage caused by a veteran tenant.
 - D. Consider other incentives to landlords to house veterans, much like employers are incentivized to hire particular harder-to-employ populations.

5. Challenge all Local Management Entities/ Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCO) mental health providers to follow the lead of Smoky Mountain LME/MCO to develop programs that target all who have served in the military for needed support to access and maintain permanent supportive housing.
6. Promote the development of affordable housing, including targeting and set-asides for homeless veterans. Implement preferences in existing criteria for affordable housing development funded by the state. Recruit private partners to help finance housing development as part of a statewide campaign.
7. Advocate for increased availability and accessibility of HUD-VASH and Housing Choice Vouchers in communities with additional need.
8. Explore options of linking and/or developing employment support and program for veterans moving from homelessness into housing, including:
 - A.** Increasing the number of providers of Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program from 1 to at least 2 in North Carolina.
 - B.** Linking Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) staff to existing efforts.