

## North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care Plan to End Veteran Homelessness Addendum: Outreach and Shelter Procedures

**Background:** The NC BoS CoC covers a large geographic area including many rural areas. In some places, the nearest homeless shelter is hours away. Adequately covering large rural areas with street outreach is challenging. This document sets procedures for providing adequate coverage of shelter and outreach in order to identify and serve all Veterans experiencing homelessness across the whole NC BoS CoC.

**Goal: To identify all Veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the BoS CoC**

Street outreach:

- SSVF providers will work with community partners to identify unsheltered homeless sites and develop a map for their community. Community partners should include:
  - Law enforcement
  - Faith-based outreach/ministry programs
  - Mental health providers
  - Soup kitchens and mobile feeding programs
  - Veterans Service Officers and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program officers (VSOs and DVOPs)
  - Other providers serving unsheltered homeless individuals
- SSVF providers will develop a schedule for a trained outreach worker (from SSVF or other community programs) to visit each identified location on a regular basis (not less often than once every two weeks). Visits may be less frequent if no homeless person is found at an identified location after three consecutive visits.
  - If a campsite is identified, especially one with multiple people, SSVF providers should develop a plan for how to provide outreach to the campsite while ensuring safety of outreach workers and campsite residents. Guidelines for campsite outreach:
    - Outreach workers must always go in groups.
    - Try to develop a strong relationship with a member of the campsite who can help engage the other residents of the site.
    - Always ask permission to enter the campsite, even if permission has been granted in the past. Ideally have a resident of the campsite lead outreach workers to the campsite.
    - Law enforcement could escort outreach workers to the site, if law enforcement has a good relationship with the campsite residents and law enforcement presence will not result in the arrest of the residents or eviction of the camp.
    - If entering the campsite is unsafe or outreach workers are unwelcome, outreach workers should work with a resident of the campsite to meet campsite residents at a neutral place.
- SSVF providers or other trained street outreach workers will conduct street outreach to known unsheltered Veterans within 48 hours of a direct referral or within a week of when they learn about their presence.

Site-based outreach:

- Site-based outreach occurs at a community agency other than a shelter or transitional housing program, such as a soup kitchen, library, or Department of Social Services. Site-based outreach can be *either passive or assertive outreach*, depending on the level of engagement and expertise of the staff at the agency. SSVF providers should assess whether each site can be passive – program staff will engage Veterans and refer them to SSVF programs themselves – or assertive – SSVF providers will develop a regular, frequent outreach schedule to visit an agency to engage Veterans.

Coverage:

- Outreach coverage in the NC BoS CoC may vary by the number of Veterans in the county and the presence of shelters. SSVF providers should focus street outreach efforts in areas with the most unsheltered Veterans but must develop a system to identify and engage unsheltered Veterans in other counties as needed. SSVF providers should develop a map of known sites where unsheltered Veterans frequent. If a county has no known unsheltered Veterans, they should work with VSOs, law enforcement, and other passive or assertive outreach sites to ensure unsheltered Veterans will be identified and referred to SSVF programs, if they appear. In counties with unsheltered Veterans, SSVF providers should develop a regular street outreach plan to engage and serve unsheltered Veterans.

***Goal: To provide shelter to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it***

Some counties in the NC BoS CoC do not have emergency shelter, and some counties with shelter have barriers that prevent Veterans from accessing it. At times, SSVF providers will need to provide emergency housing in a hotel or motel to Veterans in order to provide emergency shelter to every homeless Veteran who wants it.

SSVF funds available for such emergency housing are restricted. SSVF providers should make every effort to identify a suitable emergency housing placement before using a hotel or motel. SSVF providers should:

- 1) Verify the Veteran is eligible for SSVF.
- 2) Verify that no shelter is available to the Veteran, including shelter within a reasonable distance but in another region, to which SSVF providers could provide transportation.
- 3) Verify that SSVF programs cannot place the Veteran immediately into a permanent housing placement.
- 4) Verify that the SSVF program will be able to house the Veteran permanently within 45 days of putting them in emergency housing.
  - a. The SSVF provider should have strong relationships with landlords in the area such that they have units or buildings in mind in which the Veteran could be feasibly placed within 45 days.

If a Veteran ineligible for SSVF funding cannot access emergency shelter, as stated in the BoS Plan to End Veteran Homelessness, SSVF providers should work with the regional coordinated assessment system to identify other sources of emergency housing.

If a region is not able to shelter an unsheltered Veteran who wants shelter, SSVF should immediately contact Ehren Dohler at [ehren@nceh.org](mailto:ehren@nceh.org).

## **North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care Plan to End Veteran Homelessness Addendum: By-Name List Procedures**

***Goal: To develop a comprehensive by-name list and track USICH criteria and benchmarks data in every region***

Each region must maintain a by-name list that tracks every homeless Veteran in the region, regardless of their eligibility for VA services. By-name lists should also track the data needed to fulfill the USICH criteria and benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness.

To facilitate data tracking and reporting on USICH criteria and benchmarks for the whole CoC, all by-name lists must be tracked using HMIS.

SSVF providers will use the by-name list report in HMIS as a basis for their by-name lists. To ensure a comprehensive report, SSVF providers should train all service providers in their region(s) to identify Veterans and indicate Veteran status in HMIS.

NCCEH has developed an assessment in HMIS that will track the additional data for the USICH benchmarks. SSVF providers will develop a process for tracking USICH benchmarks data, choosing from these two options:

1. Providers will fill out the USICH assessment in HMIS for all Veterans in their programs; or
2. SSVF providers will enter all Veterans in the community into a “coordinated assessment program” in HMIS (that NCCEH staff will set up) and track all USICH assessment data.

SSVF providers will develop a procedure to identify Veterans staying in shelters that do not enter data into HMIS and track those Veterans on the by-name list, including the USICH assessment data. SSVF providers can engage those Veterans directly and enter them into an HMIS-participating project, or SSVF can create an anonymous record in a “coordinated assessment program” in HMIS for each Veteran, with data provided by the referring program.