The Maine Homeless Veteran Action Committee
Addressing Veteran Homelessness in Maine

Robert Marcroft
Statewide Housing Liaison, Preble Street Veterans Housing Services
Chair, Maine Homeless Veteran Action Committee

Tyra Parker
Vice President of Program Operations, Volunteers of America Northern New England

www.PrebleStreet.org
77 communities and 3 states have ended Veteran homelessness
4 communities have ended Chronic & Veteran homelessness
States that have at least one community that has ended homelessness
National Trends

Source: HUD Point-in-Time Data
The Maine Homeless Veterans Action Committee is a statewide alliance, united to ensure homelessness among veterans in Maine is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Adopted in the fall of 2016.
Who We Are

Members include:

- Preble Street
- VA Maine Health Care System
- Easter Seals of Maine
- Veteran’s Inc.
- MaineHousing
- Bread of Life Ministries
- Maine VFW
- Maine Bureau of Veteran Services
- Volunteers of America Northern New England
- Betsy Ann Ross House of Hope
- Maine Elks
- Veterans with lived experience
What We Do

The Maine Homeless Veteran Action Committee operates, oversees, and works to improve Maine’s system to address homelessness among veterans.
Pre-ME HVAC Shortfalls

- Veterans completing intakes and screenings multiple times and regular movement between programs
- Veterans receiving duplicative services from more than one program at a time
- All programs serving veterans of varying vulnerability
- Under/over utilized programs
- Limited communication between programs
Our member providers closely coordinate with one another.

Close coordination of members = close coordination of services and resources for the veterans we serve.
Close Coordination

• All of our member providers meet weekly on a conference call we call **Case Consultation**

• In case consultation, our member providers are...
  • Celebrating move ins!
  • Sharing updated information about veterans experiencing homelessness.
  • Coordinating referrals and ongoing services in real time.
  • Sharing/Receiving information about available housing.
  • Ensuring newly identified veterans experiencing homelessness are promptly connected with services.
  • Troubleshooting challenges.
Close Coordination

What do we coordinate?

• Outreach: identifying veteran households experiencing homelessness
  • Staying in touch
  • “No Wrong Door”
• Data collection
• Services and resources
Mayor’s Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness

• A call to action for all mayors and other civic leaders to publicly commit to making sure that every Veteran who served the U.S. has a home in it.

• Civic leaders who have signed on to the challenge:

Congressman Jared Golden
Mayor of Auburn, Jason Levesque
Mayor of Westbrook, Mike Sanphy
Mayor of Portland, Ethan Strimling

Mayor of Brewer, Bev Uhlenhake
Mayor of Augusta, David Rollins
Bangor City Council Chair, Sarah Nichols
Increasing ME HVAC Membership

Some newer members include:

• RAM Property Management
• Maine Elks
• Maine American Legion
• Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center

• YOUR NAME HERE!

Please contact committee chair Robert Marcroft at rmarcroft@preblestreet.org or 207-239-2795 if you are interested in becoming a member, learning about how you can help, or for more information.
Raising Awareness

Some of those we have presented to:

• Maine Military and Community Network
• IDEXX Laboratories
• Maine Sheriff’s Association
• YOUR NAME HERE!

Please contact committee chair Robert Marcroft at rmarcroft@preblestreet.org or 207-239-2795 if you would like us to present to your organization.
As of August 31, 2019: **103** veterans were experiencing homelessness in Maine.

- **43** veterans experiencing homelessness in Region 1 (Portland, South)
- **40** veterans experiencing homelessness in Region 2 (West of Lewiston on up to South of Bangor)
- **15** veterans experiencing homelessness in Region 3 (East of Bangor on up to Northern Maine)

Ending Veteran Homelessness is a **solvable** problem.
Reducing Long-term Homelessness among Veterans:

Chronic Homelessness = 1 year or longer OR 4 times in the last 3 years, equivalent to 1 year of homelessness.

### The Numbers

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<th>Month</th>
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Reducing Average Time Veterans Spend Homeless

The increase in the average amount of days from identification to permanent housing was due to a focus on the chronic and long-term homeless population this year.
• We currently house an average of 63 veteran households every 90 days.
• This past year, we identified an average of 78.6 veteran households every 90 days.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF VA MEHCS HUD-VASH PROGRAM AND VOANNE

VA MEHCS HUD-VASH:

• Screening of homeless Veterans to determine eligibility for the VA Medical HUD-VASH Program

• Identify the social service and medical needs of VA HUD-VASH participants and providing regular ongoing case management, outpatient health services, hospitalization, and other supportive services as needed throughout this initiative

• Submit application to VOANNE to complete referral for assistance under the PBV Program to Maine Housing once a Veteran is admitted to the program

VOANNE:

• VOANNE follows the Housing First model in alignment with the HUD-VASH Housing Assistance Program (HAP)
  - Veterans from the streets or homeless shelter
  - Not on the Sex Offender Registry
  - No convictions Meth Lab

• Accepting housing applications in person and via mail

• Informing VA MEHCS of upcoming HUD-VASH vacancies

• Marketing for all non-HUD-VASH units
CLIENT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Successes:

• Currently have all 21 cabins full (everyone stayed the first year; average age 59; average rent $359/month; 90% male)

• First year, only two situations where individuals had major lease violations and required high support services (and this was support not wanted or received from the VA Togus HUD VASH team)

• Four that left the cabins, there were no evictions:
  • Two individuals decided to get married and left their individual cabins to move into a large home in the community.
  • One who came from the living in the woods many years decided it was too isolating moving closer to the ocean (but not back to the woods)
  • One moved do to leasing violations but also to move off government grounds

Challenges:

• Ongoing clear communication with the VA Togus HUD VASH team, police and fire department

• Supporting Veterans with Mental Health diagnosis (VASH and NON-VASH) who do not want support services

• Building a community that works for a diverse population

• Transportation to meet the needs of residents
Veteran Homelessness is a Solvable Problem
We need our housing organization partners to be flexible on admission screenings.
Veterans experiencing homelessness are coming up against:

- Mandatory application fees
- Rigid rental history requirements
- Rigid criminal history requirements
- Rigid credit requirements

All major obstacles to veterans securing housing
Application screenings are not foolproof. Many veterans experiencing homelessness will not have spotless backgrounds, but they are great tenants.
Obtain the Support & Resources You Deserve!

Too often, property managers are on their own for screening applicants **and** if a financial or behavioral concern arises with a tenant.
Added Resources

Housing organizations gain access to resources they wouldn’t otherwise have:

- An organized, coordinated group of providers
- Additional information: will help make more informed admission decisions
- Trained staff support: someone to call for help
- Professional help mediating and resolving issues with tenancy
- Professional support for tenants
- Financial safety net
- Support on Municipal, State, and Federal advocacy for policy change and funding
If you know of a veteran experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, please call 211.
You can help!

If you...

• Are interested in renting to a veteran experiencing homelessness
• Would like to refer a landlord to us
• Are Interested in partnering with our committee
• Are Interested in joining our committee
• Would like us to present to your organization
• Have ideas you would like to discuss
• Would like more information

CONTACT US!
Robert Marcroft, Chair: rmarcroft@preblestreet.org
Arwen Agee, Co-Chair: Arwen.Agee@va.gov
Erin Kelly, Data Manager: ekelly@preblestreet.org
Mike Gray, Secretary: cgray@eastersealsme.org
Thank You!