

VA



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Fact Sheet

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Ending Veterans Homelessness in Los Angeles

On January 28, 2015, Secretary Robert McDonald and attorneys representing homeless Veterans in Los Angeles announced an agreement that dedicates the West Los Angeles VA campus to serving Veterans in need, and committed the department to design a plan to help end homelessness among Veterans in the Los Angeles area.

In the past 18 months, VA leaders have joined together with community partners to host listening sessions and stakeholder meetings to construct a path forward to best use the VA campus to care for homeless Veterans. This input shaped the Master Plan and supports our shared vision to create a safe, welcoming, Veteran-centric community on VA's West LA grounds.

VA's intent is to transform the campus into a vibrant community where Veterans can receive housing, healthcare, benefits, and other supportive services – with a specific focus on chronically and aging homeless Veterans, female Veterans with dependents and other underserved Veteran populations.

VA and the community have worked collaboratively to quickly rehouse homeless Veterans and build the support system to allow those falling into homelessness to be rapidly rehoused. Tremendous progress has been made but there is much more work to do to end Veteran homelessness in Los Angeles.

Currently there is legislation pending in Congress regarding the VA West Los Angeles campus.

“The Master Plan addresses the immediate need to build permanent and supportive housing on VA's West LA Campus and will provide housing for hundreds of the most vulnerable homeless veterans in LA,” explains Secretary McDonald. “However, this plan cannot be fully implemented until Congress passes the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act of 2016, introduced by Senators Feinstein and Boxer, and Congressman Lieu. This legislation would authorize the public-private partnerships to develop housing and services for veterans and their families, but it is still pending in Congress. Our hope is that the public will encourage their legislators to move quickly and pass this bill so we can start building more housing for homeless veterans.”

Progress and the Effort to End Veteran Homelessness

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Greater Los Angeles (GLA) programs in partnership with city, county and nonprofit partners, assisted close to 4,000 Veterans in obtaining permanent housing to effectively end their homelessness. That is more than any other medical center in the VA system and the most of any of the 25 High Priority Cities.
- The January 2016 Point-In-Time(PIT) count released from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), that included Los Angeles County and neighboring communities of Glendale, Long Beach, Pasadena, indicated the Veteran homelessness population declined more than 30% from 4,362 homeless Veterans in 2015 to 3,071 Veterans in 2016. The Unsheltered Veteran population decreased by 44%, from 2,889 in 2015, to 1,618 in 2016.
- Also of note is that Veteran homelessness in the City of Los Angeles decreased by 41% in 2015.
- These unprecedented gains demonstrate that the goal of ending Veteran homelessness is within reach. We must continue to work together to provide housing and services for all homeless Veterans.
- In October, 2015, GLA hosted its first ever stand down on the campus. In two days, VA assisted close to 800 homeless, formerly homeless and at-risk Veterans and issued over 60 same-day HUD-VASH vouchers with support from Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACOLA). **The next Stand Down is scheduled for October 20, 2016.**
- VA opened the Welcome Center (Building 257) and it is now providing services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Welcome Center has 35 bridge beds which filled up within 48 hours of opening and remain fully occupied.
- Established MyVA Community Veteran Engagement Board (CVEB) to improve coordination, collaboration and partnership with the Veteran community. Refer to <https://www.facebook.com/Los-Angeles-Regional-Community-Veteran-Engagement-Board-1567478903553286/> for information on the next CVEB Public Forum.

Providing Resources and Leveraging Partnerships

- VA has worked with non-profits and partners to develop and repurpose 300 additional beds in the community to serve as bridge housing. These beds provide Veterans with a safe place to stay while they work with VA and community partners to identify a permanent home with services and access to healthcare, benefits and employment services to help sustain the home and prevent a relapse back into homelessness.
- VA has added 800 new HUD-VASH vouchers to create and/or expand housing opportunities (including working with our partners at the Department of Housing and

Urban Development (HUD) to increase the voucher rate to 120% of Fair Market Value

- Since January 2015, VA has added \$30 million to the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program to fund homeless prevention and rapid rehousing initiatives in Los Angeles. As recently as June, 2016, The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles has been awarded an additional \$781,492, the largest such funding award in the country, to support its Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program.
- In the summer of 2016, the Brentwood School offered 20 Scholarships per week to their Summer Camp Programs for children of Veterans. All slots were filled within 30 days.

Framework Master Plan and the Way Forward

- The Framework Master Plan, publically released in January 2016, is a roadmap for the development of VA's West Los Angeles Campus as a vibrant community where Veterans can receive housing, healthcare, benefits, and other supportive services – with a specific focus on chronically homeless Veterans and other underserved Veteran populations.
- VA hosted more than 100 town halls and stakeholder meetings across Los Angeles County, and received more than 1,000 public comments through the Federal Register.
- VA continues to partner with the Public Housing Authorities, Home for Good, and City and County officials in engaging Landlords as there is a critical need for increasing housing options for our Veterans.
- In partnership with Housing Authority City of Los Angeles (HACLA), VA has been exploring ways to engage developers in rapidly converting vacant properties for project based Veteran Housing. Our goal is to have 500 units ready for veteran occupancy by January 2017.
- The Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLA HCS) has appointed a new medical center director, Chief of Staff and Chief Nurse , and will continue to recruit other key leadership positions.

More to Be Done

As part of the framework Master Plan and contingent on legislative authority to develop housing with services on the campus, VA plans to revitalize the campus into a welcoming, 21st Century, state-of-the-art healthcare facility and home for our Veterans. Some of the planned services include:

- Expand services, with initial focus on the Family Well-Being Center and services to Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury, Mental Health and addiction needs, and with specialty services for female Veterans in collaboration with UCLA.
- Start a Legal Clinic for Veterans (in collaboration with UCLA).
- Expand Bridge Housing beds.
- Enhance our Veteran Peer Concierge Service
- Continue to grow and refine our Coordinated Entry System so we can more rapidly assist Veterans in accessing housing, healthcare and employment.
- Restore the campus chapel and other historic sites on the campus (in collaboration with the 1887 fund)
- Increase recreational and leisure skill activities on the campus (In collaboration with Brentwood School and UCLA)
- Integrate VA by moving our Los Angeles VA Regional Benefits Office onto the campus
- Beginning construction on the Veterans columbarium.
- Make the campus more customer friendly with more signage, peer navigation and concierge services.
- Upgrade VA data systems to be more user friendly and compatible with the community.
- VA continues to address the land use agreements that have been on the campus and is working to ensure that all future land use activities on the campus will be principally Veteran focused.

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