

Countywide Strategic Planning to Prevent, Reduce & End Homelessness

VETERANS

Including Women, Families, Older (55+) Veterans, & Substance Use/Mental Health

Indicators

Of the challenges we are facing

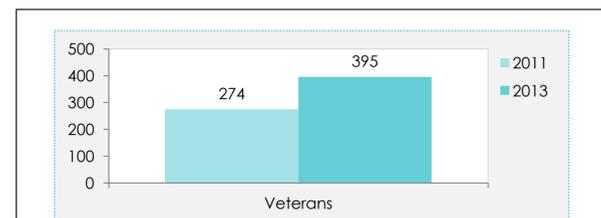
1. Number of homeless veteran women, homeless veteran families, older adult veterans
2. Number of deaths related to lack of housing among veterans
3. Number of homeless veteran women, homeless veteran families, older adult veterans who access veteran housing & service programs (VASH, SSVF, County veteran services)
4. Number of older Veterans reported to Adult Protective Services, Law Enforcement, Area Agency on Aging or other social service agency
5. Number of veterans seeking mental health and/or addiction treatment
Number of incarcerated veterans who lose their housing
6. Number of veterans with addiction or mental health issues who lose housing or return to street after treatment

Results

We aim to achieve

1. Homeless and at-risk Women Veterans have appropriate and stable housing for themselves and their families (including children and/or aging parents), as well as supportive services enabling them to stay housed.
2. Homeless and at-risk Veteran Families have stable housing and supportive services enabling them to stay permanently housed.
3. Homeless and at-risk Older Adult & Senior Veterans have appropriate and stable housing.
4. Homeless and at-risk Veterans suffering from substance use disorders and/or diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health are able to access and maintain care within Santa Cruz County at the lowest level of intervention possible to assist them in achieving/maintaining housing.

Veteran Homelessness



The number of homeless veterans in Santa Cruz County increased between 2011 and 2013.

Veterans remain 11% of the homeless population in Santa Cruz County

Strategies & Programs

To achieve these results

- Create a new coordinated new housing strategy for Santa Cruz County that takes into account the needs of different sub-populations (women, families, older adults, those with addiction or mental health services).
- Provide more Veteran housing and housing assistance for specific sub-populations.
- Establish system of single-point-of-entry referrals for vets to access services from wherever they initially touch the system.
- Continue to utilize HUD-VASH for permanent supportive housing (PSH) and increase the supply of PSH (consider need for additional TH although preferred housing model is PSH).
- Engage volunteers to provide housing acquisition assistance and housing retention support.
- Educate and engage landlords to increase the acceptance of VASH housing vouchers.
- Refer Veterans to specific VA services designed for their sub-population.
- Provide emergency housing for specific sub-populations when other options are not available.
- Provide peer-support & wraparound services (geared to specific subpopulations) to help veterans overcome housing instability, deal with trauma and barriers they encounter as they transition to civilian life.

Strategies & Programs Continued

- Co-locate veterans services with housing.
- Utilize mainstream (non-veteran specific) resources when available.
- Create a veterans' treatment court and other mechanisms to divert homeless veterans from the criminal justice system.
- Create new mechanisms to prevent homelessness for veterans and families at-risk of losing their housing.
- Employ a harm reduction model for new housing. Advocate for more Housing First programs for veterans that do not require a length of sobriety for admission/duration of program.