



Fact Sheet for Veteran Homelessness Funding October 2017

On September 22, 2017, the Acting Under Secretary for Health of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Poonam Alaigh, M.D., sent a memorandum to VA Network Directors, Deputy Under Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff of VA Medical Centers nationwide instructing them to realign 99 line items from Specific Purpose funds to General Purpose funds.

This directive went into effect October 1, 2017, without community input, to align with the beginning of the federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2018. All line items for HUD-VASH Case Management (\$266M nationally) have been impacted. We encourage you to contact the Secretary of the VA, David Shulkin by writing to David.Shulkin@va.gov to share the following information.

Veteran homelessness is still an emergency in Los Angeles

- According to the 2017 Homeless Count, Los Angeles County is home to **4,828** veterans living on the streets or in shelters on any given night.
- From 2016 to 2017 there was a **57% increase** in veterans experiencing homelessness across LA County.
- An estimated **5,000** veterans are currently housed and receiving supportive services using a HUD-VASH voucher across Los Angeles County.

Keeping vets enrolled in HUD-VASH works

- A fully staffed HUD-VASH case management team is necessary to support retention in the program.
- A recent study showed when veterans were enrolled in HUD-VASH:
 - ER visits decreased **27%**
 - Intensive inpatient cost decreased by **54%**
 - There was a **32%** percent reduction in VA healthcare costs
- Many veterans receiving HUD-VASH case management have experienced severe trauma. The loss of the support system provided by these services has the potential to be retraumatizing.

Homeless and formerly homeless vets need our assistance

- Los Angeles County suffers from a severe shortage of available rental units with a vacancy rate of under **3%**.
- The HUD-VASH program attrition rate for the City of Los Angeles Housing Authority (HACLA) is reported above **15%** for CY2015 and CY2016. If funding from the HUD-VASH Case Management program is not kept as Specific Purpose funds, the attrition rates for the HUD-VASH Program will rise drastically.

Local agencies are doing their part. The VA needs to remain a partner in ending veteran homelessness

- The City and County of Los Angeles have invested significant local resources for veteran homeless housing and services over the next ten years, which will be used to leverage federal funding.
- In 2015, the VA entered into a legal settlement with homeless and disabled veterans in Los Angeles. As part of the settlement, the VA committed to work “to end veteran homelessness in Greater LA in 2015 and beyond.” As part of the settlement, the VA agreed to improve care and services for homeless veterans in coordination with local and state agencies.