

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Derrick Van Orden
Chair, House Committee on Veteran Affairs
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
364 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Pappas
Ranking Member, House Committee on Veteran
Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
550 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Van Orden and Ranking Member Pappas:

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (hereinafter “the Alliance”) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization which is dedicated to ending homelessness in the United States. We use research and data to find solutions to homelessness; we work with federal and local partners to create a solid base of policy and resources that support those solutions; and then we help communities implement them.

On behalf of the Alliance, I want to express our support for two bills I understand will be considered at a March 11 hearing of the House Committee on Veteran Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

The HUD-VASH program consists of a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) voucher and wraparound services provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). I had the privilege of being part of the federal team that designed and implemented the HUD-VASH program in its current form. It has been the cornerstone of our collective work to end homelessness among our nation’s veterans, and it has played a key role in the over 50% reduction in veteran homelessness since 2010. The Alliance is pleased to endorse the End Veteran Homelessness Act (H.R. 1957) because now is the time to update this highly successful program in order to increase utilization of vouchers and get even more homeless veterans into permanent housing, while continuing to serve those with acute needs with both housing assistance and wraparound services.

There are fewer homeless veterans than ever before, but in January of 2024 there were still 32,882 veterans residing in shelters or on the streets. Veteran homelessness has been reduced by more than one-half since 2011, but the number of veterans using HUD-VASH has stagnated at 80,000 over the last several years. The success of HUD-VASH requires us to rethink the program’s approach. How can we better use the program’s resources, particularly the proven winning formula of housing, services, and a Housing First approach as well as the nearly 30,000 unused vouchers, to achieve even greater success?

1. Continue to do what has made HUD-VASH the gold standard in homeless services: prioritize service to chronically homeless veterans, those veterans who have experienced unsheltered homelessness for a long period while suffering from one or more disabilities—a physical ailment, a mental illness, or substance use.
2. Expand program eligibility for the housing and services made available by HUD-VASH to thousands of additional veterans and their families if it is determined they are homeless or at risk of homelessness and do not need case management.
3. Rationalize the program by using all HUD-VASH vouchers and allowing veterans in non-veteran homelessness programs to transfer into HUD-VASH, thus freeing up more homelessness assistance for non-veterans in need.
4. And, finally, make it easier to use HUD-VASH vouchers by allowing public housing authorities to cover administrative fees to facilitate leases for veterans.

The Alliance strongly endorses the End Veteran Homelessness Act and we thank the bill's sponsors for their leadership: Representative Mark Takano (D-CA), the ranking member of the House Committee on Veteran Affairs; Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA), the ranking member of the House Committee on Financial Services; and Representative Mike Levin (D-CA), the previous ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee.

The Alliance is also pleased to endorse legislation that would require VA to provide helpful guidance and programming for entities seeking grants to implement the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program. The Simplifying Veterans Assistance Act (H.R. 1960) would help to involve new grantees in the application process and make it more likely that the most capable entities would be awarded GPD grants, especially given the important changes in the program that were enacted pursuant to The Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare Benefits and Improvement Act.

Thanks for your consideration of our views. Please alert the Alliance's John Threlkeld (jthrelkeld@naeh.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ann Marie Oliva
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