



HOUSING AUTHORITY

OF THE COUNTY OF KERN

Creating brighter futures...one home, one family at a time

12/28/2017

California Veterans Assistance Foundation
Attn: Deborah Johnson
2215 Buena Vista St.
Bakersfield, CA 93304

Dear Mrs. Johnson,

The Housing Authority of the County of Kern has been issued eight allocations of VASH vouchers since the program began in 2012. These allocations total 160 vouchers, and as of today, there are still 25 vouchers available. Of these 25 vouchers, 21 have never been issued due to the lack of staffing to support the case management component.

There are currently 75 homeless veterans on the communities By-Name-List who need housing solutions. As of December 13, there were 25 homeless veterans on the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) prioritization list. These veterans could be served by the VASH program, if there was adequate case management. Instead they are being matched to other PSH programs, utilizing resources that are needed for homeless individuals with no other program options.

The Housing Authority is currently meeting with the VASH team quarterly to brainstorm ways we can reach 100% utilization, and ensure the most vulnerable veterans get this resource first. At the last meeting in October of 2017 the VASH team expressed that another social work position was authorized. As of today, that position has not been staffed, and the VASH team does not know the status. In short, the understaffed VASH program in Kern County has several implications on veteran homelessness:

1. Kern County might not receive the appropriate allocation of future vouchers.
2. HUD might decide to recapture the vouchers already issued due to underutilization.
3. Veterans are utilizing community resources that could be provided to non-veteran homeless,
4. Because the VASH team has such high caseloads, they are not able to fully participate in the community's work to end veteran homelessness.

Thank you for taking the time to review the status of the VASH program in Kern County. If you have any other questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Heather Kimmel

Assistant Executive Director

