



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### US Interagency Council on Homelessness Approves Western PA Continuum of Care's Claim Submission

The Western PA Continuum of Care (CoC) is proud to announce that the U.S. Inter-agency Council on Homelessness has approved the declaration that the Western CoC has effectively ended Veteran homelessness. This means that we have built a system that can quickly identify and house any Veteran experiencing homelessness within the CoC's 20 County region (Warren, Forest, Crawford, Mercer, Lawrence, McKean, Potter, Cameron, Elk, Venango, Clarion, Jefferson, Clearfield, Butler, Armstrong, Indiana, Westmoreland, Fayette, Greene, and Washington). We know that we will continue to see Veterans in our community who are experiencing homelessness. This declaration means that our community has come together to build a system that quickly identifies Veterans experiencing homelessness and assists these Veterans in being housed again. Our goal is that when Veterans experience homelessness that it will be 1) Rare 2) Brief 3) Occur one time (the same Veteran will not cycle back into homelessness again).

This declaration is the culmination of four years of work by the Western CoC's Veteran Committee. The committee, chaired by Lawrence County Community Action staff members Kathy Presnar and Missy Russell, and supported by Doug Tetrault, Sr. Associate from the Technical Assistance Collaborative, brought together key partners including: the U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs, the 5 VA Medical Centers serving the region, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, state agencies (Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Dept. of Community and Economic Development), Veteran services providers (Supportive Services for Veteran Families providers, Grant and Per Diem providers, VA-funded providers, local Veterans groups & foundations, etc.), homeless services providers, housing providers, community services providers and the Western PA CoC.

Being confirmed to have effectively ended homelessness among Veterans means our CoC have met the benchmarks outlined [here](#) and can now say the following:

- o Whenever a Veteran experiences homelessness, we identify them quickly and house the Veteran in less than 90 days on average.
- o We have identified Veterans experiencing chronic and long-term homelessness and have worked to house these Veterans.
- o There are enough housing and service resources available in our community to assist any Veteran experiencing homelessness.
- o We are providing long-term housing resources to Veterans and not relying on short-term housing interventions except when the Veteran needs specialized services.

The work to serve Veterans experiencing homelessness will never be "done". This claim affirms that our CoC has built a solid system that can quickly and effectively end homelessness when a Veteran experiencing homelessness is identified.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Kathy Presnar (724-658-7258 x1213 [kpresnar@lccap.org](mailto:kpresnar@lccap.org)) or Missy Russell (724-658-7258 x1414 [mrussell@lccap.org](mailto:mrussell@lccap.org))