

HUD FINDS HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION INCREASED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR VETERANS

More than half of Veterans studied served in Iraq and Afghanistan

WASHINGTON – In 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) embarked upon a demonstration to explore ways to prevent or end homelessness among veterans. Today, HUD released the [*Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration \(VHPD\) Evaluation Final Report*](#), which finds participating veterans, many having served in Iraq and Afghanistan, experienced substantial improvements in housing stability, employment and income that persisted after exiting the demonstration.

Conducted by Silber & Associates and the Urban Institute, the evaluation of the *Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration* found that six months after leaving the demonstration program, 76 percent of those veterans studied lived in their own place, employment nearly doubled, and monthly incomes grew by 41 percent. View [*Homeless on the Home Front*](#), a photo essay profiling the work to prevent and end veteran homelessness.

“When our men and women of the armed forces return home to civilian life, some after multiple deployments, they need and deserve housing and jobs,” said HUD Secretary Julián Castro. “This study shows us that our collaboration across federal agencies is working. By providing a roof and a place to call home, we’re creating the stability needed to find employment and transition back into civilian life.”

“Prevention is critical to ending homelessness among veterans but it’s also the hardest part,” said Mary Cunningham, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute and lead author of the report. “Demonstration projects are pilots that are designed to explore a new approach, such as an intervention or a new form of support. VHPD was small in scale—with only five pilot sites—and there was no control group against which to compare results. Still, the promising nature of these early findings suggests that these new approaches are worth further testing.”

VHPD was the first homelessness prevention effort combining housing, health care, and employment services to serve homeless and at-risk veterans and their families. This demonstration provided short- to medium-term housing assistance (up to 18 months), including security deposits, rent, rental arrearages (up to 6 months back rent), moving cost assistance, and utilities; case management; and referrals to community-based services and supports. Service providers could also

use VHPD funds for child care, credit repair, and transportation expenses.

In addition to these supports, VHPD connected veterans to needed health services through the VA's health care system and employment services through local workforce agencies, so the demonstration could provide veterans with a comprehensive set of supports and prepare them to sustain housing on their own.

HUD, in consultation with VA and DOL, selected five military bases and their surrounding communities to participate in VHPD:

1 Camp Pendleton in San Diego, California;

2 Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas;

3 Fort Drum in Watertown, New York;

4 Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington; and

5 MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

HUD allocated \$10 million in demonstration funds (\$2 million for each site); VA awarded \$5 million to provide case management and outreach services; and DOL provided services through its existing veteran employment programs. The three-year trial operated from 2011 to 2014, during which time the demonstration served 4,824 adults and children, including 2,023 veterans in 1,976 households.

The evaluation found that providers successfully reached post-September 11th-era veterans, with 55 percent of clients in the study having served during this time period. Many of the households served were families: about 43 percent had children in their household and 27 percent were women. At the same time, many VHPD veterans suffered from poor health, serious mental illness, and/or disabilities that prevented them from working. Nevertheless, the study found the following positive outcomes:

- 26 percent of veterans who entered the demonstration were homeless and about 74 percent were at risk of homelessness. When they exited, 85 percent were stably housed.
- Six months after exiting, 76 percent of clients were in their own place, 18 percent lived with someone else, and 6 percent were homeless; another 4 percent were housed at follow-up but reported they had been homeless at some point since entering the program.
- Only 25 percent of VHPD clients were employed at entry compared to 43 percent at the follow-up interview 6 months after leaving VHPD.
- Average monthly income increased from \$1,076 at entry to \$1,519 at the follow-up interview.

Among the lessons learned from this demonstration is that intense and targeted outreach is necessary; veteran-on-veteran supports are

critical; service providers must have skills for working with clients suffering from traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorders; and employment service providers must know how to translate military experience into terms that are meaningful in civilian labor markets.