



VHA AmeriCorps NCCC Project

Brief Project Description and Desired Outcomes

The *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* set goals for our nation to prevent and end homelessness among veterans in 2015, for chronic population in 2017, and for families with children and youth in 2020. Communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia are working hard to achieve these goals. In 2015, Governor McAuliffe announced that the state had functionally ended homelessness among veterans – AmeriCorps NCCC Teams were instrumental in achieving this goal! Between 2015 and 2016, overall homelessness in the Commonwealth declined 10.5% with a 17% decrease in family homelessness. This progress emerges from new efforts in communities to improve homelessness response and housing assistance systems and a leveraging of resources, such as AmeriCorps NCCC.

VHA will apply to receive, and will act as the intermediary for, up to two NCCC teams to serve between January and April 2017. As a priority project, NCCC Teams will help conduct the 2017 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. Focus on the 2017 PIT Count is critical for three leading reasons: 1) Continuums of Care must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons on odd numbered years, 2) USICH introduced benchmarks for ending chronic homelessness that are partially based on the PIT Count, and 3) the 2017 PIT Count will be used as the baseline to measure community progress on ending youth homelessness.

The NCCC Teams will be on the ground during the busiest emergency shelter season. Members will assist with operations and upkeep of are cold weather shelters, while conducting outreach and vulnerability assessments. The Teams will assist the Continuums of Care in marrying PIT Count data with By-Name Lists to facilitate rapid placements into permanent housing and so that communities' outreach to youth and chronically homeless can be expanded. VHA expects that the NCCC Teams' involvement will help develop new partnerships between Continuums of Care and local service organizations, motivate and educate NCCC members to be skilled advocates for addressing and ending homelessness, and move Virginia towards functionally ending chronic homelessness in 2017 and youth homelessness in 2020.

VHA is soliciting letters of interest, due September 7 2016, from Continuums of Care across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Up to two host sites will be selected from the received letters of interest. Continuums of Care will need to partner with local service providers to host NCCC members in their community, which will promote strategic partnerships, and work with VHA to direct NCCC resources to the communities with high need and ability to host members. Successful project proposals will position the NCCC Team to enter into a formalized PIT process.

Ending chronic and youth homelessness is a sustained, long-term effort, but energetic and dedicated team members will catalyze the process in Virginia. The timeline for receiving the NCCC Team will bring members to invigorate Virginia Continuums of Care at a pivotal time. Additional enthusiasm and multiplication of working hands will motivate and enable Continuums of Care to launch their greatest effort yet to count and engage the number of youth and chronically homeless, thereby empowering communities to end chronic and youth homelessness in our Commonwealth.

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