



Housing Our Heroes Initiative

The Housing Our Heroes initiative builds on the San Diego Housing Commission's (SDHC) policy decision to leverage its available resources to address homelessness through **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO**, SDHC's three-year Homelessness Action Plan.

Close to \$12.5 million over two years in Federal, City and SDHC resources will be invested in the Housing Our Heroes initiative to provide rental housing in the city of San Diego for Veterans who are living on the streets or living in shelters.

The San Diego City Council on March 1, 2016, unanimously authorized SDHC to direct up to \$7 million in City and SDHC funds to the Housing Our Heroes initiative. This action was preceded by the approval of the SDHC Board of Commissioners on February 12, 2016. San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer first announced the Housing Our Heroes initiative during his State of the City address on January 14, 2016.

A landlord outreach program of Housing Our Heroes provides outreach to landlords in the city of San Diego with rental units located in ZIP Code 92037 and ZIP Codes that begin with 921, excluding 92118. In addition, landlords with rental properties in the city of National City (ZIP Code 91950) can participate in Housing Our Heroes." Veterans who receive Federal rental housing vouchers through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program are able to rent units in National City.

The Housing Our Heroes initiative has four programs:

1. Landlord Outreach
2. Rapid Rehousing Assistance
3. SDHC Federal VASH Vouchers
4. SDHC Federal Housing Vouchers with Supportive Services

The Housing Our Heroes initiative will assist:

- 300 chronically homeless Veterans with an honorable discharge and a disabling condition who need supportive services and who qualify for the VASH voucher program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which is administered by SDHC;
- 100 Veterans who are eligible for the HUD Sponsor-Based Housing Voucher program, which is administered by SDHC. Veterans receive supportive services, such as case management; and
- Up to 600 additional homeless Veterans who will be provided with housing opportunities through the Rapid Rehousing Assistance program. Homeless Veterans need not have an honorable discharge to be eligible for Rapid Rehousing financial rental assistance.

All participants of the Housing Our Heroes initiative must be referred by SDHC partner agencies or organizations that provide supportive services to homeless San Diegans.

Between 1,000 to 1,600 homeless individuals in the city are U.S. military Veterans, men and women who served their country, but they don't have a place to call home, according to data extrapolated from a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs analysis of the annual Homeless Point-in-Time Counts, required by HUD, which were conducted January 23, 2015, and January 23, 2014, as well as internal data from the VA.

The Housing Our Heroes initiative follows the national "Housing First" model – to provide housing as quickly as possible, with supportive services as needed.



Housing Our Heroes Initiative

1. Landlord Outreach

Budget: \$4,408,551

Homeless Veterans Assisted: All homeless Veterans.

Landlords who rent their units to homeless Veterans are important partners in the Housing Our Heroes initiative. A low rental vacancy rate (currently 3.4 percent in the city, according to the San Diego County Apartment Association) and tight competition for affordable and market-rate apartments make it difficult for homeless Veterans to obtain rental housing.

This program provides incentives for landlords with rental properties in the city of San Diego with rental units located in ZIP Code 92037 and ZIP Codes that begin with 921, excluding 92118, and landlords in the city of National City with rental units located in ZIP Code 91950 who rent to homeless Veterans, such as:

- **Pre-inspections** – To expedite the rental process, SDHC pre-inspects units to be rented to Veterans who have qualified for a housing voucher. The inspection certification is good for 60 days. In addition, the unit does not need to be occupied.
- **Landlord Incentive Payments** – Landlords receive \$500 for the first apartment they rent to a homeless Veteran under the initiative and \$250 for each additional unit.
 - **Budget:** Up to \$677,500 total
- **Contingency Fund** – Funds are set aside to help landlords cover expenses, such as repairs that exceed security deposits or rent due to unforeseen vacancies.
 - **Budget:** Up to \$1 million total
- **Security Deposit & Utility Assistance** – An average of \$1,500 in security deposits and \$100 in utility assistance per household.
 - **Budget:** Up to \$1,470,000 total
- **Rental listings** – Free online listings include photos, maps and information about rents, accessibility features and neighborhood amenities.
- **Landlord Liaison** – SDHC provides dedicated housing specialists to answer landlords' questions, as well as to provide credit report and application assistance for homeless Veterans. SDHC will also coordinate recruitment fairs and training sessions for landlords, service providers and tenants.

For more information: email HousingOurHeroes@sdhc.org or call (619) 578-7768

***Funding Sources:** A grant from the City of San Diego resulting from the ground lease of San Diego Square; proceeds from the sale of Hotel Metro; HUD VASH Voucher Administrative Fees; and HUD Extraordinary Administrative Fees for VASH vouchers.*



*(Left to right) City Councilmember Chris Ward; City Adviser for Homeless Solutions Stacie Spector; "Housing Our Heroes" landlord David Antczak; Formerly Homeless U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Paul; Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer; and SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry.
SDHC News Conference – Housing Our Heroes initiative – 12.20.16*



Housing Our Heroes Initiative

2. Rapid Rehousing Assistance

Budget: \$1,967,250

Homeless Veterans Assisted: Up to 600 homeless Veterans and their families who become homeless because of an unexpected life experience, such as a job loss, domestic violence, or a medical crisis. Homeless Veterans need not have an honorable discharge to be eligible for this assistance.

Rapid Rehousing funds are awarded to nonprofit or for-profit service providers who apply for these funds through a competitive Notice of Funding Availability. The service providers will make these payments directly to the landlord:

- **Rental Payment Assistance** – Financial assistance varies; on average four to six months may be all that a homeless Veteran needs. However, in cases of extreme hardship, the funds may cover up to two years of rental payments.
- **Up-front Move-in Costs** – First and last month's rent, security deposits of \$1,500 on average per household, and utility deposit assistance of \$100 on average per household.

Nonprofit or for-profit service providers may also use these funds to provide case management and supportive services, such as mental health care, or to purchase furniture and/or move-in kits for homeless Veterans.

***Funding Sources:** A grant from the City of San Diego, resulting from the ground lease of San Diego Square, and proceeds from the sale of Hotel Metro*



Luis, formerly homeless Navy Veteran, now a Hotel Churchill Resident through Housing Our Heroes.



Housing Our Heroes Initiative

3. SDHC Federal VASH Vouchers

Budget: \$2,685,600

Homeless Veterans Assisted: Chronically homeless Veterans with an honorable discharge and a disabling condition who need supportive services.

Additionally, 300 existing Federal HUD VASH vouchers are part of the Housing Our Heroes initiative.

VASH vouchers provide rental assistance to honorably discharged Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness while also having a disability.

SDHC obtained a waiver from HUD that allows for a 20 percent higher rent payment amount with a VASH voucher, effective February 1, 2016.

For example, the rent payment amount for a 1-bedroom apartment with a VASH voucher is \$1,288 a month—up from \$1,074 a month.

SDHC partners with the VA San Diego Healthcare System to provide VASH vouchers.

The VA provides clinical health and case management services to VASH voucher recipients.

The local VA identifies Veterans who qualify for VASH vouchers. SDHC confirms their eligibility and enrolls them in the VASH voucher program.

The VASH voucher program is similar to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, in which participants pay a portion of their rental costs. These Federal housing vouchers do not expire as long as the individual continues to meet qualifying criteria, such as income eligibility.

Funding Sources: HUD VASH funding

4. SDHC Federal Housing Vouchers with Supportive Services

Budget: \$3,410,800

Homeless Veterans Assisted: Homeless Veterans who are not eligible for Federal VASH vouchers.

Housing, combined with supportive services, such as mental health counseling; substance abuse treatment programs; and independent living skills classes help homeless Veterans begin to rebuild their lives.

Through a competitive Request for Proposals, SDHC will award 100 Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers to nonprofit or for-profit organizations, or “sponsors,” to provide rental assistance to homeless Veterans to help pay for their housing.

Funding Sources: HUD Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers and proceeds from the sale of Hotel Metro



Housing Our Heroes Initiative

Funding Approval Actions

February 12, 2016 – SDHC Board of Commissioners approved 6-0

March 1, 2016 – San Diego City Council approved 9-0

Funding Sources

Extraordinary Administrative Fees for VASH Vouchers: A HUD program that supports the cost of administering VASH voucher programs, including landlord outreach activities, housing search assistance, pre-inspections of housing units, and additional services to ensure that VASH clients can move into their new homes as quickly as possible. — \$365,000

HUD VASH Voucher Administrative Fees: — \$160,801

HUD VASH Rental Assistance: — \$2,685,600

HUD Sponsor-Based Housing Voucher Rental Assistance: — \$2,260,800

San Diego Square: — A grant from the City of San Diego resulting from the ground lease of San Diego Square. — \$4 million

Hotel Metro : — Proceeds from the sale of Hotel Metro. — \$3 million

Service Providers

It is important that homeless Veterans add their names to a database that assesses their housing needs and vulnerability, which will help identify those homeless Veterans who are most in need.

Homeless Veterans should call or visit the following agencies that can assist them with this registration:

Alpha Project for the Homeless
(619) 232-4785
3737 5th Ave.
San Diego, CA 92103

Episcopal Community Services
(619) 955-8217
2144 El Cajon Blvd
San Diego, CA, 92104

Neil Good Day Center
(619) 233-8500
299 17th St.
San Diego, CA 92101

Veterans Village of San Diego
(619) 497-0142
3320 Kemper Street #104
San Diego, CA 92110

Community Resource Center
(760) 753-8300
650 Second Street
Encinitas, CA, 92024

Father Joe's Villages
(619) 446-2100
1501 Imperial Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101

PATH
(619) 810-8600
1250 6th Ave.
San Diego, CA, 92101

Volunteers of America
(619) 561-9808
3530 Camino Del Rio North
Suite 300
San Diego, CA 92108

Courage to Call
(Mental Health Systems)
211 – Option 4
9445 Farnham St. Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123

Interfaith Shelter Network
(619) 702-5399
3530 Camino Del Rio N #301
San Diego, CA, 92108

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
(619) 400-5000
7410 Mission Valley Road
San Diego, CA 92108

YWCA
(619)239-0355
1012 C Street
San Diego, CA, 92101

ElderHelp
(619) 284-9281
3860 Calle Fortunada, #101
San Diego, CA 92123

Joan Kroc Center at Father Joe's Villages
(619) 233-8500
1501 Imperial Ave.
San Diego, CA 92101

Veterans Community Services
(800) 974-9909
5605 El Cajon Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92115



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*(Left to right) SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry; U.S. Army Veteran and Housing Our Heroes landlord Noble Robinson; Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer; and then-City Councilmember Todd Gloria.
SDHC News Conference – Housing Our Heroes – 7.20.16*

Program Definitions

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers: A HUD program, with supportive services from the VA, to provide monthly rental assistance to chronically homeless, honorably discharged Veterans with a disabling condition, who served in the military for at least two years. Additionally, qualifying criteria require that the Veterans or members of their household cannot be registered sex offenders. Participating Veterans must be able to complete activities of daily living and live independently in the community with case management and supportive services. SDHC administers this Federal program locally.

Income eligibility: Up to 80 percent of the San Diego Area Median Income (\$47,600 a year for one person in 2016)

Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers: A HUD program that awards rental housing vouchers to nonprofit or for-profit organizations, or “sponsors” that provide supportive services to homeless individuals and families. This program can provide rental assistance for Veterans who do not qualify for VASH vouchers. SDHC administers this program locally, awarding housing vouchers to the sponsors through a competitive process.

Income eligibility: Up to 80 percent of the San Diego Area Median Income (\$47,600 a year for one person in 2016)

Rapid Rehousing Assistance: An SDHC program to help homeless Veterans and their families obtain a stable home as quickly as possible. The program is for Veterans who have become homeless because of an unexpected life experience, such as a job loss, domestic violence, or a medical crisis. Homeless Veterans need not have an honorable discharge to be eligible for this Rapid Rehousing Assistance.

Income eligibility: There are no income requirements for this program.