



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

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EFFORT TO HELP CHRONICALLY HOMELESS VETERANS ACCELERATES WITH 177 ADDITIONAL FEDERAL HOUSING VOUCHERS FOR THE SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION

*Homeless veterans at Stand Down receive counseling about
the availability of the rental assistance*

SAN DIEGO, CA—Providing momentum in the drive to end homelessness among military veterans, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) received an additional 177 federal housing vouchers to provide rental assistance to veterans in a program that includes case management and clinical health services. [Watch Video.](#)

The announcement was made by San Diego City Council President Todd Gloria at the 27th annual Stand Down, held at San Diego High School's Balboa Stadium by Veterans Village of San Diego, a three-day event to provide support and services to homeless veterans.

“This means 177 veterans will now have a place to call home,” Gloria said to cheers from veterans listening to the announcement. “You have given your all to us, and now it’s our time to give something back to you.”

Carl, 62, a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and has been homeless for nearly two years, said “having a place to be able to be relaxed, comfortable, (and) safe is essential” for someone like him.

“The street is worse than being in combat,” said Carl.

The San Diego Housing Commission receives allocations of the federal vouchers through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The VASH program was created in 2008 to help chronically homeless veterans rebuild their lives.

The VA is counseling veterans at Stand Down on the availability of VASH vouchers.

HUD defines chronic homelessness as being continuously homeless for a year or more or experiencing at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years while also having a disability.

Including the newly announced vouchers, SDHC has received 797 VASH vouchers since the program began. The estimated total annual value of these vouchers is more than \$6.8 million.

“Here in San Diego, these additional VASH vouchers will help us contribute to an urgent national priority – ending homelessness among veterans,” said SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry. “With services from the VA, vouchers help chronically homeless veterans get into permanent supportive housing, using the Housing First approach that SDHC, local and state elected officials and experts in homelessness planning all have embraced.”

SDHC partners with the San Diego Healthcare System of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 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.

Cynthia Abair, acting director of the VA San Diego Healthcare System, expressed thanks to all the community partners involved in the VASH program. “Our collaborative efforts have shown we have made a difference in the lives of many veterans.”

Phil Landis, president and CEO of Veterans Village of San Diego, said that seeing homeless veterans with children at Stand Down “just breaks your heart.”

With assistance from SDHC, the City Council, the Mayor and additional elected officials, “The goal is to not have one single homeless veteran in the entire County of San Diego – wouldn’t it be wonderful?” said Landis.

The vouchers come amid the City of San Diego’s participation in the 25 Cities initiative, a collaboration by HUD, the VA, and the U.S Interagency Council on Homelessness to accelerate efforts to place homeless veterans into permanent supportive housing and end veteran homelessness by 2015. SDHC is one of 16 partnership organizations in housing, homelessness, health care and outreach that are working together to produce a plan of action to implement this effort in Downtown San Diego.

VASH vouchers and the 25 Cities initiative are only two of the programs in which [SDHC](#) is a partner to address homelessness among veterans in San Diego. Additional efforts include:

- The Veterans Emergency Winter Shelter is administered for the City of San Diego by SDHC and operated by VVSD. On July 1, 2014, the veterans’ shelter completed an unprecedented 19 months of continuous operation. The 150-bed facility will return to regular operation during the winter months around Thanksgiving.
- Connections Housing Downtown is a City-Sponsored public-private collaboration supported by SDHC with federal Project-Based Housing Vouchers for 73 studio apartments and 16 interim special-needs units. Supportive services available at Connections Housing, provided by People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) San Diego, helped 123 homeless veterans find jobs in its first year of operation.
- The historical Hotel Churchill in Downtown San Diego is being renovated to create 72 affordable studio apartments for homeless individuals. SDHC and its nonprofit affiliate, Housing Development Partners, are collaborating to preserve this affordable housing, which will be renamed The Churchill. The \$17 million rehabilitation project will set aside 56 units for veterans, with on-site social services and case management for residents.

- The San Diego Rapid Re-Housing Program helps homeless individuals and families find and retain permanent housing as quickly as possible. Homeless veterans are one of the target groups of the Rapid Re-Housing Program.
- Expansion of Veterans Village of San Diego facilities provides housing for homeless veterans. SDHC has provided \$9.9 million in loans and grants to Veterans Village of San Diego for five housing developments at its 4141 Pacific Highway campus.

For more information about how SDHC supports housing for military veterans, visit www.sdhc.org.

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