



NORTHWEST & WEST CENTRAL MN CONTINUUMS OF CARE

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Northwest and West Central Minnesota End Veteran Homelessness

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Moorhead, MN. – Today, the Northwest and West Central Minnesota Continuums of Care (CoC) announced they have cleared their housing waiting list for homeless Veterans. In a letter to the CoC regions, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, HUD, and VA, determined the 22 counties served by the CoC have effectively ended homelessness among Veterans, becoming the 49th and 50th communities in the nation to do so. The Northwest and West Central CoCs are Minnesota’s second and third region to reach this historic goal. The USICH threshold is 90 days, but the two regions have maintained the status for over 8 months.

These counties include: Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Beltrami, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, Norman, Mahnomen, Clearwater, Hubbard, Clay, Becker, Wilkin, Wadena, Otter Tail, Grant, Douglas, Traverse, Stevens, and Pope

These 22 counties in Northwest (12) and West Central (10) Minnesota are committed to honoring the men and women who have served our state and our country by establishing a strategic plan that prevents Veterans homelessness from occurring whenever possible. “The plans ensure that when homelessness does occur, it is rare, brief, and non-recurring,” said Carla Solem, Continuum of Care Coordinator. “It does not mean that there will never be another veteran who becomes homeless, but it is evidence that the CoCs have plans in place to assure the veteran is sheltered immediately, housed rapidly and supported in a manner that reduces the likelihood that he or she will ever become homeless again.”

This plan and subsequent progress is the result of joint efforts to end Veteran homelessness including: the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness (MICH), Fargo and St. Cloud Veterans Administration, MN Assistance For Veterans, MN Department of Veterans Affairs, the two CoCs and numerous regional County Veterans Service Organizations.

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs and partners launched a statewide Homeless Veterans Registry focused on housing all Minnesota Veterans experiencing homelessness. This Registry has accelerated Minnesota's progress toward the goal by creating individual housing plans based on each Veteran's unique challenges and situation. The registry, combined with CoC Veterans preferences, Coordinated Entry into the homeless response system, and dedicated Veterans beds, have allowed us to rapidly and successfully respond to the needs of homeless veterans in our region.

Since December 2014, the CoCs have seen a drastic decrease in the number of homeless veterans, directly correlated with the dedicated system access, housing and supports targeted at homeless veterans. Research demonstrates that the most lasting solutions are personalized for each individual or family experiencing homelessness. Veterans experiencing homelessness in the NW and WC region are typically housed within three months. Currently, neither West Central or Northwest have any Veterans waiting for housing.

"Homelessness among Veterans is a problem that we can solve," said Diana Hall, Fargo VA Homeless Programs Director. "Together with our partners we are committed to bringing our Veterans 'all the way home.'"

Anyone who knows of a Veteran experiencing homelessness please either call the Fargo VA Homeless Programs or 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838).

About the Continuum of Care

The Continuum of Care is a regional planning body of representative stakeholders designed to promote a shared commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. It includes: gathering and analyzing information to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness; implementing strategic plans to end homelessness; measuring program and system performance; assuring coordination and easy access to the homeless response system; and setting local funding preferences for HUD CoC grants.