



King County

Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy

Department of Community and Human Services

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March 30, 2018

TO: Councilmember Joe McDermott
Chair, Metropolitan King County Council

FM: Leo Flor, Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Manager

RE: Quarterly Update: Number of Homeless Senior Veterans who have Obtained Housing

SUMMARY

- The voter-approved Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) ballot measure ordinance requires at least half of the VSHSL's proceeds dedicated for seniors to be used for seniors who are veterans or their families or caregivers until either 75% of the number of homeless senior veterans who were homeless on the ordinance's date of enactment obtain housing or King County administers at least \$24M to house homeless senior veterans. The enacted VSHSL Transition Plan requires DCHS to provide the Council quarterly memoranda on the status of how many homeless senior veterans have obtained housing.
- The enacted VSHSL Transition Plan states that there were 422 homeless senior veterans in King County on the ballot measure ordinance's date of enactment. 75% of 422 is 317.
- Acting under guidance of the voter-approved VSHSL Ballot Measure Ordinance and the enacted VSHSL Transition Plan, DCHS has undertaken efforts to achieve the goal of housing 317 homeless senior veterans. Anticipating the forthcoming enactment of the VSHSL Transition Plan Appropriation, DCHS has taken additional actions to continue housing homeless senior veterans once Transition Plan proceeds have been appropriated. These actions include:
 - Prioritizing homeless senior veterans for assignment to senior housing vacancies through the Coordinated Entry for All system;
 - Emphasis in the weekly Veterans Operational Leadership Team (VOLT) on housing homeless senior veterans;
 - Including homeless senior veterans amongst the priority groups who will be housed in the DCHS-funded master leasing arrangement at the Mark Cooper House, operated by Pioneer Human Services;
 - Preparing to implement *Transition Plan*-funded Capital, Operations, Master Leasing, and Shallow Rent Subsidy strategies with more than \$7M allocated exclusively to serve seniors who are veterans or their families;
 - Planning for a community event and corresponding communications strategy to mark the accomplishment of 317 homeless senior veterans obtaining housing.
- As of March 28, 2018, 237 homeless senior veterans in King County have obtained housing.



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BACKGROUND

1. In December 2017, King County Ordinance 18638 adopted the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (“VSHSL”) *Transition Plan*. The *Transition Plan* includes a section entitled “Tracking the Number of Homeless Senior Veterans Who Obtain Housing.”¹ That section of the *Transition Plan* describes the voter-approved requirement that at least one-half of the VSHSL’s seniors proceeds must be used to serve seniors who are also veterans or military servicemembers and their respective caregivers and families.

The *Transition Plan* draws that requirement from the VSHSL’s voter-approved ballot measure ordinance, Ordinance 18555, Section 4.B.2:

[u]ntil either (a) seventy-five percent of the number of those seniors, who are also veterans or military servicemembers in King County and who as of the enactment date of this ordinance are homeless, obtain housing or (b) a total of twenty-four million dollars from the levy proceeds, except those levy proceeds described in subsection B.1 of this section, or from other funds administered by King County or both are spent to house seniors who are also veterans or military servicemembers in King County, whichever comes first, as least fifty percent of the levy proceeds described in [subsection B.2] shall be used to fund capital facilities and regional health and human services for seniors who are also veterans or military servicemembers and their respective caregivers and families.

- 2. Ordinance 18555 was enacted on July 21, 2017**

The Council passed Ordinance 18555 on July 20, 2017 and the Executive signed the ordinance the next day, making July 21, 2017 the date of enactment.

- 3. How does Ordinance 18638, Attachment A define “homeless” for the purpose of determining how many senior veterans were homeless on July 21, 2017?**

The enacted Transition Plan states that homeless veterans are defined as persons tracked by HMIS, CEA and the VA who self-identified as veterans and as of July 21, 2017:

- completed an assessment through Coordinated Entry for All but had not yet moved into permanent housing or transitional housing
- were enrolled in a shelter program in HMIS
- received a voucher or subsidy but had not yet moved into a permanent housing unit
- were enrolled in a day shelter or street outreach program within the 90 days preceding July 21, 2017
- were enrolled in a homelessness prevention or supportive services only program and indicated that they were homeless when they entered the program
- left a program in HMIS for a non-permanent housing situation or a place not meant for human habitation within the 90 days preceding July 21, 2017.

- 4. How many seniors who are also veterans or military servicemembers were homeless on July 21, 2017?**

¹ See Attachment A to King County Ordinance 18638 at 52.

Under the enacted Transition Plan's methodology, there were 422 homeless veterans aged 55 or older on July 21, 2017. Seventy-five percent of 422 is 317.

5. How does Ordinance 18638, Attachment A define what constitutes "obtaining housing" for a homeless senior veteran?

The enacted Transition Plan states that senior veterans will be counted as housed if:

- The veteran is placed in housing through VASH or Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) as verified by the VA Puget Sound
- The veteran enrolls in a transitional housing program
- The veteran enrolls in a permanent housing program (including Rapid Re-Housing with a move-in date)
- The veteran is removed from the Coordinated Entry Community Queue after self-resolving their housing crisis
- The veteran successfully exits any program to permanent housing, defined as a Permanent Supportive Housing or another permanent housing program; an owned or rented unit, with or without subsidy; or voluntarily staying with friends or family permanently.

6. How does Ordinance 18638, Attachment A require DCHS to track and report the number of senior veterans experiencing homelessness who obtain housing?

The enacted Transition Plan states that:

DCHS evaluation staff will monthly track the number of homeless senior veterans who obtain housing. DCHS evaluation staff will track this information through use of the HMIS and CEA systems and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The combined system protocol of combining, de-duplicating and reconciling information from HMIS, CEA, and the VA will be used[.] DCHS began tracking the number of homeless senior veterans who obtained housing for the purpose of reporting progress against the 317 veteran goal as of July 21, 2017, the VSHSL Ballot Measure Ordinance's date of enactment.

PLAN TO HOUSE SENIOR VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Acting under guidance of the voter-approved VSHSL Ballot Measure Ordinance and the enacted VSHSL Transition Plan, DCHS has initiated efforts to achieve the goal of housing 317 homeless senior veterans. Anticipating the forthcoming enactment of the VSHSL Transition Plan Appropriation, DCHS has taken additional actions to continue housing homeless senior veterans once Transition Plan proceeds have been appropriated. These actions include:

- **Prioritizing homeless senior veterans for assignment to senior housing vacancies through the Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) system**
DCHS has implemented guidance for CEA operations so that when housing placements become available for seniors, seniors who are veterans receive prioritization in receiving the placement.
- **Emphasis in the weekly Veterans Operational Leadership Team (VOLT) on housing homeless senior veterans**
DCHS partners with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, and multiple community-based organizations including the Community

Psychiatric Clinic. This collaboration is called the VOLT group, and DCHS has shared with the group with goal of housing homeless veterans who are seniors.

- **Including homeless senior veterans amongst the priority groups who will be housed in the DCHS-funded master leasing arrangement at the Mark Cooper House, operated by Pioneer Human Services**

DCHS in early 2018 began coordinating with the Mark Cooper House to create a master leasing arrangement to house senior veterans and persons with criminal justice system involvement, advancing the goals of the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy.

- **Preparing to implement *Transition Plan*-funded Capital, Operations, Master Leasing, and Shallow Rent Subsidy strategies with more than \$7M allocated exclusively to serve seniors who are veterans or their families**

In preparation to implement the VSHSL Transition Plan’s “new” housing stability investments, which include more than \$7M specifically to create housing or housing access for veterans who are seniors, DCHS has begun designing programs and communicating with community partners to further concentrate on housing homeless senior veterans in King County.

- **Planning for a community event and corresponding communications strategy to mark the accomplishment of 317 homeless senior veterans obtaining housing**

The current rate of progress suggests that King County will have achieved the goal of housing 317 homeless senior veterans with 2018. Achievement of this goal will provide an important opportunity to highlight completion of the goal set out in the VSHSL Ballot Measure Ordinance as well as to provide the community with information about how VSHSL investments and strategies will continue to focus on decreasing numbers of homeless senior veterans with a combination of prevention strategies and housing strategies. DCHS will seek Council partnership in planning and executing the community event and supporting communications strategy.

NUMBER OF HOMELESS SENIOR VETERANS WHO HAVE OBTAINED HOUSING

As of March 28, 2017, 237 homeless seniors veterans in King County have obtained housing. Of the 237 who have obtained housing, the veterans break out into the following categories:

Category	Description	Number of Senior Veterans
1 VA Placements	The veteran is placed in housing through VASH or Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) as verified by the VA Puget Sound.	65
2 Transitional Housing	The veteran enrolls in a transitional housing program.	45
3 Permanent Housing Program	The veteran enrolls in a permanent housing program (including Rapid Re-Housing with a move-in date).	59
4 Resolved Housing Crisis	The veteran is removed from the Coordinated Entry Community Queue after self-resolving their housing crisis.	20
5 Permanent Housing Exit	The veteran successfully exits any program to permanent housing, defined as a Permanent Supportive Housing or another permanent housing program; an owned or rented unit, with or without subsidy; or voluntarily staying with friends or family permanently.	48
Total		237

- The veterans identified in category 1 include only veterans whose placement has been verified by the VA Puget Sounds Health System. That data is as of January 2018.
- The veterans identified in category 3 include only veterans who are still enrolled in Permanent Supportive Housing, Permanent Housing with services, or Rapid Re-Housing—for Rapid Re-Housing, the placed veteran must have moved-in without yet having exited the program.
- The veterans identified in category 5 include only veterans with documentation that they left the Community Queue to a permanent housing location.