

# Office Hours: Permanent Housing Placement National Challenge to House 38,000 Veterans

VHA Homeless Programs Office – October 28, 2022

## Emerging Principles for Encampment Resolution

### *Overview*

- Share federal updates on efforts to address unsheltered homelessness and encampments.
- Highlight the new “[7 Key Principles for Addressing Encampments](#).”

### *State of Unsheltered Homelessness*

- For the first time, in 2020, unsheltered homelessness exceeded sheltered homelessness among individuals.
- HUD Definition of Homelessness Individuals or families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including someone who is unsheltered.
- Definition of Unsheltered – Having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation.

### *USICH and Federal Response*

- USICH and its member agencies recognize the urgent need to support communities in addressing encampments and formed a workgroup to identify short-term and longer-term actions.
- The USICH Federal and National Partner Workgroup on Encampment workgroup consist of federal and national partners that inform USICH’s efforts and provide a place for members to share information and coordinate activities to address encampments.
- Publications
  - [Responding to the Growing Crisis of Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments](#)
  - [What Other Cities Can Learn From Boston’s Public Health Approach to Encampments](#)
  - [7 Principles for Addressing Encampments](#)
  - [Resource Roundup for Addressing Encampments](#)
- Guidance and Resources
  - USICH Federal and National Partner Workgroup on Encampments
  - USICH [Senior Regional Advisors](#)
  - Upcoming USICH Federal Strategic Plan

### *Principles for Addressing Encampments*

- Principle 1: Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response
  - Command centers approach using daily coordination for all involved with encampment planning and response.
  - Law enforcement may need to play a role but should not drive the process.

- Principle 2: Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions
  - Elevate the lived expertise of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
  - Adequate time for outreach teams to engage residents in finding alternative shelter, housing, and service options.
- Principle 3: Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach
  - Connect people directly to shelter and housing, mental health and treatment services, and health care.
  - Sharing data and information and using a coordinated map to identify coverage and gaps in outreach.
- Principle 4: Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage
  - Continue to provide public restrooms, parks, and other community spaces.
  - Offer public services such as garbage collection, sharps containers, maintenance, and regular cleaning.
  - Access to storage and special care to avoid destroying personal belongings.
- Principle 5: Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options
  - Encampments should not be closed unless there is access to low-barrier shelter or housing.
  - Provide interim solutions until more permanent affordable housing options are available.
  - Ensure voluntary, sanitary, and safe shelter with few programmatic requirements.
- Principle 6: Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports
  - Link people with permanent housing opportunities with the right level of services.
  - Coordinate efforts to mobilize available resources to move people as quickly as possible from homelessness into housing.
- Principle 7: Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure
  - Plans for former encampment sites should emphasize safety, accessibility, and inclusivity.
  - Facilitate coordination among public works, service providers, and volunteer organizations to serve people after the encampment is gone.

## *Resources*

- [Ending Homelessness for People Living in Encampments: Advancing the Dialogue | United States Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\)](#)
- [Responses to Homelessness | Bureau of Justice Assistance \(ojp.gov\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Engaging Individuals with Lived Expertise - HUD Exchange](#)
- [Core-Components-of-Outreach-2019.pdf \(usich.gov\)](#)
- [Interim Guidance on People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness | COVID-19 | CDC](#)
- [Protecting Health and Well-being of People in Encampments During an Infectious Disease Outbreak \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
- [Infectious Disease Toolkit for CoCs: Preventing and Managing the Spread of Infectious Disease within Encampments \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
- [Caution Sanctioned Encampments Safe Zones 052318.pdf \(usich.gov\)](#)
- [Model Transitions Document FINAL \(hud.gov\)](#)
- [Homelessness Among People Living in Encampments | HUD USER](#)

- [Case Studies: Ending Homelessness for People Living in Encampments | United States Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Planning a Housing Surge to Accelerate Rehousing Efforts in Response to COVID-19 \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Housing Surges: Special Considerations for Targeting People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
- [Microsoft PowerPoint - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Final Presentation \(hud.gov\)](#)
- [The Curb-Cut Effect \(ssir.org\)](#)
- [spur gehl coexistence in public space.pdf](#)
- HUD [Unsheltered and Rural Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

## Bright Spots: VA Greater Los Angeles (GLA) Health Care System (CTRS)

### *Social Distancing Led to an Increase in Street Homelessness*

- Let's go back in time to remember March/April of 2020
- Los Angeles was under a Shelter-in-Place order
  - Residential programs were practicing social distancing
  - Numbers of COVID-19 Cases were on the rise
- COVID-19 testing at residential treatment programs:
  - Holds for positive Veterans; weekly mandatory testing.
- The CARES Act passed on March 27, 2020, which allowed GLA to offer housing directly.

### *GLA's Response to COVID-19*

- CTRS is a pilot initiative that expands unsheltered homeless Veterans' access to the VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System.
- CTRS started as tents in a parking lot on the GLA grounds, then migrated to the Great Lawn.
- The goal of CTRS is to improve unsheltered Veterans' health care outcomes while moving them toward permanent housing solutions.
- While in CTRS, health care-eligible Veterans and spouses or partners receive active case management, three meals per day, access to shower facilities and other services.

### *Best Practices for Engaging with Encampments*

- Take a Veteran-centered approach.
- Provide time to engage with Veterans living in the encampment.
- Establish strong team coordination.
- Provide adequate and appropriate resources.
- Identify all experienced service partners who should also be present.

### *Veteran-Centered Approach*

- Rapport and Trust: this will take time; unhoused Veterans want to share their story; you need to ensure you can provide appropriate resources.
  - Often, encampments have a community leader, one person who will need to get your buy-in.

- Make a schedule for going to the same encampment; post this with your contact info.
- Bring in other community partners to best meet the needs.
  - Our by-name list (BNL) has been vital in ongoing communication.

### *Provide Time to Engage, Change is Hard!*

- Time to Prepare
  - Unhoused Veterans are often in crisis or are trying to survive on the street. Imagine having to fear for your safety 24 hours per day or worry about the next time you will have a hot meal.
- Housing Resources
  - Have your housing resources ready; do you know the bed availability for resources in your area that will fit the needs of the Veterans you are serving?

### *Establish Strong Team Coordination*

- Huddling with our community's by-name list twice a month for every service prioritization area.
- Debriefs after visits to encampments:
  - What worked well?
  - What could be improved?
  - Who or what is still needed?

### *Provide Adequate and Appropriate Resources\**

- Know the needs of the Veterans in the encampment:
  - When was the last time they were housed?
  - Do they have a partner?
  - Do they have pets?
  - Where area do they prefer to be close to?
  - What paperwork do they still need, and do they know how to obtain it?
- \*For both transitional and permanent housing

### *Identify All Service Partners Who Should Be Present*

- Who is working with unhoused Veterans in your community?
- In Los Angeles, we have many experienced service partners:
  - Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority
  - Veteran service organizations
  - Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grantees
  - Community resources
  - Housing authorities
  - National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
  - HOST Team-Sheriffs Department

### *Case Study: San Vicente Encampment*

- In Early October 2021: Secretary Denis McDonough came to GLA to meet with Veterans. He announced that the VA would be helping all the veterans in this encampment to move into temporary or permanent housing.

- On November 1, 2021, 15 Veteran households entered CTRS on the day of a sweep
  - Five went to hotels thru SSVF.
  - All others moved to transitional housing or permanent housing.

### *Resources*

- USICH Resources:
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- [Case Studies: Ending Homelessness for People Living in Encampments](#)
- [Resource Roundup for Addressing Encampments](#)