

# Bridge Housing

An Approach to Ending Veteran  
Homelessness

# GPD Update

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), GPD Program is evolving programmatically in collaboration with Federal and community partners
- Updating the program to serve and environment with a Housing First focus, a broader continuum of resources and fewer homeless Veterans

# GPD Update

- The Department's overall vision for the GPD Program is to shift the program to eventually support three different types of transitional housing models:
  - Bridge Housing – emphasizing short lengths of stay and rapid connections to permanent housing
  - Service-intensive transitional housing – transitional housing not being used as bridge housing, but in which Veterans are still actively working, with the assistance of appropriate services and supports, to achieve permanent housing as quickly as possible.
  - Transition in Place housing – a housing model where Veterans are provided time-limited transitional housing assistance with the lease converting to the Veteran as their permanent housing after a short period of assistance.

# GPD Update

- We have been focusing on data to demonstrate performance and need
- Right sizing program based on utilization
  - GPD currently has approximately 14, 500 beds
    - As of 1/19/15 we had 12,313 Veterans in GPD
    - Program vacancies may offer opportunities for Bridge Housing
- Encouraging programs to lower barriers to access

# What is Bridge Housing?

- Bridge Housing- Transitional housing used as a short-term stay when a Veteran has been offered and accepted a permanent housing intervention (e.g., SSVF, HUD-VASH, Housing Coalition/CoC) but, is not able to immediately enter the permanent housing.
- Generally provided for up to 90 days.
- Goals in the Individual Service Plan (ISP) should be very short-term with the focus on a move to permanent housing

# Components for Successful Bridge Housing

- ***The Veteran needs a permanent housing plan.***
  - *Though length of stay in Bridge Housing can and should be individually determined based on Veteran need, in general it is not expected to exceed 90 days.*
    - *There must be permanent housing option offered and accepted*
  - *Veterans may have or are in the process of obtaining a HUD-VASH voucher (but must be accepted by HUD-VASH case management)*
  - *Veterans may have permanent housing located but need assistance or extra time before they move in*

# Components for Successful Bridge Housing

- **Collaboration with other resources (SSVF, HUD-VASH, local Housing Coalitions/CoC).**
  - *As part of the permanent housing plan, veterans in Bridge Housing should have the resources available to help them move into permanent housing quickly, such as SSVF, HUD-VASH or some other resource.*

# Components for Successful Bridge Housing

- **Lower Barriers/ Short term Expectations.**
  - Given the short time-frame of Bridge Housing, there should be an expectation that veterans in this ‘track’ will not complete many some parts of the GPD program.
  - Goals in the Individual Service Plan should be very short-term with the focus on the move to permanent housing, rather than the completion of treatment goals.
  - Many veterans in this track may also have unresolved MH or substance abuse issues that might keep them from participating in a traditional GPD program.
    - Use of Low Demand approaches focusing on safety may be considered
    - Assisting Veterans access services as needed/requested by the Veteran (available of a menu of services)

# Developing Bridge Housing

- Encourage a conversation with your GPD programs and local community (i.e. Continuum of Care) to determine need and opportunity to develop bridge housing
  - Ultimately it is the GPD funded organization's decision to pursue
- Ensure components/processes previously noted are present
  - Does your community have coordinated assessment/entry process, and if so, how will GPD be integrated?
  - What role will GPD play in the short stay ISP?

# Developing Bridge Housing

- Examine any policies and procedures that need to be added/adapted as a result of adding this new service
- What type of training may need to be provided to staff?
  - As with any change, it will be important to have staff “buy-in”
- Communication with Veterans who are currently in the program about the program change

# Developing Bridge Housing

- Keep in mind the entire GPD project cannot be converted to bridge housing
  - Would be major departure from original grant application, can be an additional service offered by the grantee
  - Up to 50% of transitional housing beds at any given time can be used for bridge housing
  - The bridge housing beds can be flexible and do not have to be used for bridge housing only
- A written change of scope by the GPD funded should be submitted by the organization to the GPD National Program Office
  - The GPD Office must approve any change to the original application. Program changes include: services provided, staffing, admission and/or discharge criteria, etc.

# Final Thoughts

- Bridge Housing presents an opportunity for GPD programs to meet a local service gap
  - Conversations with local VA and CoC regarding need
  - If you have questions about the use of bridge housing in GPD contact the GPD National Program Office