HUD-VASH Update

Veterans Administration and HUD Public Housing Office with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA) and VI Community Partners
Overview of the HUD-VASH Program

HUD-VASH

• Partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

• Provides long-term case management supportive services, and permanent housing support for chronically homeless Veterans.
TARGET POPULATION

• Veteran must be homeless and meet VA health care eligibility as defined by law and regulation.

• The target population needs to include the chronically homeless Veteran, who is the most vulnerable and often has severe mental or physical health problems and/or Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

• Other Veterans who are homeless with diminished functional capacity and resultant need for case management are also eligible for the program.

• The HUD-VASH Case Manager assess each case on an individual basis, based on clinical judgment and resource availability.
Referrals

• Referral sources may include any of the following:
  ➢ The local Continuum of Care (CoC), community partners or other community based stakeholders.
  ➢ VA’s National Homeless Call Center: 1-877-4AID VET or 1-877-424-3838
  ➢ Veteran self-referral
  ➢ Other VA Homeless Programs, and
  ➢ Other VA or community medical facilities and programs, including Community Based Outpatient Clinics’ (CBOC) and Vet Centers.
VA Eligibility

- Eligible for VA Health Care
- Homeless per Hearth Act definition
- Identified need for case management to successfully live in community housing.
- Agreement to participate in case management services and to comply with rental responsibilities.
PARTICIPANT’S ELIGIBILITY

- Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) or Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) determines homeless status, screens participant for eligibility, and refers HUD-VASH eligible families to the participating Public Housing Authority (PHA). VIHA is our local PHA.

- PHA partners with VA in the screening and identification of those Veterans who do not qualify for their lifetime sex offender status and eligibility for income.
SCREENING AND EVALUATING

• The screening process determines a Veteran’s appropriateness and need for HUD-VASH

• Clinical determination for admission needs to be made as quickly and safely as possible

• Vulnerability Scales must be used to evaluate referrals
ADMISSION/ASSESSMENT/ HOUSING PLAN

• Admission is a clinical decision of HUD-VASH staff.
• Newly accepted Veteran is assigned to a HUD-VASH Case Manager
• The Case Manager must ensure that there is a homeless initial assessment completed through the HOMES system.
• Veterans are encouraged to work with the Case Manager to develop a housing plan with specific individualized goals.
CASE MANAGER ROLE

- HUD-VASH Case Manager partner with PHA and assisting the Veteran to obtain a voucher from PHA through:
  - Working with PHA to streamline the voucher application process;
  - Assisting the Veteran to obtain the needed documentation;
  - Supporting the Veteran during appointment(s) at PHA and other community resources
CASE MANAGER ROLE

• Obtain the Veteran’s signed release of Information indicating permission for information exchange with PHA and other community agencies.

• Coordinates with the local PHA to inspect and approve the dwelling and coordinate to sign the housing contract.

• Coordinate with local voluntary and community programs to assist the Veteran with the necessary steps for moving.
HOUSING PLACEMENT

• The Veteran is responsible for:
  o Finding a suitable apartment with the help of the HUD-VASH Case Manager.
  o Participate in the unit inspection
  o Attend the lease execution with landlord
  o Moving into the housing unit, assisted by the Case Manager.
  o Paying the security deposit and to pay a portion of the monthly rent directly to the landlord.
VIHA’s Role

Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA)

- Accept VA referred families
- Conduct intake process for families
- Verify income
- Determine PHA rent subsidy amount
- Inspect housing units
- Provide subsidy payments to landlords
- Annual income re-certification and unit re-inspection
VIHA’s Role

• VIHA will contact the VA case manager to discuss the reasons for any veteran’s potential termination.
• VIHA does not have any role in determining or verifying the veteran’s homeless status.
Income Verification

• PHAs must verify income of family in order to determine whether they meet income limitations of the program.
• HUD’s Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system verifies income information supplied by applicant.
• HUD has guidance on calculating income (earned income, benefit income).
• *Income limitation applies to the initial application to enter the program.
• VA staff can help veterans assemble original, third-party income documentation.
Unit Selection

- Standard Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) requirements regarding unit size, Housing Quality Standards Inspection (HQS) and payment standards apply to each veteran household.
- VA owned units on the grounds of a VA Medical Clinic are eligible housing for the VASH program.
- VIHA and VA case manager staff will assist the veteran in identifying available units.
- If a homeless veteran dies the voucher would remain with the remaining members of the tenant family.
Leasing a Unit

• Veterans must comply with **ALL** terms of lease, including portion of rent
• Rent charged must be “reasonable”, i.e., rent is comparable to similar non-luxury housing unit in a similar location with similar amenities
• Initial Lease **may** be less than 12 months
• Family can live on grounds of a VAMC in units owned by the VA
How Long does HUD-VASH program last?

As long as Veterans needs the program to last

• However:
  
  o Assistance must be terminated for failure to participate in case management, without good cause, as verified by the Veteran Administration Medical Center (VAMC).

  o If VAMC determines that case management is no longer needed, participant is not terminated from program. PHA may issue a regular voucher, if available.
NETWORKING

• HUD-VASH
  - VIHA
  - Supported Services for Veterans Families
  - Local private and public agencies
  - Vet Centers
  - Faith Based Organizations
  - Rehabilitation Centers
  - Continuum of Care
  - Social Services Agencies
  - Local Assistance Services
Progress Update

• VA Case Worker was assigned
• Identification of potential candidates from 3 Islands
• Coordination with VIHA’s HCVP Staff
• Currently there are 10 applicants in preparation for vouchers, with one discharge.
• Coordination with several organizations, such as:
  o Methodist Outreach and Training Center
  o Catholic Charities
  o St. Thomas and St. Croix VA clinics
  o Continuum of Care organizations
  o Department of Human Services
  o Bethlehem Shelter
Progress Update

- Participated in the Point-In-Time count on St. Croix
- Prepared orientation flyer for distribution to bring awareness to the program
- Program was presented to the Catholic Charities Permanent Supportive Program
- VIHA Section 8 program Office has implemented an expedited application process
## Participants’ profile

**N-10**

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**Average Age**

- **59**

**Average Income**

- **$810.00**
# Participants’ profile

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# Participants’ profile

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Local VASH Contacts

• VIHA: Akala Anthony, Housing Choice Voucher Program Director: 340-714-0174
• Veteran Administration: Marangeli Hendricks HUD-VASH Case Manager: 340-778-5553