



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

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SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL APPROVES FUNDING FOR THE 1,000 HOMELESS VETERANS INITIATIVE

New initiative of HOUSING FIRST-SAN DIEGO, SDHC's landmark three-year Homelessness Action Plan, includes the 'Housing Our Heroes' landlord outreach campaign

San Diego, CA – The San Diego City Council unanimously approved funding for The San Diego Housing Commission's (SDHC) [The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative](#), a collaborative effort with the City of San Diego to provide a path off the streets for up to a thousand homeless military Veterans in the city of San Diego within a year.

“We have an opportunity – and I think all of us would say an obligation – to make sure that the men and women who served our country get the dignity and respect they deserve,” said San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, speaking to the City Council before their vote today.

The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative will invest close to \$12.5 million in Federal, City and SDHC resources to provide housing opportunities for homeless Veterans. Today's [Council action](#) authorizes SDHC to direct up to \$4 million in City funds resulting from the ground lease of San Diego Square apartments in Downtown San Diego and up to \$3 million from SDHC's pending sale of Hotel Metro in the East Village neighborhood toward The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative.

“Getting 1,000 homeless Veterans off the street effectively ends Veteran homelessness in our region. ... Other places have done this already. We can do this too, and with the Council's affirmative vote today, we will get this done,” said Councilmember Todd Gloria, who also chairs the Regional Continuum of Care Council, which coordinates millions of dollars in Federal funds for homelessness programs in the San Diego region.

The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative, a new initiative of [HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO](#), SDHC's landmark three-year Homelessness Action Plan, uses the Housing First model – to provide homeless individuals with housing as quickly as possible, with supportive services as needed.

Mayor Faulconer first announced the landlord outreach component of the initiative, Housing Our Heroes campaign, during his State of the City Address on January 14, 2016. The landlord outreach campaign was kicked off [at a news conference on February 3](#).

A low rental vacancy rate (currently 2.8 percent in the City of San Diego, according to the San Diego County Apartment Association) and tight competition for affordable and market-rate apartments make it difficult for homeless Veterans to obtain rental housing – which makes landlord outreach essential, as noted by Councilman Scott Sherman, who offered his services to the landlord recruitment effort.

“Having been around the apartment world from the insurance side of things for 20-plus years, I know a lot of landlords out there, so if there's anything my office can do to help spread that word let me know. I'll be more than happy to,” he said.

Landlords seeking participate in The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative can call 619-578- 7768 or email HousingOurHeroes@sdhc.org for more information.

“Hopefully it's a tremendous success and we can move on from housing our Veterans to housing other homeless people in our community,” said Councilmember David Alvarez.

The four program components of The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative are:

1. **Landlord Outreach – “Housing Our Heroes”:** More than \$4.4 million to provide incentives for landlords who rent to homeless Veterans in the city of San Diego, such as: pre-inspections of apartments; incentive payments for each apartment a landlord rents to a homeless Veteran; security deposit and utility assistance; a Landlord Contingency Fund to cover expenses, such as repairs that exceed security deposits upon move-out or rent due to unforeseen vacancies; and dedicated housing specialists at SDHC to answer landlords’ questions, as well as to provide credit report and application assistance for homeless Veterans.
2. **Rapid Re-Housing Assistance:** More than \$1.9 million to provide rental assistance and up-front moving costs to homeless Veterans and their families who became homeless because of unexpected life experiences, such as a job loss, domestic violence or medical crisis.
3. **SDHC Federal VASH Vouchers:** More than \$2.6 million in rental housing vouchers from the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with supportive services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These housing vouchers assist chronically homeless Veterans with an honorable discharge and a disabling condition who need supportive services.
4. **SDHC Federal Housing Vouchers with Supportive Services:** More than \$3.4 million in HUD Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers awarded by SDHC through a competitive process to nonprofit or for-profit “sponsors” to provide rental assistance as well as supportive services. These Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers support case management and additional supportive services, to ensure 100 percent of participants are assessed and have the opportunity to be connected to appropriate services and rental housing.

“The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative combines housing opportunities with the supportive services that Veterans need to address the circumstances that contributed to their homelessness,” said SDHC Chairman of the Board Gary Gramling, an Army Veteran.

SDHC President and CEO Richard C. Gentry noted that The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative builds upon the success of HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO.

"This is not something we have come out of the blue with. It is in the context of what we've done before. We believe it is imminently achievable within the confines of this program," Gentry said.

Funding sources for The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative include: a grant from the City of San Diego resulting from the ground lease of San Diego Square; proceeds from the pending sale of Hotel Metro; HUD VASH Voucher Administration Fees; HUD Extraordinary Administrative

Fees for VASH Vouchers; HUD VASH rental assistance; and HUD Sponsor-Based Housing Voucher Rental Assistance.

Additional partners include former San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce; Whitney Benzian, Executive Director of the San Diego division of the California Apartment Association; Jessica Chamberlain, Chief of Social Work Service for the VA San Diego Healthcare System; Jeff Hickox, President of the San Diego County Apartment Association; and Phil Landis, President and CEO of Veterans Village of San Diego.

There are between 1,000 and 1,600 homeless Veterans in the City of San Diego, based on data extrapolated from a VA analysis of the annual Homeless Point-in-Time Counts, required by HUD, which were conducted January 23, 2015, and January 23, 2014, as well as internal VA data.

All participants in The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative must be referred to the program by SDHC's partner agencies or organizations that provide supportive services to homeless San Diegans.

To be included, homeless Veterans can add their names to the Coordinated Assessment database, which will assess their housing needs and vulnerability to help identify those homeless Veterans who are most in need.

Agencies that will be able to add homeless Veterans to this database in the Downtown area include:

- The Neil Good Day Center; and
- The Joan Kroc Center at Father Joe's Villages.

The 1,000 Homeless Veterans Initiative is a new initiative of **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO**, which was announced on November 12, 2014. **New initiatives for the second year** of **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO** were announced on December 3, 2015.

For more information, visit www.sdhc.org .

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