



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

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1,000 HOMELESS VETERANS OBTAIN RENTAL HOUSING THROUGH HOUSING OUR HEROES INITIATIVE

More than 430 individual landlords joined this initiative—part of the San Diego Housing Commission’s HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO homelessness action plan

SAN DIEGO, CA — The Housing Our Heroes initiative has reached its goal of helping 1,000 homeless Veterans in the City of San Diego secure rental housing through this collaborative effort to provide them with a path off the streets.

“We now have 1,000 Veterans off the streets, living in homes and getting the supportive services they need through the Housing Our Heroes program,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. “I want to thank the hundreds of landlords participating in the program for stepping up to help our most vulnerable Veterans. We still have a lot of work to do to reduce homelessness, but this shows what we can accomplish when we work together to help turn people’s lives around.”

The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) and City of San Diego are partners in the Housing Our Heroes initiative, which launched on March 1, 2016, and is part of [HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO](#), SDHC’s homelessness action plan.

“The Housing Our Heroes initiative achieved this goal by bringing together landlords, service providers, and government agencies with a common purpose. I look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Faulconer, the City Council and our partners to build on this success and provide housing opportunities for other homeless populations in the City,” SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry said.

Landlords are essential partners in Housing Our Heroes. More than 430 individual landlords joined the initiative. Approximately 45 percent of them are new to SDHC rental assistance programs.

“There are agencies that are out there, and they’re doing their part, but it’s only so much they can do if landlords (aren’t) a part of it,” said Jimmie Robinson, who along with his wife, Marlynn, became a Housing Our Heroes landlord. “Landlords have to open their minds and be part of this type of program.”

For homeless Veterans, Housing Our Heroes provided the help they needed to begin to rebuild their lives.

“I was in that program less than a month, and I got housed,” said Daniel, a 56-year-old U.S. Navy Veteran who was homeless and living at Veterans Village of San Diego for two years before Housing Our Heroes helped him move into an apartment in April. “This is a new start for me, so it feels really good to have my own place again.”

[Housing Our Heroes](#) consisted of four programs:

1. **Landlord Outreach:** This program provided incentives for landlords with rental properties in the City of San Diego with rental units located in ZIP Code 92037 and ZIP Codes that begin with 921, excluding 92118, and landlords in the City of National City with rental units located in ZIP Code 91950 who rent to homeless Veterans.
2. **Rapid Rehousing Assistance:** Funds were awarded to nonprofit or for-profit service providers through a competitive Notice of Funding Availability. The service providers make rental assistance payments directly to landlords (on average, four to six months, but may cover up to two years) and pay up-front move-in costs, such as security deposits and utility deposits.
3. **SDHC Federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers:** SDHC partners with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) San Diego Healthcare System to administer VASH vouchers, which provide rental assistance to honorably discharged Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness while also having a disability.
4. **SDHC Federal Housing Vouchers with Supportive Services:** SDHC awards Sponsor-Based Housing Vouchers to nonprofit or for-profit organizations, or “sponsors,” to provide rental assistance to homeless Veterans to help pay for their housing. The “sponsors” provide supportive services, such as mental health counseling; substance abuse treatment programs; and independent living skills classes

Additional partners in the Housing Our Heroes initiative included: the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego County Apartment Association, the California Apartment Association, the VA San Diego Healthcare System, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and many homeless service providers.

Housing Our Heroes directed up to \$12.5 million over two years in Federal, City and SDHC resources to provide housing opportunities for 1,000 homeless Veterans. On June 6, 2017, the San Diego City Council authorized SDHC to utilize \$4.4 million of these funds toward the expansion of the Landlord Outreach program to provide incentives to landlords who rent to anyone experiencing homelessness in the City of San Diego.

This funding will support the Landlord Incentives program of the next phase of [HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO](#), which launched on July 1, 2017, and will provide permanent housing opportunities for at least 3,000 homeless San Diegans over the next three fiscal years.

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Media Contact:
Scott Marshall
Vice President of Communications
San Diego Housing Commission
619-578-7138
scottm@sdhc.org