



VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Housing Developers Toolkit

A Guide for Creating Affordable Housing for Homeless Veterans

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Introduction

Across the country, communities recognize the need for more affordable housing for Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness. While many affordable housing development resources already exist, navigating local homeless response systems and understanding how to identify and work with Veteran-serving partners and stakeholders can be challenging.

Developed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Homeless Programs Office, this toolkit was created to guide housing developers in successfully creating affordable housing opportunities for homeless Veterans by working with VA teams, local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), and other key partners and stakeholders.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed around a roadmap that guides developers from concept to occupancy. While every housing development project is different, the information and lessons included throughout are intended to help developers identify key considerations, engage the right partners, and create affordable housing that successfully serves homeless Veterans.

This toolkit is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing affordable housing development resources. For additional resources around general affordable housing development topics such as financing, construction, and property management, please refer to **Appendix A: Additional Affordable Housing Resources for Developers**.

Rather than serving as a comprehensive manual, this toolkit focuses on considerations specific to homeless Veterans that can help developers create affordable housing that successfully supports Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including:

- Building effective partnerships among local housing and community organizations
- Working with local VA teams and other Veteran-serving partners
- Engaging with local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)
- Understanding housing vouchers and the potential role of the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program
- Designing affordable housing with the needs of homeless Veterans in mind
- Developing tenant selection and referral strategies that align with local homelessness goals and response systems
- Avoiding common mistakes that can delay housing projects or unintentionally limit access for homeless Veterans

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This toolkit focuses on smaller-scale development projects and is intended for housing developers looking to create affordable housing options for homeless Veterans in their communities.

While much of the information in this toolkit applies to general Veteran housing, the focus of this resource is affordable housing development designed to ultimately help communities prevent and end Veteran homelessness.

ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

This toolkit identifies five key elements that are critical for developing affordable housing for homeless Veterans:

1. Start by understanding the needs of Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness in your community.
2. Engage VA and other key partners and stakeholders early in the process.
3. Understand how financing decisions affect eligibility, referrals, and occupancy.
4. Plan for long-term operations and resident support from the beginning.
5. Develop housing that homeless Veterans can access, afford, and will choose to live in.







Section 1: Why Develop Housing for Homeless Veterans?

Every Veteran deserves a safe, stable place to call home. Yet for many Veterans experiencing homelessness, finding and maintaining affordable housing remains one of the greatest barriers to long-term stability and well-being.

According to the 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an estimated 32,495 Veterans experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2025,[1] representing a 56% decrease in Veteran homelessness since 2010.[2]

While communities across the country have made significant progress in reducing Veteran homelessness, housing shortages, rising costs, and limited affordable housing inventory continue to create barriers for homeless Veterans. As a result, expanding affordable housing opportunities remains a critical component for preventing and ending Veteran homelessness.

Consistent with this approach, resources and services offered through VA homeless programs are built around the understanding that stable housing helps Veterans access health care, employment, benefits, and other supportive services that support recovery and stability.[3]

WHY DEVELOP HOUSING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS?

Developers may choose to create affordable housing for Veterans for a variety of reasons, including:

- A commitment to support those who have served our country
- A desire to help address Veteran homelessness and housing instability
- An interest in partnering with local organizations focused on preventing and ending homelessness
- An opportunity to address a recognized need in their communities for more affordable housing

In many communities, affordable housing developments serving homeless Veterans benefit from collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and organizations that have experience in providing health care, employment services, benefits assistance, and other supportive services to Veterans experiencing homelessness. These partnerships are essential for strengthening long-term housing outcomes for Veteran residents.

HOUSING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS REQUIRES A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Housing developments designed for homeless Veterans often involve additional considerations that may not be relevant to other affordable housing projects. Successful housing developments for homeless Veterans often require:

- Strong partnerships with VA teams and Veteran-serving organizations
- Coordination among housing, case management, and other service providers
- Housing designs and amenities that are tailored to Veterans' needs and preferences
- Thoughtful and intentional planning around supportive services
- Referral processes that align with local homeless response systems
- Tenant selection policies that accommodate and welcome homeless Veterans

Understanding these considerations early can help developers create affordable housing that homeless Veterans can access, afford, and choose to live in.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What housing barriers are currently contributing to local Veteran homelessness in our community?
- Which Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness are most underserved in our community?
- What affordable housing options do Veterans want in our community?
- What housing gaps currently exist within local homeless response systems?
- What is driving our motivation to develop affordable housing for homeless Veterans?
- Who are the key partners, stakeholders, and organizations we will need to engage early in the process?



Section 2: Building the Right Partnerships

WHY PARTNERSHIPS MATTER

Successful affordable housing developments designed to support homeless Veterans are built through strong, collaborative partnerships.

One of the most common misconceptions among developers is that VA builds or finances affordable housing for Veterans as part of its mission to end Veteran homelessness. In reality, **VA Homeless Programs do not have capital funding to contribute to housing development**. Instead, affordable housing developments serving homeless Veterans are built by private developers, nonprofits, local housing and government agencies, and other community organizations.

Because developing affordable housing for Veterans involves coordination across multiple stakeholders and organizations with varying roles, responsibilities, and legal authorities, successful projects depend on early communication and strong partnerships.

Understanding which partners, stakeholders, and organizations should be involved and how they can contribute to the project can help developers avoid delays, strengthen referral pathways, and create housing that successfully serves homeless Veterans.

WHAT ARE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES?

Supportive services refer to programs and resources that help Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness secure and maintain stable housing. Supportive services may include:

- Case management
- Health care
- Dental care
- Mental health care
- Substance use treatment
- Benefits assistance
- Employment services
- Legal services

Supportive services are planned and managed separately from affordable housing developments. As a result, developers should work with service providers and partners to understand how these supportive services will be delivered to Veteran residents.

Successful Veteran housing developments are planned in coordination with organizations, including VA, that can connect Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness to the resources and services that directly support their recovery and help them remain stably housed.

KEY PARTNERS BEHIND SUCCESSFUL HOUSING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Affordable housing projects designed for homeless Veterans often involve a variety of partners and stakeholders working together to plan, finance, operate, and support the project.

Partner	Role	Significance
Developer	Plans, finances, and develops housing	Leads project planning, financing, and construction, and manages the overall development process
Property Management Team	Operates and manages the housing development after completion of the project	Supports leasing, occupancy, resident satisfaction and retention, and day-to-day operations of the property
Public Housing Agency (PHA)	Administers housing vouchers and oversees local rental assistance programs	Administers housing vouchers and helps to determine whether a housing development aligns with voucher-assisted housing requirements
VA Medical Center (VAMC)	Provides access to local VA teams, resources and services, and information related to the needs of local Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness	Provides and connects local Veterans to health care, benefits assistance, and other supportive services and resources
Continuum of Care (CoC) Program	Coordinates the local community response to preventing and addressing Veteran homelessness	Provides local information related to Veteran homelessness, homeless response programs and systems, and facilitates connections to key partners and stakeholders
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	Offers local homeless prevention and rapid-rehousing services	Connects local homeless Veterans to housing and supportive services; can serve as referral partners
Community and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)	Provides local resources and services that support homeless Veterans	Provides direct support and resources or helps connect Veterans to health care, benefits assistance, and other supportive services



DEVELOPERS

As the developer, you are responsible for leading and managing the overall planning and development process, including financing, construction, and operations. Common responsibilities include:

- Site selection
- Securing project financing
- Partnership development
- Community engagement
- Construction oversight
- Ensuring regulatory and funding compliance

Because affordable housing developments serving homeless Veterans depend heavily on partnerships, successful developers should engage partners long before construction begins on a project.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Property management teams play a critical role in the success of Veteran housing. Common responsibilities include:

- Leasing and occupancy
- Rent collection
- Building operations
- Maintenance
- Resident relations
- Enforcement of lease rules and requirements

A property management team that understands homelessness, trauma, housing stability, and the important role that supportive services play in helping Veteran residents achieve stability is crucial.



PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES

Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) provide rental assistance and administer housing vouchers, including Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) and Project-Based Vouchers (PBV). In partnership with VA, PHAs are also responsible for administering HUD-VASH vouchers to eligible Veterans. PHAs also play an important role in local affordable housing initiatives, including planning, inspection, and compliance. Developers should engage PHAs early to discuss:

- Voucher availability
- Local housing priorities
- Program requirements
- Housing quality standards and inspections

Tip for Developers:
Do not assume that HUD-VASH vouchers will automatically be available because a housing development is designed to serve homeless Veterans. Local voucher availability and eligibility requirements should be discussed early with your local PHA and VA teams.

VA MEDICAL CENTERS

Local VA team members from the nearest VA Medical Center (VAMC) will likely serve as the primary points of contact for VA collaboration on Veteran housing projects. Depending on the project, VA partners may:

- Help developers understand local homeless Veteran populations and affordable housing needs
- Participate in initial planning discussions
- Coordinate case management and housing services through relevant VA programs
- Assist with linkages to local PHAs and assessment of available HUD-VASH resources
- Connect Veteran residents with housing-related services, health care, benefits, and other supportive services after move-in

Early conversations with the local VAMC can help developers better understand local homeless Veteran housing needs, available resources, and referral considerations before major project decisions have been finalized.

Note that VA's role is to support Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness through housing-related and other supportive services. **VA Homeless Programs do not have capital funding to contribute to housing development.**

CONTINUUMS OF CARE

Continuums of Care (CoCs) are local planning bodies that coordinate the local response to homelessness and often maintain valuable data regarding local housing needs and homeless trends.[2] CoCs can help developers:

- Understand local homeless trends and data
- Identify gaps in local homeless response programs and systems
- Align housing projects with local housing needs and priorities
- Identify and connect with relevant partners and stakeholders

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides grants to community-based organizations that help Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness obtain and maintain housing. Services may include:

- Housing navigation
- Case management
- Financial assistance
- Landlord engagement
- Rapid rehousing support



VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Many successful Veteran housing projects rely on partnerships that offer experience and knowledge beyond local housing programs and health care systems. Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and community partners that serve local Veteran populations can provide insights around the needs of local homeless Veterans as well as existing service gaps. Potential partners include:

- Food banks
- Behavioral health providers
- Workforce development programs
- Faith-based organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Local government agencies

These organizations often provide resources and services that help Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness remain stably housed and connected to their communities.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Have we confirmed that our proposed housing concept aligns with the needs of homeless Veterans in our community?
- Have we identified local organizations that can help us understand Veteran homelessness and connect future residents to supportive services?
- Have we identified points of contact we can engage at the local VA Medical Center?
- If we are hoping to utilize Housing Choice Vouchers, including HUD-VASH vouchers, have we connected with the local PHA and VA team?

Successfully building affordable housing for homeless Veterans requires coordination between developers, property management teams, PHAs, VA teams, and community organizations. Strong partnerships help ensure that housing not only gets built but is accessible to homeless Veterans and supported by the referrals, services, and resources needed to promote long-term housing stability.

Section 3: Understanding HUD-VASH and Project-Based Vouchers



Many developers interested in helping address Veteran homelessness are likely already familiar with HUD-VASH. However, understanding how the program works, how vouchers are administered, and how HUD-VASH teams will coordinate with your housing development is essential.

WHAT IS HUD-VASH?

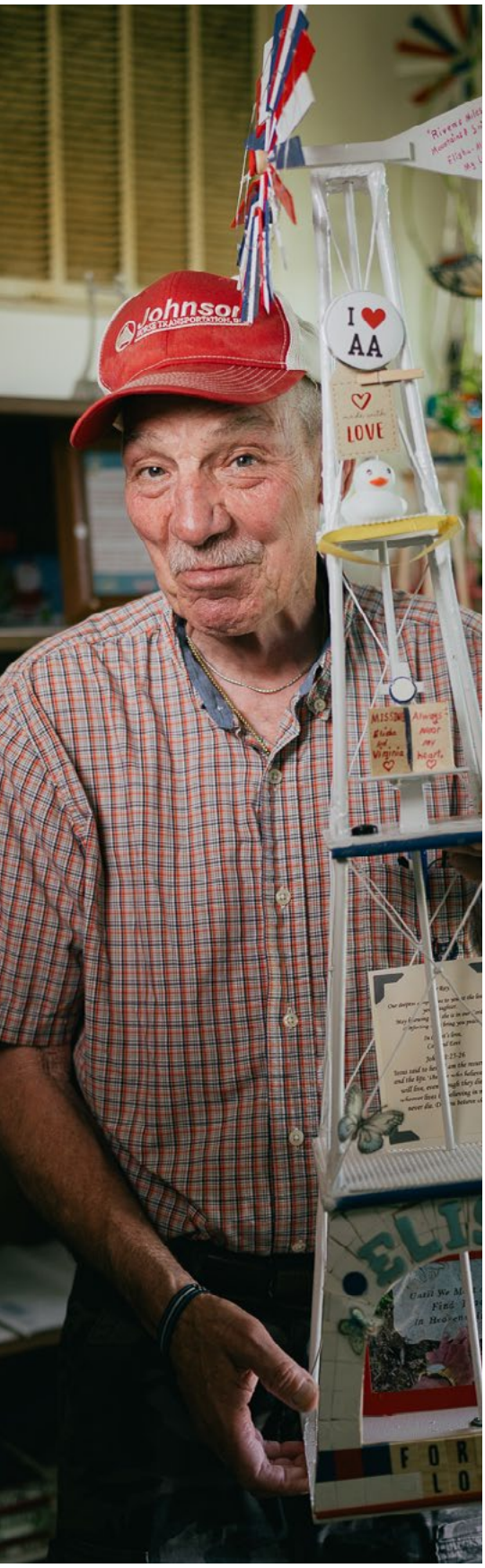
The Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines rental assistance provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with case management and supportive services provided by VA. The program is designed to help Veterans experiencing homelessness obtain and maintain permanent housing.[4]

Through HUD-VASH, eligible Veterans experiencing homelessness receive rental assistance while also gaining access to case management and other supportive services including health care, benefits assistance, employment resources, and legal services.[5]

HOW HUD-VASH WORKS

HUD-VASH is a partnership between HUD, VA, and local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs). Each organization plays a distinct role in helping Veterans secure and maintain housing.

VA provides case management and supportive services to Veterans enrolled in HUD-VASH and identifies Veterans who may be eligible for the program. VA screens potential participants, provides supportive services, and refers eligible Veterans to local PHAs for consideration and voucher issuance.[5]



Services provided through VA may include:

- Housing stability support
- Case management
- Health care coordination
- Mental health services
- Substance use treatment
- Benefits assistance
- Connection to community resources

VA's role is to help Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness obtain and maintain housing stability through a combination of case management and supportive services.

PHAs administer the rental assistance component of the HUD-VASH program through vouchers. Responsibilities include:

- Determining whether Veterans referred by VA meet HUD program requirements
- Issuing HUD-VASH vouchers to eligible Veterans
- Determining housing assistance payments
- Conducting housing inspections
- Monitoring program compliance
- Administering project-based vouchers when applicable

Because PHAs administer HUD-VASH vouchers and make decisions regarding voucher-assisted housing opportunities, they are a critical partner for any developer interested in serving homeless Veterans through voucher-assisted housing.

TENANT-BASED AND PROJECT-BASED VOUCHERS

Most Veterans participating in HUD-VASH receive tenant-based vouchers, which remain with the Veteran if they move to a different eligible housing unit.

With Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs), rental assistance is attached to specific housing units rather than the individual Veteran. When a Veteran resident moves out, the rental assistance remains associated with the unit and becomes available for the next eligible Veteran. PBV availability varies by location and is determined by PHA processes and requirements.

WHAT DEVELOPERS SHOULD KNOW BEFORE COORDINATING WITH HUD-VASH

HUD-VASH can be an important consideration for affordable housing developments designed to serve homeless Veterans. However, developers should avoid assuming that HUD-VASH vouchers will automatically be available. Several factors may determine whether HUD-VASH vouchers can be utilized, including:

- Local PHA policies
- Voucher availability
- Program requirements
- Project eligibility
- Local housing and homeless priorities

Early conversations with both local PHA and VA teams will help determine whether HUD-VASH may be an appropriate consideration for a proposed development and whether the use of HUD-VASH vouchers will be supported.

Tip for Developers:
Participation in HUD-VASH and PBV programs is subject to HUD requirements and local PHA policies. Developers should discuss both opportunities and limitations with local VA and PHA teams before incorporating HUD-VASH into their project plans.



VETERAN ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Developers should avoid assuming that all homeless Veterans will qualify for an affordable housing development, even if it is designed with this population in mind. Financing requirements, income restrictions, screening criteria, and program rules can all affect who is eligible for housing and whether referrals can be made.

A community may have a significant need for housing for homeless Veterans, but challenges can still arise if project requirements do not align with the needs of Veterans being referred through local homeless programs and response systems.

If HUD-VASH vouchers are being considered, discussions with local VA and PHA contacts should take place early to ensure that project assumptions and plans align with local homeless Veteran housing needs and HUD-VASH program requirements.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Are HUD-VASH vouchers currently being utilized locally?
- Are PBVs currently being used to support housing for homeless Veterans?
- How are homeless Veterans currently being referred to housing?
- What eligibility requirements could affect referrals?

RESOURCE

- HUD-VASH Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook: This guidebook provides detailed information around the structure and operations of the HUD-VASH program, including Veteran eligibility, referrals, voucher administration, and the roles of VA and local PHAs.



Section 4: Designing for Stability, Dignity, and Comfort

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT NEEDS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

Creating affordable housing for homeless Veterans is about more than providing a roof over someone's head. The most successful housing projects are designed with the goal of helping Veterans feel safe, welcomed, connected, and able to remain stably housed.

Veterans experiencing homelessness are not a single population. Different Veterans may face different barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing and may benefit from different design features, amenities, and service partnerships.

Developers should work with local VA teams, Continuums of Care (CoCs), and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to understand the specific needs of homeless Veterans in their communities.

Veteran Population	Considerations for Housing Design
Veterans Exiting Homelessness	Many Veterans transitioning out of homelessness are regaining stability after extended periods of housing insecurity. Housing that is welcoming, easy to navigate, and connected to supportive services can help support formerly homeless Veterans in rebuilding their lives.
Veterans with Disabilities	Some Veterans may have mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. Housing units with accessibility features and barrier-free common areas can support long-term independence and housing stability.
Veterans with Behavioral Health Needs	Veterans living with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or other behavioral health conditions may benefit from predictable environments, easy access to supportive services, and housing located near treatment and recovery resources.
Veterans with Chronic Health Conditions	Veterans managing chronic health conditions may require access to local VA Medical Centers (VAMCs), health care providers, hospitals, and pharmacies. Site selection and accessibility considerations can play an important role in supporting Veterans' health needs.
Older Veterans	Older Veterans may face age-related mobility challenges, health conditions, social isolation, or fixed incomes. Accessible design, access to public transportation, and close proximity to health care services are particularly important considerations.
Veteran Families Experiencing Housing Instability	Veteran families may require larger units, family-friendly common spaces, as well as proximity to schools, childcare, and other community amenities that support families.

Veteran Population	Considerations for Housing Design
Veterans with Pets	Pets provide companionship, emotional support, and stability for many Veterans. Pet-friendly policies, nearby outdoor areas, and clear pet-related expectations can help reduce barriers to housing for Veterans with pets.
Justice-Involved Veterans	Veterans with current or prior involvement with the criminal justice system may encounter barriers to housing and employment. Clear tenant selection policies, access to supportive services, and co-ordination with community partners can help support successful tenancy.

TIP FOR DEVELOPERS:

Do not assume that all homeless Veterans have the same needs or housing preferences. Engaging Veterans with lived experiences of homelessness can provide valuable insights into the design features, amenities, and services that are most likely to support recovery and long-term housing stability.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Have Veterans with lived experiences of homelessness been consulted as part of the planning and design process?
- What design features or amenities could help Veteran residents achieve and maintain stability over time?
- Are there barriers that could limit access for Veterans with pets, disabilities, health conditions, families, or other populations?
- Are there examples of other local housing developments that have successfully served homeless Veterans? If so, what takeaways and lessons can be learned from those projects?







BALANCING PRIVACY AND COMMUNITY

Many Veterans value having a place of their own while also benefitting from opportunities to build community. Some Veterans may require quiet spaces for work, school, telehealth appointments, or personal business. Depending on the project, developers may want to create opportunities for both community engagement as well as individual privacy.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED SPACES

- Shared outdoor spaces
- Community gathering areas
- Multipurpose rooms
- Resident events and programming spaces
- Gardens or recreational areas



INDIVIDUAL AND PROFESSIONAL SPACES

- Quiet workspaces with:
  - Computer and internet access
  - Printers and charging stations
- Private meeting or interview rooms

Not every affordable housing development will be able to include these features, but where possible, thoughtfully designed individual and community-use spaces can support social connection and overall resident well-being.

CONSIDER SAFETY AND COMFORT

Safety and security are important considerations for any housing development but are particularly important for Veterans who may have experienced homelessness, trauma, or housing instability. Developers should carefully consider:

- Lighting and visibility in common areas
- Clear wayfinding
- Noise levels
- Presence of property management team members
- Emergency response procedures

PLAN FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Veterans represent a diverse population that includes older Veterans and individuals living with physical or behavioral health challenges. Projects should consider:

- Accessible unit design
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements
- Universal design principles
- Accommodations for hearing and vision impairments
- Visibility features
- Mobility-friendly layouts
- Space and storage for mobility devices
- Elevator access when appropriate
- Storage and considerations for medical equipment

CONSIDER LOCATION

In addition to amenities and features within housing units and the development, also consider proximity to the following as part of the site selection process:

- VA facilities
- Health care services
- Behavioral health and recovery services
- Grocery stores
- Community and social services
- Workforce development and employment resources
- Recreation and green spaces
- Public transportation

These factors can not only affect residents' quality of life but also support Veterans in achieving long-term housing stability.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Can residents access essential services from the housing site without a personal vehicle (i.e., proximity to a bus stop, metro or subway)?
- How far is the nearest VA facility or community-based service provider?
- Does the location of the housing support long-term community integration?

Housing that reflects the needs and experiences of homeless Veterans can help reduce barriers to housing, improve resident satisfaction, and support long-term housing stability. Successful projects consider not only what is built, but how the built environment supports Veterans' recovery and long-term success.

Section 5: The Roadmap for Developing Affordable Housing for Homeless Veterans

This section provides a high-level roadmap to help guide developers in planning and executing their affordable housing project. It is not intended to replace existing affordable housing development resources but rather to highlight the Veteran-specific considerations that should be addressed throughout the process.

PHASE 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED

Successful Veteran housing developments begin with a clearly defined population and housing need rather than a building concept or development site.

As a first step, take the time to understand which populations of Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness you hope to serve and what housing challenges they face in your community. Different groups of homeless Veterans face different barriers to securing and maintaining housing and may require different housing solutions as identified in **Section 4: Designing for Stability, Dignity, and Comfort**.

Taking the time to understand local needs early helps ensure that the proposed project will be responsive to community demand and aligned with local efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness. Consider:

- Which homeless Veteran populations are we trying to serve?
- What are Veterans experiencing homelessness in our community telling us they need?
- What housing options already exist for homeless Veterans in our community?
- What housing gaps exist across local efforts to address Veteran homelessness?
- How will this project contribute to preventing or ending Veteran homelessness in our community?
- How are homeless Veterans currently accessing housing and supportive services?
- Are there populations of homeless Veterans that are particularly underserved or experiencing unique barriers to housing?

Developers can gather information from a variety of sources, including:

- Veterans with lived experience of homelessness
- VA Medical Centers (VAMCs)
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providers
- Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)
- Continuums of Care (CoCs)
- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)

Sources of data and information may include:

- Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data
- Local VA teams
- CoC assessments
- PHA data and waitlist information
- Feedback from Veterans and VSOs

Tip for Developers:
Start with the housing need, not the housing project. Successful housing development projects can clearly identify the Veteran populations they intend to serve, the barriers those Veterans face, and how the project will contribute to local efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness.

RESOURCES

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Resources: The PIT Count provides annual estimates of Veteran homelessness and identifies data trends. This data can help developers understand local and national trends around Veteran homelessness.
- HUD Exchange: Continuum of Care (CoC) Program: The CoC program can help developers identify and connect with their local CoC to better understand how homeless services are coordinated within their local communities.

PHASE 2: IDENTIFY KEY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Once a housing need has been identified, the next step is to begin building the relationships that will help shape the project. As outlined in **Section 2: Building the Right Partnerships**, successful housing developments serving homeless Veterans are built through partnerships.

This phase focuses on engaging partners early to validate the need, collect information about local homeless programs and response systems, test project assumptions, and identify opportunities and challenges before significant time and resources have been invested. Different partners can inform different aspects of the project:

- VA and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) can help validate the needs of homeless Veterans in the community.
- Continuums of Care (CoCs) can help developers understand local homeless trends, response systems, referral pathways, and existing housing gaps.
- Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) can help developers understand local housing priorities and voucher resources.
- Property management teams can provide input on leasing, occupancy, and operational considerations.
- Local government agencies can identify zoning, land use, or community planning requirements.

PARTNERS TO ENGAGE EARLY

The following partners and stakeholders can help inform the direction of a proposed project.

Stakeholder	How They Can Help
VA Medical Centers (VAMCs)	Provide insights around local homeless Veteran populations, housing needs, and available VA homeless programs and services. Share information about local referral pathways, housing barriers experienced by homeless Veterans, and HUD-VASH program requirements and considerations.
Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)	Provide information about voucher availability, Project-Based Voucher (PBV) opportunities, local housing priorities, and housing assistance resources available to support homeless Veterans.
Continuums of Care (CoCs)	Share local homeless data, homeless response programs and systems, and information around existing needs among local homeless Veterans.
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	Share information about local housing barriers, referral pathways, and homeless prevention and rapid rehousing resources available to Veterans.
Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)	Provide perspective around the needs of local homeless Veterans, service gaps, and community resources.
Veterans	Help ensure the project reflects the preferences and needs of homeless Veterans and Veterans who have successfully exited homelessness based on lived experiences.

PARTNERS TO INVOLVE THROUGHOUT DEVELOPMENT

Some partners may continue to provide valuable input and play a role throughout planning, construction, leasing, and operating of the housing development. These may include:

- VA team members
- Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)
- Property management partners
- Service providers
- Local government agencies
- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)

Developers should begin thinking about these long-term relationships early, particularly if partners may be involved in providing referrals, resident services, or operational support. These early conversations can help address questions such as:

- What housing resources already exist?
- Is the proposed housing concept aligned with the needs of local homeless Veterans?
- Are there groups of homeless Veterans in the community that face unique barriers to securing or maintaining housing?
- What referral pathways already exist for Veterans experiencing homelessness?
- What resources and services may be needed by future Veteran residents?
- How does this project fit in among local efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness?

Referral pathways are the processes through which eligible Veterans are referred and connected to housing opportunities. Understanding existing referral pathways can help developers better assess demand for affordable housing and determine future leasing strategies.

Investing time in relationship-building early helps prevent costly changes later while also strengthening the partnerships needed to continue supporting Veteran residents after move-in.

As partnerships develop, document important decisions and assumptions. While formal agreements with partners may not be necessary in this phase, maintaining clear records can help preserve continuity and avoid confusion as the project evolves.

Tip for Developers:
Engage partners before major decisions are made. Adjusting a project concept after site selection, financing applications, and design decisions have already been finalized is more difficult than addressing concerns during the planning phase.

RESOURCES

- Find your local VA Medical Center (VAMC): Use VA's facility locator to identify the nearest VA Medical Center serving Veterans in your communities.
- Find your local Public Housing Agency (PHA): Use the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) PHA locator to identify the local PHA responsible for administering vouchers and other housing resources in your communities.
- Find your local Continuum of Care (CoC): Locate the CoC responsible for coordinating homeless response services and housing resources in your communities.

PHASE 3: ASSESS PROJECT FEASIBILITY

Once the housing need has been identified and key partners and stakeholders have been engaged, the next phase involves determining whether the proposed project can realistically move forward.

During this phase, developers will evaluate whether the planned housing development can succeed from financial, operational, regulatory, and community standpoints. Feasibility assessments often include site assessments, environmental reviews, and market studies.

While the results of the analysis may confirm that the original project concept is viable, it may also indicate that significant adjustments are needed.

AREAS TO EVALUATE

Area	Considerations	Why It Matters
Community Demand and Referral Sources	• Housing needs among homeless Veterans in the community • Demand identified through local Continuums of Care (CoCs) and other partners • Existing referral partners and referral pathways • Public Housing Agency (PHA) or housing provider waitlists • Utilization of HUD-VASH vouchers and other housing resources	A community may have a significant number of homeless Veterans, but occupancy challenges can still occur if referral assumptions do not align with local eligibility requirements, available vouchers, or referral pathways.
Alignment with Local Homeless Programs and Systems	• VA homeless programs and resources • HUD-VASH program requirements • Priorities identified through local Continuums of Care (CoCs)	Projects are more likely to succeed when they align with existing efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness and can leverage existing referral processes.
Site Suitability and Location	• Acquisition costs • Access to VA facilities • Access to supportive services such as health care • Access to behavioral health and recovery services • Proximity to grocery stores and other essential services • Proximity to public transportation • Nearby employment opportunities • Neighborhood characteristics • Accessibility	For homeless Veterans, location can determine residents' ability to access health care, employment opportunities, supportive services, and other local resources that support housing stability.
Zoning and Regulatory Requirements	• Zoning restrictions • Parking restrictions • Accessibility standards • Environmental reviews	Understanding zoning and regulatory requirements early can help avoid costly delays and redesign efforts later in the development process.

Area	Considerations	Why It Matters
Development and Operating Costs	• Construction or rehabilitation costs • Insurance • Utilities • Maintenance • Administrative costs	Feasibility and long-term operational sustainability depend on both the affordability of the development and future costs related to maintaining and operating the property.
Property Management Experience and Capacity	• Experience serving homeless Veterans • Staffing levels • Leasing procedures • Coordination with supportive service providers	Property management teams play an important role in supporting housing stability, maintaining occupancy, and coordinating with referral and service providers.
Supportive Services	• Alignment with the needs of homeless Veterans • Availability and accessibility of VA and community resources and services	Identifying how Veterans will access supportive services and what resources they need helps promote housing stability and long-term success.
Community Support and Buy-In	• Community and stakeholder support • Alignment with local housing goals • Alignment with local efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness	Early engagements can build community support, identify concerns, and reduce potential barriers during later phases of development.

Assessing feasibility requires considering all of these factors. This stage is often where developers determine whether their project concept can move forward or whether adjustments are needed. In some cases, the analysis may confirm the feasibility of the original concept. In other cases, it may lead to significant changes in project size, location, financing strategy, or operational model.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Is the proposed housing type appropriate for the homeless Veteran populations the project is designed to support?
- How will Veterans access supportive services after they move in?
- Does the location for the development offer access to public transportation, VA services, health care, employment opportunities, and other supportive services?
- Is the project concept compatible with local regulations?
- Have long-term operating costs been identified and evaluated?
- Can the project remain financially and operationally sustainable in the long-term?

Tip for Developers:

A feasibility analysis should not focus on proving that a project can move forward. Rather, it should look to identify the conditions that must be met in order for the project to succeed. Successful projects often require multiple refinements before moving into financing and development.

PHASE 4: EXPLORE FINANCING AND FUNDING OPTIONS

Many affordable housing developments rely on multiple financing sources. Depending on the project, financing options may include:

- Conventional financing
- State and local housing programs
- Federal housing resources
- Tax credit programs
- Philanthropic funding

While financing makes a project possible, funding requirements can also influence who is eligible to live in the completed housing. Income restrictions, occupancy requirements, and other rules may affect referrals, leasing, and long-term operations. For this reason, financing decisions should be made in coordination with housing and Veteran-serving partners.

ALIGNING FINANCING REQUIREMENTS WITH HOUSING GOALS

As financing options are explored, revisit the housing need identified in **Phase 1: Identify the Need.**

An affordable housing project that is financially feasible may still encounter occupancy challenges if eligibility requirements do not align with the homeless Veterans the development is designed to serve. Consider:

- Will Veterans exiting homelessness be eligible?
- Will Veterans receiving disability compensation, pensions, or other fixed incomes qualify?
- Will the Veterans being referred through local homeless response systems and referral partners qualify for the housing?
- Could financing requirements unintentionally create barriers for eligible Veterans?

Developers should pay attention to and consider how financing decisions may affect:

- Resident eligibility
- Tenant selection policies and processes
- Referrals and occupancy
- Compliance requirements
- Long-term operations

VALIDATE ASSUMPTIONS WITH PARTNERS

Developers are encouraged to review proposed eligibility requirements with:

- VA teams
- Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)
- Referral partners
- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)
- Property management teams

These discussions can help identify potential conflicts between financing requirements and referral processes while there is still time to adjust the project.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: HUD-VASH AND VOUCHER-ASSISTED HOUSING

If a project is expected to serve Veterans using HUD-VASH or other voucher programs, developers should avoid assuming voucher availability during early planning. Voucher issuance and availability and project eligibility should be discussed directly with local VA and PHA teams.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Will Veterans referred through local homelessness programs and response systems qualify for housing?
- Have housing and Veteran-serving partners reviewed the proposed eligibility assumptions?
- Could funding requirements create unintended barriers for the homeless Veteran populations the development is designed to serve?

Tip for Developers:

Financing decisions can influence tenant eligibility. Review funding requirements with VA and PHA teams as well as other Veteran-serving partners to ensure the project remains aligned with its mission of supporting homeless Veterans.

RESOURCES

VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content on the website below.

- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) – Affordable Housing Finance Guide: This guide provides financing information and identifies possible funding sources for developers looking to build and operate affordable housing for homeless Veterans.

PHASE 5: DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS PLANNING

As the project begins to take shape, developers should consider not only what is being built, but how it will be managed and operated once Veteran residents move in. For affordable housing developments serving homeless Veterans, operational planning is particularly important because successful outcomes often depend on coordination between property management, referral partners, VA teams, and service providers.

DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES EARLY

Before occupancy begins, partners involved in the project should have a shared understanding of:

- Who will coordinate referrals
- Who will communicate with prospective residents
- Who will respond to resident concerns
- Who will coordinate with supportive services
- Who will serve as primary points of contact for partner organizations
- How partners will share information and communicate

As project plans become more defined, document key discussions and planned responsibilities, processes, and procedures. Formal agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) can help preserve continuity throughout long development timelines and reduce confusion if staffing changes occur across partner organizations.

Tip for Developers:
Put important commitments in writing and maintain records throughout the development process. Staff turnover and long development timelines can create challenges if agreements and assumptions are not documented throughout the project lifecycle.

PLAN FOR REFERRALS AND OCCUPANCY

Developers should understand how homeless Veterans are currently being referred to available housing within their communities and whether those existing referral pathways align with project eligibility requirements. In many communities, referrals may come from a combination of VA programs, SSVF providers, Continuums of Care (CoCs), and other local homeless response programs and systems.

Developers should work with partners to understand:

- Which organizations will provide referrals
- How referral partners will remain informed throughout operations
- How vacancies will be communicated to partners
- How eligibility and referral questions will be addressed

Establishing a referral process early can help support smoother leasing and reduce occupancy challenges once construction of the housing development is complete.

Tip for Developers:
Understanding existing referral processes and establishing internal procedures for managing referrals and related communications early in the development process can help support smoother leasing and reduce occupancy challenges.

Developers and partners should also consider how future residents will be prepared for successful tenancy. Some Veteran residents may require additional support understanding lease requirements, budgeting for housing expenses, and transitioning into stable housing. Coordinating with Veteran-serving partners early can help support long-term housing stability and ensure smooth transitions and move-in.

INCORPORATE VETERAN PERSPECTIVES

Housing developed for homeless Veterans should be informed by Veterans, particularly those with lived experiences of homelessness. Input from Veterans can help developers better understand:

- Housing preferences
- Desired amenities
- Accessibility needs
- Safety and security considerations
- Supportive services needed

Potential methods for collecting input from Veterans may include:

- Conversations with Veterans who have experienced homelessness or housing instability
- Focus groups and listening sessions
- Feedback from VA and Continuums of Care (CoCs)
- Feedback from Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and other Veteran-serving partners

Tip for Developers:
If possible, seek input from Veterans during the planning process. Veteran focus groups, listening sessions, or feedback from Veteran-serving organizations can provide valuable insights regarding housing preferences and amenities and services that should be included.

PLAN FOR LONG-TERM HOUSING STABILITY

As part of operational planning, also consider:

- How resident feedback will be collected
- How housing stability will be monitored
- How challenges will be addressed when they arise
- How success will be measured over time
- How partnerships will be maintained after occupancy begins
- How turnover and vacancies will be managed

Successful Veteran housing projects recognize that the work to support Veteran residents and maintain strong relationships among partners continues long after a housing development opens.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Have Veterans with lived experience of homelessness been involved in planning discussions?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined among partners?
- How will referrals, occupancy, and vacancies be managed?
- Do property management teams understand the project's mission?

PHASE 6: PROPERTY PREPARATION AND CONSTRUCTION

During this phase, the project transitions from planning to implementation. While construction and rehabilitation activities move forward, developers should continue preparing for the occupancy of Veteran tenants as well as the services that will support long-term housing stability.

Activities may include:

- New construction
- Property rehabilitation
- Site preparation
- Permitting and inspections
- Leasing preparation
- Operational planning

CONTINUE PREPARING FOR OCCUPANCY

Although construction is often the most visible phase of a project, developers should continue preparing for occupancy and operations during this phase.

Construction timelines can shift due to permitting delays, financing, supply chain issues, weather, or other unexpected factors. Maintaining regular communication with key partners and stakeholders can help ensure project plans and progress continue to remain aligned.
As construction begins, consider:

- Continuing to meet with key partners and stakeholders regularly
- Sharing project updates with partners
- Reconfirming assumptions related to referrals and occupancy
- Reviewing plans for supportive services and resident onboarding
- Preparing property management staff

REVISIT THE ORIGINAL PLAN

Throughout the construction process, regularly revisit the original housing plan and related goals and consider:

- Does the project still reflect the needs of the homeless Veteran populations it was designed to serve?
- Have accessibility considerations and Veteran-informed design features been incorporated into the design?
- Have opportunities for private and community-building spaces been incorporated into the design?
- Are housing, referral, and operational plans still aligned with the project's goals?

The construction phase often represents the last opportunity to address operational and design considerations before residents begin moving in.

PREPARE PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Even while construction is underway, partners should have a clear understanding of expected timelines and their future roles. Consider:

- Are referral partners aware of anticipated occupancy dates?
- Are service providers prepared for when Veteran residents move in?
- Do property management teams understand referral and leasing expectations?

Housing projects can experience avoidable delays when partners are not prepared for or aligned on occupancy timelines.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Have construction timelines been communicated to key partners and stakeholders?
- Are referral and occupancy assumptions still realistic?
- Are property management teams prepared for leasing and resident move-in?

PHASE 7: PREPARE FOR LEASING AND OCCUPANCY

Planning for leasing should begin well before construction of a housing development is complete. Developers should ensure that tenant selection criteria, referral pathways, and occupancy expectations align with the needs of the homeless Veteran populations the project was designed to serve.

PREPARING FOR LEASING

As occupancy approaches, developers and partners should confirm that referral, leasing, and service coordination processes are ready to support future Veteran residents.

Key considerations include:

- Property management readiness
- Pre-inspection and inspection timelines
- Referral coordination
- Service coordination
- Tenant selection processes
- Resident onboarding

Housing developments serving homeless Veterans often rely on referrals from homeless programs and partners such as VA, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providers, Continuums of Care (CoCs), and other local organizations. Understanding existing referral processes and establishing clear internal procedures before units become available can help reduce confusion and support a smoother leasing process.

Occupancy challenges can occur when:

- Referral assumptions are unrealistic
- Income requirements are misunderstood
- Tenant screening criteria are overly restrictive
- Referral partners do not have clear understanding of available units or eligibility requirements
- Stakeholders have different expectations regarding eligibility

Projects intended to serve homeless Veterans should ensure that operating policies and tenant selection practices are aligned with the needs of the population being served while adhering to applicable funding and program requirements. Review by housing and Veteran-serving partners can help identify possible issues before the leasing process begins.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Is the referral process clearly defined?
- Are occupancy projections consistent with expected referrals?
- Do referral partners understand the eligibility requirements for available units?
- Are supportive services ready to begin supporting Veteran residents once they move in?
- Does property management understand the project's Veteran-serving mission?

TENANT SELECTION AND ELIGIBILITY

Tenant selection policies should support both compliance requirements and the project's mission of serving homeless Veterans.

Collaborative planning can help ensure that tenant selection processes are:

- Operationally feasible
- Aligned with referral pathways
- Consistent with funding requirements
- Accessible to the homeless Veteran populations the development is designed to serve

Stakeholders who may provide valuable input include:

- VA teams
- Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)
- Property management teams
- Legal and compliance staff

A community may have a significant number of homeless Veterans in need of housing, but projects may still encounter occupancy challenges when tenant selection policies, income restrictions, screening criteria, or referral processes are not aligned.

Reviewing tenant selection plans before leasing begins can help identify potential barriers and improve access for eligible Veterans.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Does the tenant selection plan reflect the needs of the homeless Veteran populations the project is designed to serve?
- Could any requirements unintentionally limit access for homeless Veterans?
- Are tenant screening practices consistent with project goals and referral expectations? Are they too restrictive?
- Have referral partners reviewed eligibility requirements and occupancy processes?

Tip for Developers:
Demand for housing among homeless Veterans does not automatically translate into referrals for a specific development. Reviewing eligibility requirements, referral pathways, and occupancy assumptions before leasing begins can help reduce vacancies and improve access for eligible Veterans.

RESOURCE

VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content on the website below.

- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) – Landlord Tenant Guide: This guide helps developers, landlords, and property managers understand Veteran homelessness and offers tips around preparing for Veteran residents before a lease is signed.

PHASE 8: OPERATE, LEARN, AND ADAPT

Occupancy is not the end of the development process. Successful housing developments serving homeless Veterans continue to evolve after residents move in. As operations begin, developers, property management teams, VA partners, service providers, and community organizations should continue working together to support Veteran residents.

SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL MOVE-INS

For many Veterans exiting homelessness, moving into permanent housing represents a significant milestone. Thoughtful onboarding processes can help new residents feel welcomed, understand their responsibilities, and encourage them to access available resources and supportive services.

Operational materials, move-in support, lease education, and introductions to available resources can help Veterans understand expectations and increase the likelihood of their successful transition into stable housing. Consider:

- Welcome packets or orientation materials
- Property tours and introductions to key property management staff
- Information about available resources and supportive services
- Clear expectations of lease requirements
- Opportunities for residents to ask questions and provide feedback during the move-in process

These early interactions and resources can help build trust, address potential concerns, and support Veterans' successful transition into housing.

MAINTAIN STRONG OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Elements that may require ongoing attention include:

- Resident engagement and feedback
- Property management performance
- Referral and occupancy processes
- Service coordination
- Partnership communication
- Housing stability and resident retention

Housing needs can change over time. Housing developments that remain successful are those that regularly review their processes and make adjustments as needed.

ENSURE COMPLIANCE AND MONITOR PROPERTY PERFORMANCE

Affordable housing developments often have ongoing compliance obligations associated with financing, vouchers, inspections, and regulatory requirements.

Developers and property management teams should understand:

- Annual or periodic inspections that may apply to the housing development
- Ongoing compliance requirements associated with funding sources
- Housing quality and maintenance expectations
- Responsibilities related to voucher-assisted units

Voucher-assisted units, in particular, may be subject to initial, annual, and unscheduled inspections depending on program requirements. Property management teams should understand applicable inspection and compliance responsibilities before occupancy begins.

Establishing strong operational processes early can help avoid compliance challenges later.

BUILD A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Developers and property management teams should consider establishing a regular process to:

- Gather feedback from residents
- Meet with project partners
- Review occupancy and housing stability trends
- Evaluate referral processes
- Assess whether resources and services remain aligned with residents' needs
- Identify and address operational challenges
- Identify opportunities for improvement

The measures and evaluation approaches discussed in **Section 7: Measuring Success** of this toolkit can help guide these conversations.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- How will new Veteran residents be supported during their transition into housing?
- How will resident feedback be collected and reviewed?
- Are residents aware of available services and resources?
- How frequently will partners meet to discuss project performance?
- Have procedures been established to address operational challenges?
- Are compliance and inspection responsibilities clearly understood?

Tip for Developers:

A ribbon cutting is the beginning of a housing project's story, but not the end of the development process. The most successful housing developments serving homeless Veterans continue learning, adapting, and improving long after residents move in.

Section 6: Common Mistakes to Avoid

Every housing project encounters challenges. However, many obstacles are avoidable if identified early, especially those resulting from misaligned expectations, insufficient communication, or lack of understanding of local programs and systems that support homeless Veterans.

The following mistakes are among the most common challenges observed in affordable housing developments designed to serve homeless Veterans.

Common Mistake	Why It Creates Challenges	Better Practice
Starting with the building instead of the need	Projects may be designed around a property, funding opportunity, or development concept rather than a documented housing need. This can result in a misalignment between the housing being developed and the needs of homeless Veterans in the community, reducing the project's ability to support local efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness.	Start by identifying the homeless Veteran populations the project intends to serve, the housing gap being addressed, and the evidence that demonstrates that need exists.
Engaging key partners too late	Important assumptions may be made without input from VA, Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), property management teams, referral partners, or other stakeholders. This can lead to project delays, significant adjustments, or operational challenges.	Engage housing, homeless response, and Veteran-serving partners early and maintain communication throughout the development process.
Misunderstanding HUD-VASH	Developers may assume voucher availability or make occupancy projections based on resources that have not been confirmed.	Discuss HUD-VASH opportunities directly with local VA and PHA teams before making assumptions about voucher availability, eligibility, or referrals.
Creating tenant selection criteria that unintentionally exclude Veterans experiencing homelessness	Income restrictions, screening criteria, or occupancy requirements may prevent homeless Veterans from qualifying for available housing, even when there is a clear need.	Review tenant selection policies with housing, homeless response, and Veteran-serving partners to ensure they align with the needs of the homeless Veteran populations the project is designed to serve.
Assuming local Veteran homelessness automatically translates into occupancy	Even in communities with significant Veteran homelessness, project eligibility requirements, income restrictions, screening standards, voucher availability, and referral processes can affect whether units can be filled.	Work with referral partners early to validate occupancy assumptions, referral pathways, and eligibility criteria.
Failing to clearly define roles and responsibilities	Confusion can arise regarding referrals, vacancy management, resident concerns, and communication between partners.	Establish clear expectations and document key responsibilities before operations begin.

Common Mistake	Why It Creates Challenges	Better Practice
Treating housing and supportive services as the same thing	Property managers, service providers, VA, and referral partners have different responsibilities and roles in supporting Veteran success. Lack of clarity can create gaps in communication and coordination.	Establish communication procedures early and clearly define each partner's roles and responsibilities in supporting Veteran residents.
Failing to understand the perspective of property management teams	Developers may make assumptions that conflict with operational realities related to occupancy, maintenance, or staffing.	Engage property management teams early and incorporate their feedback throughout the planning and development process.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Successful Veteran housing projects designed for homeless Veterans often share the following characteristics:

- Clearly defined homeless Veteran populations that the project is designed to serve
- Strong partnerships established early
- Regular communication among stakeholders
- Realistic referral, occupancy, and operational plans
- Tenant selection policies aligned with referral processes
- Veteran input throughout planning and development
- Coordination among service providers and Veteran-serving partners
- A commitment to supporting Veterans' long-term housing stability



Section 7: Measuring Success

A new housing development represents a significant achievement, but the ultimate goal of building affordable housing for homeless Veterans goes beyond simply building housing. Success means helping homeless Veterans secure stable housing, remain housed, and build a foundation for recovery and long-term stability.

As your project becomes operational, evaluating outcomes can help:

- Demonstrate impact to funders and community stakeholders
- Strengthen partnerships
- Identify opportunities for improvement
- Inform future housing development projects
- Support the project's long-term sustainability

Success Area	What It Measures	Questions to Consider	Metrics
Housing Stability	Whether homeless Veterans are successfully accessing and maintaining housing over time.	• Are Veterans remaining housed over time? • Are units consistently occupied? • Are there patterns of early move-outs or lease terminations? • What barriers may be affecting housing retention? • Are residents returning to homelessness after leaving the development?	• Occupancy rate • Leasing timelines • Length of tenancy • Housing retention rate • Turnover rate • Vacancy duration
Resident Well-Being	Whether housing is contributing to improved quality of life, increased stability, and greater access to supportive resources.	• How do Veteran residents describe their experience living in the development? • Are residents accessing the resources and services they need? • Are residents reporting improvements in stability, health, or quality of life? • Do residents report feeling safe, supported, and connected to their community?	• Resident satisfaction • Access to VA resources and other supportive services • Engagement with available resources and services • Community engagement
Partnership & Community Impact	How effectively project partners are working together to support housing stability and overall well-being among Veteran residents.	• Are referral pathways working as intended? • Are referral partners satisfied with the referral and occupancy process? • Are partners engaged and communicating effectively? • Are operational challenges being addressed collaboratively? • Is the project supporting local efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness?	• Referral efficiency • Stakeholder satisfaction and feedback • Communication effectiveness • Coordination between property management and service providers • Partner participation

Quantitative metrics such as occupancy rates, leasing timelines, and housing retention help demonstrate the project's impact, while resident feedback provides the clearest picture of whether the housing development is helping homeless Veterans access resources and achieve stability. A sample survey that can be adapted and used to collect feedback from residents is included in **Appendix B: Sample Veteran Resident Feedback Survey.**



Conclusion

This toolkit was created to help bridge the gap between the desire to serve Veterans and the practical steps required to create affordable housing opportunities for homeless Veterans in your communities. Whether your project consists of a single housing unit, a small multifamily property, or a larger development, the impact can be significant. Every new housing opportunity represents the possibility of stability, independence, and a brighter future for a Veteran experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

If you are ready to start on an affordable housing project for homeless Veterans, begin by:

- Identifying the housing needs of homeless Veterans in your community.
- Connecting with your local VA Medical Center (VAMC), Public Housing Agency (PHA), and Continuum of Care (CoC).
- Bringing in key partners and stakeholders who can provide valuable feedback and input and help turn your vision into reality.
- Reviewing the information included in this toolkit and supplemental resources related to affordable housing provided in **Appendix A: Additional Affordable Housing Resources for Developers.**

Thank you for your commitment to expanding affordable housing opportunities for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Appendix

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPERS

VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content on the websites below.

- Enterprise Community Partners: Enterprise Community Partners offers educational resources, trainings, and webinars focused on affordable housing.
    - Enterprise Community Partners Learning Center - Affordable Housing Topic Library: Enterprise Community Partner's affordable housing topic library includes articles and trainings on topics directly related to affordable housing.
-
- HUD Exchange – A Primer on Affordable Housing Development and Key Funding Sources: This resource provides an overview of the steps involved in developing affordable housing in addition to a list of potential funding sources.
-
- NeighborWorks America - Course Catalog: NeighborWorks America's course catalog offers both free and fee-based trainings covering development, financing, construction, operations, and other topics related to affordable housing. These courses are designed to help developers throughout all phases of the affordable housing development process.
    - Fundamentals of Affordable Housing Development: This course provides an overview of the affordable housing development process, including project planning, financing, and operations.
    - Designing Affordable Housing from Project Concept to Blueprint: This course guides developers through the process of designing affordable housing projects, including tips for creating project plans and working with designers and architects.
    - Strong Coalitions: Building on Common Interests: This course helps developers build strong, collaborative partnerships, including tips for sharing information and managing conflicts.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE VETERAN RESIDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY

RESIDENT SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback. Your response will help improve housing, services, and community life for current and future residents of this development.

ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

6. How long have you lived at this property?
   - ❑ Less than 6 months
   - ❑ 6 months to 1 year
   - ❑ 1-3 years
   - ❑ More than 3 years

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with your housing?
   - ❑ Very satisfied
   - ❑ Satisfied
   - ❑ Neutral
   - ❑ Dissatisfied
   - ❑ Very dissatisfied

HOUSING AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Please rate the following:

Item	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Condition of your unit				
Building maintenance				
Cleanliness of common areas				
Safety and security				
Responsiveness to maintenance requests				
Communication from property management				

COMMUNITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

8. Do you feel safe living here?
   - ❑ Always
   - ❑ Most of the time
   - ❑ Sometimes
   - ❑ Rarely

9. Do you feel welcomed and respected in the community?
   - ❑ Always
   - ❑ Most of the time
   - ❑ Sometimes
   - ❑ Rarely

10. Do you feel connected to other residents?
   - ❑ Very connected
   - ❑ Somewhat connected
   - ❑ Not very connected
   - ❑ Not connected at all

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

11. Are you aware of local services available to support residents?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

12. Have you used any local supportive services during the past year?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   If yes, which services have been most helpful?
   - ❑ VA resources
   - ❑ Case management
   - ❑ Housing services
   - ❑ Health care services
   - ❑ Mental health support
   - ❑ Substance use and recovery treatment
   - ❑ Benefits assistance
   - ❑ Employment assistance
   - ❑ Legal services
   - ❑ Other: _____

13. Do you feel you can access help when you need it?
   - ❑ Always
   - ❑ Usually
   - ❑ Sometimes
   - ❑ Rarely

FEEDBACK

14. What do you like most about living here?

15. What improvements would you recommend?

16. Are there services, programs, or activities you would like to see added?

17. Since moving into this development, has your quality of life improved?

18. Would you recommend this housing community to another Veteran?

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