



## HUD NEWS

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Julián Castro, Secretary  
Office of Public Affairs, Regional Office, New York & New Jersey

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MAYORS CHALLENGE UPDATE: 13 NEW JERSEY MAYORS COMMIT TO ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS BY 2015**

*The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness focuses on pooling federal, local, and non-profit resources to eradicate Veteran homelessness*

See list of resources below / sign up here: [mayorschallenge@hud.gov](mailto:mayorschallenge@hud.gov)

*Watch HUD NJ Field Office Director Maria Maio-Messano discuss the Mayors Challenge in New Jersey:* <http://comcastnewsmakers.com/2014/08/12/mayors-challenge-end-veteran-homelessness/>

**New Jersey** – As of today, thirteen New Jersey mayors have committed to ending Veteran homelessness in their cities by the end of 2015. These mayors signed onto the “Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness,” a federal initiative that aims to ensure that every man and woman who has served in the U.S. military has access to permanent housing and the services that will help them maintain a stable home life.

This initiative, which brings together the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USCIH), calls on mayors, governors and county officials nationwide to commit to eliminating Veteran homelessness by working with federal and state government agencies, local service providers and housing advocates to pool resources and expertise.

“HUD applauds New Jersey’s mayors for their commitment to ending Veteran homelessness in the state by 2015,” said **Holly Leicht, HUD Regional Administrator for New York and New Jersey**. “The brave men and women of the military, who have given so much to protect our lives and liberty, deserve to have a place to call home. Through the Mayors Challenge, all levels of government are joining forces to make sure that they do.”

“Our HUD New Jersey Office is ready to provide support and guidance to every municipality in New Jersey to assist in reaching this important goal,” said **Maria Maio-Messano, HUD New Jersey Field Office Director**. “We work closely with the service

providers as well as State, and non-profit entities that receive HUD federal funding to assist the homeless population, and I'm confident that they are also committed to this challenge. With increased focus on the Veteran homeless population, together we can make sure needed services continue to reach the men, women, and families that need the support that only a stable home can provide."

The New Jersey League of Municipalities, Housing and Community Development of New Jersey, and Monarch Housing Associates are among the organizations that have voiced their support for the initiative.

More than 200 mayors and state and county officials have already joined this effort. New Orleans, Phoenix, Salt Lake City and Houston are on track to meet or beat the 2015 goal. The following New Jersey mayors have signed on to the Mayors Challenge:

- Mayor Stephen Fulop, Jersey City
- Mayor Dawn Zimmer, Hoboken
- Mayor Jose "Joey" Torres, Paterson
- Mayor John Ducey, Brick
- Mayor John E. McCormac Woodbridge
- Mayor James Fife, Harrison
- Mayor Thomas Andes, Denville
- Mayor Thomas Lankey, Edison
- Mayor Janice Kovach, Clinton
- Mayor Don Guardian, Atlantic City
- Mayor Victor DeLuca, Maplewood
- Mayor Daniel J. Reiman, Carteret
- Mayor Alex Torpey, South Orange

The federal government is committing significant resources to help communities pursue the goal of ending homelessness among Veterans. Strategies that communities are employing to meet the Challenge include:

- Using a Housing First approach, which removes barriers to help Veterans obtain permanent housing quickly, without certain prerequisites; [http://usich.gov/usich\\_resources/fact\\_sheets/the\\_housing\\_first\\_checklist\\_a\\_practical\\_tool\\_for\\_assessing\\_housing\\_first\\_in](http://usich.gov/usich_resources/fact_sheets/the_housing_first_checklist_a_practical_tool_for_assessing_housing_first_in)
- Prioritizing the most vulnerable Veterans—especially those experiencing chronic homelessness—for permanent supportive housing opportunities, including those created through the HUD-VASH program; [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/vash](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash)
- Coordinating outreach efforts to identify and engage every Veteran experiencing homelessness and focus outreach efforts on finding them housing; [http://usich.gov/media\\_center/videos\\_and\\_webinars/opening-doors-to-innovation-building-strong-connections-to-rapidly-house-ve](http://usich.gov/media_center/videos_and_webinars/opening-doors-to-innovation-building-strong-connections-to-rapidly-house-ve)

- Targeting rapid rehousing interventions, such as programs through the Department of Veterans Affairs' Supportive Services for Veteran Families, toward Veterans who need shorter-term rental subsidies and services to reintegrate back into their communities; [http://usich.gov/media\\_center/videos\\_and\\_webinars/placement\\_and\\_retention](http://usich.gov/media_center/videos_and_webinars/placement_and_retention)
- Leveraging other housing and services resources that can help Veterans who are ineligible for some of the VA's programs find stable housing; [http://usich.gov/media\\_center/videos\\_and\\_webinars/beyond\\_vash\\_ending\\_veteran\\_homelessness](http://usich.gov/media_center/videos_and_webinars/beyond_vash_ending_veteran_homelessness)
- Increasing early detection and access to preventive services so at-risk Veterans remain stably housed;
- Closely monitoring progress toward the 2015 goal, including the success of programs achieving permanent housing; and
- Aligning local goals and strategies with the Obama Administration's broader initiative to end homelessness, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: MAYORS CHALLENGE TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS**

<http://www.hud.gov/veterans>

The following resources are available to mayors and their communities as they tackle the challenge of ending Veteran homelessness:

##### **Mayors Can Help End Homelessness**

Find out about the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/veteran\\_information/mayors\\_challenge](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge)

Find out more about the role mayors can play in ending homelessness <http://usich.gov/mayors>

##### **Help your Community Become Informed about Homelessness**

Find out about *Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, including homelessness among Veterans and their families: [http://usich.gov/opening\\_doors/](http://usich.gov/opening_doors/)

Find out more about the ongoing work to end not only homelessness among Veterans, but homelessness among all Americans: <https://www.onecpd.info/homelessness-assistance/>

Find answers to common questions about homelessness from our partners at the National Alliance to End Homelessness: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/faqs>

##### **Help People Get Involved**

Find out ways you can get involved in local efforts to end Veteran homelessness in your own community: <http://usich.gov/action/individuals>

##### **Show Your Support and Network**

Find out which cities have joined the Mayors Challenge:

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/veteran\\_information/mayors\\_challenge/mayors\\_and\\_staff](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/mayors_and_staff)

### **Helping Veterans**

If you are a Veteran who is interested in finding out more about your own or a fellow Veteran's housing or employment opportunities, view Resources for Homeless Veterans:

<https://www.onecpd.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-veterans/>

To sign up, mayors, county officials, town administrators can email [mayorchallenge@hud.gov](mailto:mayorchallenge@hud.gov).

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