

ORAL TESTIMONY

**STATEMENT OF PATRICIA CARLILE
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ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**



**BEFORE THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

MAY 18, 2004

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Evans, Distinguished Members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here this morning to represent the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Secretary recognizes the moral responsibility America has to its veterans. The abiding human value that results from helping homeless veterans, as well as the other homeless subpopulations, to regain the self-esteem they had before falling through the safety nets and to become productive citizens is a worthy goal for all of us.

Homeless veterans represent an estimated 23% of the homeless population. HUD is committed to serving this portion of the homeless population but is charged by Congress to serve all homeless groups. HUD's homeless programs serve singles and families with children. Our programs serve persons who are impaired by substance abuse, mental illness and physical disabilities as well as non-disabled persons. HUD provides an array of housing and supportive services to all homeless groups, including homeless veterans. I would like to take a moment to outline our activities that specifically relate to serving homeless veterans.

Targeted Homeless Assistance

In 2003 we awarded a total of nearly \$1.3 billion in targeted homeless assistance. It is important to note that veterans are eligible for all of our homeless assistance programs. Out of a total of 147 veteran-specific applications submitted to HUD in 2003, we awarded funds to 122 projects, which is 83% of the veterans-specific projects submitted. We awarded \$40 million to these projects. In addition to these funds, we awarded \$583

million to 1,913 projects that will be serving homeless veterans, among the other homeless groups that they also will be assisting. We estimate in 2003 through our competitive homeless programs that we served approximately 62,000 veterans. Many thousands more were served through HUD's Emergency Shelter Grants programs.

Congress has directed that each community implement a Homeless Management Information System to better understand and serve homeless persons. Once they are implemented across the country, we will be able to even more comprehensively tell how many veterans are being helped in HUD and non-HUD funded programs and what the specific outcomes these projects produce.

Interagency Initiatives

The Administration has set a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2012. This goal will benefit homeless veterans. Since the chronically homeless is the most challenged homeless group, many of whom are veterans, it is imperative to involve many partners. I represent the Department on VA's Secretary Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans, and the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. Both of these advisory groups have addressed chronic homelessness in their recommendations.

- In the \$35 Million HUD, HHS, and VA **Collaborative Initiative to Help End Chronic Homelessness**, the first program to specifically serve chronically homeless persons, HUD contributed \$20 million of the \$35 million awarded. These projects are now underway.

- We believe the proposed **Samaritan legislation**, with a \$70 million budget, will be an opportunity to double our efforts to be more responsive to this population and will enhance our ability to collaborate more effectively with our Federal partners. Of the \$70 million requested for this initiative, \$50 million would be for housing provided by HUD, which would be the lead agency in administering the new program.
- Another exciting initiative that is serving homeless veterans is the \$13.5 million HUD/DOL five-year chronically homeless demonstration program. HUD provided \$10 million to this effort. While this collaboration focuses on housing and employment, the grantees also have to offer other essential wrap-around services, such as health care, education, and life skills. We believe that the combination of housing and jobs will help chronically homeless persons become self-sufficient.
- HUD is an active collaborator with the Departments of Justice, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Veterans Affairs for the **Serious and Violent Offenders Reentry Initiative**, helping to educate the grantees, some of whom serve veterans, in accessing housing in their communities. HUD would be a partner with the Departments of Labor and Justice in another reentry prevention program that was proposed by the President mentioned in his State of the Union address earlier this year.
- In collaboration with HHS and VA, HUD has participated in the eight policy academies that have facilitated the development of comprehensive strategic homeless action plans to access mainstream services at the State and local levels.

- We meet regularly with our Federal partners in implementing these initiatives and brainstorming about additional initiatives that might be needed. We also keep each other informed of our various activities at the Interagency Council on Homelessness meetings.

All of the activities that I have mentioned will benefit homeless veterans.

Technical Assistance

- Part of a \$2 million Technical Assistance project recently awarded - Permanent Housing and Special Efforts for Subpopulations (PHASES 2) - the Department awarded approximately \$350,000 to enhance assistance to providers serving homeless veterans (especially in the areas of accessing mainstream resources), update existing materials, and coordinate with VA's homeless planning networks.
- Because we have been concerned about the lack of veterans-specific homeless project applications, we developed two technical assistance guidebooks for homeless veterans organizations to help grantees apply for our funds. The first guidebook, *Coordinating Resources and Developing Strategies to Address the Needs of Homeless Veterans*, describes programs serving veterans that are effectively coordinating HUD homeless funding with other resources. The second guidebook, *A Place at the Table: Homeless Veterans and Local Homeless Assistance Planning Networks*, describes the successful participation of ten veterans organizations in their local Continuum of Cares.
- To underscore our desire to serve veterans, we have highlighted veterans eleven times in the NOFA that was published on May 14. In collaboration with VA, this year for

the first time, we strongly encouraged applicants to use VA CHALENG data in assessing the needs of homeless veterans within their community.

Mainstream Resources

HUD is using its mainstream resources to help house homeless veterans. The HOME program recently awarded \$6.7 million to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to house chronically homeless people and HUD's Economic Development Office gave extra points in 2003 and 2004 to communities serving homeless people.

Conclusion

Again, we want to reiterate our desire to help our homeless veterans become self-sufficient and will continue to work with our Federal, State and local partners to do so. Mr. Chairman, I will be glad to address any questions the Committee has.