

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 3/19/25

Steve Connor, Central Hampshire Veterans Services, Michelle Lague, VA Health Care for the Homeless, Ann Lentini, Domus, Gumersindo Gomez, Bilingual Veterans Services, Vega Johnson, Three County CoC, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Suraj Patel, Executive Office of Veterans Services, Pamela Schwartz, WNEH, Wendi Warger, Three County CoC, Sue White, HUD/VASH program

Update on federal funding decisions:

- Big concern on HUD funding - the Continuing Resolution level funded HUD but this will still require cuts b/c of the increase in rents
- Very likely there will be no new VASH subsidies with level funded - typically every year there are new vouchers
- VA Secretary announced a 15% reduction in force which is predicted to translate to roughly 1,100 VA workers in the western region - still waiting to hear more.

CoC Updates

- **Three County:** 43 veterans on by-names list; 5 assessed in 2025; 33 in 2024, just starting to see a rise in numbers; but good news is that no unsheltered veterans in 2024 Point in Time Count
- **Hampden County:** between 8 and 10 veterans on by-names list - of those 8-10 veterans, 4 have VASH; identified a couple of families in family shelter who are vets, connecting them to VA services; working with harder-to-engage veterans; new people are continuing to enter the system, one vet in medical respite program.

Bilingual Veterans Center:

Gumersindo Gomez reported 18 veterans are living at 40 Cass St; 5 at transitional housing - 6 openings (needs to be sober or in treatment)

Central Hampshire Veterans Services:

Steve reported that in the last 2 weeks, working with 2 trans gender veterans in efforts to prevent their homelessness; one obtained a VASH voucher but too afraid of the federal government, went to live in the woods; the other refused VA services for the same reason.

Exec Office of Veterans Services - Funds outreach in western MA for Springfield Partners for Community Action, Bilingual Center, Soldier On; Berkshire Outreach Services (offers 27 contracts statewide)

Westfield: Ann Domus provided an update on the veteran housing project that will convert the old town hall into 18 SROs with own kitchen, bathroom, living space, and will include support services - working on completing funding but definitely moving ahead.

Bilingual Vets Center was awarded funding for 2 developments - Agawam and West Springfield 115 1 BR and 2BRs - waiting on funding to be released - will be ready 6 months after funding awarded (utilizing project based vouchers).

Soldier On opening new veteran housing in Devens, MA (see applications attached), 5 units, 3BRs each.

Soldier On's transitional housing contact: Dan Hawkins, 413-207-7605

Network budget and policy updates:

See [Network blog post](#) for latest update on the Network's FY26 budget priorities and legislative priorities and recent meetings with state legislators.

Network Annual Update: Friday, May 30, 9:30 am, HCC - be sure to [register here](#).

Next quarterly meeting date: Wed. June 25, 3 pm