**Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 9/16/26**

*In attendance: Shaundell Diaz, 3 County CoC, Gumersindo, Gomez, Mike Hagmaier, Soldier On, Megan Kimball, VA, Luz Marcano, VA, Suraj Patel, Veterans Services, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH*

## Program Updates

### Soldier On

By July 2027, Soldier On's transitional beds for men - roughly 60 - will be moved out of the Leed campus (the VA wanted to take back the building for other needs). The remaining transitional beds for men will be in Pittsfield. Leeds will still have 16 transitional beds. This reduction is not significant (overall a reduction of 10 beds). The need has also declined as new permanent housing units have opened (almost 200 permanent veterans units have opened over the last 16 years).

### VA Social Work

Seeing an uptick in intakes and referrals most recently - several acute cases where shelter was not appropriate and unclear on next options.

Right now a case load of approx. 50 individuals. Seeing the same trend in veterans 65 and older; primarily coming from Hampden County, some from Hampshire. Also seeing families seeking assistance.

## Three County CoC

74 veterans on the Three County by-names list. Virtually all of these veterans are part of Soldier On's transitional housing program.

Coordinated Entry Evaluation for 3 County - will be reviewed and discussed with recommendations on Thursday, 9/17 at 1 pm - go here for details.

## State budget/legislative updates:

With August legislative recess just behind us, work is now revving up for the next Legislative Session (begins in January), working to determine re-filing of bills (e.g., Access to Counsel, Rent Control, Transfer Fee on Affordable Housing) and lead sponsors. Budget work for the FY28 budget is also in its earliest stages. Work also continues on the FY26 supplemental budget, especially for funding of the emergency winter shelter needs.

**Next quarterly meeting date: Wed., 12/16, 11 am.**