



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

900 EAST MAIN STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
National Association for
Uniformed Services
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association*

Adopted
July 16, 2014

Revised
December 18, 2014

JLC Contact
Stuart Williams
(703) 595-3252
shw13@att.net

Position Paper 2015-04 Virginia Homeless Veterans Programs

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To sustain an effective program to eliminate homelessness within our Virginia Veterans population.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - a. Homelessness within the Virginia Veterans population has been a long-term issue predating the War in Vietnam. JLARC completed a significant study in June 2010 documenting a baseline size and nature of issue. That study also stated that significant long-term funding and a dedicated program would be required to solve the problem.
 - b. The General Assembly previously approved two positions within the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) to plan and coordinate an intensive program to dramatically reduce homelessness among veterans and their families. Staff in these positions has been active in coordinating solutions.
 - c. Since 2011, veteran homelessness has dropped 34 percent. From 2013-2014, veteran homelessness in Virginia has dropped 14 percent. Overall homelessness in Virginia has decreased during this same period as a result of coordinated actions within the Commonwealth. Agencies involved include the Departments of Veterans Services, Housing and Community Development, and Health and Human Resources.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - a. The state-level Homeless Outcomes Coordinating Council (HOCC) approved action steps to improve targeting of resources, coordination of services, and increased sharing of data towards the goal of ending veteran homelessness. A veteran sub-committee is responsible for implementation and monitoring the progress of these action steps.
 - b. In June 2014, Governor McAuliffe became the 4th Governor to sign the National Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, sending a clear message that ending veteran homelessness is a priority for the Commonwealth.
 - c. VWWP Housing Resource Specialists provide outreach and care coordination to homeless veterans in Hampton Roads and Richmond. These positions have been successful in reaching high barrier, chronically homeless veterans and connecting them to both U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and mainstream housing and supportive services.
 - d. As noted in the JLARC study, barriers of housing and income need to be addressed for ex-offenders who are veterans, particularly those exiting correctional institutions. Access and coordination of resources for this population need to be improved.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Governor and the General Assembly support the further reduction of veteran homelessness by approving additional funding in FY2016 for:
 - a. \$180,000 (GF) for DVS/VWWP to add three new Housing Resource Specialists in Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia, and Roanoke.
 - b. \$1 million (GF) for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to support increases in general statewide homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing funding to help veterans living in rural areas and/or ineligible for VA services.