

# Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) – Q & A.....

## What is VASH?

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA provides these services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics.

## PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

**VA Case Managers** determine clinical eligibility and homeless status. Primary focus is assisting those who are chronically homeless

**PHAs** determine if the Veteran meets HUD criteria for income and is not a lifetime registered sex offender under a State sex offender registration program.

## VA Eligibility Criteria:

- Eligible for VA Health Care
  - Homeless per McKinney Vento definition
  - Identified need for case management to successfully live in community housing
  - Agreement to participate in program of recovery and case management
- VA Eligibility
- **Is NOT predicated on the following:**
    - **Length of sobriety**
    - **Treatment compliance**
    - **Prior treatment in other homeless Programs**
    - **Income verification by VA**
    - **Criminal Background Check**

## Termination

HUD-VASH assistance may be terminated if the family refuses, without good cause, to participate in required case management as verified by the VAMC.

## VAMC referrals to PHA

- Eligible homeless Veterans that agree to participate in VA case management are referred to the VAMC's partner PHA.
- The PHA must maintain written documentation of VAMC referrals in their HUD-VASH tenant files.

## PHA screening

- PHAs only screen for income eligibility and for lifetime registration under a state sex offender registration program and can only deny issuance of a voucher for those reasons.
- Under portability, the receiving PHAs must also comply with VASH screening requirements
- PHAs cannot screen for or deny issuance of a voucher for money owned to the PHA or for criminal or drug activity.
- A PHA cannot deny issuance of a voucher or admission into the program for zero income status.

## Income – minimum rent

- A PHA can charge a minimum rent of up to \$50
- However, if a Veteran is awaiting notification about the receipt of VA benefits or other forms of assistance, the PHA must grant the Veteran a hardship exemption.
- See 24 CFR 5.630 (3)(b).
- In such cases, a PHA cannot delay voucher issuance or admission until the benefits are received.

## **Income**

- The PHA must determine income eligibility for HUD-VASH families in accordance with 24 CFR 982.201.
- PHAs should discuss these requirements with their partner VAMCs.
- HUD income limits do not apply at reexams.
- Income targeting requirements do not apply to HUD-VASH vouchers.
- However, a PHA may choose to include the admission of extremely low income HUD- VASH families in its income targeting numbers for the FY of a family's admittance.

## **Lifetime sex offender registration**

- If the homeless Veteran is subject to state lifetime registration – PHA cannot issue HUD-VASH voucher to the Veteran.
- If another family member is the lifetime registrant – family may be eligible for voucher if the family member subject to the registration requirement is removed from the household.

## **Issuance of voucher or denial of assistance**

- PHA must either issue a voucher to the referred Veteran or deny assistance.
- For denials, the PHA must promptly send a denial notice that states the reason and provides for an informal review.
- A copy of this notice must be provided to the VAMC case manager.

## **Voucher issuance - initial search term**

- Must have an initial term for housing search of at least 120 days.
- Any extensions, suspensions and progress reports will remain under the policies in the PHA's administrative plan, but will apply only after the initial 120-day term.

## **Admission and initial lease term**

- Initial leases may be for less than 12 months even if this is not

the prevailing market practice.

- Point of program "admission" is when unit selected by the Veteran comes under Housing Assistance Payments Contract and lease.

## **Eligible housing**

- Standard HCV requirements regarding unit size, HQS and payments standards apply. (HUD publication: "A Good Place to Live")
- However, VA-owned units on the grounds of a VAMC are eligible housing for the HUD-VASH program. 24 CFR 982.352(a)(5) has been waived for HUD-VASH.

## **Turnover of voucher when Veteran leaves program**

- Upon turnover, HUD-VASH vouchers must continue to be issued to eligible Veteran families referred by the VAMC.