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Gov. Malloy Announces that Connecticut is First State in America to End Chronic Veteran Homelessness

## Press Releases



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

Thursday, August 27, 2015

### **Gov. Malloy Announces that Connecticut is First State in America to End Chronic Veteran Homelessness**

**State Receives First-in-the-Nation Designation from Federal Government in Response to Positive Housing Efforts**

(HARTFORD, CT) - Governor Dannel P. Malloy today announced that the State of Connecticut has been designated by the federal government as being the first state in the nation to have ended chronic homelessness among veterans.

Last year, Governor Malloy [announced several initiatives](#) aimed at combatting veteran homelessness with the goal of ending homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015. The state has since made major investments in housing, becoming a national leader for its work.

Ending chronic homelessness among veterans is a milestone for Connecticut in its efforts to end homelessness entirely among veterans by the end of the year. Connecticut is one of just a handful of states designated for, and participating in, the Zero:2016 initiative, which aims to end all chronic homelessness by the end of next year. Today's announcement means that all known veterans experiencing chronic homelessness are either housed or are on an immediate path to permanent housing, and that the state will be able to rapidly place any veteran who newly experiences chronic homelessness on the path to permanent housing. Chronic homelessness is defined as an individual with a disability who has been homeless for a period of at least one year or has experienced four separate episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

"We have set a high bar - and with today's announcement, we're on our way to achieving it. We are truly a national leader on these issues, because our veterans deserve access to housing, quality health care, education, and career opportunities. It's our obligation to deliver for them, and that's just what we're doing as a state," **Governor Malloy said**. "We established this bold goal to end homelessness among our veterans not because it's good for our economy and makes communities stronger, but because it's morally right. Ending chronic veteran homelessness is just another step forward and another marker of progress towards reaching our goal of ending all veteran homelessness by the end of this year."

"President Obama has made a bold goal to end veteran homelessness by the end of this year, and states and cities across the country are committed to making sure every Veteran has a safe and stable place to call home. Here in Connecticut, you've responded to that challenge by helping the most vulnerable homeless Veterans find permanent housing," **U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald said**. "Americans understand and believe, as I do, that no one who has fought for this country should have to fight to keep a roof over their head. This progress would not be possible without the partnerships that have been built here in Connecticut and across the nation; partnerships across the federal government, with state and local governments, with non-profit organizations and with the private sector. This is not a static challenge; it is an ongoing challenge and we will keep at it because that is what the men and women who have served our nation have earned and deserve."

Connecticut reached this milestone through the coordinated leadership of the Reaching Home Veterans Workgroup, an unprecedented collaboration among key stakeholders around this state, which includes: the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH), the Connecticut Heroes Project (CTHP), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Connecticut's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grantees, the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH), the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), and the Partnership for Strong Communities - all working together with other community-based providers. "The historic work being done in Connecticut to combat homelessness, especially among veterans, is having a tremendous impact on people's lives," **Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman said**. "We are committed to ensuring that veterans and their families who are in need have access to the programs and services that will help rebuild their lives, rejoin the workforce, and successfully establish themselves in our communities."

The designation by the federal government comes in response to the state's application to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, which was reviewed by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies and organizations after a report was submitted in June. During the [2015 point-in-time count](#), only 41 veterans experiencing homelessness were counted on the streets or in other places not intended for habitation - a decrease of 45 percent since the last unsheltered count in 2013.

Through Connecticut's efforts, nearly 300 veterans previously experiencing chronic homelessness have been permanently housed. The primary resource for housing veterans experiencing chronic homelessness are vouchers provided through the Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. The HUD-VASH program combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services from the VA. Connecticut applied for and received 54 additional HUD-VASH vouchers in the fall of 2014 and also received another 75 vouchers this past spring 2015, bringing our statewide total to 755. The federal rental assistance provided through this partnership are in addition to the state RAP vouchers that have been set-aside for veteran use.

Connecticut's recent investments in affordable housing totals almost one billion dollars. Since 2011, the state has created 6,150 affordable housing units, with an additional 2,908 affordable units under construction, and another 5,255 additional units committed to funding.

"Governor Malloy has been a tireless advocate for the homeless community and I am proud that he has made housing such a central part of his administration," **Connecticut Department of Housing Commissioner Evonne Klein said**. "We are fortunate in Connecticut to have built a strong collaboration of partners all working together to end veteran homelessness. What we know is that when we address an individual's housing needs it will have a lasting and positive impact on that person's overall well-being for years to come."

**Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Sean Connolly said**, "This is a proud moment for Connecticut Veterans as the culmination of hard work and true determination by our leadership has brought us to this point in history where we have ended chronic Veteran homelessness in the state. We will continue collaboration efforts and approach Veteran homelessness with a multipronged strategy of support services, keeping in mind the very real and very attainable goal to end it once and for all."

"This important milestone reflects a remarkable and relentless commitment to combating veteran homelessness and marks a significant step. I commend the advocates and leaders who made it possible," **U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal said**. "But now is not the time to rest on our laurels or unfurl a 'mission accomplished' banner - we must recommit to continuing this fight together. Combating the underlying causes of homelessness - lack of jobs, skill training, health care, particularly treatment for post-traumatic stress and other invisible wounds of war - remains an unaccomplished goal. We can, and will, do more to help our veterans."

"Today's announcement is the result of years of hard work on the ground to end chronic homelessness among veterans," **U.S. Senator Chris Murphy said**. "We've come a long way from when I brought federal officials to Waterbury in 2009 to show them that veterans were living under bridges and in the woods. This is a significant victory for the state of Connecticut. We invested our resources in the right programs - from the HUD-VASH and other federal programs, to better access to health care and social services - and we have proven that when federal and state policymakers collaborate with service providers and advocates, the outcomes can be life-changing. Ending chronic homelessness for veterans has been a top priority for me since I was first elected to Congress, because the brave men and women of our armed forces - who have served and sacrificed for our country - should never be without a home. I've always said that one homeless veteran is one too many, and today's announcement means that this goal has become closer to a reality. Connecticut's story of success should be a model to end chronic veterans homelessness across America."

"No one deserves to live without housing - especially our veterans. They have sacrificed so much for the safety of our nation, and it is our moral obligation to ensure they receive the support they need when they come home," **Congressman John Larson (CT-1) said**. "I commend Governor Malloy, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development for their commitment to our veterans. Never before has any state been able to declare an end to chronic veteran homelessness. This is a historic moment, and one that makes me incredibly proud to call Connecticut home."

"Ensuring that no veteran goes without housing after returning home from the battlefield is part of the sacred compact we have with those who defend our freedom. Governor Malloy and the State of Connecticut deserve praise for their dogged efforts to earn this significant designation," **Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2) said**. "This is a vital issue on which Connecticut leaders will maintain their vigilance, and I will continue my efforts in this field, which included working with veterans advocates for supportive housing in Jewett City."

"As a nation, we have an obligation to ensure that, at the very least, the brave men and women who serve our country have a place to call home," **Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-3) said**. "We have to be sure we are doing everything possible to facilitate the smoothest possible transition from the battlefield to civilian life. It makes our communities stronger, gives families a solid foundation and is the moral thing to do. Today's announcement is thanks to the people in Connecticut who are working tirelessly to end veteran homelessness."

"Today's announcement is great news for Connecticut's veterans that put their lives on the line to protect our country and way of life. We know that with safe, stable housing in place, these brave men and women will get the healthcare, education and jobs they have earned and deserve," **Congressman Jim Himes (CT-4) said**. "Connecticut has taken a bold and comprehensive approach to fighting homelessness, setting ambitious goals and working across all levels of government, housing authorities and private organizations to reach them. I applaud Governor Malloy on today's achievement and commit to working tirelessly until all veterans live in a place they can call home."

"In Connecticut, we are doing the right thing for our veterans who have suffered with chronic homelessness, and I commend Governor Malloy for making this critical issue a key priority," **Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty (CT-5) said**. "Today's news marks a historic turning point for our state and for our veterans. Our veterans have sacrificed so much serving our country, and they deserve access to benefits that they have earned, including housing and high-quality healthcare. In Congress, I will continue working to ensure that all veterans have the support they need to live healthy, successful lives."

**State Senator Mae Flexer (D-Killingly)**, who is Senate Chair of the General Assembly's Veterans Affairs Committee, welcomed today's announcement by Governor Malloy while taking a moment to reflect on a difficult time for one veteran - her father, a Vietnam veteran, who once housed their four-member family for nearly six months in a motel and then in a kerosene-heated trailer in South Killingly when their family was struggling.

"As an adult, it's hard to talk about these months because, unfortunately in our society, we harshly blame those who struggle with poverty. But the fact is my mother and father sacrificed everything for my sister and me," Sen. Flexer said. "My family's struggles were directly tied to my dad's then-undiagnosed PTSD. Today, the federal VA and the State of Connecticut are squarely focused on ensuring that our government fulfills its promises to our veterans, and as a result, families now and moving forward will not have to struggle as ours once did."

"As the House Chairman of the legislature's Veterans' Affairs Committee, I stand committed with Governor Malloy in our efforts to find the means to end Veteran's Homelessness," **State Representative Jack Hennessy (D-Bridgeport)** said.

"Today we are celebrating what can happen when federal, state and communities work together to better care for our citizens," **Dr. Laurie Harkness, Founder and Director of VA Connecticut Healthcare System's Errera Community Care Center, said.** "VA CT and its homeless programs have been and are pleased to be working with such a rich array of accomplished and committed partners to address the disgraceful issue of homelessness among our country's Veterans. We are proud of our results as we again lead the country in addressing complicated social issues."

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