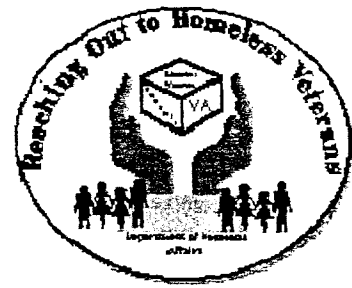


# **Homelessness Among Veterans**

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



## **Project CHALENG:**

### **Partnering with Local Communities Nationwide to Serve Homeless Veterans**

#### **The CHALENG Process**

In 1994, the VA launched Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) for Veterans, an innovative program designed to enhance the continuum of care for homeless veterans provided by the local VA and its surrounding community service agencies. The guiding principle behind Project CHALENG is that no single agency can provide the full spectrum of services required to help homeless veterans become productive members of society. Project CHALENG enhances coordinated services by bringing the VA together with community agencies and other federal, state, and local governments who provide services to the homeless to raise awareness of homeless veterans' needs and to plan to meet those needs.

The legislation guiding this initiative is contained in Public Laws 102-405, 103-446 and 105-114. The specific legislative requirements relating to Project CHALENG are that local medical center and regional office directors:

- assess the needs of homeless veterans living in the area
- make the assessment in coordination with representatives from state and local governments, appropriate federal departments and agencies and non-governmental community organizations that serve the homeless population
- identify the needs of homeless veterans with a focus on health care, education and training, employment, shelter, counseling, and outreach
- assess the extent to which homeless veterans' needs are being met
- develop a list of all homeless services in the local area
- encourage the development of coordinated services
- take action to meet the needs of homeless veterans
- inform homeless veterans of non-VA resources that are available in the community to meet their needs

At the local level, VA medical centers and regional offices designate CHALENG Points of Contact (POCs) who are responsible for the above requirements. These CHALENG POCs - usually local VA homeless center/project coordinators - work with local agencies throughout the year to coordinate services for homeless veterans.

## The Annual Project CHALENG Report and Individual Site Profiles

Each year Project CHALENG publishes a report summarizing the results of annual surveys of both local VA staff and community participants (local government, service providers, formerly and currently homeless veterans). These surveys ask for current perceptions of homeless veterans' needs, the degree of VA/community cooperation and collaboration in serving homeless veterans, and progress on local homeless veterans' program initiatives. The most recent CHALENG report for FY 2004 (*The Eleventh Annual Progress Report on Public Law 105-114: Services for Homeless Veterans Assessment and Coordination*) is available. The Report includes both VISN (Veterans Integrated Service Network) and Facility data.

**NEW** Also now available are individual site profiles. These reports incorporate CHALENG and VA NEPEC (Northeast Program Evaluation Center) data into a summary profile for each of the participating VA service sites for easy reference. Each profile includes: 1) a point-in-time estimate of homeless veterans in the CHALENG site's service area, 2) an estimate of area veterans who meet the HUD 'chronically homeless' definition, 3) a ranking of site homeless veteran needs compared to national VA rankings, 4) partnership ratings of VA efforts in collaborating with community agencies, and 5) FY 2005 site action plan.

When the Grant and Per Diem application and/or HUD Continuum of Care/Plan to End Homelessness processes are active, applicants needing to address local needs of homeless veterans may want to consult their local CHALENG POC and include local data generated from the individual site profiles VA's Northeast Program Evaluation Center (NEPEC) processes and reports the data from the annual CHALENG survey.

### For More Information on CHALENG

To find the nearest CHALENG coordinator near you or for more information, please contact the CHALENG national coordinator, Dr. Craig Burnette at 404-327-4033; email at [Craig.Burnette1@med.va.gov](mailto:Craig.Burnette1@med.va.gov). You may also contact Jim McGuire, CHALENG evaluation director, at 310-478-3711 ext. 41450; email at [James.McGuire@med.va.gov](mailto:James.McGuire@med.va.gov) or John Nakashima, CHALENG program analyst, at 310-478-3711 ext. 41946; email at [John.Nakashima@med.va.gov](mailto:John.Nakashima@med.va.gov).