



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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VA Secretary Shinseki Announces Local Grants for Homeless Veterans

Temporary Housing Grant Helps Close Gaps in Available Housing

OMAHA, Neb. – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced Sept. 19 the award of almost \$1.2 million in grant money to CenterPointe, Inc., of Lincoln, Neb., and almost \$1.1 million to the Salvation Army in Omaha.

The projects are two of 38 around the country to provide temporary housing to formerly homeless Veterans with the goal they will retain the residence as their own.

“As we drive toward our goal to end homelessness among Veterans in 2015, VA continues to find innovative ways to permanently house Veterans who were formerly homeless,” Shinseki said. “Under President Obama’s leadership, we have made incredible strides in creating programs to aid these brave men and women who have served our nation so well.”

The grant to CenterPointe, Inc. will be used to provide a daily average of 25 beds for homeless Veterans to promote increased housing stabilization. Housing will be provided at scattered apartments around Lincoln. Salvation Army also will provide a daily average of 25 beds in Omaha at 4916 California St. and 4513 Lafayette St.

The grants were awarded through a special program that gives Veterans the opportunity to take over payment of a lease instead of moving out after leaving certain VA programs, such as substance use counseling, mental health services or job training. Usually, VA programs require Veterans living in transitional housing to move out after 24 months.

Called the “Transition in Place” model, it helps close the gaps in available housing for the nation’s most vulnerable homeless Veterans, including women with children, Indian tribal populations and Veterans with substance use and mental health problems.

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“Securing permanent housing is a vital step in the journey of our homeless Veterans,” said Dr. Susan Angell, executive director for VA’s Veterans Homeless Initiative. “This is the last piece of the puzzle. It is crucial for them in continuing to lead independent lives.”

Under the program, funds go to community-based programs that provide homeless Veterans with support services and housing.

Lisa Pape, national director of homeless programs for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which oversees VA’s Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), said VHA’s focus is creating and strengthening community services around the country so homeless Veterans get the support they need.

“Our focus is creating a team of community support – pairing a variety of services, such as mental health support, employment assistance and job training – with the essential component of housing,” said Lisa Pape, national director of homeless programs for the VA’s health care system, which oversees the program.

On a single night in 2011, a national count of homeless Veterans totaled 67,495, 12 percent lower than 76,000 in 2010. As part of Obama and Shinseki’s five-year plan to eliminate Veteran homelessness by 2015, VA has committed almost \$1 billion to strengthen programs that prevent and treat the many issues that can lead to Veteran homelessness.

To help a homeless Veteran or Veteran at risk of homelessness, refer them to the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, 1-877-4AID-VET, or direct them to www.va.gov/homeless. The hotline connects homeless Veterans, Veterans at risk of becoming homeless and their families with the VA services and benefits they have earned.

The VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System’s mission is to honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. VA NWIHCS employees serve more than 161,000 Veterans in Nebraska, western Iowa and portions of Kansas and Missouri. The system includes a tertiary medical center in Omaha and a Community Living Center in Grand Island, Neb. Community-based outpatient clinics are located in Lincoln, Grand Island, North Platte, Norfolk, and Bellevue, Neb., and Shenandoah, Iowa; and a contract outreach clinic in O’Neill, Neb. For more information, visit www.nebraska.va.gov.

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