Chester County Housing Authority Launches Community Partnership to Find Homes for 100 Veterans in 100 days

The Chester County Housing Authority has launched a new campaign for finding at least 100 veterans suitable homes in the next 100 days. The Authority announced this week that it would partner with a diverse group of community agencies, as well as departments at the county and federal level, to work toward ending homelessness in the county.

“We want veterans in the community to know that we feel privileged to be able to help them meet their housing needs,” said Housing Authority’s Executive Director Dale Gravett. “Multiple organizations comprise the team working on this initiative, but we all are united in working toward the common goal of ending veteran homelessness.”

Participating partners include: the Chester County Department of Community Development; Decade to Doorways; the Housing Authority of Chester County; Veteran’s Multi-Service Center; the Coatesville Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center; Fresh Start Foundation; Chester County Mental Health and Disabilities Department; Catholic Human Services; multiple county-based emergency shelters; and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The partners met on Friday to begin the hard work necessary to reach the goal of finding 100 veterans homes by June 3. Housing targets were established for the various organizations and a core implementation and oversight committee was formed. Periodic reports will be made to chart progress in achieving the goal of housing at least 100 vets in 100 days.

Congressman Ryan Costello (PA-6) applauded the teamwork approach and pledged his support for the effort. “No veteran should ever have to use a sidewalk or park bench as a bed,” Costello said. “So I’m extremely honored to support the Chester County Housing Authority and their various community partners in ensuring adequate resources are available to provide safe shelter for veterans. As a member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, I am working to honor our commitments to the men and women who sacrificed so much for our country. The effort launched by the Chester County Housing Authority will go a long way toward fulfilling those commitments.”

The Authority’s campaign is part of a national effort to find homes for an estimated 50,000 veterans living on the streets. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ reported in August that the number of homeless veterans has dropped by roughly one-third since 2009 when 75,000 veterans were considered homeless.

In Chester County, Gravett noted a campaign similar to the one launched on Monday was successful in helping 100 veterans find permanent homes in 2014. The latest initiative is a key strategy in reaching the goals outlined in Chester County’s 10-year plan to prevent and end homelessness, Gravett said. That plan is called Decade to Doorways. Details of the plan can be viewed at www.decadetodoorways.org.

Gravett added that landlords, who have been extremely gracious in the past, will be critical in reaching the goal of finding homes for 100 veterans by June 3. He requested that landlords with affordable, available units contact the Housing Locater Service to be listed in the landlord database. The Housing Locater service can be reached at mkucherich@haccnet.org.