



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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Bringing Our Veterans Home

By Kate Coventry

Communities around the country have been working hard to end homelessness among veterans by the deadline of 2015 set by the federal government. And now DC is, too! Mayor Gray's proposed budget for next year puts the District on track to meet this goal, by making a \$4.7 million investment in permanent supportive housing for vets. With an additional local investments in 2016, the District will ensure that no one who has served our country will be living on the streets or in shelter for years at a time.

Veterans are at particular risk for homelessness. Many become homeless for the same economic reasons as others: unemployment or low wage employment and lack of affordable housing. But a large number of homeless veterans suffer from serious conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, serious physical disabilities, and addiction. These conditions are difficult to manage while homeless, meaning they often get worse and put residents at risk of dying on the streets. That's why veterans living in poverty are more than twice as likely to be homeless as other poor single adults



The mayor's investment will serve provide permanent supportive housing using a nationally-proven "Housing First" model that combines housing with supportive services. Starting with stable housing, will help homeless vets improve their physical and mental health, because it is easier for people to address those conditions when they have the foundation of a home. It also will save the city money, by avoiding expensive crisis-related services like emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, and jail. Studies from other jurisdictions have found savings of up to \$30,000 per person per year.

DCFPI is thrilled that the District is creating a way home for our veterans who desperately need it with the fiscal year 2015 budget. To learn more about efforts to combat chronic homelessness, check out www.thewayhomec.org.