



### **Veteran Example Profile: Hector**

Hector is 50. He grew up in Oklahoma City and joined the National Guard when he was 22 and served with the Guard for 12 years. He got married and worked for a local construction firm. He went to Iraq during the First Gulf War and suffered symptoms of PTSD when he returned from combat.

When he was 40 his life started to unravel. He got divorced, lost his job, and started drinking heavily. Soon thereafter he lost his house and burned through his family connections over the next couple of years. He has since lost contact with everyone from his past life including his two children and his brother. He currently lives on the streets in Los Angeles. His symptoms of PTSD and depression have gotten worse. He has been experiencing homelessness off and on for about ten years now and has been on the street constantly for at least the last two. He has unmanaged diabetes. He has had numerous interactions with the justice system including many unaddressed citations primarily incurred from the actions of living life on the street with a drug and alcohol addiction. He was approached through the outreach efforts of 100K Homes in Los Angeles and after several attempts to connect he asked to be connected to housing and services.

### **Overcoming Challenges to Access:**

First and foremost Hector needs housing. A Housing First model is most effective to help someone like Hector who has multiple barriers to a healthy stable life. Once he has stable housing, he will also need help addressing his physical health needs to manage his diabetes. He needs access to substance-abuse treatment and long-term mental health care. He also needs legal help to work through his past issues with the justice system. He needs access to income supports, benefits, job training, and readiness to begin the process of developing economic stability.

There are many programs available to help Hector get the services he needs to put him back on a path to a housed and productive life. Some programs particularly relevant to Hector's unique needs are highlighted below, but there are many other programs available. To help Hector best and use resources wisely, Hector's case-manager should connect him to just as many resources as he needs to recover. The complexity of Hector's needs will be addressed more easily if his case-manager is able to streamline his access to services as much as possible.

### **Available Resource to Help:**

**Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing:** HUD-VASH is a housing voucher program co-administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department

of Veterans Affairs. HUD-VASH vouchers are targeted to provide permanent supportive housing to Veterans like Hector who have complex needs. HUD and VA encourage vouchers to be distributed using a Housing First approach which means that Hector would be placed into housing first and then would begin to receive the services he needs to overcome his addictions and mental health issues. He would not be expected to be clean and sober before receiving housing.

**Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans:** Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs this program provides residential treatment for Veterans with intensive health care and social-vocational deficits. Hector could benefit by getting his diabetes and addictions under control and could begin to address his depression and PTSD while living in stable though temporary housing.

**Health Care for Homeless Veterans:** Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs this program targets Veterans who are the most vulnerable with serious health care needs. Hector could be placed in a community-based program that provides quality housing and supportive services to get his health care issues under control.

**Veterans Justice Outreach Initiative:** This initiative limits the criminalization and unnecessary arrest of Veterans suffering from acute and persistent mental illness through a targeted outreach program including many experiencing homelessness. Hector's case-manager could link him to resources to receive appropriate mental health and substance abuse services.

**Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program:** This provides case management and employment counseling services to Veterans who have been incarcerated or are soon to be transitioning out of incarceration and are at risk of becoming homeless. Hector could be helped with access to mainstream benefits, job training and readiness, and legal aid to address the root causes of his past incarceration.

**Second Chance Act:** The Second Chance Act is funded through the Department of Justice and could help Hector overcome the often substantial barrier to housing that a history of homelessness combined with a criminal record creates.

**Safe Havens:** In order to get off the street and into housing immediately, a local facility operating on the safe haven model would admit Hector without implementing any restrictions related to his addictions, health, mental health, or past incarcerations. Depending on the community Hector is living in, VA may also operate a Safe Haven facility that he may access, as VA is continuing to expand this option in the coming years.

**Projects for the Assistance in Transition from Homelessness:** Administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, this program helps people like Hector who are experiencing homelessness with co-occurring mental health and substance-abuse disorders get the services they need to heal and regain stability.

Mainstream programs will also help Hector with economic security. Medicaid can help supplement health benefits he received from Veterans Affairs. **Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance** can provide critical income supports.