

SECRETARY OF LABOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210

JAN 23 2015

To our partners in the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program:

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of our nation's veterans in 2014. Your efforts contributed to a reduction in the veterans' unemployment rate to 4.7 percent in 2014 — down from 5.5 percent in 2013. However, there is still a great deal of work to be done to ensure the economy is working for every veteran.

Veteran homelessness merits special attention in 2015. Too many of our veterans spent recent holidays without a home, without a table to gather around, and without shelter. The fact that 50,000 veterans experience homelessness on any given night is a national tragedy. Your hard work to help homeless and vulnerable veterans connect with supportive services that provide basic needs, such as transportation and housing, and prepare for, find, and maintain employment is essential to ending this dilemma.

In 2009, President Obama committed the federal government to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Working together at the local, state, and federal levels, and with private and nonprofit partners, we have succeeded in reducing the number of homeless veterans by one-third since 2010. We are proud to have made such an impact; however, we need your renewed efforts to get the job done and eliminate veteran homelessness this year.

It is my privilege to chair the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness in 2015. Last month, I gathered interagency leaders from the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and other departments to re-commit our agencies to end veteran homelessness in 2015. Today I ask you to join us in meeting that challenge.

Over the coming months, we will work with leaders at all levels, in every community, to identify and disseminate best practices; coordinate resources from all corners of the federal government; and engage both private and public sectors and workforce and nonprofit organizations to end veteran homelessness. To supplement these efforts, I ask you to take advantage of the following resources:

- American Job Center Webinars: The Department of Labor will host several upcoming webinars to help you and your colleagues in the American Job Centers (also referred to as One-Stop Centers) learn about and contribute to these efforts.
- Best-in-Class Guides: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans has produced a resource guide, available under the heading "Guides for Service Providers" at http://www.nchv.org/index.php/employment/employment/guides_resources/.
- Resources from the 2014 Opening Doors Summit: HUD Secretary Julian Castro and I hosted a summit in late 2014 with local officials from eleven communities that have improved access to skills training and sustainable employment for homeless or at-risk individuals. An overview of each community's efforts and other organizing documents are available online at <http://usich.gov/partnerships-for-opening-doors-summit>, and the Council will soon publish a report to provide additional information.

An important opportunity to get more involved will occur in late January as the Point in Time count takes place throughout the country. On a given night in each community, volunteers will hit the streets and enter homeless shelters to identify and count homeless persons, including those who are unsheltered. This is how we determine how many Americans – including veterans – are homeless year to year. I encourage you and your colleagues to join me and other members of the President’s Cabinet, including Veterans Affairs Secretary Bob McDonald and HUD Secretary Castro, in volunteering for the Point in Time count in your community. It is a meaningful experience that will show you why our work is more important than ever.

To learn how to sign up for the count, contact the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans at 202-546-1969. You may identify the local Continuum of Care coordinating your community’s Point in Time count by visiting the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website at <https://www.hudexchange.info/coc/> and selecting “Contact a CoC.”

Thank you again for your hard work on behalf of our nation’s veterans, and best wishes for a successful and prosperous 2015.

Sincerely,



THOMAS E. PEREZ