

Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020

Summary of Key Provisions

Overview of the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act

- The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act would take three steps to ensure that homeless veterans receive the housing vouchers and supportive services that they deserve:
 1. **Require the VA to contract out vacant HUD-VASH caseworker services to local, qualified community providers**—if a VA Medical Center has not used more than 15% of its HUD-VASH voucher allocation in the previous year and has had a HUD-VASH case manager position vacant for over 9 months.
 2. **Increase the Per Diem payments that community participants in the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program may receive for each homeless veteran that they house** by authorizing the VA to adjust the Per Diem rate based on locality pay and up to 125% of the current rate of \$48.50 a day, which better takes into account the cost of providing services to homeless veterans in different parts of the country.
 3. **Allow Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program community participants to use GPD funding to gain access to their local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**, so that they may track outcomes of homeless veterans without having to pay out-of-pocket.

Why the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act is Needed

- On July 31, 2020, the VA reported to Congress that 19,127 of the total 100,570 HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) permanent housing vouchers that have already been allocated nationwide are not currently in use, meaning that approximately 20 percent of HUD-VASH vouchers for homeless veterans are going to waste.
- There is a clear reason for this: the VA is unable to provide the wrap-around case management services needed for a homeless veteran to qualify for a HUD-VASH housing voucher due to widespread HUD-VASH case manager shortages.
 - The VA also reported 641 HUD-VASH case manager vacancies, representing 16% of the total funded positions nationwide, on July 31.
- The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act would require the VA Medical Centers to contract out HUD-VASH case management services in cases where there is a long-term case manager position vacancy at the center and underutilization of allocated housing vouchers.
- Additionally, the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act would help Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program community participants to better serve the homeless veterans that they temporarily house by taking into account the cost of housing homeless individuals in more expensive regions of the country and allowing them to more easily access their local HMIS system—thus better integrating their data with that of other community homelessness providers and potentially preserving precious homelessness resources by preventing overlapping services.