



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Announcement on Federal Decision to Expand Housing Access for Homeless Veterans**

LOS ANGELES, Calif. - Today, the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) celebrates an announcement by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announcing a new set of policy changes for which MVA and others had been advocating.

Veterans experiencing homelessness will no longer be disqualified based on their service-connected disability benefits from supportive housing projects subsidized by project-based rental assistance through the HUD-Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.

Prior to this adjustment, these benefits were considered income when determining eligibility for housing assistance, causing some veterans to exceed the income threshold for these programs. Henceforth, veterans will not be denied admission to supportive housing subsidized by HUD-VASH due to their service-connected disability benefits.

Additionally, HUD announced today they have awarded \$20 million to public housing agencies to continue to improve the HUD-VASH program.

“No veteran should have to choose between housing assistance and the benefits they’ve earned,” said MVA Director Jim Zenner. “This critical change in policy removes a major obstacle between the two. HUD and the VA should be commended for bringing us one step closer to ending veteran homelessness.”

According to HUD, they are expanding access to HUD-VASH for veterans by:

- “Requiring public housing agencies (PHAs) that administer HUD-VASH to set the initial income eligibility for veterans at 80% of Area Median Income, rather than 50% of Area Median Income. The use of this higher initial income eligibility threshold is currently optional, but HUD is now making this increase mandatory
- “Adopting an alternative definition of annual income for applicants and participants of the HUD-VASH program that excludes veterans’ service-connected disability benefits when determining eligibility”



For more information on the Administration's policy announcement, please reference today's [release](#).

Press inquiries related to MVA's continued efforts to address veteran homelessness should be directed to W. Regen Wilson, 323.823.6896, [wwilson@mva.lacounty.gov](mailto:wwilson@mva.lacounty.gov) and Irantzu Pujadas Aguirre 213.803.0899, [ipujadasaguirre@mva.lacounty.gov](mailto:ipujadasaguirre@mva.lacounty.gov)

*The L.A. County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) provides assistance to L.A. County veterans, active service members and their families with resources, programs, services and state and federal benefits, including compensation and pension claims, burial benefits and services, medical and mental health referral, education and vocational rehabilitation, home loans and grant applications, employment and job placement assistance, DMV veteran designation, legal service referrals, appeal processes, programs for incarcerated veterans, as well as aid and attendance.*

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