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100-DAY CHALLENGE TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS LAUNCHED FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF SIMILAR YOUTH CHALLENGE *Team Joins Governor Newsom's Initiative to Address Homelessness in California*



(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Following the completion of the 100-Day Challenge to reduce youth homelessness in Santa Barbara County, the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care and local stakeholders launched another 100-Day Challenge to reduce homelessness, this time among Veterans in the county. On any given night in the county, more than 150 Veterans are experiencing homelessness.

The Santa Barbara County team established a goal to connect half of this population, or 75 Veterans, to safe and stable housing, as well as supportive services. Consideration will be given to servicing the scope of needs for the men and women, some of whom have families.

“Many Veterans must navigate service-related challenges, a lack of affordable housing, and other economic hardships that civilians face,” said Santa Barbara Foundation North County Director, Kathy Simas. “Together, these dynamics often generate a number of Veterans who struggle with housing stability. The 100-day challenge presents a unique opportunity to convene cross-sector stakeholders to foster an increase in collaboration, innovative thinking and efficiency in addressing Veteran homelessness. Our Veterans deserve no less.”

In December 2019, [Governor Gavin Newsom announced a 100-Day Challenge Initiative](#) to address homelessness across California - due to the impact 100-Day Challenges have made to accelerate efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness, and in tackling Veteran and chronic homelessness across the country. In the past month in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, three communities came together virtually to launch the second cohort of 100-Day Challenges of this initiative. The focus of these Challenges is to ensure an exit from homelessness in to safe and stable housing. The counties to participate in this second cohort include Sonoma, San Francisco and Santa Barbara.

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100-DAY CHALLENGE TO REDUCE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

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Since 2012, [Rapid Results Institute has helped more than 60 U.S. cities and three states](#) launch 100-Day Challenges to accelerate progress toward ending Veteran and chronic homelessness. The Institute's work harnesses the knowledge and skills of front-line staff supporting homeless individuals and brings them together on cross-agency teams. These teams then set out to design new systems that increase efficiency, enhance resource utilization, and make data driven decisions - ultimately with the vision of ending homelessness in the United States.

Homelessness is a complex social problem that affects 1.5 million people each year in the United States, including almost 48,000 Veterans who represent about 8.5 percent of homeless people and 11 percent of all homeless adults. Between January 2009 and January 2015, the total number of Veterans experiencing homelessness dropped by 35 percent or 25,642 people.

Stakeholders on the team include:

- County of Santa Barbara Housing and Community Development
- County of Santa Barbara Veteran Services Office
- ECHO Group/Band of Brothers
- Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara
- Good Samaritan Shelter
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, HUD VASH
- New Beginnings Counseling Center
- Public Defender
- The Salvation Army
- Santa Barbara Foundation
- Stand Down Homeless Veterans Assistance Project
- United Way Home For Good
- Veteran Enterprise Services (VES) Consulting Group
- Veterans Treatment Court
- Landlords who have housed formerly homeless Veterans in Santa Barbara County
- Local Veterans with lived-experience of homelessness

Anyone interested in following the progress of these communities can sign up to receive news from RRI at www.rapidresults.org. Those interested can also follow the Challenge by searching #ChangeIn100Days and #EndHomelessness on social media.

For more information about the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care, visit <http://countyofsb.org/housing/homlessassistance/get-involved.sbc>.