



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Columbia VA Health Care System



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Columbia VA Health Care, SC Housing Team Up to Tackle Veteran Homelessness

SC Housing and the Columbia Veterans' Affairs Health Care System (VAHCS) have joined forces to make 50 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers available to homeless veterans in Lexington County. The program will go into effect Dec. 1, 2023, for the fiscal year 2024.

These vouchers are a part of a joint effort to combat the surge in homelessness among veterans in Lexington County.

Terri Davis, the Columbia VAHCS Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program (HCHV) coordinator, emphasized the significance these vouchers will have on Lexington County's Veteran community.

"The mission with the HUD VASH program is to end homelessness for our nation's most vulnerable Veterans by finding safe, stable, affordable housing," Davis said. "Fifty more vouchers will allow us to provide case management to 50 additional Veterans so that they are in a safe and secure environment."

Richard Hutto, SC Housing's executive director, highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between SC Housing and the Columbia Veterans Affairs Health Care System.

"Uniting to provide veterans with the keys to their new homes symbolizes our unwavering commitment to a brighter future for those who have served our nation," Hutto said. "Together, with the Columbia VA Health Care System, we're not just providing housing, but hope."

Highlighting key aspects of the program, Davis explained the allocation and distribution process, mentioning that Veterans desiring stable housing in Lexington County will be referred to SC Housing by a VA Social Worker for assistance in finding affordable permanent housing in their preferred area.

"We can provide case management services to Veterans who wish to reside in SC Housing's catchment area and help to fulfill the Veterans' wish to be in the area they most want," said Amanda Bonner, Columbia VAHCS HUD VASH Supervisor. "Our program's goal is to help Veterans and their families gain stable housing while promoting full recovery and independence in their community while sustaining affordable and permanent housing."

Marni Holloway, SC Housing's deputy director of programs, added the importance of providing a support service such as this cannot be overstated.

“Ensuring Veterans have a safe and stable place to call home is a profound way to honor their service and sacrifices,” Holloway said. “The impact of a supportive program like this extends far beyond housing; it nurtures the well-being of those who have served our nation.”

Eligibility criteria for the vouchers were also outlined by Davis, who mentioned that Veterans are screened based on their current housing status, income guidelines from HUD and the local housing authority, and that Veterans cannot be on the sex offender registry.

The HUD VASH program provides intensive case management, with social workers and support staff working as liaisons and Housing Navigators, aiding in the initial housing search.

"Our Social Workers and support staff continuously go the extra mile by identifying not only safe affordable housing, but also resources in the community to assist the veteran in remaining housed," said Davis.

As the program subscribes to the Housing First model of care, close monitoring is conducted to ensure agencies are working in tandem to meet the housing needs of Veterans.

Regarding future plans, both Davis and Holloway affirmed that efforts will continue to support local Housing Authorities as needs arise.

"We will always support and assist our local Housing Authorities as our Homeless Veterans' needs arise, and additional vouchers may be needed throughout our community," Davis stated.

For more information about what's going on at the Veterans medical center, clinic locations and other services available to Veterans in and around Columbia, visit the website <https://www.va.gov/columbia-south-carolina-health-care/> and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, keyword: VAColumbiaSC.

For further information or media inquiries please contact Wyatt Anthony, Columbia VAHCS Public Affairs at (803) 776-4000, ext. 53445, (803) 221-1436 or email at wyatt.anthony@va.gov.

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About the Columbia VAHCS:

The Columbia VAHCS comprises the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and seven community-based outpatient clinics located throughout South Carolina in Anderson, Florence, Greenville, Orangeburg, Rock Hill, Spartanburg, and Sumter; serving more than 90,000 veterans annually in 36 of 46 counties in South Carolina. The Columbia VA is a level 1b teaching hospital, providing a full range of patient care services, with state-of-the-art technology, education, and research. Comprehensive health care is provided through primary care, tertiary care and long-term care in areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine, and rehabilitation.

About SC Housing:

SC Housing is a self-sustaining housing finance agency committed to ensuring that South Carolinians have the opportunity to live in safe, decent and affordable housing. Agency operations are supported by a funding base that includes fees and other revenue earned through the administration of agency programs. For more information, visit SCHousing.com.