



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

News

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Contact: Michael A. Walker
(609) 989-3033

Trenton Mayor Eric Jackson and Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes Announce Their Participation in First Lady Michelle Obama's "Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015"

Trenton, N.J. — Joined by Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes and key nonprofits, including Soldier On and the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, Mayor Eric E. Jackson on Tuesday accepted First Lady Michelle Obama's "Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness by the end of 2015."

"Serious challenges must be addressed through collaboration and effective partnerships," said Mayor Jackson. "Ending veteran homelessness is a critical issue that requires human-centered problem solving and a coordinated approach. I accept the First Lady's "Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness," and I underscore its important mission. No veteran in America should have to face homelessness."

Through Trenton's Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services Center (CEAS), a comprehensive one-stop initiative for homeless adults launched last April, Mayor Jackson is committing resources and personnel to execute the "Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015" in partnership with Mercer County, Soldier On, the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness and other nonprofit and veteran-services organizations.

Accompanying Mayor Eric E. Jackson, Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes also signed on to the challenge.

"We have shown that we can rapidly house families once we have a focused effort. We can and will do the same for veterans. We will house every homeless veteran before the end of 2015," Hughes said. Mercer County has received national recognition for its Family Rapid Rehousing program, which follows the Housing First approach that centers on quickly providing homeless people with housing and then providing services.

Frank Cirillo, Executive Director of the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, a strategic partner, said that the commitment to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 is simply not realistic without strong partnerships with nonprofit organizations and veteran-services providers in our area, such as Soldier On and Community Hope. He added that the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness has been at the forefront of the issue of homelessness and has played an important role in developing the "Plan to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015."

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“The Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness is joining with Mayor Jackson and Mercer County Executive Hughes in the “Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness by 2015” because to end homelessness we know that it takes a multipronged effort supported by committed partners,” said Cirillo. “We have these elements in place and will meet our target goal.”

“The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness” is part of the “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,” which works to solidify partnerships and secure commitments to end Veteran homelessness from mayors across the country. Specifically, the call to action – announced by First Lady Michelle Obama and amplified by the HUD Secretary, by leaders across HUD, VA, USICH, and by the National League of Cities – is for mayors to make a commitment to ending veteran homelessness in their cities in 2015.

To date, the area partners have identified 79 homeless veterans in Mercer County. Through various efforts and resources, 61 homeless veterans have been housed and the partners are confident that by the end of 2015, the remaining 18 veterans will be housed. Additionally, the city's CEAS Center has assisted 90 adults with various social services, including finding temporary and permanent housing.

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