

## CALL TO ACTION

### Ending Veteran Homelessness in the Trenton/Mercer Community

#### WHAT WE KNOW:

No one should ever go without a safe, stable place to call home. Yet every night across the county, including Mercer County, veterans are experiencing homelessness. In 2013, 130 individuals self-identified as veterans as they entered emergency shelter. This is 10% of the population who become homeless every year. Approximately one third of this population have histories of long term homelessness; the other two thirds are newly homeless. This is a unique population that needs and deserve our special attention.



The *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* set a goal to end Veteran homelessness in the United States before the end of 2015. Several communities, such as Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Houston, New Orleans and others are already on track to meet or beat this goal.

The **Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness** will take the lead to ensure that we meet this goal. This is a call to action to end veteran homelessness in the Trenton/Mercer community.

#### SOLUTION:

The Trenton/Mercer community is well positioned to solve veterans' homelessness. The newly developed **CEASe Homelessness System** provides us with the opportunity to focus attention on this important group. The new system provides the data that is needed to identify the population and can provide the interventions that they need.

What is needed is a laser focus on the issue: we need a commitment to end veterans' homelessness and actions to make it a reality.

We need leadership and partnerships with government, non-profits, and business along with the resources identified by the Federal Government to focus on ending homelessness.

We need to identify the veteran's population and work with the Veterans Administration to identify who is eligible for Veterans Affairs housing and who is not. We need a strategy for both populations.

We need to prioritize veterans in our funded programs and access new pathways to housing that have not yet been fully explored (housing authorities and senior housing).

We need to leverage the powers inherent in the County Executive and Mayor's office to explore all available housing and service resources.

We need a plan to accomplish this vision and the commitment from the community as a whole to make sure that the vision becomes a reality.



<http://www.usveteransmagazine.com/>



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**The Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness will take the lead in making this vision a reality.**

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Engage County Executive Brian Hughes and Mayor Eric Jackson as Champions to End Veterans Homelessness.
- Create a Task Force to define problem and identify specific solutions.
- Create visibility for the problem and the solutions.
- Create a Plan by September 2015.
- Engage the business community, foundations and veterans organizations in the plan to End veterans homelessness.
- Raise funds to implement the plan.
- Work in partnership with the Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care.

**We can, We must, We will  
End Veterans Homelessness by 2016 in the Trenton/Mercer  
Community**

