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NEWS RELEASE

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HELP IS ON THE WAY FOR HOMELESS VETERANS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, HOC TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL HOUSING VOUCHERS
UNDER VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (VASH) PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently announced the allocation of 25 new Housing Choice Vouchers to the Housing Opportunities Commission for homeless veterans in Montgomery County.

The new vouchers are part of the HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) program. The program combines HUD Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Veterans Affairs at its medical centers and in the community.

The VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C. will provide names of homeless veterans in Montgomery County eligible for the vouchers. The Housing Opportunities Commission will oversee the administration of the vouchers. Veterans using the vouchers will pay a portion of their income (30 percent) toward rent; the Housing Opportunities Commission will pay the remainder of the rent due to the landlord.

Rep. Chris Van Hollen and the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs were instrumental in securing the additional VASH vouchers for Montgomery County.

"After answering the call to duty and serving their country on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, thousands of veterans walk the streets of this country without a place to lay their heads at night. Whatever the causes of their homelessness, these warriors deserve our respect and support. Providing housing vouchers is just one thing we can do to address the silent epidemic of homelessness affecting so many of our veterans," said Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

"We as a community owe much to veterans for their service and sacrifice," said County Executive Isiah Leggett, a Vietnam veteran. "Providing additional housing vouchers is an important step to help those veterans in need find a safe and affordable place to live in Montgomery County."

"The Montgomery Commission on Veterans Affairs was pleased to initiate the request for these vouchers and to see that the federal government recognizes that there is hardship and financial need in the County for over 100 homeless veterans in dire need of housing subsidies and support services. For too long, this population has been ignored and not properly cared for in spite of their service to this country, particularly the Vietnam Veterans who returned without receiving appropriate mental health and substance abuse services," said Bill Gray, Chairman of the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs.

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"Recent news stories about soldiers returning from war zones with disabilities that prevent them from resuming normal lives confirm what many people working in the social services and homeless services fields already know: namely that many veterans are part of the at-risk population in our community," said Annie Alston, Executive Director of the Housing Opportunities Commission.



“Veterans need all kinds of services to get them back on their feet and they especially need help paying for housing. I am delighted that we now have an additional 25 Housing Choice Vouchers to help Montgomery County veterans. Through the VASH program, these veterans will receive both housing help from HOC and supportive services through the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center,” Alston said.

The Veterans Administration estimates that 107,000 veterans in the United States are homeless on any given night. Over the course of a year, approximately twice that many experience homelessness. Only eight percent of the general population can claim veteran status, but nearly one-fifth of the homeless population are veterans.

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