



CLPHA

The Vital Link: Connecting Housing and Services

A publication of the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities

"VASH has provided veterans in our county with the means of accessing vital services such as housing and medical assistance," says Susan Benner, HACSB's Executive Director. "Through our strong partnership with the local VA hospital we hope to continue to serve more veterans, as more VASH vouchers become available, and continue to showcase success stories such as Ms. Watson's. The program works."

San Bernardino, California

Kathleen Watson is a U.S. Air Force veteran. After serving as a medical technician during Vietnam, she earned a criminal justice degree, took a job with the County Probation Department, and bought a house.

But she lost her job and consequently her home, and lived in temporary shelters until she entered the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. VASH combines rental assistance with intensive case management that connects clients with a range of services, including help finding an apartment, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and legal and financial counseling.

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) partners with the local VA hospital—the Loma Linda Medical Center—to match homeless veterans with housing and social services.

As a result, Kathleen was able to lease an apartment near the hospital where she has access to medical care.

"VASH has taken me out of the street and lifted me up from the very bottom," she says. "It has helped turn my life around."

Case managers work closely with residents to establish personal goals and to access services they need. There are monthly in-home and medical center visits.

"This is a resource for them given that they have served their country," says Enid Reece, a social worker with the program. "We definitely try to remind them that this is not a handout, this is something that is available to them because of what they have done for the country."