Veteran Families Program

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

The Veteran Families Program assists homeless and at-risk veterans and their families to obtain/retain housing and return to lives of promise and productivity. The program focuses on veterans who are homeless (approximately 80%) and also serves veterans who are at imminent risk of losing their current housing and finding themselves on the streets.

Services

Supportive services offered by the program include the following:

- Community and street outreach (e.g., homeless shelters, encampments, community colleges, employment offices)
- Case management (e.g., assistance accessing food pantries, health clinics and other critical needs services; apply for VA and other benefits)
- Life skills training (e.g., budgeting, credit management)
- Disability application assistance (staff are specially trained in assisting Veterans to file for SSI or SSDI benefits through the Social Security Administration)
- Employment services (e.g., work readiness training, vocational training, employer outreach, job placement and retention)
- Landlord outreach and housing search assistance (to overcome income and credit barriers)
- Temporary financial assistance (for security deposits, moving, utilities, partial rent payments, child care, and emergency expenses)
- Legal services (e.g., military discharge upgrades, criminal record expungement, child support, alimony, divorce and other areas of family law)
- Help obtaining household supplies and furniture for apartments

The program targets services to the most vulnerable, very low-income veterans including post-9/11 veterans struggling with the transition to civilian life, chronically homeless veterans, and veterans with children.

The program seeks to fill critical gaps in community care by providing services that typically are not offered by other veteran programs in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

Program Impact

We see their struggles daily. During the last year, 96% of homeless veteran families served by 1736 Family Crisis Center had been living in places not meant for human habitation, including abandoned buildings, on the streets, in cars, and similar settings; the other 4% had been living in homeless shelters. More than one third of participants had been homeless for more than one year. 32% of households had minor children. Nearly half of homeless and at-risk participants (48% of adults and children) had one or more disabilities. 37% of households entered the program with zero income; 23% had less than $1,000 in monthly income at program entry, placing the average rental unit out of their reach.

From October 2013 to November 2015, our Veteran Families Program has served 769 homeless and at-risk veteran families – consisting of 1,206 adults and children. Averaging approximately 31 veteran households per month, 1736 Family Crisis Center has prevented 89% of at-risk households from losing their home and has assisted 80% of homeless households obtain permanent housing.

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) designated the agency’s Director of Veteran Programs as a “Program Mentor”. As one of only three such designees in California for rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention services, our Director assists the VA, providing training and capacity building assistance to peer agencies in Southern California.
Client Stories of Triumph and Success

Below we share three recent client stories, where through participation in the Veteran Families Program, life threatening challenges and obstacles became triumphs and successes. Please note that client names have been changed in the stories to maintain confidentiality.

Imagine moving your family of five kids every other month because you have no place to live. This had been happening in one veteran’s life for more than two years. In May of last year, Maria had no place left to turn and she was desperate. She was the sole support of her children and was working hard at keeping a job and her kids in school as they moved from place to place. She made the decision to call a veteran’s help number she saw on a billboard when she had run out of options. “I called the number and explained my family would be homeless in a few days. Everyone I encountered was so comforting and eager to help”, says Maria. 1736 Family Crisis Center’s Veteran Families Program was contacted to assist and one of our case managers met with Maria and her family to help her fill out the necessary paperwork. The program helped Maria find appropriate housing for her family, provided financial assistance to pay the move-in costs of their new rental home, and also helped her apply for VA medical benefits. A year later, Maria is still employed, her children are in school and their lives have stabilized. Maria adds, “Everything is getting better little by little. Thank you so much for saving my family.”

When we met David, he was living on the streets in Orange County. He was homeless and had no job. Well, he had a job about a year ago, but he lost it, then exhausted all of his unemployment income, and then was evicted from a friend’s mobile home because he had no money for rent. Within a month of entering our program, we were able to find affordable permanent housing for David. The Veteran Families Program paid a security deposit and four months of rental assistance. This gave David time to focus his energy on finding a job. The Veteran Families Program case manager and employment specialist gave David the educational resources to help him build a resume, interview successfully, and better manage his finances. In three months’ time David was offered a position at a major retail company. “With support from 1736 Family Crisis Center and their program I was able to get back on my feet. I was destitute, but now I have a future,” says David.

Becky was a homeless, post-9/11 veteran living in a vehicle with her young son. She had a job nine months out of the year in a school system, but during the three months she didn’t work, she fell behind on rent and was evicted. She had difficulty obtaining new housing due to poor credit and the high security deposits she encountered. Our Veteran Families Program was able to help Becky find a suitable apartment for herself and her son in about six weeks. Our program assisted with her application fee/rental checks and staff negotiated with a landlord to give her an opportunity in spite of her damaged credit; the program also provided assistance with a security deposit and partial monthly rent payments for several months. Staff also helped Becky find a part-time job to provide income during the summer months. Her case manager enrolled her in financial literacy training so she could learn to budget her money. Becky was so very happy to have a home for herself and her son that she sent a picture holding the keys to her new apartment. She and son now have a stable home and are doing well.

About

1736 Family Crisis Center

The mission of 1736 Family Crisis Center is to comprehensively help children, women, men and families through crisis circumstances, including domestic violence, homelessness, abuse, neglect, poverty, substance use, post-traumatic stress disorder, and distress, and to improve their prospects for long-term housing, safety, survival, financial stability, and success. Currently, the agency operates four confidentially-located shelters for domestic violence victims, an Orange County Veteran Families Program, a Los Angeles County Veteran Families Program, an emergency youth shelter, a Legal Services Program, a job development and placement program, five 24-hour crisis/suicide hotlines, and four Community Service Centers that serve low-income individuals, children and families.

As part of our community services, 1736 FCC coordinates outreach and educational activities to promote awareness of domestic violence, at-risk youth, and homelessness issues and offers linkages to available internal and community resources. Each year we reach approximately 25,000 individuals through direct services and community educational outreach efforts.