

For Immediate Release

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New Hampshire Convenes 2024 Ending Veteran Homelessness Summit in Manchester

MANCHESTER, N.H. (June 13, 2024) — The [N.H. Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services](#) (NHDMAVS) hosted the 2024 Ending Veteran Homelessness In New Hampshire Summit on Tuesday, June 4. The event brought together leaders and subject matter experts from federal, regional, state, and local organizations and from across multiple sectors, including housing, human services, and Veterans services, for a day focused on level setting leaders on the Veteran homelessness situation; developing and mature approaches and solutions for mitigating some of the toughest barriers to housing stability; and shaping conditions for advocacy going forward.

NHDMAVS facilitated the Summit with support and participation from many partners and stakeholders, including N.H. state legislators, mayors, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Manchester Healthcare System, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Labor VETS, N.H. Housing, the Apartment Association of N.H., Harbor Care, Easterseals N.H., Clear Path for Veterans New England, Tamposi Brothers Holdings LLC, N.H. Department of Health and Human Services, N.H. Council on Housing Stability, Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Manchester Health Department, Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, N.H. Department of Corrections, N.H. Commission on Aging, the Ending Veteran Homelessness in N.H. Project's Veteran Steering Committee and many others.

“As New Hampshire looks to meet its legislative mandate to end Veteran homelessness by 2026, the Ending Veteran Homelessness in New Hampshire Summit provides a critical opportunity for all stakeholders to meet face to face, share our collective knowledge and align on a path forward together,” said Major General David J. Mikolaities, the N.H. Adjutant General. Going further, Major General Mikolaities shared a call to action:

“George Washington made this keen observation during the Revolutionary War when he wrote to a New England governor: ‘The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by this country.’ That’s the why – we thank and appreciate our veterans for preserving that American Dream – our freedoms and economic prosperity - and to think of a homeless veteran, no matter the number, tugs at our moral conscience... Help us solve this problem and find a solution.”

In its [2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress](#), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognized New Hampshire as one of just six states to report an overall decrease in Veteran homelessness between 2022 and 2023, following a period of increasing overall homelessness and Veteran homelessness in New Hampshire and across the country. The decline was attributed in part to the state’s concerted effort to place Veterans into rapid rehousing programs, thereby diverting entry into emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing programs and creating additional system capacity in these types of housing programs.

Many of the organizations in attendance played a critical role in New Hampshire’s reduction in overall Veteran homelessness in 2023, having developed a project charter for the state seeking to create a system that engages Veterans within 24 hours of being entered into Coordinated Entry, thus providing Veterans simpler, quicker, and more efficient access to permanent housing within 90 days.

Presentations addressed the Veteran demographic landscape and homelessness situation, the overarching context from the national to state to cities and towns, overviewed some of the resources and support available, and focused on developing approaches to overcome the toughest challenges facing Veteran housing stability: lack of affordable and

available housing, the impact of mental health and substance use disorder (SUD), criminal backgrounds and other than honorable discharges and the increasing aged Veteran population.

Manchester Mayor Jay Ruais, who serves as an officer in the New Hampshire Army National Guard, takes the issue of veterans' homelessness personally.

"We owe a debt to these men and women that cannot ever be repaid in full, but it's incumbent upon us to try," said Mayor Ruais. "We're working hard here in the city to increase the available units we have, and we are approaching some monumental changes. I am committed to doing everything in my power to assist those who have done so much for our city, state, and nation. It's now our turn to serve them."

Key highlights from the discussion included: the need for greater collaboration across the community of practice; treating the situation as a public health crisis; raising awareness and developing education focused on resources and services available; the need to develop targeted, business model-driven landlord incentive plans; continuing to address NIMBY attitudes through engagement; supporting planning and zoning policy changes and the need for non-traditional approaches; improving timely access to mental health care and providing more tailored approaches integrated with broader "wrap around" services addressing a "Whole Health" approach to wellbeing; legal assistance for Veterans and N.H.'s Veteran Treatment courts as example of success; and reframing the aging discussion, increasing partnerships with housing providers and Aging Service Organizations and developing data driven policy change considerations.

"What the VA and HUD is encouraging us to do is work with our community partnerships to get Veterans into stable housing faster," said Tracey Noonan, Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD VASH) program manager, VA Manchester Healthcare System. "The realization I had as I was preparing to speak to you is that each and every Veteran that comes into the program, maybe they met with two people, maybe five, but the reality of what it takes to get someone house is probably about 10-15 people in the background, across five or six agencies."

Results from the summit will be shared with N.H. leadership and the community of practice in support of operationalizing solutions for implementation both in the near term and in building bridges to longer term strategic plans.

About N.H. Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services

The Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services was established legislatively in New Hampshire in 2019. The Department is led by Major General David Mikolaities, the N.H. Adjutant General, and Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General. The Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services consolidated Veterans services from across the state, including the Division of Veterans Services, the Division of Community-Based Military Programs, and the State Veterans Cemetery. The Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services shares a mission triad with the New Hampshire National Guard—fight and win our nation's wars, secure the homeland, and build enduring partnerships. To learn more about the N.H. Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services, visit <https://www.dmavs.NH.gov/>.

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Major General David J. Mikolaities addresses the audience at the 2024 Ending Veteran Homelessness in New Hampshire Summit, held in Manchester, New Hampshire on June 4, 2024. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services.



Manchester Mayor Jay Ruais addresses the audience at the 2024 Ending Veteran Homelessness in New Hampshire Summit, held in Manchester, New Hampshire on June 4, 2024. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services.



Panelists address the audience at the 2024 Ending Veteran Homelessness in New Hampshire Summit, held in Manchester, New Hampshire on June 4, 2024. Courtesy of the New Hampshire Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services.