



**Statement of CSH before**  
**The New York City Council Committee on General Welfare and Committee on Veterans**  
Ending Veteran Homelessness and Hunger in New York City | November 10, 2014

Good afternoon. My name is Erin Burns-Maine and I am a program manager with CSH. CSH works nationally to advance solutions that use housing as a platform for services to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, maximize public resources and build healthy communities. Our organization offers capital, expertise, information and innovation that allow our partners to use supportive housing to achieve stability, strength and success for the people in most need.

CSH is dedicated to creating the housing and service models that work to reach and house the most vulnerable veterans, along with the systems needed to identify and engage them. In New York, CSH has served on the MISSION: HOME Leadership Team alongside Veterans Affairs (VA), the New York City Departments of Homeless Services (DHS), Housing Preservation and Development, the Human Resources Administration (HRA), and the New York City Housing Authority, service providers and advocates. Our team has been researching assessment tools and holding weekly case conferencing to ensure that every veteran in a NYC shelter is matched with the most appropriate housing resource. These meetings demonstrated the dedication of the VA, HRA, and DHS to end veteran homelessness in NYC. Over the next few months, we will continue to explore evidence-based models from all over the country, and develop a common assessment tool that will assist us in placing every homeless veteran into the most appropriate housing option, as quickly as possible.

This tool alone will not end veteran homelessness. Housing ends homelessness. There are two important Federal housing programs for preventing veteran homelessness and housing subsidies for rehousing veterans. The first is the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. SSVF funds the staff and resources local service providers need to help veteran families maintain their housing and identify and place them into new housing if they need it. The second resource is the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, more commonly known as HUD-VASH. This program combines rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the VA.

But there is a subset of veterans who will require more services and support to achieve housing stability. Forty-five percent of homeless veterans suffer from mental illness and fifty percent have substance use disorders. Homeless veterans are more likely to be chronically homeless than non-veteran homeless persons. Permanent supportive housing is the solution for these most vulnerable veterans. Permanent supportive housing combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges, such as mental illness and substance use disorders, to live stably and thrive.

The majority of supportive housing units developed in NY have been created through City-State supportive housing initiatives, known as “New York-New York” (NY/NY) agreements. NY/NY was the resource that made it possible for the Jericho Project to develop Fordham Village and Kingsbridge Terrace, two veteran-dedicated supportive housing developments providing housing to 132 of New York’s most vulnerable veterans. By almost every measure, NY/NY has been a success. The current program has reduced use of shelters, hospitals, psych centers and incarceration, for an average net public savings of \$10,100/unit per year; decreased chronic homelessness among single adults by 47% in first five years; and provided stability with more than 75% of NY/NY III tenants remaining housed after two years.

More than 20,000 households per year are found eligible for supportive housing but there’s currently only one housing unit available for every six eligible applicants. This ratio will only worsen if a new City-State supportive housing agreement is not reached this year as the current agreement expires next year. CSH, and 183 other NYC-based agencies endorsing the Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing, urge the City to establish a new agreement to create 30,000 units of supportive housing over the next ten years. Units created under this agreement will have a significant impact on ending veteran homelessness and providing homeless veterans the housing and support they need to live with stability, autonomy and dignity.

Thank you for your time and attention.