



## BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

### Homeless Veterans Transitional Housing in Yakima County



**A collaborative vision – giving homeless veterans an opportunity to become self-sufficient.**

Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health (CWCMH), in collaboration with the Yakima Vet's Center, operates a 12 bed transitional housing program for homeless veterans at 301 South Sixth Street in Yakima. The site was donated by the City of Yakima. A \$118,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs paid for a large portion

of the renovation. Doors opened in 2000.

The Veterans' Program Transitional Housing Program gives each resident an opportunity to break their cycle of homelessness. Residents are encouraged to change their homeless lifestyle through the development of living skills, personal growth, recovery, self-reliance, productivity, residential stability, and community involvement. The program is designed to give each resident an opportunity to stabilize their living environment while exploring employment opportunities and a more permanent living situation.

Referrals to the program originate with the Vet's Center Outreach program or through the Walla Walla VA Medical Center. Once admitted a team of professionals work with each veteran in the areas of case management, mental health therapy, substance abuse counseling, and job procurement. All aspects of the program are designed to give homeless veterans an opportunity to become self-sufficient.

#### **Criteria for home placement include:**

1. Must be a veteran of any branch of the Armed Services of United States.
2. Applicants must be clean and sober for at least 28 days and may be required to submit to a pre-placement drug screen. They should also have a recovery plan in place that includes weekly attendance at drug / alcohol outpatient support groups either through the VA Outreach Program, Alcoholics Anonymous, or through the mental health MICA program.
3. Applicants must lack fixed and regular permanent housing.
4. Applicants should be medically and mentally stable enough to live safely in an unsupervised community living setting.

5. Applicants are required to undergo a background check through the Washington State Patrol. Any applicant who is a registered sex offender, arsonist, or has an outstanding warrant for his/her arrest will not be accepted into this program.
6. Applicant should be willing to follow program goals and requirements, and be willing to work cooperatively with staff and other residents.
7. Applicants must be willing to actively search for employment within the first 30 days of residency, or if on a disability be willing to engage in constructive daily activities. All residents must be willing to transition to an independent living situation within two years.
8. Any applicant who is on probation must be willing to sign an information release that allows staff to share information with his/her assigned probation officer.
9. Applicants must attend a screening interview conducted by the program staff prior to being accepted into the program.

**Want to Know More?**

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