# Ending Veteran Homelessness Overview

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs have adopted specific criteria and benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness, in order to guide communities as they build the systems needed to achieve the goal.

## Criteria for Achieving the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness

1. The community has identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness.
2. The community provides shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it.
3. The community provides service-intensive transitional housing only in limited instances.
4. The community has capacity to assist Veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing.
5. The community has resources, plans, partnerships, and system capacity in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future.

## Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness

1. Chronic and long-term homelessness among Veterans has been ended.
2. Veterans have quick access to permanent housing.
3. The community has sufficient permanent housing capacity.
4. The community is committed to Housing First and provides service-intensive transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances.

In TX-601, the criteria are established via the Veteran Policy & Procedure framework and are adopted by homeless veteran service providers.

The Benchmarks are evaluated by reviewing the Veteran Specific By-Name List data elements.

Functional Zero

### What is the difference between the definition of “functional zero” used by Community Solutions and the federal criteria and benchmarks used by the federal partners?

For the purposes of their Zero: 2016 initiative, Community Solutions considers a community to have ended Veteran homelessness (i.e., achieved “functional zero”) **when the number of Veterans experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness at any point in time is no greater than the community’s monthly housing placement rate.** Ideally, a community would never have more Veterans experiencing homelessness than it has the proven capacity to house in any given month. Communities in Zero: 2016 are leading the way in striving toward a higher level of efficiency in the pace of housing placements than is required by the federal criteria and benchmarks. These communities are also receiving significant investments of federally-funded technical assistance in order to be able to achieve this higher level of efficiency.

The federal criteria and benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness also measure a community’s capacity to assist Veterans to obtain permanent housing quickly, but uses additional measures to make this determination. The federal criteria and benchmarks also look at how quickly Veterans are permanently housed after becoming homeless and the extent to which the community has ended chronic homelessness among Veterans. They were created to allow federal partners to confirm that communities have reached the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. When developing these criteria and benchmarks, the federal partners believed it was important to consider community context when determining whether or not a community has met this goal.

The federal criteria and benchmarks and the Zero: 2016 measure of success are different but also complimentary. The strategies that are key components of Zero: 2016 are also incorporated into the federal criteria and benchmarks. Yet it is possible that a community may be able to demonstrate that either it has met the federal criteria but still have additional work to do in order to meet the Zero: 2016 definition of functional zero, or that it has met the Zero: 2016 definition but has additional work to do in order to meet the federal criteria. Ideally, all communities participating will strive to meet both.