

City Leaders Summit

April 23, 2026



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

What California Cities Are Doing to Support Homeless Veterans

Jennifer Perez, Mayor, City of Norwalk

Jesus Gomez, City Manager, City of Norwalk

Jordan Marks, Assessor, County of San Diego

Tramecia Garner, Executive Director, Swords to Plowshares

Moderator: Dr. Michael Cao, Council Member, City of Arcadia



City of Norwalk

Veterans Villa

April 23, 2026

NORWALK VETERANS VILLA: 13629 San Antonio Drive



- Partnership with Mercy Housing
- 60 supportive housing units for veterans and families of veterans
- 20 units exclusively for residents experiencing homelessness
- 100% affordable housing
- Wraparound Services

Provide clean, safe, and affordable housing by fostering independence, restoring dignity and promoting stability.

City Outreach

- Town Hall Style
- Focus Groups

Mercy Housing Outreach

- Connection to/ Enrollment for VASH participants
- In person engagement
- Flyer distribution & public notices

NORWALK VETERANS VILLA

Selection of Developers

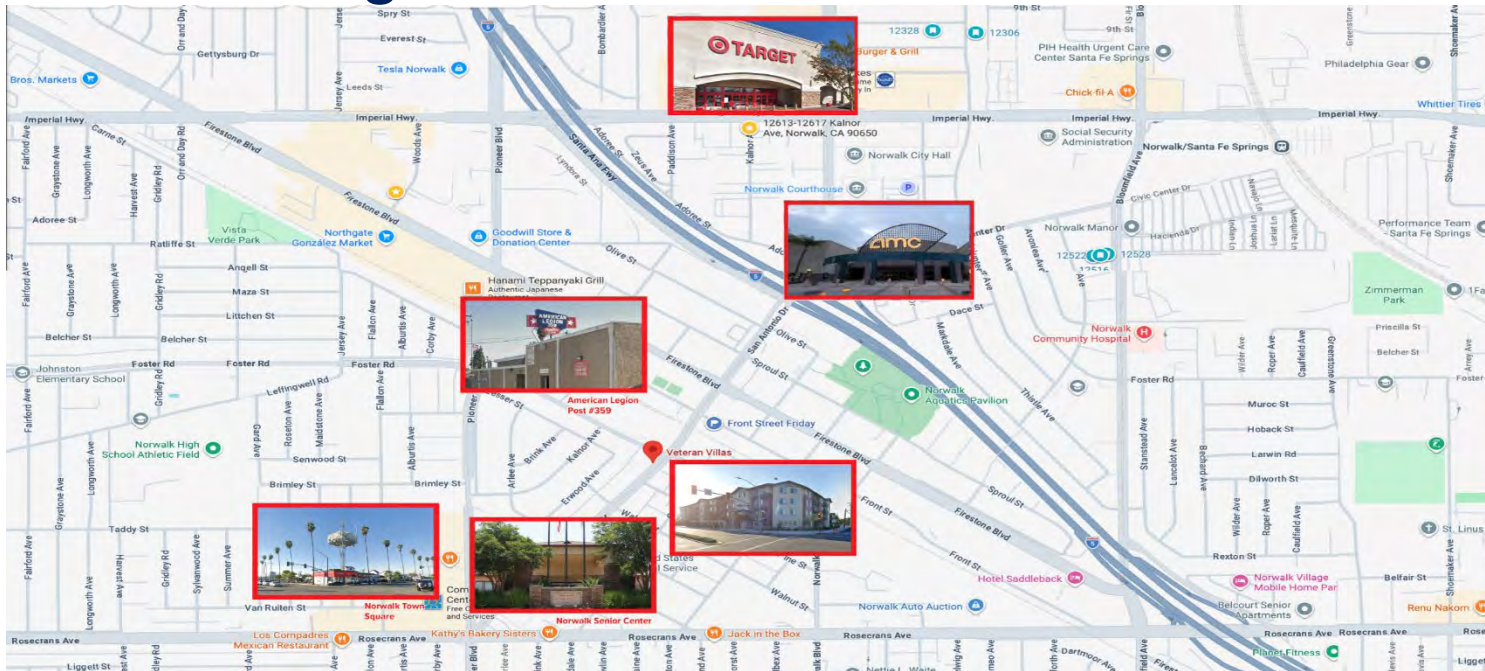
- Experience with Affordable Housing
- Success in Funding and Construction
- Ability to provide wraparound services



NORWALK VETERANS VILLA

Site Selection: Criteria

- City-owned, vacant site
- Walking distance to the American Legion
- Walking distance to the Senior Center
- Walking distance to retail



NORWALK VETERANS VILLA

Project Funding:

- Long term ground lease

First Citizens Taxable Construction Loan	\$ 28,094,330.00
City of Norwalk	3,000,000.00
State Grant	3,000,000.00
Limited Partners – Tax Credit Equity	2,442,354.00
Other: Accrued Deferred Interest and GP Contributions	2,094,186.00
AHP	885,000.00
City of Norwalk – Mitigation Fee Loan	778,665.00
NEF – Bring the Homes Grant	30,000.00
TOTAL FUNDING:	\$ 40,324,535.00

NORWALK VETERANS VILLA



Thank You

JORDAN MARKS, ESQ.
Assessor/ Recorder/ County Clerk

*Supporting Homeless Veterans
and addressing the missing
middle resources
in San Diego County*



SERVING OUR VETERANS





JORDAN Z. MARKS, ESQ. ***ASSESSOR/RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK*** ***COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO***



- Elected in 2022 Countywide
- Former Assessor Chief Deputy / Taxpayer Advocate
- Licensed Attorney
- Certified California Property Tax Appraiser
- Certified University of San Diego Cybersecurity Executive
- 2021 & 2024 San Diego County Taxpayer Watchdog Award Winner
- Serving our community



We put people first with great customer service!

1. TOP CUSTOMER SERVICE RATING

98.2% Positive Customer Service Rating & 4 ½ Stars on YELP

2. TOP FINANCIAL STEWARD

We returned \$3,000,000+ annually to County general budget over 8 years

3. OUR OFFICE OPERATES TO SERVE YOU

Extended office to 5 pm & include a Saturday for marriage service

4. MORE ONLINE SERVICES, LESS PAPER, LEADING INNOVATION

New programs moving taxpayers from inline to online. Going green – new digitization process reduced office printing over 650,000 pieces of paper annually.

5. REDUCED YOUR FEES

Reduced copy fees from \$2 per page- to \$2 first page & 5 cents each additional page – to 45 cents for any sized document delivered electronically.





OFFICE OF TAXPAYER ADVOCATE



MARTIN ARIAS

Taxpayer Advocate

Cell: (619) 541-1134

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Ensure fairness



Provide education



Correct systemic issue



Supporting Disabled Veterans

San Diego Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's Office



What We Do – *property tax savings*

1. Assist veterans in accessing the Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption (DVET)
2. Qualify for low-income additional benefit for families with a total household income less than \$80,000
3. Provide one-on-one case support to resolve complex property tax issues
4. Conduct bilingual outreach and education workshops across the community

Impact & Outcomes



1. In 2018, we had 4,500 100% disabled veterans and surviving spouses qualified
2. Launched a public-private partnership education campaign, using Zero additional budget dollars, with REALTORS® Associations and County Office of Military and Veteran Affairs, and Veterans administration to reach qualified disabled veterans and surviving spouses.
3. In 2025, we qualified over 22,000 veterans and their surviving spouses for over \$32 Million in property tax savings
4. Qualified over 1,500 families for the additional "Low-Income" savings

San Diego had multiple “Stand Down” events to serve homeless veterans
we found a way to help Veterans not become homeless!



**VETERANS VILLAGE
OF SAN DIEGO**



Reaching Veterans that may become homeless

the "missing middle"



1. 2024 launched our first Veterans Resource Fair to expand access and delivered more resources through partnerships with veteran organizations and community groups
2. In 2024 we had 500+ veterans families attend and in 2025 we had over over 40 support vendors and 1,000+ veteran families attend!

Promoting Homeless Veterans Services: Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)



VETERAN RENT ASSISTANCE²⁰²⁵ PROGRAMS



HUD-VASH

Combines housing vouchers
with VA supportive services
for homeless veterans



SSVF

Provides financial and
supportive services for very
low-income veteran families
to prevent homelessness or
rapidly re-house them

LifeSTEPS
lifestepsusa.org



The VASH Program (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) is a collaborative program between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to provide rental assistance to homeless veterans and offer ongoing VA case management and supportive services.

Many veterans have used the VASH program to successfully transition to a better life.

**THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE
YOU, OUR VETERANS AND OUR COMMUNITY!**

I'm here to serve you!



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CALIFORNIA CITY LEADER SUMMIT 2026

What California Cities Are Doing to Support Homeless Veterans:

A NONPROFIT'S PERSPECTIVE

Presented by Tramecia Garner, Executive Director



VETS HELPING VETS SINCE 1974



GET TO KNOW SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

Mission:

TO SUPPORT VETERANS AS THEY NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGES OF POST-MILITARY LIFE, AND TO PREVENT AND END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS THROUGH WRAP-AROUND CARE AND INFORMED ADVOCACY.

Who we serve:

3,000+ VETERANS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA EVERY YEAR.

92%

are low-income
per HUD guidelines.

40%

experienced homelessness
averaging **3.5 years** before
seeking services.

60%

are veterans of color
with **36%** identifying as Black.

69%

**are diagnosed with
disabling conditions**
like PTSD and TBI.



OUR WRAPAROUND SERVICES



Legal services for connection to VA care & benefits



Drop-in case management, mental health, and peer services + **Outreach** services



C.O.V.E.R.
Veteran-centered program for incarcerated veterans



Permanent supportive housing and transitional housing beds + **Homelessness prevention** and housing placement services



Employment and job training services



Financial literacy and empowerment services



Veterans Community Center and community-building services



THE BARRIERS WE SEE

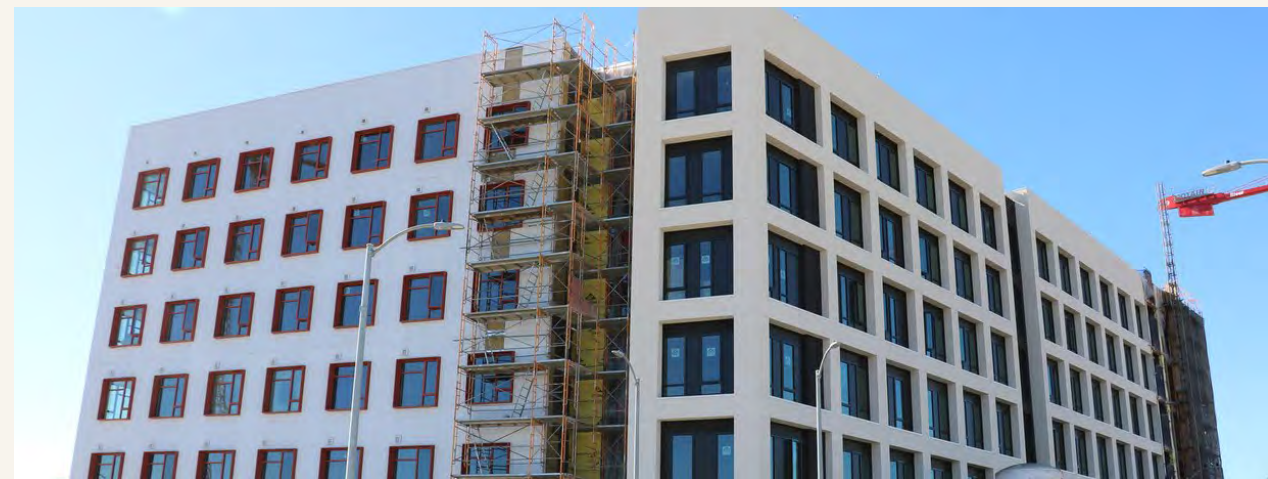
- All veterans are not taken care of by the VA or federal programs.
- Cultural and bureaucratic barriers prevent many veterans from accessing VA healthcare and benefits.
- Mental health issues – often with co-occurring substance use – are the primary cause cited for homelessness among unsheltered veterans.
- Adults in their 50s and 60s are the fastest-growing group seeking homelessness services. **60%** of the veterans in our PSH are 55+.

HOUSING PORTFOLIO

500 PSH units across 6 sites

+ 2 more sites (185 units) on the way

- 1 site was the first veteran PSH in the nation, and the first conversion of military barracks to veteran housing
 - 1 property will be owned by Swords to Plowshares with significant funding support from Homekey+ (and 1 pending HK+ application)
 - The City of San Francisco holds the master lease and we are the operator of 1 site
 - 2 sites were built from the ground-up, redevelopments of land parcels approved by the City
 - 6 sites have involved extensive rehabilitation
 - 4 sites have on-site VA case management
 - 464 housing vouchers
-
- Project-based HUD-VASH: 159
 - HUD-VASH: 133
 - SF Dept. of Homelessness & Supportive Housing: HUD McKinney/CoC: 72
 - Site-based HUD Section 8: 100



HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

Purchase & Development

Public funding, private financing, and philanthropic and development partners make it possible to acquire, build, and renovate housing for veterans.

- SF Housing Accelerator Fund
- SF Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development
- CA Department of Housing and Community Development (VHHP & Homekey+)
- Chinatown Community Development Center
- Private foundations and capital partners

Vouchers & Operating Support

Rental subsidies and operating support ensure veterans can afford housing and enable providers to operate and maintain housing over the long term.

- VA HUD-VASH
- HUD/McKinney San Francisco CoC
- CA Department of Housing and Community Development

Onsite Services

Public agencies and community partners help fund and deliver the services, staffing, and programming that help veterans stay housed.

- SF Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing
- SF Department of Disability and Aging Services
- VA
- Community-based orgs (e.g. Project Open Hand)



HOUSING VETERANS: BEYOND A KEY

In 2023, with CalVet, we launched a 3-year statewide housing Pilot that increases community-based embedded services for seniors and high-acuity veterans within PSH. Results from this partnership show it's a cost-effective solution to homelessness.



Where are you **losing residents** after housing placement?

Do these sites have **enough onsite supportive services** to keep them housed and age in place?

HOUSING VETERANS: BEYOND A KEY

Background

Inspiration: The growing need for enhanced on-site support to help aging, at-risk, and medically complex veterans remain stable in permanent supportive housing. With vouchers only covering rent & facilities, we wanted to test a model that covers veterans' needs beyond a roof over their head.

Design: Spearheaded by Swords and driven by veteran feedback, we crafted the technical design and advocacy with support from NextGen Policy.

Implementation: \$20 million in competitive grants were awarded to 4 veteran-serving supportive housing organizations across California, including Swords to Plowshares.



HOUSING VETERANS: BEYOND A KEY

Goals

1. **Maintain and improve quality of life** for those with histories of chronic homelessness
2. **Overcome and prevent challenges** that lead to eviction or the need to move into assisted living
3. **Improve health and wellness** by increasing ADL assessments, in-home support, transportation options, healthcare navigation, individual onsite counseling, and peer support
4. **Improve overall PSH operations** by embedding community-level staffing that does not rely on a medical model of care to help address daily challenges that formerly homeless seniors face in PSH settings and prevent recidivism or premature exits to nursing care



HOUSING VETERANS: BEYOND A KEY

Housing Stability Among Strongest Findings

- **Only 2%** experienced negative exits
- **None reported** in the six months prior to the analysis period

Habitability Improvements Show Housing Stability

- Cleanliness complaints **dropped by 50%**
- Noise and disruptive behavior complaints **declined by 38%**
- Unit clutter complaints **declined by 29%**

Substantial Reductions in Health & Safety Risks

- Falls declined **by 63%**
- Acute health events **dropped by 30%**
- ER visits & 9-1-1 calls **declined by nearly 2/3**

Significant Health Behavior Shifts

- Missed medical appointments were **reduced by 63%**
- Proportion of veterans **eating three meals daily doubled**
- Alcohol use **fell by 24%**

POLICY PRIORITIES

1. Include providers in decisions

- Veteran-serving providers are often left out of planning.
- Proven models should inform policy and be replicated.

2. Act on aging homelessness

- Fastest-growing population
- 58% seniors seeking services in CA

3. Fund housing stability—not just buildings and placement

- A unit alone does not sustain housing; ongoing support must be resourced.

4. Resource PSH to function as intended

- Current funding does not cover needed services and staffing.



CLOSING THE GAP

1. Fund onsite supportive staffing (not just housing units)

- No government program funds the needed level of onsite services at scale or embeds community staffing.
- PSH providers are facing increased acuity amid funding cuts to bare-bones programs.
- Cities must make sure ongoing housing services are incorporated into city homelessness strategies.

2.Reduce fragmented access to care

- Many cannot access needed services.
- Residents must self-navigate complex eligibility systems.

3.Scale what works:

- Our Pilot can help all PSH providers serving seniors and high-acuity residents.
- At ~\$18K per resident/year, this investment can prevent far greater downstream public costs.

Prevents:

- Returns to homelessness
- Institutionalization
- Evictions
- Emergency service overuse





THANK YOU

Questions?

Contact me:

Tramecia Garner, Executive Director

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VETS HELPING VETS SINCE 1974

Questions and Discussion



Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

Follow us     

www.calcities.org