

**ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE
VETERANS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Thursday, March 20, 2025
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location:

**Orange County United Way
18012 Mitchell South,
Irvine, CA 92614**

[Click here](#) for parking instructions.

Virtual Meeting Option*:

Zoom Meeting Link: [Click here for meeting link](#)

Join by phone: +1 669 444 9171

Webinar ID: 984 1140 4002

****Listen-in option only***

Committee Chair: Becks Heyhoe-Khalil, Orange County United Way

Committee Vice Chair: Eric Richardson, Volunteers of America Los Angeles

Committee Members:

Ruby Lara, Santa Ana Housing Authority

Melanie Martins, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Jeffery Pagano, Orange County Veterans and Military Families Collaborative

Larry “Smitty” Smith, Individual

MINUTES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and County Language Access Policy, those requiring accommodation and/or interpreter services for this meeting should notify the Office of Care Coordination 72 Hours prior to the meeting at (714) 834 – 5000 or email CareCoordination@ocgov.com. Request received less than 72 Hours prior to the meeting will still receive every effort to reasonably fulfill within the time provided.

Welcome and Introductions – Becks Heyhoe-Khalil, Chair

Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

Present: Becks Heyhoe-Khalil, Ruby Lara, Melanie Martins, Jeffery Pagano, Eric Richardson, Larry” Smitty” Smith

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil led a round of introductions for the group, including both committee members and members of the public.

Public Comments – Members of the public may address the Veterans Committee on items listed within this agenda or matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Veterans Committee. Members of the public may address the Veterans Committee with public comments on agenda items after the agenda item presentation. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes. Members of the public utilizing interpreter services will be given double the amount of time provided public comment.

To address the Veterans Committee during the Public Comment period, members of the public are to complete a Speaker Request Form prior to the beginning of each agenda item. Staff will call your name in the order received. Members of the public may also submit public comment by emailing CareCoordination@ocgov.com. All comments submitted via email or at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting will be distributed to the Veterans Committee members and all comments will be added to the administrative records of the meeting. Please include “Veterans Committee Meeting Comment” in the email subject line.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approve the Veterans Committee Special Meeting Minutes from November 13, 2024.
2. Approve the 2025 Veterans Committee Meeting Calendar.

Jeffery Pagano motioned to approve Consent Calendar Items 1 and 2. Eric Richardson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. **Continuum of Care (CoC) Strategic Plan** – Becks Heyhoe-Khalil, Chair and Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil explained the background behind the CoC and the CoC Strategic Plan. Felicia Boehringer provided an overview of the CoC Strategic Plan, including how it was formed, the purpose, the creation process, the feedback and implementation timeline, the CoC’s spheres of influence, and the five (5) strategic aims. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil led a discussion on how the Veterans Committee can help shape and implement this plan, and asked if there is anything that the committee would find helpful in terms of next steps or if they have any questions.

Committee Discussion:

- Vice Chair Eric Richardson inquired about when the Strategic Plan is being reviewed and asked if veterans are called out specifically within the plan.
- Melanie Martins pointed out that because some strategies may fit in different categories, the Veterans Committee needs to be aware of what other committees are doing so that work does not end up being duplicated.
- Jeffery Pagano noted that all groups working to provide housing are connected, and expressed interest in sharing the strategic plan of the Orange County Veterans and

Military Families Collaborative in order to compare and contrast the two as well as learn from the CoC how they can improve their strategic plan which is currently being put together.

- 2. Veterans Affairs (VA) Update** – Melanie Martins, LCSW, Supervisory Social Worker, Coordinated Entry System and Homeless Outreach, Tibor Rubin Medical Center, Long Beach VA Health Care System; and Becks Heyhoe-Khalil, Chair
- a. HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Tenant-Based Vouchers
 - i. Welcome Home OC Program Update
 - b. One Team Approach
 - c. VA Encampment Response Strategy

Melanie Martins shared HUD-VASH updates, noting that 400 VASH referrals have been processed since January 2025 due to the Tenant Based Voucher (TBV) Intake Pilot. Melanie Martins also provided an update on One Team, a group of Veteran system leaders and decision makers focused on advancing the goals of the system, and shared the VA response strategy for encampments. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil provided an update on Welcome Home OC, sharing that 200 households are being housed and that there are 12 VASH voucher holders in the pipeline actively searching for housing.

Committee Discussion:

- Vice Chair Eric Richardson recapped the focus of getting information on both VA and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) out to providers. They should be present at each SPA and Service Provider Forum in order for as many groups as possible to learn information about what is available for veterans and how providers can respond when encountering veterans.

- 3. HUD-VASH Project-Based Voucher Update** – Daniel Garcia, Coordinated Entry System (CES) Administrator, Office of Care Coordination; Melanie Martins, LCSW, Supervisory Social Worker, Coordinated Entry System and Homeless Outreach, Tibor Rubin Medical Center, Long Beach VA Health Care System
- a. CES Coordinated Vouchers
 - b. Public Housing Authorities (PHA) Updates
 - c. VA Vouchers

Daniel Garcia shared an update on HUD-VASH Project-Based Voucher lease-ups, noting that Estrella Springs has finished lease-up and the lease-up process has begun for Salida Del Sol, but replacement matches are on hold due to construction delays. Daniel Garcia also shared that Since November, one VASH vacancy has been filled at Buena Esperanza, along with seven at Heroes' Landing and three at Placentia Veteran's Village. Daniel Garcia provided updated totals of HUD-VASH Tenant-Based Vouchers and Melanie Martins shared Interim Housing updates, noting that VA is currently solicitating for new Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contracted Emergency Residential Services (CERS) transitional beds and sharing current interim housing needs in Orange County for Veterans.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil expressed confusion regarding the wording of the chart which states that Estrella Springs has 34 units available, despite the fact that they are filled. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil also shared excitement regarding the interim housing updates and expressed interest in sharing the information with the CoC network.
- Ruby Lara noted that there is already turnover at Estrella Springs; about 2 units will be becoming available. Ruby Lara also shared that the Santa Ana Housing Authority has availability for tenant-based vouchers, and that Santa Ana received only two of five vouchers this year and is requesting additional applications due to turnover. Since the vouchers are not fully leased, referrals are being accepted. Last year's focus was on tenant-based vouchers, and this year, efforts will prioritize utilizing the remaining available resources.
- Vice Chair Eric Richardson inquired about the total number of available beds and whether they must be distributed countywide. Vice Chair Eric Richardson noted that most shelters operate within specific areas and asked if beds could be scattered rather than concentrated in designated locations.

4. CES Veteran Registry Data Update – Daniel Garcia, CES Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Daniel Garcia shared the Veteran Registry Dashboard. Currently, there are 256 veterans experiencing homelessness on the Veteran Registry. In the previous 12 months, 172 veterans have been housed in permanent, stable housing. Over 30 agencies, including the VA Community Resource and Referral Center, outreach providers, and shelter providers, continue to meet weekly to coordinate housing and services for veterans experiencing homelessness in Orange County. In the past 12 months, there has been a 7% increase in the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in Orange County.

Committee Discussion:

- Melanie Martins raised concerns about veterans on the registry who only want Tenant-Based Vouchers (TBV) and whether they should be removed from the Community Queue if they consistently decline Project-Based Vouchers (PBV), wondering if this impacted overall numbers. Melanie Martins also highlighted discrepancies in HUD-VASH and SSVF numbers, emphasizing that while HUD-VASH receives credit, SSVF is doing much of the work. Additionally, Melanie Martins pointed out that new outreach staff may not realize an assessment is required for veterans to be added to the queue, and that the VA may not appear on the Community Queue due to lack of HMIS access.
- Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil questioned why Grant and Per Diem (GPD) is listed under the Permanent Housing Plan portion of the Veteran Registry Dashboard, despite being a transitional program. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil asked if it could be separated from SSVF, especially since the only GPD available is outside Orange County, and inquired whether individuals in the permanent housing plan have accessed the program. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil noted that the new Community Queue status visual highlights that most veterans are not active, emphasizing the importance of reducing that gap to ensure veterans remain active on the Community Queue.
- Vice Chair Eric Richardson referenced the Permanent Housing Plan portion of the Veteran Registry dashboard and noted that the outcomes for SSVF and HUD-VASH permanent

housing plans may not be completely reflective of what is taking place, as SSVF and HUD-VASH programs are often working together to house Veterans.

5. CoC Update – Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer shared updates on the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program Round 5 Award announcement, the HHAP Round 6 allocation announcement, and the Same Day Solutions Fair. Additionally, Felicia Boehringer shared information about upcoming CoC Board and Committee meetings.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil shared that HUD has announced potential changes regarding grant amendments for CoC Program funding. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil highlighted valuable resources for staying connected to news about federal funding updates, such as National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) and National Council of Nonprofits news coverage and email updates, as well as advocacy opportunities. Chair Becks Heyhoe-Khalil acknowledged the ongoing changes and the uncertainty many are feeling.

Meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, May 29, 2025, at Orange County United Way, 18012 Mitchell South, Irvine, CA 92614, from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

All are invited to attend the Orange County Veteran and Military Family Collaborative (OCVMFC) Housing Working Group meeting from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., prior to the Veterans Committee.