

Hi Morgan,

Thank you for your questions and interest in U.S.VETS. We are happy to answer any questions about our agency and the services we provide. In addition to answering your questions, I would also like to provide you with a brief overview of U.S.VETS and a description of our housing options and services for veterans.

### **U.S.VETS OVERVIEW:**

U.S.VETS mission is “The successful transition of military veterans and their families through the provision of housing, counseling, career development and comprehensive support.” Our vision is that all veterans and their families shall have their needs met to regain and maintain productive independence. Since inception in 2002, U.S.VETS – Phoenix has been able to perform this mission through government and private grants along with donations from individuals and businesses within the community – tangible expressions of concern for improving the quality of life for those who once selflessly served our country.

By providing a safe and welcoming facility along with supportive services and intensive case management, U.S.VETS – Phoenix is a leader in the veteran services community. At its location known as Grand Veterans Village in Central Phoenix, U.S.VETS operates a variety of housing options and services to meet the varying needs of homeless and at-risk veterans.

### **U.S.VETS – Phoenix Programs:**

**Veterans In Progress (VIP) Program:** The VIP program is a 66-bed transitional housing program for homeless veterans that operates as a Bridge to a Permanent Housing. Services provided are designed to support veterans in gaining the resources to successfully transition to permanent/long-term housing either on-site or in the community. Services include 24/7 on-site staffing, 3 meals daily, outreach, case management, employment assistance, job training, access to medical, mental health, and addiction treatment, financial/benefits assistance, life skills training, transportation, clothing, and other basic necessities. Upon transitioning from the VIP program, veterans have the option to continue their care in a private rental unit on site if they choose to move into the Permanent Housing for Disabled Veterans (PHDV) program or a Long-Term Supportive Housing (LTSH) unit.

**Permanent Housing for Disabled Veterans Program (PHDV):** The PHDV program provides leasing subsidies and supportive services including outreach, case management, for life skills for veterans who are homeless or chronically homeless and have a medically-certified disability. This models empowers veterans to live as independently as possible in a permanent, veteran-friendly community setting.

**Long-Term Supportive Housing (LTSH):** LTSH is affordable housing for veterans who enter into a standard tenant-landlord lease agreement with U.S.VETS to directly rent a unit. These are veterans who are not in need of a structured program, but choose to live in a veteran community and benefit from supportive services available on site at the Grand Veterans Village location.

**Transition In Place (TIP) Program:** The TIP program is a housing model which offers residents housing in which support services transition out of the residence over time, rather than the resident. The goal is to convert existing suitable apartment style housing where homeless veteran participants receive time-limited supportive services optimally for a period of 6-12 months, but not to exceed 24 months into a permanent housing outcome for the veteran. Upon transition of housing/program completion, the veteran "transitions in place" by assuming the lease which enables the unit in which he or she resides to be considered the veteran's permanent housing.

Veterans served in this program may choose an eligible unit in the community or at Grand Veterans Village.

**Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program:** The SSVF program provides rapid re-housing and homeless prevention services to very low-income veteran families through outreach, case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits to include health care services, daily living services, personal financial planning services, transportation services, fiduciary and payee services, legal services, child care services, and housing counseling services. Temporary financial assistance of rental assistance, utilities, security and utility deposits, moving costs, child care, transportation, and emergency supplies may also be provided to help veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing. Veterans served in this program may choose an eligible unit in the community or at Grand Veterans Village.

**Workforce Development Program:** Workforce development resources are available at the U.S.VETS – Phoenix Career Center, providing assistance for veterans returning to employment. Veterans are provided structured employment activities including job placement assistance, job training and education referrals, skills testing, career planning, mock interviews, resume development, and computer and Internet access and training. All veterans residing at the Grand Veterans Village location may access the Career Center.

### **RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS:**

1. Per your email, you state: We have heard some complaints from several veterans who live in the facility near Indian School and Grand Avenue. They are alleging that [U.S.VETS] is phasing out its long-term supportive housing program and replacing it with Veterans in Progress program.

- U.S.VETS Response: U.S.VETS is not phasing out its long-term supportive housing program. In fact, currently there are more units allocated for LTSH affordable rental units than our other programs. As units become vacant, U.S.VETS assesses the need for the type of housing unit and may repurpose a unit. U.S.VETS has repurposed vacant units to be utilized for its VIP program.

The current configurations of units is:

- 41 units are LTSH units
- 32 VIP units
- 25 TIP units
- 24 PHDV units
- 8 offices for operations and service staff

2. Per your email, you state: They [veterans] allege that the VIP program brings in more money per room. They also say some of the rooms dedicated to VIP are seeing three veterans per room, at \$45.79 per day, per veteran.

- U.S.VETS Response: U.S.VETS' VIP Program is funded by the VA's Grant & Per Diem (GPD) program to provide transitional housing and supportive services to homeless veterans. U.S.VETS is one of 4 GPD providers in Maricopa County. The current per diem rate set by the VA is \$45.79 per occupied bed per day and is designed to allow providers to fund housing and supportive services activities. The per diem rate is applied to the actual cost for operating units (rent, utilities, maintenance, etc.) plus providing extensive services to include staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 3 meals daily, case management, therapeutic classes, transportation, basic necessities (hygiene products, clothing, cleaning supplies, etc.), and other eligible supportive services as needed to assist veterans in transitioning from homelessness to stable housing.

3. Per your email, you ask: Are you phasing out or reducing the number of rooms that are dedicated to the Long Term Supportive Housing program?
  - U.S.VETS Response: Please note that LTSH is not a program; these are rental units in which U.S.VETS chooses to offer access to available supportive services. Length of stay in a unit is not time-limited unlike some housing programs and access to supportive services are offered unlike some rental properties, hence the name “Long-Term Supportive Housing”. U.S.VETS is not planning to “phase out” LTSH units. As units became vacant, U.S.VETS has repurposed units. Over time this resulted in 41 units currently being used as LTSH units. In addition to U.S.VETS affordable units, the Phoenix community has several low-income tax credit properties that veterans in need of affordable housing may qualify for. U.S.VETS refers veterans to these properties, such as Cloudbreak properties and Garfield Commons to name a few.
4. Per your email, you ask: How much do the veterans pay for a room per month for this program [LTSH]?
  - U.S.VETS Response: As with any property that has rental units, the monthly rate varies in price but averages about \$450 per month.
5. Per your email, you ask: And I have been told the residents have their own rooms under this program [LTSH]. Is that correct?
  - U.S.VETS Response: Veterans who live in an LTSH unit individually rent the unit through a lease agreement.
6. Per your email, you ask: Are you increasing the number of rooms associated with the Veterans in Progress program?
  - U.S.VETS Response: U.S.VETS is not currently planning to increase VIP units but may do so at its discretion if deemed necessary. U.S.VETS currently has 32 units being used for the VIP program for homeless veterans. 27 are studio units and 5 are one-bedroom units.
7. Per your email, you ask: How much money does your organization receive per veteran housed for this program [VIP]?
  - U.S.VETS Response: The current per diem rate set by the VA is \$45.79 per occupied bed per day and is designed to allow providers to fund both housing and supportive services activities. The per diem rate is applied to the actual cost for operating units (rent, utilities, maintenance, etc.) plus providing extensive services to include staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 3 meals daily, case management, therapeutic classes, transportation, basic necessities (hygiene products, clothing, cleaning supplies, etc.), and other eligible supportive services as needed to assist veterans in transitioning from homelessness to stable housing. These funds must be used within the VIP program on eligible expenses as defined by the VA, therefore, U.S.VETS does not “make money” off of these units.
8. Per your email, you ask: I am told there are some apartments that have three veterans per room under this program [VIP]. Is that correct?

- U.S.VETS Response: Within the VIP program, 3 veterans reside in the 1 bedroom units and 2 veterans in the efficiency units. The reason this is shared living is because it is a time-limited transitional housing program designed to prepare veterans for transitioning to permanent or other stable housing.
9. Per your email, you ask: Current and former residents have told me that they have concerns over the open-access nature of this facility. Is that something your organization has discussed and is [U.S.VETS] doing anything about it?
- U.S.VETS Response: Yes, safety for veterans and staff has always been a priority and U.S.VETS' continually analyzes safety and security on-site. Various steps to promote safety include:
    - Participation in the Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program in collaboration with the Phoenix Police Department.
    - Coordinated with APS to improve the quality of lighting inside and outside the facility.
    - 24 hour staff coverage.
    - On-site security cameras. U.S.VETS has secured funding through a foundation grant to install additional security cameras.
    - Today, Tuesday May 16<sup>th</sup>, a security fence will begin the installation process. All veterans will have an individual security code, and U.S.VETS staff will have video surveillance.
    - Town hall meetings with tenants and programs participants to discuss safety and security. Most recent safety socials were held on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

As a non-profit organization, all funds that are collected through rental income or funded programs, are applied towards the costs of operating the facility and providing services. However, it is rare that all costs are fully funded by these sources and U.S.VETS relies upon its fundraising initiatives and community support to fill the gaps to provide the much-needed housing and services for veterans in need.

By offering a one-campus approach in a therapeutic community environment, veterans have the opportunity to be housed in a unit and receive the services that best suits their needs and assists them in achieving and maintaining housing stability. U.S.VETS is honored to serve those who have served and continually strives to meet the needs of the veterans in the Phoenix community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share U.S.VETS resources for housing and services in Phoenix and to answer the questions posed. Please feel free to let me know if any further information is needed.