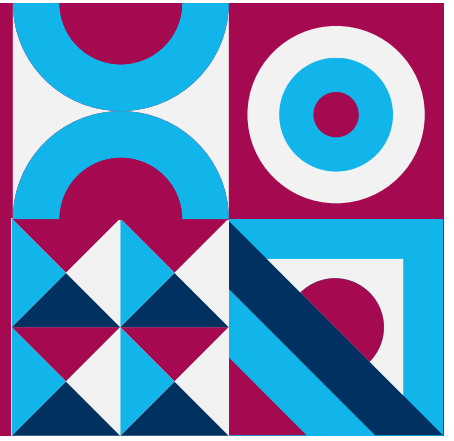


# Bright Spot

June 2024 | Significant Reductions in Veteran Homelessness



## Overview

**Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota**, a Large City that achieved Quality Data for Veterans in 2019, has made remarkable progress in reducing veteran homelessness, achieving **a 26% reduction** in recent months. This success is the result of strategic partnerships, data-driven decision-making, and innovative programs that address the unique needs of veterans experiencing homelessness.

## Key Strategies

### Build system commitment toward a shared goal

Long-term leadership, including a key leader with 23 years of experience, has been instrumental in maintaining a focus on ending veteran homelessness. The leadership's commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration has driven sustained progress.

### Convene a broad and diverse coalition of partners

The coalition has added new partners who have assets/resources needed to fill gaps or expand efforts.

1. Harnessing Built for Zero (BFZ) funding allowed Minneapolis/St. Paul to test new interventions and advocate for state resources. This collaboration resulted in an influx of state resources, enabling new programs, additional housing stock, and case management support. Programs initially funded by BFZ have transitioned to permanent state funding.
2. Strong partnerships and state-level collaboration have accelerated progress. The dynamic relationship between the Minneapolis/Hennepin County veteran team and state partners, including the governor's office, has facilitated an increase in resources and strategic implementation of programs.

### Data-Informed Practice and Continuous System Improvement

The coalition uses by name data to prioritize services and placements based on vulnerability, facilitate real-time service matching, and problem solve individual cases.

1. Data-driven approaches have been crucial in targeting funding to high-need areas and promoting equity. The veteran team's quality data highlighted disparities and informed new program proposals and funding strategies. For example, the Veterans Supportive Housing Options program was created to support veterans with higher barriers to housing.
2. The Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA) administers a statewide veterans' registry, a critical tool for funding and programmatic decisions. The registry serves as a by-name list and case conferencing tool, including every veteran experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. Data is updated in real-time and analyzed using Tableau to track various factors influencing housing outcomes. Deep dives into the data help identify outliers and system gaps, leading to targeted interventions.

## Innovative Programs

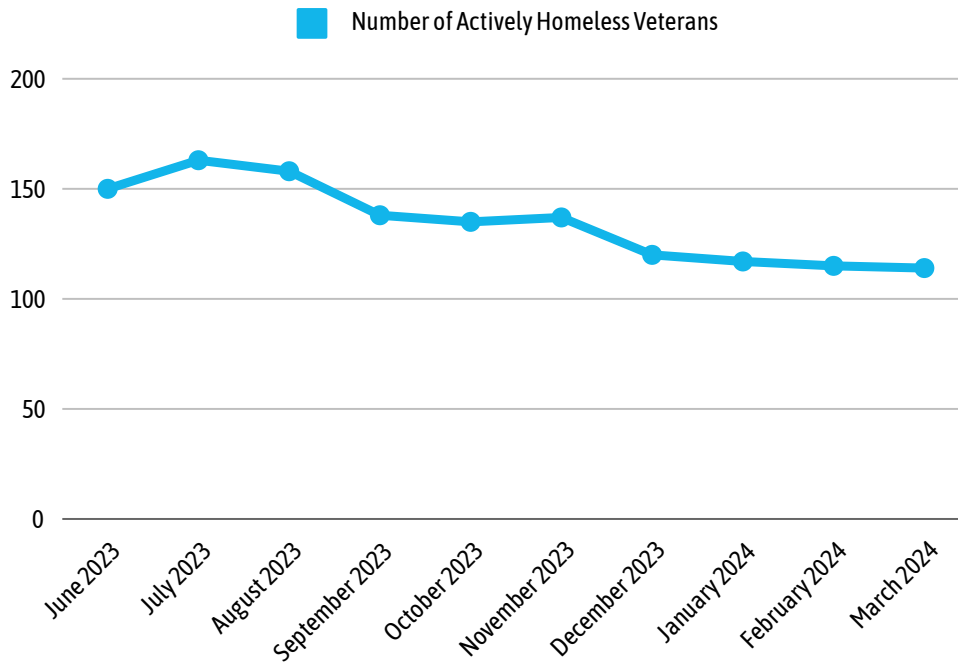
- **Veterans Supportive Housing Options:** Targets properties off the market to prevent displacement and supports veterans with high barriers to housing.
- **Homes for Veterans:** Encourages landlords to rent to veterans with non-traditional screening criteria.
- **Veteran Temporary Emergency Housing Voucher Program (V-TEMP):** Provides temporary hotel accommodations for veterans without other sheltering options.

## Challenges

Despite increased funding and legislative support, challenges such as capacity constraints, staffing issues, and the need for time to build and adapt programs affected the full utilization of resources.

## Population Outcomes

Population outcomes are those outcomes that affect the overall number of people experiencing homelessness in the community. Minneapolis/St. Paul achieved **a 26% reduction** in veterans experiencing homelessness from August 2023 - March 2024.



## Systems Outcomes

System outcomes are those outcomes that affect the infrastructure, service landscape, and processes of the homeless response system. In Minneapolis/St. Paul's, major system outcomes were **expansion of eligibility criteria for homeless programs, increased state-level funding, and sustained partnerships.**

## Partnership Structure

The following parties served as path-clearers and Improvement Team members in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Lead Organizations	Key Partnerships
<p><b>Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV):</b> Provides services and housing for homeless veterans in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.</p>	<p><b>Minneapolis VA Medical Center:</b> Collaborative efforts through the VA's homeless programs</p>
<p><b>Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA):</b> Implements the governor's plan to end veteran homelessness, collaborating with MACV for direct services.</p>	<p><b>County Veterans Service Organizations:</b> Hennepin and Ramsey counties fund outreach positions and provide essential services.</p>

# Sustainability

The long-term viability of programs is ensured through **sustainable partnerships, ongoing education and training for new staff members, and proactive advocacy** for state funding. The state's strong support for the mission contributes to the confidence that efforts to end veteran homelessness will continue.

## What's Next

Minneapolis/St. Paul's success in reducing veteran homelessness by 26% serves as proof that homelessness is a solvable problem. To continue driving reductions, the Twin Cities team will fuel more housing placements through expanded use of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program and streamlined assessment and referral processes. Further, they will decrease the number of people becoming homeless in the community by increasing homelessness prevention efforts and re-working documentation criteria. With these strategies and local dedication to the movement, the team aims to achieve functional zero for veterans by June 2026.

The strategic partnerships, data-driven decision-making, and innovative programs in **the Twin Cities have demonstrated that significant progress is possible** in the fight to end veteran homelessness.

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