



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-223, **Version:** 1

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*Report Prepared by: Mark E. Hamilton, Housing Program Supervisor, Housing Division, Department of Economic Development*

**SUBJECT:** Request to Join the Mayor's Challenge to Ending Homelessness Among Unsheltered Veterans

### REPORT IN BRIEF

Requesting the mayor to sign a letter to include the City of Merced in the Mayor's Challenge to Ending Homelessness among Unsheltered Veterans.

### RECOMMENDATION

**City Council** - Adopt a motion allowing the Mayor to sign a letter that would include the City of Merced in the national Mayor's Challenge.

### ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff; or,
3. Deny; or,
4. Refer to City Manager or Housing Division for reconsideration; or
5. Continue to a future City Council meeting.

### AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200.

### CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2015-16 Adopted Budget.

### DISCUSSION

Staff is asking Council to consider having the Mayor sign the attached letter which would commit the City to joining the nearly 1,000 other jurisdictions throughout the country who are committed to ending homelessness among veterans in their community as outlined in Opening Doors, the nation's first comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and end homelessness.

The Merced County 2016 Homeless Count and Survey revealed that there were 25 homeless veterans on January 28. The previous year, the homeless count noted that there were 88 homeless veterans, which represents a 71.5% decrease.

The Housing Authority of the County of Merced (HACM) recently received 11 more U.S. Department

of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program vouchers. This brings the total number of vouchers received by HACM to 66. In addition, the WestCare Foundation's San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV) program administers the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program for homeless and at-risk-of-becoming-homeless veterans.

The City of Merced has established a partnership with the Merced City and County Continuum of Care (CoC), which consists of a wide-range of public and private organizations, including veteran service providers, in order to finish the job of preventing and ending homelessness among local veterans. The partnership focuses on the "No More Homeless Vets in Merced Task Force (Task Force)."

The primary responsibility of the Task Force is to identify and permanently house all homeless veterans by the end of 2016 by implementing the best practices of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing through the HUD-VASH, SSVF, and other programs operated by the CoC. Any veterans encountered during the 2017 homeless count and survey will be immediately engaged so that they will be able to end their experience of homelessness.

The City of Merced and the CoC will continue to implement the best practices in order to rapidly rehouse any veterans who become homeless after the 2017 homeless count and survey. The goal will be to rehouse them within 30 days, as encouraged by the VA, HUD, and ICH.

Please know there will be a press release to the general public, as encouraged by the VA, HUD, and ICH. The press release regarding Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness will be published upon Council's support of accepting the challenge.

## **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

No appropriation of funds is needed.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Letter to be signed by the Mayor
2. Ending Homelessness among Unsheltered Veterans Program