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# Wake nonprofit gets \$631,000 to house homeless vets

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## VA grant will help those homeless to transition

By Martha Quillin — [mquillin@newsobserver.com](mailto:mquillin@newsobserver.com)

A Wake County nonprofit will get more than \$631,000 through a U.S. Veterans Affairs grant to help homeless veterans get established in permanent housing.

Passage Home will be able to place up to 15 veterans at a time in rental units scattered throughout Raleigh and Wake County, and will help them develop job and life skills so that by the end of 24 months, they can manage on their own. The grant was one of 38 the VA gave out this month under a new program that lets veterans stay in their transitional house or apartment after putting their own name on the lease.

Other VA programs require veterans to move out of transitional housing after two years, which can create new problems. Some have difficulty finding affordable housing, gathering cash for deposits or adjusting to a new place, especially if they have children living with them.

Lindsey Jordan Arledge, supervisor of the homeless program for the Durham VA, which serves Wake County, said the work Passage Home began doing with veterans last fall will help the VA in its efforts to reduce homelessness among veterans, a major long-term goal. The Durham VA will refer veterans to Passage Home, and the nonprofit will continue to look for vets who need help. "We can't do it alone," Arledge said.

One other group in the state received a grant under the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program. The Community Link Programs of Traveler Aid Society of Central Carolinas Inc. in Charlotte will get about \$1.2 million to house about 25 veterans.

At least 67,495 veterans were homeless in the United States on a single-night count in 2011, according to the VA. The previous year's count found about 76,000. Passage Home tries to reduce homelessness among veterans by providing some services directly and helping vets enroll in other programs for which they're eligible, such as medical care, substance abuse prevention and mental health counseling.

More information To help a homeless veteran or veteran at risk of homelessness, refer them to the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, 1-877-424-3838, or direct them to [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). The hotline connects veterans and their families with the VA services and benefits they have earned.

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Tiana Terry, veterans case manager for Passage Home, said veterans who get help through her agency include single soldiers and parents with young children, men and women who may have served in the Korean or Vietnam wars or just got out of the military this year. Some are newly homeless, others have been on the streets for years.

One difficulty in finding housing for them, Terry said, is that many landlords consider them a bad risk to start with because they need help paying their rent. Like everybody else who is struggling, Terry said, "These are just people who fell across hard times."

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