

PRESS RELEASE

Contact

Jen Tibbals

207-775-0026 x1117

communications@preblestreet.org



Preble Street and partners to house 100 Maine Veterans in 100 days

The campaign, 100 Veteran Challenge: Unlocking Homes for Heroes, kicks off tomorrow, August 3, and culminates on Veterans Day.

PORTLAND, ME (August 2, 2021) — On Tuesday, August 3, Preble Street Veterans Housing Services — in partnership with the Disabled Veterans National Foundation, Easterseals, Furniture Friends, Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services, Maine Veterans in Need, Maine Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Veterans Administration, Veterans Inc., Volunteers of America Northern New England, and Welcome to Housing — is kicking off the 100 Veteran Challenge, a campaign to house 100 Maine Veterans in 100 days, ending on Veterans Day. To cross the finish line, the Challenge need landlords willing to rent to homeless Veterans and their families.

Veteran homelessness is a serious and ongoing issue in Maine and across the country, and COVID-19 and the affordable housing crisis have only presented more challenges and made life harder for our nation's heroes. In our state, **Veteran homelessness has increased 84% in since the pandemic began**, and the amount of **time it takes to connect people to housing has extended from an average of 86 days to 232 days.**

"We all agree that no Veteran or their family should face homelessness or hunger, but that's the reality for too many Veterans in our state right now," said Dan Hodgkins, Senior Director of Veterans Housing Services at Preble Street. "The 100 Veteran Challenge will make a big difference to many of these families, and it's a real statewide, community effort. We have almost a dozen organizations working together to make this campaign a success, and many of us have worked together for years as part of the Maine Homeless Veterans Action Committee (MHVAC). Some of us are providing outreach, casework, and housing connections, while others are donating furniture, move-in assistance, and other critical resources."

The 100 Veteran Challenge uses a housing surge intervention model recommended by HUD, and is seeking landlord partners to pledge available units to Veterans in need.

"The work of the Maine Homeless Veterans Action Committee has made a major impact on our state's Veteran community — and in light of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, their efforts are more needed than ever before," said Senator Angus King. "The 100 Veteran Challenge is their most ambitious effort yet, and in light of the massive rise in Veteran homelessness during the pandemic, their most vital. This is a big challenge, but based on MHVAC's record of success I'm confident they are up to the task. I'm deeply grateful for the leadership of MHVAC and its partners, and will continue to doggedly advocate on behalf of Maine's Veterans in Washington."

Landlords interested in learning more about the challenge can visit LandlordsHelp.org.

Preble Street is a nonprofit human service agency serving the most vulnerable people in Maine since 1975 through innovative, best-practice, client-centered programs. In addition to the largest direct service emergency food program in northern New England, Preble Street operates low-barrier programs throughout Maine providing 24/365 services for individuals and families, including homeless youth, women, veterans, and survivors of human trafficking, driven by its mission to meet urgent needs, empower people to move beyond the crises in their lives, and advocate for solutions to homelessness, hunger, and poverty. PrebleStreet.org

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