

# BEYOND A ROOM AND A KEY:

## Interim Findings of a California Pilot on Enhanced Services in Permanent Supportive Housing



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### Housing Stability Among Strongest Findings

- Only **2%** of enrollees experienced negative housing exits
- No negative exits were reported in the six months prior to the analysis period

### Substantial Reductions in Health & Safety Risks

- Falls declined **by 63%**
- Acute health events **dropped by 30%**
- ER visits & 9-1-1 calls **declined by nearly 2/3**

### Habitability Improvements Show Housing Stability

- Cleanliness complaints **dropped by 50%**
- Noise and disruptive behavior complaints **declined by 38%**
- Unit clutter complaints **declined by 29%**

### Significant Health Behavior Shifts

- Missed medical appointments were **reduced by 63%**
- Proportion of veterans **eating three meals daily doubled**
- Alcohol use **fell by 24%**

## Summary

### What does it take to help aging veterans remain housed—and improve their quality of life—as their needs intensify?

Interim findings from the Veterans Support to Self-Reliance (VSSR) Pilot point to a promising service model that supports housing stability, strengthens health and social connection, and may reduce reliance on high-cost emergency care.

This report presents interim findings from RAND, serving as the independent impact evaluator of the Pilot, and Swords to Plowshares Policy Department, serving as the consultant and process evaluator of the Pilot.

The analysis covers outcomes from June 2023 through May 2025<sup>1</sup> and places particular emphasis on the 250 veterans who have completed a full year of participation. The formal observation period will end on June 30, 2026 and RAND will issue a final report on their findings in August 2026.

Early descriptive findings suggest that VSSR is a promising model that may reduce reliance on high-cost emergency care, and enable aging and high-acuity veterans to maintain housing and enhance their quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> The findings are based on a limited sample of veterans enrolled during the first four quarters of the project and the results are subject to change as more data and time in program is incorporated into the evaluation.

# Implications and Recommendations

## for Sustaining the Model

The VSSR model is achieving positive outcomes in housing retention, safety, and acute health reductions, while strengthening social connection and daily living supports.

The Pilot demonstrates that enhanced on-site services can stabilize aging and high-acuity veterans, reduce reliance on emergency care, and improve daily functioning.

Early outcomes indicate that this model can serve as a critical protective factor against housing loss and prevent declines that lead to institutionalization.

Early evidence suggests that investing in ongoing engagement strategies, medical supports, peer interventions, transportation to appointments and nutrition services, and access to group-based activities, not only improves outcomes but may also reduce long-term public expenditures by preventing expensive emergency medical interventions including hospitalizations and emergency response calls.



## Strategic Recommendations

1

### Sustain and solidify VSSR-style staffing models in PSH

- Transition from Pilot funding to sustained program funding.
- Prioritize embedded staffing (e.g., on-site behavioral health support, peer providers) as a core model component.
- Determine additional staffing models (e.g. substance use treatment counselors, clinical care for complex mental health needs).

2

### Prioritize early and sustained engagement strategies

- Expand group-based programs using models implemented at Pilot sites.
- Standardize best practice techniques for engagement and trust-building with high-acuity formerly homeless residents.
- Standardize staff training in cognitive decline, behavioral health, and motivational engagement.

3

### Integrate medical and social care within housing

- Implement care coordination models for veterans requiring complex medical or mobility support.

4

### Position VSSR as a scalable model for aging and high acuity veterans

- Use current outcomes to inform a statewide implementation framework with site and geographic considerations based on acuity, access to services, and staffing structures.



Explore the full report on our website:  
[www.swords-to-plowshares.org/pilot](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org/pilot)