



**Office of
Mayor Jay Ruais**
NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor Ruais and Harbor Care Announces Manchester Has Effectively Ended Veteran Homelessness

Over 140 veterans housed through coordinated community initiative

Manchester, NH- Today, Mayor Jay Ruais and Harbor Care CEO, and veteran, Henry Och, announced that Manchester has met the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness legacy benchmarks for effectively ending veteran homelessness, fulfilling a commitment Mayor Ruais made when launching the initiative in September 2024.

At the time, 47 veterans were experiencing homelessness in Manchester. Every veteran from that original group has since secured permanent housing. Tragically, one veteran has passed away. More than 140 veterans have now been housed through the initiative.

“Nearly two years ago, we promised to effectively end veteran homelessness in Manchester. Today, with the help of our community partners, we have fulfilled that promise,” said Mayor Ruais. “More than 140 veterans have been housed, including every veteran from the original group. They fought for us. It is only right that we fight for them.”

Effectively ending veteran homelessness does not mean that a veteran will never face a housing crisis, or become homeless. It means Manchester has a system in place to quickly identify veterans experiencing homelessness, connect them with services, and help them secure permanent housing. The goal is to ensure veteran homelessness remains rare, brief, and nonrecurring. This system has met the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness’ legacy benchmarks and certified by the Manchester Continuum of Care.

The initiative began in September 2024 with a coordinated plan developed by Mayor Ruais, Harbor Care, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and community partners.

“The success of this initiative demonstrates what’s possible when a community comes together around a shared purpose,” stated Henry Och, Harbor Care President and CEO. “This effort includes a deep level of collaboration between federal and municipal agencies, non-profit organizations, landlords and developers, business and community leaders. Manchester should be incredibly proud of this milestone.”

“This milestone is worth celebrating because it shows what’s possible when a community comes together around a shared goal. By creating a coordinated, targeted response for veterans, we

helped make veteran homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring—and built a model that can help us address homelessness among other populations as well.” said Matthew McCall, Chair of the Manchester Continuum of Care and representative of The Home for Little Wanderers.

The initiative uses current data and regular meetings among service providers to identify veterans in need and track their progress toward housing. Partners work with each veteran to find housing, provide services, and remove barriers that can delay placement.

The coalition also created a Sustainability Fund to help cover expenses such as security deposits, application fees, emergency housing, and identification documents.

“When we launched this initiative, I said that just like in the military, we would not accomplish this mission alone,” Mayor Ruais continued. “Harbor Care, the VA, the Manchester Continuum of Care, our landlords, veteran service organizations, outreach workers, and other community partners made this possible. Our work now is to maintain this system and ensure veterans who face homelessness are quickly connected with housing and support. Additionally, this is a roadmap for how we can tackle homelessness more broadly. We can take the lessons learned from this initiative and scale it to address the larger population. This is exactly what we have done with the elderly and infirmed, families and children along with those suffering from substance use disorder or mental health issues.”

“Over the years, our veterans have heard people say, ‘Welcome home.’ Now, I want to be able to tell them, ‘Welcome to your new home. Today, we can,’” Mayor Ruais said.