

CITY OF SHREVEPORT

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PRESS RELEASE

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## **Shreveport Recognized for Efforts to End Veteran Homelessness**

Shreveport has been recognized by federal agencies as the second city in Louisiana for progress made to functionally end veteran homelessness.

“This is a proud moment for Shreveport. It is my prayer that all that we accomplish in working to eradicate homelessness for veterans, would be transformational in their lives and allow them to transition into society as productive citizens who enjoy a good quality of life,” said Mayor Ollie Tyler. “As citizens, we owe a debt to all of those who offered themselves in service and sacrifice for our country. Shelter is a basic need and the least that we can do for those who have done so much for us.”

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Veterans Affairs recognized the City of Shreveport for its efforts to effectively end homelessness among veterans.

“We are confident that the infrastructure and systems you have built will ensure that any Veteran experiencing homelessness in Shreveport will get the support they need to quickly obtain a permanent home,” wrote Matthew Doherty, executive director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, in a confirmation letter to Mayor Tyler.

While the City of Shreveport recognizes that housing instability will continue to be an ongoing issue, the community now has a system to prevent homelessness among Veteran population, shorten the duration of homelessness when it does occur, and establish sustained housing security for those who were once identified as homeless.

“Every person who has served our nation in uniform deserves a safe, stable place to call home. Communities like Shreveport have shown that ending veteran’s homelessness is achievable,” said Julián Castro, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “I am honored to congratulate Mayor Ollie Tyler and the local and federal partners for proving that we can find housing solutions for the brave men and women who have sacrificed on behalf of our nation.”

Through strong partnerships created by the City of Shreveport and Overton Brooks VA Medical Center (OBVAMC), a team was able to lead an effective program to make shelter and housing available to Veterans experiencing homelessness. Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) and HOPE Connections were leading partners to make this achievement a reality.

These efforts were coordinated with Volunteers of America of North Louisiana (VOANL), the Elle Foundation, Salvation Army, Bossier Parish Section 8 Housing, and the Veterans Lighthouse, along with various landlords to achieve this historic milestone.

“The team collectively agreed that the only solution to homelessness is housing; therefore, all partners were focused on ways to ensure that every Veteran in our area obtained and maintained permanent housing,” said Christa Pazzaglia, HOPE Connections Executive Director.

Efforts to end Veteran homelessness, continues for Shreveport. Volunteers and organizations combed the streets of Shreveport collecting information and identifying all Veterans in need of shelter. Locally, Veteran Service organizations and community housing partners conducted outreach on a weekly basis to ensure all Veterans needing assistance are identified.

“Our combined efforts over the past several years have led to successfully placing our Veterans into housing quickly and permanently. The Overton Brooks staff is truly dedicated and guided by the principle that when Veterans have a place to call home, they are best able to benefit from the supportive services they need to stay in their homes long-term,” said Toby T. Mathew, Medical Center Director. “There is still much work to be done to ensure that all of our Veterans and their families have a place to call home.”

**-Shreveport-**