

## Veteran Finds Health and Housing Assistance Through HPRP

### Positive Stories / Lessons Learned from HPRP: *Individual Success Story*

HPRP Grantee:	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
CoC Name and Number:	TX-600 – Dallas City and County/Irving CoC

### Latest CoC Point-in-Time Count:

Total persons in ES:	29	Total persons in TH:	38
Total persons in Safe Haven:	0	Total unsheltered persons:	42
Total persons, sheltered and unsheltered:	109		

Victor's\* HPRP case manager was shocked by the environment in which she first found him. He was living in a storage unit, huddled on a small cot wedged in among towers of books and newspapers, boxes of memorabilia and trinkets, and plastic bags of empty food wrappers. He had five other storage units where he housed the rest of his accumulated belongings. He clearly had so many needs that his case manager initially had trouble prioritizing them. Victor's housing instability presented an ideal context for the comprehensive, coordinated Housing First approach, for which HPRP would provide the funding.

Victor was a veteran, though he did not provide his service details. For Victor, as for many other veterans, his mental health concerns had jeopardized his housing stability. Nationally, veterans make up one-third of all homeless adults on any given night. Victor had lost his job three years earlier, and had become homeless after exhausting his savings living in motels. His mother would occasionally mail him a little money for housing, which he instead spent on storage rental. Hoarding was not a new behavior.

Victor would become one of the more than 200 HPRP program participants (representing 12% of the homeless persons served by the City of Irving) who would benefit from the mental health services provided by Metrocare Services through its partnership with HPRP. Through Irving's Back on Track program, Victor underwent a standard, mandatory mental health evaluation upon intake, and soon began to receive counseling and intensive clinical case management.

Back on Track coordinated service delivery through weekly check-ins between his HPRP and Metrocare teams. The City's HPRP case manager was then able to secure housing. Victor's rent, which included utilities, was low enough that he would be able to manage it beyond the six months of rental assistance he would receive through HPRP. His new apartment was also accessible by public transportation.

Metrocare addressed his hoarding, as well as the other untreated mental and somatic health problems that had led to his unemployment. Victor's case manager coached him through applying for Social Security Disability Insurance, which he soon began to receive. Meanwhile, Back on Track connected Victor with a financial counselor from the North Texas Housing Coalition, who helped him to create a budget that incorporated his new income. Effective communication between his case manager and his financial counselor enabled Victor to adhere to his budget and begin the slow process of credit repair.

Over the two years since he stopped receiving HPRP assistance, Victor has remained housed, using his own income to pay the rent. He worked with counselors to continually decrease his hoarding behaviors, and by the time he exited HPRP, he had disposed of much of his clutter and relinquished all six of his storage units. HPRP had enabled the first step - moving out of his storage unit and into his own apartment - to create a dignified environment in which to begin again.

*\*Names have been changed for confidentiality.*

For more information, contact Vicki Ebner, City of Irving at 972-721-4807 or [vEbner@cityofirving.org](mailto:vEbner@cityofirving.org).