

**RESOLUTION NO. 836 -2014, AUTHORIZING ACTION TO END
VETERANS HOMELESSNESS IN SUFFOLK COUNTY
("HOUSING OUR HOMELESS HEROES ACT")**

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs announced in 2009 its goal of ending veterans homelessness by the end of 2015; and

WHEREAS, concerted local efforts have proven to be the most effective approach to implementation of this goal according to the 2013 report by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, and local leadership and strategic planning that marshals federal, state and local resources is critical to ending veterans homelessness in communities across the nation and in Suffolk County; and

WHEREAS, the County of Suffolk is home to the largest veterans population in New York State, including many who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless and is committed to ending veterans homelessness and reaffirming our commitment to those who have sacrificed so much to protect our freedom and our way of life and to make sure that nobody who has put on a uniform ever experiences homelessness; and

WHEREAS, many veterans, both single and those with families and children, face difficulty transitioning from military life to civilian life and face obstacles to securing affordable housing, and many find themselves homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; and

WHEREAS, in order to reach this important goal of ending veterans homelessness, the County must accurately assess the magnitude of veterans homelessness in Suffolk County both for individual men and women, and their families and children; determine the County's current capacity to provide permanent housing for homeless veterans; and ascertain the additional resources necessary to eradicate veterans homelessness, including researching grant opportunities, meeting needs that cannot be fulfilled through Veterans Administration Programs and establishing partnerships with community groups that serve veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, the County must also take steps to improve outreach to the homeless veterans population including creating a Homeless Veterans Web Portal to facilitate access to critical information; now, therefore be it

1st RESOLVED, that the County of Suffolk adopts the goal of ending veterans homelessness in Suffolk County; and be it further

2nd RESOLVED, that the Veterans Services Agency is hereby empowered, authorized and directed to determine the state of veterans homelessness in Suffolk County; specifically, the Veterans Services Agency will determine the number of veterans and veterans families, including children, currently residing in temporary emergency housing and transitional housing, and the number of homeless veterans and their families who are presently unsheltered (i.e. living in places not meant for human habitation) and create a database to track the number of homeless men, women, families and children and their placement in housing; and be it further

3rd **RESOLVED**, that the Veterans Services Agency shall, in conjunction with the Department of Social Services and the Division of Real Property Acquisition and Management, assess the County's current capacity to provide permanent housing for homeless veterans, by reviewing the needs assessment, referred to above, to be prepared by the Veterans Services Agency, identifying qualified housing developers and service providers capable of developing housing suitable for the needs of such veterans and, then, seeking to match such veterans, developers and providers with suitable properties within the County real property inventory for development and ultimate occupancy for housing single veterans, both male and female, and their families; and be it further

4th **RESOLVED**, that the Veterans Services Agency shall report the findings it makes pursuant to the directives of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd **RESOLVED** clauses herein to the Legislature within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this resolution; and be it further

5th **RESOLVED**, that the Veterans Service Agency shall, in coordination with outside agencies that provide services to veterans, including non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and other government agencies, help veterans whose discharge status may hinder their ability to receive services due to a service-related condition, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or other service-related mental health diagnosis, access legal counsel and social services; and be it further

6th **RESOLVED**, that the Veterans Services Agency is authorized, empowered and directed to establish, with the assistance of the Department of Information Technology, a web page portal that will provide information regarding all federal, state and local programs available to homeless veterans and their families and links to the forms and applications for such programs; this web page shall be operational within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this resolution; and be further

7th **RESOLVED**, that this Legislature, being the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) lead agency, hereby finds and determines that this resolution constitutes a Type II action pursuant to Section 617.5(c)(20), (21) and (27) of Title 6 of the NEW YORK CODE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS (6 NYCRR) and within the meaning of Section 8-0109(2) of the NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW as a promulgation of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, and legislative decisions in connection with continuing agency administration, management and information collection, and the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is hereby directed to circulate any appropriate SEQRA notices of determination of non-applicability or non-significance in accordance with this resolution.

DATED: October 7, 2014

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Steven Bellone
County Executive of Suffolk County

Date: October 16, 2014