

Tribal HUD- VASH – Supporting Native Veterans
Colville Indian Housing Authority (WA) Best Practice
November 7, 2017



Veterans have answered our nation's calls to serve. In return, our nation should answer their calls when they need help. HUD, the VA and our Tribes are doing precisely that.

In January of 2016, the Colville Indian Housing Authority in central Washington was awarded a grant from HUD's Office of Native American Programs. The Tribal HUD-Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (THVASH) grant provided subsidy funding for CIHA to house twenty homeless or at-risk of homelessness Native Veterans.

After months of pre-planning and the hiring of a VA Case Manager, the Colville Tribal Veterans Representatives and the housing team were ready to house Native Veterans. One of the first applicants served was Gary J. Francis (Colville), a retired Marine who served from 1977 – 1981 and was honorably discharged.

The team worked to qualify Gary for the housing subsidy and helped him find a decent, affordable place to live that he could call his own. For years he'd gone without one, living in substandard housing that had no running water, a leaky roof, and was severely in need of repairs. There was a bit of a delay in locating suitable housing, but by June of 2017, Gary was in a two-bedroom single family home in Nespelem and receiving case management services, assistance to furnish his home and, thanks to THVASH subsidy, paying a rent he could afford.

Gary appreciates having a place to call home. Earlier this summer he attended Camp Chaparral, a week-long cultural immersion experience hosted by the Yakama Nation about 275 miles southwest of the Colville reservation designed to improve understanding and sensitivity of all ethnic backgrounds and Veterans suffering from PTSD. According to his case manager, "It was a very spiritual experience for him," his case manager says. "He has made tremendous changes in his life."

Currently, Gary is taking Microsoft computer training through Work Source and continues sharing his experiences with the Tribal HUD-VASH program with other homeless veterans.

The VA Case Manager and the Tribal Veterans Representatives continue to support Gary on his journey. As Gary says, "I asked for help and help was provided."

If you are a Native veteran who is homeless or at-risk of homelessness in Northeastern Washington, please contact Shelby "Serena" Hinders at 509.634.2752 x2797 or email shelby.hinders@va.gov to find out if you are eligible for the THVASH program.
