

Area veteran service representatives met last week during a summit at the Tomah VA to collaborate ideas — just a year into a 5 year plan to curb veteran homelessness.

The VA's five-year plan is a six-area guide to prevention: outreach/education, treatment services, prevention services, housing/supportive services, income/employment/benefits, and community partnerships. The VA's five-year plan faces obstacles, just like many of its veterans. Some of those obstacles include lack of emergency housing, transportation for veterans to access services and a coordinator to lead the new initiatives.

There's a lot to get done in the four remaining years to end veteran homelessness, but Cathy Routh, chief of social work services at the VA, is optimistic. There are around 300 homeless veterans on a nightly basis in western Wisconsin.