



Arlington Partnership
For Affordable Housing



Terwilliger Place

**A Place to Live. A Place to Serve.
A Place in Our Community.**

Creating 160 units of affordable housing in partnership
with American Legion Post 139, in Arlington, VA.



Introduction

Terwilliger Place:

Affordable Housing, Serving those Who Served.

Home is more than a building. It's more than an address. It's a place to live and thrive. For American Legion Post 139, what once was home no longer met their needs. This very challenge presented a unique opportunity – the opportunity to create Lucille & Bruce Terwilliger Place.

Thanks to the ingenuity of the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH), the vision of the leaders of American Legion Post 139, the support of the Arlington County government, and creativity of a team of engineers, designers and builders, Terwilliger Place was born. This property is truly unique, combining 160 units of affordable housing, recreation spaces, state-of-the-art tech, and a 6,000 square foot Legion Hall, Terwilliger Place is a home for families, a center of activity in the community and a hub of service for Post 139.

The following case study provides context for the project and illustrates the impact on our community and for the American Legion, **and shows how this project can be a replicable model for veterans services organizations, and other mission-driven organizations across the country.**

Affordable Housing Today

The Challenge of Finding a Home

Today, there is an affordable housing crisis in the Washington, DC metro area. The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment in our region is \$2,210. A two- or three-bedroom home is more. In an area with one of the highest costs of living in the country, there is a massive deficit of affordable housing units, in the tens of thousands. And the number is growing. This means people who play a vital role in our local economy are left with the choice of unattainable housing costs, or unmanageable commutes, which put their livelihoods and families at risk.

This burden is especially true for veterans. The DC region once attracted many veterans who served our country and stayed on to work and raise their families in our community. From Arlington National Cemetery and the Pentagon to our workplaces and neighborhoods, veterans have given our region a legacy of service, leadership, and civic responsibility.

Today's local veterans face a different reality than those who came before. The high cost of housing makes it difficult for many families to afford an adequate home for their family. While Virginia and Arlington County have been highly successful in addressing veteran homelessness, **the National Housing Conference documents that between 20% and 34% of the 236,000 veterans in the DC metro area remain housing cost burdened, paying well over 30% of their income to cover housing costs.**

Difficult Choices: Home or Commute

Virginia is home to one of the largest – and youngest – veteran populations in the country. **Nearly 33% of younger vets have a service related disability compared to only 14% of all veterans. The unemployment rate for veterans serving since 2001 is 10% compared to a lower 6.9% for veterans overall.** Many younger vets who start families while in the service struggle to make ends when they enter civilian life.

Often, these veterans must choose between substandard housing, or long commutes. They have little time to devote to education and training that could improve their access to the high skill, technical positions available in the region. As a result, many are simply unable to participate in the economy and the civic life of our community.

We believe this needs to change.





Serving Those Who Served Us

Today, Veteran Service Organizations Face Many Challenges

A generation ago, veteran service organizations like the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and others were often a central part of local communities. Through their facilities or “posts” veteran service organizations provided socialization, community service, sports leagues, special events, charitable support, and so much more. And many posts served as a home-away-from-home for veterans, where they could spend time with peers who shared their experience.

Organizations like these saw their membership grow significantly during the period from World War II through the Vietnam era. Yet today, membership is declining. There are 3 million post-9/11 veterans compared to nearly 28 million from World War II through Desert Storm. Not only is the number of potential members dropping, younger vets returning from more recent conflicts have different hopes, needs, and challenges than earlier generations. Those transitioning out of the military often face significant barriers in returning to the civilian workforce. They struggle with poverty at rates much higher than previous generations.

Many veteran services organizations are challenged to meet the needs of this new generation. Many groups, like American Legion Post 139, are burdened with outdated, inefficient facilities, in need of repair, or simply not designed to provide the resources and functional space needed to serve the younger vets’ needs.

For American Legion Post 139, these challenges presented a new opportunity.

“...We were in a house that was on the property and had been there for a century. That house of course has gone. And, and then 1920, when we reformed, we bought that particular piece of property. The building [that we were in was] very old and getting run down.”

Dan Donohoe
American Legion

Exploring the Partnership

How APAH and American Legion 139 Created a Plan

The leadership of American Legion Post 139 knew they had significant problems with their facility. It was built in the 1940s and in urgent need of costly repairs and upgrades. The building had significant physical barriers, prohibiting service to veterans in wheelchairs or with mobility impairments. The heating system and roof were at the end of their useful life. The bar smelled of years of cigarette smoke and was unappealing to younger Vets and their families. But it was located on a 1.4-acre site, in one of the most desirable corridors in the Arlington, VA community. So they issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for redevelopment of the property. Initially, the Post expected proposals for commercial developments that would include the Post in a more sustainable model. But APAH proposed something more.

The APAH team saw an opportunity to reimagine the facilities in a way that both delivered a new Post and created new affordable housing, with a focus on serving veterans. The new housing would be conveniently located near job opportunities, transportation, grocery stores and more. APAH's innovative proposal for redevelopment of American Legion Post 139 would enable the Post to achieve its service goals, and provide affordable housing resources to a community in desperate need.

In 2016, the Post selected APAH to launch the lengthy process of rezoning the site for this new vision.

The project was underway.



“The problem today with American Legion and veterans organizations is it’s an aging population. The buildings are older and we’re not replenishing the membership. We could not bring young veterans into that post.”

Bob Romano
2nd Vice Commander,
American Legion Post 139



About the Development

APAH brought a sophisticated knowledge of the land use process in Arlington. The Legion property was zoned for low-rise commercial development—the same designation it had for decades, while land directly across the street was rezoned and developed with high rises. Rezoning this site required a two step public process: first, a change in the General Land Use Plan (or GLUP) for the neighborhood and second, a Site Plan to approve the project details. APAH and the Legion explored numerous variations on designs, checking in with legal counsel and County leadership, before the final “F”-shaped, seven story building was conceived. In exchange for seven-story heights, the public would receive a new dedicated public road across the site, new wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, all new utility service, plus, of course, a revitalized Post and affordable housing.

APAH also brought its strengths in affordable housing finance to this complex project. Terwilliger Place was financed with a complicated capital stack that included equity from the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (using both tax exempt bonds and securing a competitive 9% award), subordinated debt from Arlington County, HOME and CDBG funds, and the proceeds from a capital campaign. Led by APAH Board member Rich Jordan, a Naval Academy graduate, the capital campaign raised \$4M, including lead gifts from Ron Terwilliger and one of the first-ever capital grants from Amazon.

About the Property

Location



**Virginia Square
Neighborhood**
Arlington, VA

Walking distance to GMU
Arlington Campus, Clarendon,
Ballston neighborhoods



The first Veteran preference housing in
the same community as the **Pentagon**,
Arlington National Cemetery, **Fort Meyer**
and **Henderson Hall**, along with the **Air
Force and Marine Corps** memorials



1 Mile from
the **National Mall**



3.5 Miles from
the **Pentagon**

**"It's a place where veterans can
come in, mingle, have a beer, socialize in a
comfortable atmosphere."**

Bob Romano
2nd Vice Commander,
American Legion Post 139



Apartment Mix and Affordability

Size	Units at 80% AMI	Units at 60% AMI	Units at 50% AMI	Units at 30% AMI	Total
1 Bedroom	0	16	21	11	48
2 Bedroom	9	24	40	14	87
3 Bedroom	9	12	3	1	25
Total	18	52	64	26	160

Building Features



Situated on 1.4 acres



6,000 SF Post Hall with breakout rooms, social areas, recreation



Designed outdoor spaces



160 units of affordable housing



Includes 1, 2 and 3-bedroom units



Modern design and finishes



Technology-equipped

“APAH was the only one that had really had veterans’ housing, medium-income housing, and a post home downstairs for 139.”

Bob Romano

2nd Vice Commander,
American Legion Post 139



“We want to create something that is about connection and legacy and reimagining ... how can the new post home be a haven and a place for the next generation of veterans who are a lot younger than traditional post members of the past?”

Kia Weatherspoon
Interior Designer,
Determined by Design

APAH's Unique Solution

Bringing Expertise and Vision to Meet American Legion's Needs

American Legion Post 139 selected APAH to lead the project, because we brought a unique approach that other developers did not recognize. Our deep experience creating affordable housing opportunities in the Arlington area, coupled with our dedication to serving veterans led us to see the property differently. It was not just an opportunity to create a modernized facility for Post 139, it was a chance to provide a hundred and sixty families an affordable place to call home, including a preference for Veterans. Our vision not only delivered on the objectives of Post 139, but will now allow previously disadvantaged families to become thriving members of the local economy, creating benefits across the community.



Focus on Function

The property includes Post 139's own multi-purpose condo space. The property includes facilities designed to host a wide array of activities. Spaces include large common areas, and smaller private spaces – designed by a Veteran-led interior designer in a manner to help serve today's veterans. In addition, there are versatile outdoor spaces for recreation, gathering and play.



High Tech Connectivity

Today's veterans, and the community at large, depend on technology for work, socialization, and recreation. We designed the Post 139 common areas to include state of the art connectivity with free wireless internet services for all residents.

Project Milestones

On-time, On-budget Delivery

The past two years have been an unprecedented time as the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives and industry. Yet, construction on the Terwilliger Place property proceeded – safely – on-time, and on-budget, despite the challenges to the construction and building materials industries.

“ We wanted to serve. [Post 139] wanted to serve veterans in their own community. We wanted to help solve an affordable housing problem. And we’ve realized that together we can make so much of that vision happen. ”

Carmen Romero
President & CEO, APAH

Project Timeline

2016

FALL 2016

APAH Selected as American Legion development partner

2017

FALL 2017

Arlington approves General Land Use Plan Amendment

2018

SUMMER 2018

Site plans submitted

SUMMER 2018

Arlington County recommends \$11 million AHIF funding award

2019

WINTER 2019

Final site plan and AHIF award approvals

SPRING 2019

Application for tax credits

SUMMER 2019

Low Income Housing Tax credits awards announced

FALL 2019

Early site work begins

2020

SPRING 2020

Formal construction groundbreaking

2021

ALL YEAR

Post 139 celebrates its 100th Anniversary as construction continues

2022

SPRING 2022

Project Completed

Impact on Affordable Housing and Veterans Service

How Terwilliger Place Serves the Community

Affordable Housing for Our Community

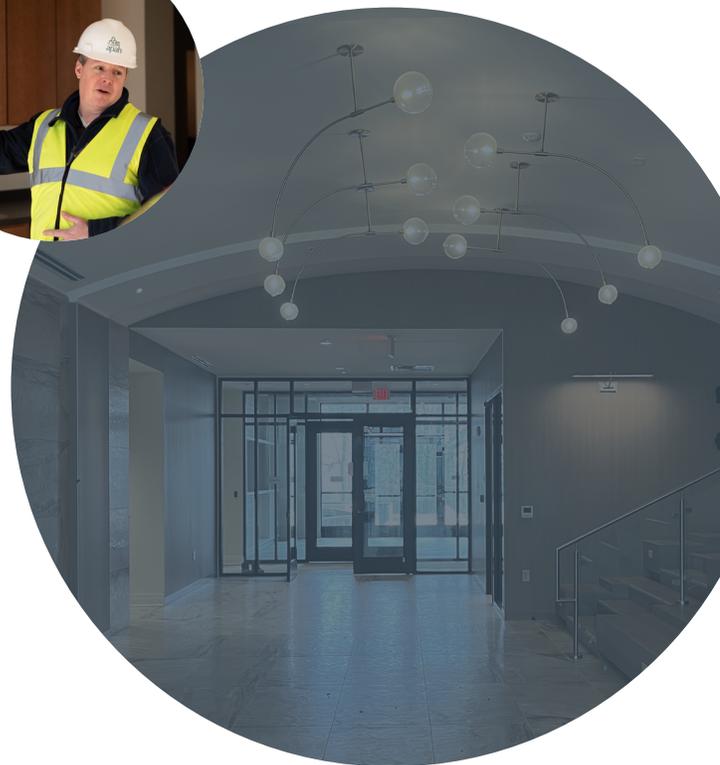
Terwilliger Place will immediately make an impact on affordable housing opportunities in Arlington, by offering 160 units with priority for veterans and their families. Due to its location, families living in Terwilliger Place will have access to some of the region's best public schools, many within walking distance. The location further addresses food insecurity, with its direct proximity to grocery stores and other conveniences. The location is a short three blocks to a major Metro station (Washington, DC-area's public transit system), and several major bus lines and thoroughfares.

The County has secured fifteen units with Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers that can support veterans coming out of homelessness. Nearly two-thirds of the apartment homes will have two or three bedrooms, ideal for families with children, and multi-generational families. With modern finishes and high-quality construction, these units are not just a place to stay, they are designed to provide an exceptional quality of life – truly homes to be proud of.

Revitalized Facilities for Post 139

Throughout the planning and construction, APAH worked closely with the Joint Base Ft. Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia's Department of Veterans Services and numerous service organizations to identify veterans' most pressing needs. As a result of this real-world feedback, the new American Legion Post 139 offers more than 6,000 SF of versatile space, redesigned from the ground up to meet the needs of today's generation of veterans, while respecting the legacy of the past, and accommodating for the future.

The apartment building includes a large community room and flexible multi-purpose room, counseling space, and a business center, equipped with advanced connectivity and versatile workspaces. The Legion Post condominium includes banquet facilities with a commercial kitchen, clubroom, private areas for counseling, and business offices. Both have dedicated outdoor spaces with grills and tables to allow for all-season gatherings and events.



Expanding the Vision

Terwilliger Place is a Model for Other Communities

American Legion Post 139 faced challenges that are shared by many veteran services organizations across the nation, as well as by other mission-driven organizations, service clubs and churches. Aging facilities in need of costly repair, facilities that sit unused, or that no longer meet the functional needs of the organization – these are all common issues organizations face. Often, the value of the land may exceed the value of the structures currently on it.

Consider regions across the nation, where the cost of living is high, where affordable housing is scarce, where veterans and other families in need struggle to make ends meet. These factors can all work together to create an exceptional opportunity for a creative developer to revitalize a space that benefits both the organization, and the local community.

The APAH Process: Listen, Collaborate, Deliver

At APAH, we followed a step-by-step process that can guide other developers or community organizations in their own journey to revitalization. This approach is replicable, and has yielded successful results for American Legion 139 in Terwilliger Place, and can do so for others.

1

Listen

The American Legion Post 139 leadership had clear goals for what they wanted to accomplish. A central objective was to better serve today's veterans. So we sought out expert insight from leaders at Joint Base Ft. Myer-Henderson Hall, and from Virginia's Department of Veterans Services to better understand today's veterans needs, and propose solutions to meet them.

2

Collaborate

We formed a strong collaborative partnership with the leadership of Post 139 to ensure they were able to review, approve and advise at all phases of construction. In addition, we worked closely with Arlington County government officials to meet all necessary requirements and statutes, through open, direct and timely communication.

3

Deliver

Even during one of the most challenging periods of time for the construction and development industries, we were able to move forward safely and efficiently to deliver on-time, and on-budget. This required significant coordination, and expert project management throughout the process.

Conclusion

Serving Veterans, Serving the Community

Thanks to the vision of American Legion Post 139 leaders, the enthusiastic support of the Arlington County government, and creative solutions from a team of legal counsel, designers, architects and builders led by APAH, Terwilliger Place opened to its first residents in the spring of 2022.

American Legion Post 139 now has a revitalized home from which to serve local veterans and the community, and at least 160 families have an affordable place to call home – right in the heart of Arlington, in the center of opportunity.



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For Affordable Housing

About Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH)

In 1989, inspired by faith and a desire for economic justice, four couples created APAH to address the housing needs of the diverse, inclusive community they deeply valued. Thirty years later, APAH has created a portfolio of 19 properties valued at over \$350 million providing nearly 2,300 rental homes, with 1,800 more in the pipeline. APAH has a strong track record of connecting residents to services and programs that strengthen stability and open doors of opportunity. A leading provider of affordable housing, APAH is deeply committed to building strong communities and advocating for the people they serve.

Learn more at:
www.apah.org



American Legion
Post 139

American Legion Post 139

Since its founding in 1921, American Legion Post 139 has served veterans as a gathering place for social support, community service and reintegration with civilian life. The Post offers programs ranging from social activities like the annual holiday party for families of local service members to workshops on navigating veteran benefits. Most importantly, the Post responds to urgent needs of local veterans. Post 139 is also engaged in the local community sponsoring a competitive baseball team for 16-19 year olds and the rifle clubs at Arlington's three public high schools. Dedicated to sustaining its impact, American Legion Post 139 is ready to evolve to meet the needs of the next generation.

Learn more about the American Legion at:
www.legion.org