



Department of  
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Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

# Fact Sheet

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## VA Programs for Homeless Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 a top priority. The 2012 Point in Time Estimates of Homelessness estimated that on a single night in January 2012, 62,619 Veterans were homeless which is a 17.2 percent decline since 2009. Veterans comprised 9.8 percent of all homeless adults in 2012.

Together with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Labor, and a number of other Federal, State and local agencies, VA and its partners provide substantial hands-on assistance to homeless Veterans. More than 240,000 Veterans who were homeless or at-risk of homelessness in 2012 were served by VA, a 21 percent increase since 2011. Although limited to Veterans and their dependents, VA's major homeless programs constitute the largest integrated network of homeless assistance programs in the country, offering a wide array of services.

VA is conducting an outreach campaign to raise awareness of VA's programs and services to prevent and end homelessness. This effort is reaching deeply into communities and partnering with those who know this population best: first responders; police, fire and hospital workers; faith-based and community service providers, Veterans Service Organizations, and others who come into contact with homeless Veterans on a regular basis.

Part of this outreach includes raising awareness that VA has a 24/7, 365 National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV), 1-877-4AID-VET, and an online chat service at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). The NCCHV provides homeless and at-risk Veterans with access to trained responders. From fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2012, calls to the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans rose from 36,100 to 80,558, a 123 percent increase.

If you, or a Veteran you know, are at risk of homelessness contact VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838) to speak to a trained VA responder.

VA, using its own resources or in partnerships with others, has secured over 15,000 residential rehabilitative and transitional beds and over 48,000 HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program vouchers for permanent housing

throughout the nation. In fiscal year 2013, VA expects to spend \$4.4 billion on core health care services for homeless Veterans and \$1.4 billion on specialized homeless programs.

VA sponsors and supports national, regional and local homeless conferences and meetings, bringing together thousands of homeless providers and advocates to discuss community planning strategies and provide technical assistance in such areas as transitional housing, mental health and family services, education and employment opportunities for the homeless.

More detailed information on all of VA's Programs for Homeless Veterans can be found on the internet at <http://www.va.gov/homeless>.

## **Homeless Programs**

National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans: The Center's mission is to promote recovery-oriented care for Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness by developing, promoting, and enhancing policy, clinical care research, and education to improve homeless services. Several model development projects are supported by The Center including Community Referral and Resource Centers (CRRC), Safe Havens/Low Demand Demonstration Project, Housing First, and Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACT) to create a "medical home" tailored to the needs of homeless Veterans that keeps them from needing to go to the emergency departments for care; helps address chronic medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment needs; and is integrated with homeless program staff to expedite housing placement and reduce recidivism.. The Center is designed to be a national resource for both VA and community partners.

HUD-VA Supportive Housing (VASH) Program is a joint effort between the Department of Housing and Urban Development and VA to move homeless Veterans and their families into permanent housing with dedicated case management. HUD provides housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) that allows homeless Veterans to rent privately owned housing. VA offers eligible homeless Veterans clinical and supportive services through its health care system across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

As of October 30, 2012, approximately 48,000 Housing Choice Vouchers were available for use in the HUD-VASH Program and 38,514 previously homeless Veterans were housed through use of these vouchers. Eleven percent of Veterans receiving HUD-VASH assistance were women. Fourteen percent of HUD-VASH vouchers were provided to homeless Veterans with children.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF) At risk Veterans benefit from early interventions to avoid homelessness for themselves and their families. VA is providing resources through the SSVF Program to provide supportive services to very low-income Veteran families. Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that will assist very low-income Veteran

families by providing a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability. In July 2012, VA awarded nearly \$100 million in grants to 151 community agencies in 49 states and the District of Columbia. The sites encompass both rural and urban locations with the goal of preventing homelessness and maintaining housing stability for the Veteran's family. In its first year of operation (Fiscal Year 2012), SSVF provided assistance to over 35,000 Veterans and their family members including more than 8,800 children.

VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. The GPD Program has more than 600 funded projects and over 14,000 beds nationwide. In fiscal year 2012, 12,232 Veterans were housed through GPD programs.

VA's Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) Program provides residential care for homeless Veterans. DCHVs provide rehabilitation in a residential setting on VA medical center grounds or in the community to eligible Veterans who have a wide range of problems, illnesses or rehabilitative care needs which can be helped by medical, psychiatric, vocational, educational or social services. Clinical care is provided by interdisciplinary teams in supportive, therapeutic milieus which foster Veterans' functional independence and mutual support. DCHVs provide a structured and supportive residential environment as part of the rehabilitative treatment process. There are more than 2,300 beds available through the program at 44 sites. The program provides residential treatment to over 8,000 homeless Veterans each year.

Stand Downs are one- to three-day events that provide homeless Veterans with a variety of services and allow VA and community-based service providers to reach more homeless Veterans. Stand downs give homeless Veterans a temporary refuge where they can obtain food, shelter, clothing and a range of community and VA assistance. In many locations, stand downs provide health screenings, referral and access to long-term treatment, benefits counseling, ID cards and access to other programs to meet their immediate needs. There were 220 Stand Downs held during 2011, a 17 percent increase from 2010. These events served 45,957 Veterans, an increase of approximately 4 percent from 2010. More than 27,000 volunteers participated in stand down events. For a list of stand down events nationwide please visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless>.

The Readjustment Counseling Service's Vet Center program's community-based locations and outreach activities identify and serve approximately 170,000 homeless including homeless combat Veterans, primarily through assessment and referrals for other needed services through their more than 230 Vet Centers that provide readjustment counseling services in homeless shelters and are major players in community stand-down events. Every Vet Center has a homeless Veteran coordinator.

A fleet of 70 mobile counseling centers have deployed across the country as part of the Vet Center program.

VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program provides outreach and case management as well as residential services programs which target homeless Veterans transitioning from literal street homelessness, those being discharged from institutions, and Veterans who recently became homeless and require safe and stable living arrangements while they seek permanent housing. The program operates at 135 VA medical centers. In fiscal year 2012, over 119,878 homeless Veterans were served through HCHV outreach, an increase of more than 21 percent from fiscal year 2011.

The Contract Residential Treatment Program component of HCHV ensures that Veterans with serious mental health diagnoses can be placed in community-based programs which provide quality housing and services. In fiscal year 2012, over 4,900 Veterans received services in HCHV contracted residential treatment beds.

VA's Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP) provides dental treatment for eligible Veterans receiving residential service in a number of programs: Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment, VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem, Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (contract bed), and Community Residential Care. In fiscal year 2012, 17,544 HVDP Veterans were provided dental care nationally. This reflects an increase of 25 percent from FY 2011.

Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program (HVSEP) provides vocational assistance, job development and placement, and ongoing supports to improve employment outcomes among Veterans and Veterans at-risk for homelessness. Formerly homeless Veterans who have been trained as Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRs) provide these services. Nearly 13,000 homeless Veterans received services through HVSEP during FY 2012 to help them obtain and maintain employment.

Compensated Work-Therapy (CWT) and Compensated Work-Therapy/Transitional Residence (TR) Programs: Through its CWT and TR programs, VA offers structured work opportunities and supervised therapeutic housing for at-risk and homeless Veterans with physical, psychiatric and substance abuse disorders. VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by these Veterans, who learn new job skills, re-learn successful work habits and regain a sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Veterans in CWT-TR programs are paid for their work and, in turn, pay a program fee that is applied toward maintenance and upkeep of the residence. At the end of FY 2012, there were 571 operational beds across 44 programs.

VA's National Cemetery Administration initiated a partnership where formerly homeless Veterans from the CWT program are participating and apply for a one-year paid caretaker apprenticeship at VA national cemeteries located near servicing VA medical centers. Participants in the first apprenticeship class began their training on October 22, 2012, and will be placed in full-time positions at five national cemeteries.

NCA employed 23 Veterans as part of this program and plans to sponsor additional classes in the future.

Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration Program (VHPD) is a three-year pilot program designed to prevent Veterans and their families from becoming homeless or reduce the length of time Veterans and their families are homeless. The program targets Veterans returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This demonstration program provides an opportunity to understand the unique needs of this new cohort of Veterans and develop efforts to identify those at risk, conduct outreach, and deliver assistance in regaining and maintaining housing stability. VHPD is supported by a partnership among the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Labor (DOL), and local community agencies. The program assisted 970 Veterans in fiscal year 2012.

Homeless Veterans Receive Benefits Assistance at the Regional Offices through designated staff members who serve as Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinators. Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinators provide outreach services and help expedite the processing of homeless Veterans' benefits claims. The Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act allows eligible Veterans without a fixed address to receive VA benefits checks at VA regional offices. VA procedures allow for expeditious processing of homeless Veterans' benefits claims. Last year, over 15,200 homeless Veterans had their claims expedited by VA staff members.

Property Sales for Homeless Providers Program makes all the properties VA obtains through foreclosures on VA-guaranteed mortgages available for sale to qualified, non-profit homeless provider organizations at a discount of 20 to 50 percent to shelter homeless Veterans. The percentage of discount will vary based on how long the property has been listed for sale.

VA's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Enhancement Initiative provides access to substance use services in the community to assist homeless Veterans with obtaining and maintaining housing, increase access to care, and enhance the opportunity for recovery. This initiative began in FY 2011 with the funding of 16 SUD Specialists at targeted sites around the country, followed by 31 additional SUD Specialists in FY 2012. In FY 2012, nearly 9,000 homeless Veterans were provided access to SUD services through this initiative.

Veterans Justice Outreach Program has the goal of avoiding the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans involved with the criminal justice system have timely access to VA's mental health and substance use services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate. In fiscal year 2012, 27,251 reentry Veterans were provided services through the program.

Healthcare for Reentry Veterans (HCRV) Program is designed to address the community reentry needs of incarcerated Veterans. HCRV's goals are to prevent homelessness, reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse problems

upon community readjustment, and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison. In fiscal year 2012, 10,572 justice-involved Veterans were provided services through the program.

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) for Veterans brings together consumers, providers, advocates, local officials and other concerned citizens to identify the needs of homeless Veterans and work to meet those needs through planning and cooperative action. CHALENG is designed to be an ongoing assessment process that describes the needs of homeless Veterans and identifies the barriers they face to successful community reentry. This process has helped build thousands of relationships with community agencies, Veterans groups, law enforcement agencies, and federal, state and local government. Local CHALENG meetings represent important opportunities for VA and public and private agency representatives to meet and develop meaningful partnerships to better serve homeless Veterans. Over 17,000 people participated in the CHALENG process in calendar year 2011. In calendar year 2012, the CHALENG process was completely transitioned to a web-based survey, eliminating the paper survey process.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation VA has built program monitoring and evaluation into all of its homeless Veterans' treatment initiatives and it serves as an integral component of each program. Implemented in conjunction with the Northeast Program Evaluation Center (NEPEC) at VAMC West Haven, CT, these evaluation efforts provide important information about the Veterans served and the therapeutic value and cost effectiveness of the specialized programs.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki is the Chair of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

For more information, visit the VA Homeless Veterans website at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless) or contact VA's Veterans Homeless Initiative Office at (202) 461-1857, or [homelessvets@mail.va.gov](mailto:homelessvets@mail.va.gov)

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