Ending Veterans Homelessness

"How You Can Help"

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Sons of The American Legion
2016-2017
"Knowledge is Power"

Homeless Veterans, 2016
39,471

(Estimated)
Veterans Homelessness
In United States 2016

What should I know about homelessness?

Being homeless, or at risk for homelessness, is one of the most difficult things anyone can face. Lacking the security of knowing where you'll sleep at night, having no place to keep your belongings, and not being able to care for yourself and possibly your family can lead to stress, anger, a sense of shame, depression, and physical discomfort. It can be hard to find employment, live a satisfying life, or do the things you want to do when you are homeless.

Many circumstances can lead to homelessness. Some Veterans become homeless due to a combination of housing shortages and high unemployment. Other Veterans may be dealing with painful memories from the military or health issues and have little access to health care or support from family and friends. This may lead them to feel as though they have nowhere to go but the streets. In some cases, what seems like a temporary lack of a place to stay becomes permanent. In other cases, Veterans who are homeless move from shelter to shelter because they don't know where else to go.

What should I know about being homeless?

Like many others, you or a Veteran you know may have difficulty coming to terms with the thought "I am homeless." You may become angry or hopeless and simply give up trying to find a home or stop taking care of yourself. Such despair can also lead to harmful behavior — such as alcohol or drug problems — as a means of coping with your feelings.

"I had been successful, and then it felt like I lost all my energy. I just couldn't keep my job anymore. The bills mounted up, I couldn't keep up with the rent, and I got kicked out of my apartment."

Some Veterans who are homeless may face additional difficulties, such as:

- Feeling down on themselves and hopeless
- Being hungry, or not eating healthy foods
- Getting sick more often
- Having physical ailments
- Being out in extreme heat and cold
- Drinking alcohol or taking drugs to temporarily feel better

Some homeless Veterans may be dealing with health conditions that need attention, such as physical injury, problems with alcohol and drugs, depression, and posttraumatic stress. No matter what you or a Veteran you know may be going through while homeless, you may want to reach out for help right away.

What help is available for homeless Veterans?

All Veterans at risk for homelessness or attempting to exit homelessness, and their families and friends, can access a variety of resources and benefits, such as prevention services, housing support, job training, and health care. The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans provides a hotline and online chat for free, confidential assistance. Trained VA staff are on call and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to assist homeless Veterans and their families at **1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838).**
www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp

"I went to a Stand Down thinking I would just get some clothes and new glasses. I ended up talking to someone who helped me work out my legal problems."

Veterans and their family or friends can also contact the VA Homeless Coordinator at their nearest VA Medical Center for information or assistance.

Homelessness is complicated and difficult to overcome, but there are things you can do right now:

- Make a list of your most immediate needs.
- Contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans for support and resources.
- Find a place where you can receive mail, like a shelter, place of worship, or VA regional office or clinic.
- Make sure you have copies of personal records, such as your birth certificate, your Social Security card, a photo ID, and your DD214; the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans has information on replacing personal records.
- Eat healthy foods when possible.
- Avoid "easy outs" like alcohol and drugs.

Take the next step: Make the connection.

Every day Veterans who served in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard and their families and friends connect with resources, services, and support to address the issues affecting their lives. Homelessness interferes with health, relationships, and daily activities. There could also be underlying issues that are contributing to homelessness. Reach out for support and consider connecting with:

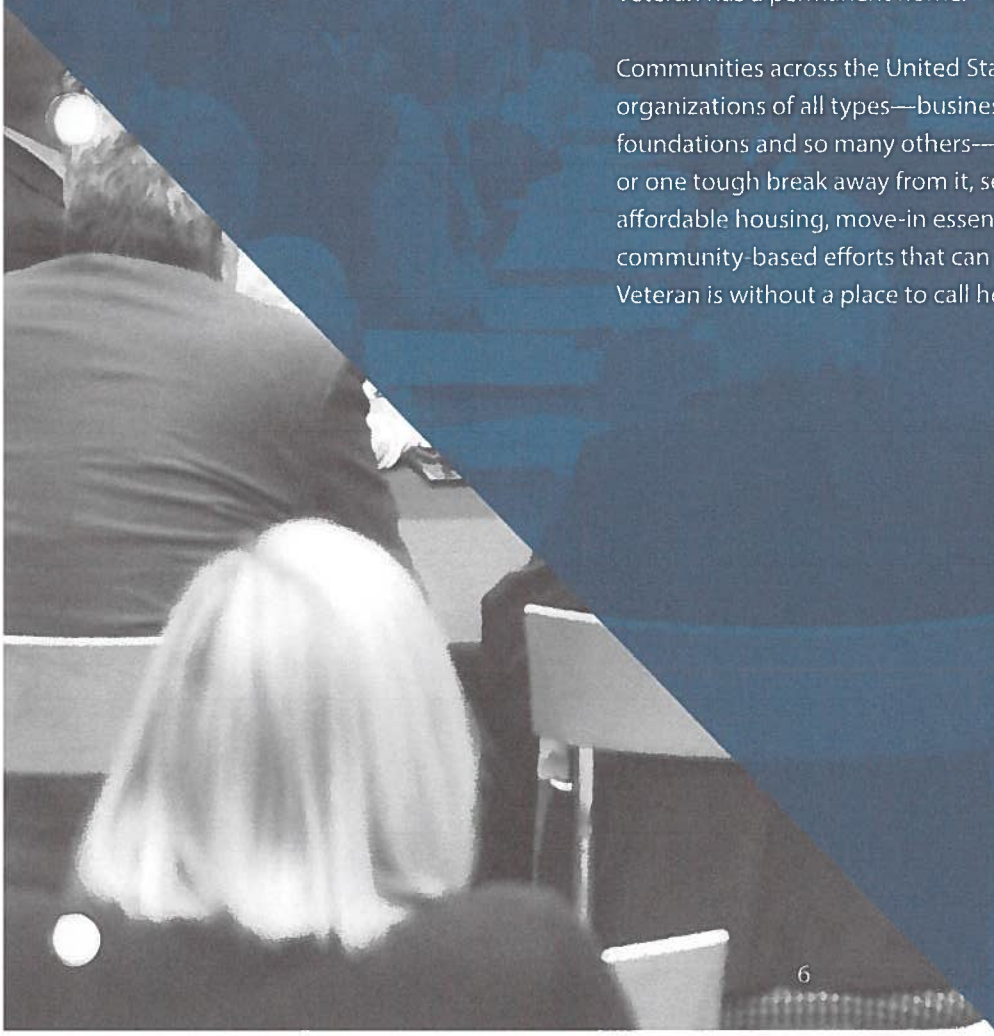
- **The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**
- **Your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center.** VA specializes in the care and treatment of Veterans and has specific resources for homeless Veterans.
- **Your doctor.** Ask if your doctor has experience treating Veterans or can refer you to someone who does.
- **A mental health professional,** such as a counselor or therapist
- **A spiritual or religious adviser**

10 *Ways To Get Involved in Ending and Preventing Homelessness*

The company that hires a formerly homeless Veteran. The landlord who accepts her housing voucher. The faith-based group that helps furnish her new apartment. The foundation that shores up her finances. And the civic group that pays a visit to welcome her home.

These are just a few ways that community-based organizations provide a fresh start to Veterans who are exiting homelessness. These collaborators are essential to the nation's success in making sure every Veteran has a permanent home.

Communities across the United States count on the support of organizations of all types—businesses, nonprofit service providers, foundations and so many others—to help Veterans who are homeless, or one tough break away from it, secure meaningful employment, affordable housing, move-in essentials and more. Here are 10 community-based efforts that can get us closer to the day when no Veteran is without a place to call home.



1 BOOST ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Encourage property owners and landlords to house Veterans exiting homelessness, whether or not they're eligible for the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program and other VA services. Consider incentives (e.g., risk-mitigation funding) to encourage housing providers to get involved.

Aid your efforts with this video, *www.usich.gov/blog/first-lady-michelle-obama-releases-video-encouraging-landlords*, and these resources, *www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/engaging-landlords-risk-mitigation-funds-community-profiles.*

2 COORDINATE HOUSING EFFORTS

Pool resources and staff to develop coordinated assessment and entry systems to ensure that there is no wrong door for Veterans seeking help and housing.

Identify all Veterans experiencing homelessness by name and share that list across systems so that no one falls through the cracks. Guide your efforts with resources at *www.va.gov/homeless/USICH benchmarking.asp.*

3 HELP VETERANS NAVIGATE HOUSING OPTIONS

Take a page from New Orleans—the first city to achieve an effective end to Veteran homelessness on Jan. 2, 2015—and pair Veterans with housing navigators.

These dedicated staff and peer support professionals help Veterans define which housing and other services they need, fill out paperwork and complete other complex tasks to promote the rapid transition to permanent housing. Learn more by viewing this toolkit at *www.va.gov/homeless/nchav/research/Navigator_Toolkit%20PDF.pdf.*

4 COLLECT AND DISTRIBUTE MOVE-IN ESSENTIALS

Veterans exiting homelessness often need mattresses, household items and other costly supplies to make their new house or apartment feel like home.

Check with VA Voluntary Service *(www.volunteer.va.gov)* and the local homeless coordinator to see if there are specific ways to help.

5 SUPPORT MOVE-IN COSTS

Even Veterans who have located a permanent home may be one security deposit or rental fee away from being able to move in. Work with community partners who have programs that raise funds to help Veterans secure their first and last months' rent and security deposits so they can exit homelessness as quickly as possible.

6 PROMOTE VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

Employers can work with VA community employment coordinators (CECs)—based at nearly every VA Medical Center—to share position openings and set up interviews with qualified Veterans. CECs pre-screen Veterans who have a wide variety of skill sets and all levels of education to facilitate hiring and onboarding.

Find the nearest CEC online at *www.va.gov/homeless/cec-contacts.asp.* Other agencies can promote Veteran employment. Collaborate with workforce investment boards, faith-based groups, homelessness services, housing organizations, VA Medical Centers and employers to help Veterans develop résumés, polish interviewing skills and access job opportunities.

7 SHARE LEGAL SERVICES INFORMATION

Expanding Veterans' access to free and low-cost legal services can be a critical way to end and prevent homelessness among Veterans.

Here are a few ways to help:

- Share videos about how legal services professionals can assist Veterans at *www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKbu5C1tx2w* and *www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGVpwfcGufU.*

- Visit VA's Legal Help for Veterans page *(www.va.gov/OGC/LegalServices.asp)* to find out if a pro bono Veterans' legal clinic exists in your community, locate a VJO specialist and identify other resources.

8 EXPAND TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Transportation services help Veterans keep stable housing. Transportation links Veterans to steady work, regular health care and support services vital to success in housing.

Directly or in partnership with others, many states and communities provide discounted or free transit trips for Veterans. Veterans service organizations and nonprofits may offer discounted or free bus and train passes for Veterans. Ridesharing and bike sharing are other options to get Veterans where they need to go.

For more ideas and resources, view the fact sheet at *www.va.gov/homeless/docs/Transportation_Programs_FactSheet.pdf.*

9 PARTICIPATE IN A STAND DOWN

Stand Downs are outreach events where Veterans can get access to immediate, on-site services and VA health care and benefits. They are local, collaborative events, coordinated among local VA Medical Centers, other government agencies and community-based service providers.

Contact your local VA Medical Center *(www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp)* to sponsor or participate in a Stand Down.

10 TAKE THE CHALLENGE

VA needs your input in a planning process called Project CHALENG (**C**ommunity **H**omelessness **A**ssessment, **L**ocal **E**ducation and **N**etworking **G**roups). This ongoing assessment unites homeless service providers, advocates, Veterans and citizens toward the goal of identifying and meeting the evolving needs of Veterans who are homeless.

Visit *www.va.gov/homeless/chaleng.asp* to take up the CHALENG today.

Help for Homeless Veterans

877-4AID-VET

va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

Help Spread the Word

Please use the following social media content on your organization's Facebook and Twitter accounts and use the article in a blog, newsletter or email, or on your website. Please contact VAHomeless_Veteran_Outreach@va.gov if you have any questions. Thank you for supporting our Veterans!

Tweets

1. We are a proud partner in the fight to end #Veteran homelessness. How will you help? 1.usa.gov/Q8aM5L
2. Ask the question "Are you a #Veteran?" when you encounter anyone experiencing homelessness. Encourage the individual to Make the Call to 877-4AID-VET.
3. Everyone can help end #Veteran homelessness. Make the Call to 877-4AID-VET today to learn how to change a life. 1.usa.gov/Q8aM5L
4. Veterans fought for our home. Now we fight for theirs. Ask those facing homelessness in our community, "Are you a Veteran?" 1.usa.gov/Q8aM5L
5. After serving our nation, #Veterans should never face homelessness. Make the Call to 877-4AID-VET on behalf of a Veteran in our community.
6. Check out this #PSA about ending #Veteran homelessness. Share it with your family and friends to support local Vets. http://bit.ly/TcAWmU

Facebook posts

1. Veteran homelessness is a national issue that ends at the community level. Learn your role today. va.gov/homeless/for_the_community.asp
2. You can make a difference in the life of a Veteran who is homeless. Share this PSA, and empower Veterans in our community to Make the Call to 877-4AID-VET. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe_UTAFtZk0
3. Those who served our nation should not struggle to stay in their homes. Call VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET to learn how to help a Veteran in our community. va.gov/homeless

Blog or newsletter article

Veterans are proven leaders. But they're also human. Veterans can face money problems and mental health challenges, or retreat from family and friends as they adjust to civilian life. Don't ignore the hardships that could jeopardize the health, livelihood, or homes of Veterans you know. VA has allocated unprecedented resources for ending Veteran homelessness. For Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, VA is here to help. Make the Call to **877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838)** or chat online at **va.gov/homeless** to help Veterans access the services they have earned.

There is no "typical" Veteran. Your oldest buddy, the store clerk, the woman playing with her children at the park—they all may be Veterans at risk of homelessness. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. VA is able to do this because it provides a wide range of services to eligible Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, including:

- Health care
- Safe housing and temporary rental assistance
- Job training and financial counseling
- Help paying for child care or moving expenses
- Foreclosure avoidance through guaranteed loans

These resources—and others provided by local agencies—have already helped thousands of Veterans. We are here to make sure that those who served our country get the help they need. But no one can end homelessness alone. Ask anyone you encounter who is experiencing homelessness if he or she is a Veteran. Free support is available 24/7 from the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **877-4AID-VET**. You can also visit the Homeless Veterans Download Center to access printable brochures, posters, and Web banners that can help you raise awareness in our community at va.gov/homeless/resource_center.asp

Community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, fire and Emergency Medical Services, homeless shelters, libraries, social services, and soup kitchens

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE POINT PAPER

END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

In 2010, then-VA Secretary Eric Shinseki pledged to devote resources necessary to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Although this robust goal was not met – there has been progress in combating veteran homelessness. Former VA Secretary Robert McDonald stated that eliminating veteran homelessness – functional zero nationwide – was still a top priority for the Department. VA has worked closely with Congress to provide resources in affordable housing and supportive services programs to help more veterans and their families. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) there were fewer than 40,000 homeless veterans (or 9 percent of homeless adults) on a single night in January 2016. Two thirds of homeless veterans (67 percent or 26,404 veterans) were staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens, while a third (33 percent or 13,067 veterans) were found in places not suitable to human habitation. Veteran homelessness dropped by 47 percent, or nearly 35,000 people, between 2010 and 2016. Between 2015 and 2016 alone the number of homeless veterans dropped by 8,000 people (or 17 percent).

A full continuum of care — housing, employment training and placement, healthcare, substance abuse treatment, legal aid, and follow-up case management — depends on many organizations working together to provide services and adequate funding. The availability of homeless veteran services, and continued community and government support for them, depends on vigilant advocacy and public education efforts on the local, state, and federal levels. The complexity of issues affecting all homeless veterans (the extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income, and access to healthcare), as well as the fact that a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and a lack of family and social support networks mandates VA must, in order to meet its commitments, have additional resources.

As 2017 begins, The American Legion believes programs dedicated to battling veteran homelessness should continue to be funded even beyond the 2015 goal. This is because even if cities and/or states are successful in achieving a "functional zero" of homeless veterans, veteran homelessness is often a temporary circumstance. If a functional zero is achieved, the focus should shift to ensuring that those veterans who *become* homeless are able to be quickly transitioned from homelessness to economic stability, including stable housing and meaningful employment. These programs are a necessary means to ensure that we, as a nation, are able to retain a functional zero in veteran homelessness.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

The American Legion recommends funding for a broad range of appropriate and effective interventions, including:

- Congress must appropriate funds ($300 million) and permanently re-authorize the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program (SSVF). SSVF funds have been used effectively by community organizations to prevent many veterans from becoming homeless, and to quickly re-house veterans who need nothing more than short-term rental assistance and limited case management in order to get back on their feet. SSVF funds can also be used to pay for employment services, utility assistance, child care costs, and other housing-related expenses.

- Congress must continue support for VA's Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program. This critical program provides short-term housing help to homeless veterans, allowing them to get connected with jobs, supportive services, more permanent housing, and ultimately to become self-sufficient. Promising new models for using grant and per diem funds, including allowing veterans to remain in their GPD housing unit once support from the program ends and new programs focused on women veterans, are helping to ensure that GPD continues to meet the ever changing needs of returning veterans and their families.

- Congress must increase appropriations for Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) to $50 million, the program's authorized level since 2005, and continue fully funding the program through the foreseeable future.

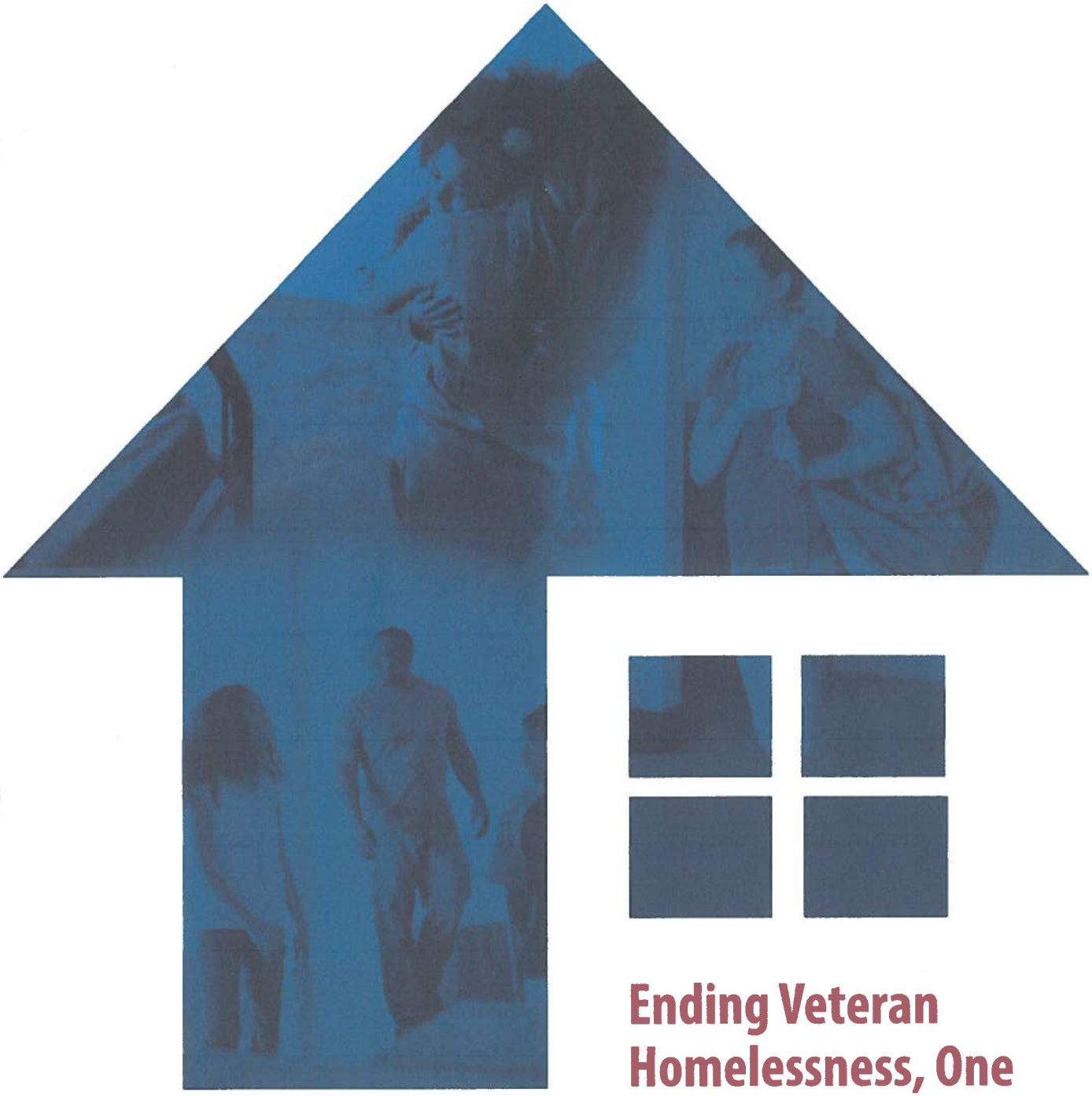
- Congress must provide funding for dental care and legal services for homeless veterans.

The American Legion continues to lead communities by volunteering, fundraising, and advocating for programs and resources to help homeless veterans. In addition, The American Legion directly provides housing for homeless veterans and their families, including facilities in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. One of the goals of The American Legion is to help bring federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based institutions and other stakeholders to the table to discuss best practices, along with funding opportunities, so homeless veterans and their families can obtain the necessary care and help to properly transition from the streets and shelters to gainful employment and independent living.

Over the span of seven years, veteran homelessness has fallen 46 percent, with 33,896 fewer homeless veterans in 2016 than in 2009. This decline includes both large decreases in the number of veterans found in unsheltered locations (16,891 fewer veterans), and in veterans experiencing homelessness in shelters and transitional housing projects (17,005 fewer veterans). Still, despite this good news, there remains work to be done in order to ensure that our homeless veterans are cared for.

Reference:

Resolution No. 324 (Sept. 2016): Support Funding for Homeless Veterans



Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home at a Time.

Landlords Can Help.

Set Aside Apartments for Veterans Exiting Homelessness • Accept HUD-VASH Vouchers • Rent to Veterans with Challenged Rental Histories

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Visit va.gov/homeless and get involved.

Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home at a Time.

Housing and Community Partners Can Help.

Expand Affordable Housing • Enlist Landlords • Help Veterans Move In To and Furnish Homes

Visit va.gov/homeless and get involved.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

No one who served this country should be without a place to call home.

In addition to operating the largest integrated network of homeless assistance programs in the country, VA is proactively reaching Veterans in need and connecting them with housing solutions, health care, community employment services and other required supports.

Visit va.gov/homeless to learn how these specialized VA programs operate in your community to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans and get involved:

- HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
- Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)
- Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD)
- Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)
- Veterans Justice Outreach/Health Care for Reentry Veterans (VJO/HCRV)

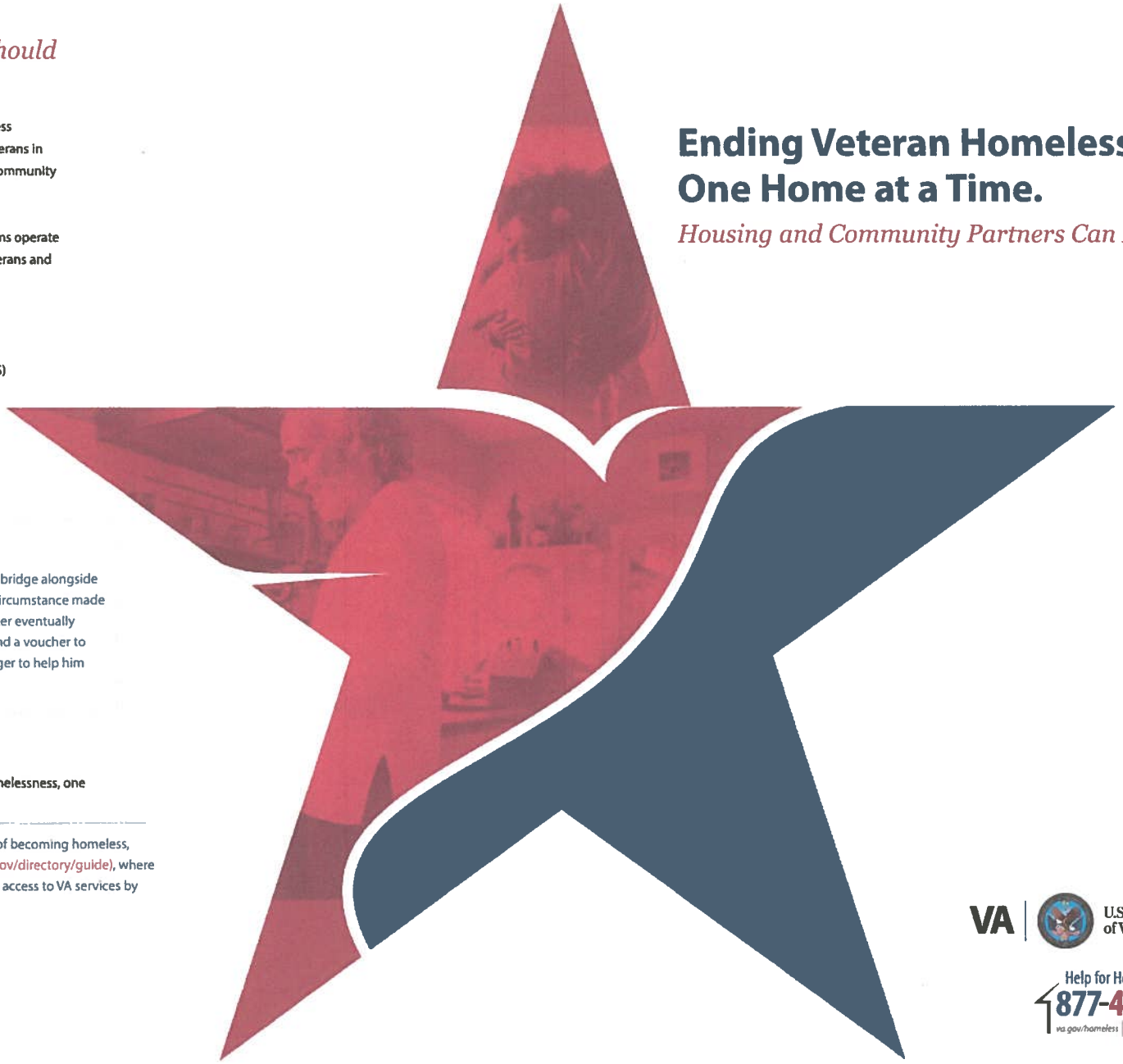
How HUD-VASH Can Help

A Veteran had fallen on hard times, and for 10 years lived under a bridge alongside a river. He didn't want to be homeless, but the complexity of his circumstance made him reluctant to respond to offers of support. A VA outreach worker eventually earned his trust and connected him to the HUD-VASH program and a voucher to rent an apartment. He was also assigned a HUD-VASH case manager to help him access VA services needed to maintain housing stability.

Collaborate with VA.

Visit va.gov/homeless to learn how you can help end Veteran homelessness, one home at a time.

If you encounter Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, encourage them to call or visit their local VA Medical Center (va.gov/directory/guide), where VA staff are ready to help. Veterans and their families can also get access to VA services by calling 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).



Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home at a Time.

Housing and Community Partners Can Help.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

You can help end homelessness among Veterans.

Our nation has set an ambitious goal to end Veteran homelessness. Led by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), tremendous progress is being made. Community by community, localities across the country are on the path to ending homelessness among Veterans. These successes show that it's possible to end homelessness among Veterans and among all Americans.

One way to achieve this milestone is to increase access to affordable housing. For many Americans, including Veterans, safe and affordable housing is out of reach.[1] One study found that just 25 percent of families eligible for housing assistance receive it.[2]

Community-based partners hold the keys to ending homelessness among Veterans. Through greater awareness and long-term commitment, property developers, affordable housing providers, landlords, real estate agents, philanthropic groups and many others can expand housing and related services for Veterans exiting homelessness.

[1] "The State of Homelessness in America, 2015," National Alliance to End Homelessness, http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/458837a0513453bec1_56m6zdnl3.pdf (accessed July 14, 2015).

[2] "Out of Reach 2015," National Low Income Housing Coalition, http://nlihc.org/oor (accessed July 14, 2015).

Take action to make sure every Veteran has safe, stable housing.

Too many Veterans are one rough patch away from housing insecurity or homelessness. Work with VA to expand the capacity to quickly house Veterans who become homeless or who we know are at risk of homelessness. Here are a few ways community partners can fill critical housing and service gaps:

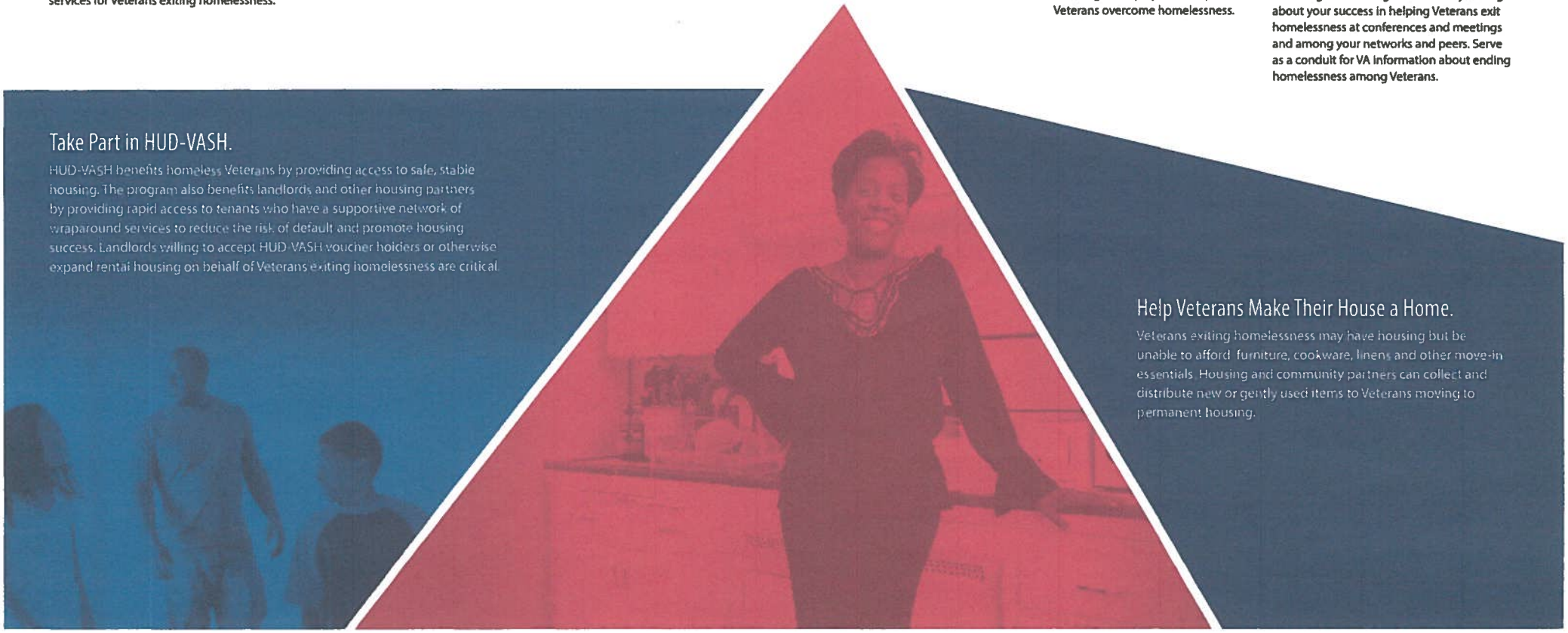
Make a commitment.
Set aside a certain number of affordable housing units each year for Veterans who are homeless. Agree to house Veterans both eligible and ineligible for the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.

Review your practices.
Identify ways you can lease units to Veterans who are homeless, including by reducing "preconditions" and other barriers to housing Veterans with challenged rental histories.

Hire a Veteran.
Meaningful employment helps Veterans overcome homelessness.

Help with Veterans' security deposits and move-in costs.
Join with community partners that raise funds to help Veterans secure first and last months' rent and security deposits so they can exit homelessness as quickly as possible.

Spread the word.
Encourage others to get involved by talking about your success in helping Veterans exit homelessness at conferences and meetings and among your networks and peers. Serve as a conduit for VA information about ending homelessness among Veterans.



Take Part in HUD-VASH.

HUD-VASH benefits homeless Veterans by providing access to safe, stable housing. The program also benefits landlords and other housing partners by providing rapid access to tenants who have a supportive network of wraparound services to reduce the risk of default and promote housing success. Landlords willing to accept HUD-VASH voucher holders or otherwise expand rental housing on behalf of Veterans exiting homelessness are critical.

Help Veterans Make Their House a Home.

Veterans exiting homelessness may have housing but be unable to afford furniture, cookware, linens and other move-in essentials. Housing and community partners can collect and distribute new or gently used items to Veterans moving to permanent housing.

Make a Difference by Hiring a Veteran

Veterans' made a special commitment to serve and protect our nation and it is our duty to make sure they have an opportunity to succeed after facing the challenges of being homeless.

Not only do Veterans offer a diverse skillset that is applicable to many different fields and levels of employment within an organization, but they also tend to have higher retention rates.

Homeless Veterans come from all walks of life, and are comprised of different races, religions, ages, sexes, and service experiences or educational backgrounds.

Veterans who are currently enrolled in VA services have access to a variety of wraparound care, including health services, housing assistance, support that leads to greater job engagement and retention and other VA benefits to ensure their on-the-job success.

How You Can Help

As an employer or someone in the position to hire homeless or at risk Veterans, we're asking you to think outside the box and work closely with a local Community Employment Coordinator (CEC) to recruit, interview, hire and create a positive work environment where Veterans can be successful.

CECs are located in each VA Medical Center (VAMC) and they counsel and pre-screen Veterans to prepare them for potential employ-ment opportunities.

These Veterans are exiting homelessness and are backed by VA's entire network of services and providers.

Work with VA

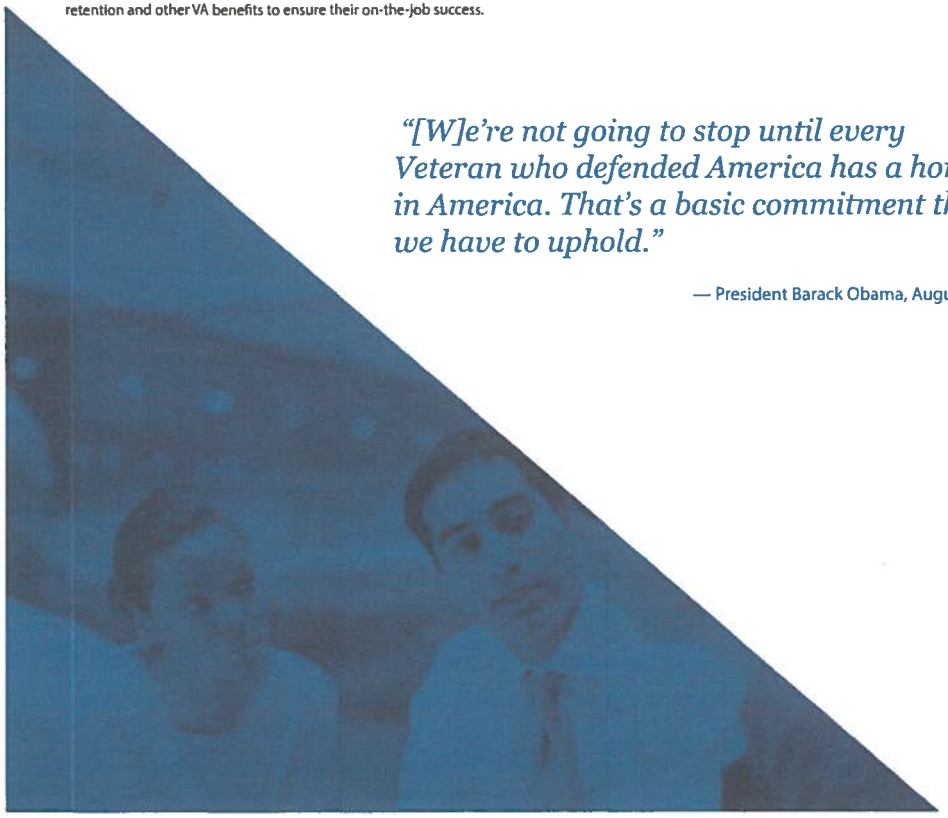
Organizations in communities across the country are working to connect Veterans with the jobs and support services they've earned. You can too, by helping to spread the word about VA's services and resources.

To learn more about how you can become VA's partner, visit http://www.va.gov/homeless/ get_involved.asp.

Los Angeles, CA Success Story: Eddie

Eddie—a 55-year-old Army Veteran in Los Angeles—became homeless after experiencing substance abuse and many incarcerations for robbery and drug-related crimes.

After working closely with a local CEC, an employer took a chance on Eddie, and he's now working as a store clerk at a downtown market. His next goal is to become the store manager.



"[W]e're not going to stop until every Veteran who defended America has a home in America. That's a basic commitment that we have to uphold."

— President Barack Obama, August 2014

VA Services Can Make a Difference

Eligible Veterans enrolled in VA's benefits program have access to its transitional housing programs, health and mental health care, and employment services.

This wide range of services promotes residential stability, increases skill levels and/or income and helps Veterans gain greater self-determination in their swift path to permanent housing. Below are a few examples of services homeless Veterans may qualify for and can receive while working at your organization:

Compensated Work Therapy (CWT): CWT is comprised of three unique programs which assist homeless Veterans in returning to competitive employment: Sheltered Workshop, Transitional Work and Supported Employment.

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV): The central goal of the HCHV programs is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by engaging and connecting homeless Veterans with health care and other needed services.

Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program: A "housing-first" model program between HUD and VA where eligible homeless Veterans receive a Housing Choice rental voucher from HUD, paired with VA providing case management and supportive services to sustain housing stability.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): This program provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families in or transitioning to permanent housing for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis.

One Veteran. One Job.
You Can Help!

Veterans made a commitment to serve and protect our nation. It is our duty to make sure they have opportunities for success after facing the challenges of being homeless.

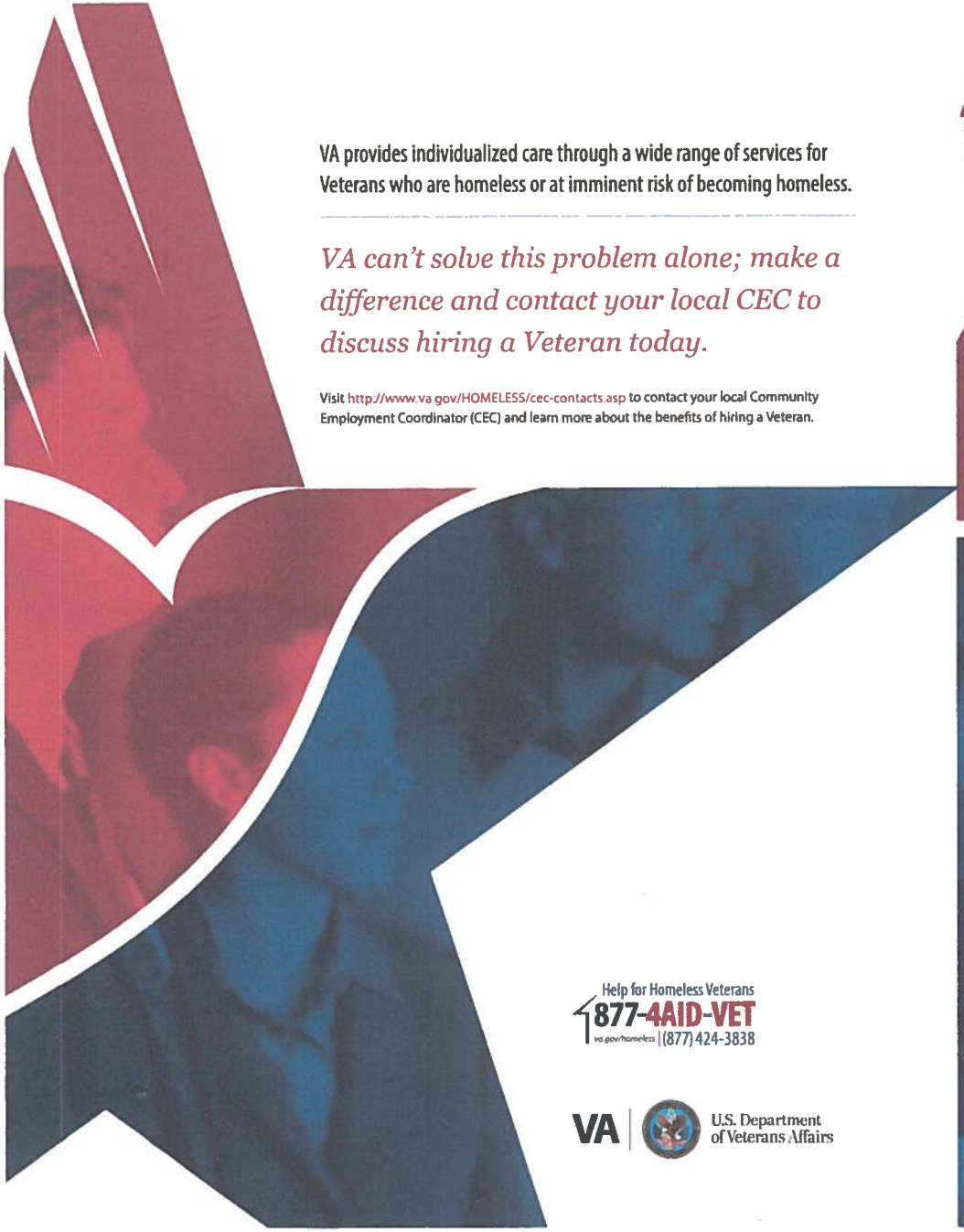
Contact your local Community Employment Coordinator (CEC) to discuss how your organization can benefit from hiring a Veteran with a diverse skillset who will make a dedicated, long-term employee.

As our nation thanks those who serve our country, we also thank and appreciate those who give them an opportunity to find meaningful work following their service.

VISIT http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/cec-contacts.asp to CONNECT with your local CEC.

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



VA provides individualized care through a wide range of services for Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

VA can't solve this problem alone; make a difference and contact your local CEC to discuss hiring a Veteran today.

Visit http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/cec-contacts.asp to contact your local Community Employment Coordinator (CEC) and learn more about the benefits of hiring a Veteran.

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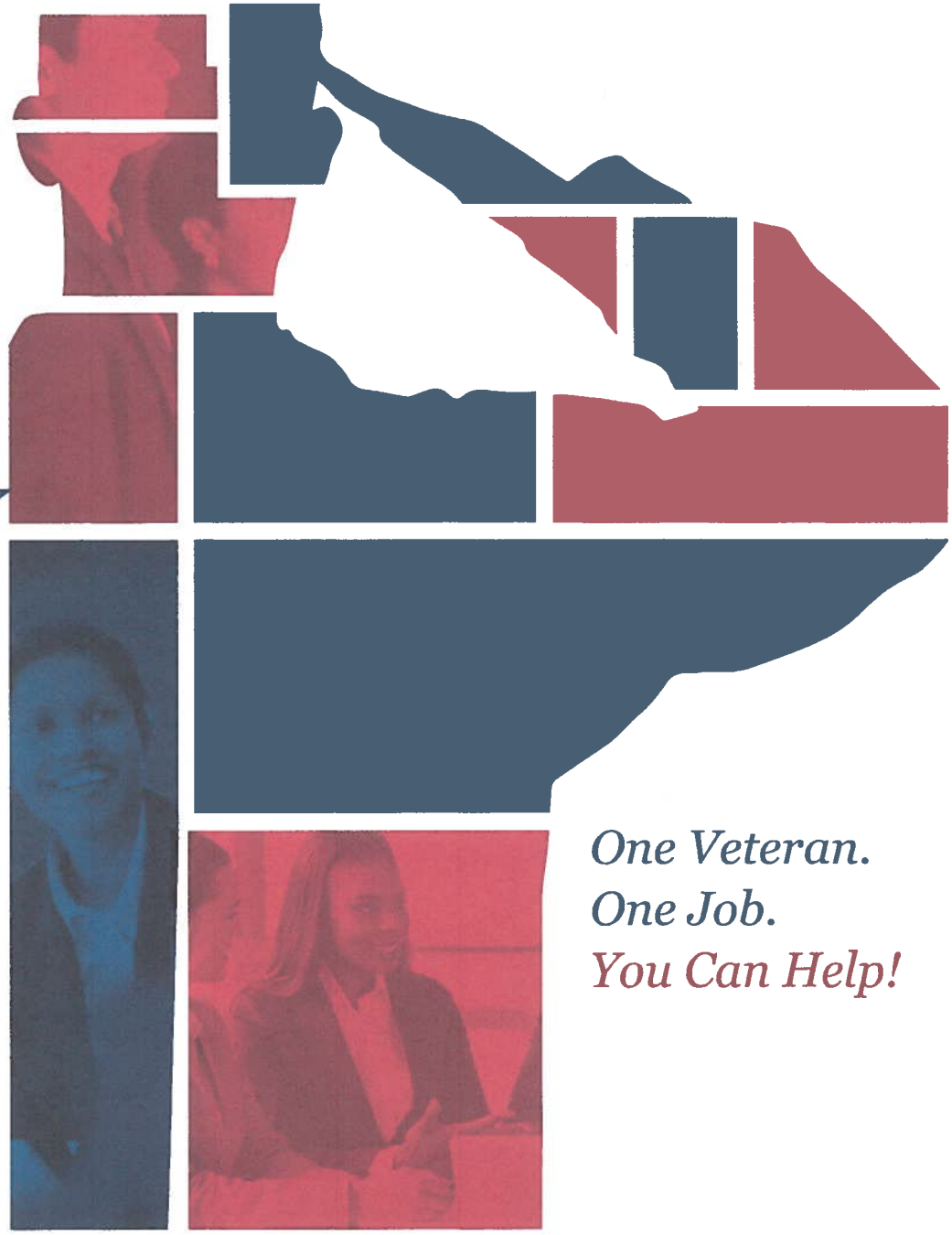
VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



One Veteran.
One Job.
You Can Help!

Homeless Veterans Programs

Military.com

VA has many benefits and services to assist homeless veterans. Disability benefits, education, health care, rehabilitation services, residential care, and compensated work therapy are among the services we offer to eligible veterans

One-third of adult homeless men and nearly one-quarter of all homeless adults have served in the armed forces. While there is no true measure of the number of homeless veterans, it has been estimated that fewer than 200,000 veterans may be homeless on any given night and that twice as many veterans experience homelessness during a year. Many other veterans are considered at risk because of poverty, lack of support from family and friends and precarious living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing. Ninety-seven percent of homeless veterans are male and the vast majority are single. About half of all homeless veterans suffer from mental illness and more than two-thirds suffer from alcohol or drug abuse problems. Nearly 40 percent have both psychiatric and substance abuse disorders.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the only federal agency that provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless people. Last year, VA provided health care services to more than 100,000 homeless veterans and provided services to 70,000 veterans in its specialized homeless programs. More than 40,000 homeless veterans receive compensation or pension

benefits annually. 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 and initiatives to help veterans recover from homelessness and live as self-sufficiently and independently as possible. Nearly three-quarters of homeless veterans we have contacted use VA health care services and 55 percent have used VA homeless services.

VA, using its own resources or in partnerships with others, has secured more than 15,000 residential rehabilitative, transitional and permanent beds for homeless veterans throughout the nation. VA spends more than one billion dollars from its health care and benefit assistance programs to assist tens of thousands of homeless and at-risk veterans. To increase this assistance, VA conducts outreach to connect homeless veterans to both mainstream and homeless-specific VA programs and benefits. These programs strive to offer a continuum of services that include:

- Aggressive outreach to veterans living on the streets and in shelters who otherwise would not seek assistance;
- Clinical assessment and referral for treatment of physical and psychiatric disorders, including substance abuse;
- Long-term transitional residential assistance, case management and rehabilitation; and,
- Employment assistance and linkage with available income supports and permanent housing.

VA has awarded more than 400 grants to public and nonprofit groups to assist homeless veterans in 50 states and the District of Columbia to provide transitional housing, service centers, and vans to provide transportation to services and employment.

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 to provide technical assistance in such areas as transitional housing, mental health and family services, and education and employment opportunities for the homeless.

VA Homeless Programs

VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV) operates at 133 sites, where extensive outreach, physical and psychiatric health exams, treatment, referrals and ongoing case management are provided to homeless veterans with mental health problems, including substance abuse. This program assesses more than 40,000 veterans annually.

VA's Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) Program provides medical care and rehabilitation in a residential setting on VA medical center grounds to eligible ambulatory veterans disabled by medical or psychiatric disorders, injury or age and who do not need hospitalization or nursing home care. There are more than 1,800 beds available through the program at 34 sites. The program provides residential treatment to more than 5,000 homeless veterans each year. The domiciliaries conduct outreach and referral; admission screening and assessment; medical and psychiatric evaluation; treatment, vocational counseling and rehabilitation; and post-discharge community support.

Veterans Benefits Assistance at VA Regional Offices is provided by designated staff members who serve as coordinators and points of contact for homeless veterans. Homeless coordinators at VA regional offices provide outreach services and help expedite the processing of homeless veterans' claims. The Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act allows eligible veterans without a fixed address to receive VA benefits checks at VA regional offices. VA also has procedures to expedite the processing of homeless veterans' benefits claims. Last year more than 35,000 homeless veterans received assistance and nearly 4,000 had their claims expedited by Veterans Benefits Administration staff members.

Acquired Property Sales for Homeless Providers Program makes properties VA obtains through foreclosures on VA-insured mortgages available for sale to homeless providers at a discount of 20 to 50 percent. To date, more than 200 properties have been sold. These properties have been used to provide homeless people, including veterans, with nearly 400,000 sheltered nights in VA acquired property.

Readjustment Counseling Service's Vet Centers provide outreach, psychological counseling, supportive social services and referrals to other VA and community programs. Every Vet Center has a homeless veteran coordinator assigned to make sure services for homeless veterans are tailored to local needs. Annually, the program's 207 Vet Centers see approximately 130,000 veterans and provide more than 1,000,000 visits to veterans and family members. More than 10,000 homeless veterans are served by the program each year.

Veterans Industry/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 are paid for their work and, in turn, make a payment toward maintenance and upkeep of the residence.

VA operates 66 homes with more than 520 beds in transitional residences. Nine sites with 18 houses serve homeless veterans exclusively. Two-thirds of all CWT and TR beds served homeless veterans. There are more than 110 CWT operations nationwide. Approximately 14,000 veterans participate in CWT programs annually.

VA's National Cemetery Administration and Veterans Health Administration have formed partnerships at national cemeteries, where formerly homeless veterans from the CWT program have received therapeutic work opportunities while providing VA cemeteries with a supplemental work force.

HUD-VA Supported Housing (VASH) Program, a joint program with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides permanent housing and ongoing treatment to homeless mentally ill veterans and those suffering from substance abuse disorders. HUD's Section 8 voucher program has designated more than 1,750 vouchers worth $44.5 million for chronically mentally ill homeless veterans, and VA personnel at 34 sites provide outreach,

clinical care and case management services. This approach significantly reduces homelessness for veterans plagued by serious mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

VA's Supported Housing Program allows VA personnel to help homeless veterans secure long-term transitional or permanent housing. They also offer ongoing case management services to help the veterans remain in housing they can afford. VA staff work with private landlords, public housing authorities and nonprofit organizations to find housing arrangements. Veteran service organizations have been instrumental in helping VA establish these housing alternatives nationwide. VA staff at 22 supported housing program sites helped more than 1,400 homeless veterans find transitional or permanent housing in the community.

Stand Downs are one-to three-day events that provide homeless veterans 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. Each year, VA participates in more than 100 stand downs coordinated by local entities. Surveys show that more than 23,000 veterans and family members attend these events with more than 13,000 volunteers contributing annually.

VA Excess Property for Homeless Veterans Initiative provides federal excess personal property, such as clothing, footwear, sleeping bags, blankets and other items, to homeless veterans through VA domiciliaries and other outreach activities. This initiative has been responsible for the distribution of more than $125 million in material and currently has more than $15 million in inventory. This initiative employs formerly homeless veterans to receive, warehouse and ship these goods to homeless programs across the country that assist veterans.

The Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program provides grants and per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate new supportive housing and service centers for homeless veterans. Grant funds may also be used to purchase vans to conduct outreach or provide transportation for homeless veterans. Since the program's inception in fiscal year 1994, VA has awarded more than 400 grants to faith and community-based service providers, state or local government agencies and Native American tribal governments in 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Up to 20,000 homeless veterans are expected to be provided supported housing under this program annually in the more than 10,000 beds.

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) for Veterans is a nationwide initiative in which VA works with other federal, state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations to assess the needs of homeless veterans. CHALENG groups have held conferences, developed directories of local resources available to homeless veterans and established local action plans to fight homelessness and prepare strategies for future actions.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation conducted by the Northeast Program Evaluation Center at the VA Connecticut Health Care System provides important information about the veterans served and the therapeutic value and cost-effectiveness of VA's specialized homeless programs. Information from these evaluations also helps program managers determine new directions for expanding and improving services to homeless veterans. VA conducted a one-day census to determine the extent of homelessness among veterans in VA's acute inpatient programs (1995-2000) and found that one-quarter of all veterans in VA beds were homeless.

Initiatives
The Multifamily Transitional Housing Loan Guarantee for Homeless Veterans Program has made several conditional commitments to establish housing for formally homeless veterans.

VA's 15-member Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans submitted its third annual report to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the provision of benefits and services to homeless veterans.

VA Secretary R. James Nicholson sits as lead member of the U.S. Interagency Council on the Homeless. The reactivated council focuses a ttention on and coordinates efforts aimed at ending chronic homelessness.

The U.S. Department of Labor and VA are collaborating on a pilot project to assist veterans discharging from incarceration to avoid homelessness and reincarceration.

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

To find the nearest VA facility, visit: http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp.

Get more detailed information on all Department of Veterans Affairs Programs for Homeless Veterans.

Explore these resources for helping homeless Veterans.

Learn more about what you can do if you are experiencing specific concerns related to homelessness, such as alcohol or drug problems, stress and anxiety, relationship problems, posttraumatic stress, and depression.

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans ensures that homeless Veterans or Veterans at risk for homelessness have free, confidential, 24/7 access to trained counselors. Veterans and their families can connect with a trained VA staff member at **1-877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).**
www.va.gov/HOMELESS/NationalCallCenter.asp

Department of Veterans Affairs – Homeless Programs
This website provides information on VA's programs and services for homeless Veterans.
www.va.gov/HOMELESS/index.asp

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
NCHV is recognized as the nation's leading authority on issues involving homeless Veterans. The NCHV website includes links to resources, employment assistance, and guides for homeless Veterans.
www.nchv.org

National Center for PTSD
This website provides information, resources, and practical advice for Veterans, their family and friends, and the public when dealing with trauma.
www.ptsd.va.gov/public/index.asp

Vet Center
If you are a combat Veteran, you can bring your DD214 to your local Vet Center and speak with a counselor or therapist — many of whom are Veterans themselves — for free, without an appointment, and regardless of your enrollment status with VA. In addition, any Veteran who was sexually traumatized while serving in the military is eligible to receive counseling regardless of gender or era of service.
www2.va.gov/directory/guide/vetcenter_flsh.asp

VA Medical Center Facility Locator
VA provides world-class health care to eligible Veterans. Most Veterans qualify for cost-free health care services, although some Veterans must pay modest copays for health care or prescriptions. Explore your eligibility for health care using VA's Health Benefits Explorer tool and find out more about the treatment options available to you.
www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1