



DONATION DRIVE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) collaborates with many individuals and groups to end and prevent homelessness among Veterans — and faith-based organizations play a large part in this effort. Churches and community centers across the country host donation drives that are essential to collecting and distributing move-in essentials and providing security deposits for Veterans who are exiting homelessness.

This step-by-step guide can serve as a checklist for organizations setting up donation programs to benefit homeless Veterans.

Getting Started

- Identify all potential stakeholders — any congregation, member of the clergy, organization, or other group or individual that might have a vested interest in supporting homeless Veterans.
- Find your local VA Homeless Outreach Coordinator by visiting <https://www.va.gov/homeless/homeless-coordinators.asp>.
 - Contact the coordinator to share your plans for a donation drive.
 - Ask if there is anything specific to homeless Veterans in your area that you should keep in mind as you plan your event (e.g., a need for particular move-in items, stakeholders you were not aware of).
- Set goals that will enable your organization to measure success. For example:
 - At least 25 church and community center employees will be on-site to support the event.
 - At least 500 items will be collected for donation.
- Create a plan to collect feedback during the drive or in a follow-up survey.
- Assign responsibility for each task — reserving space, printing handouts, greeting donors and other attendees, etc. — to specific individuals.

Logistics

- Establish a date and time for the drive as soon as possible. When selecting the date, consider factors that may affect attendance (e.g., holidays or other community events).
- Identify and contact the church or community center coordinator well in advance to reserve a space for the selected date and time. Be sure to reserve sufficient time before and after the event for set-up and cleanup.
- Once the space is reserved, secure needed resources, which could include the following:
 - Audiovisual equipment
 - Microphone
 - Badges for staff and volunteers
 - Booth display
 - Camera or photographer
 - Laptop(s)/tablet(s)
 - Printing services
 - Pens and pencils
 - Tables and tablecloths

- Confirm staff availability for the selected date and time.
- Meet with staff and volunteers to provide logistical information, outline roles, and share presentations and other materials for the event.
- Establish a means of tracking attendance.
- Ensure that any handouts, posters, badges, or other materials are printed prior to the drive.
- Conduct a walk-through of the space well in advance to determine the most effective way to set things up for the event.

Communications

- Develop a plan for communicating to potential donors and others in the community about your donation drive.
- To promote consistent communications prior to and during the drive, provide messages and FAQs for all staff and stakeholders to use.
- Provide staff with suggested social media posts to help get the word out about the drive.

Day of the Drive

- Arrive early to the venue to address any last-minute issues. Be prepared to make on-the-spot changes.
- Set up tables, booths, audiovisual equipment, and other items. Test all equipment to make sure it is working.
- Place signs or staff near entrances to welcome attendees and direct them to the event space.
- If you are collecting feedback using a brief survey at the drive, be sure to have plenty of pens or pencils available and provide clear instructions about where to submit completed surveys.
- Account for all materials and resources before you leave the space and complete whatever cleanup is required.

Follow-up

- If you didn't do so during the drive, distribute evaluation surveys soon after.
- Tally all survey responses, review attendance and engagement data, and use the information to measure success and identify lessons learned.
- Send a thank-you message to all staff and attendees for their participation. Be sure to send personal thank-you notes to those who donated.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

It is through the support of VA's numerous, dedicated partners that VA is ending and preventing Veteran homelessness one community at a time. To get involved or learn more about how housing, employment, and community collaborations can help end Veteran homelessness, send an email to HomelessVets@va.gov or visit VA's Homeless Veterans website at <https://www.va.gov/homeless/>.

A PHONE CALL AWAY.

If a Veteran you know is homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, refer him or her to their local VA medical center where staff is ready to assist, or urge them to call **1-877-4AID-VET** (1-877-424-3838). Trained, supportive professionals are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to connect Veterans with the care they need to get back on their feet.

