

Veteran Families

VA HOMELESS PROGRAMS HELP VETERAN FAMILIES FIND SAFE, SECURE HOUSING

Many Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have families. Often, these Veterans do not seek assistance from VA because they fear their family will be separated, the housing options may be unsafe for children, or they will lose custody of their children if they ask for help. Or they may be unsure if their household is considered a family.

VA provides housing assistance to an eligible Veteran and his or her family members regardless of gender or sexual orientation and as long as the household is headed by a Veteran. Single parents, husbands and wives, dependent children, or other persons living with the Veteran who are important to his or her care or well-being are considered a part of a family.

HOW VA CAN HELP

VA offers four key sources of assistance—Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA-Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, and the Grant Per Diem program. *September 2017 data show that since 2010, more than 603,519 Veterans and their family members have been supported by HUD and VA's homeless programs designed to permanently house, rapidly rehouse, or prevent Veterans and their families from falling into homelessness.*

Through these programs and resources, along with partnerships with multiple community organizations, VA provides homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families with critical services that will help them sustain permanent housing and lead independent lives. These services include:

In 2017, data showed that nearly two percent of homeless Veterans were part of a family. If your family or a Veteran family you know is in any of the following situations, VA can help.

- Spent the night in a shelter, a car, or on the streets in the last six months
- Will be evicted within 14 days
- Lives in transitional housing
- Couch-surfs or doubles-up
- Stays in unsafe places or relationships.

- Housing vouchers
- Case management services
 - Health and mental health care
 - Substance use disorder treatment
 - Job training and placement
- Child care
- Marital and family counseling
- Financial guardianship
- Family reconciliation
- Legal assistance
 - Restoration of a driver's license
 - Child support issues
 - Outstanding warrants and fines
 - Eviction and foreclosure prevention



HOUSING FIRST

VA's programs take a housing first approach. This means Veterans and their families are provided with safe, secure, and permanent housing as quickly as possible without conditions, such as showing they are free of alcohol and illegal substance use or from mental health issues. Further, Veterans or family members with a criminal background, except those with a lifetime sex offender registration, are not barred from VA programs. Once housing assistance is provided, Veterans and their families receive a variety of services, including health and mental health care and job training, to help them rebuild their lives and become independent.

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.

FOUR KEY VA SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS AND AT-RISK VETERANS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA-Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines rental assistance with long-term case management and supportive services. Homeless Veteran families receive a housing voucher from a public health authority for privately owned housing and, when available, for units on the grounds of a VA facility that were developed to house homeless Veterans and their families. VA then delivers services that may include health care, mental health and substance use treatment, and job training along with help for resolving legal, financial, or other issues that may present barriers for maintaining permanent housing. Since 2008, HUD-VASH has awarded more than 87,000 HUD-VASH vouchers to public housing authorities to help the most vulnerable Veterans and their families live in safe, secure affordable housing.

The Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program is designed to rapidly re-house Veteran families experiencing homelessness and prevent homelessness among those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis. Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that can provide case management services and assist families in obtaining VA and other benefits, which may include health care services, daily living services, personal financial planning services, transportation services, legal services, child care services, and housing counseling services. In addition, time-limited payments may be provided to landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing. In 2017, SSVF assisted nearly 130,000 Veterans and their spouses and children. Further, nearly 28,000 children in over 14,000 households with children received assistance from SSVF.

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans provides both a 24-hour hotline and an online chat service that homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families can use for free to connect with a trained counselor who will provide information on VA homeless programs, medical care, and other available services in or near the Veteran's community. Call 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838) or visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp> for assistance.

Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program provides grants and per diem funds to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate transitional and supportive housing and services for homeless Veterans and their families.

VA is committed to preventing and ending homelessness among Veterans and their families.