

## Government Officials Action Guide

### Overview

Since 2010, VA has helped more than 600,000 Veterans and their families find stable, secure housing. VA did not accomplish this alone. Partnerships with a multitude of local and state governments and community organizations ensure homeless Veterans receive the resources and wraparound services, like healthcare, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, job training, and community reintegration support, they need to secure stable permanent housing; find employment; and become valued community members. While there have been major accomplishments, more work is needed. Government officials can make a big difference.

This guide provides information that state and local government officials can use to get involved and encourage their constituents to help prevent and end Veteran homelessness in their community. This guide can also be found online at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless).

### Challenges to Ending Veteran Homelessness

- A lack of affordable housing.
- An unwillingness of some landlords to accept Veterans with HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers that subsidize the cost of rent for low-income Veterans.
- Concerns among potential employers about formerly homeless Veterans' job-readiness.

### What You Can Do

**Increase Inventory of Affordable Housing:** Support policies and laws that forbid discrimination based on payment source and encourage landlords to accept HUD-VASH vouchers by emphasizing the safety net of services provided to homeless Veterans under the HUD-VASH program.

**Share Information:** Distribute information about VA's Veteran homelessness programs to your constituents, including community and neighborhood organizations, schools, faith-based organizations, and others.

**Participate in Local Homelessness Events:** Support Stand Downs, Operation Reveille events, or other local activities that provide homeless Veterans with services, such as food, transitional or permanent housing, clothing, health screenings, and benefits counseling.

**Collaborate with Employers:** Organize community job fairs where prospective employers can meet job-ready Veterans who are exiting homelessness and learn about their work histories, skills, abilities, and professional interests. Refer prospective employers to VA's Community Employment Coordinators (CECs) who can help identify job-ready formerly homeless Veterans for vacancies within their organization. A list of CECs is located at [www.va.gov/homeless/cec-contacts.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/cec-contacts.asp).

**Create Local Mitigation Fund:** Support the creation of a mitigation fund that can serve as an incentive for property owners to rent to formerly homeless Veterans and others with challenging rental histories. Fund may be used for the repair of property damage, unpaid rent, legal fees, and other damages.

**Use VA's Available Resources:** Visit VA's [website](http://www.va.gov/homeless) to find information and resources that are helping many communities make significant progress in ending Veteran homelessness. Refer Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless to their local [VA medical center](#), where VA staff are ready to assist, or urge them to call 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).

