AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

People who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) alone or in combination with another race accounted for 2.9% of the total United States population in 2020, or 9.7 million people. This represents a 160% increase in this population from 2010 to 2020.

This community serves in the military at a higher rate per capita than any other race or ethnicity, with more than 140,000 Veterans identifying as AI/AN, constituting 0.7% of approximately 18.3 million Veterans – and yet, they are proportionally over-represented per capita in the population of Veterans facing homelessness.

HOMELINESS IN AI/AN COMMUNITIES

Too often, AI/AN Veterans do not access or are unaware of the support available to end their homelessness.

WHAT VA IS DOING

AI/AN Veterans often have limited knowledge about VHA services or eligibility for care. To combat this, VA and HUD’s Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) work together to promote the Tribal Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (Tribal HUD-VASH) program. This program provides rental assistance and supportive services to AI/AN Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness living on or near a reservation or other tribal areas.

VA is committed to delivering high-quality, equitable care to AI/AN Veterans, and eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in health care. VA’s homeless programs are promoting increased AI/AN cultural competency by providing cultural education opportunities for VA staff and forming collaborations with agencies who directly serve AI/AN communities.

The Indian Health Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs launched a new interagency map application to increase access to health care, community-based resources, and other essential services for AI/AN Veterans.

These services, as well as the standard HUD-VASH program, are designed to help homeless Veterans and their families find and sustain permanent housing and access health care, mental health treatment, substance use counseling, and other supports as necessary to help them gain stability and maintain housing in the community. Read more about the resources available to Native American Veterans through VA.

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

- Resources for Native American Veterans Experiencing Homelessness
- Find Health Care & Resources for Native Veterans
- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
- Tribal HUD-VASH
- Indian Housing’s Office of Native American Programs (ONAP)
- Urban Indian Organizations

Counting Homelessness on Tribal Lands | SAMHSA

"Homelessness manifests itself differently in rural settings where individuals are less inclined to experience literal homelessness, and more likely to live in substandard housing or stay with friends or relatives for long periods of time, often in very crowded conditions.

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