



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

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Media Relations

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Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made ending Veteran homelessness a top priority. This unprecedented effort has dramatically decreased homelessness and increased successful outcomes for Veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. VA and our Federal, state, local, and non-governmental partners recognize that ending Veteran homelessness is not a single event in time, but rather a deliberate continuing effort.

Employment is a key element in helping Veterans transition permanently out of homelessness or to avoid it altogether by increasing access to permanent housing and improving housing stability. Employment provides an improved quality of life, increased self-confidence and independence, opportunities for socialization, and a decreased reliance on institutional care. As part of efforts to end homelessness among Veterans, in fiscal year (FY) 2014, VA enhanced employment services for Veterans through implementation of Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES).

HVCES staff are embedded in homeless programs within the VA medical centers (VAMCs), complement existing medical center-based employment services, and are a bridge to employment opportunities and resources in the local community. HVCES is staffed by Vocational Development Specialists who function as Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) and Employment Specialists. CEC are funded at each VAMC. The Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) and Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Programs have funded Employment Specialists at a limited number of VAMCs based on local needs.

HVCES provides a range of site-specific employment services rather than being a discrete program. There are no eligibility requirements for Veterans to receive assistance from HVCES other than participation in a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) homeless program. HVCES staff ensure a range of employment services are accessible to Veterans who have experienced homelessness. These Veterans may need individualized support to overcome barriers preventing them from returning to work such as: a poor work history; lack of transportation and appropriate clothing; history of justice involvement; and co-occurring substance use and/or mental health issues.

HVCES staff are tasked with:

- Working with VA homeless program and employment services staff, including Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Vocational Rehabilitation/Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program and Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) Vocational Readiness and Employment (VR&E), to identify employment resources

available to serve homeless and at-risk Veterans, including chronically homeless Veterans.

- Collaborating with community, state, and federal partners (outside of VA) to provide training and support services to Veterans that are not available within VA.
- Engaging employers to develop new job opportunities for Veterans who have experienced homelessness.
- Ensuring ongoing support services are available to homeless Veterans once they return to work and helping employers to address any issues with workplace adjustment.

FY 2020 HVCES Highlights:

- Employment outcomes for homeless Veterans have continued to trend in an upward direction, exceeding the national targets.
- Approximately 6,547 Veterans exited homeless residential programs with competitive employment (i.e., Grant & Per Diem (GPD), Low-Demand Supportive Housing (LDSH), and Healthcare for Homeless Veterans – Contract Residential Services (HCHV-CERS)).
- Employment rates for Veterans housed through HUD-VASH exceeded the national target despite the impact of COVID-19 on employment nationally.
- There were over 15,489 newly documented, unique instances of employment for Veterans engaged in or who exited from VA Homeless Programs or Services.
- In response to COVID-19, HVCES staff increased the use of telehealth and telephone visits and developed strategies for providing employment services and supports through virtual platforms by more than 50%.

Future Directions:

- In FY 2021, the collaboration between VHA homeless programs and Department of Labor (DOL) programs such as, but not limited to, Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), and Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) will continue to be a focus on both national and local levels including joint trainings for staff and highlighting the impact of this partnership on employment for Veterans who have experienced homelessness.

For more information on HVCES, please visit:

<https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/HVCES.asp>

To read more on employed-focused promising practices, please visit:

<https://www.va.gov/homeless/promising-practices.asp>

To locate the HVCES CEC in your area, please visit: <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/cec-contacts.asp>

Contact Us

To find the VA facility nearest to you, please visit:
<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp>

More detailed information on all of VA's Programs for Homeless Veterans can be found on the internet at www.va.gov/homeless.

If you or a Veteran you know are at risk of homelessness, please contact VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)** to speak to a trained VA responder.

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