

AGING AND DISABLED VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

There is growing evidence of a trend of older homeless Veterans entering the VA system of care with higher rates of chronic health conditions typical among aging populations.¹ These conditions have implications for the future development of care and suggest the need for better integration of home and community health care, social services, and permanent supportive housing programs.

- In fiscal year 2024, almost half of Veterans enrolled with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) were aged 65 or older.²
- It is expected that between fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2035, the subgroup of Veterans aged 85 and older is expected to increase by 66%, and specifically the subgroup of women Veterans aged 85 and older is expected to increase by 159%.
- In fiscal year 2024, 19.4% of the Veterans served by VA homeless programs were over the age of 66.
- More than 60% of Veterans in the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program are older than 60.

TAILORING CARE FOR OLDER AND DISABLED VETERANS

VA's HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) programs have stepped up to ensure that older Veterans have the support they need to secure housing and remain stably housed over time. This has led to VA's Homeless Aging and Disabled Veterans Initiative, which finds innovative ways to bring together home and community health care, social services, and permanent supportive housing programs.

It combines resources from the HUD-VASH program, which pairs HUD Housing Choice Vouchers with VA case management and supportive services, and the GEC program, which advances quality care for aging and chronically ill Veterans and seeks to maximize their functional independence.

In particular, the HUD-VASH and GEC programs are supporting the development and expansion of housing models based on existing use Public Housing Authority special housing types and existing GEC programs where Veterans can utilize their vouchers in these GEC community-based programs, such as:

-  **Medical Foster Home**
-  **Home Assisted Living**
-  **Community Residential Care**

The initiative focuses on 4 key strategies:

- 01 Increasing access to GEC
- 02 Developing housing options to assist with using HUD-VASH vouchers in specialized programs
- 03 Expanding the use of HUD-VASH project-based vouchers with intensive services that could be provided onsite
- 04 Proactively developing partnerships with community agencies

By enabling Veterans to age in place or transition more seamlessly to higher levels of care, HUD-VASH and GEC can help prevent or lessen the burden of disability on older, frail, chronically ill patients and their families and caregivers, and maximize each Veteran's functional independence.

MORE INFORMATION

- If you are a Veteran who is homeless or at risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838)**.
- Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.
- Check out the [Ending Veteran Homelessness podcast](#) to learn more about what VA is doing about Veteran homelessness.
- Learn how to [get involved with housing homeless Veterans](#).
- [Subscribe to the Homeless Programs Office newsletter](#) to receive monthly updates about programs and supportive services for Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

1. Schinka JA, Byrne TH. Aging and mortality in homeless veterans. In J. Tsai, ed. Homelessness Among US Veterans. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019
 2. VHA Support Services Center