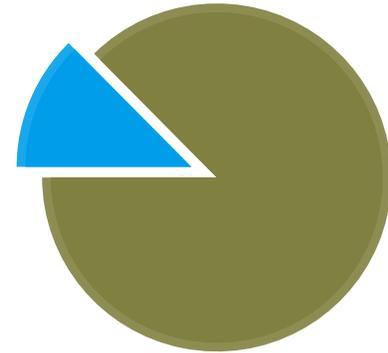


# A Hand Up

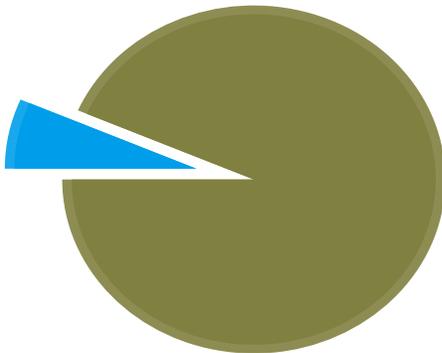
## Increasing Income to Strengthen Stability

### What's the relationship between poverty, income, and homelessness?

- **Being in poverty is a significant risk factor for homelessness:** While we know that substance use disorders and mental illness are consistently the strongest homelessness risk factors, being low-income and other factors related to level of income are the next most significant risk factors.<sup>1</sup>
- **Homeless persons are often unstably employed:** Although it may not show up in a labor market report, employment for homeless persons is often unstable. They are more likely to end up in jobs that are seasonal, short-term, and outside of the formal labor market. Sometimes, these jobs involve peddling or day/ pick-up work.<sup>2</sup>
- **Disabled Veterans, especially those with substance use disorders, earn even less income:** research shows us that disabled Veterans with substance use disorders are most likely to work at lower levels, leading to less overall monthly income.<sup>4</sup>
- **Non-employment negatively impacts the most vulnerable homeless sub-populations:** Across the board, the highest levels of non-employment occur among the oldest and youngest age groups. For Veterans, these age groups also experience the highest levels of homelessness.<sup>5</sup>

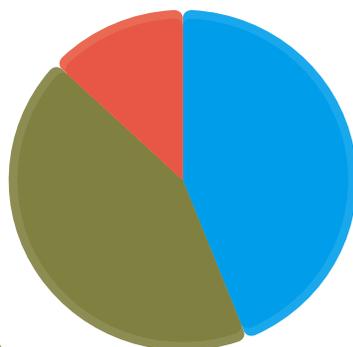


Homelessness rate among poor Veterans - 12.6%<sup>3</sup>



Homelessness rate among poor non-Veterans - 6.5%<sup>3</sup>

### Among Homeless Veterans...<sup>7</sup>



Earning income (44%)

Unemployed, but want to work (43%)

Not seeking employment (13%)

### Myth Busting!

*“Veterans experiencing homelessness who have more income will spend more money on drugs or alcohol, hindering their recovery.”*

**FALSE:** Veterans experiencing homelessness with mental illness who experienced an increase in income were more likely to spend more money on items like food, clothing, and housing. Their spending on alcohol and illegal drugs showed no significant increases.<sup>6</sup>

*“Homeless people don’t work.”*

**FALSE:** According to the most recent research on the subject, nearly half of homeless persons did some kind of paid work in the last month. In fact, close to two-thirds had been working consistently since age 16.<sup>7</sup>

*“Homeless people don’t want to work.”*

**FALSE:** Over 40 percent of homeless individuals reported that while they did not have a regular job, they wanted one.<sup>8</sup>

*“Veterans experiencing homelessness who experience an increase in income will disengage from services.”*

**FALSE:** Research shows that, in fact, many Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to utilize VA services if they are connected to VA benefits.<sup>9</sup>

*“Working on increasing a Veteran’s income is not a critical component of the housing stabilization process.”*

**FALSE:** Some research shows us that when case managers help Veterans to secure additional income sources, Veterans have more housing retention success.<sup>10</sup>

