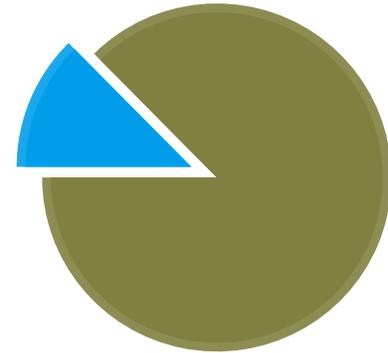


A Hand Up

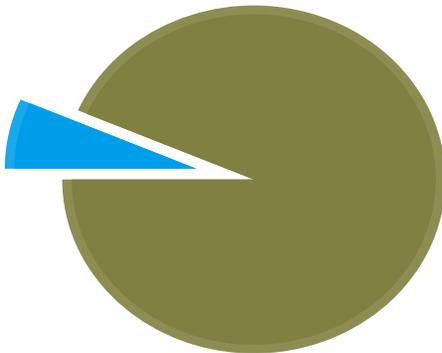
Increasing Income to Strengthen Stability

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.¹
- **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.²
- **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.⁴
- **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.⁵

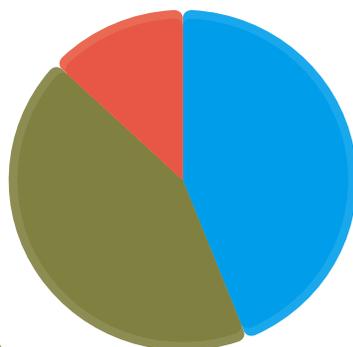


Homelessness rate among poor Veterans - 12.6%³



Homelessness rate among poor non-Veterans - 6.5%³

Among Homeless Veterans...⁷



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.⁶

“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 16.⁷

“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.⁸

“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.⁹

“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.¹⁰

A Snapshot of Employment Services

Each Veteran who walks through your door is unique. Whether Veterans in your program are homeless, at risk, have a disability, are aging, or are simply looking to end a long stretch of unemployment, programs exist to help you meet their employment needs. Below are snapshots of a few targeted Veteran employment programs you may find in your community that offer training and education, job placement, and career growth for Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Veterans who are homeless:

The Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) connects homeless Veterans to meaningful employment in their communities. To be eligible, a Veteran must be homeless (including within 14 days of becoming homeless), have served at least one day of active duty, and have a discharge status other than dishonorable. Veterans do not need to be VHA eligible to enroll in HVRP. Veterans can be co-enrolled in SSVF and HVRP.

HVRP grantees are community agencies providing services to support employment, including resume development, job clubs, life skills training and education, job placement, employer engagement, and job retention resources. As of 2015, 159 HVRP grantees are operating in 40 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. You can find local HVRP contacts here: <http://www.nvtac.org/grantees/>

Veterans with a disability (non-VHA-eligible):

DOL's Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program funds **Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs)** and **Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs)** at over 2,500 American Job Centers and community outposts across the country to help Veterans transition into employment. DVOPs set up those Veterans who are considered economically or educationally disadvantaged, served more than 180 days, and who do not have a dishonorable discharge. Recently, DVOPs have refocused services to serve Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment, which includes Veterans who are homeless, low-income, or recently separated with a history of unemployment. Veterans with a dishonorable discharge can still receive employment services through the American Job Center's general workforce staff members. Veterans can be co-enrolled in both SSVF and the American Job Center.

These DVOPs and LVERs help Veterans successfully transition into competitive employment through training and intensive case management aimed at employment placement and retention. DVOPs consistently place over 50 percent of Veterans into competitive employment with a retention rate over 80 percent. Locate your American Job Center and DVOPs here: <http://www.servicelocator.org/OneStopCenters.asp>.

Veterans with a disability (VHA-eligible):

VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program helps Veterans with a service-connected disability and some active duty service members to prepare for and obtain employment. To be eligible, a Veteran must have a service connected disability, an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge, and be in need of rehabilitation services to connect back to the world of work. Veterans can be co-enrolled in both SSVF and VR&E, but not all service members and Veterans in VA's VR&E will be eligible for SSVF.

To connect to VA's VR&E program, work directly with your local VA Medical Center. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Coordinators are usually VA employees located near the VA Medical Center or on college campuses. Veterans in VR&E can decide on one of four tracks: self employment, re-employment, rapid employment access, and long-term employment services. Of those who receive services through the program, about half connect to competitive employment with an average length of time in the program around four years, often due to longer education programs. Sometimes, Veterans enrolled in VR&E can receive a subsistence allowance while they are going to school or are in training. You can find local VR&E contacts at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/links_resources.asp

Veterans who are over 55:

The DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based training program for aging workers. To be eligible, a person must be 55 and older with a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Individuals must be unemployed and have limited employment prospects. While the program is not Veteran or homeless specific, homeless Veterans do receive priority of service. Veterans can be enrolled in SCSEP and SSVF.

SCSEP is implemented locally by either a local affiliate of a national nonprofit agency or a state or territorial government. Often, states will issue sub-grants to local agencies focused on aging services. Veterans can be placed in jobs that can average 20 hours or more per week in community service based jobs for nonprofits and public facilities. Participants in SCSEP earn the higher of the state or Federal minimum wage. Although SCSEP is considered a training program, it aims to transition 30 percent of enrolled participants into competitive employment each year. You can find local SCSEP agencies at: http://www.servicelocator.org/program_search.asp?prgcat=1&officeType_1=14.

HVRP Grantee Map



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- ²Burt, Martha R., Laudan Y. Aron, Toby Douglas, Jesse Valente, Edgar Lee, and Britta Iwen. "Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve: Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients: Summary Report. Chapter 5." *PsycEXTRA Dataset* (1999): n.p.
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- ⁴Zuvekas, Samuel H., and Steven C. Hill. "Income and Employment among Homeless People: The Role of Mental Health, Health and Substance Abuse." *J. Mental Health Policy Econ. The Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics* (2000): 153-63.
- ⁵Greenburg, Greg A., and Robert A. Rosenheck. "Are Male Veterans at Greater Risk for Nonemployment than Nonveterans?" *Monthly Labor Review* (2007): 23-31. Web.
- ⁶Rosenheck, Robert A., David J. Dausey, Linda Frisman, and Wesley Kaspro. "Outcomes After Initial Receipt of Social Security Benefits Among Homeless Veterans With Mental Illness." *PS Psychiatric Services* 51.12 (2000): 1549-554.
- ⁷Burt, Martha R., Laudan Y. Aron, Toby Douglas, Jesse Valente, Edgar Lee, and Britta Iwen. "Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve: Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients: Summary Report. Chapter 5." *PsycEXTRA Dataset* (1999): n.p.
- ⁸Burt, Martha R., Laudan Y. Aron, Toby Douglas, Jesse Valente, Edgar Lee, and Britta Iwen. "Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve: Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients: Summary Report. Chapter 5." *PsycEXTRA Dataset* (1999): n.p.
- ⁹Gamache, Gail, Robert Rosenheck, and Richard Tessler. "Factors Predicting Choice of Provider Among Homeless Veterans With Mental Illness." *Psychiatric Services* 51.8 (2000): 1024-028.
- ¹⁰Kaspro, Wesley J., Robert A. Rosenheck, Linda Frisman, and Diane Dilella. "Referral and Housing Processes in a Long-Term Supported Housing Program for Homeless Veterans." *PS Psychiatric Services* 51.8 (2000): 1017-023.