VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

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VA Programs for Homeless Veterans

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 a top priority, undertaking an unprecedented campaign to dramatically increase successful outcomes for Veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Our goal is a systematic end to homelessness, which means there are no Veterans sleeping on our streets and every Veteran has access to permanent housing. Should Veterans become or be at-risk of becoming homeless, we will have the capacity to quickly connect them to the help they need to achieve housing stability. The ultimate goal is that all Veterans have permanent, sustainable housing with access to high-quality health care and other supportive services.

To meet this challenge, VA launched a comprehensive, evidence-based, and outcome-driven strategy consistent with the first ever Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, which was developed in May 2010.

VA together with our Federal, state, and local partners, has made steady progress toward preventing and eliminating homelessness among Veterans. The 2014 Point-in-Time Count, prepared by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), estimates there were 49,933 homeless Veterans on a single night in January 2014 in the United States. There has been a 33 percent reduction in Veteran homelessness since the initiative began in 2010.

Strong interagency collaboration is resulting in successful policies and programs such as Housing First in the Community (Housing First), Rapid Re-Housing, Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF). These programs have been critical to achieving the reduction thus far.

We have broadly expanded the array of services and supports aimed at identifying, interceding, and rapidly engaging these Veterans in housing, clinical care, and social services, as well as resources aimed at preventing homelessness from occurring. As a result of these investments, in fiscal year (FY) 2014 alone, VA provided services to more than 260,000 homeless or at-risk Veterans though the Veteran Health Administration's (VHA's) specialized homeless programs. The needs of these Veterans varied and not all required an intensive homeless program intervention, but

for those who did require a more intensive intervention, more than 53,000 Veterans were either placed in permanent housing or prevented from becoming homeless. When we include their family members, that number rises to over 72,000.

VA is now working to forge new partnerships that yield more affordable housing units set aside for Veterans experiencing homelessness, and to forge new partnerships that yield more good, meaningful jobs for Veterans.

VA is the Nation's largest single provider of homeless treatment and benefits assistance services to Veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We continue to increase our support to Veterans and their family members who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. Ending Veteran homelessness is achievable, but doing so is possible only with continued investments in effective interventions.

Select VA Homeless Program Metrics
Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 through FY 2014

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Total number of Veterans served in specialized homeless or at-risk services.	157,182	208,115	259,734	264,827
Number of Veterans obtaining permanent housing during this fiscal year through VA Homeless Programs. (1)	18,591	34,877	42,716	53,475
Total number of beds available to homeless Veterans. (2)	55,885	68,738	79,800	80,178
Number of Veterans contacted through Health Care for Homeless Veterans outreach services.	98,213	119,568	146,557	158,553

1. Includes all exits to permanent housing from Compensated Work Therapy – Transitional Residence (CWT-TR), Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV), Homelesss Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contract Residential, and number of move-ins to Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH).

2. Includes number of operational GPD, HCHV Contract beds,DCHV beds and HUD-VASH vouchers allocated at the end of each FY.

VHA Homeless Programs

(All data on this Fact Sheet is as of September 30, 2014 unless otherwise stated.)

Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRC): CRRCs are a collaborative effort of VA, the community, service providers, and agency partners. The CRRCs are located in strategically selected areas to provide both a refuge from the streets and a central location to engage homeless Veterans in services. Veterans will be referred to health and mental health care resources, job development programs, housing options, and other VA and non-VA benefits.

Program Highlights:

- Through FY 2014, over 20,000 Veterans received services through the CRRCs.

- Currently, there are a total of 29 CRRCs in various phases of development or operation.

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV): The DCHV program provides time-limited residential treatment to homeless Veterans with mental health and substance use disorders, co-occurring medical concerns, and psychosocial needs including homelessness and unemployment. DCHV programs provide homeless Veterans access to medical, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment in addition to psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation treatment programs.

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014, the DCHV program provided services to over 8,500 Veterans.
- In FY 2014, the DCHV program provided 2,482 operational beds at 48 sites in support of homeless Veterans.
- In FY 2014, VA established three new DCHV programs in Atlanta (January 2014), San Diego (February 2014) and Philadelphia (July 2014).
- VA is also developing an additional DCHV in San Juan, Puerto Rico, which is projected to open in first quarter FY2016, and constructing a new DCHV on the grounds of the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, which is projected to open in fourth quarter, FY2016

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/dchv.asp

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV): The central goal of HCHV programs is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by engaging and connecting homeless Veterans with health care and other needed services. HCHV programs provide outreach, case management and HCHV Contract Residential Services ensuring that chronically homeless Veterans, especially those with serious mental health diagnoses and/or substance use disorders, can be placed in VA or community-based programs that provide quality housing and services that meet the needs of these special populations.

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014, the HCHV program provided outreach services to 158,553 Veterans.
- In FY 2014, the HCHV program provided case management services to 11,744 Veterans.
- In FY 2014, the HCHV contract residential services (CRS) program provided emergency and transitional services to15,696 Veterans.
- In FY 2014, the HCHV CRS program provided 4,061 operational beds in support of homeless Veterans.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp

Health Care for Reentry Veterans Services (HCRV): The HCRV program is designed to address the community re-entry needs of incarcerated Veterans. HCRV's goals are to prevent homelessness, reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse

problems upon community re-adjustment, and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison.

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014, the HCRV program provided services to 16,772 Veterans.
- In FY 2014, the HCRV program provided services in 998 (81%) of 1,234 United States state and federal prisons.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACT): H-PACT provides a coordinated "medical home" specifically tailored to the needs of homeless Veterans. At selected VA facilities, Veterans are assigned to an H-PACT care team that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff and others who provide medical care, case management, housing and social services assistance, to provide and coordinate the health care they may need while assisting them in obtaining and staying in permanent housing.

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014, H-PACTs provided care to over 14,600 veterans, a 100 percent increase over FY2013, at 50 different VA facilities compared with 37 sites in FY2013.
- This has resulted in a 22 percent reduction in emergency department visits and 29 percent reduction in hospitalizations at VA facilities in the six months after being enrolled in an H-PACT compared to the six months prior.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp

Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD): The GPD program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. GPD-funded projects offer communities a way to help homeless Veterans with housing and services while assisting VA medical centers (VAMC) by augmenting or supplementing care.

Program Highlights:

- VA's largest transitional housing program with over 15,000 beds nationwide. Approximately 229 additional beds are under development.
- During FY 2014, VA launched five new capital grant projects providing up to 158 transitional housing beds.
- There were 16 rehabilitation grant projects completed which provided capital improvements to operational transitional housing for homeless Veterans.

- During FY 2014 over 500 Transition in Place model housing units were operational.
- In FY 2014, 14,652 homeless Veterans exited GPD to permanent housing.
- In FY 2014, 45,167 Veterans were served through GPD.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp

Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP): The Homeless Veteran Dental Program helps increase the accessibility of quality dental care to homeless and certain other Veteran patients enrolled in VA-sponsored and VA partnership homeless rehabilitation programs throughout the U.S.

- In FY 2014, 18,913 HVDP Veterans were provided dental care nationally.
- VA published a large retrospective longitudinal cohort study in the December 2013 edition of the American Journal of Public Health titled: *Evaluating the Impact of Dental Care on Housing Intervention Program Outcomes Among Homeless Veterans.* This study showed that compared to Veterans who did not receive dental care, those who did had remarkable results:
    - 30 percent increase in completing their homeless rehabilitation program;
    - 14 percent increase in employment /stable financial status; and
    - 15 percent increase in obtaining permanent housing.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/dental.asp

Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program (HVSEP): This was a collaborative effort between the VHA Homeless Program and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program. The HVSEP made two important contributions to the initiative to end homelessness among Veterans. First, it hired and trained 400 homeless or formerly homeless Veterans utilizing Schedule A noncompetitive appointing authority to serve as Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRS). Second, through the efforts of the VRSs, Homeless Veterans were provided vocational and employment services based on rapid engagement, customized job development, and competitive community placement. These services were provided within a community- based as opposed to VAMC based context to promote community integration. The Veterans served by HVSEP were also provided with on-going supports after job placement to assist with employment maintenance. ***NOTE: HVSEP has transitioned to Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES) as of October 2014. See the next program entry below for additional information.***

Program Highlights:

- As of May 2014 of the 2,412 Veterans who exited HVSEP, 1,061 or 44 percent exited with competitive employment. Employment rates at exit from Homeless Residential Programs (GPD, DCHV, and CWT/TR) increased by over five percent across programs.

For more information, please visit:
http://www.va.gov/homeless/employment_programs.asp

Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES): In order to help improve employment outcomes and reach the most difficult to serve homeless Veterans, in the third quarter of FY 2014 each VA medical center (VAMC) received funding to hire new Vocational Development Specialists (VDS) who will serve as Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) within the Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES) framework. The new CECs are responsible for the ongoing orientation and training of the Homeless Services continuum and for providing direct assistance in connecting Veterans to the most appropriate and least restrictive VA and/or community-based employment service leading to competitive employment with appropriate supports.

Program Highlights:

- Partnered with the Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) to implement the VBA Homeless Veteran Employment Program to hire 40 homeless/formerly homeless Veterans during FY 2015 as File Clerks and/or Claims Assistants in VBA Regional Offices across the country. In September 2014, the first Veteran was accepted for this program.
- Partnered with Veteran Canteen Service (VCS) to implement the VCS Homeless Veteran Employment Program to hire homeless Veterans at multiple locations nationally as food services workers and retail store clerks. Two pilot sites were identified for this program; Seattle and Greater Los Angeles. Local VCS and CEC teams have been developed and Veterans have been hired.

Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program: A collaborative program between HUD and VA where eligible homeless Veterans receive a Housing Choice rental voucher from HUD, paired with VA providing case management and supportive services to sustain housing stability and recovery from physical and mental health problems, substance use disorders, and functional concerns contributing to or resulting from homelessness. HUD-VASH subscribes to the principles of the “Housing First” model of care. Housing First is an evidence based practice model that has demonstrated rapidly moving individuals into housing, and then wrapping supportive services around them as needed, helps homeless individuals exit from homelessness, remain stable in housing, and thus improving ability and motivation to engage in treatment strategies. Program goals include housing stability while promoting maximum Veteran recovery and independence in the community for the Veteran and the Veteran’s family.

Program Highlights:

- Through the end of FY 2014, a total of 58,135 vouchers have been allocated for use in the HUD-VASH program.
- 51,913 Veterans were housed through HUD-VASH as of September 30, 2014.

- Funding for an additional 10,251 tenant based Housing Choice Vouchers in FY 2014 will be awarded in two rounds.
    - Round One vouchers were released on October 1, 2014. There were a total of 8,276 tenant-based vouchers released.
    - Round Two vouchers are anticipated to be released by early December 2014. An additional 1,975 tenant based vouchers are anticipated.
- An additional 1,627 project-based Housing Choice Vouchers were awarded through a Public and Indian Housing (PIH) Notice. 929 of these vouchers are expected to be active by the end of FY2015.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV): The NCCHV was founded to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to VA staff. The hotline is intended to assist homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families, VAMCs, Federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. The phone number is **1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838).**

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014 the NCCHV received 112,076 total calls.

National Center on Homelessness among Veterans (NCHAV): The National Center on Homelessness among Veterans (NCHAV) works to promote recovery-oriented care for Veterans who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness by developing and disseminating evidence-based policies, programs, and best practices. The Center was active this year in research, model development, and education.

Program Highlights:

- Deploying the 25 Cities Initiative. The overall objective is to help 25 communities with high concentrations of homeless Veterans to intensify and integrate their local efforts to end Veteran homelessness, by 2015. This is a joint effort by VA, HUD, USICH and local community partners -- city government, housing authorities, community providers -- to work closely and identify by name all of the remaining homeless Veterans in their respective communities, and work together to identify permanent housing solutions for these homeless and chronically homeless individuals. The initiative focuses on three areas:
    - Building and strengthening the elements of a coordinated system for identifying, assessing, and matching homeless Veterans and chronically homeless individuals to the most appropriate housing and service interventions.
    - To strengthen and integrate the data systems used to end both Veteran and chronic homelessness.
    - To further integrate the work and assets of the VA with broader efforts to end chronic homelessness in the community.

- Continued development of the Homeless Registry which contains geographic, programmatic and Veteran specific information related to housing stability, treatment engagement, and VA benefit enrollment. Additionally the Registry is a comprehensive data management tool that provides longitudinal information designed to monitor VHA's progress in obtaining the goal of ending Veteran homelessness.

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Educations and Networking Groups) for Veterans: This program unites consumers, providers, advocates, local officials and other concerned citizens to identify the needs of homeless Veterans and work to meet those needs through planning and cooperative action. CHALENG is designed to be an ongoing assessment process that describes the needs of homeless Veterans and identifies the barriers they face to successful community reentry. This process has helped build thousands of relationships with community agencies, Veterans groups, law enforcement agencies, and Federal, state, and local government. Local CHALENG meetings represent important opportunities for VA and public and private agency representatives to meet and develop meaningful partnerships to better serve homeless Veterans.

Program Highlights:

- In calendar year 2014 to date, 10,657 people have participated in the CHALENG process.
- Fifty two percent (52.2%) (n = 5,563) of the 2014 participants were homeless Veterans.
- In calendar year 2014, surveys were collected both online and on paper to maximize stakeholders' ability to give feedback.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/chaleng.asp

Safe Havens: Safe Havens provide a transitional residence for hard to reach homeless persons with mental illness and substance use problems who have failed in traditional programs. The low-demand, non-intrusive environment is designed to establish trust and eventually engage the homeless Veteran in needed treatment services and transitional or permanent housing options.

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014, Safe Haven model development projects served 972 unique veterans, including both males and females.
- Among those Veterans who exited the program, more than 85 percent were characterized as positive or neutral exits.
- Forty percent left the Safe Haven to move into permanent housing and 34 percent experienced an increase in income during their time in the program.

For more information, please visit: http://endveteranhomelessness.org/programs/safe-havens

Stand Downs: Stand Downs are typically one to three day events providing services to homeless Veterans such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAs, other government agencies, and community agencies who serve the homeless.

Program highlights:

- In calendar year 2014, more than 320 Stand Down events have been held or are scheduled and it is estimated that approximately 80,000 Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will participate in these events. *(Note: Stand Down data is collected by calendar year, not fiscal year.)*

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): This program was authorized by Public Law 110-387 and provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families in or transitioning to permanent housing. SSVF is designed to rapidly re-house homeless Veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis. Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that will assist very low-income Veteran families by providing a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability.

Program Highlights:

- In FY 2014, the SSVF program awarded $507 million in grants allowing SSVF to expand from 319 community agencies to 383 community agencies that serve all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.
- In FY 2014, SSVF assisted a total of 123,383 individuals exceeding the annual projection of 115,000.
- SSVF has created a significant impact on Veteran families with 27,452 children assisted in FY 2014.
- Of 77, 687 Veteran participants, 11,397, or 15 percent, are women.
- In FY 2014, 81 percent of those discharged from the SSVF program obtained permanent housing.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp

Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO): The purpose of the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Program is to prevent homelessness, and avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans. This is accomplished by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans encountered by police, and in jails or courts, have timely access to VHA mental health, substance abuse, and homeless services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

Program Highlights:

- During FY 2014, the VJO program provided services to 41,683 justice-involved Veterans, a significant increase from the 35,975 justice-involved Veterans served by this program in FY 2013.

For more information, please visit: http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp

Contact Us

To find the VA facility nearest to you, please visit:
http://www1.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 http://www.va.gov/homeless.

If you, or a Veteran you know, are at risk of homelessness 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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