

Information from the VA about Homelessness and New Initiatives

Veteran Homelessness

- About one-third of the adult homeless population have served their country in the Armed Services.
- Current population estimates suggest that about 131,000 Veterans (male and female) are homeless on any given night and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year.
- Right now, the number of homeless male and female Vietnam era Veterans is greater than the number of service persons who died during that war -- and a small number of Desert Storm veterans are also appearing in the homeless population.
- Although many homeless Veterans served in combat in Vietnam and suffer from PTSD, at this time, epidemiologic studies do not suggest that there is a causal connection between military service, service in Vietnam, or exposure to combat and homelessness among Veterans. Family background, access to support from family and friends, and various personal characteristics (rather than military service) seem to be the stronger indicators of risk of homelessness.
- Almost all homeless Veterans are male (about three percent are women), the vast majority are single, and most come from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Homeless Veterans tend to be older and more educated than homeless non-Veterans.
- But similar to the general population of homeless adult males, about 45% of homeless Veterans suffer from mental illness and (with considerable overlap) slightly more than 70% suffer from alcohol or other drug abuse problems.
- Roughly 56% are African American or Hispanic.¹

National News

Earlier this year, President Obama stated, **“We provide new help for homeless veterans because those heroes have a home- it’s the country they served, the United States of America. Until we reach a day when not a single veteran sleeps on our nation’s streets, our work remains unfinished.”**

- This Spring, President Obama signed the completed FY 09 federal budget that includes among other items \$75 million for an additional 10,000 housing vouchers and supportive services under the HUD-VASH program for homeless veterans and \$10 million for HUD to conduct a demonstration program in

¹ U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs website at www.va.gov/homeless

HUD-VA Providers Information & Networking Event
August 18, 2009
Fresno, CA

collaboration with the VA and the Department of Labor "to test the effectiveness of strategies to prevent veterans from becoming homeless. "

- President Obama's summary of his upcoming FY 2010 federal budget, released in February, indicates that the Administration will propose increasing funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs by \$25 billion over the next five years including dramatic increases for VA health care. Special attention will be paid to enhancing outreach and services related to mental health care and cognitive injuries with a focus on improving access for veterans in rural areas. The budget will also propose expanding VA's services to homeless veterans through a collaborative pilot program with non profit organizations. This pilot will help maintain stable housing for veterans who are at risk of falling into homelessness while helping the VA to continue providing them with supportive services.
- The National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans was recently launched to promote policy, support implementation of research, provide education and training and to disseminate evidenced-based best practices.²

Local News

HUD-VASH Vouchers

HUD-VASH vouchers have been allocated to our communities: 35 will be allocated to Tulare, and 35 vouchers will be allocated in Fresno.

Upcoming Stand Downs in the Central Valley:

- 08/22/09 - Vets Stand Up for Stand Down
 - National Guard Armory, 1240 8th St., Merced, CA
 - 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
 - Contact: Eli Painted Crow, (209) 617-0276
- 09/23/09-9/25/09 – Central Valley Veterans Stand Down 2009
 - VFW Fost 8900, 3585 N. Blythe, Fresno, CA 93722
 - 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM Wed-Thurs with overnight accommodations and 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM Friday
 - Contact: Charles Hunnicutt, (559) 454-5436

² Information available at www.usich.gov