Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Accessing Services for Homeless Veterans

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Homeless Care Line Manager
An Overview

Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

Vet Centers
Important Facts

• Every VA benefit must be applied for – none are automatic

• Military service must be verified

• Character of discharge is important

• National Guard & Reserve are eligible if activated “federally” and complete the term of duty
Eligibility for VA Healthcare

• Minimum duty requirements – 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty for those entering service after 10/16/1981

• Prior to 10/16/1981 – one day of service is required

• Don’t try this at home...lots of exceptions and special circumstances exist

• There are eligibility specialists at every VA medical center.
Discharge Upgrades

• Application must be within 15 years of the discharge

• The Department of Veterans Affairs cannot assist with discharge upgrades

• Refer to:
  - Veterans Service Organizations
  - State Office / Division of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Health Care Services

- Primary and Specialty Medical Care
- Mental Health Treatment (inpatient, outpatient, residential)
- Substance Abuse Treatment (inpatient, outpatient, residential)
- Pharmacy Benefits
- Homeless Services including Homeless Veterans Dental Initiative
- Returning Veterans (OEF/OIF/ND) Care Coordination
- Women Veterans Care Coordination
Defining Homelessness

A Homeless Veteran:

- Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;
- Or resides in a public or privately operated shelter or institution;
- Or resides in a place not designed for use as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

A Chronically Homeless Veteran:

- Has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has had at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years.

* Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Overview of Homelessness

• 62,619 Veterans estimated to be homeless on any given night (2012 HUD AHAR)

• Homelessness is often a consequence of multiple psychosocial factors, including unstable family supports, job loss, inadequate job skills, health problems, substance use disorder, or other mental health concerns.

• Homeless services cannot be provided in isolation.

• Homeless services must be comprehensive:
  - Recovery-oriented; support physical and mental health stabilization and treatment
  - Provide substance use disorder treatment
  - Enhance independent living skills
  - Address vocational rehabilitation and employment maintenance
  - Assist with housing searches and placement
VA’s Strategy to Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans

- VHA homeless programs were initiated by Public Law 100-6 in 1987

- In November 3, 2009, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki announces a Five Year Plan to End Homelessness Among Veterans

- Key philosophy of “No Wrong Door” means that all Veterans seeking to prevent or get out of homelessness must have easy access to programs and services. Any door a Veteran comes to – at a Medical Center, a Regional Office, or a Community Organization – must offer them assistance.
Six Strategic Pillars to End Homelessness Among Veterans

Outreach/ Education

Prevention

Housing and Supportive Services

Income/ Employment/ Benefits

Treatment

Community Partnerships
Homeless Prevention Services

• **Supportive Services for Low-Income Veteran Families**
  - Grants to provide case management and supportive services for low-income Veteran families
  - Services include temporary financial assistance to prevent Veterans falling into homelessness

• **Health Care for Re-entry Veterans**
  - Outreach to Veterans within 6 months of release from state and federal correctional facilities
  - Coordination with Corrections and Parole on community re-entry plans
  - Connection to VA health care and benefits

• **Veterans Justice Outreach Initiative**
  - Outreach and education for law enforcement
  - Linkage to VA services for Veterans in treatment courts, including Veterans Courts
  - Transitional planning for Veterans discharging from the justice system
  - Designated Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists at each VA medical center
• National Call and Referral Center
  ➢ Resource for homeless Veterans and advocates seeking immediate assistance
  ➢ Linkage to wide array of VA and community resources
  ➢ 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)

• Health Care for Homeless Veterans
  ➢ Emergency residential placement (60-180 days) and supportive services for homeless Veterans
  ➢ Contracted services with community providers for Per Diem
Treatment

• Access, Access, Access and the “No Wrong Door Policy”

• VA Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs
  ➢ VA-operated residential care programs with access to full spectrum of available services, plus in-house programming;
  ➢ Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans: 4 month psychosocial rehabilitation

• Homeless Veterans Dental Initiative
  ➢ Enhanced effort to promote dental care for homeless Veterans
Housing and Supportive Services

• **Grant and Per Diem**
  - Transitional housing (up to 24 months) and supportive services for homeless Veterans
  - Nationally competitive grant process; awards to community non-profit providers

• **HUD-VASH Program**
  - Nation’s largest supported permanent housing initiative
  - Combines permanent housing with case management and supportive services that promote and maintain recovery and housing stability
  - HUD Housing Choice Section 8 rental vouchers paired with VA dedicated case management services
• **Supportive Employment/Compensated Work Therapy**
  - Employment program targeted at Veterans with significant health problems
  - Each VAMC has hired up to 6 homeless / formerly homeless Veterans to work in VA programs to help other homeless Veterans find competitive employment

• **Expedited Claims for Homeless Veterans**
  - Collaboration with VBA to ensure timely processing of homeless Veterans’ benefits claims

• **Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program**
  - Collaboration with Department of Labor grantees to provide Veterans with gainful employment
• Collaborate with local, City, State, Federal and community partners to:
  
  ➢ Conduct effective outreach to homeless and at-risk Veterans
  
  ➢ Maximize housing, employment and other resources for homeless Veterans

“We will provide new help for homeless Veterans because those heroes have a home – it’s the country they served, the United States of America. And until we reach a day when not a single Veteran sleeps on the street our business is unfinished.”

- President Barack Obama
Homeless Veteran in need of help now? Call 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838) “MAKE THE CALL!”

Go to any VA medical center, outpatient clinic, or VBA Regional Office
  • Ask for Homeless Coordinator
  • Ask for OEF/OIF/OND Coordinator
  • Ask for Women Veterans Coordinator

Use the VA website: www.va.gov/homeless
Accessing VA Services

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