

HOMELESS VETERANS PREVENTION ACT OF 2013

Legislation to Improve VA's Programs for Homeless and At-Risk Veterans

In 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) set a goal to eliminate veteran homelessness by 2015, uniting the country around this effort. In collaboration with other Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Community partners, VA provides a host of veteran-centered services to homeless including, medical, dental, and mental health care, outreach to high risk populations, and a continuum of housing options. VA and its partners also provide preventive services such as foreclosure prevention, financial assistance for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing, employment and job placement services, education opportunities, and substance abuse treatment to those veterans who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

Much progress has been made, as evidenced by the over 17 percent decline in homeless veterans since 2009. Despite this progress there were still more than [62,000 homeless veterans](#) in January 2012. We must continue to invest in the progress that has been made toward his effort and remove any remaining barriers to housing for veterans.

A number of legal issues can contribute to and stem from homelessness, including an inability to obtain identification, outstanding warrants, outstanding fines, and an inability to successfully negotiate manageable child support payments, among others. For the last three years, a VA [survey](#) of homeless veterans has identified legal services as one of the top four unmet needs among homeless veterans.

VA's Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office reported on a number of barriers that prevent homeless women veterans from utilizing the programs and housing currently offered. Such barriers included a lack of specific measures to address the safety of women veterans who have often experienced sexual trauma or domestic abuse and who are asked to reside in the same facilities as men.

Improves Homelessness Prevention Programs

- Allows VA to partner with public and private entities to increase the availability of legal services for homeless veterans.
- Permanently authorizes the Department of Labor's Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program.

Improves Transitional Housing Programs

- Requires transitional housing grantees to meet the gender-specific needs of homeless women veterans and allows VA to offer capital grants to help facilities meet this requirement.
- Keeps veteran families together by allowing VA to house the children of homeless veterans in transitional housing programs.
- Incentivizes grantees to avoid disruptions that arise when veterans complete transitional housing programs and move on to permanent housing.

Expands upon existing programs for homeless veterans

- Expands eligibility for the Homeless Veterans Dental Program to include HUD-VASH participants, aligning the program with VA's implementation of the Housing First model.
- Reauthorizes a number of VA's programs for homeless veterans, including drop-in centers, transitional housing programs, rapid re-housing programs, and employment programs for homeless veterans.