



The Homeless Veteran's Resource Guide

Table of Contents:

1. [National Housing, Food, Counseling, and Education Programs](#)
2. [State Programs](#)
3. [Legal Help for Homeless Veterans](#)
4. [Employment Resources for Homeless Veterans](#)
5. [Medical Treatment for Homeless Veterans](#)

Introduction

Veterans account for nearly a quarter of the homeless population in the United States. The large majority of these veterans served in Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expects thousands more returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to end up homeless.

Homelessness among veterans is largely understood to be a problem coming from the stresses and effects of combat. Returning veterans who suffer from [Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome](#), [Traumatic Brain Injury](#), Depression, physical injuries, or other related conditions often find it hard to rejoin society and as a result end up living on the streets or worse.

It is important that veterans know that there are programs out there that can help them get back on their feet, not only by providing a place to sleep and food to eat, but by providing counseling and reintegration help.

This guide will first discuss the national programs available to homeless veterans and then list several state programs. **A useful companion guide to this document is [Are You Leaving Money on the Table](#).** Contacting one of these organizations can dramatically change the life of a veteran who is struggling to get by.

Perhaps the fastest and easiest way to get help is to call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838)**.

If you are in an emotional/suicidal crisis call the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press "1" for Veterans, or [go here to chat with a VA crisis counselor online](#).

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

Housing Programs:

- A. [Department of Housing & Urban Development/VA Supportive Housing](#) (HUD-VASH): This program places some eligible homeless veterans in permanent housing by providing [VASH housing vouchers](#). These vouchers are specifically allocated for veterans and given out by HUD-VASH case managers. [Eligible veterans](#) include those who are most vulnerable such as: veterans with families, female veterans, veterans with disabilities, and recently returning veterans. However, there are a limited number of vouchers available by geographic region. HUD-VASH programs are usually run as part of the Homeless Program at most VA Medical Centers.
To apply [contact your local state case manager](#). Or [go here to find the closest VA Medical Center](#) (VAMC), or call **1-877-222-8387**.
- B. [Shelter Plus Care Program \(S+C\) – HUD](#): The Shelter Plus Care Program provides long-term rental assistance to homeless persons with disabilities, including mental illness and drug and alcohol problems.
[Go here to see who is eligible for this program](#).
[Contact your nearest HUD office](#).
- C. [Housing Choice Voucher Program](#): The Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federal program run by HUD that provides housing vouchers to very low income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Eligibility is determined on the basis of a person's annual income. If you are interested in applying for a voucher, [contact the local PHA](#). For further assistance, contact the [HUD Office](#) nearest to you.
- D. [Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program](#): This is a program of the VA that provides high-quality residential rehabilitation and treatment to veterans with severe medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, and other psychosocial deficits. Contact the VA about this program by calling **1-800-827-1000**.

Food Programs:

- A. [The Emergency Food Assistance Program - Department of Agriculture](#) (TEFAP): The TEFAP is a program that provides food to homeless individuals. To learn how to apply click [here](#). You may

also review the variety of other food programs offered by the Department of Agriculture by clicking [here](#).

- B. [Emergency Food & Shelter Program - FEMA](#): The FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds shelter and food services for homeless veterans. For a list of funded organizations by state click [here](#).
- C. [Food Stamps and Other Nutrition Programs](#): The Food Stamp program is run by the Department of State through the individual states and provides food stamps to qualifying individuals. Most homeless veterans will qualify for this program. To find out if you are eligible click [here](#).
- D. [National Food Bank Locator](#): This is a resource for locating food banks in your state.

Income Support:

- A. [Supplemental Security Income](#): Those who are homeless have the same rights and privileges in applying for SSI benefits as those who are not homeless.

Counseling Programs:

Mental illness is often a factor contributing to homelessness. So it is important that veterans know where to go to get help with their illness. Even where mental illness does not lead to a veteran becoming homeless, the effects of being homeless for long periods of time can lead to depression and suicidal thoughts. There are a number of resources available to help homeless veterans with mental illness listed below. For in depth information about Traumatic Brain Injury see statesidelegal.org's [Guide to Traumatic Brain Injury](#).

- A. [Vet Center Combat Call Center](#): This is a helpline for combat veterans who need to talk to someone. To contact the Vet Center Combat Call Center dial **1-877-WAR-VETS**.
- B. [Veterans Crisis Line](#): The Veterans Crisis Line is available to all veterans. Feel free to call it if you are experiencing depression, PTSD, Substance Abuse, Suicidal thoughts, or any other mental health issue. Call **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** and press "1" for Veterans, or you can chat with a VA crisis counselor online by clicking [here](#).
- C. [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#): Homeless veterans, and veterans in danger of becoming homeless, can call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **1-877-424-3838** for counseling and other assistance. You can also chat with a counselor online through the [Homeless Veterans Chat service](#).
- D. [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury \(DCoE\) Outreach Center](#): The DCoE provides information and resources about mental health, PTSD, and Traumatic Brain Injury to veterans through their outreach center. To contact DCoE call **1-866-966-1020**, by e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org, or you can also go to [DCoE Outreach Center Live Chat](#).

- E. [DoD/VA Suicide Outreach Program](#): This program helps veterans and servicemembers struggling with suicidal thoughts. You can call the National Suicide Hotline at **1-800-273-8255**, or chat with a crisis counselor by clicking [here](#).
- F. [US Veterans Initiative](#): USVets.org provides counseling services to homeless veterans in the following places: [Barbers Point, HI](#), [District of Columbia](#), [Houston, TX](#), [Inglewood, CA](#), [Las Vegas, NV](#), [Long Beach, CA](#), [Phoenix, AZ](#), [Prescott, AZ](#), [Riverside, CA](#), and [Waianae, HI](#).

Education Programs:

Most veterans qualify for education benefits from the VA. These programs allow veterans to go to college to earn a degree while paying the veteran for the cost of school and housing. This can be a very valuable resource for veterans struggling with the transition into civilian society or suffering from homelessness. For more information about the education programs available to veterans see [A Veteran's Guide to Education Benefits](#).

STATE PROGRAMS

Hundreds of state and local programs help the homeless. Here are links to directories that list many of these organizations.

- A. [HUDVET State and Local Resources](#): The HUDVET program is a joint program between the VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development that provides services to homeless veterans through state and local organizations. Click [here](#) to find your local state contacts.
- B. [The VA's Homeless Resource Guide](#) provides a long state by state list of available programs and contacts for homeless veterans.
- C. [The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#): This organization has several valuable resources for homeless veterans broken down by state.
- D. [Directory of National, Statewide and Local Homeless Advocacy Coalitions](#): This directory will lead you to a list of each state's local homeless advocacy groups.
- E. [Directory of Local Homeless Service Organizations](#): Click this link to see a list of local homeless service organizations.
- F. [Homeless Shelter Directory](#): Click this link to find a local homeless shelter near you. You can also find a similar list by clicking [here](#).
- G. [Healthcare for Homeless Veterans by State](#): This link lists healthcare facilities available to homeless veterans in each particular state.
- H. [Homelessness Resource Center](#): This site provides a wide range of information about homelessness for advocates and the homeless. They have a very useful state resource tool that you can access by clicking [here](#).
- I. [211](#): 211 is a program for the homeless that assists individuals in finding food, shelter, counseling services, and much more. To find a local 211 service near you click [here](#).

- J. [Catholic Charities USA](#): Catholic Charities USA provides a list of their charities offering housing counseling services to the homeless on their site. You can access this list by clicking [here](#).

Legal Help for Homeless Veterans

Many homeless veterans are held back by unpaid fines, debts, and other legal judgments incurred while homeless. Fines relating to unpaid child support are listed as one the greatest unmet needs of homeless veterans. Likewise, housing laws can play an important role in whether a veteran becomes homeless. Still other veterans commit crimes while homeless and require legal representation and advice.

[Statesidelegal.org](#) is a valuable tool for veterans who have legal problems and includes veteran friendly information and contact information for hundreds of support groups and legal assistance services. [Go here to access the legal services organizations in each state](#). The [National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty](#) is another great resource - designed for advocates but offering some very useful information about applicable laws for homeless veterans. The [National Resource Directory](#) also provides a long [list of other legal service organizations available to veterans](#).

The law is broken into two different categories: civil law and criminal law. Generally speaking, “civil law” refers to legal issues among individuals such as divorces, landlord/tenant disputes, and personal injury claims. “Criminal law” involves the government charging an individual for “breaking the law,” such as traffic offenses and driving under the influence, as well as more serious charges, such as criminal assault and manslaughter. In the U.S. criminal defendants who face more serious charges have a right to a lawyer. In such a case, you may ask for a public defender or court-appointed lawyer if you cannot afford one. For more minor criminal charges and “civil law” cases, it may be more difficult for a homeless veteran to find a lawyer. Below is a list of both civil and criminal law resources for homeless veterans.

Civil Law:

- A. [Fair Housing Laws](#): Fair housing laws protect people from discrimination on the basis of disability, among other things. Veterans who have a disability are protected against evictions and other housing discrimination because of those disabilities. In federally funded housing, landlords must make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. To find out more about what rights you have under the fair housing laws see [statesidelegal.org](#)’s [Fair Housing Manual](#). For help with a legal issue involving housing [find a legal services organization near you](#).

- B. [Fair Lending Protections](#): Like the fair housing laws, the fair lending laws prohibit discrimination by lenders against persons with disabilities. If you have a disability and believe you have been discriminated against as a result of that disability you should read more about the [fair lending protections](#). For legal help involving fair lending practices [go here](#).
- C. [Servicemembers Civil Relief Act](#): The SCRA protects current military members who are called to active duty. One of the protections provided by the SCRA is the protection from eviction. Thus, servicemembers can protect themselves and their families from becoming homeless while on active duty. [Learn more about the SCRA here](#).
- D. [Family Law](#): A major factor leading to homelessness for many veterans are expenses relating to the family. These expenses include such things as alimony payments, child support, housing costs, and medical expenses. In fact, child care costs were listed as the most unmet need for homeless veterans in a study by [CHALENG](#), a VA sponsored program. [Statesidelegal.org](#) provides numerous resources to help veterans dealing with family law issues. For a veteran with children who is seeking to receive child support payments see [Uniformed Services Spouses Protection Act](#). For more information about how child support works [go here](#). Many legal services offices serving low-income families handle family law matters for free. [Find an office near you](#). Or try getting legal help from a [JAG or civil legal assistance officer](#) in your state (serving active duty servicemembers and their families and retirees).
- E. Military Law Matters: Another common hindrance to a veteran's ability to break free of homelessness is the [character of his/her discharge from the service](#). Having a bad conduct discharge can greatly impact a veteran's ability to find work. To find out more about discharges and how you can have a discharge characterization changed see [Discharge Conditions: How to Request a Review](#).

Criminal Law:

Veterans who have committed crimes and have outstanding warrants and fines may have to resolve these issues before they can secure permanent shelter and employment. Further, if you are characterized as a [fleeing felon](#), you may lose your VA benefits. The VA has designated Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists at each VA medical facility who will work closely with the justice department and courts to manage a veteran's case once a veteran is being charged with a crime. To contact your local outreach specialist click [here](#).

It is also a good idea to get a lawyer if you have been arrested. For a more serious charge that could involve a jail term, you may have the right to a lawyer. If you cannot afford one, ask for a public defender or court-appointed lawyer. For more detailed information about how to manage a criminal charge see [Getting Help with Criminal Cases](#). For help with outstanding warrants contact a [local legal services organization](#) near you.

Employment Resources for Homeless Veterans

Several programs help veterans find jobs. To apply for a job, you may need a resume. Numerous programs can help veterans prepare resumes. One such program is the [VA's VetSuccess program](#). The [Department of Labor's CareerOneStop program](#) also has a valuable [resume building tool](#). You can also contact your [state Veteran's Affairs office](#) for resume and job searching help.

- A. [U.S. Department of Labor](#): The Department of Labor has several programs that can help veterans find jobs. [Go here to get their contact information](#). The Labor Department also runs a special program for veterans called the [Veterans Employment and Training Service \(VETS\)](#). Another Department of Labor program is the [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program](#). To learn more about this program you should contact your local [Veterans' Employment and Training Service Office](#).
- B. [One-Stop Career Centers](#): This site provides a one-stop shop for both employers and those seeking jobs. You can also call **1-877-US2-JOBS (1-877-872-5627)**, or **1-877-TTY-JOBS (1-877-889-5627)**.
- C. [Helmets to Hardhats](#): Helmets to Hardhats is a program that helps military, **reservists, and guardsmen** leaving the service to find work in the construction industry.
- D. [Return to Work](#): This organization provides vocational rehabilitation to veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- E. [Hire Heroes USA](#): Hire Heroes is a national organization that focuses on placing disabled veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom in jobs. You can also call Hire Heroes USA by calling **1-513-683-5020**.
- F. [VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment](#): The Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program provides vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with service-connected disabilities. This program includes [VetSuccess](#) and the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT).
- G. [VetCentral](#): VetCentral is run by a coalition of major U.S. employers and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), and contains thousands of job postings by these companies for veterans. You can also call **1-866-268-6206**.
- H. [VetJobs.com](#): VetJobs is another very valuable job searching site for veterans and their family members. To contact VetJobs you can also call **1-877-VETJOBS**.
- I. [Military.com's Veteran Job Search](#): Military.com also provides a veteran job search feature that may be useful to homeless veterans looking for work.

Medical Treatment Programs

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, dial 911 immediately.

As a homeless veteran, you may be in need of medical treatment. Veterans who qualify for VA disability benefits have access to VA healthcare facilities. To find out more about the various disability benefits available to veterans see [Disability Benefits: Military, VA, and Social Security](#). [Go here to see who qualifies for VA healthcare](#). And here is a list of additional programs that may be helpful.

- A. [Health Resources and Services Administration](#): This site will provide you with a list of available federally-funded health centers. Most hospitals have a free-care program for low income individuals who are treated there. [Get a list of federally-funded health centers](#).
- B. [Homeless Veterans Dental Program](#): This is a program of the VA that provides dental services to homeless veterans.
- C. [National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#): The National Health Care for the Homeless Council provides a [list of hospitals by state](#) that provide free healthcare to the homeless as well as a [Need Help Now? resource page](#).
- D. [Medicaid](#): Medicaid is a federal program that provides health insurance to low-income individuals and families. [Learn more about Medicaid](#).
- E. [Medicare](#): Medicare is health insurance for people who are age 65 or older, those who are permanently disabled, and those who meet other special criteria. [Learn more here](#).

If you are denied health coverage from one of these programs and you disagree, contact your nearest civil [legal services office](#) for help before your appeal deadline.

Note: If you are an organization that directly services homeless veterans please contact statesidelegal.org to be added to this resource guide.
