



**NATIONAL COALITION for HOMELESS VETERANS**

333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20003-1148

202-546-1969 / 800-VET-HELP

Website: [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org) Email: [info@nchv.org](mailto:info@nchv.org)

## **Policy Statement: Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28, 2013— The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) is the nation's only employment program wholly dedicated to serving homeless veterans, most of whom have serious and multiple barriers to re-entering the workforce. Administered by U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) for over two decades, HVRP presently serves about 16,000 veterans each year. These men and women find employment at an average wage of \$10.48 per hour at an average cost of \$3,295 per placement.

In order for HVRP grantees to receive renewed funding, they must guarantee job placement and retention services for homeless veterans. These veterans benefit from wrap-around supports, as most grantees also provide residential stability, health services and counseling. Additionally, successful programs leverage local service networks without incurring extra costs.

There are no giveaways in HVRP— the program simply provides an opportunity for those who have worn our nation's uniform and fallen into homelessness to build the skills necessary to once again become gainfully employed.

### *Why is HVRP critical?*

The issues facing homeless veterans fall into three primary categories: health, financial and access to affordable housing. HVRP is the most effective program available to address homeless veterans' financial issues by helping them become gainfully employed. Through relatively small investments in community-based partners, HVRP capitalizes on the benefits provided by 143 existing service delivery systems nationwide.

Among the program's hallmarks are long-term follow-up – grantees must check in with and offer support to veteran participants for 270 days after clients enter employment – and a commitment to serve veterans transitioning out of incarceration, women veterans, and veterans with families. A recent study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) found that women veterans, who now account for 8% of the veteran population, are three times more likely to become homeless than their non-veteran counterparts.

HVRP is critical in light of the high veteran unemployment rate, especially among young veterans. In December 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the unemployment rate among post-9/11 veterans was 10.8%, with post-9/11 women veterans experiencing an even higher unemployment rate of 15.7%. While these numbers are down from a year earlier, they remain a cause for concern.

The number of young homeless veterans, meanwhile, is increasing. The most recent data shows that approximately 12,700 Iraq- and Afghanistan-era veterans experienced homelessness in 2010.

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*Mission: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans will end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.*

*What should Congress do?*

**NCHV recommends that Congress reauthorize and fund HVRP at \$50 million through the maturity of the Five-Year Plan (FY 2015).** The program is currently authorized at \$50 million through FY 2013, yet is underfunded by about \$12 million. We commend the bipartisan leadership that helped build this program's legacy, and call upon Congress to ensure that legacy continues.

In recent years, there have been calls to consolidate federal employment assistance programs. Due to its highly specialized nature and unique homeless veteran target populations, however, HVRP cannot be incorporated into other programs without sacrificing its effectiveness and efficiencies.

*How can I learn more about HVRP?*

The NCHV-sponsored *Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Best Practices Project* is a comprehensive report on the nation's highest-performing HVRP programs. It is designed to inform grant-seeking organizations and government agencies about the essential components of successful, replicable programs. The report represents programs from urban and rural areas, faith- and community-based organizations, as well as large and small operations.

To download the report, go to [www.nchv.org/images/uploads/HVRP\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Vol.\\_2\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.nchv.org/images/uploads/HVRP_Best_Practices_Vol._2_WEB.pdf).