



**NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS**

1730 M St., NW Suite 705

Washington, DC 20036

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. 1, 2017— The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) is the nation's only Federal grant program wholly dedicated to serving homeless veterans, re-entering the workforce. Administered by U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) for over two decades, HVRP served over 17,000 veterans in 2014, with a national placement rate into employment of 69%. These men and women find employment at an average cost to the program of \$2,007 per placement. Both the placement rate and the cost per placement represent improvements over the last several years.

In order for HVRP grantees to receive renewed funding, they must guarantee job-driven training and employment placement for homeless veterans. This is not simply an employment assistance program. Veteran clients benefit from wrap-around supports, as most grantees also provide residential stability, health services, and personal and family counseling through leveraged resources in the community. The success of HVRP comes from building individual service plans to help veterans get and keep good jobs while addressing the challenges and barriers they face.

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 and return to independent living as productive members of society.

*Why is HVRP critical?*

The issues facing homeless veterans fall into three primary categories: health issues, financial hardship, and a shortage of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families in most communities. HVRP is the most effective program available to address homeless veterans' financial issues by helping them become gainfully employed. Through 153 relatively small investments in community-based partners, HVRP capitalizes on the benefits provided by existing service delivery systems nationwide.

Among the program's hallmarks are a focus on target populations, including homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children. A recent study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) found that women veterans, who now account for eight percent of the veteran population, are three times more likely to become homeless than their non-veteran counterparts. The program is unique in its connection to the Department of Labor's workforce system through mandated veteran enrollment in the American Job Center. This mandate allows all veterans in HVRP to access wide assessment, training, and education resources through the nation's workforce system.

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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.*

Economic factors dramatically impact risk of homelessness, especially for younger veterans falling into homelessness. The most recent data shows that approximately 12,700 Iraq- and Afghanistan-era veterans experienced homelessness in 2010. We currently have no reliable predictions for the number of veterans from this period that will become homeless in the years to come. However, much of the homelessness among Iraq and Afghanistan era veterans we will see with the impending drawdown of forces will likely be economically driven homelessness. Maintaining HVRP to provide job-driven employment training and placement is the best defense against a resurgence of veteran homelessness in the future.

*What should Congress do?*

**NCHV recommends that Congress reauthorize and fund HVRP at \$100 million.** The HVRP program is currently authorized at \$50 million through FY 2017, yet is underfunded by about \$12 million. This highly successful, specifically targeted program should be expanded across the country, and given a long-term, if not permanent, authorization. To this end, the authorization for the program should be raised to \$100 million and funds should be appropriated to match the new authorization. NCHV encourages Congress to go above and beyond the \$50 million level for FY 2107 called for in that year's Presidential Budget.

NCHV was however, pleased to see the House Appropriations Committee proposed an increase to \$50 million for FY 2017 in the 114<sup>th</sup>'s H.R. 5926, which represented the sense of that committee – as well as 67 of their colleagues in the House who expressed their position in a letter to the relevant subcommittee in March, 2016. NCHV urges the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress to start their post-CR budget discussions for the remainder of FY 2017 with this \$50 million figure for HVRP.

In recent years there have been calls to consolidate federal employment assistance programs. Due to its core link to Department of Labor resources and data, and unique homeless veteran target populations, however, HVRP cannot be incorporated into other programs without sacrificing its effectiveness and efficiencies. Furthermore, NCHV believes the program's continued administrative location at the Department of Labor is critical to its sustained success.

*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).

To view Best Practices videos, go to [http://nchv.org//index.php/connect/story/hvrp\\_best\\_practices\\_resources](http://nchv.org//index.php/connect/story/hvrp_best_practices_resources).

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