

The Start to Ending Veteran Homelessness

Overall, homelessness has been an issue for large cities that has only been getting worse. In places such as Los Angeles, California homelessness has gotten out of hand that there is a neighborhood full of homelessness, named Skid Row. Although homelessness is such a big issue in this paper we will dive into the issue of veterans and how they become homeless. Not only will the paper talk about how veterans became homeless, but how the community can help support their transition out. Homelessness overall shouldn't be an issue, but especially regarding veterans who have served our country, thus rather than the government being the only people attempting to help the community should take part in decreasing the number of veterans who are homeless.

The government provides a budget for the veteran's affair program in hopes of helping veterans in need, however, there is so much that a program and the government can do for many of these homeless. As stated in Caring for U.S Veterans: A plan for 2020, In 2020 the government gave \$220.2 billion of its federal budget; however, the money must be divided into three sections: The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which is responsible for providing health care and conducting biomedical research; the Veterans Benefits Administration; and the National Cemetery Administration," (Korb 17). Despite the Veterans Affairs Program receiving a good amount of money from the government, it is apparent that the funding isn't enough for all veterans as we have seen that there are still those who have lost everything and are currently homeless. Other VA programs that are offered are disability compensation, pension, education

and training, home loans, and vocational rehabilitation and employment. Often in order to be part of a program, you have to meet certain requirements and if a veteran has met all the requirements there are those who get enhanced eligibility status due to having had met more requirements. It is no wonder why the VA is often said to be underfunded and takes a long time to be eligible for certain benefits or health and mental help.

Therefore, due to the lack of fast and reliable help of the VA many veterans must rely on family and friends. Many of these veterans deal with some sort of mental disorder such as PTSD and often need the support of loved ones and or peers to help them deal with their issues.

According to Why Are So Many Veterans Homeless? “Female veterans are more likely to be homeless than their male counterparts. Female veterans are also 4 times more likely to be homeless when compared to female non-veterans in the U.S. and female non-veterans in the poverty population,” (12). In order to understand why more women are at risk, we must understand that most often than not it is the women who take care of the children, some female veterans are or have become single mothers, and they have no one to turn to when times get tough. One can argue that this might also apply to men, however, we have to note that men have more resources available to them than women who are single and or have dependents. There are very few programs that help families overall, and especially shelters that allow women and their children.

One might argue that the government does enough to help as many veterans as they can and veterans should be grateful for the amount of funding that is given to the VA. This is true to some extent, however, according to the VA they have seen that when a community comes together to help veterans in need, they not only lower the number of veterans suffering from homelessness but in some cases, they also help eliminate veteran homelessness in certain

neighborhoods/communities. Currently as stated in The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, “11% of veterans account for the homeless population and there are 1.4 million veterans considered at risk for homelessness,” (1). There isn’t enough funding as we have seen from the data above to allow for more government housing to be built in order to keep veterans away from the streets. Even if there was more funding, the issue isn’t how to get veterans into housing if they are homeless or at risk? But how can we help prevent veterans from becoming homeless?

There are multiple ways to help out a veteran in need. Helping a veteran doesn’t necessarily mean money, but actually lending a hand. For tenants seeking to help veterans at risk of homelessness or who are currently homeless, they are able to participate in the housing program designed for veterans. This means that if you are accepted you will rent out one of your units to a veteran and if applicable their family as well. In order for programs that allow housing to make a difference, veterans should have to not only go to a mandatory group but must also show that they are getting things in order in their lives and are able to be reliable on rent. We have to note that many of these veterans will be struggling financially, thus they should be given their first-month rent-free or if possible, the first month and a half that way they have time to find a job and save enough money to afford rent. This way not only will homeless veterans start getting a monthly income but they will begin to be more financially responsible gradually. As stated in the post Help for Homeless Veterans, landlords will not lose money because they will have a reliable monthly rental through the local housing authority,” (1). People with their own business should consider hiring veterans in need. Not only will the VA work to find the perfect match, but you can make a difference in a veteran’s life. If this is something that you would like to do you can reach out to your neighborhood VA contact for work and they will help you out. I

believe that in order for this to work out business owners should have a policy of giving veterans 3 strikes for being late, not showing up, or disrupting the work environment. The owner needs to ensure that the other employees don't have to drag on the extra workload if he/she doesn't come in for their shift. If you would like to make a donation feel free to do so, but should also spread the word to others. Just like companies have toy drives, clothing drives, etc. if possible, companies should have a drive focused on giving out the veterans who are homeless by making donations to the VA or any other charitable fund aimed at helping veterans, clothes, food, etc. for homeless veterans. You can also help spread the word to social media to help out if possible and share posts of upcoming fundraisers aimed to help veterans in need.

There is so much the community can offer veterans that do not require money. Veterans shouldn't have to struggle more than they have had to once they come back home. They give all they have to protect our country and keeping us all safe that it is only fair to give back when they need it the most. To be there as a supporter to ensure their transition back to normal civilian life is smooth and to create a safe environment where they are able to reach out to anyone for help. Let us start helping out and helping our community end veteran homelessness.

Work Cited

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