



Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration Evaluation

Summary

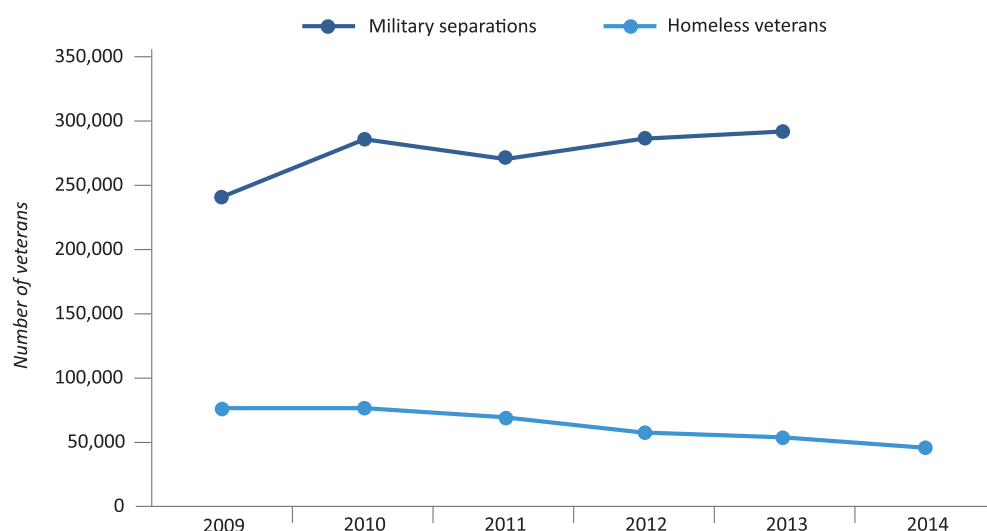


The Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration (VHPD), funded in the 2009 appropriations bill, was intended to explore early interventions to help prevent veteran homelessness among service members, especially veterans returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. VHPD offered short- to medium-term rental assistance, case management, and employment services to eligible veterans. The VHPD evaluation shows that this approach can produce positive outcomes for veterans at risk of homelessness or who are already homeless.

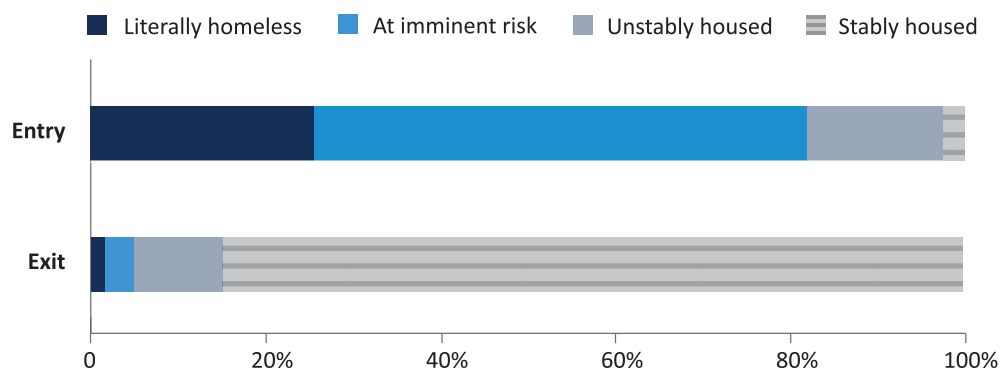
VHPD led the way in efforts to prevent homelessness among veterans of post-September 11 conflicts. Its firsts include the following—

- Targeting prevention and rapid re-housing assistance to veterans at risk of homelessness or who are already homeless.
- Combining U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare, and U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) employment services to serve veterans at risk of homelessness or who are already homeless.
- Targeting federal homeless assistance funds to veterans of post-September 11 conflicts, including outreach to veteran women and veterans with families.
- Serving targeted veterans and their families.

Total Number of Military Separations and Homeless Veterans in the United States, 2009–2014.



Housing Status of VHPD Veterans (Percent) at Program Entry and Exit.



The VHPD evaluation, conducted by Silber & Associates and the Urban Institute, assessed veterans' housing, employment, and income when they entered and exited VHPD and again 6 months after exiting. The study found that 55 percent of clients had served during the post-September 11 period; 43 percent had children and 27 percent were women. Many VHPD veterans suffered from poor health, serious mental illness, disabilities, or a combination of the three that prevented them from working. Yet, the study found positive outcomes.

- About 26 percent of VHPD clients were homeless at program entry and 74 percent received prevention services; by program exit, 85 percent were stably housed.
- At the follow-up interview 6 months after leaving VHPD, 10 percent of veterans reported experiencing homelessness at some point since their baseline interview, including 6 percent who were homeless when interviewed.
- Employment increased—only 25 percent of VHPD clients were working at program entry compared with 43 percent at the follow-up interview 6 months after leaving VHPD.
- Average monthly income increased from \$1,076 at program entry to \$1,519 at the follow-up interview.

"He, basically, took all these skills that I hadn't even thought about that I had under my belt, experience, and he turned it into civilian work or résumé language, if you will, and that was excellent. I think if there were more people like [the VHPD lead local veterans' employment representative] who had the same qualities or training that he has that would be ... [good]. If there were more of [him] out there ..."

— VHPD Veteran





A major lesson learned from evaluating the VHPD is the need for veteran-specific elements, such as the following—

- Reaching out to veterans in places they frequent.
- Having veterans on staff.
- Offering peer-to-peer support.
- Preparing staff to work with clients suffering from traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Preparing employment services providers to help veterans translate their military experience and credentials into terms relevant for the civilian labor market.

A second major lesson learned is that the federal partnership that made this demonstration possible was instrumental in achieving the state-level collaboration necessary to coordinate HUD, VA, and DOL services at the local level, resulting in better employment outcomes for at-risk or homeless veterans.

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