PROGRESS REPORT ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS

VETERANS

Kentucky Housing Corporation - 2013

Introduction

Veteran Definition:

A person who served in the active military, naval, or air force, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

This includes those who were called to active duty while serving as a reservist.

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported there were 62,619 total homeless veterans in America, making up 12 percent of the total homeless population.[1] It is the goal of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to decrease the total number of homeless veterans to 52,500.

The national trend of decreasing veteran homelessness is not reflected in the Kentucky Balance of State (BoS) data. Homeless veterans in the BoS have consistently increased every year since 2009. In 2008, BoS reported 319 homeless veterans, showing a decrease to 153 in 2009. Since 2009, there has been a 37 percent increase to 245 in 2013.

If the current trend continues, Kentucky may make the national Balance of State/Statewide top ten list for largest veteran homeless population, with 10 percent of Kentucky's total homeless population being veterans in 2013.

Why the Increase?

While no single cause can be identified for the increase in veteran homelessness in Kentucky, studies show that a possible cause is the decrease of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2009. Despite the decrease in deployments, many rural Kentucky men and women still join the armed forces, thereby increasing the number of veterans in Kentucky. After these Kentuckians serve, they return to their rural homes where the job market is saturated and cannot support them. Also, as the 2013 K-Count shows, the population of veterans with substance abuse and mental disabilities is much higher proportionally than the general homeless population, further taxing veteran services and adding additional barriers to possible employment opportunities for these Kentuckians.

In addition to the native Kentuckians comprising our veteran population, many veterans receiving services in Kentucky have migrated here from other states. This puts further strain on the programs in place to help all veterans in Kentucky.

Also, the federal strategy on ending homelessness has recently identified veterans as a priority population. As a result, much attention and many new federal resources have been focused on accounting for homeless veterans in Kentucky. This may have contributed to the spike in numbers counted in recent years.

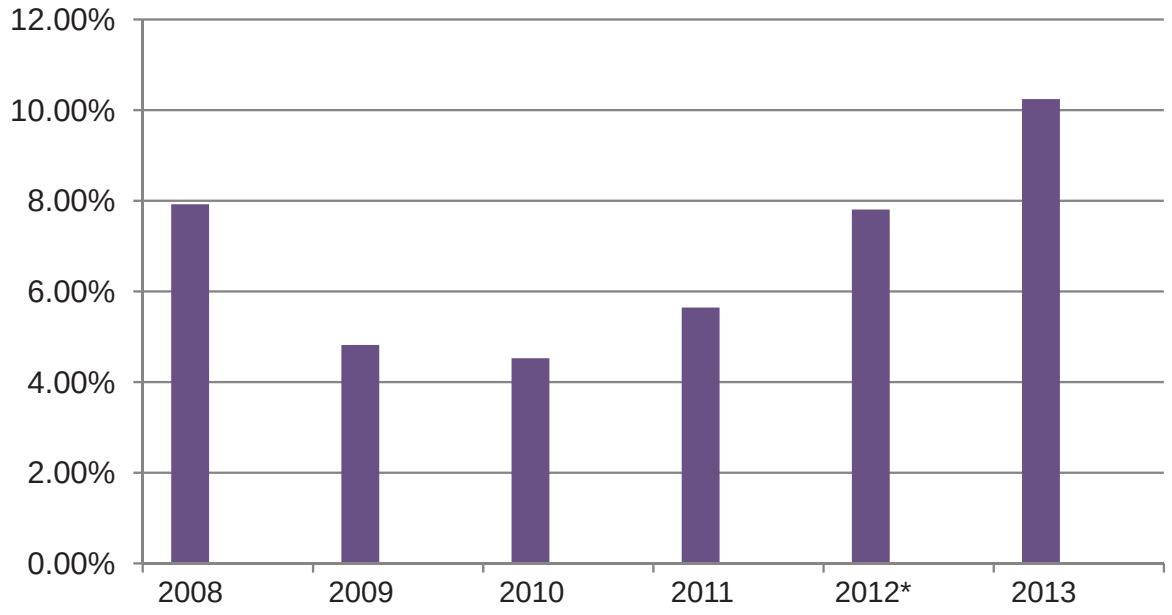
Finally, the unsheltered count collects self-reported data and does not require documentation of veteran status. This represents a limitation to the data collection methodology.

[1] The 2012 Point-In-Time Estimates of Homelessness, Volume 1 of the *2012 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development. Retrieved 4/3/2013.

Overview

In the Kentucky BoS, the percentage of homeless veterans as a portion of the total homeless population has grown from 7.92 percent in 2008 to 10.24 percent in 2013.

Percentage of Homeless Veterans 2008-2013



*In 2012, HUD required a sheltered homeless count only. This meant all veterans staying in a place not meant for human habitation were **not** counted. As an unsheltered count was not conducted, analysis of 2012 compared to 2013 is not valid.

Demographics, such as age and race, differ slightly from the overall homeless population.[2]

The average age for a homeless veteran in Kentucky's BoS in 2013 was 48 for sheltered, and 52 for unsheltered. Compared to Kentucky's overall homeless population, veterans are, on average, older than the general population for both sheltered (39) and unsheltered (42).

Overall, 70 percent of veterans in Kentucky's BoS are caucasian with 20 percent identifying as African American. These percentages vary slightly when sheltered and unsheltered veterans are compared.

African American veterans account for 22.7 percent of sheltered homeless in 2013.

Caucasian veterans represent 75 percent of the unsheltered veteran population.

[2] Of the 43 persons who did not submit surveys, 13 of them were veterans. Some of this analysis was conducted with records for those 13 removed for certain measures, such as migration, age, race, extent of homelessness, etc. Those 13 persons are only included in the overall totals. Overall numbers will remain the same as submitted to HUD.

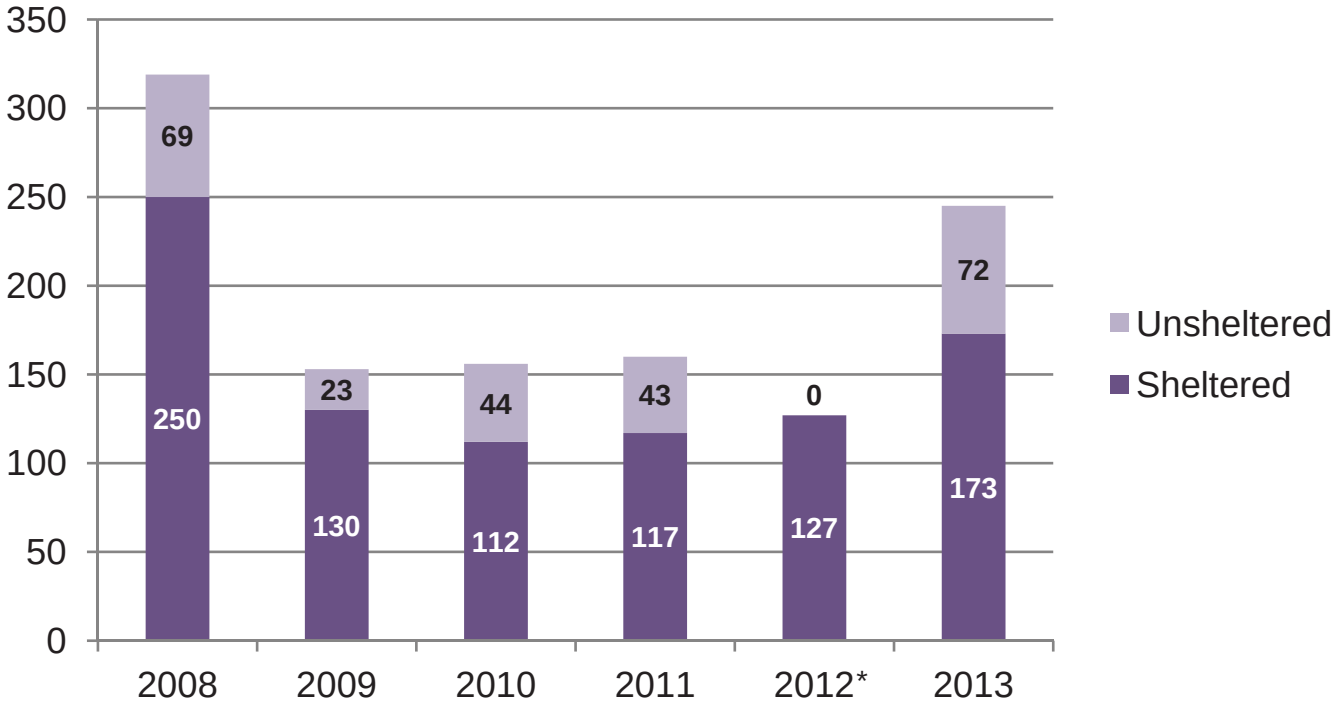
Sheltered and Unsheltered

In ***2009***, BoS reported ***23 unsheltered*** veterans.
In ***2013***, BoS reported ***72 unsheltered*** veterans.

In 2013, 29.38 percent of total veterans were unsheltered, and 28.3 percent of these were located in Kenton County, Kentucky. There is a VA domiciliary in Fort Thomas, Kentucky (Campbell County), and on the night of the 2013 count, they reportedly had 54 out of 60 beds occupied, leaving 6 open for these unsheltered veterans. Campbell County borders Kenton County.

Another VA-funded transitional housing shelter is located in Christian County, Kentucky. On the night of the 2013 K-Count, no unsheltered veterans were located in Christian County and the Grant and Per Diem Program reported all but one bed occupied on that night.

Unsheltered and Sheltered Veterans, 2008-2013



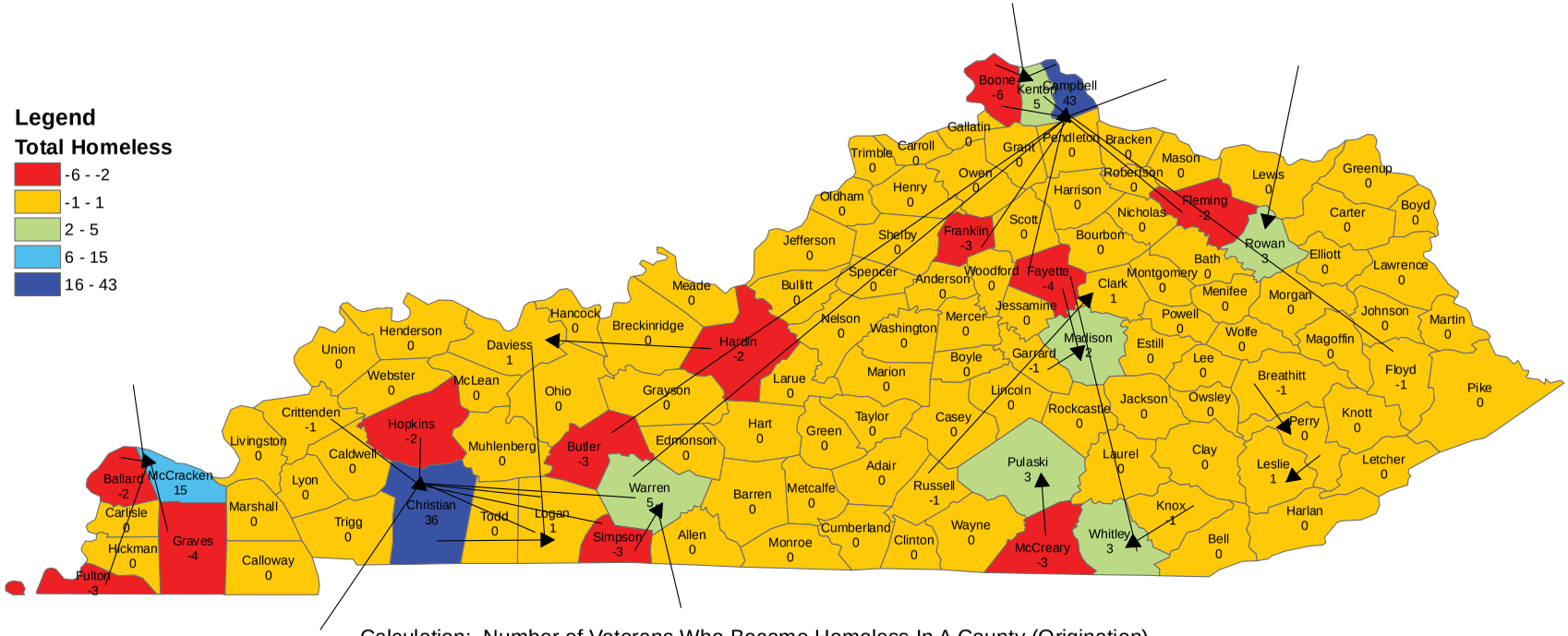
*In 2012, HUD required a sheltered homeless count only. This meant all veterans staying in a place not meant for habitation were not counted. As an unsheltered count was not conducted, analysis of 2012 compared to 2013 is not valid.

Migration

*In 2013, **three out of every ten** homeless veteran households currently residing in the Commonwealth reported becoming homeless in other states.*

2013 Homeless Veteran Migration

Kentucky Balance of State CoC



Calculation: Number of Veterans Who Became Homeless In A County (Origination)
Minus Number of Veterans Who Were Counted in A County (Completion) = Net Change/Migration

Note: Migration to Jefferson and Fayette Counties not included.

Data source: 2013 Kentucky Balance of State CoC Housing Inventory Chart

Kentucky Housing Corporation

This Map Prepared By:
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May 31, 2013

Female Veterans

In 2009, the Kentucky BoS reported 19 female veterans, representing 12.58 percent of the total veteran homeless population. In 2013, KHC reported a total of 19 female veterans, 7.76 percent of the total veteran homeless population.

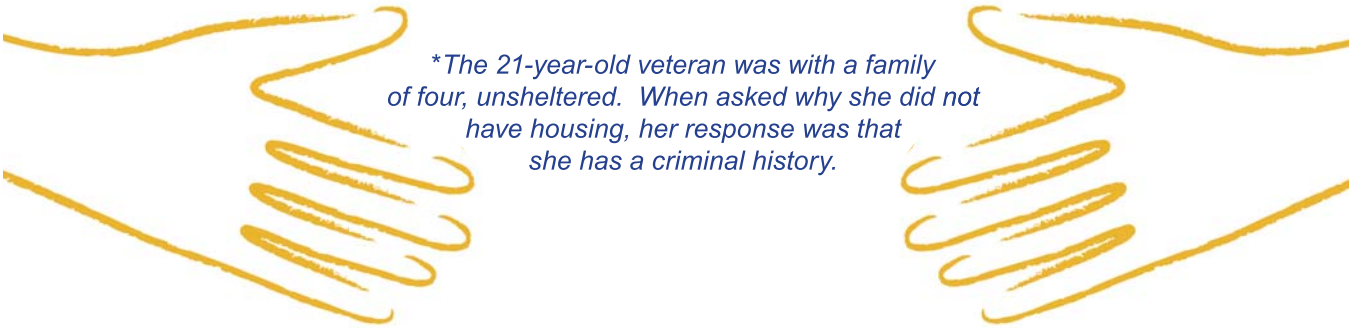
In 2013...

31.58 percent (6) of female veterans were unsheltered.

68.42 percent (13) of female veterans are sheltered in emergency shelter or transitional housing.

One 58-year-old female veteran reported being chronically homeless. This female was staying in an emergency shelter at the time of the 2013 K-Count.

The average age for a female veteran was 44 years old. The youngest* was 21 and the oldest was 58. This is five years older than the average homeless head of household.



**The 21-year-old veteran was with a family of four, unsheltered. When asked why she did not have housing, her response was that she has a criminal history.*

Disabilities

There is a higher rate of disabilities in veterans, compared to the overall homeless population.

76.72 percent of veteran households reported at least one disability. This is 14.12 percentage points higher than the overall homeless population.

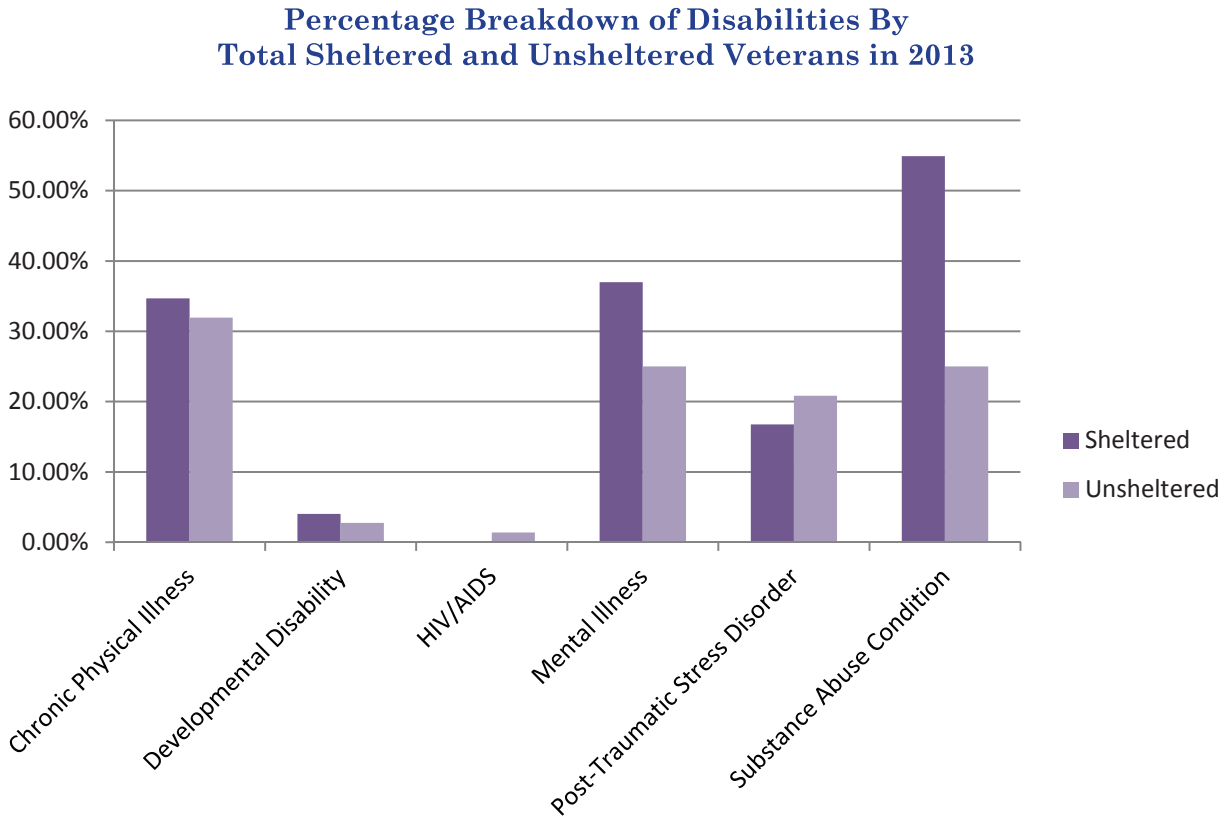
Personal Matters Definition:

Defined by HUD, is the ability to take care of yourself, taking medications a doctor has prescribed, taking care of your children, going shopping, or getting around in the community.[3]

40 percent of those households reporting a disability also reported that it has impeded their ability to keep a job or take care of personal matters.

[3] 2013 Housing Inventory County and Point-in-Time Count of homeless Persons: Data Collection Guidance. Version 1.1. Published December 2012. https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/2013HICandPITGuidance.pdf

Disabilities



In 2013, 46.12 percent of veterans reported a substance abuse condition, almost half of the total veterans. This is the highest disability reported for veterans. Compare that to only 21.7 percent of the total homeless population who reported having a substance abuse condition.

In the sheltered homeless veteran population, 54.91 percent reported a substance abuse condition, more than double the 25 percent of unsheltered veterans.

Overall, 33.47 percent of homeless veterans reported having a severe mental illness, almost double the general homeless population at 19.8 percent.

Domestic Violence

Veterans reported having a lower rate of domestic violence, 16.32 percent, than the average homeless population, 22.99 percent.

16.76 percent of sheltered veterans reported being a victim of domestic violence, while 15.28 percent of unsheltered veterans reported domestic violence. These numbers are lower rates of domestic violence than the total homeless population (35 percent and 28 percent, respectively).

Chronically Homeless

Of the total veteran population in 2013, 23.26 percent (57) were identified as chronically homeless households.

The majority of those chronically homeless heads of household were males; however, there were four households with a female listed as head of household.

Caucasians accounted for 78.9 percent of the chronically homeless veterans.

25 chronically homeless veteran households were unsheltered, for a total of 29 persons.

The average age for those unsheltered was 52, which is the same average age as an unsheltered veteran not chronically homeless.

There is a rather interesting change in race when comparing chronically and non-chronically homeless veterans.

Chronic	Non-Chronic
88% White	**64.7% White**

Conclusion

Since 2003, an estimated 1.4 million Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans have become eligible for VA benefits,[4] and funding for programs targeting veteran homelessness has multiplied. With the decrease in deployments overseas, Kentucky veterans are forced to return home, many to rural areas where employment opportunities are scarce. Unfortunately, with three out of every ten homeless veterans in Kentucky coming from other states, Kentucky's available funding pool is stretched very thin.

In 2009, the VA published a five-year plan to end veteran homelessness. The national veteran homeless totals have been steadily decreasing since 2010.[5] The VA's plan to end homelessness includes several programs to end veteran homelessness.

The VA plans to continue the expansion of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), and the Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program. Under the SSVF program, the VA awards grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives who can provide supportive services to very low-income veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. It was established in 2011 with $60 million and was awarded $100 million in fiscal year 2012. Awards for fiscal year 2013 have not been released, but funding is authorized at $300 million.[6] This program was expected to help 42,000 veteran families by the end of 2012; however, as of September 28, 2012, the program had only assisted a little over half of that with 28,000 clients.[7]

The VA relies heavily on the assistance provided by the SSVF program. The BoS currently has two SSVF programs within its boundaries, both in rural areas. Since their implementation, these two programs have assisted 143 persons.[8] At the 2012 National Rural Housing Conference, experts reported, "homelessness is growing in rural areas…" due in part to the 21.5 percent increased likelihood of small-town men and women joining the military.[9] Even though veterans and their families participating in the program may be homeless at the time of the K-Count, according to HUD, they are not to be included in the homeless numbers because HUD considers them in permanent housing. In the first quarter of 2014, two more BoS agencies, Kentucky River Foothills Development Council and Penny Royal Center, will receive new SSVF funding.

Another program focused on ending veteran homelessness is the VA's GPD. The Kentucky BoS has two of these programs within its boundaries. The largest, in Hopkinsville, was almost full the night of the K-Count with only one bed open. The other program is located in northern Kentucky and was at capacity on the night of the K-Count.

In a news release by the VA, Dr. Susan Angell, executive director for VA's Veterans Homeless Initiative, is quoted as saying the GPD Program, "…is the last piece of the puzzle."[10] In the fiscal year 2012 process, the VA encouraged providers to adopt a transition-in-place model, which allows the veteran to remain in the same apartment or house after the per diem's 24-month period of assistance ends. The VA data show the average length of stay is 179 days; however, "...if permanent housing for the veteran has not been located or if the veteran requires additional time to prepare for independent living..." the veteran may extend time past the 24-month time frame.[11]

The VA also funds Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program shelters. Of the 42 nationwide domiciliary care facilities across the county, the Kentucky BoS is home to one in northern Kentucky. These domiciliary shelters are for rehabilitative services for physically and mentally ill or aged veterans. HUD reported in fiscal year 2010, the average stay for program completion was 114 days. Of those who completed the program, 54.8 percent moved into an apartment/house with another 21.8 percent transitioning into a halfway house/transitional housing.[12]

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[4] Perl, Libby. *Veterans and Homelessness* Congressional Research Service. CRS Report for Congress. 7-5700 www.crs.gov. RL34024. February 4, 2013.
[5] Department of Veterans Affairs. Office of Public Affairs. News Release September 19, 2012. Washington, DC 20420. www.va.gov.
[6] *The State of Homelessness in America 2013*. By the numbers Annual Benchmarks to End Veteran Homelessness. April 2013. National Alliance to End Homelessness, Homelessness Research Institute.
[7] Perl, Libby. *Veterans and Homelessness* Congressional Research Service. CRS Report for Congress. 7-5700 www.crs.gov. RL34024. February 4, 2013.
[8] KYHMIS database results from 1/1/2009 until 5/1/2013.
[9] Briggs, Bill. "Fewer homeless vets this year, but advocacy group sees 'alarming' rise in younger ex-service members." NBC News Contributor. April 2, 2013 at 11:59 a.m. www.usnews.nbcnews.com.
[10] Department of Veterans Affairs. Office of Public Affairs. News Release September 19, 2012. Washington, DC 20420. www.va.gov.
[11] Perl, Libby. *Veterans and Homelessness* Congressional Research Service. CRS Report for Congress. 7-5700 www.crs.gov. RL34024. February 4, 2013. 38 C.F.R. 61.80(d) and 61.33(d).
[12] Perl, Libby. *Veterans and Homelessness* Congressional Research Service. CRS Report for Congress. 7-5700 www.crs.gov. RL34024. February 4, 2013.

Conclusion

The HUD Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) provides supportive housing vouchers to veterans who are at risk of homelessness.

An annual study from the VA, *Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Group (CHALENG) for Veterans*, showed a change in why families and individuals become homeless. In fiscal year 2006, the highest prioritized unmet need was long-term housing. By 2010, both veterans and homeless providers did not rank long-term housing in the top five. It was replaced with childcare, welfare payments, legal assistance, and family reconciliation assistance.[13]

It will be necessary for the BoS to prepare for the future years, as studies have found that homeless Vietnam veterans reported homelessness at least ten years from separation.[14] Research has also found that those returning from multiple deployments to Iraq have received a higher amount of mental health services than veterans returning from other conflicts.[15] These veterans also show mental health issues after being home for six months, not immediately.[16]

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Know that one phone call can be the difference in the life of a veteran who is homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Make the call to 877-4AID-VET (424-3838) to be connected 24/7 with VA's services to overcome or prevent homelessness for yourself or a veteran you know.
- Go to http://www.va.gov/homeless/get_involved.asp to find resources for your community including brochures, fact sheets, posters, and helpful hints for outreach.
- Ask every homeless person or household if they have ever served in the military.
- Take the 2013 CHALENG Survey to help identify veteran needs in your area.

[13] Perl, Libby. *Veterans and Homelessness* Congressional Research Service. CRS Report for Congress. 7-5700 www.crs.gov. RL34024. February 4, 2013.
[14] Perl, Libby. *Veterans and Homelessness* Congressional Research Service. CRS Report for Congress. 7-5700 www.crs.gov. RL34024. February 4, 2013.
[15] Hoge, Charles W., Auchterlonie, Jennifer L., and Milliken, Charles S.. "Mental Health Problems, Use of Mental Health Services, and Attrition from Military Service After Returning from Deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan." JAMA. 295(9). March 1, 2006. pp. 1026, 1029.
[16] Hoge, Charles W., Auchterlonie, Jennifer L., and Milliken, Charles S.. "Longitudinal Assessment of Mental Health Problems Aming Active and Reserve Component Soldiers Returning from the Iraq War." JAMA. 298(18). November 14, 2007. pp. 2141, 2144.