

Ending Veteran and Veteran Family Homelessness: The Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program (HVSEP)

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Homelessness Among United States Veterans

- ❖ In 2009, it was estimated that there were 131,000 homeless Veterans living in the United States.
- ❖ Currently, it is estimated that on any given night, 62,619 Veterans are homeless.

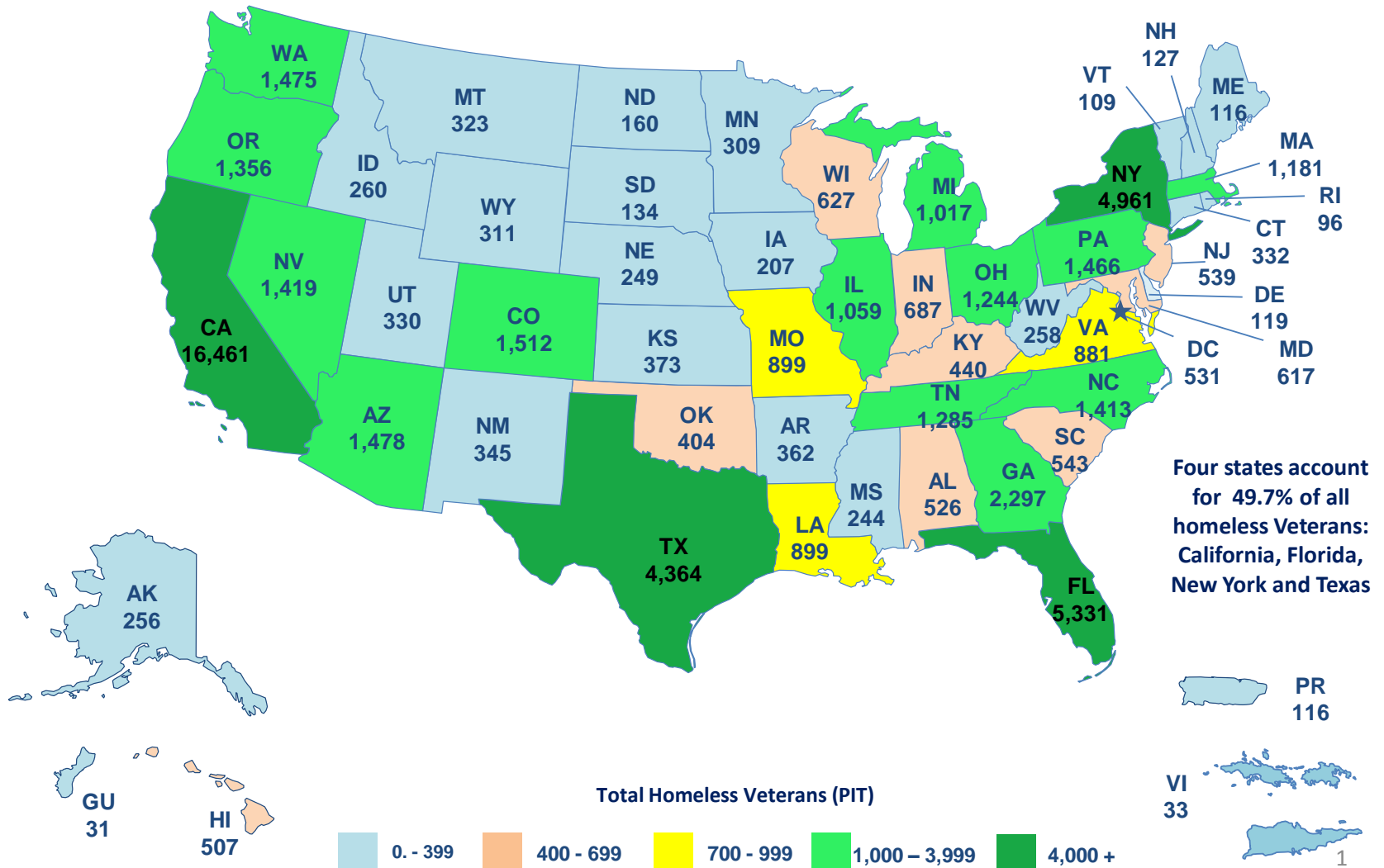
Source: Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) 2012

Homeless Veteran Demographics

- ❖ Male (94%).
- ❖ Between the ages of 31-61 (average age = 51.6).
- ❖ Served in the post-Vietnam era (1975-1990).
- ❖ Single.
- ❖ Equally likely to be either African-American or Caucasian.
- ❖ Unemployed and has an income of less than \$125 per week.
- ❖ Female Veterans are the fastest growing segment of the homeless Veteran population (6%)

Geographic Distribution of Homeless Veterans by State (Point-In-Time)

Total: 62,619 Veterans



Source: Veteran AHAR 2012

What Leads to Homelessness Among Veterans?

- ❖ Job Loss
- ❖ Financial problems
- ❖ Legal Issues/Incarceration
- ❖ Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- ❖ Mental Health Problems

What Leads to Family Disruption and Family Homelessness?

- ❖ Job Loss
- ❖ Financial problems
- ❖ Legal Issues/Incarceration
- ❖ Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- ❖ Mental Health Problems

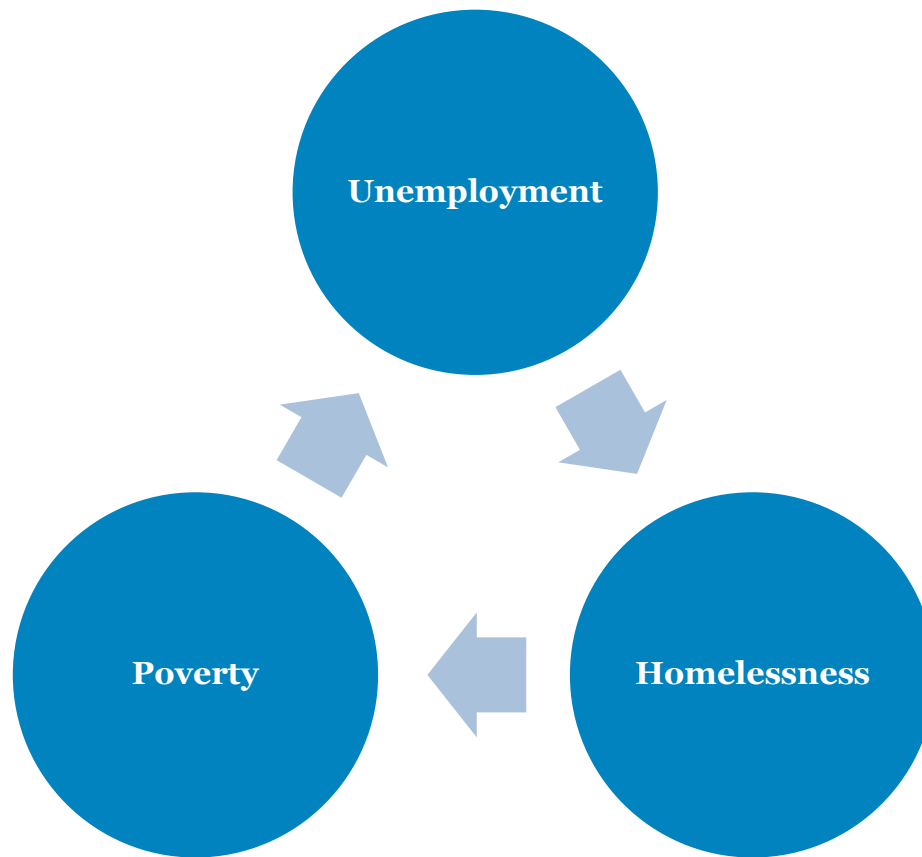
Homeless Veterans Completing Assessments in FY2012* (N = 97,173)

- ❖ Unemployed – 30%
- ❖ Incomes under \$500.00 in the past 30 days – 59%
- ❖ History of incarceration – 65%
- ❖ Drug or alcohol use problems – 52% (by self report)
- ❖ Mental health problems – 55%

Homeless Veterans Completing Assessments in FY2012 (N = 97,173)

- ❖ Separated, Widowed, Divorced – 57%
- ❖ Children – 27% (25,877)
- ❖ Children Under the Age of 18 in Physical Custody – 12% (11,876)

Breaking the Cycle



Prevention and Intervention

- ❖ **Prevention – stops the cycle from repeating.**
 - Identifying “at-risk” Veterans.
 - Specific interventions to support housing plans and increase personal and residential stability for Veterans and their families in their own communities.
- ❖ **Intervention - interrupts the cycle once it has started.**



Employment

Unemployment ↔ Homelessness



Employment and Homelessness

- ❖ Employment is one of the key elements in helping Veterans climb out of homelessness permanently or avoid it all together.
- ❖ Employment provides an improved quality of life, increased self confidence and independence, opportunities for socialization and a decreased reliance on institutional care.
- ❖ As a result, employment is likely to result in decreases in substance use and improvements in mental health.
- ❖ Conversely, unemployment increases the likelihood of isolation, social withdrawal and disengagement from the community.

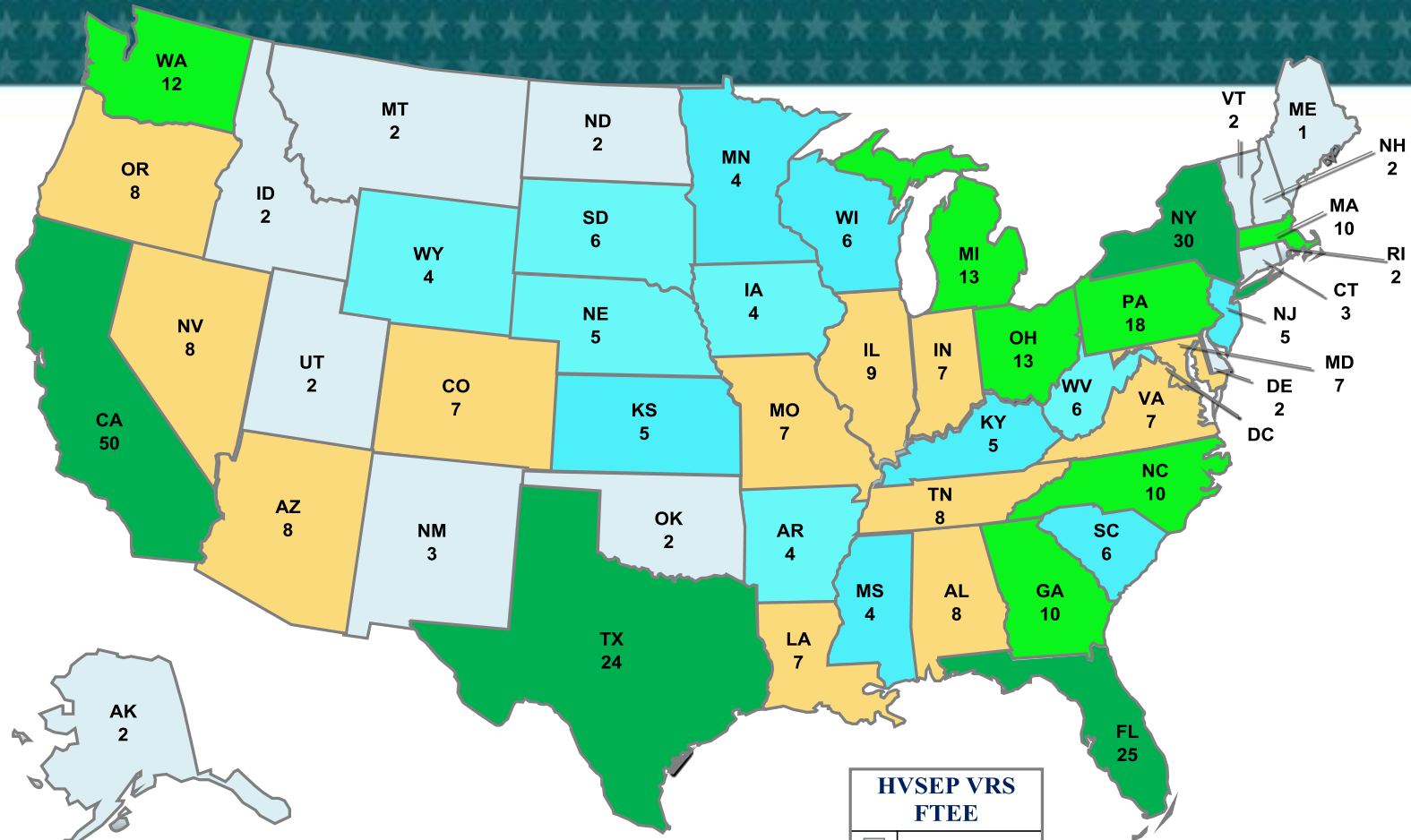
HVSEP Initiative

- ❖ In order to address the critical issue of unemployment among homeless Veterans, VA initiated the Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program (HVSEP) in fiscal year (FY) 2011.
- ❖ HVSEP is a collaborative effort between the Homeless Veterans Programs and the Compensated Work Therapy Program (CWT).
- ❖ In FY2012, 402 Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS) positions were funded to provide vocational assistance, individualized job development and placement, and ongoing employment supports to homeless Veterans.

HVSEP Staff

- ❖ All HVSEP staff are Veterans who were homeless, formerly homeless, or at-risk of homelessness.
- ❖ These Veterans have ongoing training as Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRSs) to provide employment services to other homeless Veterans.
- ❖ 25% of the VRSs are female Veterans.

Homeless Veterans Supported Employment Program (HVSEP)



HVSEP VRS FTEE	
Light Blue	2 - 3
Light Cyan	4 - 6
Light Orange	7 - 9
Light Green	10 - 19
Dark Green	20 +

In the Words of Our HVSEP Staff...

“Having a job like this is not limited to financial compensation. On a daily basis, it helps a person develop their social and problem solving skills and it feels great going home after a challenging day knowing that you have been given the opportunity to learn and grow.” M.E.

“One of the things that is heard most often from HVSEP clients is that they really appreciate the fact that we can relate to and fully understand the things with which they struggle, e.g. lack of income, family obligations, struggles with addictions, uncertainty, fear, etc.” L.H.

“My experience of homelessness, jails, institutions & near death helps me to empathize with the veterans I serve. Being hired as a VRS reminds me that “but for the grace of God there go I”. W.H. (Female Veteran/VRS)

Early Results


- ❖ During fiscal year (FY) 2012, HVSEP has provided employment services to 12,815 Homeless Veterans.*
- ❖ Of the 3018 Veterans discharged from HVSEP in FY12, 37.3% were competitively employed. **

* Data from VHA Decision Support System (DSS)

** Data from NORTHEAST PROGRAM EVALUATION CENTER (NEPEC)

Program Goals

- ❖ FY13 - Provide employment services to 20,000 homeless Veterans.
- ❖ FY14 – Provide employment services to 25,000 homeless Veterans



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