

RETURNS TO HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS



The number of homeless Veterans is continuing to decline, showing a 55% decrease between 2009 and 2022. What this number doesn't represent is the Veterans who end up returning to homelessness after obtaining permanent housing through a VA homeless program.

There are countless reasons that a Veteran returns to homelessness: losing income, using their limited resources to care for a friend or family member, or experiencing high medical costs themselves, to name a few. Though these Veterans may have initially found a permanent housing situation, they may find themselves needing to reengage with VA homeless programs.

55%

decrease in homeless
Veterans between
2009 and 2022



RESEARCH

Research on Veterans who return to homelessness is limited. The few VA studies that exist show that drug use and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are risk factors.

Similarly, non-VA studies find that substance abuse is a major risk factor for returns to homelessness. There is also indirect evidence showing that a history of poverty and repeated homelessness are also important risk factors.

NATIONWIDE

6 MONTH RETURNS		12 MONTH RETURNS		24 MONTH RETURNS		FY20 COHORT
2,156	4.9%	4,076	9.2%	7,119	16.0%	44,407
TOTAL	RATE	TOTAL	RATE	TOTAL	RATE	TOTAL

KEY TAKEAWAYS

VA data from 2018 through 2022 revealed significant differences between Veterans who do and do not return to homelessness.

Veterans who returned to homelessness were:

38%
more likely to
have a diagnosis
of drug use
disorder

18%
more likely
to be black

More likely to have no VA
service-connected disability

16%
more likely
to be unmarried

More likely to
be less engaged
in VA outpatient
care and more
engaged in VA
acute care

CONCLUSION

VA outreach and patient care providers can use this data to focus on Veterans who are most at risk for returning to homelessness and offer services to support them on their way to finding the permanent housing they deserve.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



National Call Center
for Homeless Veterans
877-424-3838
va.gov/homeless