

## Tapping VA resources to overcome homelessness

**Interviewee1:** When you're in the service, the structure is set pretty strong. When you get out, not only do you lose that level of structure, but then you also lose that level of resources.

**Interviewee2:** When I got out of the Army, I was trying to find a job and I didn't know what to do. The only skill I had was flying helicopters, and I applied for jobs and got rejected because the market was flooded pilots just like me.

**Interviewee3:** My house burned down. The economy kind of took a crap on my construction company. It would've never occurred to me to look for any kind of VA benefit that would help me out of the mess that I was in.

**Interviewee4:** I was pretty much on the streets of Dallas and I had lost everything in the culmination of a year. Everything that I had built up, I'd pretty much lost.

**Interviewee5:** Basically, I was going from friend's to friend's houses and they let me stay for a while and finally it was like, just ran out of friends. Just had a campsite where I would go and camp for a while.

**Interviewee1:** There was a lot of couch surfing, figuring things out, staying with friends, that kind of thing right after I got out. But at that time, we didn't consider that homelessness; we just kind of considered it transitioning.

**Interviewee3:** A few years ago, I got into trouble. There were some bad things that happened in my life with alcohol and with DUIs, and I ended up getting thrown into prison behind that. While I was there, there was a Veteran's representative that came to see me; his name was Tony and he came to see me and he explained some things that were available to Veterans.

**Interviewee6:** I was talking to a friend of mine saying, "I can't go to the VA because I'm not retired or a combat Veteran," which was my assumption at the time, that's how you got to use the VA. He said, "No. You can absolutely use the VA."

**Interviewee1:** I found out about the HUD-VASH Program through one of the social workers at the VA because I was going through the Trauma Care Clinic.

**Interviewee2:** And this lady said, "Try the Veterans Hospital in Loma Linda, California. I went to the VA Hospital and that saved my life."

**Interviewee7:** I've only been out for going on 12 months, and I went through the Homeless Veterans Program. They gave me a place to stay, food, room and board, and also helped me with a job.

**Interviewee1:** They really worked with me to get me some type of financial resources, get me the kind of care that I needed for my daughter. These are outside resources, but they plugged me into the information so that we could get stabilized.

**Interviewee3:** He started lining some things out and I think it's called the HVRP, and I didn't consider myself a homeless Veteran, but I guess if your house is foreclosed on



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while you're locked up, that's basically what you become. And he hooked me up with another program called the HAV Homes for All Veterans and that's administered through the Department of Veteran Affairs.

**Interviewee2:** I'm reunited with my son. I'm back in my own home. I'm reinstated to my job.

**Interviewee1:** It's been about three years now, but we been on the HUD-VASH 2 and, hopefully, I'm moving forward toward purchasing a home so.

**Interviewee6:** If you need to be in a shelter, swallow your pride and go because that's where the resources begin – subsidized housing, mental health, discounted bus passes, whatever. So, if you're in that position where you're out on the street, find a shelter. It's all about resources. They're there; you got to ask, you got to look. Be proactive.

**Interviewee7:** And in life, situations come up. There's going to be all kinds of situation, but the main thing it is is that you're a Veteran; you volunteered to fight for this country, and there is programs that's fighting for you.



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