

VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

- Veteran homelessness in Canada is unacceptable; Veterans deserve a safe and affordable place to live.
- Eliminating Veteran homelessness will take a coordinated approach. We are committed to working with communities and partners to achieve this.
- Veterans Affairs works closely with Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on initiatives to support Veterans experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.
- On August 12th, 2024, I was pleased to join my colleague, the Minister for Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, in announcing the funding recipients for the Veteran Homelessness Program.
- Through this \$79.1 million program, the federal government will partner with organizations across the country to provide rent supplements and mental health support to Veterans. Additionally, it will support research on Veterans' homelessness and help organizations increase their capacity to serve those in need.

- Veterans Affairs Case Management and programs like the Veterans Emergency Fund and Veteran and Family Well-being Fund also provide supports to Veterans experiencing and at risk of homelessness and organizations who support them.

WHEN PRESSED:

Q1 – What is Veterans Affairs Canada doing in response to the First Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, *Moving Towards Ending Homelessness Among Veterans?*

On June 16, 2022, the Government Response to the Standing Committee's report was tabled. The Government appreciates the report and the input from witnesses who appeared before Committee.

The Government agrees with the Committee that homelessness is a complex issue for which the solution requires numerous, coordinated interventions.

Veterans Affairs Canada has been working with Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada on the implementation of the Veteran Homelessness Program. This program will provide support services and rent supplements to Veterans experiencing homelessness to help them get them back on their feet. Information collected through the delivery of this program will provide new insights into the scope and nature of homelessness among the Veteran population in Canada and will inform future decisions about how best to address it.

The Government is advancing initiatives supporting the Committee's recommendations and continues to engage key partners at the federal provincial, territorial and community level to continue to improve the measures and services for Veterans experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

BACKGROUND – VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

Veteran homelessness in Canada

According to Census 2021, there are an estimated 461,240 Canadian Veterans. Accurately measuring the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness is challenging. Based on shelter information and Point-in-Time counts, we estimate there are approximately 2,600 Veterans experiencing homelessness in Canada.

Veterans Affairs Canada's Approach to Homelessness

Veterans Affairs Canada provides Case Management Services to support Veterans facing complex challenges.

The Department works with local community partners to identify Veterans experiencing homelessness or those in-crisis, find suitable housing, and make connections to other VAC programs and services. VAC also collaborates with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to address Veteran's housing needs and homelessness.

Since 2018, Veterans Affairs Canada has implemented:

- **Veterans Organization Emergency Support Fund** - \$20 million one-time emergency funding for Veterans organizations to offset the effects of COVID-19. This included support for organizations that assist homeless Veterans.
- **Veterans and Family Well-Being Fund** - provides grants and contributions to organizations to conduct research and implement initiatives and projects that support the well-being of Veterans and their families.
- **Veterans Emergency Fund (VEF)** - Provides emergency financial support to Veterans, their families and survivors at risk due to an urgent and unexpected situation.

VAC is committed to providing programming based on unique needs identified through Gender Based Analysis Plus.

With the implementation of HICC's Veteran Homelessness Program, we will aim to meet the diverse needs of the population through the flexibility of community based housing services and rent supplements.

Veteran Homelessness Program

Budget 2021 announced \$44.6 million over two years to pilot a program aimed at reducing Veteran homelessness through the provision of rent supplements and wrap-around services. To ensure that long-term support is in place, Budget 2022 proposed to move directly to the launch of a full program providing rent supplements and supports

with an additional investments of \$62.2 million over three years, bringing total funding available to \$106.8 million over five years.

On April 27, 2023, the Minister for Housing and Diversity and Inclusion and then Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lawrence MacAulay, announced the launch of the new Veteran Homelessness Program. This program provides funding to organizations for rent supplements and supports for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada worked with successful organizations to finalize agreements throughout 2024. Any questions regarding the number of agreements negotiated and signed or the cost of administering the Veteran Homelessness Program should be directed to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.