

Veteran Homelessness

Issue

Veteran Homelessness is a complex issue whose solution will require cooperation from all levels of government as well as community-based organizations. Based on shelter information and the national Point-in-Time counts, it is generally estimated that there are about 2,600 Veterans experiencing homelessness in Canada.

Context

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has various supports that Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness can access, including the services of Case Managers. Case managers and other front-line support staff can help Veterans apply for VAC benefits and services and refer Veterans to various Provincial/Territorial programs and local organizations where appropriate.

The Veterans Emergency Fund is available for use if a Veteran is facing an unforeseen financial emergency, VAC can provide prompt financial support to cover essentials such as: food, clothing, and rent. Through the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund, VAC provides funding to organizations working with Veteran homelessness, but this is limited to new/innovative initiatives. VAC currently has no mechanism to fund ongoing/existing programs that could assist Veterans experiencing homelessness. While all of these initiatives can provide assistance to a Veteran experiencing or at risk of homelessness, VAC has no specific homelessness program.

To address Veteran homelessness, VAC introduced the Intergovernmental Programs Division in 2022. This division has been working closely with Housing Infrastructure and Communities Canada on the implementation of the Veteran Homelessness Program, which was announced on April 27, 2023. The purpose of this program is to help prevent and reduce Veteran homelessness in Canada. This program is a five year transfer payment program that is providing \$79.1M in funding to organizations in two streams:

- Services and Supports (\$72.9M) – to provide rent supplements and wrap around supports
- Capacity Building (\$6.2M) – to focus on research and improved data collection and increased capacity

This division is also currently developing a strategy that is aimed at reducing and, to the extent possible, eliminating and preventing Veteran homelessness.

Key Data and Milestones

The HICC Veteran Homelessness Program call for applications closed on 6 July 2023. Through this process, a total of 34 organizations (6 in the capacity building stream, and 28 in the services and supports stream) were selected to receive funding. These recipients have begun providing supports to Veterans and will provide anonymized, disaggregated data to HICC on an annual basis.

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