

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.

Context

The Government of Canada estimates approximately 2,600 Veterans are at risk or experiencing homelessness in Canada. This estimate is based on the most recent shelter information and the national Point-in-Time counts, and has been adjusted to account for hidden homelessness.

Within Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the number of Veteran clients identified as experiencing homelessness fluctuates from year to year, though has been trending upwards with a total of 812 unique Veteran clients identified who were experiencing homelessness at some point in 2023-24. The greatest numbers are in large urban centres in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec.

Outreach and communications from VAC have focused on encouraging referrals, including self-referrals, and educating/partnering with local and national organizations including Veteran-serving organizations, police services, shelters and other homeless-serving organizations to identify and coordinate supports for Veterans.

VAC has various supports available to Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness including access to 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.

VAC's Veterans Emergency Fund can provide prompt, non-taxable financial assistance to eligible Veterans who are facing an emergency that is threatening their health and well-being to cover essentials, such as food, clothing, and rent. VAC currently has no specific homelessness program.

The Veteran Homelessness Program was launched in April 2023, and is led by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) with support from VAC. This five-year transfer payment program is providing \$79.1M in funding to 34 organizations in two streams:

- Services and Supports (\$72.9M) – to provide rent supplements and wrap around supports (28 organizations)
- Capacity Building (\$6.2M) – to focus on research and improved data collection and increased capacity (6 organizations)

This program is already assisting Veterans and is expected to have a significant impact on reducing chronic Veteran homelessness.

Key Data and Milestones

- As of February 19, 2025, the Veteran Homelessness Program has served 1,360 Veterans.
 - Of those, 154 Veterans have received rent supplements.
- The first annual report from recipient organizations is due to HICC within 30 days of the end of the fiscal year.
- *redacted*
- *redacted*
- The Veteran Homelessness Program is set to end on March 31, 2028. It is expected that there will be an ongoing need for a homelessness program for Veterans. The ultimate responsibility for the care of Veterans falls under the Mandate of Veterans Affairs. *redacted*