



Homeless Veterans Working Group Mission

Our mission is to act as a vehicle in aiding the chapters of Veterans For Peace by providing tools, processes, activities and support that can be used to help homeless veterans and their families.

Our group will be the repository for various proven ways to help the homeless and will inform about pitfalls to avoid. These practices and projects, which we call, "Best Practices" are gathered from various VFP members and will allow any chapter to put them into play in their communities.

For more information about how you can get involved with efforts to help homeless veterans, please contact:

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VETERANS FOR PEACE



Supporting Homeless Veterans

For veterans, homelessness is often linked to the horrific experience of War.



**Exposing the True Costs of War
and Militarism Since 1985**

HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES:

Homelessness is an increasing epidemic plaguing the United States - striking Americans of every age, ethnicity, and religion, hitting urban and rural communities alike. 3.5 million people in the United States are homeless. These people live in parks, under bridges, in shelters, abandoned buildings, or in cars. Of this group:

- 23% are military veterans
- 35% are families with children
- 25% are children under the age of 18
- 20 % suffer from mental illness

WHY SO MANY HOMELESS?

The combination of the high cost of living, low-wage jobs, and high unemployment rates only exacerbate problems and force countless Americans to choose between food, housing, and other expenses. The lack of affordable housing and medical treatment are two other factors that contribute to these alarmingly high numbers.

Many do not identify homelessness as a side effect of endless war. Each year, the US government invests billions of taxpayer money into wars and war preparation, while cutting federal programs that are targeted to helping at-risk populations. Despite plans to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, the Pentagon budget remains inflated with unnecessary spending on equipment and programs that don't make sense. With such a growing homeless population, we need to demand that our leaders direct more funds on human needs and social programs, not on fueling the war machine.



“In the United States, 23% of the entire homeless population are military veterans.”

“Post traumatic stress, depression, and other emotional or physical challenges can make return to civilian life a challenge for some veterans of war.”



THE PLIGHT OF THE HOMELESS VETERAN:

For veterans, homelessness is often linked to the horrific experience of war. Post traumatic stress (PTSD), depression, and other emotional or physical challenges can make return to civilian life nearly impossible for some veterans returning from war. As a result, they are not able to cope with everyday life situations, such as seeking work in a recession, the stress of the workplace, or even large crowds. Many wind up homeless, living in an environment that could cause them to run afoul of the justice system.

It is important to note the unique challenges that face veteran women. Homeless veteran women are one of the fastest growing populations. Many are single or displaced women with children. This issue is compounded by lack of services and programs designed for returning veteran women.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Veterans For Peace recognizes justice for veterans as an most important issues, as spelled out in our Mission Statement: *"to seek justice for veterans and victims of war."* In one project, the chapter in San Diego, CA has distributed more than 2100 sleeping bags in the downtown area. Chapters of Veterans For Peace, throughout the nation, are actively involved in helping homeless veterans. Some chapters work with allies, to help veterans get computer training and the job skills necessary to re-enter the civilian workforce. There is much more work that needs to be done. Please join us in these efforts.