

HOMELESS VETERANS

The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) says almost all homeless veterans are male (roughly three percent are women). The vast majority are not married and come from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds. While roughly fifty-six percent are African American or Hispanic, forty-five percent suffer from mental illness and with considerable overlap, eighty percent have substance abuse problems.

America's homeless veterans have served in World War II, Korea, Cold War, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Desert Storm, the military's anti-drug cultivation efforts in South America, Iraq, Afghanistan and during peacetime.

In addition to the complex set of factors affecting the entire homeless population ... job layoffs, substance abuse, an extreme shortage of affordable housing and lack of access to health care ... a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These hardships, often compounded by a loss of family and social support networks, make the issue of homelessness a difficult social challenge.

FAST FACTS:

400,000 - the estimated number of male and female veterans who will be classified as homeless in the United States over the course of one year

200,000 - the estimated number of homeless veterans living in the United States on any given night

89% - of these homeless veterans were honorably discharged

1,700 - homeless veterans reside in the state of Massachusetts

378 - the number of beds funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program in Massachusetts

Sources:

"New England Center for Homeless Veterans" www.nechv.org

"U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs" www.va.gov

MASSACHUSETTS STAND DOWN IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN:



VA BOSTON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
WWW.BOSTON.VA.GOV



Volunteers of America
MASSACHUSETTS

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MASSACHUSETTS
WWW.VOAMASS.ORG

WITH SUPPORT FROM:

THE CITY OF BOSTON

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

U.S. DEPT. OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

MASSACHUSETTS NATIONAL GUARD

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

UNITED STATES ARMY AND NAVY

**AND A HOST OF OTHER VETERAN SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, NON-PROFITS
AND VOLUNTEERS WHO MAKE STAND DOWN**

A SUCCESS YEAR AFTER YEAR.

THANK YOU

VA BOSTON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM & VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MASSACHUSETTS



A VETERAN'S CELEBRATION OF SERVICE



MASSACHUSETTS STAND DOWN
C/O VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MASSACHUSETTS
441 CENTRE STREET
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA 02130
T: 617-522-8086 | F: 617-522-4533
WWW.VOAMASS.ORG/MASSSTANDDOWN
EMAIL: MASSSTANDDOWN@VOAMASS.ORG



GIVING HOMELESS AND AT-RISK VETERANS A HAND UP... NOT A HAND OUT!

WHAT IS A STAND DOWN?

In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefields to a place of relative security and safety. Today, Stand Down refers to a grassroots, community based intervention program designed to help the nation's estimated 275,000 homeless veterans "combat" life on the streets. The hand up, not a handout philosophy of Stand Down is carried out through the work of hundreds of volunteers and organizations throughout the nation.

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

The concept of Stand Down, as related specifically to the homeless veteran crisis, was the brainchild of two Vietnam Veterans, Robert Van Keuren and Dr. Jon Nachison. The first Stand Down was held in San Diego during the summer of 1988. The popularity of the event has steadily grown from the original in 1988 to more than 80 throughout the nation each year. It is estimated that more than 100,000 homeless veterans have received assistance at Stand Downs.

TO PROTECT AND SERVE

Thousands of Heroes are sleeping on sidewalks in every big city. Stand Downs provide homeless and at-risk veterans with a broad range of necessities including food, clothing, medical services, legal and mental health assistance, job counseling and referral, and most importantly, companionship and camaraderie. It is a time for the community to connect with the homeless veteran population and address this crisis that affects every town, city and state in this country.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

For over 15 years VA Boston Healthcare System (VA BHS) has been helping to organize the Massachusetts Stand Down. Serving homeless veterans has always been the main focus of Stand Down and over the years reaching out to at-risk veterans has also become a main priority. VA BHS has worked with many Massachusetts Veteran and community service agencies who are dedicated to helping the brave men and women who served our country. Most recently, VA BHS has teamed up with non-profit human service provider, Volunteers of America Massachusetts to continue to provide these critical services.



MASSACHUSETTS STAND DOWN

Tel: 617-522-8086, Ext. 228
Web: www.voamass.org/MassStandDown
Email: MassStandDown@voamass.org

VA BOSTON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

VA Boston Healthcare System (VA BHS) is a large integrated organization encompassing three campuses and six community outpatient clinics within a 40-mile radius of the greater Boston area. VA BHS serves as a national medical Research and Development center and is a major tertiary care center for VA New England Healthcare System and the Veterans Integrated Service Network.

Academic affiliations include Harvard Medical School and Boston University Medical School, as well as, numerous other institutions. As a teaching facility, VA Boston Healthcare System provides a full range of services, with state-of-the-art technology as well as education and research, offering specialized training to over 1,100 residents and fellows, 250 medical students, and 400 students in various other areas of clinical practice.

WWW.BOSTON.VA.GOV

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MASSACHUSETTS

In 1896, Volunteers of America was founded on a vision and promise to "go wherever we are needed and do whatever comes to hand." For more than 100 years that spiritual and social legacy has inspired our organization's work.

In Massachusetts, we run comprehensive programs for at-risk youth, adults and youth in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction, veterans, elders in need of housing and health services, as well as families and individuals in need of mental health counseling and education.

Volunteers of America Massachusetts is committed to its mission which focuses on strengthening the individual spirit and broadening an awareness of possibilities through human services programs.

WWW.VOAMASS.ORG

Veterans are nearly five times as likely to be homeless than the rest of our population.

Veterans comprise 27.6 % of the homeless population, but only 5.7% of the U.S. population.

146,000 Veterans suffer from alcohol and drug abuse.