

# Veteran Homelessness



IN MARION AND POLK COUNTIES



# America's Homeless Veterans

Have Served in:

- WWII
- Korean War
- Vietnam War
- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Various minor conflicts

Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that nationwide 47,725 veterans are homeless.

Of These:

- 9% are female. Of which, 1 in 5 suffer from MST (Military Sexual Trauma)
- 68% reside in principal cities
- 51% have disabilities
- 50% have serious mental illness
- 70% struggle with substance abuse

# The average homeless Veteran

- Predominately male
- 10.4% are African American
- 3.4% are Hispanic
- 9% are between the ages of 18-30
- 41% are between the ages of 31-50
- Nearly 50% are Vietnam Era Veterans

# Homeless Veterans in Marion and Polk Counties



**2015 Annual Homeless Count Event  
January 28, 2015**

	<b>Unsheltered Count</b>	<b>Sheltered Count</b>	<b>Jail Count</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Veterans</b>	<b>30 of 315 (10%)</b>	<b>72 of 722 (10%)</b>	<b>14 of 132 (11%)</b>	<b>116</b>

Estimate Based on national average:

Polk County –  $7521 \times .11 = 827$

Marion County –  $25,086 \times .11 = 27592015$

## Challenges to reaching homeless veterans include:

- They are often distrustful, especially of government agencies
- Many don't identify as Veterans
- They often choose to camp "underground" as opposed to staying in emergency shelters
- Many Vietnam Era Veterans still do not know they qualify for VA benefits

# Why are Veterans homeless?



In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all individuals experiencing homelessness...

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of living wage income
- Poor access to appropriate healthcare, including mental health and substance abuse assessment and treatment
- PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Substance Abuse
- Lack of transferrable job skills



# What Services do Homeless Veterans Need?



- A coordinated community effort that allows them to secure and sustain safe, affordable housing
- Easy access to basic physical health care
- Accessible substance abuse care and aftercare
- Accessible comprehensive mental health treatment
- Job assessments, training and placement assistance
- Supports to assist with maintaining employment

# Veteran Specific Housing Resources Currently Available In Marion & Polk Counties



- **Transitional Housing**
  - Home of the Brave – Private non-profit
- **Housing Assistance/Supportive Services**
  - HUD VASH - Veteran Administration & Salem Housing Authority
  - SSVF – Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency /ARCHES Project
  - EHA Vet DRF– Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency /ARCHES Project



# What is working?



“The most effective programs for homeless and at-risk veterans are community-based, nonprofit, “veterans helping veterans” groups. Programs that seem to work best feature transitional housing with the camaraderie of living in structured, substance-free environments with fellow veterans who are succeeding at bettering themselves.”

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

<http://nchv.org/>

## Contact Information

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