**OneRoof and other homeless organizations should increase resources for homeless veterans**

**Posted April 14, 2024 | By Ellie Andrews | Ellie is the PR Practitioner for OneRoof, a homeless organization in central Alabama. She balances this position while also being a student at Auburn University.**

Did you know that two years ago in 2022, out of the [580,000 people in the nation that were homeless, around 13% of that homeless population were veterans](https://valorhealthcare.com/2022-homeless-veteran-statistics-no-home-for-the-brave/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20there%20were%20more,is%20made%20up%20of%20veterans.). The sad part is, that is very similar to the numbers we are still seeing today almost two years later in 2024.

Veterans are often at risk for homelessness because of many reasons. One factor of veteran’s homelessness is their demographic, psychographic, and military status. Many of the veterans who are also at a greater risk for homelessness are veterans who experienced any form of trauma in war, including PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and MSA (Military Sexual Assault).

Homelessness is still continuing to be a rising problem in the U.S., and it is continuing to be a rising problem for veterans as well. Veterans struggling post-war are constantly at risk for homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing. Veterans who become homeless often don’t seek help or feel that they are unable to, which often leads to self-medicating, substance abuse, alcoholism, or continuing to isolate themselves. The feeling of neglect, lack of support, and attempting to treat their trauma themselves are factors that ultimately lead most veterans to homelessness.Which is why there needs to be resources put in place to help veterans coming out of war so that they are given the opportunities they need to prevent homelessness from happening.

OneRoof and other homeless organizations need to have resources and systems put in place so that veterans are given plenty of ways to avoid homelessness, or if they are already homeless, to transition out of being homeless. These resources should include mental health aid and housing outcomes.

In order to prevent veterans from becoming homeless or to help veterans who are already homeless get back on their feet, having more mental health aid opportunities specifically for veterans is one of the best ways to help. By having more access to mental health resources, veterans will be able to properly treat and aid their trauma. There are some already in place such as the HCHV program with the [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs](https://www.va.gov/homeless/mental_health_services.asp), which is put in place to offer “outreach, exams, treatment, referrals, and case management” for homeless veterans dealing with trauma and mental health issues. Although the HCHV program is great for homeless veterans there needs to be more opportunities like this available and accessible for homeless veterans in all areas. One Roof as well as other homeless organizations are working to make mental health aid available to homeless veterans and veterans just coming out of the war, but it will take help from all homeless and veteran organizations to put a stop to veteran homelessness all together.

Homeless veterans can also greatly benefit from having more housing outcomes available to them whether it is when they are coming out of the military or they are already homeless. In the article, [How Homelessness Programs are Serving Four Populations In California](https://ternercenter.berkeley.edu/research-and-policy/distinct-populations-homelessness-programs/), the VHHP (Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program) worked to provide funds that contributed towards developing affordable housing for veterans. They found that through these actions “the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in California declined 41% between 2010 and 2022”, which shows that more housing outcomes would be a positive opportunity for homeless veterans. For many veterans that come back from war, many things from their life before war have changed. Veterans can’t help that life has moved on without them while they are serving in the war and many veterans are unprepared for the major changes that lie ahead. Which is why providing more housing outcomes specifically for veterans can stop many individuals from the problem of becoming homeless and gives them alternative ways to stay on their feet.

Although providing mental health aid and housing outcomes for veterans won’t stop the problem of veteran homelessness completely, it is still a way to provide many of these individuals with the help that they need and deserve after returning from war.

As homelessness in the U.S. continues to remain a problem for many veterans returning from war, I urge homeless organizations like OneRoof in central Alabama and other veteran organizations to have initiatives and resources in place specific to the veteran communities in the area. Veterans can come from all races, genders, relationship status, military service eras, and military branches and still experience a form of trauma and PTSD that has a positive correlation with veteran homelessness. The trauma that veterans experience can be from many things they experience while being in the military whether it be combat or non-combat. In order to help veterans who are becoming homeless or are already homeless, organizations like One Roof, find it important to offer more mental health aid and housing outcomes so that these veterans receive the help they need and are able to get back on their feet.