

## Homeless Veterans

Veteran homelessness is one of the top issues of concern for veterans according to a Mission Roll Call pole of veterans nationwide, more that 90% said they do not think enough is being done to address veteran homelessness,

Veterans make up about 7% of all homeless adults even though they represent around 6% of the total population. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in 2023 35,574 veterans were experiencing homelessness. Just over half of these were staying in sheltered locations. In addition, they found there were certain groups among the homeless that are disproportionately affected. Men make up about 88% while female veterans are more likely to homeless with children, highlighting the need for family-specific support.

It's difficult to pinpoint and root cause of the veteran housing crisis; rather it's an accumulation of factors over time. Mission Roll Call has outlined 6 areas that are contributing to homelessness. Difficulties transitioning to civilian life. Navigating VA bureaucracy for access to benefits, service-related disabilities, Gaps in mental health support, legal difficulties and the growing disparity between housing costs and income.

A study by the National Health Care for Homeless Council found that homelessness significantly worsens veterans' health, both physically and mentally. Homeless veterans are 3 times

more likely to be infected with HIV. The study also found that homeless individuals are more likely to be victims of violent crimes. The trauma of homelessness can also lead to increased suicide rates. Suicide rates are 9 times that of the general population. While these federal programs do help, the number of veterans still struggling to permanent solutions to housing problems makes it clear that our current systems are not enough. Research has also shown that Americans have become more compassionate towards the homeless in recent years this along with legislative attention and public awareness of the issue and are important steps to ending veteran homelessness there is still more to do. I have said for years that there are two words that should never be used in the same sentence, they are **VETERAN AND HOMELESS**. The NDVLC asks for you yes vote, thank you