

BRIEFING PAPER

Programs Available to Homeless Veterans in El Dorado County

El Dorado County

- Residential Population - 190,000
- Residential Homeless Population - 600 (estimated)
- Veteran Population - 13,500
- Veteran Homeless Population - 50 (Estimated)
 - The percentage of homelessness is slightly higher among vets than the public at large.
 - Homeless veterans have the additional burden of military service-connected issues.
 - 55% have mental health issues.
 - 40% of homeless women suffer from mental health issues, mostly resulting from sexual trauma.
 - 70% cope with substance-abuse issues.
 - South Lake Tahoe reports "functional zero" homeless vets - all known homeless vets are housed.
 - About 20 of this population are active cases, tracked by VA, nonprofit and county workers - the others are housed or refuse assistance. Several are in jail, on probation or in programs.

Case Study

- Veterans Commissioner Todd Smith
- Was alerted to a homeless, female veteran living in a Placerville motel who was in severe medical duress; she suffered from combat-related PTS and was abusing substances
- Contacted EDC Sheriff's Office for transport
- Accompanied deputies to VA Med Center Mather
- EDC Veterans Affairs Commission arranges with Only Kindness for homeless vet's rent to be paid while she is at Mather
- The VA cares for and saves the life of the vet
- The VA offers a treatment program to address mental health and substance abuse issues
- The vet refuses treatment, returns to her motel in Placerville
- The VA and Smith continue to follow up, urging the vet to reconsider
- Vet eventually dies of a drug overdose

If you can't get the bottle out of the hand,
If you can't get the needle out of the arm,
If you can't get the crazy out of the head,
Then you can't get the homeless off the streets.

An important distinction between homeless veterans and the overall homeless population is that military service-connected mental health, physical disabilities and substance-abuse issues diminish the ability of homeless veterans to make appointments and submit paperwork needed to get federal housing assistance.

Among reasons homeless vets don't get housing available to them are:

- They relocate frequently, disrupting the processing of assistance;
- They refuse to leave El Dorado County when housing is available at Veterans Homes and shelters elsewhere;
- They have no means of being contacted;
- They fail to follow through with applying for aid;
- They are incarcerated or enrolled in recovery programs;
- They refuse to stop drinking or using drugs;
- They refuse to accept treatment;
- Following treatment, they recidivate;
- They have too much income to qualify for housing (pensions, inheritances, trusts);
- They cannot establish their military record (insufficient info to recover a DD-214);
- They fail to appear at appointments; and
- A small number are registered sex offenders which limits where they can be housed.

Organizations

- Numerous governmental organizations, nonprofits and churches assist homeless veterans in El Dorado County, including:
 - VA Northern California (Mather) and VA Reno,
 - EDC Veterans Service Offices (Placerville and South Lake Tahoe),
 - Volunteers of America,
 - Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless,
 - Only Kindness,
 - American Legion Post 119 (David Zelinsky),
 - EDC Sheriff's Office, and
 - EDC District Attorney's Office.

Homeless Shelters

- Several homeless shelters, operated by nonprofits and churches exist in the county. (Nomad, Green Valley Church, Ridgeview Manor)
- Homeless vets also create their own housing in cars, vans, motor homes, old trailers and shacks, in rooms traded for serving as a watchman or custodian and by camping.
- Victory Village - Provides rapid re-housing for veterans in Jackson, CA (serving El Dorado County) <https://www.vvvets.org/h-e-l-p/>

- Proposed EDC Homeless Shelter and Navigation Center (Perks Ct, off of Missouri Flat Road) - Jan., 2023. 60 beds. Admittance by invitation only, based on needs-based assessment.
- South Lake Tahoe - Functional Zero Veterans Homelessness, according to the Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless - 3 facilities.
- Housing El Dorado
 - The Upper Room, Placerville - Pathways Project (year-round services to the homeless community), affordable housing, Space Rent Stabilization, Land Bank.
- El Dorado Opportunity Knocks Continuum of Care (COC) - Homeless Strategic Plan with consultation by Home Base.
- Envisioned - Pollock Pines School - Veterans Training Center - Mini Homes for 60 students

EDC Veterans Affairs Commission

- Advises EDC BOS on veterans issues, serves as watchdog for the BOS on veterans issues: budget, policy, VSO performance, education, housing, employment (just launched the Veteran-owned business program - low cost (\$4) business licenses, door sticker, listing on county website, networking),
- Recommends to BOS distribution of \$170,000 in grants, many of which help homeless and at-risk veterans

County Veterans Service Office - VSO and VSRs

- Placerville - 9 - 4, M, W, F by appt.; Tues/Thurs - drop in
- South Lake Tahoe - 2nd and 3rd Tues. of Mo. by Appt.

EDC Stand Downs (2022)

- Placerville - Sept 29 - Oct 1
- South Tahoe - Sept 17

Veterans Housing Programs

CalVet Housing Programs

Veterans Homes of California (est. 1884 for Civil War veterans)

- Yountville - A, B, C, D
- Chula Vista - A, B, C
- Fresno - B, C, D
- Lancaster - B
- Redding - B, D
- Ventura - B,
- West LA - B, C, D
- Barstow - C
 - A - Independent Living
 - B - Assisted Living
 - C - Skilled Nursing Care

D - Memory Care

Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention (VHHP) - Prop. 41 funding for multi-family, rental housing for homeless vets - \$75 million annually

USDVA Housing Programs

- HUD-VASH - long term case management, supportive services, permanent housing - rent assistance
- VA Grant Per Diem (GPD) - renovation, acquisition or construction of housing
- Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) - provides grants to cities, counties
- Supportive Services for Homeless Families - helps very low-income veterans and their families
- Domiciliary Care - residential care for vets with severe medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, psychosocial deficits.
- Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams - provides a coordinated “medical home” to address health disparity and equity issues facing homeless vets.
- HUD Continuum of Care - resources for homeless providers

Housing Loans/Protection

- Homes, condos, mobile homes - up to \$997,000
- Mobile homes in parks - up to \$175,000
- Farm Loans - up to \$1.148m
- Home rehabilitation loans
- Construction loans
- Home Protection Plans
- ESDVA Home Loan Guarantees

Veterans Hotlines

- Homeless Veterans Hotline
 - (877) 4 AID VET (424-3838)
 - CalVet (877) 741-8532 - VHHP@calvet.ca.gov
- Veterans Crisis Line - (800) 273-TALK (8255), Text 838255
 - Suicide
 - Mental Health

Medical Assistance

- VA Medical Centers and extensive programs to help veterans, including homeless vets
- Homeless veterans dental program

Employment

- Homeless Veteran Supported-Employment Program
- Compensated Work Therapy

EDC Volunteer Nonprofit Organizations

- American Legion Post 119
- Only Kindness
- El Dorado Veterans Resources (EDVR)
- Military Family Support Group (MFSG)
- El Dorado County Veterans Alliance
- Lake Tahoe Veterans Alliance
- Volunteers of America
- Sacramento Valley Cooperative

Food programs

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program
- Emergency Food Assistance Program
- No Vet Goes Hungry - EDVR
- El Dorado County Food Bank

Transportation

- El Dorado Transit - MyRide - All vets - mileage reimbursement to any medical, legal or other appointment

Legal Aid

- Veterans Court
- Veteran Treatment Courts
- Homeless Court - resolve outstanding misdemeanor warrants (Sacramento County)
- American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness and Poverty

This briefing paper was prepared by the El Dorado County Veterans Affairs Commission