

**HOMELESS VETERANS AS A “SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION”
(HTF-1-07)**

**This Resolution amends HTF-1-05 by incorporating HTF-2-05, A “FAIR SHARE”
OF FUNDING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAMS & SERVICES to
create a more comprehensive resolution.**

Issue:

The number of homeless veterans is very fluid. However, nationally it is accepted that 23-30% of the total homeless population, or approximately 194,000, are homeless veterans. While federal agencies acknowledge these statistics, they have yet to identify these veterans as a “Special Needs Population.” Veterans make up a significant percentage (23-30%) of the homeless population in America. Homeless veterans are due a “Fair Share” of the available federal dollars for programs and services funded in the United States.

Background:

Our country’s homeless problem is a national disgrace that refuses to fade. Homelessness has varied definitions and many contributing factors. Among these are PTSD, a lack of job skills and education, substance abuse and mental-health problems. The homeless require far more than just a home. A comprehensive, individualized assessment and a rehabilitation/treatment program are necessary, utilizing the “continuum of care” concept. Assistance in obtaining economic stability for a successful self-sufficient transition back into the community is vital. Although many need help with permanent housing, some require long-term residential care.

In some cases, agencies deal inappropriately, without sensitivity to the particular needs and issues of the homeless, especially to those of veterans. Because homeless veterans do present with unique issues surrounding their military experiences, we consider them a “Special Needs Population”. Until homeless veterans achieve status as a “Special Needs Population” through legislative action, monies earmarked by Congress to combat homelessness will fail to reach programs specifically designated for these veterans.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers the funds set aside by the McKinney-Vento Act. Admitting by its own computations that veterans approximate 23-30% of the entire homeless population in America, HUD would have us believe that it is, in fact, reaching this population by providing a general, overall relief effort to the homeless in America. With the “special needs” status of other populations in America receiving specifically allocated funding, veterans are once again having to fight a war on the home front to obtain rights and benefits that should rightfully be theirs. Veterans are not specifically targeted in funding, and the money is wasted on stopgap measures. Mission-type meal providers and overnight cots are well intentioned, but they change nothing and solve nothing.

This resolution amends HTF-1-05

Resolved, That:

Vietnam Veterans of America, urges the Presidential Interagency Council on Homeless to recognize homeless veterans as a Special Needs Population. Further, we urge Congress to require all entities/agencies, including non-profit or governmental, that receive/utilize federal program funding dollars, to report statistics on the number of veterans they serve, their residential status, and the services needed. Vietnam Veterans of America strongly urges its membership, at the chapter and state council level, to work with their state and federal legislators to enhance services to homeless veterans and encourage them to recognize these veterans as a “Special Needs Population.” Additionally, Vietnam Veterans of America supports legislation that would incorporate a “Fair Share” dollar approach for the federal funding of all homeless programs and services so to specifically target homeless veterans.

Financial Impact Statement: In accordance with motion 8 passed at VVA January 2002 National Board of Directors meeting which charges this committee with reviewing its relevant Resolutions and determining an expenditure estimate required to implement the Resolution, presented for consideration at the 2007 National Convention; this committee submits that implementation of the foregoing Resolution shall be at no cost to National except where staff time may be required for legislative action.

**HOMELESS VETERAN HUD TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
ONLY FUNDING
(HTF-4-07)**

Issue:

There continues to exist today, limited, if any, access to transitional residential and supportive service only dollars within the HUD Super NOFA grant proposal process. Supportive services are vital in the successful reintegration of our homeless veterans back to the community. There are currently no staffing dollars allocated for the provision of supportive services, to include case management, to those individuals in Shelter Plus Care programs, for example. These case management services are key in providing the veterans with a support system to assist them with working into and through the system.

Background:

Presently, HUD is silently discouraging McKinney-Vento funding for transitional housing and “supportive services only” programs with the request to city and municipalities continuum of care for a 30 percent set aside of the grant dollars going for permanent housing only. In the national competition for the McKinney-Vento funding, many cities are requesting proposals for only permanent housing. This situation effects those needing funding for transitional housing. An effect of this situation also eliminates a potential match for VA Homeless Grant and Per Diem (**HGPD**) grant proposals. VA will lose a financially effective and efficient resource for providing assistance to veterans

who are homeless if non-profit agencies lose the ability to obtain HUD McKinney-Vento grants for transitional programs. This has significant impact in light of the lack of fair-share federal funding for homeless veterans. These successful non-profit agencies have reduced recidivism, shortened the length of VA in-patient stay, hence reducing the cost of treatment programs.

This resolution amends HTF-4-05

Resolved, That:

Vietnam Veterans of America urges HUD to communicate the importance of transitional residential and supportive service only programs in their approach to placing homeless in permanent housing. This approach will discourage local continuums from eliminating these entities as viable components to a successful transition to permanent housing. Additionally that HUD reiterates the sense of Congress in its proposal process and seeks set-aside HUD funding in its McKinney-Vento grant cycle for transitional housing, supportive service only and supportive service dollars within the Shelter Plus Care grant programs.

Financial Impact Statement: In accordance with motion 8 passed at VVA January 2002 National Board of Directors meeting which charges this committee with reviewing its relevant Resolutions and determining an expenditure estimate required to implement the Resolution, presented for consideration at the 2007 National Convention; this committee submits that implementation of the foregoing Resolution shall be at no cost to National except where staff time may be required for legislative action.

**HOMELESS VETERAN HUD/VA SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FUNDING
(HTF-5-07)**

Issue:

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has repeatedly failed to comply with section 12 of P.L 107-95, which authorized HUD/VASH vouchers. Though the vouchers have been authorized in each fiscal year since 2003, HUD has failed to request the appropriate level of appropriations to incorporate the vouchers into reality.

Background:

As outlined in PL 109-461, it is the sense of Congress that:

1. Homelessness is a significant problem in the veterans community and veterans are disproportionately represented among the homeless population;
2. while many effective programs assist homeless veterans to become, once again, productive and self-sufficient members of their communities and society, all the essential services, assistance, and support that homeless veterans require are not currently provided;
3. federally funded programs for homeless veterans should be held accountable for achieving clearly defined results;

4. Federal efforts to assist homeless veterans should include prevention of homelessness;
5. Federal efforts regarding homeless veterans should be particularly vigorous where women veterans have minor children in their care;
6. Federal agencies, particularly the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, and Department of Housing and Urban Development, should cooperate more fully to address the problem of homelessness among veterans; and the programs reauthorized by this title provide important housing and services to homeless veterans.

HUD acknowledges that HUD/VASH funds have not been requested or appropriated and that housing needs of homeless American veterans is one of the top priorities, of the department. Again VVA asks, if this is so, then why are they leaving about 5,000 homeless veterans' without the most vital resources they need a safe and secure place to live by not asking Congress to appropriate these vouchers. PL 109-461 has included under Section 710, Rental Assistance Vouchers for Veterans Affairs Supported Housing Program, 500 vouchers for 2007, 1000 vouchers for 2008, 1500 vouchers for 2009, 2000 vouchers for 2010 and 2500 vouchers for 2011. These 7500 vouchers, coupled with the 5000 previously authorized would have a measurable impact on ending homelessness among our veterans.

Resolved, That:

Vietnam Veterans of America urges HUD to comply with Section 710 of P.L. 109-461 by requesting the allocation of funds at the level necessary to provide for the total number of rental assistance voucher for homeless veterans.

Financial Impact Statement:

In accordance with motion 8 passed at VVA January 2002 National Board of Directors meeting which charges this committee with reviewing its relevant Resolutions and determining an expenditure estimate required to implement the Resolution, presented for consideration at the 2003 National Convention; this committee submits that implementation of the foregoing Resolution shall be at no cost to National except where staff time may be required for legislative action.

**VA HOMELESS GRANT AND PER DIEM FUNDING
(HTF-6-07)**

Issue:

Funding and support of the VA HGPS Program has proven to be a most effective tool in addressing veteran homelessness.

Background:

VA Homeless Grant and Per Diem funding must be considered a payment rather than a reimbursement for expenses, an important change that will enable the community-based organizations that deliver the majority of these services to operate effectively. Per Diem dollars received by services centers are not capable of obtaining or retaining appropriate staffing to provide services supporting the "special needs" of the veterans seeking

assistance. Per Diem for Service Centers is provided on an hourly rate, currently only \$3.91 per hour.

Service centers are unique and indispensable in the VA process. In many cases they are the front and first exposure to the VA and VA Homeless Grant and Per Diem programs. Veteran specific service centers are vital in that most city and municipality social services do not have the knowledge or capacity to provide appropriate supportive services that directly involve the treatment, care and entitlements of veterans. Additionally, since many local municipalities have removed “supportive services” from their HUD Continuums of Care, providing staffing dollars through the VA Homeless Grant and Per Diem program, similar to the Special Needs Grant process, to those agencies operating HGPS service centers would provide the funding necessary to continue these services. Without consideration of staffing grants, the result could be the demise of these critical services. The VA acknowledges this problem exists. It is yet to be specifically identified how many awarded services center grantees have been affected by either the inability to establish these centers or retain operation because of this very funding issue.

Resolved, That:

Vietnam Veterans of America urges the Department of Veterans Affairs, Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program to provide “payment for services” rather than the “reimbursement for services” it presently provides. Additionally, VVA supports and seeks legislation to establish Supportive Services Assistance Grants for VA Homeless Grant and Per Diem Service Center Grant Awardees.

Financial Impact Statement: In accordance with motion 8 passed at VVA January 2002 National Board of Directors meeting which charges this committee with reviewing its relevant Resolutions and determining an expenditure estimate required to implement the Resolution, presented for consideration at the 2003 National Convention; this committee submits that implementation of the foregoing Resolution shall be at no cost to National except where staff time may be required for legislative action.