



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Fact Sheet

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### **Project CHALENG – Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Homeless Veterans**

#### **Background**

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Educations and Networking Groups) for Veterans was launched in 1994 to bring together homelessness service providers, advocates, Veterans and other concerned citizens to identify the needs of homeless Veterans and work to meet those needs through planning and cooperative action. CHALENG is designed to be an ongoing assessment process that describes the needs of homeless Veterans and identifies the barriers they face to successful community reentry. This process has helped build thousands of relationships with community agencies, Veterans groups, law enforcement agencies, and Federal, state, and local government. Local CHALENG meetings represent important opportunities for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and public and private agency representatives to meet and develop meaningful partnerships to better serve homeless Veterans.

Project CHALENG has two components: a CHALENG survey, in which participants rate the needs of homeless Veterans in their local communities, and CHALENG meetings, which encourage partnership development between VA and community service providers. The results of the CHALENG survey are used each year to identify unmet needs and encourage new partnership development to meet those needs.

Over the years, CHALENG has helped build thousands of relationships between VA and community agencies so they can better serve homeless Veterans locally. Data from CHALENG on Veterans' unmet needs has assisted VA in developing new services for Veterans such as the Homeless Veteran Dental Program (HVDP), the expansion of the Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program, the Veterans Justice Programs and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF). In addition, community organizations use CHALENG data in grant applications to support services for homeless Veterans. These grant applications bring VA, other Federal, local government, and community foundation dollars, which maximizes community participation in serving homeless Veterans.

## **2013 CHALENG Survey Participation**

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, 13,260 individuals completed a CHALENG Participant survey. This included 7,741 homeless Veterans and 5,519 other participants (VA staff, state and public officials, community leaders, volunteers).
- 9.3 percent of the homeless Veteran survey participants were women. 62.6 percent were between the ages of 45-60, with another 17.1 percent 61 or older. 52.4 percent were non-White or Other.
- There were 5,519 participants who were not homeless Veterans. Of these, 49.5 percent were VA staff, 2.1 percent were other Federal employees, 36.2 percent were state/local official or community providers, and 12.2 percent were interested members of the community.

## **Top Homeless Veteran Needs Identified in 2013 CHALENG Survey**

- Consistent with 2012 data and with the previous 10 years of CHALENG data, met needs primarily reflect services that the Veterans Health Administration can provide directly, and unmet needs are primarily services that require community partnership to meet. This consistency underscores the importance of collaboration between Federal, state, local, and community partners to meet the needs of homeless Veterans to successfully end homelessness.
- Eight of the top ten unmet needs were the same for male and female Veterans: housing for registered sex offenders, child care, legal assistance in four separate areas (prevent eviction/foreclosure, child support issues, restore a driver's license, outstanding warrants and fines), family reconciliation assistance, and financial guardianship.
- Nine of the top ten met needs were also the same for male and female Veterans: medical services, testing and treatment in three separate areas (Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS), case management, services for emotional or psychiatric problems, medication management, substance abuse treatment, and food.

### **Additional Information**

For more information, see <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/chaleng.asp> , or contact Jessica Blue-Howells, MSW, Program Manager, CHALENG [Jessica.Blue-Howells@va.gov](mailto:Jessica.Blue-Howells@va.gov), (310) 478-3711 ext. 43759.

This sheet was last updated February 2014. The CHALENG survey is an annual event. This fact sheet is next projected to be updated March 2015.

## CHALENG 2013 Survey Results Summary

### CHALENG Participant Survey

#### A1. CHALENG Participant Survey: Participation

**Total number of participants:** 13,260

- **Homeless Veteran participants:** 7,741
  - homeless Veteran male participants: 7,023
  - homeless Veteran female participants: 718
- **Non-homeless Veteran participants:** 5,519
  - VA Staff: 2,733
  - Other Federal staff: 118
  - State/local government agency, or community based homeless provider: 1,997
  - Interested member of the community: 671

#### A2. CHALENG Homeless Veteran Participant Demographics

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Homeless Veterans (n=7,741)</b> | <b>Male Veterans (n=7,023)</b> | <b>Female Veterans (n=718)</b> |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Less than 25 | 1.0%                               | 0.9%                           | 1.5%                           |
| 25-34        | 8.0%                               | 7.1%                           | 17.0%                          |
| 35-44        | 11.2%                              | 10.6%                          | 17.1%                          |
| 45-60        | 62.6%                              | 63.3%                          | 56.4%                          |
| 61+          | 17.1%                              | 18.1%                          | 7.9%                           |

| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>          | <b>Homeless Veterans (n=7,741)</b> | <b>Male Veterans (n=7,023)</b> | <b>Female Veterans (n=718)</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| African American               | 41.4%                              | 41.6%                          | 40.9%                          |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 2.3%                               | 2.2%                           | 2.4%                           |
| Asian/ Pacific Islander        | 0.7%                               | 0.7%                           | 0.8%                           |
| Hispanic                       | 4.6%                               | 4.5%                           | 5.0%                           |
| White                          | 47.6%                              | 47.8%                          | 45.7%                          |
| Other                          | 3.3%                               | 3.1%                           | 5.2%                           |

| <b>Where homeless Veteran CHALENG Participant was living at time of Survey</b> | <b>Homeless Veterans (n=7,741)</b> | <b>Male Veterans (n=7,023)</b> | <b>Female Veterans (n=718)</b> |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Literally Homeless (on streets, in shelter, car)                               | 23.6%                              | 23.7%                          | 22.8%                          |
| In VA Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)                            | 5.4%                               | 5.6%                           | 3.1%                           |
| In VA Grant and Per Diem (GPD) or other transitional housing program           | 34.8%                              | 35.9%                          | 23.8%                          |
| In subsidized permanent housing (including Section 8 Housing)                  | 22.5%                              | 21.5%                          | 31.9%                          |
| In unsubsidized permanent housing  | 13.8%                              | 13.3%                          | 18.4%                          |

## **B. Ranking of Male Homeless Veteran Need (1=unmet ... 4 met)**

### **Top ten highest unmet needs, male Veterans**

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Need</b>   | <b>Mean Score</b> |
|-------------|---|-------------------|
| 1           | Registered Sex Offender Housing                         | 2.03              |
| 2           | Child Care  | 2.26              |
| 3           | Legal Assistance to Prevent Eviction and Foreclosure    | 2.37              |
| 4           | Legal Assistance for Child Support Issues               | 2.38              |
| 5           | Legal Assistance to Help Restore a Driver's License     | 2.40              |
| 6           | Legal Assistance for Outstanding Warrants and Fines     | 2.45              |
| 7           | Family Reconciliation Assistance                        | 2.46              |
| 8           | Financial Guardianship                                  | 2.49              |
| 9           | Financial Assistance to Prevent Eviction or Foreclosure | 2.51              |
| 10          | Military discharge upgrade                              | 2.55              |

**Top ten highest met needs, male Veterans**

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Need</b>                                    | <b>Mean Score</b> |
|-------------|--|-------------------|
| 1           | Medical Services                               | 3.64              |
| 2           | TB Testing and Treatment                       | 3.57              |
| 3           | Case Management                                | 3.45              |
| 4           | Medication Management                          | 3.44              |
| 5           | Substance Abuse Treatment                      | 3.43              |
| 6           | Services for Emotional or Psychiatric Problems | 3.43              |
| 7           | HIV/AIDS Testing and Treatment                 | 3.43              |
| 8           | Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment              | 3.42              |
| 9           | Personal Hygiene (Shower, Haircut, etc.)       | 3.38              |
| 10          | Food   | 3.38              |

**C. Ranking of Female homeless Veteran Need (1=unmet ... 4 met)****Top ten highest unmet needs, female Veterans**

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Need</b>  | <b>Mean Score</b> |
|-------------|--|-------------------|
| 1           | Registered Sex Offender Housing                      | 2.04              |
| 2           | Child Care   | 2.37              |
| 3           | Legal Assistance for Child Support Issues            | 2.57              |
| 4           | Legal Assistance to Prevent Eviction and Foreclosure | 2.59              |
| 5           | Family Reconciliation Assistance                     | 2.60              |
| 6           | Credit Counseling                                    | 2.60              |
| 7           | Legal Assistance to Help Restore a Driver's License  | 2.62              |
| 8           | Legal Assistance for Outstanding Warrants and Fines  | 2.63              |
| 9           | Dental Care  | 2.68              |
| 10          | Financial Guardianship                               | 2.69              |

**Top ten highest met needs, female Veterans**

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Need</b>                                    | <b>Mean Score</b> |
|-------------|--|-------------------|
| 1           | Medical Services                               | 3.65              |
| 2           | Tuberculosis Testing and Treatment             | 3.58              |
| 3           | Services for Emotional or Psychiatric Problems | 3.48              |
| 4           | Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment              | 3.48              |
| 5           | HIV/AIDS Testing and Treatment                 | 3.47              |
| 6           | Case Management                                | 3.43              |
| 7           | Food   | 3.41              |
| 8           | Substance Abuse Treatment                      | 3.38              |
| 9           | Medication Management                          | 3.32              |
| 10          | Health and Wellness                            | 3.31              |