



## Preventing and Ending Veteran Homelessness

August 2018





## How many Homeless Veterans are there in Canada?

- The 2016 Coordinated Point-in-Time Count (a measure of the number of homeless people on a specific date in a given geographical area) demonstrated that nearly 5% of respondents indicated they were Veterans of the Canadian Military, while less than 1% indicated that they were a Veteran of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).
- The Mental Health Commission of Canada's *At Home/Chez Soi* research demonstration project of homelessness and mental health (2009-2013) reported that 99 of the 2,298 participants (4.3%) identified themselves as Veterans.
- In August 2016, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Homelessness Partnering Strategy released the *2005–2014 Highlights of the National Shelter Study*. The study estimates that in 2014, 2,950 (or 2.2%) of the total number of shelter users self-identified as having served in the Canadian military.



## Proposed Goal and Themes

- Goal: To prevent and significantly reduce Veteran homelessness in Canada
- Guiding Principles:
  - Veteran-centric
  - Collaboration-led
  - Evidence-informed
  - Outcome-based
- Themes:
  - Lead and engage: Improve collaboration and leadership
  - Find: Improve outreach and identification
  - Assist: Improve mechanisms to assist homeless Veterans
  - Prevent: Prevent Veteran homelessness through optimizing Veteran well-being





## Responding to Veteran Homelessness

VAC hosted a Roundtable on Homelessness on June 7 to engage stakeholders and partners on the issues related to Veteran homelessness. The following main points were raised during the discussions:

- Effective dissemination of information
- "Civilian 101" course for service providers
- Veterans' health care to assist with transition
- Peer to peer support
- "Housing First" strategy
- Assuring seamless transition
- Veteran ID card
- Holistic approach - no one organization can do this alone
- Strong collaboration between government and non-government organizations



## Responding to Veteran Homelessness (Continued)

Developing key partnerships with other federal government departments:

- Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- National Housing Strategy
- Veteran's Justice Outreach Initiative

VAC initiatives

- Emergency Fund
- Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund

Partnerships with community organizations

Examples of partnerships from the Atlantic region provided during the Roundtable on Homelessness include:

- John Howard Society
- Coverdale Centre for Women
- Fredericton Homeless Shelters Inc
- Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee
- Affordable Housing Association Nova Scotia
- Stella's Circle





## Responding to Veteran Homelessness in Alberta

- VAC has 38 Area Offices across the country and there is a point-of-contact in each office to work with Veterans who are homeless and with local homeless organizations and services providers:
  - Point of contact for Alberta: Amy Springer, A/Area Director
- Veterans Affairs Canada offers assistance to homeless Veterans and those at risk of homelessness regardless of eligibility for VAC benefits and services:
  - Case management
  - 24/7 assistance via the VAC Assistance line
  - Career counselling
  - Job search training and support
  - Emergency funds
  - Peer support
  - Pastoral services



## Responding to Veteran Homelessness in Alberta

- Veterans Affairs Canada Case Managers and other staff work with community and Veterans' organizations to:
  - identify Veterans who are homeless and link them to Veterans Affairs Canada benefits and services; and
  - increase awareness of Veterans Affairs Canada benefits and services.
- Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces work closely together to improve the transition of members from military to civilian life. Early intervention is one of the most critical components of a successful transition process, and can prevent difficulties that may result in homelessness.