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Homelessness Among Veterans

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Veterans, unlike civilians, encounter difficulties in obtaining affordable housing and the economic turmoil that characterize recent times, in addition to the hardships experienced by various long-term deployments. Combined, these factors develop a population that needs but mostly struggles with housing, financial, health, and mental stability. The policies that address homelessness among veterans include legislative policies that increase funding in housing programs that mitigate homelessness, like the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF), which despite its main objective being increasing and preserving the distribution of rental accommodation for veterans in low-income households, it does not have adequate funding (Salsich, 2009). Other benefits would include permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing.

Regulatory policies should concentrate on resource allocation based on the different needs homeless veterans exhibit. Increased investments in the Housing and Urban Development-VA and housing that offers constant rental support can promote initiatives that build and implement programs to solve veterans' distinct issues, including those from different ethnic groups and women. They also concentrate on providing income opportunities for veterans since, apart from having a home, they also need to be self-sustainable. Earlier solutions have failed to provide effective responses to meeting the needs of homeless veterans since, according to numerous studies, more than 50,000 veterans are homeless each night, representing 13% of the homeless segment. Even though there is a significant investment in various programs and collaborations between funders and service providers, resulting in a decrease in the number of homeless veterans, earlier solutions failed to concentrate on how they could improve other factors that relate to homelessness like increased mental health and employment opportunities for the veterans (Henwood, 2015). This explains why there is a constant number of homeless veterans since they end up going back into the streets because finding employment is hard, as well as the mental issues they constantly face when living in the provided residence that people and organizations fail to consider.

The social concepts that influence the responses include health issues, substance abuse, and self-esteem issues that hinder homelessness among veterans. Economic influences include the lack of employment or income-generating activities since maintaining a house requires a sustainable source of income. Veterans are faced with stringent requirements when accessing decent housing, and they all stem from the rigorous regulations that insist on evidence of permanent employment and credit history. Organizational influences include the significant impact by different managers in developing impetus, indicating commitment, and support integration and alignment in the various programs meant to settle homeless veterans in their respective organizations. The political influences include the various Acts enacted by Congress like the Homelessness Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act that has a focus on developing different strategies to mitigate and eradicate homelessness among veterans and others affected (Perl, 2013, November).

The groups that define the responses include social workers since they are the ones who deal directly with the homeless; thus, they have a better picture of the issues they face. They also understand the different strategies that would suit the different groups affected. The legislature is responsible for creating the policies that would guide different entities on how to deal with homelessness and resource allocation to ensure the success of the initiatives. Government and non-governmental agencies provide the resources and framework for the distribution of human and financial resources in tackling homelessness. These agencies also work with social workers to identify those affected. When the groups work together, there is increased efficiency and communication thus making it easy for the country to mitigate homelessness.

The government's role is to provide consultation and guidance on current and recommended policies in regards to the provision of services to homeless veterans. It also identifies potential areas of integration among federal agencies that would strengthen the continuum of care. Private entities have a role in eradicating homelessness. There is no single sector that can mitigate or eradicate the problem (Lee, 2018). There is a need to involve different public and private entities to create and implement common objectives. This allows for different partnerships that lead to new ideas and resources. In terms of service delivery, policies have ensured veterans' plights in accessing decent housing have been incorporated into local and state plans to eradicate chronic homelessness. This involves evaluating and developing recommendations on proposals that affect homelessness among veterans to sustain consistency in the general approach of service delivery. The initiatives concentrate on homelessness mitigation among different groups and the well-being of veterans once they have been provided homes.

The policies are chosen since they allow for a coordinated approach in reaching out to veterans in need of help. Providing at-risk and homeless veterans with health care, accommodation, income-generating opportunities, and other forms of support while collaborating with different levels of government and state agencies, organizations expand income-generating opportunities and affordable housing solutions for homeless veterans. A challenge related to the implementation of the policies is the likelihood that veterans may not receive the services provided in terms of housing allocation and sustainability. There is also an increase in the number of female veterans who provide unique challenges since they face different types of trauma while serving. Few homeless initiatives have the ability and resources to cater to women with children and those who are alone (Washington, 2010). There has been a decline in the number of homeless veterans over the last few years, with three states priding themselves on eradicating the problem within their boundaries. This, with the help of various communities, government agencies like the VA, and private organizations, has made it possible though in 2016 and 2017, there was a significant increase in the number of homeless veterans in key cities. There are difficulties in getting the HUD-VASH vouchers, and there are reports of veterans preferring to sleep under bridges than in the homes provided since they are unsafe. Most of them suffer from mental issues and forcing them to stay in unsafe dwellings worsens their condition.

Curbing homelessness among veterans promotes human rights and shows that a country is accountable for its actions in addressing the rights by developing measures to mitigate homelessness. It shows that a state can offer adequate and affordable accommodation for everyone, thus promoting various human rights like the right to get the highest attainable standard of health, the right to life through preventing premature deaths, and the right to enjoy life with dignity. Having a house prevents stigmatization and promotes productivity. Due to the moral obligation of ending homelessness, The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) emphasizes the need to offer training, do research, and expand current efforts meant to eradicate homelessness among veterans (Tsai, 2012). Since social work focuses on improving well-being and assists in meeting everyone's primary needs, especially those who are vulnerable, poor, or oppressed, they promote change and social justice among the people they serve. They specifically concentrate on the social structures around them to influence policies that eradicate homelessness among veterans. Social workers and other entities should prioritize eradicating homelessness among veterans, and there should be effective ways of assessing the progress made.

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