

NUMBER OF HOMELESS FEMALE VETERANS INCREASES



The statistical research is quite unpleasant to hear. The number of homeless female veterans continues to increase. And, the fact is that many homeless female veterans are divorced, single, and do not have a means of employment. There is a woman, 42 years of age, who is a homeless veteran and has been dealing with such struggles for the past six years. As of right now, John is living in a long term living center that is funded by the United States Veterans. The living center is located in Long Beach, California. John pays a small portion of rent but most of it is supported and taken care of by the center. She has been without a home since 2006 and she and her daughter are living in the center together. And, a new study that has been released shows that the number of homeless female veterans seems to have doubled within the past few years. It is expected that the homeless female veteran population was at about 3,328 during 2010 and has probably increased during 2011 as well. The report has stated that the Department of Veterans Affairs needs to take certain actions to improve housing for these veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs is known for committing much time and energy into ending homelessness of all the veterans by 2015. The report states that, "While the VA is taking steps--such as launching an outreach campaign--to end homelessness among all veterans, it does not have sufficient data about the population and needs of women veterans to plan effectively for increases in their numbers as servicemembers return from Iraq and Afghanistan." The GAO has suggested that Veterans Affairs collect as much data as possible on the number of homeless female veterans while also working to improve their housing and help them find employment by all means necessary. The Veterans Affairs and Department of Housing and Urban Development both agree with the GAO and its suggestions. John is working on obtaining a degree in social work but she says there are a number of reasons why it can be complicated for women veterans to return back to civilian life. She says that these women are often recovering from military sex abuse or are having a hard time adjusting back to civilian life because they had to leave their children while on deployment. John believes that the singlehanded best way to help prevent female veterans from becoming homeless is to help them find employment so that they can make a living when they return home from their deployment. She is hoping that a program will be designed to help these women, along with her, find employment that fits the skills they have learned in the military. John says, "Focus on us not as a group but as an individual." She also says, "Place us according to what we know -- not just at any old job. And whatever I'm lacking, help me get the training."

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