

HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAM

Chairman: Deborah Johnson
4001 Rio Viejo Dr.
Bakersfield, CA 93313
(C) (661)619-6994
deb.johnson@cavaf.org

More and more in the newspapers, on television, and on line we are hearing of the staggering figures in our California cities of the number of homeless Veterans! What can WE, as an organization do to take the appropriate steps toward alleviating this terrible condition you ask? It's as simple as reaching out and taking action **voluntarily!** Step up to the plate....You hear about it? Care enough to do something about it! Remember that there by the Grace of God...it could be YOU that is homeless with no knowledge of where to turn next.

Doing nothing is not acceptable.

What you can do at the Post level:

- Do your research on line at www.va.gov/homeless/ (Veterans Services), www.nchv.org (Organizations), www.vfw.org (Assistance) to educate yourselves on what the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans and OUR organization offer for the relief of our homeless Veterans.
- Appoint your Post Chaplain and Post Service Officer to head this vital program. Make sure they discuss this program on your floor so that all Post Members are aware of the resources that are available.
- Do your homework! Broaden your horizons! Familiarize yourself with what referable services are available in your own communities. (I.E. County Veterans Service Office, Employment Development Department office, community shelters, church/community-run needy programs for food and clothing, Alcohol/Drug Anonymous meetings, soup kitchens, etc.) In addition, participate and/or volunteer in a Stand Down in your area.
- Make sure your Post Relief Fund has ample funds to be drawn on when a need arises.
- Have a Standing Rule in place for a specific dollar amount to be immediately drawn upon (between business meetings) or vote out to buy gift cards to local grocers and restaurants to have on hand and put them under the control of the Post Chaplain and Post Service Officer for this specific program.
- Have food and clothing drives on a continual basis in your Post Home then donate the items to the resources in your community for further distribution.
- Report each activity you do as they are completed.

What you can do at the District level:

- Organize or participate in a Homeless Veterans Stand Down. Have services available such as employment, temporary housing, legal services, dental/medical services, food/water donations and preparation, showers/barbers/hair stylists, daycare, Alcohol/Drug Anonymous, etc.
- Team up with allied veteran organizations/restaurants/food distributors to execute a plan for a Stand Down.

- Do your homework! Who knows who? What are they willing to bring to the table? Obtain as many donations as possible. If you don't ask, you won't get. Explain that all donations are tax deductible.
- Encourage involvement from all your Posts. Appoint a Homeless Veteran Chairman!
- I know a lot of Posts take part in "Stand Downs" in their area, but do not report it. If you don't report your work, no one will know about your efforts.

State Homeless Veterans resources can be found on the California Department of Veterans Affairs website <https://www.calvet.ca.gov> (Veteran Services / Benefits – Housing).

HOW TO REPORT

Important! – To qualify for awards a Post must submit an online report.

AWARDS

Awards are based on the Chairman recommendation and will be presented in both categories at the State Convention as follows unless otherwise noted elsewhere in this guide:

- 1st Place (Post & District) will be awarded a plaque.
- 2nd and 3rd Place (Post & District) will be awarded a certificate.