

Unsheltered Veterans in Connecticut

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Issue

Provide information on the number of unsheltered veterans in Connecticut, existing programs to serve them, and any recent legislation on this issue.

Summary

Seventeen veterans were identified as unsheltered in the state during the 2023 point-in-time count surveys. Based on data provided by the state Department of Housing (DOH) for that year, 186 unsheltered veterans received homelessness services, with the majority being placed in emergency shelters or temporary housing, as described below. In 2016, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness certified that Connecticut had effectively ended veteran homelessness, meaning that the state created a system that works to prevent homelessness among veterans and ensures new episodes of homelessness are brief and non-recurring.

According to a state Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) representative, programs serving unsheltered or homeless veterans are primarily administered by nonprofits that receive a mix of state funding and other grants and donations. However, the DVA provides housing to veterans in its [residential facility](#) and at [Patriot's Landing](#), both of which are in Rocky Hill. As described below, the federal government, primarily through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (U.S. VA), also has several programs that assist veterans in the state who are experiencing homelessness.

We identified one piece of legislation from the past five years that specifically addressed veterans experiencing homelessness. [PA 23-207](#), § 22, requires the DVA, within available funding, to convert vacant, underused, or otherwise available properties to house homeless or housing-insecure veterans. We also identified legislation that targeted homelessness (not specifically in veteran

populations) more broadly (e.g., [SB 168](#) (2022) would have, among other things, made it a state goal to implement policies that respect, protect, and fulfill a right to housing for all residents).

Number of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

Data Sources

According to 2022 [U.S. Census Bureau data](#) (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates), approximately 146,179 veterans live in Connecticut. There are several data sources that estimate how many of them are unsheltered. Below we describe two: point-in-time (PIT) counts and Connecticut Coordinated Access Network (CAN) data.

PIT Counts. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) most recent 2023 annual report on PIT counts, described below, identified 17 unsheltered veterans and another 148 as sheltered in an emergency shelter or transitional housing (compared to 9 and 140, respectively, in 2022).

Table 1: Veterans Identified in Connecticut PIT Counts, 2022 & 2023

Veteran Location	Year	
	2022 ¹	2023 ²
Unsheltered	9	17
Sheltered		
<i>Emergency</i>	48	32
<i>Transitional</i>	92	116
Total	149	165

¹ Source: HUD, “[Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations: Connecticut](#)” (2022)

² Source: HUD, “[Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations: Connecticut](#)” (2023)

HUD’s PIT count report provides an estimate of people experiencing homelessness (including those who are unsheltered or in emergency shelter or transitional housing) on a single night, generally in January. PIT counts are annually conducted by local entities that are responsible for coordinating homelessness services in a certain geographic area (i.e., “continuums of care”). For purposes of the count, the following definitions are used:

- **Unsheltered** refers to people whose primary nighttime location is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (e.g., the streets, vehicles, or parks)
- **Emergency shelter** is a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness
- **Transitional housing** means programs to provide people experiencing homelessness a place to stay combined with supportive services for up to 24 months

HUD’s 2023 [“Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress”](#) provides additional information on the counts and its related findings. Its [webpage](#) describes the methodology used to conduct the counts.

CAN Data. [CANs](#) are composed of service providers in a defined region that assist people experiencing homelessness. A person needing housing services can call [2-1-1](#), which refers the caller to the CAN in his or her community. The CAN conducts a standardized assessment and refers the caller to available services in his or her area. Service providers also record enrollment data that is collected in a statewide database (the Homeless Management Information System). Some of this data can be found on the [CAN Data website](#).

According to CAN data provided by DOH, 509 veterans received services from CAN-participating programs in 2023. Of these veterans, 186 were unsheltered (i.e., living in a place that was not meant for human habitation) prior to contact with the CAN. As shown in Table 2 below, the majority of these unsheltered veterans were placed in an emergency shelter or transitional housing. Thirty-seven received [street outreach services](#).

Table 2: Services and Programs Provided to Unsheltered Veterans, 2023

Service or Program	Number Receiving ¹
Emergency shelter	90
Transitional housing	87
Street outreach	37

¹Twenty-eight veterans received more than one service, thus the sum of the number of veterans receiving these services (214) exceeds the number of unsheltered veterans (186).

2016 Federal Certification Connecticut Effectively Ended Veteran Homelessness

In 2015, Governor Malloy [announced](#) that Connecticut was federally designated as the first state to end chronic veteran homelessness. He reported that approximately 300 veterans previously

experiencing chronic homelessness had been permanently housed. The next year, he [announced](#) that the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) certified that Connecticut effectively ended veteran homelessness. According to the U.S. VA webpage “[Ending Veteran Homelessness](#),” Connecticut is one of three states to have done so.

In a [2016 interview](#), the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness’ executive director at the time stated this certification did not mean that the state would never have another homeless veteran, “[b]ut we will have built a system whereby we can meet their needs, we can get them out of homelessness and back to housing very quickly.”

The [ICH](#) uses various benchmarks when considering whether a state or community has effectively ended veteran homelessness (e.g., veterans have quick access to permanent housing and there is sufficient permanent housing capacity). For more information on the specific benchmarks, see ICH’s “[Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness](#)” (June 2019).

Additional Resources

- National Alliance to End Homelessness presentation, “[Effectively Ending Veteran Homelessness in Connecticut](#)” (Mar. 2016)
- The Building Movement, “[Coordinating Collaboration: A Mid-Point Learning Assessment of the Reaching Home Campaign and Opening Doors-Connecticut.](#)”
- Melville Charitable Trust, “[Connecticut Homeless System Performance and Re-Design Recommendations](#)” (Oct. 2018)

Housing Programs for Veterans in Connecticut

State and Nonprofit Programs

Programs in this state that provide housing to veterans are primarily administered by nonprofit organizations, often with funding from the state or federal government. However, the state DVA does provide housing in its residential facility and in Patriots Landing (five single-family homes located in Rocky Hill). The table below provides information on these and other housing programs for veterans identified by the DVA, the United Way’s [resource directory](#), and the [2-1-1 searchable database](#).

Veterans and their families may also be eligible for housing programs and services that are not specifically limited to veterans.

Table 3: Veteran Housing in Connecticut Administered by the State and Nonprofits

Program or Administrator	Housing Type	Housing Location	Other Information
Chrysalis Center	permanent supportive housing	Bristol, Hartford, Newington, Rockville, and other locations	nonprofit that collaborates with state and federal agencies
Columbus House	transitional housing	New Haven	nonprofit funded primarily through federal, state, and local grants and individual, corporate, and foundation contributions
Fish of Northwestern Connecticut	emergency and transitional housing	Torrington	supported by the U.S. VA
Homes for the Brave/Applied Behavioral Rehabilitation Institute, Inc.	permanent supportive and transitional housing	Bridgeport and West Haven	nonprofit funded by local, state, federal, and foundation grants
New London Homeless Hospitality Center, Vet House	transitional housing	New London	nonprofit funded by federal and state contracts and grants and other sources
Patriots Landing	temporary housing	Rocky Hill	five single-family homes provided by the state DVA
Veterans Crossing (Community Renewal Team)	transitional housing	East Hartford	nonprofit funded, in part, by the U.S. VA
Veterans Affairs Residential Facility	temporary housing	Rocky Hill	community housing with on-site supportive services provided by the state DVA
Veterans, Inc	emergency, transitional, and long-term supportive housing	New Britain and elsewhere in New England	Funded by nonprofits and the U.S. VA

Federal Programs in the State

Care Coordinator. U.S. VA Connecticut Health Care has a designated [care coordinator](#) to assist veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to financial hardship or certain other factors (e.g., addiction, depression, or transition from incarceration). The coordinator, among other things, helps these veterans get immediate food and shelter, including both transitional and permanent housing.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families. Through its [Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#) program, the U.S. VA also awards grants to local organizations to assist low-income veteran families residing in or transitioning to permanent housing. The program specifies what services these organizations may provide with the grant funding, but broadly they may perform outreach to veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and help them quickly find and pay for new, more affordable housing. The Connecticut grant recipients are [Community Renewal Team](#), [The WorkPlace](#), [Columbus House](#), and [Veterans Inc.](#)

HUD-VASH. HUD's [Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program](#) (referred to as "HUD-VASH") combines the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance program with case management and clinical services provided by the U.S. VA. Similar to the standard [HCV program](#), participating public housing agencies (i.e., housing authorities) provide eligible low-income veterans with rental vouchers and recipients are free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program (e.g., the unit must meet an acceptable level of health and safety).

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program. The U.S. Department of Labor's [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program](#) provides grants to organizations to help homeless veterans find employment and expedite their reentry into the labor force. These organizations may provide job training, counseling, and placement services (e.g., job readiness and literacy and skills training). Currently, recipients of the grant in this state are [Goodwill](#) (for Fairfield County) and [Veterans, Inc.](#) (for all other counties).

Additional Resources

- U.S. VA, "[Veterans Health Administration Homeless Programs Office Annual Report](#)" (2023)
- U.S. VA, Office of Research & Development, [VA Research on Homelessness](#)

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