Homeless Veterans in San Francisco
Housing Our Heroes

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It isn’t easy to identify veterans that will become homeless.
Veterans are trained to carry all that they have on their backs, to survive without help from others, but to help others when they can.
Homeless Veterans have a mentality of NOT wanting to be a burden on people, without realizing the burden they put on themselves which can become a burden on others and the city.
OVERVIEW / INTRODUCTION

▪ This project is to bring to light to one thing that most large cities face but try to avert their eyes from, homelessness, but taking it one step further and bring focus the homelessness amongst veterans in San Francisco.

▪ After my own exit from the military in 2005, I was homeless for about six months, going from couch to couch as well as sleeping in my car. I didn’t identify myself as homeless, but the fact is, I was without a home or a safe dwelling to sleep in at night, thus homeless.

▪ With this project, I hope there is an opportunity of plans and partnerships to be made that can end homelessness among veterans in San Francisco, in California, in the United States and in the world. Homeless veterans are professionals that fell on hard times, they are leaders, trainers, team oriented and have great ethical values.

▪ In San Francisco there are funds from the federal government, state and city that go towards homeless veterans, if these funds can be diverted to other things because we managed to come up with the system that will end homelessness among the veteran population then that is what we should all strive to do. The social impact is great, helping those that can help themselves, but need a little bit of help will get them off the streets and into the community, the plan is to establish plans to end homelessness with the veteran population and other homeless in the cities of the world, but starting with San Francisco.
OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

1. Identify the homeless veterans through “EBenefits” and the Veterans Administration
2. In-process them into the system which is linked to the Veterans Administration
3. Find housing, temporary up to 2 years, with the plan to NOT have any permanent housing.
4. Get medical help, which includes mental, physical, addictive and rehabilitative counseling.
5. Identify certifications, job titles held, leadership skills. (DD Form 214)
6. Assign a counselor and battle buddy, this is a friend that are nearby to help them through the system.
7. Job placement with the VA or through the D.I. Link App (Social Enterprise Solutions) which will allow them to be placed in jobs based on their readiness and professional work history.
8. Eventually get all homeless veterans off the streets and back into the society as an active member of the community; healthy, working and happy.
9. Getting those that were helped, to help other veterans, “Leaving No One Behind”.

MNA MASTER OF NONPROFIT ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
METHODS AND APPROACHES

1. First with the data search it was difficult to find material that was reliably sourced since this is a topic not often written about
2. Web searches for all types of articles to include recent articles
3. Online news videos with the Mayor of San Francisco, Mayor London Breed
4. Interviews with professionals in the field
   a. VA representatives
   b. Partnerships with VA
   c. Organizations that help homeless
   d. Organizations outside of San Francisco which help the homeless
DATA ANALYSIS

- Data from USC School of Social Work
  a. 636,017 Homeless in America
  b. 67,495 Homeless Veterans (10.6%)

- Reasons
  a. Substance Abuse / Mental Health
  b. Foreclosures
  c. Poverty
  d. Unemployment
DATA ANALYSIS

This is a shot of the Bay Area, in 2017, which equates to 28,000 homeless.

In a 2017 count, around 28,000 people were estimated to be homeless in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Persons experiencing homelessness by Bay Area county in 2017, number

- Napa: 315
- Marin: 1,117
- Solano: 1,232
- San Mateo: 1,253
- Contra Costa: 1,607
- Sonoma: 2,835
- Alameda: 5,629
- San Francisco: 6,858
- Santa Clara: 7,394

DATA ANALYSIS

Homeless Population Increase

- The San Francisco homeless population since 2017 to 2019 has had a growth of 17%. Of the 8,011 homeless in San Francisco, 8% are veterans.
- Using the same 8% calculation of growth, we can easily say the homeless veteran population in the Bay Areas is over 2,240.

San Francisco homeless population

The latest one-night homeless count in San Francisco indicates that the numbers have gone up at least 17% since 2017.

- Unsheltered
- Sheltered

2007: 5,703
2009: 5,823
2011: 5,669
2013: 7,008
2015: 6,775
2017: 6,858
2019: 8,011

Note: Figures were compiled under federal guidelines, which are not as complete as numbers used by the city. San Francisco will release its fuller count in July.

Source: San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

Todd Trumbull / The Chronicle
IMPLICATIONS
IMPLICATIONS FROM THE CITY (since 1983)

- Covid-19 is a danger for all, to include the homeless.
- Businesses suing the city to help clean up the homeless in their area.
- Street sleeping boxes painted on the streets in the Tenderloin to get the homeless off the sidewalks.
- Placing homeless in shelters and hotels; as you heard from the video clip, this was a success on getting homeless off the streets, but not for all.
  a. Addicts bring problems into hotels
  b. No oversight by the city
  c. Methadone and Alcohol given to addicts
  d. Assault and sexual assaults in hotels
- Reactive and not proactive
IMPLICATIONS WITH A PLAN (Proactive)

- Partnerships are key to solving this problem
  a. Veterans Administration
  b. Volunteers of America; veterans services
  c. Swords to Plowshares
  d. Veteran owned businesses
- Office of the Mayor
  a. City Grants
  b. Federal Grants
- Nonprofits
- Health Services (VA and, other medical facilities)
- Education services along with the VA and colleges
- Housing and job opportunities through the VA and local Nonprofits
RECOMMENDATIONS (10-year plan)

1. Backed by the city commission and the Mayor to move forward on the building of one large facility (1,000 beds), which can be placed in the abandoned areas at the docks in San Francisco.
   a. Outline a plan to end homelessness to include veterans
   b. Centralize homeless veterans in one building
   c. City funds to help build and run the facility
   d. First floor will contain offices for organized courses through health and welfare to include; healthcare, mental and physical in a clinic, cafeteria, training facilities for integration to the workforce, job placement office, financial training, education, appt. by text

2. Temporary Housing, not permanent

3. Check-ups on the veterans
RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Battle buddy process (looking after one another)
5. Helping veterans by those who have already been helped
6. Seek expansion to other cities throughout California and throughout the United States
7. Expansion of the building uses
   a. Homeless Veterans
   b. Homeless (other than veterans)
   c. Elderly
REFERENCES


REFERENCES Cont.


San Francisco VA Health Care System (2020). SFVAHCS Homeless Program Recognized by VA. Retrieved from https://www.sanfrancisco.va.gov/features/In_February_the_San_Francisco_VA_Health_Care_Syst.asp


Homeless Veterans in San Francisco: Housing our Heroes
Raymond Gray, MNA - Master of Nonprofit Administration - Capstone Project
"Master of Nonprofit Administration Capstone..."

SUMMARY

Homeless Veterans in San Francisco is a growing problem in the city and being a veteran I want to see it end, first here in San Francisco and hopefully throughout the nation. This is something we have to get a grip on as problem solvers and fix it, create something that will take a homeless veteran and work through a program to get them off the streets of the city and on their own as great neighbor and citizen in the communities throughout San Francisco.

Housing our Heroes is the first step in a multi step process I believe will enable the veteran to gain their dignity, self respect, responsibility and respect of the people in their communities they will live in in the future. Help them with a hand-up, not a hand-out.

PURPOSE

Social Enterprise Solutions? I feel this can be a social enterprise solution, you have the homeless veterans on the streets, and no one likes to walk over or have the homeless around their homes or their businesses. People don’t like to visit a city where the homeless, if it is veterans or not, where there is open drug use, fecal matter on the ground and a lack of just caring what others think about. This project in partnership with the city, the federal government and a few other nonprofits can not only get the veterans off the streets but eliminate homelessness for veterans in San Francisco.

RESEARCH

What can I create in the system, with help that is available, more accessible to those veterans that need it? I know that there is a feasible way to not only get the homeless veterans off the streets and housed, but to get them through the system and standing on their own feet. There are systems in place, just have to have the access and professional help to guide them through the process for success.

METHODS

REACHING OUT: There aren’t many credible statistics that I can use, but I have reached out to many people for interviews and I hope that I can process these interviews before the end of this paper. I have reached out to Write here your main methods and approaches for the research. I have reached out to the Office of the Mayor (no answer), I have reached out to journalists from the San Francisco Chronicle in reference to their printed stories. I have reached out to a mental health counselor for the VA, also a rep from the VA that deals with Homelessness and I have reached out to a man from the Volunteers of America Veterans Services. I am hoping to get interviews with everyone, so far three interviews have happened.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

In the top graph it shows the amount of homeless in the Bay Area, this equates to 28,000.

The second picture shows the growth of homelessness in San Francisco in since 2017 to 2019 with a growth of 17%. Of the 8,011 homeless in San Francisco, 8% are veterans.

In 2019 a count around 20,000 people were estimated to be homeless in the San Francisco Bay Area.

- VA can help, but you have to be able to access computers and guidance, this can be done through the Volunteers of America Veterans Services.
- Ebenefits is a VA site that can help the veterans get help with their medical issues and compensation reporting for possible income. This can also help the veteran seek education benefits, which could allow them to get a degree as I have done.
- Governments willingness to help the veteran and families into housing through HUD VASH.
- A lot of nonprofit organization do one part of the problem and that is to get the homeless off the streets, but that is where it stops, we want to continue with this goal and get them out of the system by allowing them to organize themselves back into society, by developing their self confidence and dignity through job placements.

RESULTS

- CENTRALIZE HOMELESS VETERANS IN ONE BUILDING: Organize with the Mayor’s office to find a centralized place that can house homeless veterans with up to 1,000 beds.
- ORGANIZE CURES THROUGH HEALTH AND WELFARE: In the same building have a health and welfare staff to properly the health of the veterans and get them on proper medication if needed, physically and mentally.
- PARTNERSHIPS AND JOB PROGRAMS: Partnerships with other organizations for classes, resume help and job placement. Always maintaining a mentoring relationship for the veteran to show progression.
- GET THE VETERANS BACK INTO SOCIETY: The idea is to help the veteran to where they help themselves out of the system, allowing room for someone else to be helped as they were

REFERENCES

San Francisco VA Health Care System (2020). SFVANCS Homeless Program Recognized by VA. Retrieved from https://www.sanfrancisco.va.gov/features/In_February_the_San_Francisco_VAHealth_Care_Syst.asp
