

SERVING VETERANS ACROSS THE CITY AND SUBURBS



Illinois is currently home to more than 800,000 veterans. Our deployed and returning military personnel, many coming home after multiple deployments, face challenges being addressed across United Way's core areas of focus, particularly basic needs, income and health. While United Way does not currently fund any agencies serving an exclusive veteran population, veterans are being assisted in considerable numbers given the strategies and programs United Way funds.

HOMELESSNESS

In Chicago, approximately 1,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. Currently, the number of homeless Vietnam-era veterans in America is greater than the number of service persons who died during that war. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are regularly appearing in the homeless population. Veterans, like a large number of homeless individuals, may also be dealing with mental illness and/or substance abuse.

UNITED WAY STRATEGY:

United Way works with homeless and transitional housing services, case management, food pantries, legal assistance and domestic violence interventions and counseling as part of its basic needs work.

MENTAL HEALTH

While the Veterans Administration is working to improve its mental health services, suicide and PTSD rates remain alarmingly high among the veteran population as does the prevalence of depression. Nationally, 228,875 troops who served in Iraq or Afghanistan returned with PTSD in 2012.

UNITED WAY STRATEGY:

United Way's work in the health arena includes connecting people, including veterans, to health insurance, a primary care provider, mental health services and addiction treatment.

INCOME

Young veterans ages 18-24 are entering the workforce with more skills and work experience than most of their civilian peers, yet their unemployment rate in 2012 averaged 20.4 percent nationally—five points higher than young non-veterans. In Illinois, where the unemployment rate is 6.7%, it's even tougher for veterans to find sustainable employment.

UNITED WAY STRATEGY:

United Way's focus in economic stability serves veterans through job training, income supports and financial literacy education.

A SAMPLE OF THE UNITED WAY PARTNER AGENCIES WHO SERVE VETERANS AMONG THEIR CLIENTS:

- > Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry
- > Naperville Cares
- > Together We Cope
- > West Suburban PADS
- > CEDA Northwest
(Northwest Compass, Inc)
- > Inspiration Corp
- > Breakthrough People's Resource Center