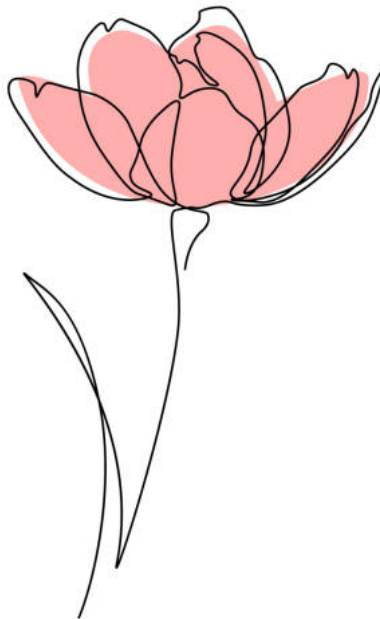


# Identifying Veteran Homelessness

## A Resource Guide



*This Resource Guide is an adapted version of the Ending Veteran Homelessness Community Guide created by Built for Zero-Canada (February 2025).*



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# Section One



## Veteran Definition

"A Veteran includes any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, along with former members of an Allied Force (e.g., U.S./U.K. Veteran), former members of the RCMP, former Reservists, Veteran civilians, and former Canadian Rangers."

[Veteran Affairs Canada](#) offers supports and benefits to Veterans and others which helps to further understand who is included in this definition.

### **Veterans:**

- Armed Forces and Merchant Navy Veterans who served during the First World War, Second World War or Korean War;
- Former and current members of the Canadian Forces, including those who served in Special Duty Areas in peacekeeping; and
- Allied Veterans who have served with one of the Allied forces during the Second World War or the Korean War; and have lived in Canada for at least 10 years or lived in Canada prior to enlisting.

### **Others:**

- Civilians who are entitled to benefits because of their war time services;
- Former and, in certain cases, serving members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and
- Survivors and dependents of the previous groups. See [Services and Support for Families and Caregivers](#).

## Section Two



## Asking the Veteran Question

The first step is to have a person self-identify they are a Veteran. A question about Veteran status is included in the By-Name List intake. But how should providers ask about Veteran identity?

Veterans may be hesitant to indicate they've served (for many reasons) or they may not even realize they are considered a Veteran. Therefore, people should not just be asked, "Are you a Veteran?". Built for Zero Canada has sought advice from Veteran serving organizations and strongly recommends asking the question about Veteran status in the following way:

**"Have you served in the Canadian or Allied Armed Forces or participated in basic training? Are you a former member of the RCMP?"**

Other prompts may include, "Have you served in the military?", "Have you worn a uniform for your country?", "Have you ever been deployed?".

### Further Tips for Asking About Veteran Identity:

- These questions can and may be triggering for some Veterans. While many Veterans experience a rewarding career in the military, as Trauma Exposed Professionals, military personnel may (due to the very nature of their duties), have been exposed to extremely challenging and traumatic situations. A trauma-informed approach is necessary, especially at this identification stage to successfully engage and support.
- Let the person know that you will not be asking any questions about the details of their service, that you are simply asking if they served in any capacity to pursue Veteran status verification so that they might be able to access additional services and supports. Further, let them know that you will not share any information or pursue any course of action without their consent. Let them know that the only time they may be asked to provide further details of their service is if they were trying to access specific injury benefits or pensions through Victim Affairs Canada (VAC).
- Re-ask the question after intake, and in different ways, once a more trusting professional relationship has been built, as an individual presenting for service

may not readily disclose their service in the military or may not be aware that they would be considered a Veteran eligible for Veteran-specific services and supports.

- Remember to thank people for their service if they self-identify.

## Section Three





## How to Seek Confirmation of Veteran Status

**You can explain the purpose of any Veteran status verification or support form to those who self-identify as, “Your information on these forms will be used to confirm your service and connect you to available supports and resources.”**

Once someone has self-identified as a Veteran, there are a few options for confirming Veteran status:

1. Through the Royal Canadian Legion (See Option 1 in Appendix A). Note, if the person is a U.S. or other Allied Veteran, the Royal Canadian Legion Dominion Command has contacts and can help confirm Veteran status for these people as well.
2. Through Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) (See Options 2A and 2B in Appendix B).
3. A Veteran may also already have a [“My VAC Account”](#) (which would indicate Veteran status has been confirmed) or be carrying one of the following cards that would also be a way to verify status:
  - a Cfone card or a Veteran’s Services Card ([Request a Military Service Identification Card - Canada.ca](#)); and/or
  - a VAC Health Identification Card ([Your VAC healthcare card | Veterans Affairs Canada](#))

**Note:** For those in receipt of [Veteran Homelessness Program](#) (VHP) funding, the completion of a [VAC1746 Consent Form](#) is required, which is specific to the Veteran Homelessness Program (VHP).

- Any organization who is providing services and supports is required to have participants sign a consent form consenting to Veterans Affairs Canada sharing their personal information with the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defence, the RCMP, and/or the Library and Archives Canada for the purposes of confirming their former services in the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP if they do not have proof of their service. This form is required to be signed and kept on file with the organization for auditing purposes, or if Veteran Affairs Canada requests it. If the organization is seeking to provide rent supplements, the form will need to be provided to Veteran Services Canada.

- For further information, refer to the [VHP Directives](#) noting section 7 which provides details on confirmation of Veteran service.

**Note:** Forms often request a “Service Number”, if it is known, and readily accessible by the participant. A Service Number is a unique number, like a Social Insurance Number, that all military and RCMP are assigned at the beginning of training camp or duty, and used throughout their service career, including any deployments and after discharge as part of a service record.

- Sometimes the Service Number is the Veteran’s Social Insurance Number (SIN).
- While helpful to include their Service Number (if available), this is usually not required to move forward with Veteran status verification.

# Overview of Veteran Services

There are several Veteran services that have been serving and supporting Veterans and Veterans experiencing homelessness across Canada for many years.

## Veteran Affairs Canada (VAC)

- See [VAC and Veteran Homelessness in Canada](#) – a website page with information on services and links to additional resources.
- VAC provides many direct resources, services, supports, and benefits to Veterans and their survivors and dependents in general, but also [specific supports for those experiencing and at risk of homelessness](#).
  - Can confirm Veteran status.
  - Provide case management and financial supports for Veteran's at risk or experiencing homelessness.
  - Connect homeless Veterans to emergency funding, mental and physical healthcare supports and service providers.
  - Peer support for Veteran's experiencing homelessness.

## The Royal Canadian Legion (RCL)

- See [Royal Canadian Legion Homeless Veterans](#) – a website page with supports available including Operation Leave the Streets Behind, roles, and area branch contact information.
  - Offers service navigation, peer support, and additional resources to support Veterans.
  - Can confirm Veteran status.
  - Can provide training to communities on how to identify Veterans along with the supports offered through Royal Canadian Legion.
  - Works with local organizations and first responders to identify and refer Veterans to services and to the local homelessness response sector.
  - Works closely with Veterans Affairs Canada, shelters and community organizations to get Veterans off the street and into temporary and/or long-term accommodations.
  - Can provide financial assistance for items such as first and last month's rent, rental arrears and furnishings. Note: they do not provide on-going rent subsidies.

## **Respect Campaign**

- See the [Respect Campaign website](#).
- Through twice annual forums, the Respect Campaign seeks to create a network among organizations who support veterans, emergency responders, and their families in meeting the array of challenges, such as transition, mental health issues, and housing instability by promoting collaboration that improves the delivery of services.

## **VETS Canada**

- See the [VETS Canada website](#).
- VETS Canada provides aid and comfort to Canadian Veterans that are in-crisis, are at risk of becoming homeless, or are experiencing homelessness.

There are additional organizations who have been funded across Canada through the [Veteran Homelessness Program \(VHP\)](#) over 2024-2028 to prevent and reduce Veteran homelessness.

- [Find further information on those programs](#).

## Appendix A — Option 1:

### Process to Confirm Veteran Status through the Royal Canadian Legion:



**Step 1:** A person self-identifies as a Veteran and is interested in taking the next steps for Veteran status verification.

**Step 2:** Complete the one-page Leave the Streets Behind Intake Service Verification Form and e-mail to [veteransservices@legion.ca](mailto:veteransservices@legion.ca). This goes to the Dominion Command national office to support status verification, and where requested to identify the needs of the Veteran experiencing homelessness, and assess eligibility to receive supports through [Leave the Streets Behind](#).

When completing the form, consider the following:

- Print the [PDF Form](#).
- Use dark pen or press hard enough to read clearly.
- The Veteran's name and date of birth are required. The Service Number is not required but it may help speed up the verification process.
- As part of the Shelter/Referral Agency Name and Address, include the community's name or city where the Veteran is being supported (this is required).
- Under the "Nature of Assistance Required" section you can identify either:
  - Veteran status verification only (if the Veteran is not seeking/refuses further supports or resources currently); or
  - Identify the supports the Veteran is seeking (such as transportation, first month's rent, rental arrears, energy bill, assistance with food, housing start-up kit, furnishings, glasses, dental care, peer support, etc.). Someone from the local Royal Canadian Legion provincial office will reach out to the referral source to coordinate support.
  - If the Veteran is interested in assistance with exploring and accessing benefits through VAC, please also fill out this [Legion Claim Application](#) which will not only provide Veteran status verification, but allow the Royal Canadian Legion access to additional information to support the Veteran to access VAC benefits and services.

- Note for the Legion Claim Application the Veteran will also need a photocopy of government issued identification.
  - If the Veteran is a member of the RCMP, the Royal Canadian Legion will reach out to have an RCMP form filled out as well.
  - If the RCMP Veteran is willing, the Royal Canadian Legion will also assist in reaching out to the RCMP Veteran's Association for any supports they may be able to provide.
- The Veteran's signature must be provided in ink.

## Appendix B — Option 2:

### Process to Confirm Veteran Status through Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)



#### Option 2A: Calling VAC with the Veteran Present

The fastest way to confirm Veteran status through Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is to call the VAC National Contact Centre Network at 1-866-522-2122 with the Veteran present to provide verbal consent.

Explain who you are and that you are seeking a verification of Veteran status and that the person is present with you. Once status is confirmed, explain that they are experiencing homelessness and request the Veteran be referred to Case Management Services as per VAC protocols for further screening of their risk and need.

Key phrases or words that may aid in assistance include indicating that the Veteran is experiencing homelessness, that they are unstable in their housing, and/or that they have no cell phone or internet access.

#### Option 2B: Using My VAC Account or Sending Form(s) Separately

##### Section A: Veteran Status Confirmation

**Step 1:** Ask the Veteran if they have a [My VAC Account](#).

- **If yes**, it means they have already been confirmed as a Veteran. Proceed to Section B below.
- **If no**, continue with the following Section A steps below. You do not need to complete the steps listed in section B.

**Step 2:** Access and fill in the following forms:

- [Form 520](#) – Consent for Veteran Affairs to Disclose Personal Information to Third Parties. For detailed instructions on the completion of this form, please see below.
- [Form 928](#) – Consent for Veteran Affairs to Collect Personal Information from Third Parties

**Step 3:** Mail the completed form(s) to the address indicated on the form(s). Alternatively, you can send the form(s) to the Royal Canadian Legion Dominion Command office at [veteransservices@legion.ca](mailto:veteransservices@legion.ca) who can submit the forms more quickly on your behalf.

**Step 4:** Once forms are submitted and have processed, you may contact the National Contact Centre Network at 1-866-522-2122 or your contact at your local Veteran Affairs Canada office who will then release the following information:

- Confirmation of Veteran status
- Veteran Service Number
- VAC eligibility for programs and benefits

#### Section B: Electronic Form 520 Submission for Veterans who have a My VAC Account

*Use this process if the Veteran has a login for a My VAC Account*

**Step 1:** Have the veteran login to my VAC Account

**Step 2:** Search for Form 520 – “Consent for Veterans Affairs Canada to disclose Personal Information to Third Parties.”

**Step 3:** Fill out Form 520. For detailed instructions on the completion of this form, please see below. Once completed, have the Veteran submit the form electronically.

**Step 4:** If you have a contact for your local Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) office, contact them directly. If not, call the Veterans Canada National Contact Centre Network at 1-866-522-2122. Let them know you are working with a Veteran experiencing homelessness and request to be connected to your local VAC office and/or connect to an Intake Case Manager.

**Step 5:** Once connected to the local VAC office, advise the VAC Case Manager that you are a third party working with a Veteran experiencing homelessness and that the Veteran has submitted form 520 to share information with your organization. The VAC Case Manager will confirm consent to disclose information in the Veteran's file, and you may request the following information:

- Confirmation of Veteran status
- Veteran Service Number
- VAC eligibility for programs and benefits




## How to Complete Form 520


The numbers on the following figure correspond to the detailed instructions below. Refer to this figure when following the instructions to complete Form 520.

Veterans Affairs Canada / Anciens Combattants Canada		Protected B when completed.	
		CSDN ID <sup>2</sup>	File No. <sup>3</sup>
<sup>4</sup> Last name*	First name*	Middle name(s)	
<sup>5</sup> Date of birth (yyyy-mm-dd)*			
<sup>6</sup> Service No.(s)/RCMP Regimental No.(s) (if applicable)			
<sup>7</sup> I hereby give permission to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) to disclose my personal information to the following third party:			
Name (last name, first name)			
OR Name of organization		Telephone (Country Code, Area Code, No.)	
Mailing address (No., Street, Apartment No., PO Box, RR No.)		City/Town/Village	
Country	Province/Territory/State	Postal Code/ZIP	
Please indicate the information authorized for disclosure:*			
<input type="radio"/> All information held by VAC OR			
<input checked="" type="radio"/> The following information only:			
Confirmation of Veteran Status (VAC Service Number)			
Confirmation of receipt of VAC benefits/supports			
Name of VAC Local Case Manager/Agent working with the veteran			
I confirm that I have read and understand this form. This authorization will remain valid until revoked.			
<sup>9</sup> Signature		Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	

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Fields with an asterisk (\*) are required.  
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## **Detailed Instructions to Complete Form 520 (See Above Figure for Reference Numbers)**

1. Barcode: For VAC internal use.
2. CSDN ID: For VAC internal use.
3. File No.: For VAC internal use.
4. Name: Enter the full name of the Veteran (Last, First, Middle).
5. DOB: Enter the Veteran's date of birth (Year-Month-Day).
6. Service No.: Ask the Veteran for their Veteran Service Number. If they do not know it, ask for their Social Insurance Number. If they do not know that either, make a note in section #8 of the template.
7. Leave the "Name" blank and fill in "Name of Organization". Use your organization's contact information, including phone number and address.
8. Check the box "The Following Information Only". Input the following into the comment box below:
  - Confirmation of Veteran status
  - Confirmation of Veteran Service Number
  - Confirmation of VAC benefits/supports
  - Name and contact information of local VAC Case Manager (working with the Veteran)
9. Have the Veteran sign and date the Form.