

Tiny Home Village Reduces Homelessness Among Veterans

Providing homes, community and support services to help veterans transition back into civilian life

The Homes for Heroes Foundation (H4HF) builds tiny home villages to help homeless veterans transition back to civilian life. These villages provide housing, community, and support services. The modular homes are affordable, and the project has successfully helped veterans move on to independent living. H4HF aims to expand its model to other Canadian cities while helping other organizations use the model to support additional demographic groups.

3 Key Findings

- 1. Provide Transitional Housing for Veterans:** H4HF creates tiny home villages to offer safe, supportive housing for homeless veterans, helping them transition back to civilian life.
- 2. Leverage Cost-Effective Modular Construction:** By using modular construction, H4HF develops affordable housing solutions, allowing funds to be directed toward essential community spaces and services.
- 3. Foster Independence Through Support Services:** H4HF equips veterans with tailored support services—such as medical care, job training and counseling—helping them successfully reintegrate into society.

Project Scope and Expected Outcomes

The Homes for Heroes Foundation (H4HF) was created to help military veterans who return to civilian life and find themselves homeless. There are about 5,000 homeless veterans in Canada, many of whom experience mental and physical health issues, along with other challenges. H4HF's goal is to provide a caring and complete housing solution for them.

H4HF villages provide homeless veterans with a place to live, a community of peers and social supports tailored to meet their individual needs. These services include peer support, medical care, physical therapy, mental health services, employment training and counseling. By offering these resources, the villages give veterans the tools they need to successfully transition back into civilian life.

Building a Caring and Supportive Tiny Home Community

In early 2020, H4HF launched its tiny home project in Edmonton with 20 modular homes. It built upon lessons learned from the organization's Calgary village, which has 15 tiny homes.

Modular homes are built off-site in a controlled environment using the same codes standards as conventional buildings. Once finished, the 300-square foot tiny homes were moved to the Edmonton site. Each unit was equipped with everything needed for independent living.

The Edmonton village is designed like a military barracks, and includes professional landscaping, a community garden and a memorial area. There is also an amenity building and community spaces for a wide range of social services that help veterans transition back to civilian life. The amenity building and community spaces are barrier-free, and 10% of the units are accessible.

A Cost-Effective Approach to Social Support

Each tiny home cost \$67,000 to build—much less than a typical bachelor apartment in Edmonton, which cost between \$120,000 and \$160,000 at the time. Veterans pay \$600 a month in rent, which includes support services. In comparison, rent for a bachelor apartment is about \$800 a month, and this doesn't include any support services.

The H4HF project shows that modular construction is an appropriate and cost-effective way to create housing for homeless veterans. The lower cost helps to make room in the budget for community spaces and services that help veterans succeed in their transition to independent living.

Three Key Challenges to Consider

Modular housing also has other benefits, including faster construction, lower costs, reduced waste, better energy efficiency, and the ability to reuse the homes. However, the model has its challenges. The three main challenges H4HF experienced in their project were:

1. The high cost of land and the time needed to acquire it
2. Finding funding for ongoing operations
3. Securing approval for municipal zoning, as many communities don't allow tiny home developments

Overcoming these challenges took time and extensive consultation with the municipal government, funding partners, social service agencies and donors.

Impact and Future Directions

Since the project began, 83 veterans from the Edmonton and Calgary villages have moved on to life independently, a major accomplishment.

H4HF's goal is to have a tiny home village for veterans in every major Canadian city. In 2024, there are villages in Edmonton and Calgary, with similar projects nearly completed in Kingston and Winnipeg.

The organization believes their tiny home model can work for other demographic groups, including people experiencing homelessness, low-income earners, people with disabilities, residential drug rehabilitation and seniors. H4HF has responded to interest from other charities, nonprofit housing organizations and planners, sharing advice on how to design and implement projects of their own.

Project Team

Homes for Heroes Foundation (H4HF)

Program

[Affordable Housing Innovation Fund](#)

Get More Information

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Visit the [National Housing Strategy's Innovation page](#)