

# VETERANS MATTER 11/11 @ 7 RALLY TO HOUSE AMERICA'S HOMELESS VETERANS



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q. What is Veterans Matter?

A. Veterans Matter is an extremely innovative program of 1Matters.org that helps homeless veterans get off the streets and into shelters in your community, region, and nation – wherever we are needed most! It has a 100% success rate housing homeless veterans in the VA's **LONG-TERM** housing program, which has a 91% success rate keeping them housed. Veterans Matter was created in 2012 by Ken Leslie, himself a formerly homeless addict and CEO, to house 35 Toledo veterans. Urged on by Dusty Hill of ZZ Top and John Mellencamp to house vets in their home states. Ken expanded the program and has gained the support of 20-plus celebrities, including Katy Perry, Mitch Albom, Kid Rock, Gary Sinise, Ice-T, Kix Brooks, Susan Sarandon and many others. Last year the National Exchange Clubs joined the campaigns and nationwide held inaugural 11/11@7 rallies. Veterans Matter has now housed over ~~1,600~~3,000 veterans in over 100 cities nationwide.

### Q. What is the “Veterans Matter 11/11@7 Rally to House America’s Homeless Veterans”?

A. Once again this year, exchange clubs across the country will be coming together to host a rally in their community on Veterans Day (11/11) at 7 p.m., dubbed 11/11@7 Rally to End Veteran Homelessness.

Last year 4028 citiesclubs had fundraising events and this year we hope to double that.

***100% of the funds raised go to help house veterans locally or nationally, wherever the greatest need is. In other words, anywhere there is a veteran waiting for a home tonight, we will be there!***

### Q. What kind of 11/11@7 event should my organization host?

A. It can be anything you want! A walk, a rally, a dinner, an auction, a wine tasting, a chili cook-off – the possibilities are endless! Bottom line: All you need to do is find a location, invite your friends and help raise as much as you can to help as many veterans as we can!

**Q. Can my group partner with other clubs or organizations on 11/11@7?**

**A.** Absolutely! **In fact, we recommend it.** Using the Unity Model, invite and involve local veteran services organizations, VFWs, American Legions, veteran-friendly businesses, service groups and individuals passionate about helping house homeless veterans.

**Q. How do we handle donations?**

**A.** You have several choices. You can have the checks made out to Veterans Matter and mail them to Veterans Matter, 3450 W. Central Ave. Suite 108, Toledo, OH, 43606. Put your club name in the memo for proper credit or include a cover sheet if sending multiple checks. For credit cards, you can enter them at [VeteransMatter.org/Donate](http://VeteransMatter.org/Donate).

## **About Veterans Matter**

**Q. How does it work?**

**A.** The VA has an exceptional program called HUD-VASH. The Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) social workers find the veteran and veteran families with children living in their cars, on the streets and in the shelters. They help the veterans find their own apartment and then HUD-VASH pays the LONG-TERM rent until they can get back on their feet. The only thing stopping them is the deposit, which Veterans Matter pays directly to the landlord, allowing them to cross the threshold right then and sleep under their own roof tonight.

**Q. Why is Veterans Matter needed?**

**A.** To get a deposit from the existing programs, the veteran and their HUD-VASH social worker first have to apply to several programs around town and hope one of them still has some deposit money left for homeless veterans. If they do, the veteran waits the 2 – 4 weeks it takes to get an appointment and for them to process and mail the check. If they don't have money, the veteran has to beg for it from churches, VFWs and the like. Until then, the veteran (and their spouse and children) will be staying in their car, on the streets or in the shelters.

With Veterans Matter, once the veteran has found housing, the VA social worker logs into our secure, cloud-based online system with their laptop, smart phone, or any other device and enters the request for the deposit and hits send. Usually within minutes, often while they are still with the landlord, the social worker and landlord get an email from Veterans Matter approving the request and the check will be in the mail to the landlord the same day. And because celebrities like John Mellencamp, Dusty Hill, ZZ Top, Katy Perry, Kix Brooks and others fully support Veterans Matter, the landlord often will give the veteran the keys immediately. In other words, we have reduced a process from 2 – 4 weeks to literally minutes. That's Veterans Matter. We take care of our own.

**Q. How do you find the veterans? How do you know they are legit?**

**A.** We operate solely off referrals from the Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) social workers. By the time a social worker contacts us, they have already screened the veteran for legitimate homelessness, confirmed their military service, determined their capability to be

housed in the sustained HUD-VASH housing, found the veteran a place to live and negotiated a contract with the landlord. The veteran is now ready, willing and able to sign the lease if they can find the deposit. In other words, the VA staff do all of the hard work, we just eliminate the last barrier preventing a ready, willing and able homeless veteran or veteran family with children from crossing the threshold into a home.

**Q. What is the need?**

**A.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) annual physical census found over 437,000 veterans homeless in the United States. One in four homeless people in the U.S. are veterans. According to HUD's April 2012 VASH assessment, "Hands down, the most common obstacle faced by veterans during the lease-up process as described by HUD-VASH sites is a lack of funds for security deposits and other move-in costs." Veterans Matter eliminates that obstacle.

**Q. Who are the veterans served?**

**A.** Since 2012, Veterans Matter has housed over 1,6003,000 veterans in 1422 states. Including spouses and children, we've housed more than 1,6004,000 people, 24-26-23 percent of those are children! Fifty-seven percent served in the Army, 1920 percent in the Navy, 12 percent in the Marines, 10 percent in the Air Force and 1 percent in the Coast Guard. Twenty-two percent are Vietnam veterans, 21 percent served in Desert Storm and 14 percent served in Iraq or Afghanistan.

**Q. How much does it cost per veteran?**

**A.** Our national average is \$750 deposit. The actual cost is dependent on the area's cost of living. For example, our average in Washington, D.C., is \$1,400 while the average deposit in Indiana is \$500.

**Q. Can veterans or landlords access the system directly?**

**A.** No, only the VA's Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) social workers have access.

**Q. Do you follow up with the veterans after they are housed?**

**A.** Absolutely! The VA's long-term supportive housing program has a 91 percent success rate at keeping veterans housed and this is because once a veteran is housed, their VA social worker continues to connect them to other local community partners to help them get a job, car, furniture, enroll in college, enroll their children in grade school, help deal with any addiction or mental health issues, and generally help with whatever they and their family need to get back on their feet.

**Q. What about veterans who are addicts or mentally ill?**

**A.** The VA's Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) social workers work with each veteran individually to assist them in finding and enrolling in the programs and services they need to recover and obtain domestic autonomy. Because they are now housed it is easier to make sure they receive the care or medications needed. Due to this support the program has a 91 percent success rate of keeping veterans housed.

**Q. Do you help cover appliances, furniture, utilities, etc.?**

A. No, Veterans Matter's sole mission and purpose is to raise money to get the veteran off the streets and into housing. We've never seen a veteran die from lack of a couch, but we have seen them die with their faces frozen to the street due to a lack of housing.

**Q. Does Veterans Matter get reimbursed by the VA?**

A. No, we raise private funds, which are used to pay veterans' deposits/first month's rents to landlords as referred to us by the Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) social workers. We only raise as much as we need for a certain area and then we move on to the next greatest need. Bottom line: We take care of our own.

**Q. Will my donation stay in my local area?**

A. Maybe. We do our best to make sure donations stay local to help veterans in the immediate area where funds were raised or designated. But each state has a limited number of HUD-VASH vouchers allocated and there are some areas where there are no vouchers allocated or they have already been allocated. So if there is not a need for your community, we will use your donation in the next closest area of your state or region where veterans need us most. ***100% of the funds raised go to help house veterans locally, regionally or nationally, wherever the greatest need is. In other words, anywhere there is a veteran waiting for a home tonight, we will be there!***

**Q. What about salaries and administrative costs?**

A. Veterans Matter has only one mission: help get our veterans off the streets and into a place called home. That is our only job. We are not a fundraising machine; we are a mission. We raise only enough money to support the local HUD-VASH vouchers to get the veterans off the streets of your communities, region and nation and then we move on to the next area with the most need. This efficiency and laser-like focus allows us to be experts at our job and operate very quickly, at a low cost of operation.

Founder Ken Leslie believes the less we can pay in salary and expenses, the more we can use to help veterans. So we are quite particular about where the dollars go. We intentionally keep all costs as low as possible in order to help more veterans and eliminate every barrier a donor might have.

To give you an idea of how focused we are, Ken's budget does not include a huge travel budget. When he is asked to speak, the host group covers his travel costs. For important meetings, Ken "panhandles" Delta Frequent Flyer Miles from other CEOs and frequent travelers.

Bottom line is: If your desire is to help unhoused veterans living on the streets get housed, this is the fastest and best way to get that done, today.

**Q. Is Veterans Matter a nonprofit 501c3?**

**A.** Veterans Matter is a program of 1Matters, a nonprofit 501c3 sparked and supported by singer John Mellencamp in 2008. Checks can be made out to 1Matters or Veterans Matter and mailed to: Veterans Matter, 3450 W. Central Ave. Suite 108, Toledo, OH, 43606.