



# VA NATIONAL CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS

*Promoting data-driven, evidence-based solutions to end Veteran homelessness*

## **VA Homeless 101 Programs Overview**

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## Presentation Objectives

- VA Homeless Programs
  - Enhance Knowledge on Mission to End Homelessness-**The Goal**
  - Understand the Overview-**The Scope**
  - Increase Awareness of Intent and Coordination of Services-**The Approach**
  - Enhance Knowledge of Conditions of Homelessness-**The Layers**
  - Learn about Individual Program Services-**The Intent**
- Review of Program Services
- Opportunities, Linkages, and Leveraging Resources
- Education Opportunities
- The Center's Mission



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs The Goal

- Secretary's Plan to *End Homelessness among Veterans*
  - In 2009, the Secretary announced the Five-Year Plan to End Homelessness among Veterans.
  - This goal became part of the Federal Plan, put forth by the US Interagency Council on the Homeless.
  - Intent:
    - Enhance resource coordination, improve collaboration, create new programs, and develop research and policy recommendations to end Veteran homelessness.



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## Overview – Homelessness and Veterans The Scope

- Veteran homelessness declined by nearly half since 2010
- Since 2010, over 850,000 Veterans have been served
- Ending homelessness
  - 69 areas
  - 84 communities
  - 3 states
- Rare, Brief, and Nonrecurring



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs The Approach

- *Ending Homelessness among Veterans - Strategies*
  - Housing First Practices
  - By name identification – community engagement, coordinated assessment
  - Share and use of data
  - Community and stakeholder engagement
  - Coordination of services
  - Outreach throughout systems (law enforcement, hospitals, libraries, job centers, etc.)
  - Connections with housing, medical and mental health services, job opportunities, and vocational enhancement.



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## Continuum of Services and Special Populations

- **Typical community and VA services:**
  - Outreach
  - Residential
  - Rapid rehousing
  - Prevention
  - Services enhanced and infused
  - Permanent housing
  - Multi level case management



# Veteran Homelessness





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## Overview – Causes or Effects

- *Case Histories*
  - Gary – streets, unsuccessful, independent living with flexibility.
  - Willie – unclear background, excelled, house keeping, mail-room.
  - George – alcohol use, vulnerable, physical injury, incarceration.
  - George II – elderly, TBI, accosted, further injury.
  - Dale – HIV, guarded, sister, residential, VAMC

Connections with housing, medical and mental health services, job opportunities, and vocational enhancement.





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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs Program Intent

- Permanent - HUD VASH
- Prevention and rapid re-housing - SSVF
- Bridge, transitional, and outreach - HCHV / DCHV / GPD
- Immediate intervention and referral - Call Center
- Outreach and services, justice involved - HCRV – VJO
- Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCEs)
- Community engagement and enhanced access - Stand Downs
- Addressing Identified gaps and innovative services - New Models
  - HPACTs
  - Safe Haven
  - CRRCs
  - Other



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs

- **Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)**
  - HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between HUD and VA.
  - Eligible homeless Veterans receive VA provided case management and supportive services to support stability and recovery from physical and mental health, substance abuse, and functional concerns contributing to or resulting from homelessness.
  - Through the end of FY 2020, 84,991 HUD-VASH Vouchers were used by Veterans and their families.
- **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)\*\***
  - SSVF provides supportive services to very low-income Veterans families in or transitioning to permanent housing.
  - Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and other community partnerships to provide supportive services and to promote housing stability.
  - In FY 2020, SSVF served over 77,500 Veterans.



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs

- **Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)**
  - HCHV programs reduce homelessness among Veterans by conducting outreach to those who are the most vulnerable and are not currently receiving services.
  - *The Contract Residential Treatment Program* ensures that Veterans with *serious mental health* diagnosis can be placed in community-based residential treatment programs which provide quality housing and services.
  - In FY 2020, the HCHV program over 5100 Veterans left residential beds to move to permanent housing. Outreach services were provided to more than 120,000 Veterans.
- **Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)**
  - DCHV programs provide time-limited residential treatment to homeless Veterans with health care and social-vocational deficits.
  - DCHV programs provide homeless Veterans access to medical, psychiatric, and substance use disorder treatment in addition to social and vocational rehabilitation programs.
  - At the end of FY 2020, the DCHV program had provided residential services to over 4500 Veterans. The average number each year has been over 6000. This number for FY 20, was reduced secondary to pandemic protocols and reduction in admission.



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- **VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program**
  - The GPD program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments.
  - The GPD program offers communities a way to help homeless Veterans with housing and services while assisting VA medical centers by augmenting or supplementing care.
  - Over 10,600 beds exist in the GPD Program nationally - in 2020, 25,500 Veterans were served.
- **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV)\*\***
  - NCHAV provides toll-free number to assist homeless or at-risk Veterans and families.
  - Direct access to trained counselors, 24-hour assistance.
  - Screening and assessment.
  - Immediate referral to local homeless program coordinators to assist with VA or community resources.
  - In FY 2020, the Call Center received over 131,200 actionable calls.



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs

- **Health Care for Reentry Veterans Services (HCRV)**
  - HCRV program is designed to address the community reentry needs of incarcerated Veterans.
  - Reentry staff work directly in state and federal prisons.
  - Goal is to prevent homelessness, reduce impact of medical, psychiatric and substance abuse problems upon community adjustment.
  - In FY 2020, HCRV staff provided services to over 7,400 Veterans.
- **Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)\*\***
  - Ensure justice-involved Veterans have timely access to VA mental health, substance abuse, and homeless services, and other VA benefits.
  - Goal to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans.
  - In FY 2020, VJO staff provided services to over 42,300 justice involved veterans.



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs – New Models

- **Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT)\*\***
  - The H-PACT care teams provide homeless Veterans with medical care, case management, housing, and social services assistance to help them obtain and stay in permanent housing; reducing emergency department use and hospitalizations and improving chronic disease management.
  - Since the project launched in January 2012, through the end of FY 2020:
    - H-PACT had 81 sites actively enrolling Veterans, with
    - 17,100 Veterans actively enrolled (on a panel). 22,000 served annually.
- **Safe Havens**
  - Targets chronically homeless with mental illness and substance use problems.
  - Targets Veterans who have failed in traditional programs.
  - Does not require sobriety or compliance with MH TX as a condition of admission / continued stay. Environment of care is as non-intrusive as possible.
  - In FY 2020 -21 programs.



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## Overview – VA Homeless Programs – New Models

- **Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRC)\*\***
  - Strategically selected locations to test a “one-stop shopping” model program.
  - Secure store front community accessible space or partner with an existing community partners for space and services.
  - Showers and laundry on site or through referral; access to food and clothing services via non-profit community providers. Rapid referral to housing services (emergency and permanent). Medical and mental health services either on site or by referral.
  - 32 operational programs; estimated over 67,200 visits in FY 2020.
- **Developing Models**
  - Grant / Per Diem Program
    - Low Demand



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## Opportunities for Working with Veterans – Linking Services

- **Linking Services**
  - Each VISN or Network - NHC (Network Homeless Coordinator):
    - <http://www.va.gov/homeless/>
  - VA Medical Centers and VA Outpatient Clinics - Homeless Program Coordinators:
    - <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1&isFlash=0>
  - Many Vet Centers work closely with Homeless Veteran Programs and the community:
    - <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/vetcenter.asp?isFlash=0>
  - Direct assistance and referral available at VA National Homeless Veteran Call Center:
    - 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838)
    - <http://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp>
  - Veterans Service Organizations:
    - <http://www.va.gov/vso/>
  - County or State Veteran Service Officers:
    - Contact local or state government





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## Opportunities for Working with Veterans – Leveraging Resources

- **Leveraging Resources**
  - Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)
    - Grants for non-profit and community collaboratives for homeless prevention and rapid rehousing.
    - <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>
  - Department of Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
    - Section 8 and VA staff - provides permanent housing and case management.
    - Contact local Public Housing Authority and VA Medical Center Homeless Program Coordinator.
  - Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD)
    - Capital and operational funds for non-profits to provide transitional housing.
    - <http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp>
  - Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
    - Outreach, case management, and contracts with community-based organizations to provide residential care.
    - Contact NHC or local VA Homeless Program Coordinator.



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## Opportunities for Working with Veterans and Sustaining Services – Continued (VAMC)

- **Primary Care – or HPACT**
  - Enroll, enroll, enroll – includes primary, women vets, geriatrics
- **Mental Health Services**
  - Includes direct care, substance use, PTSD, groups, referrals
- **Specialty Care**
  - Includes rehab, dental, audiology, pain management, nutrition, TBI
- **Telehealth / My HealtheVet**
  - Video visits, remote care



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## Opportunities for Working with Veterans and Sustaining Services - Continued

- Linking Services – *knowing is linking* – *has anyone coordinated with?*
  - GPD Liaison
  - Community Homeless Service Provider(s)
  - Vet Center Point of Contact
  - County or State Veterans Service Officer
  - Veteran Service Organization(s) Point of Contact
  - VA Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator
  - VA Homeless Community Employment Services POC
  - VA Coordinated Entry Specialist
  - SSVF Point(s) of Contact
  - VA Medical Center - what services



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## Group Experience

- Case Studies – from the group
- Leveraging of:
  - Points of Contact
  - Provider Direct Engagement
  - Linking of Services



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## Vignettes

Jack is a 56-year-old Hispanic divorced, not-healthcare eligible Navy Veteran. He has been in two different GPD programs within the past years. Currently, he is receiving intermittent medical care for his hypertension and asthma. Jack has a history of suicidal ideation and mood disorder. He denies the need to connect with a mental health provider as he states he can keep things under control by smoking marijuana daily. Although he has been able to pay rent in the past, he is behind in rent payment for the last month. He is also having difficulty maintaining his apartment, difficulty with cleaning and completing his household chores.

Maria is a 44-year-old Caucasian Army Veteran. She is a single mother with two children, ages 4 and Maria is 40% service connected; however, she is struggling financially and has not paid rent for two months. She doesn't want to lose her apartment as she doesn't have a place to stay with her children. She has severe anxiety and worsening of her depression symptoms. She has missed two of her mental health appointments due to lack of childcare.



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## Veteran Benefits

- Service-connection
- NSC pension
- Aid and attendance (A&A)

<https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/>



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## Veteran Benefits

- Service Connection
  - Veterans can be service-connected from 0% to 100%.
  - Service-connected disability identifies that some type of disability, medical diagnosis, mental health diagnosis developed while the Veteran was on active-duty, or
  - Through the Veteran's service and exposure, a disability developed as a direct result post-service.
  - A Veteran can be service connected for multiple disabilities all rating different percentages.
- Non-Service Connected (NSC) Pension
  - Given to Veterans who have served during war-time.
  - Did not have a disability develop but post-military.
  - Did not accrue enough social security credits to qualify them for social security benefits.
- Aid and attendance (A&A)
  - Benefit given to Veterans needing assistive care from either a caregiver or within a home
  - This benefits assists Veterans with affording the required assistive care.

*Transitioning service members are all eligible for 5 years of healthcare through the VA.*



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## Additional Educational Opportunities - Archived

### **Helpful Archived Webinars:**

[Coordinating methods with internal stakeholders for the benefit of the homeless Veteran](#)

[Collaborating with Community Agencies and Employers to Improve Employment Outcomes for Homeless Veterans](#)

[Working with older homeless and formerly homeless Veterans](#)

[Complex Issues and Housing Solutions for Veterans Who Need to Register as Sex Offenders](#)

[Working with older homeless and formerly homeless Veterans](#)

[HERS: Aging Homeless Veterans](#)

[Cognitive Decline Webinar](#)

[Hoarding and Homelessness](#)

[Motivational Interviewing and Engaging Veterans with Active Substance Use Disorders, Part 2](#)

[Whole Health and Homelessness](#)

[Cultural Competence, LGBT, and Homelessness](#)

[Legal and Policy Foundations of VA's Homeless Programs](#)

[Military Culture and Veteran Homelessness](#)

[Ethics in Serving Homeless Veterans](#)

### **CIS Training Program:**

[VA Community Integration Specialist Training](#)





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## Additional Educational Opportunities - 2022

### Webinars from FY 2022:

- November 18, 2020: **Gambling among Veterans: Screening, Treatment, and its Association with Homelessness**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- December 16, 2020: **Mindfulness and Compassion with Veterans: Paying Attention to What Really Matters**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- January 12, 2021: **Virtual Outreach: Expanding Access for Homeless Veterans through VA-Issued Video Telehealth Tablets**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- February 17, 2021: **Integrating Data Analytics, Peer Support, and Whole Health Coaching to Address the Needs of Homeless Veterans**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- March 17, 2021: **Challenges Serving Veterans Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Instability in Rural Areas**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- April 21, 2021: **Establishing a Care Environment for Homeless Housing Settings: Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- May 19, 2021: **Best Practices for Addressing Substance Use Disorder**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- June 16, 2021: **Connecting Research to Practice: Veterans with Experience of Homelessness that is Unsheltered**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- July 21, 2021: **Peer Specialists in Homeless Programs – Screening for Suicide Risk in the Community**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- August 18, 2021: **Homeless Evidence and Research Synthesis (HERS) Forum: Where are we with Housing First?**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)
- September 15, 2021: **DEI Presentation Part 1 of 2: "Me in the Room: How Personal History and Our Understanding of Societal Systems Impact Our Work"**
  - [View Recorded Webinar](#)



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## Additional Education

- Podcasts:
  - [Podcasts on Self-Care for VA Homeless Program Staff](#)
  - [Battling Two Frontiers: Substance Use Epidemic during a Pandemic](#)
  - [Conversations about Racial Equity \(speaker.com\)](#)

National Center on Homelessness among Veterans –  
Education Page

[Education and Dissemination - VA Homeless Programs](#)

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs | Washington, DC 20420  
Media Relations | (202) 461-7600  
www.va.gov

December 2020

### Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Homeless Programs Office (HPO)

The United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) remains committed the goal of preventing and ending homelessness. We can and will get there.

No one agency or group can end Veteran homelessness alone. The effort to prevent and end Veteran homelessness is a partnership of Federal, State, local government and most importantly the local community. VA works with communities to help them develop the solutions that work best for them and their Veterans.

VA and our federal, state, and local partners, as well as non-governmental partners, recognize that ending Veteran homelessness is not a single event in time; rather, it is a deliberate effort made to achieve the goal, and continued follow-up efforts to make sure that progress toward achieving the goal is maintained.

Our goal is a systemic end to homelessness, which means communities across the country:

- Have identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Are able to provide shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants housing.
- Provide service-intensive transitional housing in limited instances.
- Have the capacity to help Veterans swiftly move into permanent housing.
- Have resources, plans, and systems in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future.

The ultimate goal is to make sure that every Veteran has permanent, sustainable housing with access to high-quality health care and other supportive services and that Veteran homelessness in the future is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

#### State of Homelessness

Significant progress has been made to prevent and end Veteran homelessness. The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States has declined by nearly half since 2010. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point-in-Time (PIT) Count estimates that on a single night in January 2019<sup>1</sup>, 37,085 Veterans were experiencing homelessness, which is 2.1 percent fewer compared to 37,878 reported in January 2018.

<sup>1</sup> As of December 2020, HUD has not released the PIT Count for January 2020.

VA Homeless  
Program Office –  
Fact Sheet  
(double click opens adobe  
doc)



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## The National Center on Homelessness among Veterans

- Promote and conduct research - causes and contributing factors.
- Identify and disseminate best practices – housing, income support, employment, partnerships.
- Integrate evidence-based and best practices, policies, and programs.
- Serve as a resource center, exchange of information, research and education, for federal and non-federal entities.



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## Summary

- VA Homeless Programs
  - Mission to End Homelessness – the goal
  - Overview – Current – the scope
  - Intent and coordination of services – the approach
  - Conditions of homelessness – the layers
  - Individual program services – the intent
- Review of Program Services and VAMC Services
- Opportunities, Linkages, and Leveraging Resources
- The Center's Mission



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