



# VHA Homeless Programs



Share the HPO newsletter so others can receive news and information about Veteran homelessness.

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance. To minimize the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, only Veterans who do not have access to a phone are to visit their closest VA medical center without calling in advance.



## Message from Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs Office

Welcome to 2021! With a new year comes new opportunities to help Veterans facing homelessness. VHA's [Homeless Programs Office](#) (HPO) is beginning this year energized by the prospect of continuing to offer innovative programs and services for those who are counting on us. We're able to offer such solutions based in part on the research and work of other governmental organizations that share our mission to end homelessness. Among these organizations is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

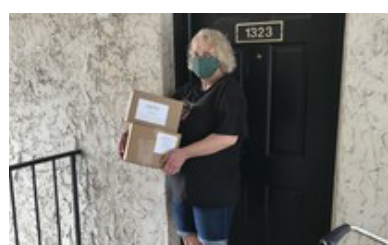
HUD's [Point-in-Time \(PIT\) count](#), an [annual effort](#) to estimate the number of Americans without safe, stable housing, is used to measure progress toward VA's goal of ending Veteran homelessness. In odd-numbered years, the local planning bodies that coordinate homelessness services in a regional area (these are called Continuums of Care, or CoCs) count both sheltered and unsheltered people. To maximize safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD has allowed CoCs to change their standard PIT count methodology this year. According to HUD, the unsheltered PIT count will offer information about how COVID-19 has impacted those who are experiencing homelessness. This is important information for VA, CoCs, and national partners to have to determine what additional resources are needed to serve this population.

As we move forward in 2021, we're also feeling motivated by the creative and meaningful ways our partners and colleagues have helped Veterans in the past 12 months. There are so many stories from people all over the country who have "stepped up" and shown great resolve and determination to help Veterans in need. We hope you enjoy their stories, highlighted below, as much as we have.

## Veteran Success Stories

### VA, United Way, and DoorDash deliver food supplies to Veterans experiencing food insecurity

To help reach Veterans who are facing food insecurity, VA and [Feeding Northeast Florida](#) teamed up with [United Way of Northeast Florida](#) and [DoorDash](#) to kick-start a pilot program to deliver nonperishable food to Veterans. Navy Veteran Celina Larkins lives in northeast Florida and participates in this pilot program. In September 2020, DoorDash began delivering her weekly meals.



[Read more.](#)

### VA offers housing assistance resources for Veterans facing homelessness

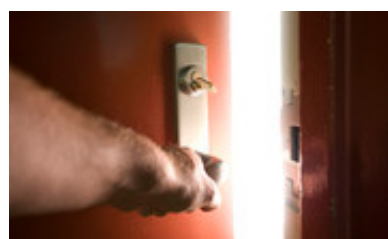
VA is working to help Veterans and their families maintain safe housing while the COVID-19 continues to threaten their economic stability. To combat this risk, VA is offering supportive services to low-income Veterans facing homelessness to help them find suitable housing. VA takes a [Housing First](#) approach – meaning that housing is considered a basic need that should be met quickly and without any preconditions.



[Read more.](#)

### Bill to assist Veterans experiencing homelessness during COVID-19 signed into law

On January 5, 2021, President Trump signed [H.R.7105 - Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020](#) into law. This bill addresses the administration of VA programs and benefits for Veterans experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.



[Read more.](#)

## HPO Resource Quick Links

- [Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\)](#) grantees are required to use the SSVF Homelessness Prevention (HP) Stage 2 screener again, effective January 1, 2021. This is in anticipation of a growing demand for limited HP resources as eviction moratoria have expired. For additional information on SSVF HP screening, please refer to the [SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening Companion Guide](#).
- VA [expands access to telehealth services during COVID-19 pandemic](#) for older, rural and homeless Veterans.
- VA Senior Advisor and Director of Community Engagement, Anthony Love, was on [The VFW Podcast: Episode 003 – Working Together for Veteran Welfare](#) to talk about VA efforts to decrease Veteran homelessness nationwide.

## HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates

VA is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans and VA health care personnel. We know you have a LOT of questions, and answering them quickly. We will continue to update the [COVID-19 vaccines at VA webpage](#) as new information becomes available.

## HPO Staff Spotlight: Q&A with Dr. Jillian Weber

Jillian Weber, PhD, RN is the [Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams \(H-PACT\) National Program Manager](#) and a member of the HPO COVID-19 Response Team.

**Q:** What do you enjoy the most in your work supporting HPO?

**A:** I really enjoy working with all the HPACT field staff and providing any national-level support whether that be education, training, or just a quick chat. There are 55 HPACT sites across the United States, and many have developed strong practices and robust patient panels that provide high-quality and culturally-sensitive care to Veterans in their communities. I also enjoy working with other homeless programs and staff within HPO and collaborating on projects and initiatives that support Veterans and address their needs.



[Read the full interview.](#)

## HPO Fact of the Month

### Did you know?

In fiscal year 2020 alone, VHA homeless programs served more than 229,000 Veterans, for a total of nearly 852,000 Veterans and their family members who have been placed into permanent housing or prevented from falling into homelessness since 2010.