

OCTOBER 2021

The Homeless Programs Office newsletter contains news and information about Veteran homelessness. Share this newsletter with others so they too can stay up-to-date.



## VHA Homeless Programs Office

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

### **Executive Director's Message | Around HPO | Resources COVID-19 Response | Staff Spotlight | Fact of the Month**

*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.*

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



[National Case Management Week](#) is a time to recognize case management professionals for their important roles in helping clients achieve optimum wellness and independence. We celebrate U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) case management professionals across the country for their untiring dedication and compassion in helping Veterans achieve their medical, occupational, and financial goals, and so much more. Their importance in connecting Veterans facing housing crises to the benefits and services they have earned and deserve cannot be overstated. VA case management professionals are integral in leading Veterans facing housing instability down the pathway to permanent housing, skills enhancement, improved income prospects, and greater self-determination.

[Read Monica's full message.](#)

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## [Resources for Veterans in Crisis: Suicide and Homelessness Prevention Facebook Live Recap](#)



In observance of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in September, HPO hosted a [Facebook Live event](#) to share information about the causes of suicide and homelessness among Veterans, how current events have exacerbated the risk of housing instability and suicide, and how to connect Veterans to housing resources and VA mental health services.

## **Around HPO**

### [Video on HUD-VASH: Providing Safe Housing and Supportive Services for Veterans](#)

VA recently produced a [video](#) educating viewers about the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, including how it combines [HUD Housing Choice Vouchers](#) with [VA supportive services](#) to help Veterans experiencing homelessness find and sustain permanent housing. If you are a property manager or landlord interested in helping end homelessness among Veterans, click [here](#) to learn more about the HUD-VASH program and how to participate.



We also encourage concerned citizens and our partner organizations to spread awareness of homelessness resources available to Veterans by sharing the video on their digital channels.

### [Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program Update - Shallow Subsidy Expansion](#)



As eviction bans and other COVID-19 related renter protections end, tenants across the country may be at increased risk of eviction. VA recently [expanded](#) the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program's Shallow Subsidy Initiative, which has awarded \$200 million to 234 nonprofits nationwide. This initiative will provide rental assistance to eligible low-income Veteran households to help address the widening gap between incomes and housing

costs. Visit [va.gov/HousingResources](https://va.gov/HousingResources) for the latest information and resources on eviction prevention, rapid rehousing, and homelessness avoidance.

### [Grant and Per Diem Program Update - VA Grants Improve Transitional Housing, Prevent Veteran Homelessness](#)

VA's Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program has provided supportive services and community-based transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness for three decades. On September 30, 2021, VA [awarded](#) \$116.4 million in Capital, Case Management, and Special Need Grants to more than 200 nonprofit organizations.



- Capital Grants allow community organizations to build or renovate facilities used by Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Case Management Grants support case managers, a position which provides services to help Veterans remain self-sufficient and maintain stable housing.
- Special Need Grants help facilitate housing stabilization for Veterans in one of the special need populations (i.e., chronically mentally ill, frail elderly, individuals who care for minor dependents, terminally ill or women).

These grants support organizations that provide transitional housing and supportive services for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

## [Status Query and Response Exchange System](#)



Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES) is a VA web application that provides VA employees and external homeless service organizations with reliable, detailed information about Veteran eligibility for VA health care and homeless programs. If your organization has a business need for SQUARES and you would like to become an authorized user, follow the instructions on [va.gov/homeless/squares](https://va.gov/homeless/squares). Click [here](#) to view the explainer video about how SQUARES helps Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

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## HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates



Life has been challenging and unpredictable since the start of the pandemic. If you or a Veteran you know is struggling to pay housing-related costs due to the effects of COVID-19, VA can help. VA and other government agencies offer resources that can assist Veterans and their families avoid homelessness. Click [here](#) to learn more.

VA encourages all Veterans, service members, and their families to learn more about COVID-19 preventive measures, including the benefits of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots. VA follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations on COVID-19 [booster shots and third doses](#). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine booster shots in September and it is anticipated that both the Moderna and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccines will be authorized this month. Additionally, the CDC now recommends a third vaccine dose for certain groups of people who have received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and have weakened immune systems.

VA will contact Veterans eligible for a COVID-19 booster shot based on the information in their VA health record. Please note this may take some time. Veterans who are not contacted by VA may contact their VA health care team to discuss eligibility and schedule appointments. Veterans should speak with their health care provider if they have any questions or concerns about COVID-19 treatments or vaccines.

## HPO Staff Spotlight: Anthony Warren



Retired Army combat engineer Anthony Warren is an inspiration to friends, family, and Veterans alike. After two overseas tours of duty and ten years in the military, Warren left the Army in 2001 and found assistance through several VA programs and services offered to Veterans, including the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. He is now a champion for programs that help Veterans transition seamlessly into civilian life. Click [here](#) to learn more about Mr. Warren's inspiring story.

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## HPO Fact of the Month

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) [Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\)](#) program recently collaborated with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and leading researchers to launch a new homeless prevention screening tool. This new tool was released to the public for national use on October 1, 2021, and incorporated into the current [Homeless Management Information System \(HMIS\)](#), a locally administered, electronic data collection system that stores personal information about Veterans or individuals who access VA homeless services.

Designed to aid in providing supportive services by identifying those at increased risk of homelessness, this screening tool will collect information and capture data to provide inclusive statistics on Veteran homelessness. The tool will further VA's goal to increase successful outcomes for Veterans and their families who are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness.

To learn more about the new homeless prevention screening tool, download the [SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screener Overview](#) fact sheet.

If you or a Veteran you know is at-risk of experiencing homelessness, please visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to access available prevention services and resources.