

Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION HOMELESS PROGRAMS OFFICE



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



This report reflects data as of end of fiscal year 2019 (Sept. 30, 2019) unless otherwise stated.
(Data from some programs are reported only by calendar year.)

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The Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs Office

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is dedicated to preventing Veterans and their families from becoming homeless, or if such an event occurs, ensuring it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience. Since 2010, VA has helped house or prevented more than 800,000 Veterans and their families from experiencing homelessness.

As Executive Director of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Homeless Programs Office (HPO), I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in a capacity that promotes a holistic approach to restoring the health and independence of our Nation's Veterans. HPO's programs and services are based on the belief that every Veteran should have a place to call home, can successfully reintegrate into their community, and has the support needed to lead an independent life. In the last two fiscal years, HPO has helped 124,900 Veterans and their families facing homelessness find or stay in their homes. HPO programs and services cover a wide breadth—housing solutions, employment assistance, health care, justice and reentry services, and more—to address the diverse needs of Veterans and their families.

The Veterans Health Administration's Homeless Programs Office FY2019 Annual Report presents a snapshot of the HPO programs and services that have helped put Veterans and their families facing homelessness on the path to a more independent, healthier life. These HPO programs and services are built on seven pillars—Outreach; Healthcare Treatment; Housing Solutions and Supportive Services; Community Employment (Income, Employment, Benefits); Community Partnerships; Data Analytics, and Research and Administrative Operations.

HPO exemplifies the progress that can be achieved when government agencies work together and partner with citizens and community leaders. These initiatives include HUD-VASH, a collaboration between the departments of Housing and Urban Development and VA that has helped house unsheltered Veterans, VHA's delivery of health care and case management services, and stand downs held by Veteran Service Organizations. Between 2017 and 2018, the total number of Veterans experiencing homelessness decreased 5.4 percent, and in 2019, that number dropped another 2.1 percent.

Along with cross-agency and interagency collaboration and partnerships with other agencies and organizations across the country, the support of the White House and Congress and the dedicated service of VA staff are getting us closer to the day when no Veteran is living on the street.



Monica Diaz

Executive Director,
Veterans Health Administration,
Homeless Programs Office

Homeless Programs Office



Through HPO's collaboration with multiple VA administrations and offices, other federal agencies, and numerous community-based partners thousands of Veterans and their families have successfully exited homelessness. In addition to delivering program services directly to Veterans, HPO provides grants to organizations to fill critical gaps in transitional housing, case management support, permanent housing, and other services. The breadth and impact of HPO's programs and services are illustrated in the following sections of this report:

- **Housing Programs**
- **Employment Services**
- **Health Care Services**
- **Veterans Justice Programs**
- **Community Programs**
- **Interagency Programs and Services**
- **Research**

Each section provides a brief description of specific programs and services along with data that shows the impact on and value to Veterans.

Overview of the Report



VA's housing programs are guided by the Housing First approach that is based on the premise that when Veterans have a place to call home, they are better able to benefit from supportive services. The key principles of Housing First as they are applied under VA's housing programs are: respect, warmth, and compassion for all Veterans; Veteran choice and self-determination; a recovery-oriented approach; and utilization of Harm Reduction strategies. Housing First features rapid, streamlined entry into a housing program with no preconditions such as sobriety or completion of alcohol or drug treatment for obtaining tenancy. As Veterans achieve their goals, establish recovery, and gain independence, the services they receive are continually adjusted to meet their needs.

Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program

HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between HUD and VA that combines HUD housing choice rental vouchers with VA case management services. Since 2008, HUD-VASH has awarded more than 100,000 vouchers and served more than 170,000 homeless Veterans. The HUD-VASH program is targeted to homeless Veterans with the greatest needs for case management and supportive services to maintain permanent housing. This includes Veterans with serious mental illness, physical health diagnoses, and substance use disorders. Once a Veteran and family members find permanent housing, they agree to participate in case management services designed to help them recover from the physical and mental health problems and other issues contributing to or resulting from homelessness. These services, delivered by the VA, may include mental health and substance use disorder treatment, primary health care, support for integration into the community, and employment assistance. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp.

HUD-VASH PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Boston-area HUD-VASH partnerships successful in housing Veterans

Strong community partnerships are vital to ending Veteran homelessness — and VA employees play a key role in building these relationships. The VA Boston Healthcare System and its employees who support VA's homelessness programs have forged exemplary housing partnerships that leverage HUD-VASH and other VA programs to help the most vulnerable Veterans get back on their feet. To read the full story of how the VA Boston Healthcare System's HUD-VASH team manages three successful partnerships that provide affordable housing to Veterans exiting homelessness, please visit: bit.ly/2k9L7zc.



MORE THAN 11,000 VETERANS FOUND PERMANENT HOUSING AND CRITICALLY NEEDED SUPPORT



NEARLY 25,000 HUD-VASH PROGRAM EXITS OF WHICH 54% WERE POSITIVE

Positive exits include Veterans who accomplished their goals and/or obtained services and no longer needed the program; found/chose other housing; and/or are no longer financially eligible for a HUD-VASH voucher. Approximately 17.6% of exits were for negative reasons and 28.4% of exits were neutral.

Housing Programs



Tribal HUD-VASH

According to the 2010 Census, more than 150,000 Veterans identified as American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) alone. Because many tribal members do not consider themselves “homeless” but “houseless,” sheltering in the homes of family or friends, most tribes do not have homeless shelters, safe havens, or other homeless resources. The Tribal HUD-VASH program seeks to house AI/AN Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness on or near their home reservations so they can live near their families and access culturally appropriate and traditional healing practices. Through a hybrid Indian Housing Block Grant, Tribal HUD-VASH combines rental assistance from HUD in the form of a sum of money, instead of vouchers like HUD-VASH, AI/AN Veterans enrolled in the program receive tailored VA case management and clinical services to help them exit homelessness.

For more information, please visit hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih/tribalhudvash.

TRIBAL HUD-VASH PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

An Oneida Veteran struggled with both homelessness and addiction. After enrolling in the Tribal HUD-VASH program, he went from living out of a backpack and sleeping outdoors to having his own fully-furnished apartment. With the assistance he received through the program, the Veteran has overcome many obstacles. Recently, he began his fourth semester of college business management courses and was granted visitation of his two young sons, which includes overnight sleepovers. After one and a half years of complete sobriety, an accomplishment he was unable to achieve before Tribal HUD-VASH, the Veteran has regained contact with his family and culture. Today, he participates in sweats and other cultural activities, successfully maintains stable housing, has filed for joint custody of his sons, and works hard rebuilding his life. This Veteran has expressed his appreciation on many occasions, stating that without Tribal HUD-VASH, he would still be on the streets and unable to see his children.



APPROXIMATELY 500 VETERANS ENROLLED

After Veterans are enrolled, they work with a VA case manager through a multi-stage process before they are housed. VA case managers screen the Veterans for VA eligibility, assist with gathering documents, refer the enrollees to the Tribally Designated Housing Entity for housing criteria screening, locate or identify available housing units, and then move the Veterans into housing.



MORE THAN 398 VETERANS HOUSED



76 VETERANS EXITED THE PROGRAM

Housing Programs

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program

SSVF is designed to rapidly re-house or provide guidance and case management services to Veteran families (defined as a single person, or a family in which the head of household or the spouse of the head of household is a Veteran) who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to a housing crisis. VA grants funds to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives to help Veteran families access a full range of community benefits designed to prevent homelessness. Through SSVF, Veterans are able to obtain VA and other benefits that may include health care, daily living services, personal financial planning services, transportation, legal services, childcare, and housing counseling. Time-limited payments to landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed childcare providers may also be provided so Veterans can stay in or acquire permanent housing.

For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.



MORE THAN 70,500 VETERANS SERVED



MORE THAN 20,600 CHILDREN IN MORE THAN 10,500 HOUSEHOLDS SERVED



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO NEARLY 9,500 WOMEN



82% OF THOSE DISCHARGED FROM THE SSVF PROGRAM OBTAINED PERMANENT HOUSING

SSVF PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Stable housing leads Air Force Veteran to better employment, more time with her children

Constance Hicks, a Veteran of the U.S. Air Force and a member of the Air Force Reserve, proudly served her country for eight years. During her military service, she attended Airman Leadership School and participated in phases I and II of the Medical Laboratory Apprentice program, ultimately serving in a medical support squadron. In recognition of her military service, she was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Air Force Achievement Medal. In 2010, Hicks received an honorable discharge.

Upon leaving the Air Force, Hicks moved from New Jersey to Chicago with her three young children to be closer to her family. Her mother graciously took the children in, while Hicks moved from place to place for sleeping accommodations, returning to her mother's house each morning to dress the children and take them to school. Her first attempts to secure employment resulted only in jobs through temporary agencies, some of which paid less than minimum wage and required commuting to Wisconsin. She barely earned enough to cover living expenses for herself and her children. Hicks eventually found employment at a local bakery, where she confided in a co-worker that she did not have a place to live. Hicks' co-worker connected her with a friend at Heartland Alliance Human Care Services, which administers the SSVF program. To read the full story on how SSVF helped Hicks gain access to VA resources, please visit: bit.ly/2GaeD1c.

Housing Programs

Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program

The GPD program awards grants to community-based agencies that provide transitional housing and supportive services to help homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. VA also provides per diem payments to non-profit organizations to help offset the operational costs of these programs. GPD grantees may choose to utilize different housing models to most effectively meet the needs of homeless Veterans in their communities. In FY2019, GPD awarded approximately \$30 million in new case management grants to 128 organizations to improve housing retention for formerly homeless Veterans and Veterans at risk for homelessness. VA also awarded about \$2.4 million to renew 11 special-need grants for supportive services for homeless Veterans with chronic mental illnesses, women Veterans, and Veterans who must care for dependents under age 18. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp.



OVER 23,000 VETERANS ENTERED GPD TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



OVER 13,000 HOMELESS VETERANS EXITED GPD TO PERMANENT HOUSING



OVER 30,000 VETERANS WERE SERVED BY GPD GRANTS

GPD PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Air Force Veteran had “a lot of help along the way”

After his four-year stint in the Air Force, Curtis May became an automotive drivability technician for the Dodge Corp. His area of specialty was resolving computer diagnostic problems. He worked with Dodge until 2002, when events in his life came to a head.

When his father died, May began turning to substances to cope with the loss. “I ended up in a little trouble.” In truth, he says, he began to experience “a whole bunch of trouble.” In addition to losing his job, he lost his marriage and family, became homeless, and had frequent interactions with the justice system.

While he was in jail, May was contacted by a Veterans Justice Outreach employee, who helped him find hope through the Walla Walla VA Medical Center. In 2014, May entered the Residential Rehabilitation Unit at Walla Walla VA. After completing the program, he entered a GPD-funded program that provides transitional housing for homeless Veterans. To read the full story of how a GPD-funded program and VA’s other homeless programs helped May, please visit: bit.ly/2m8OJSF.

Housing Programs



Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) Program

The DCHV program provides residential care and interdisciplinary clinical care to Veterans with complex and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, medical conditions, and/or psychosocial needs. Veterans receive medical, psychiatric, vocational, educational, or social services to help them overcome the conditions that inhibit their exiting homelessness. The program emphasizes self-care and personal responsibility and provides long-term support throughout homeless Veterans' transition to stability and housing independence. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/dchv.asp.

DCHV PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Once homeless, White House VA Hotline employee now helps others find stable housing

After returning home in 2008 following a deployment to Iraq with the Army, Donald Wolfer did not seek treatment for his health and mental health issues and lost everything he held dear, including his home. Unable to hold down a job or maintain his relationship with his wife and kids, he was evicted and ended up living in a tent on the streets in West Virginia. A few months later, a Telamon food bank staffer in Martinsburg noticed Wolfer's old military ID and suggested he speak to LaDonna Weller, Telamon's Veteran representative.

Weller told Wolfer about VA's programs for homeless Veterans, and put him in touch with Roberta Wilson, a case manager in the DCHV at the Martinsburg VA Medical Center (martinsburg.va.gov) in West Virginia. Wolfer soon began receiving assistance, including mental health services, to help him get back on his feet. Read the full story of how Wolfer received support and assistance from the DCHV by visiting bit.ly/2BmmZiE.



MORE THAN 7,000 VETERANS SERVED



MORE THAN 2,000 OPERATIONAL BEDS AVAILABLE

Housing Programs

Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) Program

The CWT/TR program is a unique residential mental health program that provides beds in a rehabilitation-focused setting to help Veterans successfully reintegrate into their communities. The work program offers multiple vocational options leading to job development and placement. At the end of FY19, there were 41 CWT/TR programs with 559 operational beds and 733 completed episodes of CWT/TR treatment. The average length of stay was approximately 140 days.

Also in FY19, at the time of discharge, 56% of the Veterans eligible to work had secured competitive employment, and an additional 11% remained in CWT, where they continued to receive vocational support following their discharge from the residential treatment program. During this time, 62% of Veterans were discharged from CWT/TR to permanent housing; an additional 15% went to another mental health residential rehabilitation treatment program, a health care institution, or transitional housing; and another 11% were sent to temporary housing or stayed with family or friends.

For more information, please visit va.gov/health/cwt/veterans.asp.



759 ADMISSIONS



771 DISCHARGES



1,086 UNIQUE PATIENTS SERVED

CWT/TR PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence program helps Veteran organize his life for success

George Leidhecker served 12 years in the U.S. Army, and has resided in the CWT/TR House on VA Butler's campus since 2015. CWT/TR is a clinical vocational rehabilitation program that provides an opportunity for Veterans to gain valuable long-term employment skills and the resources they need for a hopeful future. "With the CWT/TR program, I am able to focus not only on scheduling appointments, but also recovery-based activities," said George. "I needed a lot of help organizing my life to be successful, and each day is another opportunity to become a little better." George has held several positions, including a few at VA Butler, and currently works at WD Wright Contracting, Inc., in traffic control operations thanks to a new partnership established this year with VA Butler's Vocational Rehabilitation Department. The company trains and certifies Veterans as "flaggers" and has hired two local Veterans in the CWT program. "CWT/TR, has been very supportive of me and my goals, never pushing too much, but also staying firm to help show me the path forward. I hope I have done well by the program, as well as been a good example to my peers who might follow my lead," said George. While he plans to continue with his role at WD Wright, George also hopes to pursue a machinist job in the future. His next big step is to own a car so that he can get to and from any job he chooses.

Housing Programs



Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) Program

The EUL program, managed by VA's Office of Asset Enterprise Management, provides a mechanism for a non-VA entity to develop and operate supportive housing for homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families on VA property near VA health care facilities. The 52 housing EULs that have been executed have housed 2,548 Veterans. VA enters into a long-term ground lease with a private, not-for-profit, or local government entity that develops, builds, finances, operates, and maintains the housing. Along with providing Veteran residents with close proximity to VA health and mental health care, EUL housing often has onsite computer and laundry facilities, fitness centers, haircuts, and supportive services ranging from financial management to job training.

EUL PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Enhanced-Use Lease authority develops underutilized land and buildings

HELP Veterans Village at Perry Point VAMC in Maryland consists of 75 new and rehabilitated housing units for homeless and at-risk of homelessness Veterans. Developed under VA's EUL Program and in partnership with HELP USA, a national nonprofit for the homeless and people in need, the Village reached full capacity within four months of opening. One Veteran resident is David Barber, a Navy Veteran who had been homeless for ten years. After moving into transitional housing provided by the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Barber received services that got him to a point where he was ready to move to HELP Veterans Village at Perry Point. To read more about the housing provided under the EUL program for Veterans experiencing homelessness, please visit: bit.ly/2SOB8Lw.



3 EULS PROVIDED 215 UNITS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



2 PREVIOUSLY EXECUTED EUL PROJECTS PROVIDED 119 HOUSING UNITS FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



7 EUL PROJECTS ARE NOW IN DEVELOPMENT

Housing Programs

Employment can be a key element in helping Veterans climb out of homelessness or avoid it all together: VA's employment services assist Veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness with securing and maintaining jobs in their communities.

Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services (HVCEs)

The assistance provided by HVCEs complements VAMC-based services and serves as a bridge to employment opportunities and resources in the local community. HVCEs has more than 150 Vocational Development Specialists who serve as Community Employment Coordinators (CECs) at most VAMCs across the country. CECs at a limited number of VAMCs are funded by the Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) and HUD-VASH programs based on local needs. CECs work with staff from VA's homeless programs, Compensated Work Therapy (CWT), Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E), and other programs to identify employment resources available to homeless and at-risk Veterans. They also collaborate with community, state, and federal partners (outside of VA) to provide training and support services that are not available within VA and help employers and Veterans address any issues with workplace adjustment. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/employment_programs.asp.



APPROXIMATELY 9,325 VETERANS EXITED HOMELESS RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS WITH COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

(GPD, CWT/TR, Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans, Low-Demand Supportive Housing, and Healthcare for Homeless Veterans – Contract Residential Services)



EMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS HOUSED THROUGH HUD-VASH EXCEEDED THE NATIONAL TARGET BY MORE THAN 5%



HVCEs PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Tech for Troops bridges the digital divide for Veterans in need

In 2014, the VA began partnering with the nonprofit organization Tech for Troops in Richmond, Virginia. Tech for Troops' mission is to eradicate Veteran homelessness and poverty by gifting refurbished computers to Veterans in need and providing computer skills training through its three programs: IT Training, Technology Reuse, and Computer Recycling. In 2018, Tech for Troops provided training for more than 75 Veterans in Richmond, 100 in Wisconsin, and approximately 70 in West Virginia. To read the full story about Tech for Troops' collaboration with VA employment specialists and CECs and the positive impacts of this partnership, please visit bit.ly/2S6U9Jc.

Employment Services

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program

VR&E helps Veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find, and retain suitable jobs. VR&E staff determine Veterans' abilities, skills, and interests for employment and then provide services that include on-the-job training, job-seeking support, resume development, interviewing skills, and direct placement.

Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program

Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) is a VHA clinical vocational rehabilitation program offered at every VAMC. CWT's mission is to assist Veterans with overcoming barriers to employment and secure and maintain community-based competitive employment. Career planning and job retention are elements provided in all CWT services that include:

- **Transitional Work** — a pre-employment vocational program that operates in VAMCs and business and industry.
- **Supported Employment** — intended for Veterans with psychosis or other severe mental illnesses such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or physical disabilities due to conditions such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) who cannot function independently in employment without intensive, ongoing support services.
- **Community Based Employment Services** — a range of services leading to direct placement in competitive employment, where an employer hires a Veteran who receives continuing clinical support.
- **Vocational Assistance** — a set of assessment, guidance, counseling, or other related short-term services designed to help Veterans search for, interview, and succeed in their jobs without the need for ongoing follow-up support.
- **Supported Self-Employment** — business practices, training, networking opportunities, and linkages with community financial institutions to help Veterans with disabilities achieve the benefits of self-employment.
- **Supported Education** — individualized supports for Veterans engaged in education and training programs as well as linkages with educational facilities to help Veterans achieve their instructional goals.

For more information, please visit va.gov/health/cwt/veterans.asp.

CWT PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Army Veteran got his life and his daughter back thanks to VA's Compensated Work Therapy program

Across from Craig Robbins' desk in his large office in the VA Palo Alto Health Care System's carpentry building is a picture of his daughter at her eighth-grade graduation. For Robbins, that photo is more than office décor, it's a reminder of what pushed him to change his life for the better years ago.

"My biggest priority was being a better father and making sure my daughter is raised the right way," Robbins said, explaining why he worked so hard to turn his life around from where it was a decade ago. To read the full story of how Robbins turned his life around with help from VA's Compensated Work Therapy program, visit bit.ly/2IR38CQ.



62,935 UNIQUE PATIENTS SERVED



43.1% OF 13,637 NEW ENROLLMENTS WERE HOMELESS

Employment Services

Quality health care services are immensely important in the effort to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. Veterans whose health is successfully managed are able to direct their attention to other life needs and goals, including employment, education, caring for their children, and more.

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)

HCHV's mission is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by connecting them with health care and other needed services. Through outreach, case management, and Contract Residential Services (CRS), HCHV helps place chronically homeless Veterans — especially those with serious mental health diagnoses and/or substance use disorders — in VA or community-based programs that provide quality housing and services that meet their specialized needs. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/hchv.asp.



NEARLY 6,300 VETERANS EXITED HCHV CRS PROGRAMS TO PERMANENT HOUSING



68 DAYS WAS THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN A HCHV CRS



64% OF VETERANS EXITING CRS PROGRAMS ENGAGED IN VA MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND 80% RECEIVED ONGOING VA MEDICAL SERVICES



137,008 VETERANS RECEIVED HCHV OUTREACH SERVICES



10,754 VETERANS RECEIVED HCHV CASE MANAGEMENT



HCHV PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Signing an apartment lease returns hope and pride to formerly homeless Veteran

Carl Davis spent many years sleeping in various shelters throughout Dallas in addition to spending some nights sleeping under a bridge. After three years at one Dallas shelter, he met team members from the Homeless Mobile Medical and Mental Health Clinic (northtexas.va.gov/services/homeless/mobile_unit.asp), operated by the VA North Texas Health Care System (northtexas.va.gov). The mission of the mobile clinic is to find homeless Veterans like Davis and help them enroll in VA health care, get screened for housing, and access other available resources. To read the full story of how HCHV helped Davis move into an apartment after several years without a stable home, please visit: bit.ly/2khyv9q.

Health Care Services



Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACTs)

H-PACT is an innovative treatment model that VAMCs across the country are implementing to provide a coordinated “medical home” specifically tailored to the needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness. Selected VA facilities assign Veterans to an H-PACT that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff, and others who provide medical and mental health care, case management, housing, and social services. This team provides and coordinates Veterans’ health care along with the services needed to obtain and stay in permanent housing. Five core elements distinguish H-PACT from traditional primary care models. These include: (1) reducing barriers to care, (2) providing one-stop, wrap-around services that are integrated and coordinated, (3) engaging Veterans in intensive case management, (4) providing high-quality, evidence-based, and culturally sensitive care, and (5) being performance-based and accountable using real-time data. Veterans enrolled in H-PACT experience on average 31% fewer emergency room visits, have an average of 24% fewer hospitalizations, receive care at almost \$10,000 less per year than a homeless Veteran enrolled in a standard PACT, and report more positive patient care experiences. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp.

H-PACT PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

H-PACT increases Veteran access with the use of real-time data

To address the growing number of homeless Veterans who had two or more Emergency Department (ED) visits or an inpatient admission during the previous 3 months, the H-PACT at the Charleston, South Carolina VAMC created and implemented a hot spot patient flag. These “Hot Spot Veterans,” as indicated by data in the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC), often use the ED for low-acuity issues at high cost and lack primary care follow-up. The patient flag was embedded in a Veteran’s electronic health record for ED and inpatient clinicians to be made aware of the Veteran’s medical and social needs while also providing H-PACT with specific contact information. Since implementation, the number of hot spot Veterans continues to decrease while primary care follow-up with H-PACT has increased. This innovative project not only improved primary care access for hot spot Veterans in Charleston but created an opportunity for more Veterans experiencing homelessness to receive coordinated, high-quality, individualized and culturally sensitive care.



OVER 80 ACTIVE H-PACTS AT 55 VHA SITES



OVER 24,000 VETERANS SERVED

Health Care Services

Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRC)

CRRCs operate in collaboration with local community-based homeless providers and other federal and state partners engaged in providing services to Veterans experiencing homelessness. The Centers provide “one-stop” access to housing, health and mental health care, job development programs, and other VA and non-VA benefits in a central, community-based location with the lowest barriers possible. There are currently 31 CRRCs located in strategically selected areas across the country. For more information, please visit: va.gov/homeless/crrc-list.asp.



OVER 73,000 VISITS TO CRRCs



Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP)

Dental care ranks among as one of homeless Veterans’ top three unmet needs. HVDP provides dental care to Veterans through VA programs such as DCHV, GPD, CWT/TR, HCHV (contract bed) and Community Residential Care. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/dental.asp.



17,672 VETERANS SERVED

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV)

Veterans at risk of homelessness, living on the streets, or facing a housing crisis can reach VA 24/7 by contacting the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV) at 1-877-4AID VET (1-877-424-3838). VA medical center (VAMC) staff; federal, state, and local partners; community agencies; service providers; and others in the community also can call the hotline to make referrals and get more information. Please visit va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp for more information.



NCCHV RECEIVED 127,860 CALLS



NCCHV SENT 66,680 REFERRALS TO VAMC HPO STAFF NATIONWIDE

Health Care Services



Veterans Justice Programs (VJP)

Incarceration is one of the most powerful predictors of homelessness, and VA's Veterans Justice Programs serve Veterans at any point in their involvement in the criminal justice system, including reentry into the community from incarceration. The goal of VJP is to provide these Veterans with resources, services, and mental health and other clinical treatment to prevent homelessness and ensure a lasting rehabilitation. VJP staff conduct outreach in prison, jail, and court settings, and work with local law enforcement to identify and contact justice-involved Veterans and facilitate their access to VHA mental health, substance use, and homeless services and other VA services and benefits as appropriate. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp and va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp.



MORE THAN 58,300 JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERANS RECEIVED SERVICES



551 VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS AND OTHER VETERAN-FOCUSED COURT PROGRAMS WERE SUPPORTED

VJP SUCCESS STORY

Helping Veterans readjust: "I go to prisons and inspire hope."

On any given day in the United States, an average of 181,500 Veterans are incarcerated — constituting about 7% of the prison population, according to the Department of Justice. Former Army infantryman Raymond Perez was one of those Veterans.

After reconnecting with the VA with the help of an Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) specialist, Perez was able to get back on his feet with the help CWT (va.gov/health/cwt/veterans.asp), a clinical vocational rehabilitation program offered at every VA medical center. Today he is a peer support specialist with the Phoenix VA CRRC. CRRCs, located across the country (va.gov/homeless/crrc.asp), provide Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with one-stop access to housing, physical and mental health care, career development, and other VA and non-VA benefits.

"What I do is go to different prisons throughout the state of Arizona and I inspire Veterans with hope," explains Perez. "I let them know, 'I've been there. I've been incarcerated. If I can get out of it, you can too.' We're sharing our stories and offering different tools for Veterans to succeed once they get released from prison. Each and every one of us has to decide for ourselves when we are ready to make a change. My job is to walk alongside them and reassure them that there is hope." To read the full story of how Perez works with Veterans Justice Outreach to help formerly incarcerated Veterans avoid homelessness, please visit: bit.ly/2k9JMIG.



170 PRO-BONO LEGAL CLINICS WERE ONSITE AT VAMCS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH LEGAL PROVIDERS

Veterans Justice Programs (VJP)

VHA Homeless Programs Office of Community Engagement

The Office of Community Engagement serves as a trusted resource and a catalyst for the growth of effective partnerships at the national, state, and community level and as a facilitator/access point for public and private entities interested in partnering with VHA to benefit homeless or at-risk Veterans and their families. Partnerships are established to enhance supportive services and resources to Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Community Engagement works with VA's Office of Strategic Partnerships, the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs and a contractor who provides the personnel to develop communication tools, partnership referrals and strategic messaging to make Veterans who are homeless aware of services available to them. This approach also targets other VA employees, state and local organizations, both private and non-profit and other interested stakeholders.



VETERANS MATTER HELPED HOUSE 2,600 VETERANS

Veterans Matter provides deposit support to Veterans who have a HUD-VASH voucher and have identified an apartment, helped house 2,600 Veterans.



FEEDING AMERICA SERVED 600,000 MEALS TO OVER 30,000 VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization with a nationwide network of over 200 food banks, has helped set up 17 Veterans food pantries in VAMCs across the country. Through this partnership, 600,000 meals have been served to over 30,000 Veterans and their family members.



BOMBAS DISTRIBUTED 40,000 PAIRS OF SOCKS TO VETERANS

Bombas, a high-quality socks manufacturer, distributed 40,000 pairs of socks to VAMCs/CRRCs to be given to Veterans who are currently homeless.



MILITARY OUTREACH USA DISTRIBUTED HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS TO OVER 40,000 VETERANS EXITING HOMELESSNESS

Military Outreach USA provides a network of faith-focused partners with the tools, programs, and resources that help members of the military community. Household essentials and other items have been distributed to over 40,000 Veterans exiting homelessness.



PROGRESSIVE INSURANCE KEYS TO PROGRESS HELPED COORDINATE THE DONATION OF VEHICLES, ALONG WITH 6 MONTHS OF FREE INSURANCE, TO 635 VETERANS

Progressive Insurance Keys to Progress, a corporate relationship developed in 2015, has helped coordinate the donation of vehicles, along with 6 months of free insurance, to 635 Veterans experiencing transportation hardships, in which 73 Veterans were enrolled in VHA Homeless Programs.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPLES INITIATED THE END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS (EVH) CHALLENGE

National Association of Elementary School Principles initiated the EVH Challenge in September of 2018, which involved 6 schools in different states competing to collect donations of household essentials, cash, and other items to help their local VAMC help Veterans exit homelessness and successfully transition into permanent housing. The EVH Challenge ended in December with the Henry Zarrow International School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, declared the winner; collecting donated items valued at more than \$2,000. In 2019, the second annual EVH Challenge involved 6 different schools in different states, ending on November 15, 2019. The Kaohao School in Honolulu, Hawaii, won the Challenge with the students collecting items valued at more than \$3,200.

Community Programs and Services

Stand Downs

Stand Downs are one to three-day events held by community agencies in partnership with VA to provide Veterans experiencing homelessness with essential services and support, including health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing, employment, and substance use disorder treatment. For more information, please visit va.gov/homeless/events.asp.



320 STAND DOWNS REACHED MORE THAN 75,500 VETERANS

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups)

Project CHALENG enhances coordinated services by bringing VA together with community agencies and other federal, state, and local governments that provide homeless services to assess and develop plans to meet the needs of homeless Veterans. CHALENG includes two components: CHALENG meetings and the CHALENG survey, which includes the perspective of Veterans as well as VA and community providers. For more information about the project and to see the full details of the top 10 unmet needs for Veterans and the demographics of the participants, please visit va.gov/homeless/challeng.asp.

STAND DOWN SUCCESS STORY

In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefields to a place of relative security and safety. At secure base camp areas, troops could take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care, mail and receive letters, and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in a safe environment. Today, Stand Down refers to a grassroots, community-based intervention program designed to help the nation's homeless Veterans on any given night "combat" life on the streets.

To learn more about how VAMCs use Stand Downs to provide Veterans experiencing homelessness with essential services and support, visit bit.ly/2kce0La.



Community Programs and Services

Veterans Benefits Assistance Outreach Program

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) funds Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinators (HVOCs), located at 20 regional offices, who work full time to provide access to VA benefits and information through outreach efforts to homeless Veterans and Veterans at risk of being homeless. VBA also has Homeless Veterans Claims Coordinators (HVCCs) in its other 36 regional offices. HVCCs specially label, control, and expedite the processing of claims by homeless Veterans and those at imminent risk of homelessness, including Veterans involved with the criminal justice system, as well as report on the prioritization of homeless claims activities. In FY19, VBA personnel participated in over 1800 events designed to assist homeless Veterans.

Additionally, VBA was a major content contributor in VA's collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that is intended to provide a framework by which VA can effectively provide information and access services for BOP inmates who are Veterans as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 101(2) or who submitted a claim to VA for a benefit for which status as a Veteran is required.



EXPEDITED 42,989 COMPENSATION CLAIMS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS (AVERAGE OF 116 DAYS TO COMPLETE)



EXPEDITED 2,155 PENSION CLAIMS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS (AVERAGE OF 69.6 DAYS TO COMPLETE)



Excess Property for Homeless Veterans Initiative

This program provides for the distribution of the federal government's excess personal property such as sleeping bags, hats, coats, footwear, and other items to Veterans experiencing homelessness. VA distributes the majority of this surplus property at Stand Downs conducted by community partners serving Veterans experiencing homelessness and their families.

Mortgage Foreclosure Assistance

VA works with servicers to assist borrowers with VA guaranteed loans per the Loan Guaranty Service to avoid foreclosure.

Interagency Collaboration and Services

National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans (NCHAV)

NCHAV, established by section 713 of the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016, is active in research, model development, education, and policy analysis, to promote recovery-oriented care for Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Research conducted and supported by NCHAV includes assessing the effectiveness of programs; identifying and disseminating best practices that are integrated into polices, programs, and services for homeless or at-risk Veterans; and serving as a resource for all research and training activities carried out by VA and other federal and non-federal entities with respect to Veteran homelessness.



POOL OF 22 AFFILIATED RESEARCHERS EXPANDED TO 36

Researchers focused on the causes of homelessness to discuss opportunities to partner on research projects.



30 PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS ON HOMELESS VETERANS AND 10 RESEARCH BRIEFS



SPONSOR OF THE VA HSR&D SOTA (STATE OF THE ART) EVENT ON HOMELESSNESS AND SUICIDE



25 RESEARCH-FOCUSED EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Including research to practice webinars, special presentations, and research roundtable events for various stakeholder groups across the country.



A SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL MEDICAL CARE ON “MULTIMORBIDITY IN HOMELESS POPULATIONS” EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED IN FY 2020



19 STUDIES COVERING A RANGE OF TOPICS: EPIDEMIOLOGY OF HOMELESS VETERANS, EMPLOYMENT, PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS, RAPID REHOUSING, DEMENTIA, FINANCIAL LITERACY, AND SUICIDE



HOMELESS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM WENT LIVE IN SEPTEMBER 2019

This program offers all VA staff (over 4,500 employees) providing care to Veterans experiencing homelessness an opportunity to demonstrate competency in working with homeless populations.



CLINICIAN TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAM ON EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPIES

For 14 homeless program clinicians who treat Veterans experiencing homelessness and two training consultants in Cognitive Based Therapy for Homeless (CBT-H) Veterans. Future plans include soliciting other networks for similar training opportunities.



OVER 3,500 PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED 12 NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS

Topics included Ethics, Working with Veterans Required to Register as Sexual Offenders; Behavior Management; Opioids in Rural America; Traumatic Stress and Organizational Dynamics; Race and Homelessness: Principles of Leadership in the Community; Evidence-Based Practices; Money Management for Veterans; Whole Health Approaches; Military Culture.



At the community level, VA is working to identify every homeless Veteran by name and putting processes in place to secure permanent housing and supportive services for each of them. As of April 2020, 78 communities and three states — Connecticut, Delaware, and Virginia — declared an end to Veteran homelessness. These communities are an inspiration to others and proof that ending Veteran homelessness is not an impossible feat.

By inviting collaboration between relevant VA departments and external key stakeholders, VA continues its efforts to end and prevent homelessness among Veterans, community by community. Working with communities nationwide has revealed a number of promising practices that VA has, in turn, shared broadly in an effort to further its mission to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. Innovative and promising practices that have been documented to help VA staff and partner organizations ensure that no Veteran is sleeping on the street include comprehensive street outreach, landlord engagement strategies, and peer housing location assistance groups.

With much work still to be done, VA continues to cultivate new partnerships to fill critical gaps in affordable housing, employment, job training, and other essential areas. Because partners often fulfill needs that VA, by law, cannot, their efforts are essential in providing Veterans with the support they need.

Moving forward, VA will continue to capture promising practices, collect program performance data, and develop strategic partnerships to help more Veterans exit homelessness. Veterans nobly answered the call to serve, so our nation has an obligation to be there for them when they are in need. This is especially true for the most vulnerable Veterans — those who are experiencing or are at risk for homelessness.

Conclusion

