

REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS



20th ANNUAL REPORT

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans
20th Annual Report**

HISTORY

On December 21, 2001, P.L. 107-95, the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001, became effective. The Act revised, improved and consolidated provisions of law providing benefits and services for homeless Veterans and authorized an Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV). In response to its provisions, the Committee was established on March 1, 2002, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 2066. The Committee's mission is to advise and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and to Congress on issues affecting homeless Veterans. Additionally, the Committee assesses the needs of homeless Veterans to determine whether VA and other programs and services are meeting those needs.

MEMBERS

The Secretary selects Committee members from experts knowledgeable in treating mental illness and substance abuse disorders, as well as those adept at developing permanent housing alternatives for lower-income populations. Additional experts selected by the Secretary include State Veterans' Affairs officials, community-based service providers, advocates of homeless Veterans and homeless individuals in both the civilian and Veteran populations. The members serve without pay, in accordance with the Committee's charter.

A brief biographical summary of each Committee member is attached (Attachment 1). Attachment 2 lists the Committee Support Staff and Ex-Officio Members.

INTRODUCTION

This is the 20th Annual Report filed by the ACHV. As the Committee that advises you on ways to reduce and end Veteran homelessness, we are pleased that the Administration and Congress have continued to prioritize ending homelessness among Veterans. We recognize the historic progress VA and its partners have made. Since 2010, Veteran homelessness has been reduced by more than half. New data show an 11% decline in Veteran homelessness between 2020 and 2022 — the biggest drop in more than 5 years. We are not aware of any other social problems in the Nation that have seen such a dramatic reduction.

In order to make substantial gains for ending Veteran homelessness nationally, we wholeheartedly agree that VA should stay its course and continuously improve previously-adopted models, including Housing First, that led to these dramatic reductions. We believe that combining this with the recommendations set forth below would accelerate progress.

This year, the Committee focuses on aging, transitioning Service members, suicide prevention and employment. The Committee applauds VA's recent efforts in 2022 in launching the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant leveraging community-based providers to address Veteran suicide. This legislation improved the communities' capacity to address the needs of Veterans struggling not only with mental health challenges but with homelessness, which is often co-occurring.

As the aging Veterans population continues to increase, we deeply believe that we should recognize that our geriatric Veterans need to get extra focus and attention in the coming years. We also know that people of color, Native Americans and LGBTQ+ Veterans are disproportionately represented in the population of Veterans experiencing homelessness that we serve. As such, we recognize equity should be centered in all VA strategies to end Veteran homelessness moving forward.

As we noted last year, we need to look closer at the social determinants of health across the board and adopt a more holistic approach with alignment between VA and its community partners across employment, aging, military transition, health care and housing with the express intention of keeping Veterans safe, stably housed and productive participants in their communities.

Since the authorization and implementation of ACHV, we have been pleased that most of our recommendations have received concurrences, and we hope that they remain under active consideration by the Secretary and Congress for implementation. Our recommendations are based on data, personal knowledge and experience, as well as information provided in person and in writing from a variety of sources, including direct input from Veterans experiencing homelessness, community partners and stakeholders. We have focused on matters we believe should be emphasized.

We want to highlight a recommendation that was included in last year's annual report with which VA concurred in principle: to consolidate and elevate how VA's programs are led and directed. We are interested in understanding how work in that direction continues to move forward.

We applaud VA and its community partners for their heroic efforts to advance quality of care as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic. We also encourage continued collaboration with other Federal partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Our recommendations are grouped under three main headers:

1. Geriatrics and Aging Veterans;
2. Transitioning Service Members and Suicide Prevention; and
3. Employment Service.

Recommendation 1: Geriatrics and Aging Veterans

There is a critical need for enhanced onsite services within existing site-based permanent supportive housing, which houses high numbers of aging Veterans and Veterans with complex care needs which can be exacerbated by their homeless experience. There are various models that are employed with success in many parts of the country, including VA Medical Foster Homes and Community Residential Care, as well as other Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) special housing types. However, these models are prohibitively difficult to implement in higher cost-of-living areas and for Veterans who are extremely low income with physical, mental and behavioral issues that limit acceptance in “higher levels of care” facilities. In addition, Veterans often prefer to age in place and do not want to leave their current housing even if a placement can be found. Others need more support to maintain stability and prevent a premature placement to a higher level of care facility.

Nonprofit housing providers and our partners at VA need to figure out how to increase onsite supportive services for these Veterans. The San Francisco VA Health Care System piloted a geriatric-enriched housing model in Northern California called Veterans Village. This site has seen success and yet even they noted challenges of providing consistent support services to attend to needs of connection to community, unit habitability, hygiene and independent functioning. This is due to the nature of how these services are contracted out, the availability of such services, and that no two Veterans tend to have the same provider. This is an inefficient system and raises issues of trust with Veterans when their provider frequently changes. Veterans Village in Colma showed that bringing services to Veterans where they live is key.

There is still more that VA needs to do to care for Veterans living in permanent supportive housing, including providing a dual approach to services with a medical and community-based service model. Many of the needed supports include maintaining unit and personal hygiene, assistance with self-administration of medication, connecting Veterans to services and events in the community, and providing transportation to medical appointments and grocery stores. These can be provided by community-based staff at permanent supportive housing buildings who already have the connection to Veterans given their proximity and around-the-clock staffing.

With this in mind, contracting out for these additional critical support services can increase engagement in care at VA, reduce the use of emergency medical services, and prevent premature health decline, especially for those Veterans who refuse to give up their housing even if there is the ability to move to a more appropriate level of care. Additional on-site supportive housing staff will also enhance the team approach to care that VA currently employs in models such as Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams and other patient-aligned care teams. This shared responsibility of care between VA and the community could also have a positive impact on staff retention given the current toll that inadequate services can take on team members who continually have to

manage vicarious trauma, burnout and workplace stress while caring for our most vulnerable Veterans.

Recommendation 1A: ACHV Recommends that VA engage with and learn from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) as they ramp up the Veterans Support to Self-Reliance Pilots starting in early 2023, where the state will provide one-time funding over the next three years. These pilots will add the aforementioned key services to Veteran site-based supportive housing. This promising program seeks to show the impact an enhanced staffing model will have on keeping Veterans housed with onsite care available to them when they need it and are ready to engage. These pilots will document best practices that can also be used to improve permanent supportive housing models nationwide and in the planning of new supportive housing sites so that providers are equipped to serve those Veterans most in need. This information can then be used to assess the VA funding levels necessary to ensure Veterans remain stably housed with the onsite support services they need. **VA should publish early lessons learned from this California Pilot by May 2024 and at the end of the three-year period.**

VA Response: Concur in Principle.

VA is aware of the CalVet pilots, which increase supportive services for aging Veterans residing in permanent supportive housing. As the pilots have aims similar to those employed by VA's HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Aging and Disabled Veterans Initiative, VA concurs that bilateral engagement and learning from both efforts could result in the identification of best practices for this Veteran population. VA can provide consultation with participating organizations on reporting lessons learned from the CalVet pilots. Since CalVet is the funding institution and likely has plans for evaluation, more in-depth VA involvement in evaluation and publishing findings may require a formal memorandum of understanding and shared funding or personnel with CalVet for VA to be involved.

Recommendation 1B: ACHV recommends that VA provide contract funding to pay for the staffing needed for permanent supportive housing sites to provide enhanced care and services, such as peer supports, addressing unit habitability and independent functioning, providing transportation to and from medical appointments and grocery shopping, and other supportive services that often require planning and more direct assistance for this population of Veterans. VA should establish a plan for contract funding by January 2024 and begin contract funding by January 2025. While local VAs may provide many of these services, there are often issues of caseload capacity, timing constraints, costs to the Veteran, or a lack of access on weekends and after hours when these supports are needed. Site-based care by community-based providers known and trusted by the Veteran is often the best way to prevent premature decline and increase engagement with their community and with VA. VA currently has models such as the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) and Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) programs, which provide support services to

Veterans living in community-based settings that can be used as models for VA to establish a new contracting process for enhanced site-based supportive services.

VA Response: Concur in Principle.

VA concurs that enhancing the on-site resources available to aging, formerly homeless Veterans residing in permanent supportive housing is essential to housing stability and allowing Veterans to age in place. Toward that end, VA offered an enhanced staffing opportunity to HUD-VASH programs operating in project-based settings specifically set aside for aging and disabled Veterans in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. The first round of this opportunity resulted in the award of 51 enhanced staffing positions—including Social Workers, Recreational Therapists, Nursing, Occupational Therapists, Certified Nursing Assistants, Physical Therapists and others—at 18 VA Medical Centers (VAMC) across the country. A second opportunity was made available in FY 2023 and resulted in the award of 49 enhanced staffing positions at 23 VAMCs.

As with all staffing requests, the National HUD-VASH Program Office allows individual VAMCs to determine the mechanism for hiring the awarded positions (e.g., via VA employees or contracts). VA supports filling these positions in the way that is most expeditious and best serves local Veteran need. VA does not support the recommendation that enhanced staffing be provided exclusively via contract.

Recommendation 2: Transitioning Service Members and Suicide Prevention

As a result of the 2018 Executive Order 13822, the relationship between the VA Department of Defense (DoD), and Department of Homeland Security has drastically improved in support of our transitioning service members. The development and execution of a *Joint Action Plan Supporting Veterans during their Transition from Uniformed Services to Civilian Life* continue to introduce well-needed initiatives to enhance the transition process, equipping communities to prevent homelessness and suicide amongst Veterans. However, with all the advancements to get in front of homelessness and suicide, there remain hundreds of thousands of Veterans who did not benefit from this intentional pre-transition equipping, Solid Start, and personal touches that service members now receive 365 days prior to and post-separation. For example, Veterans transitioning prior to 2020 have very little awareness of VA's Military Life Cycle Modules or the Women's Health Transition Training that are now available. Since no one can predict a service member's mental health once they are outside of the Armed Forces, service members should be allowed to navigate through scenario-driven exercises intentionally and independently. This will validate their comprehension of VA and non-VA tools acquired during the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) in a timely manner.

Recommendation 2A: ACHV recommends VA adopt the Army's “preparation” model of Be-Know-Do, emphasizing the “DO” in addition to static instruction (words, slides and quizzes) used to prepare service members for post-military success. Service members should create and “DO” real-time response scenarios from wholeness to homelessness, depression, loneliness, suicide, unemployment and food insecurities, where service members are required to identify assistance and solutions both nationally and once relocated in their local communities. VA should adopt this recommendation by January 2024.

A Capstone that includes real- world scenario driven, check-on-learning will provide confirmation of the effectiveness of the TAP program for the service member, DoD and VA in advance of post military assistance being needed. It will also create a memory for the Veteran to apply if faced with homelessness and/or thoughts of hopelessness/suicide in the future.

On-the-spot evaluations will be value added for off-setting the low survey rates of response by TAP eligible and non-eligible service members participating in VA's Office of Outreach, Transition, Economic Development, Post Separation Transition Assistance Program Assessment Outcome Study: in 2019 - 2.9% and in 2020 - 13.4%. This will also capture results and data to prevent potential problem areas in advance.

VA Response: Non-Concur.

Each year, approximately 200,000 Service members separate from the military. The military-to-civilian transition involves a tremendous breadth and complexity of benefits, tools, partners, information and counseling resources. VA understands the importance of providing just-in-time resources to empower transitioning Service members, Veterans and their families to make critical decisions regardless of when they transitioned.

In response to section 552 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2019 (P.L. 115-232), VA redesigned the VA Transition Assistance Program (TAP) course and overall TAP curriculum. Changes went into effect worldwide on October 1, 2019. Through increased interactivity, real-life examples and customizable resources like personalized checklists, the VA Benefits and Services course already provides greater access to information and resources about the benefits Service members have earned and the services available to them. There are checks on learning throughout the course, similar to the above recommendation. In addition, there is a redesigned [VA's Benefits and Services Participant Guide](#), Version 5.0, released January 2023 with quick response (QR) codes that make it easy to reference resources related to topics of importance at the time of need for Service members, spouses and families.

Topics in VA's Benefits and Services Participant Guide include family support, disability compensation, housing, education, employment and health care benefits.

VA will continue coordinating with our TAP interagency collaborators and listening to the voice of participants via the Transition Assistance Participant Assessment and the Post Separation TAP Assessment Outcome Study to guide us in enhancing and redesigning the VA Benefits and Services course. Future redesigns will adhere to principles of adult learning and will include scenario-based learning and benefit-specific micro-learning opportunities designed to enhance learning.

Recommendation 2B: ACHV recommends the VA update VA's Benefits and Services Participant Guide to make it Veteran friendly and to share the new post-2019 initiatives (online and in print) that are now available to the Veterans who separated before 2020 and distribute it in a feasible manner (online, direct email, print, advertisement, partner relationships) to all Veterans and Veteran caretakers via boots-on-the-ground organizations: Veteran Service Organizations, Veteran Centers, and other VA and community partners. This recommendation should be completed by May 2024.

VA's Benefits and Services Participant Guide is a curriculum product provided to current transitioning Service Members and their families/caregivers who attend the in-person, instructor-led course held at DoD installations. Although TAP provides a link to VA's Benefits and Services Guide on their website, it is an Active-Duty curriculum support tool and not a Veteran support tool.

The front of [VA's Benefits and Services Participant Guide](#), clearly states "Active Duty," yet it contains pertinent information for Veterans as well. Modules 1-6: "Navigating Your Journey," "Supporting Yourself and Your Family," "Getting Career Ready," "Finding a Place to Live," "Maintaining Your Health," and "Connecting with the Community," contain timeless information for Veterans and can be instrumental in preventing both homelessness and suicide if Veterans were made aware of its existence.

VA Response: Non-Concur.

VA meets the goal of this recommendation through the [VA Federal Benefits Handbook for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors](#). VA's Federal Benefits Handbook for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors is one of VA's most popular publications and provides information on benefits and services currently available by law and regulation, including health care, non-health care benefits, education and training benefits and more. VA's Benefits and Services Participant Guide is a curriculum product specifically designed to accompany the VA Benefits and Services course, a mandatory element of the TAP that all transitioning Service members must attend. Accordingly, the guide is printed and shipped to over 300 military installations worldwide and provided only to Service members attending the mandatory VA Benefits and Services course. However, VA does make the participant guide available online to those not attending the compulsory course, including military spouses, Veterans, caregivers and the public.

Beginning in January 2024, the VA Benefits and Services guide will only be available digitally—online.

Recommendation 3: Employment Services

In 2022, the employment work group researched the similarities and differences within the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Homeless Veterans Re-Integration Program (HVRP) and how these programs can work in concert to support Veterans' transition out of homelessness. The workgroup has also reviewed reports from the [Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training and Employer Outreach](#) for reference and alignment. Through this research and work, an additional letter was sent to DOL from several HVRP grantees recommending closer collaboration between the two agencies. This recommendation letter highlights the ripple effect of the work from the ACHV and energy for continued improvement and advocacy for our Veterans community.

We believe that the VA should work to prioritize Veteran employment by both enhancing the VA's existing programs and integrating other agency programs through collaboration. **ACHV recommends that VA establish a 120-day task force dedicated to the exploration of how Veterans' employment is being or could be prioritized and incorporated into all VA programs. The taskforce should also provide strategies and actionable recommendations on how VA can work more closely with other Federal partners to establish a concerted effort regarding employment for Veterans transitioning from homelessness. VA should include an ACHV member as a member of this task force for improved transparency to this committee. VA should convene the task force in 2023 and publish the results by May 2024.**

VA Response: Concur in Principle.

VA agrees that employment services and resources are a critical component of ending Veteran homelessness in order to increase access to permanent housing and improve housing stability. Employment decreases the risk of suicide; provides an improved quality of life; increased self-confidence and independence; opportunities for socialization; and a decreased reliance on institutional care. Therefore, an extensive range of VA employment services are available to homeless Veterans and those at-risk of homelessness in addition to ongoing collaborations with Federal collaborators, in particular the Department of Labor (DOL).

These programs and services include the following:

For Veterans, including homeless Veterans, who have a service-connected disability impacting their ability to work, **Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) Veteran Readiness and Employment program (VR&E)** provides the following five support-and-services tracks:

- Reemployment track;
- Rapid access to employment track;
- Self-employment track;
- Employment through long-term services track; and
- Independent living track.

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Vocational Rehabilitation Service provides recovery-oriented clinical vocational rehabilitation services, integrated within treatment, to assist Veterans living with mental illness, physical impairments and/or psychosocial conditions to obtain and maintain meaningful community-integrated employment. VHA Vocational Rehabilitation Service utilizes evidence-based and informed models and includes Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) and Vocational Assistance. CWT consists of Individual Placement and Supported Employment, Transitional Work, Community-Based Employment Services, and in some locations, Supported Education and Supported Self-Employment. Veterans are referred via clinical consult.

Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES) provides employment services and resources to Veterans participating in VHA homeless programs. HVCES staff are embedded in homeless programs within VAMCs; complement existing medical center-based employment services; and are a bridge to employment opportunities and resources in the local community. HVCES is staffed by Vocational Development Specialists who function as Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) and Employment Specialists. CECs are funded at each VAMC. The HCHV and HUD-VASH Programs have funded Employment Specialists at a limited number of VAMCs based on local needs.

HVCES staff ensure a range of employment services are accessible to Veterans who have experienced homelessness. These Veterans may need individualized support to overcome barriers preventing them from returning to work such as: a poor work history; lack of transportation and appropriate clothing; history of justice involvement; and co-occurring substance use and/or mental health issues.

HVCES partners with DOL programs such as Veterans' Employment and Training Services, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), Senior Community Services Employment Program and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs as well as working closely with DOL-funded National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center which provides training and technical assistance to its grantees and other organizations who are committed to helping Veterans experiencing homelessness find employment.

In addition, VA's SSVF Program encourages grantees to partner with HVRP, or other employment support programs to assist participants with reaching economic self-sufficiency by the end of the 2-year Shallow Subsidy rental assistance.

Because of the availability of employment services for homeless Veterans provided by VA as well as collaborations with DOL programs and locally-determined community and state partners who provide training and support services to homeless Veterans, VA does not believe a task force is warranted at this time and recommends focusing on the continued provision of these services and partnerships.

CONCLUSION

As we continue to acknowledge the many challenges Veterans face, we are confident that VA in partnership with community stakeholders will remain strong and committed in our collective efforts to end homelessness among Veterans. We look forward to the improvements that will undoubtedly flourish as a result of the current experience. We appreciate you and your staff's steadfast commitment to the honorable men and women who have served this great Nation and your openness to our recommendations.

Biographies of Members of the Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans

Jennifer Leimaile Ho is the seventh Commissioner of Minnesota Housing, appointed by Governor Tim Walz in December 2018. She has been working to end homelessness since 1999, first as executive director of Hearth Connection and later as deputy director at the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Her roles have focused on the intersection of health and housing, particularly health care financing and improving outcomes associated with supportive housing.

Jennifer served as the Senior Advisor for Housing and Services at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Obama Administration and worked with First Lady Michelle Obama to launch the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.

She currently serves on the board of the National Council of State Housing Agencies and the MelvilleCharitable Trust. Jennifer received her bachelor's degree in philosophy from Bryn Mawr College.

Tammy Bellofatto is the Executive Director of Bayaud Enterprises in Denver, Colorado. She has been working in the vocational field for more than 11 years with disadvantaged populations. During the last 7 years, she has primarily worked with homeless Veterans. She wrote and administered a large Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program in the Greater Denver area.

When a homeless Veteran enters her services, she does not just assist them with employment. Her team also works with VA and other Veteran service providers to help stabilize the Veteran, and wrap around services are the key to success. One of her greatest success stories is when a homeless Veteran accessed services. The Veteran was connected to the Supportive Services for Veteran and Families Program and not only obtained housing, but her program also assisted the Veteran in obtaining a career at VA earning \$65,000 per year.

She is a community leader and former Chair and current member of Denver's Road Home Employment Subcommittee. She works with more than 60 service providers in Denver to assist homeless and at-risk individuals gain stability. She works with the local continuum of care, tying employment and housing together for a lasting solution.

She gets to go to work every day and see that Veterans Service Organizations make a difference in the quality of life for Veterans experiencing homelessness. Even if it is a cup of coffee and a conversation, she is there to support Veterans to the level they are ready. Some may take a few days to assist, and others may take a few years, but we move at their pace, so they feel comfortable with the assistance they are receiving.

Veterans are proud people, and it may take a while for them to understand that we are here with a hand up to get them the services they deserve, as they are the amazing people who served our country. She believes that she would add value to the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans as she leads teams that support Veterans experiencing homelessness. She has coached her teams to listen to Veterans' experiences and how to use a one-on-one approach to walk with them on their journey to sustainability. She is an industry leader on employment issues with homeless Veterans and believes she can shed light on how housing, health care and employment are essential to ending Veteran homelessness.

Brad Bridwell has 21 years of experience working with homeless individuals. He has dedicated the past 17 years to specifically assisting homeless Veterans to successfully reintegrate into their communities. Currently, Mr. Bridwell is the Director of National Operations for Cloudbreak Communities, a special needs housing developer for homeless Veterans that has developed more than 3,000 units of housing for Veterans. Previously, he was employed as Arizona's first Homeless Veterans Services Coordinator at the Arizona Department of Veterans Services and was responsible for coalescing stakeholders to create, implement and evaluate the state's effort to end homelessness among Veterans. Mr. Bridwell served as a key leader in Project H3: Home, Health, Hope, a local implementation of the 100,000 Homes Campaign, uncovering critical innovations in "Housing First" models for people experiencing long-term homelessness and who are medically vulnerable. He has played a key leadership role in Project H3 Veterans' Employment and Training Services, Maricopa County's initiative to end chronic homelessness among Veterans.

In his previous employment as the Arizona Director for United States Veterans Initiative, the Nation's largest non-profit dedicated to the successful reintegration of homeless Veterans, Mr. Bridwell helped establish more than 200 beds of housing and services between its Phoenix and Prescott operations by using VA's Grant and Per Diem Program; Department of Housing and Urban Development; city and state HOME programs; and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits among other sources.

His Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, established in Phoenix, Arizona, led to "Best Practice" recognition by its funding entity, the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Mr. Bridwell holds a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor's in Social Work from Arizona State University. Also, he has served as the Board Chair of the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness and is a board member of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Karl Calhoun has been a public social service executive for over a decade. Currently, he is the Director of Safety Net Programs and Partnerships at Los Angeles (LA) Care Health Plan, the largest publicly operated health plan in the United States. He oversees the Housing and Homeless Services and Supports Unit.

He is an accomplished and passionate professional with more than 17 years of experience in social services, coupled with a Master's in Clinical Psychology. His experience includes operational leadership, program startups and developing and implementing effective programs/services for vulnerable populations, with proficiencies in leading high-performing teams. He is experienced at addressing homelessness among emancipated former foster youth, Veterans and those receiving health care through Medi-Cal. His current work involves effective implementation of the housing community support services under the CalAIM initiative for medical recipients in LA County. Karl is thankful to be working with the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans team in support of our Veterans.

Tramecia Garner, LPCC is the Chief Operating Officer and Housing Director at Swords to Plowshares in San Francisco, California. Prior to this new role, she was the Associate Director for Housing and Residential Programs since 2016. As a member of the executive-level management team, she works alongside the Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer and other senior management staff regarding agency operations, budget and strategic planning. She manages many of the agency's direct service programs, provided in Oakland and San Francisco, California, which include Supportive Services for Veteran Families, Employment and Training, VA's Grant and Per Diem Service Centers, Outreach and Drop-In Case Management and Mental Health Services. She provides direct management of the various housing programs to include: Health Care for Homeless Veterans programs-DeMontfort House and Safe Haven located in San Francisco, California. She also manages six Permanent Supportive Housing sites for Veterans and their families who were formerly homeless or chronically homeless in San Francisco, California. These sites include more than 260 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-VA Supportive Housing (VASH) households and 170 non-HUD-VASH units (Continuums of Care and Rental Assistance Demonstration, section 8). Also, she was directly responsible for managing the Grant and Per Diem Program (which included Special Needs Chronically Mentally Ill, Bridge Housing and Frail Elderly beds); however, it was surrendered in 2017 to increase permanent housing options for Veterans.

In addition to her leadership role within Swords to Plowshares, she is very active with local advocacy and oversight bodies such as the Continuum of Care, Veterans Coordinated Entry Steering Committee and is currently the Co-Chair of the Supportive Housing Providers Network. In 2018, she was selected by National Alliance to End Homelessness to participate in the Trans-Atlantic Practice Exchange. As a result, she traveled to London, England, to learn about Veteran homelessness and shared her perspective and experience with providers in the United Kingdom. Ms. Garner obtained a Master's Degree in Professional Counseling and Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

from Georgia State University. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in the State of California.

Sharon Green is a native New Yorker and retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, entrepreneur and author with more than 30 years of leadership and financial management experience. She is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Alettes Consulting Group, LLC (pronounced al-ay-thace), providing leadership coaching, speaking and training for corporate executives, non-profit organizations, Veterans and individuals globally.

As the Chief Operations Officer and Legacy Member, Women Veterans Interactive, Inc. (WVI), Sharon continues to play an active role in fulfilling the WVI mission of meeting women Veterans at their points of need through advocacy, empowerment, interaction, outreach and unification. Through Operation Safety Net, a unique WVI program that provides emergency funding to address the critical needs of women Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of being homeless, she strives to bring awareness to provide emergency funds to those in need. In conjunction with the organization's financial literacy program, she ensures that women Veterans are educated and equipped to excel beyond yesterday's economic hardships, while adapting and overcoming the new challenges presented by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Sharon was also essential in building a proactive WVI workforce development program that is successfully equipping women for sustainable employment, while eradicating homelessness and reducing suicide among the increasing population of women Veterans.

In addition to unifying, equipping and connecting women Veterans, nationally, Sharon has expanded her leadership expertise as a member of the President's Advisory Council for the more than 25,000 global member John Maxwell Team (JMT), where she is instrumental in serving the JMT tribe and facilitating innovative training that is transforming the leadership culture in the Nations of Guatemala, Paraguay and Costa Rica.

Sharon received her Army commission as a Financial Manager after graduating with honors in 1988 from Howard University, earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Accounting. In 1994, she earned a Master of Science in Business Administration degree from Boston University. Throughout her almost 24 years of serving her country, she has led and held oversight of thousands of Service members and civilians, while managing pay systems and billions for the Federal Government. She is an Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation New Dawn Veteran, having earned numerous military awards and decorations. Sharon is a member of the Association of the U.S. Army, American Society of Military Comptrollers, Military Officers Association of America, Disabled American Veterans, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the proud mother of her teenage son, John'al.

Kathryn C. Monet is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV). In this role, she focuses on the execution of NCHV's strategic policy and technical assistance agenda and expanding NCHV's strategic partnerships to end Veteran homelessness more effectively.

Kathryn has spent over a decade in the public and non-profit sector working to address housing instability and homelessness among Veterans. Prior to joining NCHV, she was with the National Alliance to End Homelessness, focusing on the promotion of data-driven, evidence-based interventions to end homelessness, particularly among Veterans. Kathryn also was involved in Veteran homelessness in a legislative capacity during her time at the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

She earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Villanova University and a Bachelor of Science in Diplomacy and International Relations from Seton Hall University. Kathryn currently serves on VA Advisory Committee for Homeless Veterans, the U.S. Vets DC Advisory Council, the Board of Directors for the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Board of Governors for the National Housing Conference.

Bilal Mustafa is a U.S. Navy Veteran, who possesses 13 years of experience in the fields of community organizing, case management and housing support for low-income tenants. He has worked as an on-call housing specialist with Swords to Plowshares from October 2017 to May 2018 and currently works as a Community Organizer with Swords to Plowshares in San Francisco, California. He has had exposure working with a diverse set of clients in the California State prison system, as well as having traveled to 13 different countries when he served in the military (May 1984 to March 1990). Also, he is a Certified State Chaplain for the American Muslim Community.

Abraham Thompson Jr. is a retired U.S. Army Veteran. He attended the South Carolina Public Schools and the Brooklyn Adult Academy in New York. Also, he worked in the construction field (as a Master Carpenter) for more than 40 years and served as the Veteran Council President at U.S. Vets (a transitional facility in Washington, DC) where he was a participant. In Abraham's opinion, U.S. Vets was the best thing that happened to him because it helped him to transition from a state of homelessness, helplessness and hopelessness. Currently, he resides at the Jon and Jill Conway Apartment Complex and enjoys seeing the magnificent views of the Washington, DC, Skyline spending time with fellow Veterans and preparing full course meals on special occasions.

Jessica Venegas is Principal for Strategic Partnerships with Community Solutions International. She leads the organizational efforts to effectively leverage partnerships with the public and private sector to support successful community outcomes in a lasting end to homelessness that leaves no one behind.

Community Solutions works in 105 communities in the U.S. to end homelessness for Veteran and chronic populations. It deploys neighborhood-based solutions in key communities to address housing needs, economic well-being and place making through real estate development and community organizing strategies. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Community Development from Azusa Pacific University and holds graduate certificates from the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence, Duke University Center for Leadership and Public Values and Harvard Kennedy School. She splits her time between Washington, DC and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Brandon L. Wilson is currently serving as the Director of Veterans Services of the Carolinas with Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry. His duties include the oversight of seven Federal and state grants supporting Veterans and their families in 100 counties across North Carolina. This \$8 Million portfolio includes: Supportive Services for Veteran Families, a VA housing program addressing homelessness; Homeless Veteran Re-integration Program, an employment program from DOL designed to support Veterans in transition from homelessness to the workforce; Healing Outreach Partnership for Empowerment, a program aimed at intensive outreach to the homeless population that struggles with mental illness/substance abuse from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and most recently, VA's Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Program. Brandon held numerous positions with the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, to include Regional Veteran Service Officer, State Training Coordinator and Deputy Director of the North Carolina Division of Veteran Affairs (NCDVA). During his time in Raleigh, Brandon served on the NCDVA Senior Leadership Team and was instrumental in the creation of the NC4Vets Resource Guide, as well as the transformation and restructure of the agency and establishment of a new North Carolina cabinet level agency of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Brandon is a combat Marine, who served in the infantry during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has served as an advisor to many local and state Veterans committees to North Carolina State Veterans Commission, North Carolina Veterans Council and North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness and currently serves on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration State Committee for Veterans and the State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee, an advisory board to the Secretary of North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services. Brandon lives in Waynesville, North Carolina, with his wife Sara, and their two daughters, Daisy and Anna.

**Committee Support Staff and Ex-Officio Members
Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans**

Committee Support Staff

Anthony Love, VA, is the Designated Federal Officer for the Committee and serves as the Principal Advisor, Intra/Inter-Agency Collaboration and Director of Community Engagement, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Homeless Programs Office.

Leisa Davis, VA, is the Alternate Designated Federal Officer for the Committee and serves as a Program Analyst, VA, Homeless Programs Office.

Candace Parker, VA, is the Special Assignment to the Homeless Program Office, VHA Homeless Programs Office and a Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing Coordinator.

Tisha Hardin, VA, is the Special Assignment to the Homeless Program Office, VHA Homeless Programs Office and a Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator.

Veronica Morawek, VA, is the Special Assignment to the Homeless Program Office, VHA Homeless Programs Office and a Senior Social Worker Health Care for Homeless Veterans.

Ex-Officio Members

Susan Black, DSW, VA, Veterans Benefits Administration, is the National Suicide Prevention Officer, Outreach, Transition and Economic Development.

Greg Crawford, U.S. Department of Justice, is the Correctional Program Specialist at the National Institute of Corrections.

Heather Denny, U.S. Department of Education, is the Education Program Specialist, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Team, Department of Education.

Ivan Denton, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), is the Director of the Office of National Programs and oversees the DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Services programs, among others.

Jeff Olivet, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness is the Executive Director.

Stacy Owens, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is the Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison.

Yashika D. Neaves, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is the Policy and

Communication Strategist for DoD's Military-Civilian Transition Office, under the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

Monshi Ramdass, Department of Agriculture, is the Acting Military and Veteran Agricultural Liaison and Veterans Outreach Manager.

Norm Suchar, Housing and Urban Development, is the Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs.