

JUNE 2022

The Homeless Programs Office (HPO) newsletter contains news and information about VA's ongoing effort to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans.



Executive Director's Message | Around HPO

COVID-19 Response | Staff Spotlight | Fact of the Month

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance.

Message From Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs Office



I will admit that I have written many drafts of this month's message. No words seem adequate to capture the heaviness weighing on my heart.

As a mother, I cannot stop thinking about the children in Uvalde, whose futures and chances to fulfill their dreams were stolen.

As a community member, I cannot stop thinking about those who entered a Buffalo supermarket with shopping lists but instead were listed as targets—because of the color of their skin.

As a healthcare professional, I cannot stop thinking about the Tulsa team who dedicated their careers to saving lives—only to have their own taken far too soon.

As a military spouse, I cannot stop thinking about the five United States Marines from California whose families will not be greeted with another hug from their hero, but instead a folded American flag.

We cannot make sense of these senseless losses, and we cannot accept that violence is an inevitable part of the American experience. But here is what we can do.

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

Around HPO



[Pride Month Resources](#)

The most important interaction LGBTQ+ Veterans have with VA is through their day-to-day interaction with their providers at medical centers across the country. To create a safe and inclusive environment, every VA facility has a local LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator. [Click here](#) to learn more about how VA is recognizing and supporting LGBTQ+ Veterans during Pride Month.

[How to be an Effective Ally to the LGBTQ+ Community](#)

Want to learn more about implicit bias, as well as ways to enhance personal and professional competence in interacting with diverse individuals? Attend this live, knowledge-based webinar on Friday, June 24 at 2:00 p.m.

ET to review concrete strategies for being an effective ally to the LGBTQ+ community. [Click here to register.](#)



[Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Episode 2](#)

On this month's *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast, we're joined by Jill Albanese, Director of Business Operations with the VHA Homeless Programs Office, to learn about VA's new goal to house 38,000 homeless Veterans in 2022. Ms. Albanese walks us through the goal's origins, the various housing programs VA uses to achieve the goal, and how people like you can help. [Listen to the latest episode on Spreaker.](#)

[How VA's Grant and Per Diem \(GPD\) Program Reduces Long-Term Homelessness Among Veterans](#)

The GPD Program funds community agencies providing transitional housing and other services to Veterans experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. VA trusts that both grantees and Veterans participating in GPD are the experts on their



own needs; GPD case managers help Veterans choose the path that best aligns with their goals. The synergistic relationship between GPD and Veterans has helped hundreds of thousands of Veterans exit homelessness since GPD's 1994 pilot program. [Learn about the 3 foundational strategies GPD has used over the past 2 decades to connect Veterans with housing.](#)



[Racial Equity in VA Services](#)

In every state, Black Americans are more likely than white Americans to experience homelessness, and minority groups make up a disproportionate share of the overall homeless population. VA recognizes the pressing need to look at homeless services from a racial equity

lens in its programming. [Learn how VA is taking steps to prioritize this through the Racial Equity and Racial Justice Workgroup.](#)

[VA publishes Interim Final Rule for Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program](#)

As part of VA's national homeless prevention efforts, they have published an [Interim Final Rule](#), which allows VA to enhance the provision of legal services for Veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness. Through the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grant Program, VA will offer up to 75 grants each year to eligible entities, with at least 10% of funding being utilized for women Veterans. [Read the full press release.](#)



[Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2020 Annual Report](#)

SSVF recently published their FY 2020 Annual Report. It summarizes the results achieved by the 257 SSVF Grantees funded for FY 2020 and is intended to inform Congress and the public about the Grantees' important work helping to prevent and end homelessness among our nation's Veterans. [Read the full report](#)

[VA Program Finds Army Veteran a Home](#)

Veteran Lorenzo Campbell joined the Army in 1979 to defend the two most meaningful things in his life: his country and his family. The Veteran did not anticipate that nearly four decades later, his military service would continue to enable him to protect his family. [Read Mr. Campbell's story](#) of getting access to medical care and stable housing through VA, and eventually using a VA Home Loan to make his dream of owning a home come true.





[USICH Releases Principles for Addressing Encampments](#)

Communities across the country are facing a crisis of unsheltered homelessness. USICH developed a list of 7 principles in coordination with the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Veterans Affairs; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and several national partners to help communities more effectively address encampments. To read the full list, [click here](#).

HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates

[The CDC has updated its guidance](#) to include that adults ages 50 years and older, and those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised, are now eligible to receive a second booster shot. To consider yourself up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines, you must receive all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.



To learn more about CDC COVID-19 vaccine guidance, [click here](#). To find out how you can get a COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot through VA, [click here](#).

HPO Staff Spotlight: Parvin Thomas



Parvin Thomas is grateful for her role as HUD-VASH Supervisor in Tampa, FL, as she enjoys seeing the positive impact that housing provides homeless families. Serving on a team that supports Veterans facing homelessness, Thomas also gets a unique view into the variety of issues these Veterans face, and the different types of support they require.

“I think on the surface, the system is designed to be equal, not equitable,” Thomas shares. “Most homeless policies seem as though they were written assuming everyone is starting at the same point, but that is often not the case.”

[Read the full spotlight on Thomas](#) to learn how racial inequalities contribute to homelessness, and the actions we must take to achieve equitable care for our Veterans.

HPO Fact of the Month

Did you know there is a greater prevalence and earlier onset of cognitive issues among older homeless individuals? During Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month, learn about the [VA resources and dementia care options](#) for aging homeless Veterans.

