

Homeless Programs Office

Strategic Plan 2021-2025, Spring 2024 Update

As part of its Agency Priority Goals, VA will place at least 76,000 unique Veterans into permanent housing and ensure that at least 90% of at-risk Veterans are prevented from becoming homeless by September 30, 2025. The following seven objectives and associated strategies have been identified as being key to propelling HPO's vision and mission forward.



OBJECTIVE 1: Increase access to affordable permanent housing options.

- 1.1 Enhance integration between the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) programs to increase voucher use and accelerate housing placements.
- 1.2 Promote effective interagency policy developments and implementations that increase rental housing affordability and alleviate the cost burden for homeless Veterans and their families.
 - 1.2 A Develop and implement strategies that support Veterans whose incomes exceed limits for program participation but who still need supportive services to resolve their homelessness.
- 1.3 Promote and advance the availability of affordable housing for HUD-VASH project-based voucher development and targeted availability or rental subsidies.
- 1.4 Ensure that all VA homeless programs provide a coordinated response that prioritizes permanent housing placements using Housing First principles.
- 1.5 Increase the use of housing navigation services.

OBJECTIVE 2: Expand targeted prevention services and resolve returns to homelessness.

- 2.1 Increase Veterans' access to legal services, including eviction prevention and landlord mediation, through legal services grants and community partnerships.
- 2.2 Enhance income and financial stability through evidence-based employment supports (e.g., training, transportation) and affirmative outreach to support increasing receipt of benefits.
- 2.3 Leverage and apply national flexibilities through the SSVF Shallow Subsidy services to meet the needs of extremely low-income Veterans and their households.
- 2.4 Apply a One Team integrative approach toward delivering homeless programs and services that provide an agile and comprehensive response to prevent and resolve Veteran homelessness.
- 2.5 Lead initiatives and efforts in partnership with law enforcement, prisons, jails, and other VA stakeholders to reduce the risk of returns to homelessness for justice-involved Veterans.

OBJECTIVE 3: Enhance targeted services to address the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations.

- 3.1 Optimize and increase coordinated outreach and service delivery focused on identifying and engaging homeless Veterans in unsheltered settings.
- 3.2 Provide immediate access to interim housing and supportive services through the elimination of unnecessary barriers and by using Housing First principles that do not impose preconditions for immediate access to permanent housing.
 - 3.2 A Enhance residential homeless programs to increase access and decrease barriers for women, transgender, gender non-conforming, justice-involved, rural, and aging Veterans and other vulnerable populations.
 - 3.2 B Eliminate administrative burdens and lower barriers to immediate access to housing.
- 3.3 Facilitate the full integration of VA resources into the local coordinated entry system (CES) to provide an agile homeless response in collaboration with community stakeholders.
- 3.4 Support effective housing and supportive services prioritization through community by-name lists and data sharing.
- 3.5 Conduct targeted local housing surge events to facilitate immediate enrollment into homeless programs, streamline access to interim housing, and accelerate permanent housing placements for Veterans.
- 3.6 Increase access to housing programs and services for American Indians and Alaska Natives through enhanced engagement and technical assistance.
- 3.7 Increase coordination and integration to develop approaches to address the service and housing needs of aging Veterans, those at risk of suicide, and Veterans with substance use disorder and behavioral health needs.

OBJECTIVE 4: Use research and data to make informed and timely decisions.

- 4.1 Develop, modernize, and sustain tools that provide the necessary insights to make data-driven decisions that positively impact Veterans' outcomes and improve program performance.
- 4.2 Incorporate research and data insights into homeless program operations by providing training, education, and tools to homeless program staff so they can effectively utilize data internally and with community partners.
- 4.3 Promote research and evaluation that provides a comprehensive understanding of homeless programs and the Veterans served and enables the identification and rapid implementation of evidence-based strategies to end Veteran homelessness.

OBJECTIVE 5: Provide equitable services and outcomes through all homeless programs and services.

- 5.1 Embed racial equity principles in all aspects of homeless system service delivery.
 - 5.1 A Conduct targeted analyses of regions facing a disproportionate number of Veterans from racial and ethnic minority groups who return to homelessness.
 - 5.1 B Ensure that prevention efforts and coordinated entry prioritization address identified inequities.
- 5.2 Combat the stigmatization of justice-involved Veterans, including stigmatization based on multi-group identities (including but not limited to race, gender identity, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and legal history).
- 5.3 Conduct targeted analyses of regions facing a disproportionate number of Veterans from racial and ethnic minority groups who return to homelessness.

OBJECTIVE 6: Provide national technical assistance for strategic actions.

- 6.1 Provide remote and on-site technical assistance and training to VA medical center homeless programs and grantees.
 - 6.1 A Provide training, technical assistance, and resources that encourage promising practices related to effective outreach, preventing and resolving returns to homelessness, and accelerating permanent housing placements.
- 6.2 Coordinate and provide technical assistance among interagency partners toward ending Veteran homelessness.

OBJECTIVE 7: Ensure adequate homeless programs staffing resources and support the development of a highly skilled workforce.

- 7.1 Implement a national staffing strategy that applies innovative approaches to accelerate adequate nationwide staffing and address the safety and well-being of all community-based VA staff.
- 7.2 Provide and prioritize education and technical training skills in alignment with Housing First principles and strategies.
- 7.3 Identify and address the causes of burnout among staff working in homeless programs.
- 7.4 Develop strategies that support the appropriate staffing resources to conduct outreach and provide case management to meet the needs of the population.

Mission Statement

We ensure that Veterans and their families **obtain permanent and sustainable housing** with access to supportive services that are Veteran-centered, equitable, and lead to personal empowerment.

Vision Statement

We work towards **ending homelessness for all Veterans and their families** using evidence-based, innovative practices and partnerships to provide access to permanent housing and deliver Veteran-centered, equitable, and inclusive services, leading to personal empowerment and increased independence.