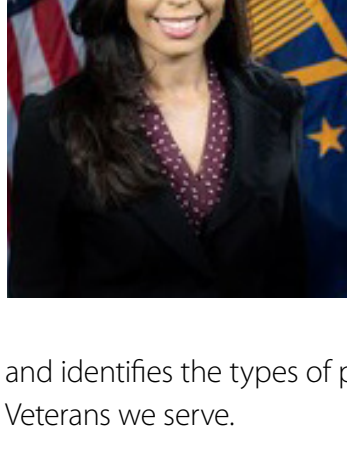


The Homeless Programs Office newsletter contains news and information about Veteran homelessness. Share this newsletter with others so they too can stay up-to-date.



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

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance. To minimize the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, only Veterans who do not have access to a phone are to visit their closest VA medical center without calling in advance.



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

This month, VHA's [Homeless Programs Office](#) (HPO) is pleased to share its [five-year Strategic Plan](#) for preventing and ending homelessness among Veterans. The release of the plan marks a months-long collaboration among HPO and national stakeholders—including Veterans—to unify strategies, activities, and objectives to achieve our shared goal of ensuring every Veteran has access to safe and stable housing. The plan also refines HPO's policies and processes

and identifies the types of partnerships required to assure improved outcomes for the Veterans we serve.

The commitment to ensuring every Veteran has a place to call home starts at the top of the federal government. President Joseph Biden recently announced the [American Rescue](#) and [American Jobs](#) plans, which both include provisions for helping people experiencing homelessness, including Veterans. In addition, Secretaries Denis McDonough and Marcia Fudge of the U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, respectively, issued a [joint statement](#) last week pledging to mobilize the full force of their agencies to accelerate progress in preventing and ending Veteran homelessness.

VA and its partners have made significant progress in reducing homelessness among Veterans since 2010, but we must do more, especially because the coronavirus pandemic has intensified the challenges facing individuals who lack stable housing. The Strategic Plan reflects the latest lessons learned and evidence-based practices integral to successful homeless prevention and rapid rehousing and explains how HPO will use information to guide our next steps and policy decisions. HPO's efforts will be bolstered by President Biden's [FY 2022 discretionary funding request](#) for VA. If approved by Congress, a portion of the funding, \$2.1 billion, will be earmarked for Veterans' homeless programs to further the administration's goal of achieving a systematic end to Veteran homelessness.

In this month's newsletter, you'll find success stories about Veterans who have benefited from HPO's work. By offering evidence-based, targeted, and deliberate strategies like those outlined in the HPO Strategic Plan, we know our successes will continue to inspire Veterans, many of whom are apprehensive about seeking help, to contact VA for assistance.

Also, this month, we are providing [information and resources](#) for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. [Studies have shown](#) that women Veterans in the U.S. face a disproportionate risk of housing instability and intimate partner violence (IPV). We are meeting that reality with a message of support and the promotion of [VA's services and resources](#) for Veterans who have experienced sexual trauma and IPV. HPO also hosted a Facebook Live event in March with the [Center for Women Veterans](#) to discuss VA resources and programs for women. You'll find a link to the recording of this session below.

Armed with the knowledge of the challenges Veterans experiencing homelessness are facing—along with their first-hand insight into the resources they need—we will continue to help these Veterans achieve residential stability and enjoy greater self-determination.

Around HPO

Veteran battled homelessness, now has a career helping others

After years of health issues, addiction, and homelessness, Navy Veteran Dawn Densel is healthy, has stable housing, and works for the federal government, thanks to [VA](#) and its many programs for Veterans experiencing homelessness.



Densel now helps Veterans who are participating in Mobile homeless programs while working in Environmental Management Service (EMS). As someone who has gone through several homeless programs and started her federal career working in EMS, Densel is able to relate to and inspire these Veterans every day.

[Read more.](#)



Resource for Women Veterans: Housing Stability & Security Facebook Live Event

In observance of Women's History Month, the Center for Women Veterans and VA's HPO discussed VA's their commitment to assisting women Veterans with housing stability and security. These offices focused on how their specialized programs are especially critical during COVID-19. Participants heard from two VA experts and two women Veterans who received help from VA programs to find new safe, stable housing or to remain stably housed. Be sure to check out the recap of the Facebook Live event on the Center for Women Veterans Facebook page.

[Watch.](#)

VA Winterhaven Stand Down saved by generous support from community partners

This year, what would have been the 27th annual Winterhaven Homeless Veterans Stand Down was put on hold because of COVID-19, in accordance with [VA and CDC guidance](#). But the team at the DC VAMC's [Health Care for Homeless Veterans \(HCHV\)](#) program was undeterred. The distribution project was dubbed "Winterhaven Lite," and by the end of December 2020, it had helped 248 Washington-area Veterans through generous donations from community partners. One of those partners was [I Support the Girls](#), a nonprofit organization that provides essential items to women and girls.



[Read more.](#)

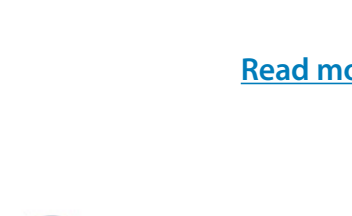


Preventing Suicide Among Homeless Veterans: A Consensus Statement by the Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Among Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Workgroup

The VA Suicide Prevention among Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Workgroup recently published a consensus statement in the journal "Medical Care." In the statement, the workgroup summarized key strategies to integrate suicide prevention efforts into its service operations for Veterans experiencing homelessness and highlighted the need for evidence-based interventions and programming that are designed or tailored to best meet the needs of Veterans within this high-risk population.

[Read more.](#)

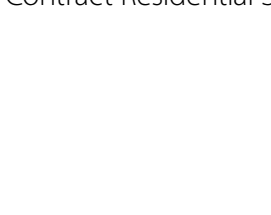
How VA supports Veterans experiencing IPV during Sexual Assault Awareness Month and beyond



During Sexual Assault Awareness Month, VA is emphasizing its ongoing work to ensure that Veterans and their partners who are experiencing or engaging in IPV are provided with the necessary resources and services, including VA's [Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program \(IPVAP\)](#) and other programs.

Veterans who lose their housing when removing themselves from situations of intimate partner violence are eligible for several programs offered through VA's [Homeless Programs Office](#): [Supportive Services for Veteran Families, Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing, Grant and Per Diem](#), and [Health Care for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Services](#).

[Read more.](#)



Assessing Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Employment Specialist Services, Outcomes, and Implementation Strategies

A new research brief, published by Meagan Cusack, MS and Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, Ph.D., draws on findings from a [complementary mixed methods project](#) that explored employment services offered by Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCEs) Employment Specialists; identified Veterans' employment needs, available services, and needed resources; and assessed whether receiving employment services is associated with improvement in Veterans' housing stability. Data included qualitative interviews with HCHV Employment Specialists (n=16), an inventory of services completed by services providers (n=16), and administrative data from Veterans with recent experiences of housing instability (n=2,643).

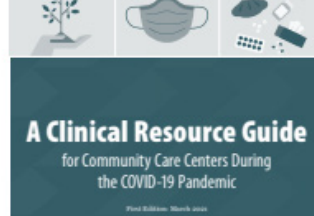
[Read more.](#)

HPO Resource Quick Links

- During April, [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#), and every month, VA provides support to those who have survived sexual abuse and trauma through specific programs and resources.
- The VA's [Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program \(IPVAP\)](#) is committed to helping Veterans, their partners, and VA staff who are impacted by IPV. If you, or someone you know could be experiencing and/or using IPV - help is available.
- ["Gender-Sensitive Homelessness Services that Address the Unique Needs of Women Veterans"](#) is a video that includes details about two programs that helped two Veterans and their families exit homelessness: Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) programs.
- [Statement by VA Secretary McDonough on the president's FY 2022 Discretionary funding request](#): President Biden outlines proposals to invest in critical health care improvements for Veterans, and to modernize VA's systems.

HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates

VA's National Center on Homelessness among Veterans and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council collaborated to create ["A Clinical Resource Guide for Community Care Centers During the COVID-19 Pandemic."](#) The intent of this guide is to raise holistic awareness of the various complex needs of people experiencing homelessness. Those people may reside in community care centers that provide 24/7 shelter, urgent care/medical respite level of care, and COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures.



HPO Staff Spotlight: Monica Diaz



Monica Diaz joined HPO as its senior executive director after serving as the skilled nursing facility administrator at the California-Yountville Veterans home, the largest in the state, from 2012 through 2018. At Yountville, she advised senior executives and interdisciplinary professional teams on patient quality-improvement programs, financial and clinical best practices, and organizational culture change strategies. Monica's year-over-year improvements increased Yountville's CMS 2-star rating to a five-star rating, placing it in the top 10% of nursing homes in the United States.

In the following interview, Mrs. Diaz shares how her personal experiences and professional background led her to HPO and shaped her commitment to ensure Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness receive rapid, integrated supportive services that helped them rebuild their lives.

[Read the full interview.](#)

HPO Fact of the Month

Did you know?

The graphic below, from the 2021-2025 HPO Strategic Plan, shows the Veterans Health Administration's legislative timeline for authorization of HPO's different programs and services.

