



VHA Homeless Programs



Share the HPO newsletter so others can receive news and information about Veteran homelessness.

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

Like many others, VHA Homeless Programs Office (HPO) staff view December as a time for reflection. As we finalize our 2021 strategic plan, the HPO team is assessing the challenges that homeless and at-risk Veterans face during this unprecedented time. We are also pinpointing solutions for inclusion in the plan. The HPO team will maintain its focus on improving our policies, procedures, and processes to deliver timely and high-quality services faster and more efficiently. For HPO, the status quo is not acceptable because we know that Veterans and their families facing imminent housing crises are counting on us.

In 2021, we will continue pushing our colleagues to identify “promising practices” that produce positive and repeatable outcomes. The HPO Promising Practices Workgroup published five papers this year about unique ways to help Veterans during the pandemic. Staff at VA medical centers across the country used the documents to continue pursuing our goal of providing Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with the world-class care and support they have earned and deserve. [View the papers here.](#)

Evidence of our innovation can be found across VA programs addressing homelessness. For example, rather than canceling its annual Homeless Veteran Stand Down due to concerns about COVID-19, the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System held a successful event by implementing physical distancing requirements and staggered attendance. [Read more here.](#)

December is also a time for gratitude, and everyone at VA knows we can't do our important work alone. We extend our deepest thanks to partners who have found new and creative ways to help Veterans find their way back to housing stability and achieve their goals. Many stories of their good work are published on [this page](#) and VA's [Vantage Point blog](#). Vantage Point also features [a podcast episode](#) on the \$300 million that Congress provided to help VA address homelessness, as well as a story on a [Facebook Live event hosted by HPO and Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#) that highlighted resources for Veterans at risk of homelessness due to COVID-19.

The holiday season is a giving season, so we encourage you to consider how you can help Veterans who are homeless in your community.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Find a shelter in your area and donate commonly-needed items from [this list](#).
- Check out the “Homeless Veterans Outreach Tools” on the [Veterans Experiencing Homelessness page](#) for ways to host your own event to help Veterans in need.
- Learn more about how [VA collaborates with various partners](#) to prevent and end Veteran homelessness, and get involved where and how you can.

Thank you for following our work this year, doing work of your own, and being committed to preventing and ending homelessness among Veterans. We wish you a restful and safe holiday season and a happy new year.

Veteran Success Stories

VA and Labor Department team up to support Veteran employment

Employment is a key element in helping Veterans avoid or exit homelessness. Recently, VA's [Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services](#)—along with the [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program](#) at the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration—hosted a joint webinar to promote housing stability and employment opportunities for Veterans.



[Read more.](#)

VA is thankful for transitioning military and those who help care for fellow Veterans

VA also has job opportunities that can be a good fit for Veterans. There are more than 1,200 VA facilities around the nation. Whether a Veteran prefers to live in a rural, urban, or suburban area, there's a VA facility that could offer great job opportunities to a Veteran.



[Read more.](#)

Veteran gets a lift with VA support

Army Veteran Lawrence Limke spent six months experiencing homelessness in Wellington before finding his way to Wichita. He walked into the [Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center](#) one day and asked for help. Limke's VA support team got him nominated for consideration for Keys to Progress, a Progressive Insurance program that provides Veterans with donated vehicles. Keys to Progress aims to offer a little relief and improve the lives of military men and women facing tough circumstances. Limke received his 2019 Nissan Sentra on November 5, nearly a year to the day after going to VA for help.



[Read more.](#)

HPO Resource Quick Links

- [The Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\)](#) program was established in 2011 to rapidly re-house Veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at risk due to a housing crisis.
- [SQUARES](#) is a VA web application that provides external homeless service organizations with reliable, detailed information.
- [How You Can Help](#) provides information about collaborating with VA to provide affordable housing, employment opportunities, household essentials, and more to prevent and end Veteran homelessness in your community.
- [HUD-VASH](#) combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by the VA. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced on Friday December 11 that it is [awarding \\$46 million in rental assistance and housing vouchers](#) to help veterans at risk of experiencing homelessness.

HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates

[When the COVID-19 vaccine comes, VA will be ready.](#) Case managers who work with Veterans in homeless programs will be especially helpful in vaccine coordination, education, and protocol. Read more on how VA is providing vaccine-related resources and information to Veterans, and capitalizing on procedures already in place to help Veterans get the [COVID-19 vaccine](#).

HPO Staff Spotlight: Q&A with Dr. Jack Tsai

Jack Tsai, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and health services researcher for the [National Center on Homelessness among Veterans \(NCHAV\)](#).

Q: What sparked your interest in homelessness among Veterans and conducting research in this space?

A: As a clinical psychologist and health services researcher, I've always been drawn to helping people who needed help. When I started my career, I focused on studying schizophrenia and working with groups diagnosed with the most severe mental illnesses. As I worked with these groups, I often encountered people who didn't have homes or had challenges with everyday living. This started my journey in research on homelessness. Because my work is about serving those who serve, ultimately, I was drawn to VA because it has the largest program in the country for Veterans experiencing homelessness.



[Read the full interview.](#)

HPO Fact of the Month

Did you know?

There are currently more than 30 NCHAV researchers investigating many issues related to Veteran homelessness. Learn more about [Research and Methodology](#) at the NCHAV.