

NOVEMBER 2021

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



## VHA Homeless Programs Office

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

### 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.*

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



In what would be his last Thanksgiving Proclamation, President John F. Kennedy said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." Each November, I am reminded of the late president's message, as perhaps no other month offers as many opportunities for us to extend gratitude together as a nation.

For those who work within VHA homeless programs, Veterans Day and Military Family Month are not observed once a year, but rather every day. Every member of our team exemplifies JFK's challenge to live by their gratitude to Veterans.

Their dedication to honoring Veterans and serving military families is obvious in the empathy, creativity, dedication, and teamwork they bring to this work. I could not be prouder to work alongside this team, and I hope my admiration is evident.

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

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## [Veteran Homelessness Risk Factors](#)

HPO recently released a [video](#) to educate the public about risk factors that increase the likelihood that a Veteran will experience homelessness. The video also shares information about VA's evidence-based approach to helping vulnerable Veterans achieve housing stability. Click [here](#) to watch the video or visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn more.



## [Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week](#)



November 13 – 21 was [Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week](#).

According to Feeding America, more than 60 million people, including Veterans, sought help from food banks and community programs to put food on the table in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

VA is dedicated to ending hunger and homelessness among Veterans and their families. To address food and housing insecurity, VA connects vulnerable Veterans to local food pantries as well as homeless prevention and rapid rehousing services.

To learn more about National Homeless & Hunger Awareness Week, visit [www.hhweek.org](http://www.hhweek.org). To access information about VA programs that promote food and housing security among Veterans, visit VA's [Nutrition and Food Services](#) and [Homeless Programs](#) pages.

## [Shallow Subsidy Initiative Regulation Changes](#)

In an effort to provide a more effective subsidy to Veterans living in high-cost rental markets and increase overall housing assistance, VA updated regulations governing the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant program on November 10. In certain communities, the grant will cover up to 50% of eligible Veterans' reasonable rent for two years, an increase from 35%. Read more about the expanded benefits for the most vulnerable Veteran families [here](#).



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## [HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates](#)



HPO is committed to helping all Veterans and their families remain informed about VA's COVID-19 protocols.

***If you are enrolled in a VA homeless program***, contact your VA case manager for information about [scheduling your COVID-19 vaccination](#).

***If you are eligible for a booster shot***, your local VA health facility will contact you to schedule an appointment or inform you of your nearest walk-in vaccine clinic. VA follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on

COVID-19 booster shots and additional vaccine doses.

Visit [VA's Health Care and COVID-19 page](#) to learn more.

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## [HPO Staff Spotlight: Lindsey Marano](#)

For the past 11 years, Lindsey Marano has worked tirelessly on behalf of our Veterans. Marano has worked at three VAMCs and was a front-line social worker in the Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP) prior to her current role as HUD-VASH program coordinator in Richmond, Virginia. Additionally, Lindsey recently assisted with special projects related to legislative changes with the national HUD-VASH program office.



Lindsey continues to keep a small caseload of Veterans for case management, which she explains helps her keep pulse on the challenges frontline staff face. Her wide range of experiences within VA has granted Marano with a unique understanding of how to develop effective program processes and structures that ensure Veterans receive high quality clinical care. Read more about Lindsey's work [here](#).

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## HPO Fact of the Month



Veterans and their families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness are among the most vulnerable during natural disasters and extreme weather. As winter approaches, it's important to be able to recognize the warning signs of hypothermia – which includes shivering, slowed speech, confusion, slow breathing, and loss of coordination.

The VHA Homeless Programs Office provides similar tips for extreme weather as well as disaster assistance resources for Veterans and their families on its website. Click [here](#) for information on natural disaster survival guidance and to find resources for Veterans experiencing homelessness during natural disasters or extreme weather.