U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Calendar Year (CY) 2023 Veteran Homelessness National Goals Office Hours

VHA Homeless Programs Office
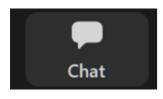December 7, 2023

Housekeeping

- This call will be recorded.

- The webinar will last approximately 60 minutes.

- All attendees will be muted.

- Questions can be submitted using the Chat function.

- If you have questions following the call, please email VHA11HPO38kGoalSupport@va.gov.

Zoom Controls

All participants are muted upon entry

 Chat – add questions or comments during the call.

Agenda

- Progress Update

- Point-In-Time (PIT) Count: Overview, Purpose & Significance

- VA & Community Collaboration: Planning and Outreach Considerations
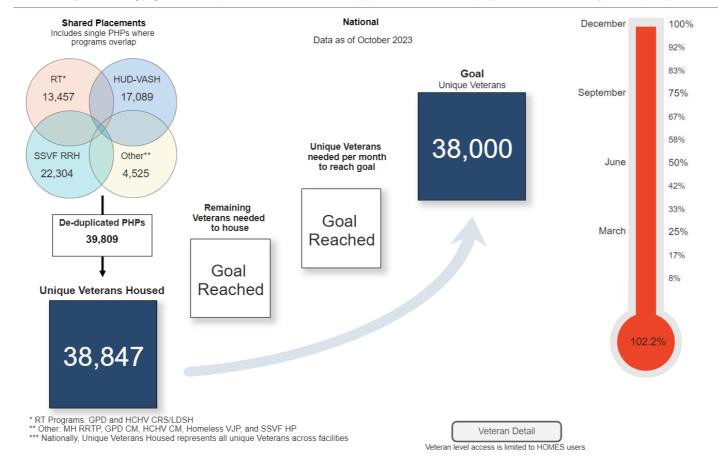
- Q&A

Progress Update

Goal 1: Permanent Housing

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Permanent Housing: VA has made a commitment to permanently house (PH) at least 38,000 unique Veterans in CY 2023. De-duplicated permanent housing placements (PHPs) for unique Veterans made during CY 2023 from the following programs count toward this goal: Grant and Per Diem (GPD), Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contracted Residential Services (CRS), HCHV Low Demand Safe Haven (LDSH), Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) – Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) homeless services who obtain permanent housing (PH), Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment (MHRRTP), HCHV Case Management (CM), and for Veterans homeless at entry for the following programs: GPD CM, SSVF – Homelessness Prevention (HP), Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO), and Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV).
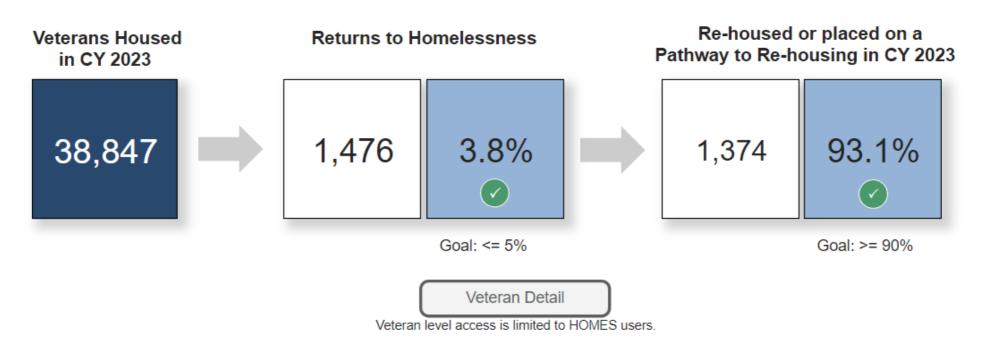
Shared Placements
Includes single PHPs where programs overlap

RT* 13,457	HUD-VASH 17,089
SSVF RRH 22,304	Other** 4,525

De-duplicated PHPs
39,809

Unique Veterans Housed

38,847

* RT Programs: GPD and HCHV CRS/LDSH
** Other: MH RRTP, GPD CM, HCHV CM, Homeless VJP, and SSVF HP
*** Nationally, Unique Veterans Housed represents all unique Veterans across facilities

Remaining Veterans needed to house

Goal Reached

Unique Veterans needed per month to reach goal

Goal Reached

National
Data as of October 2023

Goal
Unique Veterans

38,000

Veteran Detail

Veteran level access is limited to HOMES users.

December — 100%
— 92%
— 83%
September — 75%
— 67%
— 58%
June — 50%
— 42%
— 33%
March — 25%
— 17%
— 8%

102.2%

Choose VA

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Goal 2: Prevention of Returns to Homelessness

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Prevention of Returns to Homelessness: For Veterans who become permanently housed in CY 2023, no more than 5% return to homelessness. Of those who return to homelessness in CY 2023, no less than 90% will be re-housed or placed on a pathway to re-housing in CY 2023.

National

Veterans placed in housing as of October 2023.

Veterans Housed in CY 2023	Returns to Homelessness		Re-housed or placed on a Pathway to Re-housing in CY 2023	
38,847	1,476	3.8% ✓	1,374	93.1% ✓
		Goal: <= 5%		Goal: >= 90%

Veteran Detail

Veteran level access is limited to HOMES users.

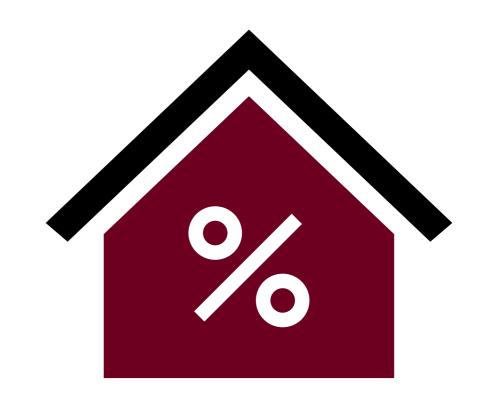# Goal 3: Engagement with Unsheltered Veterans

Goal 3: Engagement with Unsheltered Veterans

Engagement with Unsheltered Veterans: Nationally, VA will increase outreach to and engage with no less than 28,000 unique unsheltered Veterans

National
Data as of October 2023

Unsheltered Veteran Engagement
Unsheltered Veterans de-duplicated by type of engagement (includes Veterans unsheltered at both assessment and SSVF RRH program entry)

HOMES Assessments
24,093

SSVF RRH Entries
14,522

Unique Unsheltered Veteran Engagement	Remaining Unsheltered Veterans Needed	Unsheltered Veterans needed per month to reach goal	Goal Unique Veterans
34,498	Goal Reached	Goal Reached	28,000

123.2%

8% 17% 25% 33% 42% 50% 58% 67% 75% 83% 92% 100%
Mar   Jun   Sept   Dec

Unsheltered Veterans Engaged -------- Current Month Target

Veteran Detail

Veteran level access is limited to HOMES users.

Point-In-Time (PIT) Count: Overview, Purpose & Significance

PIT Count Basics

- Continuums of Care (CoCs) are required to conduct a count of people experiencing sheltered homelessness annually. The count should be carried out on one night in the last 10 calendar days of January.

- Unsheltered counts are required every other year, although most communities conduct an unsheltered count annually.

- During these point-in-time counts, communities are required to identify whether a person is an individual, a member of a family unit, or an unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 or age 18 to 24. In addition, communities must identify if a person is chronically homeless, indicating long-time or repeated homelessness and the presence of a disability, or a Veteran.

Adapted from: What is a Point-in-Time Count? - National Alliance to End Homelessness

Why Do We Count?

- To collect data and establish the dimensions of the problem of homelessness and help policymakers and program administrators track progress toward the goal of ending homelessness.

- HUD uses information from the local point-in-time counts, among other data sources, in the congressionally-mandated Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR). This report is meant to inform Congress about the number of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. and the effectiveness of HUD's programs and policies in decreasing those numbers.

- On the local level, point-in-time counts help communities plan services and programs to appropriately address local needs, measure progress in decreasing homelessness, and identify strengths and gaps in a community's current homelessness assistance system.

Adapted from: What is a Point-in-Time Count? - National Alliance to End Homelessness

Approaches for Unsheltered PIT Counts

- **Night of the Count:**

  - A count of unsheltered people on the night the CoC designated for its PIT count (often referred to as a "street count"). Include interviews to determine the characteristics of all people or a sample of people counted.

  - In a night-of-the-count approach, CoCs should use either a complete coverage or a known locations approach or a combination of these approaches.

- **Service-based**

  - A survey of people at various social service locations or other public or private locations to identify people who were unsheltered, but not counted, on the night of the count–either because CoCs did not use a night of the count approach or because unsheltered people were missed on the night of the count.

Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide (hudexchange.info)

Equity Considerations for PIT Counts

- **Representation:** Ensuring that the count accurately represents the diversity of the homeless population, including different racial and ethnic groups, genders, ages, and individuals with disabilities. It is important to have a diverse group of volunteers and outreach workers involved in the count to build trust and engage with all segments of the population of individuals experiencing homelessness.

- **Accessibility:** Making the count accessible to individuals with disabilities or those with limited mobility. This includes providing appropriate accommodations, such as sign language interpreters or materials in alternative formats.

- **Language and Cultural Responsiveness:** Review the PIT survey and how it asks about Veteran status to be sure it is inclusive. Cultural responsiveness is also crucial to ensure that the count is conducted in a respectful and sensitive manner, with consideration of the cultural norms and practices of different communities.

- **Inclusion of Marginalized Groups:** Paying special attention to marginalized groups within the population of Veterans experiencing homelessness, such as LGBTQ2S+ individuals or survivors of domestic violence. These groups may face unique challenges and barriers to accessing services, so efforts should be made to engage and count them accurately.

- **Geographic Equity:** Ensuring that the count covers all areas, including both urban and rural regions, to avoid undercounting individuals in certain locations. This can help identify disparities and allocate resources more equitably. GIS mapping can assist with this.

VA & Community Collaboration: Planning and Outreach Considerations

VA & Community Collaboration

- VA Homeless Programs and community programs that support Veterans can strengthen count efforts. Some strategies:

  - Identify locations where unsheltered Veterans are known to stay to ensure they are included in the unsheltered count.

  - Provide education to communities on how to accurately categorize VA interim and permanent housing programs when completing the Housing Inventory Count. Read the guidance.

  - Ensure the roster of housing programs for Veterans experiencing homelessness is complete for the sheltered count and identify any other VA-funded service centers that should be involved.

  - Participate in planning for the count, including understanding and consulting on count methodology and survey instruments.

  - Assist during the count: some VAs may opt to form special teams.

  - Recruit Veterans with lived expertise to participate in the planning process and the actual count. Identify a mechanism to pay them for their efforts.

PIT Data & By-Name List Considerations

- The PIT count provides an opportunity to test data quality, identify Veterans not yet known to providers and connect them to resources based on their needs and wants.

- CE specialists can assist CoCs with data validation efforts, i.e., if Veterans are identified that are not already recorded in HMIS or HOMES, specialists can help determine Veteran status.

  - If Veteran status is ruled out, this data can be corrected prior to being formally submitted.

- Should Veterans be identified that are not already reflected on the community By-Name List (BNL), CE specialists can help navigate local processes to ensure appropriate follow-up, including population on the local BNL or linking with the process which results in being added to the BNL.

- If your community does not have a CE specialist, consider using a case conferencing meeting to reconcile data from the PIT against your BNL.

Educational Opportunities for Veterans and the Larger Community

- VA staff can provide training and education to volunteers about how to proceed when someone identifies as a Veteran, i.e., making a direct, real-time referral to VA staff with the Veterans consent.

  – Example: VA staff participating in the count (either on the ground or at the support center) is on-call should other teams encounter a Veteran who consents to linkage and contact can be made to schedule follow up by HCHV.

- Develop up-to-date materials that can be provided to all teams about VA services that can be left with individuals identifying as Veterans.

- Establish and advertise "pop-up" drop-in locations for Veterans the night of the count near areas where there may be a larger concentration of Veterans.

The PIT is an Opportunity to Connect Veterans to Housing Resources

- While a PIT count is an annual event providing a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness and tends to be research-focused, it provides a valuable opportunity to identify Veterans in need and connect them to resources.

- Plan ahead to allow for same-day (when possible) or expedited admission to VA interim housing programs, i.e., teams report out availability in advance, have a VA staff available during count hours to assist with triage, have providers on standby to accommodate after-hours admissions.

- When Veterans initially refuse interim housing placements, follow-up outreach efforts should occur as soon as possible after the count, using identified locations as a way to better locate those Veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness, build trust, and support their connection to desired housing services.

Q&A and Next Steps

Wrapping Up

- The recording of this call will be posted to the [VHA Homeless Programs Hub](#) in the coming days and [VA.gov/Homeless](#).

- Join our Office Hours calls on the first Thursdays of the month at 3:00 p.m. Eastern / 2:00 p.m. Central / 11:00 p.m. Mountain / 12:00 p.m. Pacific / 9:00 a.m. Hawaii.

  - **The next Office Hours Call is Thursday, January 4, 2024**

  - For questions, please email VHA11HPO38kGoalSupport@va.gov.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead