

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Federal Coordination and COVID-19 Response

May 14, 2020

[Link to Audio](#)



# WEBINAR FORMAT

- Webinar will last approximately 45 minutes
- Participants' phone connections are “muted” due to the high number of callers
- Questions can also be submitted anytime to [SSVF@va.gov](mailto:SSVF@va.gov)



# QUESTIONS

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Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel



# AGENDA FOR THE WEBINAR

I. Welcome

II. Overview of SSVF COVID-19 Response

III. VA Resources and Priorities

IV. HUD Resources and Priorities

V. USICH Convening Role

VI. Moving Forward



## OUR PARTNERS

- Jill Albanese, SSVF
- Eileen Devine, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
- Abby Miller, HUD Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs
- Helene Schneider, USICH



Jill Albanese, LCSW  
Deputy Director  
Supportive Services for Veteran Families

# Overview of SSVF in the COVID-19 Response Efforts

- SSVF continues to respond to the crisis by using EHA to move Veterans quickly into safe environments.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, SSVF providers continue to serve existing caseloads and check in on Veterans who have been exited to ensure housing stability continues.
- Supplemental CARES Act funding and increased flexibility around EHA and prevention have provided an opportunity to serve more Veterans than ever before.
- Communication with VAMC and community partners is more important than ever.
- Connections with new partners may need to be established to reach all eligible Veterans.



# Coordinating with VAMCs and Coordinated Entry Specialists During the COVID-19 Crisis

Eileen Devine, VA HCHV National Program Director



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Homeless  
Program  
Office

# Role of CES in the COVID-19 Response Efforts

- Now more than ever, a sense of urgency, innovation and adaptation is essential to preventing and ending homelessness amongst Veterans.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, coordinating quick access to housing is more important than ever.
- Coordinated entry is the “command center” or “hub” of this coordination effort in communities as they respond the COVID-19 crisis.
- This is not business as usual and is an opportunity to improve and transform CES across the country.
- CE Specialists can assist SSVF grantees in making connections to the VAMC.



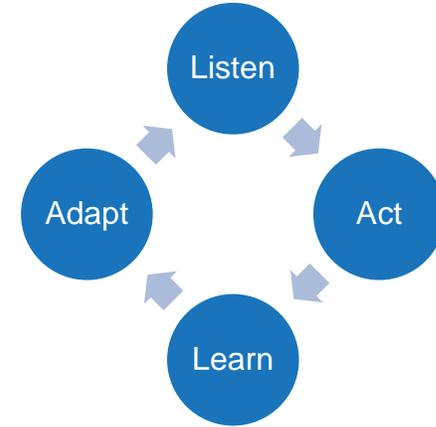
# Maximizing COVID-19 VA Resources

- CARES Act Funding for GPD and HCHV CRS:
  - Connect with your coordinated entry specialist or VAMC POC to learn about how they plan to use this additional funding.
  - Help them plan by providing input.
  - Coordinate resources and avoid duplication of services.
- Educate VAMC POCs on CARES Act Funding for SSVF:
  - Ensure that VA partners know exactly what this means for the collective community COVID-19 response efforts.
  - How can they help you utilize these funds quickly and efficiently?
  - What specifically do you need from them in this partnership?
  - Who else in the VAMC system should know about this resource and how can they assist with this in-reach effort?



# Action Steps to Consider

- Communicate more now than ever before
- Remove constraints
- Bypass or remove steps that slow down the system
- Streamline where possible
- Collect information, but ensure it is essential information
- Be creative in how you coordinate activities and continue to communicate and be flexible when thinking about the roles each person/organization serves
- Don't make assumptions, ask questions, assume goodwill





Abby Miller  
Senior Program Specialist  
HUD Office of Special Needs  
Assistance Programs (SNAPS)



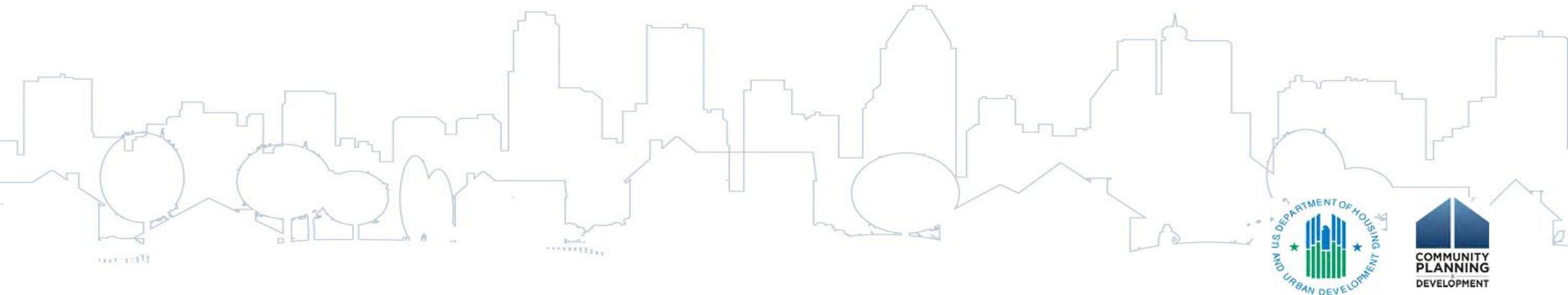
# COVID-19 & HOMELESSNESS

- Homeless crisis furthered by danger of COVID-19
- People experiencing homelessness at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19
  - Pre-existing and persistent health conditions
  - Congregate and unsheltered settings
- Disparities in Access and Referrals
- Screening guidance evolving in real time



# SYSTEM RESPONSES TO COVID-19

- CoC, public health and community partnerships key
- Focus on immediate safety needs of population
- Building systems to work and support remotely
- Creative exit and diversion strategies to ensure safety
- Pivot to rehousing strategy and long term view



# HUD CARES ACT RESOURCES

- CARES Act provided \$4 billion to Emergency Solutions Grant program
  - Rehousing Strategy a priority for HUD
  - Opportunities for Prevention, Diversion and Shelter support
- Emphasizing the need for coordinated development of a rehousing strategy and investment plan to maximize impact
- “Megawaiver” allowing some regulatory relief for HUD projects
- CoCs and SSVF/VA partners to work together on Veteran population



# A RAPIDLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

- Remote approaches to support clients and staff
- Resources to be coordinated across HUD, VA, FEMA, etc.
- Robust and creative landlord engagement strategies – always an eye to permanent housing
- Coordinated Entry changes that meet the moment and expedite connections to services and housing
- Ensure equity considerations throughout planning and service delivery



# COORDINATION OF HUD AND VA FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Best outcomes when SSVF and CoC are closely coordinate
  - Regular communication
  - Clear referral processes
  - SSVF participation in the broader homeless system
- Encourage SSVF to reach out to CoC to learn about COVID-19 response including non-congregate shelter and rehousing strategies
- Coordinated entry will be the linchpin for all the new resources



# ***Coordinating Across Federal Partners During the COVID-19 Crisis***

**SSVF National Webinar**

**May 13, 2020**





# USICH Presenter

**Helene Schneider**  
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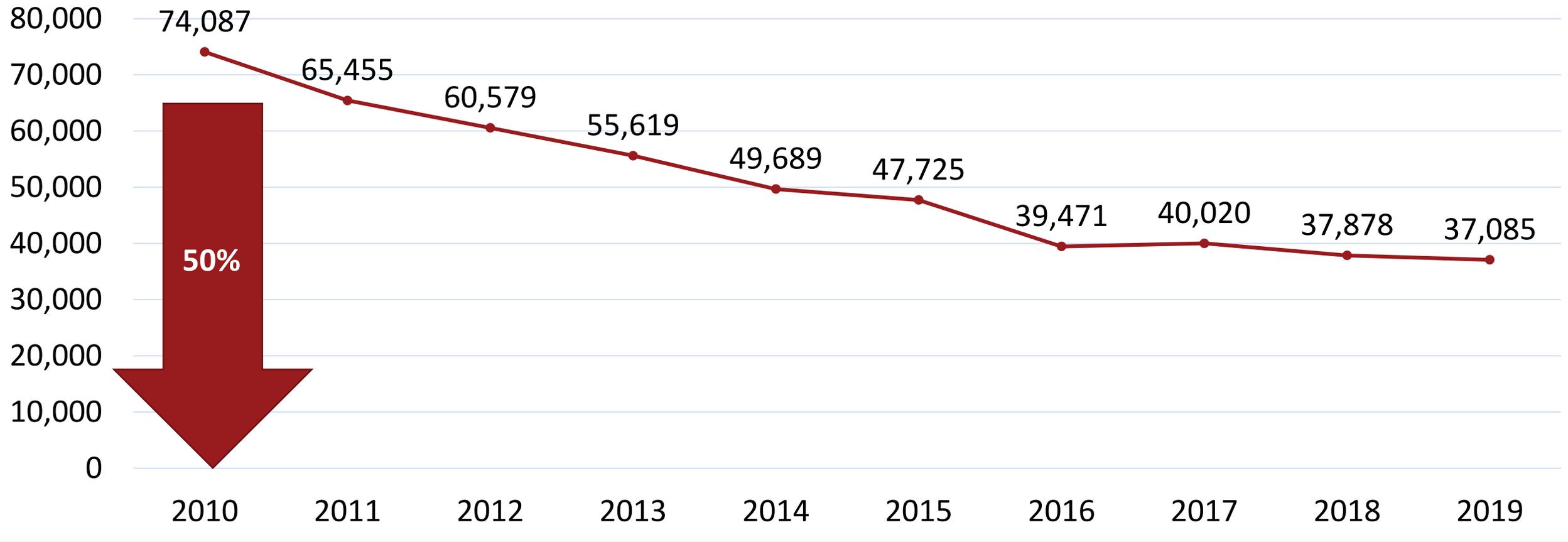


# Coordinating the Federal Response

- The Council
- Council Policy Group
- Interagency Working Groups
- Performance measurement and accountability



# National PIT Data on Veterans Experiencing Homelessness 2010-2019



## % Change Over Time

| 2018-2019 | 2017-2019 | 2016-2019 | 2015-2019 | 2014-2019 | 2013-2019 | 2012-2019 | 2011-2019 | 2010-2019 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| -2.1%     | -7.3%     | -6.0%     | -22.3%    | -25.4%    | -33.3%    | -38.8%    | -43.3%    | -49.9%    |

From HUD Point-in-Time Data



# Maximizing COVID-19 Resources

- Strengthening Partnerships
  - Securing Non-Congregate Shelter/Motel Sites
  - Connecting with CoC Grantees
  - Communicating with County & City leaders
  - Recruiting New Property Owners & Landlords
- Leveraging Financial Support
  - Knowing & understanding federal, state & local funding opportunities, regulations & how each source interacts with the others
  - Link: [COVID-19 Funding, Flexibilities & Waivers](#)

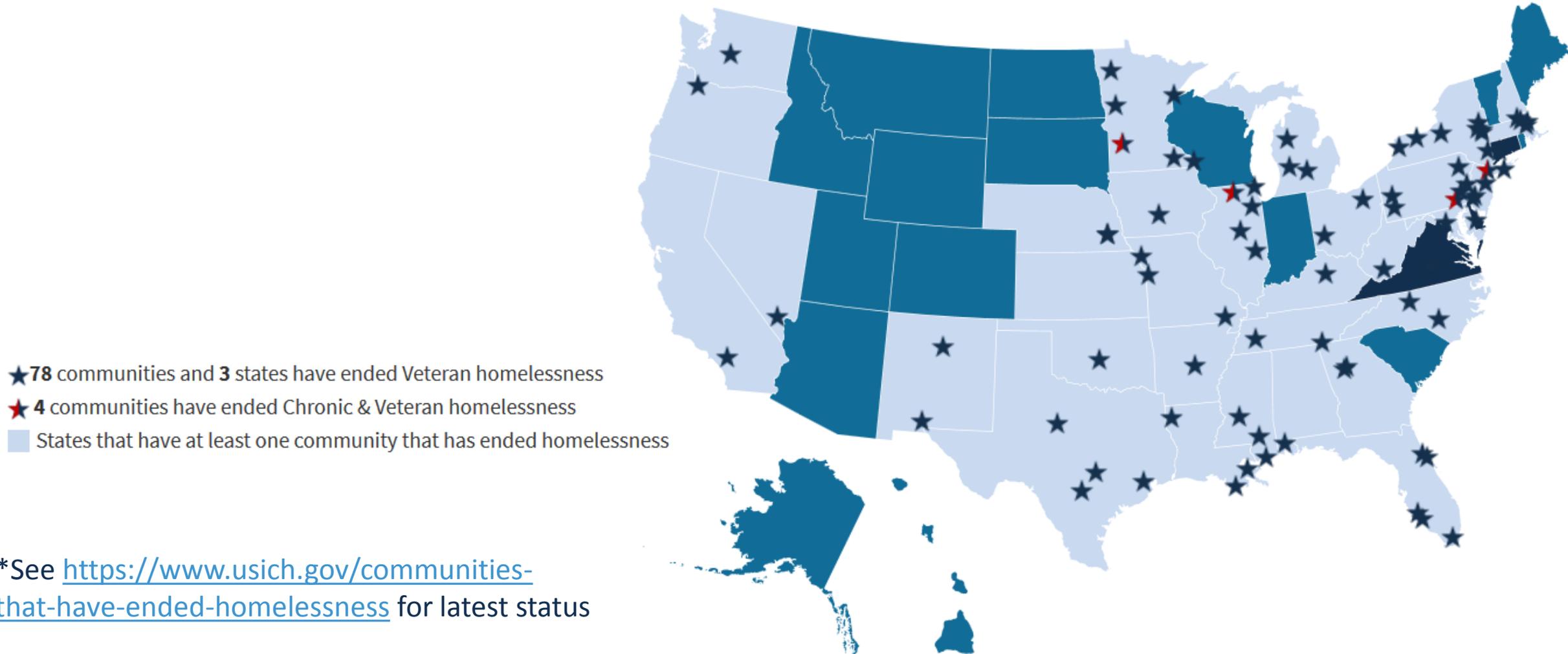


# Planning for Post COVID-19

- Create exit strategies from motels into housing
- Participate in the Federal Criteria and Benchmarks for Ending Veteran Homelessness



# 78 communities and 3 states have achieved the Federal Criteria & Benchmarks for Effectively Ending Veteran Homelessness



- ★ 78 communities and 3 states have ended Veteran homelessness
- ★ 4 communities have ended Chronic & Veteran homelessness
- States that have at least one community that has ended homelessness

\*See <https://www.usich.gov/communities-that-have-ended-homelessness> for latest status



# Federal Criteria and Benchmarks for Ending Veteran Homelessness

- Developed by federal partners (USICH, VA, HUD)
- Represent a minimum standard to achieve success within a defined period, but goal is **ongoing assessment and improvement** even once confirmed
- May be periodically updated (most recently in June 2019)
- Key Updates included in Version 4 (June 2019) are:
  - Consolidating information, specifications, and clarifications to make it easier to review and understand all of the information holistically.
  - Providing clarification on the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program models and how those programs, and Veterans staying with them, are considered within the criteria and benchmarks.



# Connect with your USICH Regional Coordinator

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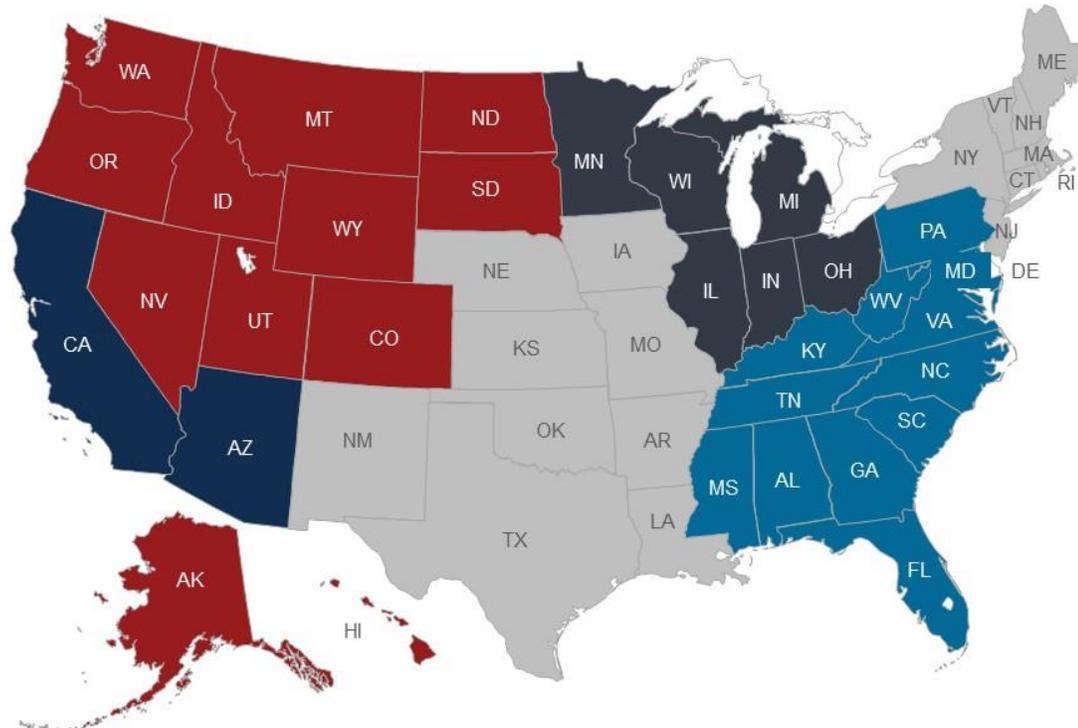
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# Helpful Tools and Information

- [Criteria and Benchmarks for Effectively Ending Veteran Homelessness](#)
- [Master List Template and Benchmark Generation Tool](#), developed by HUD and its partners, to help you manage your active list and calculate the benchmarks
- [The Transformation of VA Grant and Per Diem Programs: Considerations for Communities](#)
- [Sustaining an End to Veteran Homelessness: Strategies for Institutionalizing Your Progress](#)
- [Case studies](#) from communities that have achieved the goal
- [Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness](#)
- [SSVF Program Webpage](#)
- [GPD Program webpage](#)
- [Homelessness in America: Focus on Veterans](#)



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- HUD primary focus on rehousing
- VA initial focus on emergency housing and then rehousing
- VA and HUD committed to ongoing communication and coordination to align efforts
- Technical Assistance provided in variety of ways and methods
- Ongoing evolution and strengthening of federal partnerships



Questions?



THANK YOU!