

Veteran Homelessness 101

**NCHV 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
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VETERAN HOMELESSNESS 101

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VETERAN HOMELESSNESS 101

Vision

Vision End homelessness for all Veterans and their families using evidence-based, innovative practices and partnerships to provide access to permanent housing and deliver services that are Veteran-centered, equitable, and inclusive, leading to personal empowerment and increased independence.

Best and Promising Strategies:

- Identify and assist homeless Veterans in obtaining permanent housing with needed treatment and other support services wrapped around the Veteran to promote housing stability and improved quality of life.
- Leverage best practices among community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, and other local, state and federal agencies to enable partnerships that foster a “no wrong door” philosophy as Veterans access an increasing array of federal, state and local community programs and services.
- Foster and enable close cooperation between VA Medical Centers and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD’s) local Continuum of Care systems.

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Demographics

- 37,252 veterans were experiencing homelessness in the U.S., eight percent of all homeless adults.
- Of every 10,000 veterans in the United States, 21 were experiencing homelessness.
- Men accounted for more than nine of every ten veterans experiencing homelessness in 2020 (91% or 33,862 veterans), the same as the share of all veterans in the U.S., which is also 91 percent.
- Women Veterans experiencing homelessness were much more likely to be in a household with a child under 18 years of age (12%) than their male counterparts (1%).
- **2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report and Point in Time Count*

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Demographics

- African Americans were considerably overrepresented among the Veteran homeless population. Veterans who were Black or African American comprised one-third of Veterans experiencing homelessness and a quarter of Veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness compared with 12 percent of all U.S. veterans.
- Conversely, while 57 percent of Veterans experiencing homelessness were White, they were underrepresented compared to their share of all U.S. Veterans (81%).
- The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness who identify as Hispanic/ Latino was considerably smaller than the percentage of Hispanic/Latinos among people experiencing homelessness as individuals (11% vs. 20%), although higher than the share of all U.S. veterans who were Hispanic/Latino (7%).
- The percentage of all Hispanic or Latino Veterans experiencing homelessness who were counted outdoors (55%) was higher than the percentage of White veterans (42%) or Black veterans (31%).

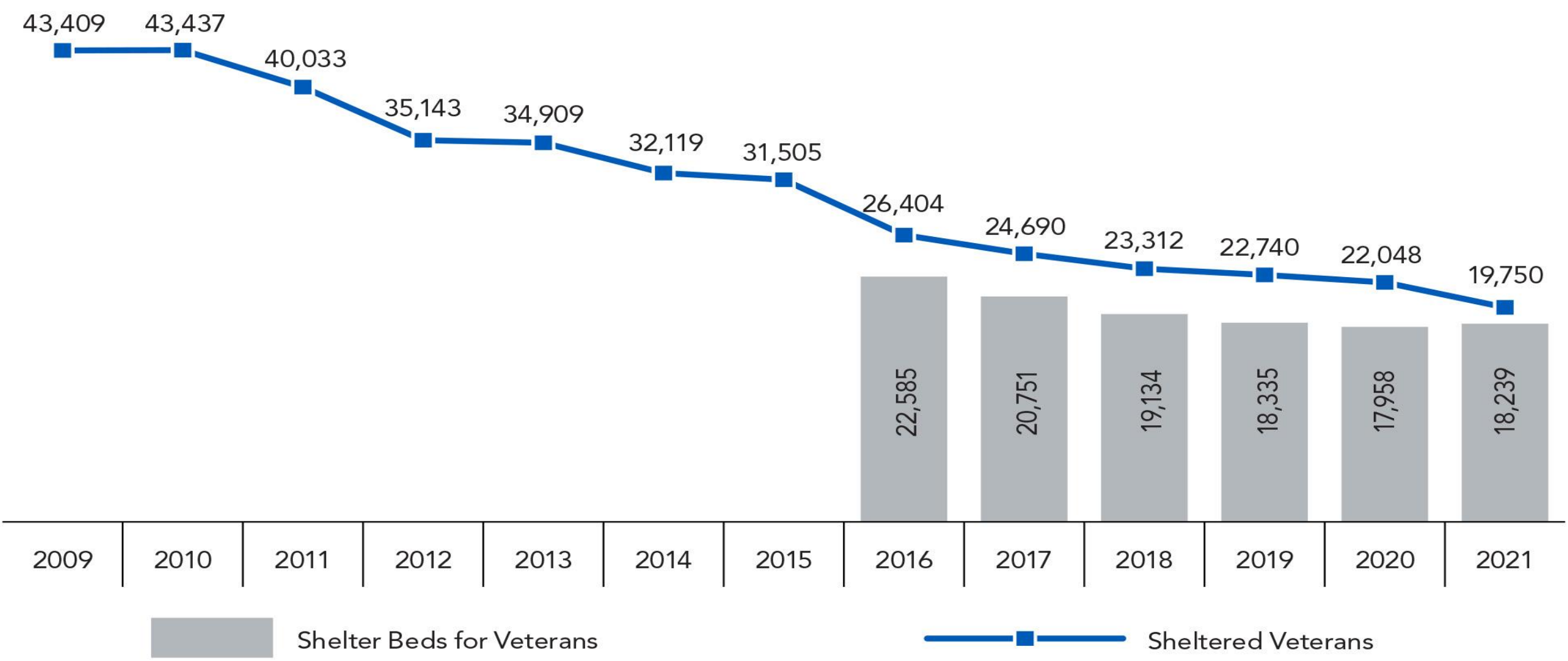
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Current State of Veteran Homelessness

- Between 2010-2020, the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States was cut roughly in half. But despite this progress, data show that since 2016, progress towards ending Veteran homelessness has stalled.
 - Veteran homelessness declined by 47% between 2010 and 2016, and by only six percent between 2016 and 2020.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2021 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count estimates that on a single night on a single night in January 2021, 19,750 Veterans were experiencing sheltered homelessness in the U.S.
 - Between 2020 and 2021, the number of Veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased by **10.4 percent** (2,298 fewer people). Since 2010, the number of Veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased by **55%**.
- The report is only able to provide national estimates on sheltered homelessness due to COVID-19's impact on communities. Therefore, while it is an important snapshot of sheltered homelessness, the report does not provide a complete picture of homelessness in America.

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Effectiveness of Homeless Programs Since 2009



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Ending Veteran Homelessness

- The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), VA and HUD developed specific criteria and benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness in order to help guide communities as they take action to achieve the goal.
- Criteria and benchmarks work together to provide an ongoing assessment of a community's response to homelessness.
- Criteria--focus on describing essential elements and accomplishments of the community's response.
- Benchmarks-- serve as important indicators of whether and how effectively that system is working on an ongoing basis.

Accomplishing both is meant to get communities as close to zero as possible, while building systems that support long-term, lasting solutions that can effectively and efficiently respond to future needs.

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Ending Veteran Homelessness

Criteria:

- The community has identified all Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- The community provides shelter immediately to any Veteran experiencing unsheltered homelessness who wants it.
- The community provides service-intensive transitional housing only in limited instances.
- The community has the capacity to assist Veterans to swiftly move into permanent housing.
- The community has resources, plans, partnerships, and system capacity in place should any Veteran become homeless or be at risk of homelessness in the future.

Benchmarks:

- Chronic and long-term homelessness among Veterans has been ended.
- Veterans have quick access to permanent housing.
- The community has sufficient permanent housing capacity.
- The community is committed to Housing First and provides service-intensive transitional housing to Veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances.

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HUD-VASH

A collaborative program between VA and HUD to move Veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing. HUD provides housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) which allows homeless Veterans to rent privately owned housing and VA provides case management and supportive services so that Veterans can gain housing stability and recover from physical and mental health problems, substance use disorders, and other issues contributing to or resulting from homelessness. HUD-VASH subscribes to the principles of the Housing First model of care. Housing First is an evidence-based practice model demonstrating that rapidly moving individuals into housing, and then wrapping supportive services around them as needed, helps individuals who are homeless exit homelessness and achieve housing stability.

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SSVF

- The SSVF program provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families that are currently in or transitioning to permanent housing.
- SSVF is designed to rapidly re-house homeless Veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis.
- Funds are granted to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that will assist very low-income Veteran families by providing a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability.
- SSVF has played a leading role in VA's response to mitigating COVID-19 risks to vulnerable homeless Veterans.

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Homeless Grant & Per Diem (GPD) Program

The GPD program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments. The purpose of the program is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or related services — with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination. GPD-funded projects offer communities a way to help homeless Veterans by providing housing and other services and at the same time assist VAMCs by augmenting or supplementing care.

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Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program

The central goal of the HCHV program is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by connecting homeless Veterans with health care and other needed services. This program provides outreach, case management, and HCHV Contract Residential Services (CRS), ensuring that chronically homeless Veterans especially those with serious mental health diagnoses and/or substance use disorders can be placed in VA or community-based programs that provide quality housing and services that meet their specialized needs.

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Other VHA Homeless Programs

Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRCs):

CRRCs are a collaborative effort of VA, communities, service providers, and agency partners. Centers are located in strategically selected areas to provide both a refuge from the streets and a central location to engage homeless Veterans in services. When Veterans enter these centers, they are referred to physical and mental health care resources, job development programs, housing options, and other VA and non-VA benefits.

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV): The DCHV program provides time-limited residential treatment to homeless Veterans with mental health and substance use disorders, co-occurring medical concerns, and psychosocial needs such as homelessness and unemployment.

Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups):

This project brings together consumers, providers, advocates, local officials, and other concerned citizens to identify the needs of homeless Veterans and work to meet those needs through planning and cooperative action. Local CHALENG meetings represent important opportunities for VA and public and private agency representatives to meet and develop meaningful partnerships to better serve homeless Veterans.

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACTs): H-PACTs provide a coordinated “medical home” tailored to homeless Veterans’ needs. At selected VA facilities, Veterans are assigned to an H-PACT that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff, and others who offer medical care, case management, housing assistance, and social services. The H-PACT provides and coordinates the health care that Veterans may need while helping them obtain and stay in permanent housing.

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO): The purpose of the VJO program is to prevent homelessness and avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans. This is accomplished by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans encountered by police, and in jails or courts, have timely access to VHA mental health, substance use, and homeless services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

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Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services:

Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services (HVCEs) to improve employment outcomes for Veterans who have experienced homelessness. HVCEs has deployed more than 150 Vocational Development Specialists who serve as [Community Employment Coordinators](#) (CECs), at most [VA Medical Centers](#) across the country. CECs are part of the VHA homeless program teams and are a bridge to community employment resources and employers ready to hire Veterans exiting homelessness.

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV): The HCRV program is designed to address the needs of incarcerated Veterans when it comes to re-entering their community. The goals of HCRV are to prevent homelessness; reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance use problems on community readjustment; and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison.

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Vet Centers:

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional readjustment counseling to eligible Veterans, active duty service members, including National Guard and Reserve components, and their families. Readjustment counseling is offered to make a successful transition from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event experienced in the military.

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Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program-(HVRP) is an employment focused competitive grant program of the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS), the only federal grant to focus exclusively on competitive employment for homeless veterans.

HVRP has two core objectives which are to provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.

Veteran Homelessness 101 Programs

Veterans are citizens first. They are eligible for other programs that serve citizens who are homeless or need a safety net. Programs include but not limited to:

All Mainstream Services (WIC, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, Section 8, etc...)

Continuum of Care resources

Second Chance Act

Healthcare for the Homeless

PATH

Other HUD, HHS, DoL, USDA, etc...

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38,000 Veterans

- During calendar year (CY) 2022, VA homeless programs will place at least **38,000 literally homeless Veterans into permanent housing.**
- This goal represents a nearly 5% increase from fiscal year (FY) 2021's Permanent Housing Placements (PHPs).
- These PHPs require a collective effort by Grant and Per Diem (GPD), Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contract Residential Services (CRS), HCHV Low-demand Safe Haven (LDSH), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), and Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH).
 - Note: The target represents the **de-duplicated** PHPs made by these programs

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NEXT STEPS

To access resources and tools to assist Veterans in your community, and to learn more about the programs offered by VA, please visit or call the following:

- VA Homeless Programs Webpage (<https://www.va.gov/homeless/>)
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (www.nchv.org)
- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
(<https://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp/>
1-877-424-3838)

QUESTIONS

