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



## Executive Director's Message | Around HPO

### Health Update | 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.*

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



[Gary East](#) scrapped metal to afford food and necessities.

[Teresa White](#) sought shelter in her vehicle.

[Ida McDonald](#) relied on local warming shelters and soup kitchens for heat, water, and electricity for nearly four decades.

These Veterans did not experience these harsh conditions in combat zones or while deployed. Tragically, each of these stories' settings is here—in the very country they served.

Last year, [41% of all Veterans](#) experiencing homelessness were unsheltered, defined by the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) as “having a primary

location in places not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people.”

Despite significant declines in Veteran homelessness in recent years, communities across the country are seeing increases in the rates of unsheltered homelessness, both among Veterans and the general population. Between 2021 and 2022, unsheltered [homelessness rose among all Americans by 7%](#).

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

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## Around HPO

### [Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: How VA Helps Unsheltered Veterans Come Inside](#)

VA set a goal to engage with 28,000 unsheltered homeless Veterans in 2023, aiming to better support this group of Veterans in need of urgent assistance. [Listen to this month's podcast](#) to learn about the experience of unsheltered homelessness, why this goal was set, and how VA is working to achieve it.

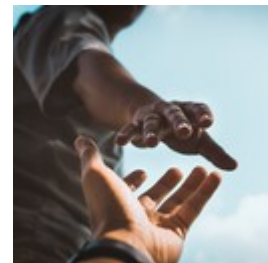


### [Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

Veterans often return from service with wounds we cannot see—and VA is committed to providing them with the mental health services they deserve. During Mental Health Awareness Month, [learn about the resources available through VA.](#)

### [Paving Paths to Reentry for Homeless Veterans](#)

A lack of stable housing is a well-documented risk factor for incarceration, and incarceration is a risk factor for homelessness. Too often, the barriers of our larger societal system can make it nearly impossible for justice-involved individuals to find the fresh start and stability they need to transition smoothly into civilian life. [Read the full story](#) about how VA is helping justice-involved Veterans succeed in their next chapter.



### [International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia](#)

About 1 out of 3 transgender individuals have experienced homelessness—and homelessness among Veterans receiving care from VHA is 3 times higher for transgender Veterans. For the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia on May 17, [learn what VA is doing to support transgender Veterans.](#)

## [Spring Ahead: A Veteran's Path Out of Homelessness](#)

In every VA across the nation, there are Homeless Veteran Program Coordinators and social workers who have made it their mission to be a part of the solution for Veterans experiencing homelessness. [Read the story](#) to learn about how these roles support Veterans.



## [VA Assistance to Help Avoid Eviction](#)

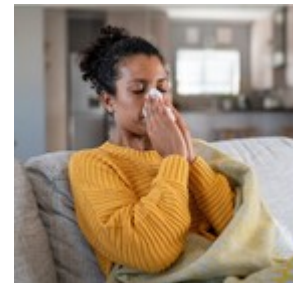
Did you know VA offers assistance that helps Veterans avoid eviction? If you or a Veteran you know is struggling to pay rent, utilities, or other housing costs, learn about the resources and services available on our [Housing Resources page](#).

You can also call the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) for free assistance at 1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838). Calls are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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## Health Update

[Long COVID](#) affects everyone differently, and not everyone will have the same symptoms. For this reason, it can be difficult to know when you have it. Those who have new or worsening symptoms 4-12 weeks after having COVID-19 that do not go away may be experiencing Long COVID.



Click here to access our [Long COVID Symptom Checker](#). If you believe you have Long COVID, [contact your care team](#) today for an appointment.

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## HPO Staff Spotlight: Corey Moore



As a HUD-VASH Peer Support Specialist, Corey Moore often finds himself using his personal experience as a homeless Veteran to relate to the Veterans who come into his office. He participated in the Grant Per Diem (GPD) and Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) programs, and his firsthand knowledge of the impact they can have helps put many Veterans at ease.

His days vary greatly, sometimes sitting down to have an initial conversation with a Veteran, other times being more “hands on” and helping a Veteran physically move into their new home. No matter the task, Moore is proud to be able to say, “I've been there, and there's a way out. It's through VA.”

[Read Moore's full spotlight](#) to learn about his role as a Peer Support Specialist, and how he uses his experiences to better serve Veterans.

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## HPO Fact of the Month

Today about 6.1 million Veterans—28 percent of all Veterans—live in rural areas. It is estimated that roughly 15 percent of the homeless population lives in rural or mostly rural areas, and a portion of these individuals are Veterans.



Although VA and HUD offer housing and supportive services to Veterans in all areas, the [USDA Rural Housing Service](#) operates several programs that could help rural Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless secure a permanent home. [Read our fact sheet](#) to learn more.

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