

# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Veteran Homelessness National Goals Office Hours

VHA Homeless Programs Office  
September 5, 2024

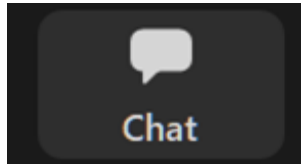
# Housekeeping

- 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](mailto:VHA11HPO38kGoalSupport@va.gov).

# Zoom Controls

**Typically, on the bottom of the screen**

**All participants are muted upon entry**



Please use the chat to add questions or comments during the call.

# Agenda

- Progress Updates
- VA's Response Plan for Coordinating with Local Agencies During Homeless Encampment Closures
- Q&A



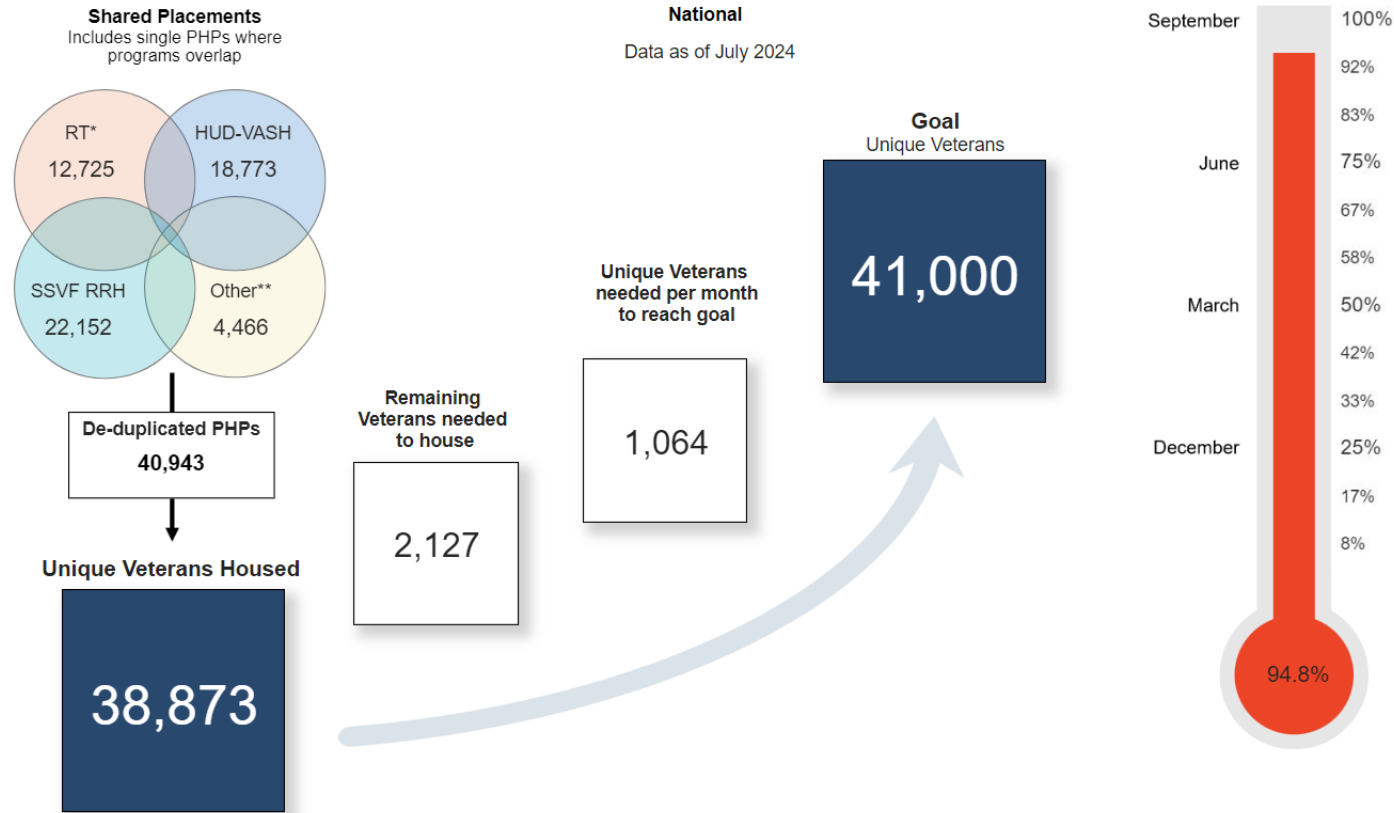
# Progress Update



# Goal 1: Permanent Housing

## Goal 1: Permanent Housing

**Permanent Housing:** VA has made a commitment to permanently house (PH) at least 41,000 unique Veterans in FY 2024. De-duplicated permanent housing placements (PHPs) for unique Veterans made during FY 2024 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 (MHRRT), 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).



\* 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

Veteran Detail

Veteran level access is limited to HOMES users.

# Goal 2: Prevention of Returns to Homelessness

## Goal 2: Prevention of Returns to Homelessness

**Prevention of Returns to Homelessness:** For Veterans who become permanently housed in FY 2024, no more than 5% return to homelessness.

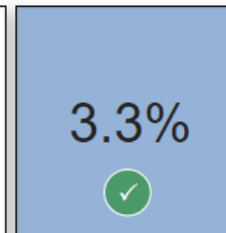
### National

Veterans placed in housing as of July 2024

Veterans Housed  
in FY 2024



Returns to Homelessness

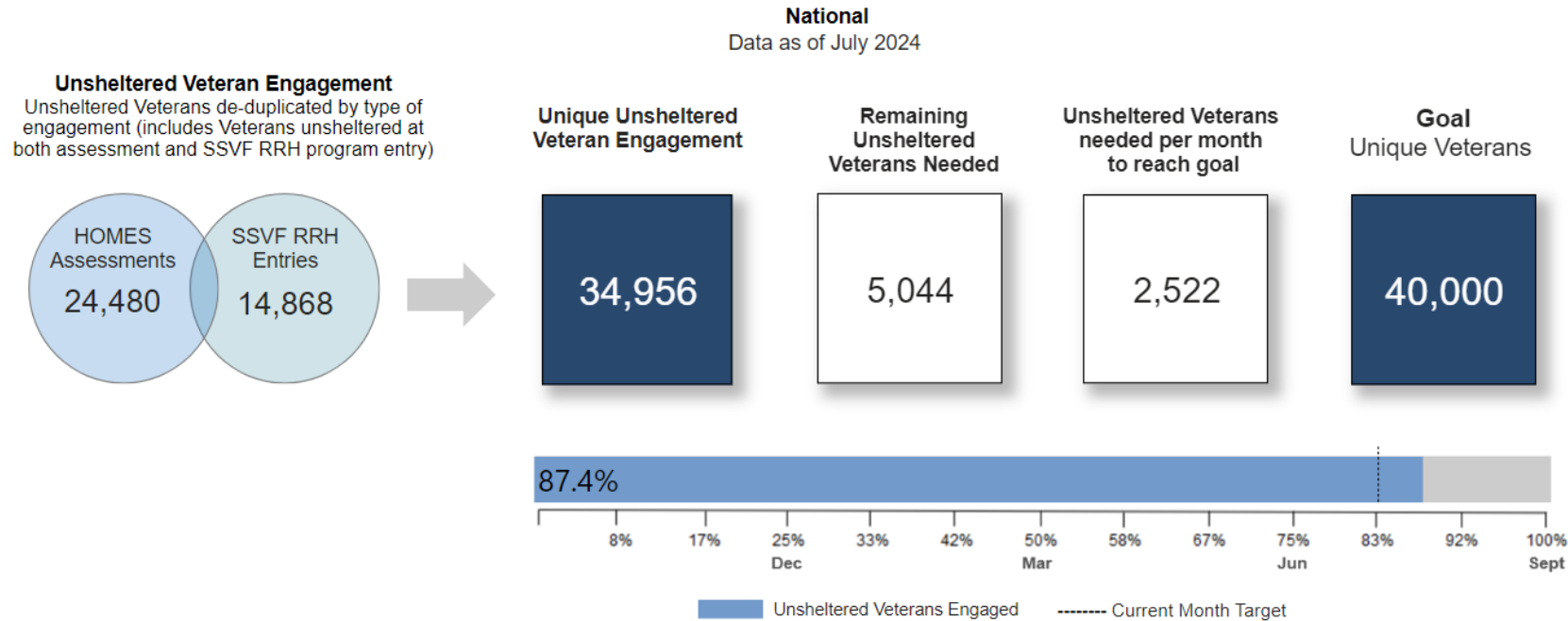


Goal:  $\leq$  5%

# Goal 3: Engagement with Unsheltered Veterans

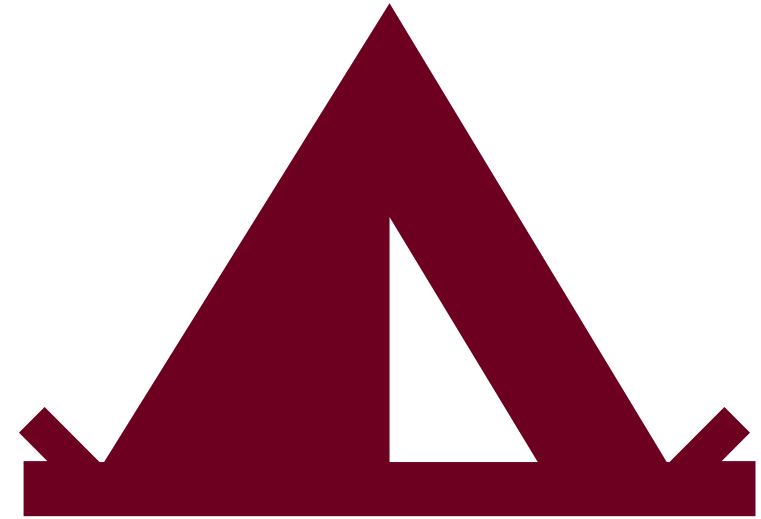
## Goal 3: Engagement with Unsheltered Veterans

**Engagement with Unsheltered Veterans:** Nationally, VA will increase outreach to and engage with no less than 40,000 unique unsheltered Veterans





# VA's Response Plan for Coordinating with Local Agencies During Homeless Encampment Closures



# Background

- *City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson*, involved the legality of local laws that ban sleeping in public and asked the question if enforcement of generally applicable laws regulating camping on public property constituted “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment.
- **Decision:** Enforcing generally applicable laws regulating camping on public property does not constitute “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment.
- **Potential Impact:** State and local policies that prohibit public camping may be enacted, requiring us to be proactive in our planning and support efforts in addressing unsheltered homelessness amongst Veterans.

# VA's Response Plan

- VA, through the Homeless Programs Office (HPO), is implementing comprehensive and proactive action plan to support Veterans impacted by current and future encampment closures.
- Concretely, this plan aims to support unsheltered Veterans living in encampments by:
  - Providing them with same-day access to interim housing.
  - Connecting them to all necessary supportive services to obtain and maintain permanent housing.
  - Preventing them from entering the criminal legal system.

# Core National Actions

- To accomplish these aims, this plan intends to build upon existing strategies that support coordination with local agencies and encompasses 3 main national actions:
  1. Develop a nationwide inventory of current encampments and future closures.
  2. Activate national and local response teams.
  3. Disseminate national guidance on strategies to inform local action.

# Action #1: Develop and Maintain a Nationwide Inventory of Encampments

- VA is gathering information on planned encampment closures and resolutions throughout the country. This information includes:
  - The number of Veterans potentially affected.
  - Expected closure timelines.
  - Potential gaps or areas of need, emphasizing immediate access to interim housing and services.
- The encampment inventory will also indicate current and future VA outreach efforts and how Veterans will be connected to VA care and housing resources if closures occur.

## Action #2: Activate National and Local Response Teams

- VA established an internal National Encampment Response Team to swiftly organize assistance for [VA Medical Centers](#) (VAMCs) needing guidance and technical assistance.
- VA is also supporting the activation of local response teams to assist Veterans living in encampments with quickly moving into temporary housing options such as emergency shelter and transitional housing.
- These local response teams, which include VAMCs and VA-funded grantees and contractors from [Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#) (SSVF), [Grant and Per Diem](#) (GPD), and [Health Care for Homeless Veterans](#) (HCHV) Contracted Residential Services (CRS), must coordinate with existing community outreach teams to align resources, increase efficiency, and avoid duplication.

# Action #3: Disseminate National Guidance on Strategies to Inform Local Action

To accomplish these aims, this plan intends to build upon existing strategies that support coordination with local agencies and encompasses three main national actions:

- Strategy #1: Strengthening outreach teams.
- Strategy #2: Ensuring immediate same-day access to interim housing.
- Strategy #3: Preventing the criminalization of homelessness during closures and resolutions.
- Strategy #4: Integrating necessary health and supportive services activation.
- Strategy #5: Promoting local collaboration with federal, state, and local stakeholders to maintain continuity in engagement plans and avoid disruptions.

## Strategy #1: Enhance Outreach Teams to Connect with Veterans Currently in Encampments

- To ensure that any Veteran living in an encampment is known to VA and has a plan for immediate temporary housing, VA is working to enhance existing outreach teams.
- This strategy encompasses 3 key actions, each designed to maximize outreach coverage while avoiding wasteful duplication of services.
  - Enhance integration between VAMCs and VA-funded grantee outreach workers to ensure comprehensive support.
  - Ensure VA outreach efforts are coordinated with local non-VA community outreach teams to avoid duplication and ensure alignment of resources.
  - Provide guidance on operating local response teams as an emergency response approach, ensuring that outreach teams have immediate access to essential resources that will allow them to be agile and effective.



## Strategy #2: Provide Veterans with Immediate Same-Day Access to Interim Housing

- To address the urgent need for housing among Veterans, VA is working to guarantee same-day access to temporary housing options.
- This strategy encompasses 3 key actions, each designed to streamline processes, enhance collaboration, and ensure no Veteran is left without shelter.
  - Implement same-day access policies and procedures within GPD and HCHV CRS programs.
  - Utilize hotels and motels through SSVF's Emergency Housing Assistance and GPD, where available.
  - Streamline admissions processes and reduce barriers to entry to emergency shelters and transitional housing.
  - Streamline the path to permanent housing.

## Strategy #3: Divert Veterans from the Criminal Legal System During Closures

- To ensure that Veterans avoid involvement with the criminal legal system during encampment closures, VA is working to enhance coordination with law enforcement agencies.
- This strategy encompasses 2 key actions, each designed to establish new partnerships or strengthen existing partnerships with local law enforcement.
  - Develop and disseminate comprehensive how-to guides for VAMCs, VA-funded grantees, and contractors to engage with local law enforcement during encampment closures.
  - Provide ongoing guidance and technical assistance.

## Strategy #4: Enhance Access to Health Care and Other Necessary Supportive Services

- To ensure that Veterans are connected to the full range of health care and benefits they have earned and deserve, VA is working to enhance access to supportive services.
- This strategy encompasses 2 key actions focused on lowering the barriers to health care engagement:
  - Where available, utilize Homeless Patient-Aligned Care Teams, mobile medical units, and VA primary care teams to provide integrated health care services to Veterans transitioning from encampments to temporary housing.
  - Swiftly connect eligible unsheltered Veterans needing treatment for medical, mental health, or substance use to VA health care services.
  - Foster collaboration among VAMCs and community health services to ensure Veterans ineligible for VA health care are fully supported.

## Strategy #5: Enhance Collaboration and Integration Among Federal, State, and Local Stakeholders

- To avoid duplication and ensure that actions are aligned with broader efforts to support all unhoused neighbors (i.e., Veterans and non-veterans) living in encampments, VA will continue coordinating with the [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#), other federal partners, and national stakeholders.



# USICH Statutory Authority and Mission

- Originally authorized in 1987 by **Title II of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987** (PL 100-77). Most recently reauthorized by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009.
- Mission is “**to coordinate the Federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership** at every level of government and with the private sector **to reduce and end homelessness** in the nation **while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government** in contributing to the end of homelessness.”
- The **only federal agency** with a sole mission focused on preventing and ending homelessness in America.



# Coordinating the Federal Response

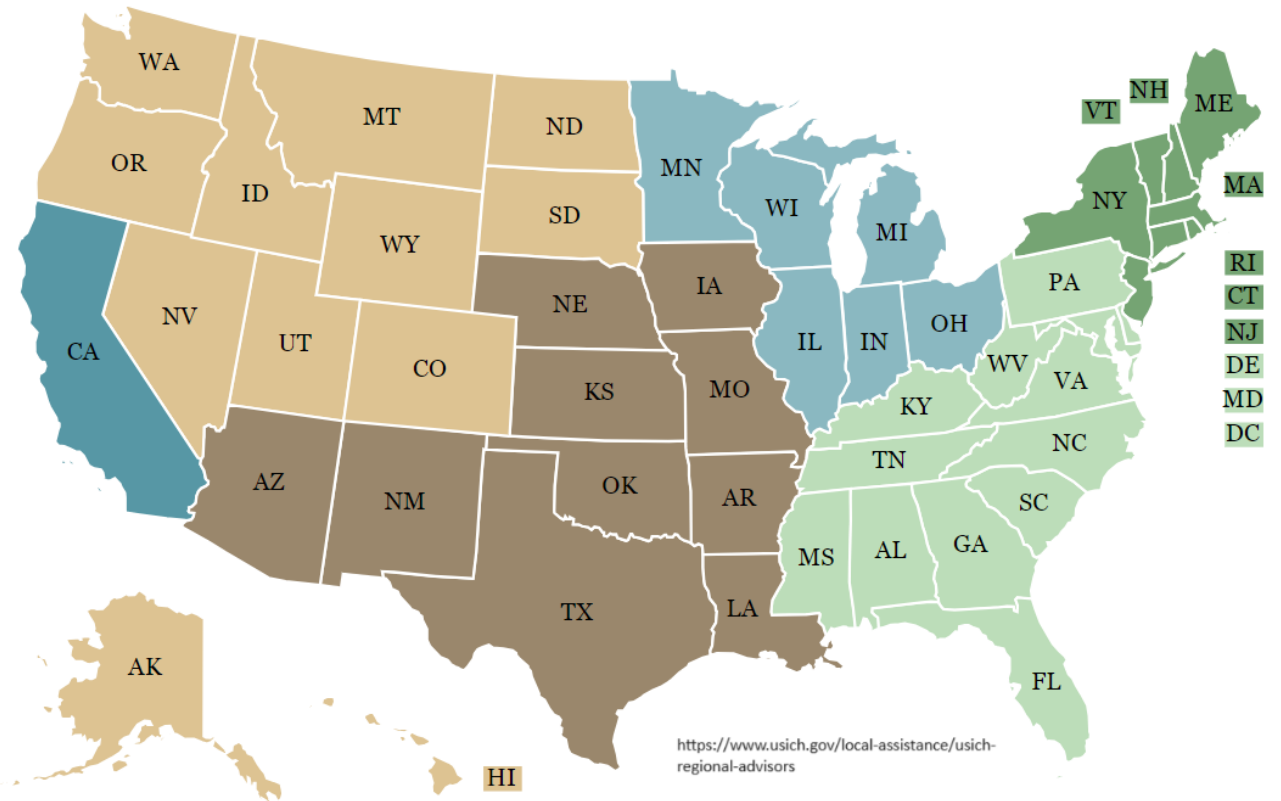
- Council
  - Attended at the Principal level
  - Chaired by Secretaries Becerra (Chair) and Vilsack (Vice Chair)
- Council Policy Group
  - Staff-level SMEs
- Interagency Working Groups





# Creating a National Partnership at All Levels

- Regional and State Interagency Councils on Homelessness
- Governors, Mayors, County Elected Leaders
- Faith-based and Nonprofit Organizations
- Private Sector
- Philanthropy



[Contact your USICH Senior Regional Advisor](https://www.usich.gov/local-assistance/usich-regional-advisors)

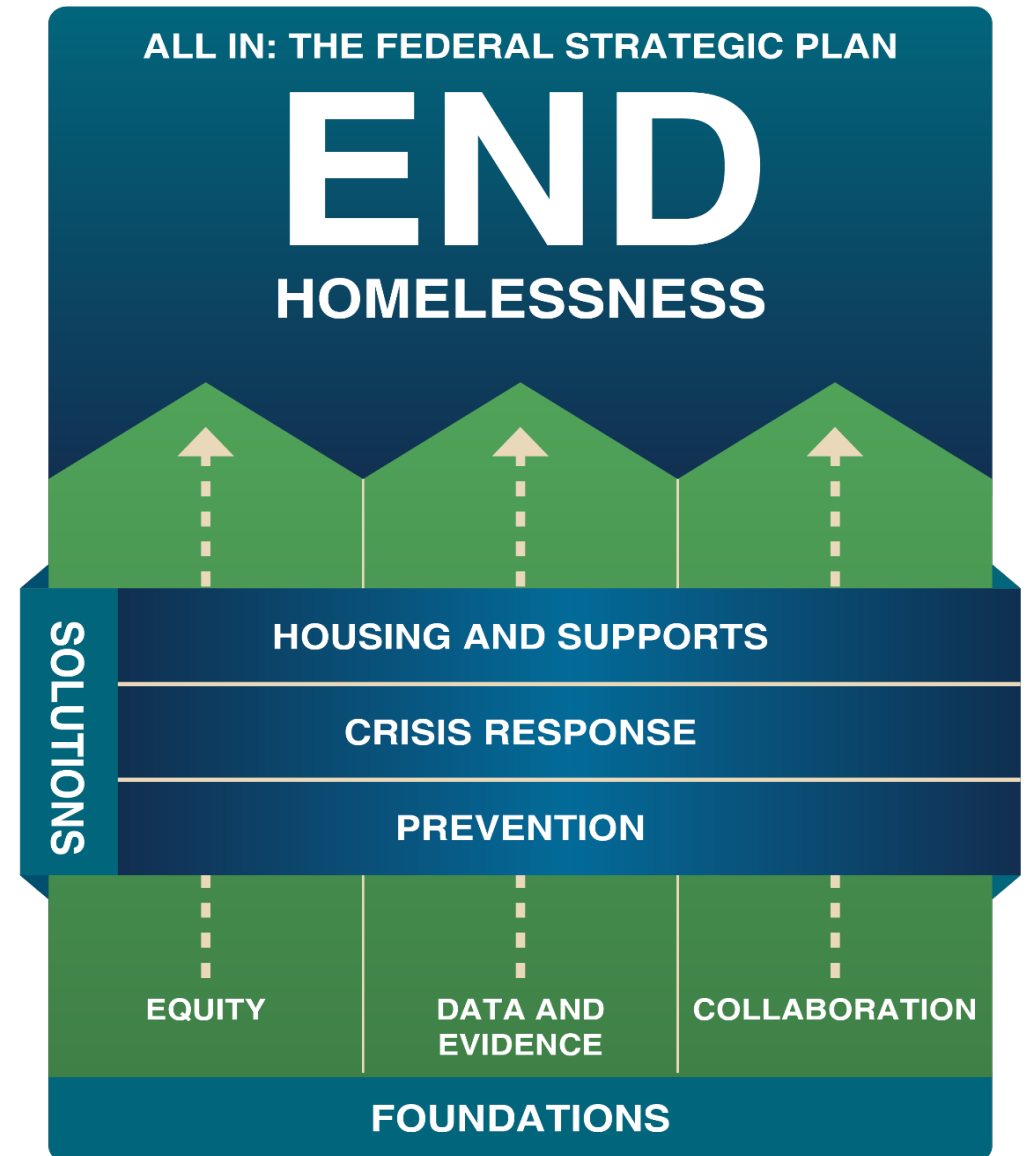


# All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Multi-year, interagency, federal blueprint for ending homelessness

Name “*All In*” represents:

- A plan of action to get ALL Americans into housing
- A plan that represents an all-of-government approach to preventing and ending homelessness—in other words, we’re “All In”







# Foundational Pillars

Lead With Equity	Use Data and Evidence	Collaborate at All Levels
Pursue equitable outcomes	Increase federal government capacity to use data and evidence to inform policy and funding	Promote collaborative leadership at all levels
Promote inclusive decision-making and authentic collaboration	Increase local and state capacity to collect, report, and use data	Improve information-sharing between and among the federal, state and local partners
Increase access for AI/AN communities	Create opportunity for innovation and research to build evidence for what works	
Change policies and practices that perpetuate disparities		



# 19 Strategies to Address Encampments Humanely and Effectively

Equity	Collaboration	Data & Evidence
1. Engage Encampment Residents in Efforts to Develop Solutions	3. Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response	7. Collect and Share Qualitative and Quantitative Data
2. Address Unique Needs of People with Chronic and Acute Health Conditions	4. Empower Outreach Teams and Health Providers to Lead the Effort	8. Track Shelter and Housing Availability
	5. Prioritize Closure Based on Health and Safety Factors	9. Track Status of People Housed and Yet to Be Housed
	6. Engage Neighboring Residence and Businesses	

Read the full guidance at [www.usich.gov/encampments](http://www.usich.gov/encampments)



# 19 Strategies to Address Encampments Humanely and Effectively

Crisis Response	Housing & Support	Prevention
10. Address Basic Needs and Provide Health Care	13. Ensure Access to Housing and Services	17. Expand Affordable Housing
11. Conduct Comprehensive, Coordinated, and Ongoing Housing-Focused Outreach	14. Ensure Interim Strategies Promote dignity, Respect, and Pathways to Permanent Housing	18. Interrupt Pipelines into Homelessness
12. Provide Storage	15. Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Support	19. Build and Strengthen Safety Nets
	16. Ensure Encampments are Closed Humanely	

Read the full guidance at [www.usich.gov/encampments](http://www.usich.gov/encampments)



# Tools

- [7 Principles for Addressing Encampments](#) (June 2022)
- USICH [19 Strategies to Address Encampments](#) and [Webinar](#) (April 2024)
- [Statement from USICH Executive Director on Encampment Guidance and Legal Landscape](#) (April 2024)
- [FAQs About USICH's 19 Encampment Strategies](#) (July 2024)
- Community Spotlights on Humane Responses to Encampments:
  - San Diego County: [Integrating Health Care](#)
  - Las Cruces, New Mexico: [Engaging Neighbors and Businesses](#)
  - Hennepin County, Minnesota: [Housing-Focused Outreach](#)
  - Denver: [Engaging Encampment Residents in Solutions](#)
  - Lane County, Oregon: [Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response](#)

# Wrapping Up and Next Steps

- This plan will be updated regularly as new resource needs are identified and new partnerships are established.
- Our new Encampments webpage serves as our repository for public-facing updates: [www.va.gov/Homeless/Encampments.asp](http://www.va.gov/Homeless/Encampments.asp)

# Q&A



# 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, October 10, 2024.**
  - Keep an eye out for the updated calendar invitation!
  - For questions, please email [VHA11HPO38kGoalSupport@va.gov](mailto: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*