

The Homeless Programs Office newsletter contains news and information about Veteran homelessness. Share this newsletter with others so they too can stay up-to-date.



VHA Homeless Programs Office

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Executive Director's Message | Veterans' Stories | Resources
COVID-19 Response | 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. To minimize the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, only Veterans who do not have access to a phone are to visit their closest VA medical center without calling in advance.



Message from Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs Office

With the arrival of warmer weather and decreasing coronavirus case numbers in parts of the country, we in VHA's [Homeless Programs Office](#) (HPO) know there is much to be optimistic about. Still, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic has put all of us, especially Veterans facing homelessness, at higher risk of mental health issues. May is recognized as Mental Health Month—a time when we work to fight the stigma of mental illness and provide avenues of support. HPO is pleased to present such a robust slate of offerings for Veterans' needs around mental health, housing, and much more.

In this newsletter, you can learn more about the VA National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans' research on mental health. Visit the [Center's main page](#) to learn more about mental health and other resources for Veterans. Preventing Veteran suicide, just like eliminating Veteran homelessness, is a team effort that HPO places atop its list of priorities. VA has partnered with PsychArmor to provide [S.A.V.E training](#) online for free. S.A.V.E educates anyone on how to help prevent suicide among Veterans. People who take the course can learn how to identify Veterans who may be at risk for suicide and what to do to intervene.

Veterans who are experiencing homelessness with access to a phone can call VA's toll-free National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-424-3838 ([1-877-4AID-Vet](#)) or use [VA's Homeless Veteran Chat](#) service if they have access to a computer. VA's Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program also provides services to Veterans around substance use, health care exams and referrals, and mental health issues. Learn more about all of these supportive services on [VA's Mental Health Services for Veterans page](#). Of course, any Veteran anywhere can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 or go to [VeteransCrisisLine.net](#) to chat with a responder; they can also send a text message to 838255 for 24/7 support. Many Veterans have recovered from issues around mental health, substance use, and homelessness; find their stories at [MakeTheConnection.net](#).

You will also find more information about the HPO Strategic Plan, which was published last month, and resources for encouraging Veterans to, at least, talk with their healthcare provider about the COVID-19 vaccine. We know that many Veterans have been especially affected by the pandemic and need support getting vaccinated.

These pieces of information go hand-in-hand, because each is part of HPO's comprehensive approach to supporting Veterans; without a thoughtful, innovative, and evidence-based plan, we could not support Veterans in the areas of housing, employment, and mental health services. We are hopeful about the future and as always, are working to meet the call to support Veterans' well-being.

Around HPO



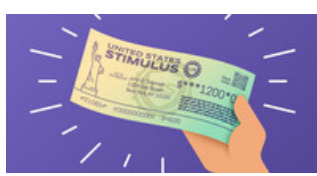
Why I get my health care at VA: Mike

After six years in the Marine Corps, Mike separated from service, but he had a difficult transition to civilian life – in finding a job and a place to live. He felt like no one understood him, until he turned to VA for help.

VHA Homeless Programs Office releases five-year strategic plan

The HPO staff and our partners worked closely to define the essential practices that would help HPO meet Veterans' evolving needs.

Homeless Programs Office
Strategic Plan 2021-2025

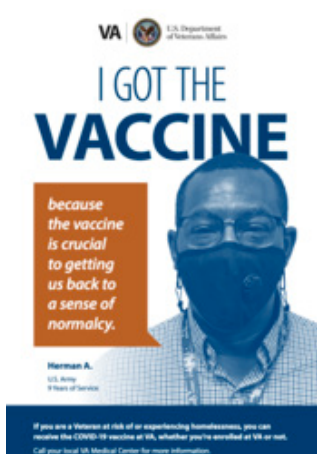


Economic Impact Payments (EIP): How low- and no-income Veterans can receive theirs now

Veterans can qualify for their EIP even if they have low or no earned income, are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or receive VA benefits.

HPO Resource Quick Links

- Explore VA's [Make the Connection](#) for ten ideas — things that anyone can start doing today — that have helped many Veterans jump-start their recovery.
- PsychArmor's [S.A.V.E course](#) was developed in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs to help participants develop a general understanding of the problem of suicide in the United States; understand how to identify a Veteran who may be at risk for suicide; and, finally, know what to do if they identify a Veteran at risk.
- [Improving Employment Services within the HUD-VASH Program:](#) During qualitative interviews, Veterans and staff described housing stability as a crucial first step towards employment: Veterans needed housing before they could try to find a job.
- [John D. Dingell VAMC – Clinical Psychology in HUD-VASH Programs An Innovative Practice in VHA Homeless Program Operations:](#) The John D. Dingell VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Detroit, MI has been identified as a site with an innovative practice for their incorporation of psychological services in the [Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing](#) (HUD-VASH) program.



HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates

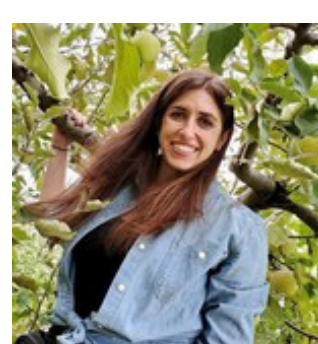
Encourage Veterans, and others, to get their COVID-19 vaccine by sharing [COVID-19 Vaccine sharable social media, web graphics and posters](#) like the one seen here.

Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine ensures protection from a severe illness from COVID-19. When someone receives the COVID-19 vaccine, they will also be helping America reach community immunity and end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Everyone always has the right to ask questions about any vaccine or treatment. The best person to discuss concerns with is a health care provider.

HPO Staff Spotlight: Samantha Lewis, Ph.D.

This Mental Health Awareness Month, we hear from Samantha Lewis, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in the [HUD-VASH program](#) at the [John D. Dingell VA Medical Center](#). She talks about her role in serving Veterans who have mental health or substance use challenges — and may be experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Dr. Lewis also shares her motivations for dedicating her career to supporting Veterans and what her work means to her.



[Read the full interview.](#)

HPO Fact of the Month

Did you know?

Clinical psychologists, delivering insight oriented and trauma focused psychotherapy, can help Veterans transition from homelessness to housing and facilitate whole health recovery.