



National Veterans'  
Technical Assistance Center

# Supporting Those Who Served: Understanding Veterans and Their Needs

## Housing and Justice Involvement Benefits for Veterans

Virtual Learning Course Series 7, Session 3 of 3

June 10, 2025

# Reminder



HVRP best practices will be shared during this session. The National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC) encourages all grant recipients to utilize best practices that may improve their service delivery. Before implementing a practice discussed during this session, please review your award statement of work and contact your Grant Officer's Technical Representative (GOTR) to discuss if it is an allowable cost or activity or if it requires an amendment to your approved plan.

# Agenda

- Understanding Veteran Homelessness
- Supportive Services
  - Housing and Homelessness Benefits and Programs
- Justice System
  - Risk Factors and Barriers to Employment
  - Other Important Services
  - Identifying Employers That Accept Criminal Backgrounds
- Resources

# Understanding Veteran Homelessness

# Understanding Veteran Homelessness

## (1 of 2)

- Understanding veteran homelessness (mental health, economic challenges, etc.). HVRP staff need to understand:
  - The intersection between mental health challenges, (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, substance use, and housing instability among veterans
  - How to navigate supporting veterans facing economic challenges such as underdevelopment, limited access benefits, and high cost of living, which contribute to homelessness risk

# Understanding Veteran Homelessness

## (2 of 2)

- Familiar with navigating barriers to accessing United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services, mistrust of the systems, and difficulty navigating disability claims or service connections
- Grounded in trauma-informed care and recovery-oriented practices to ensure veteran services are healing and veteran centered

# Supportive Services: Housing Benefits and Homelessness Programs

# Supportive Services: Housing (1 of 2)

## ➤ VA Home Loan Program

- VA helps veterans, servicemembers, and eligible surviving spouses become homeowners
- Provide a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for the veterans own personal occupancy

## ➤ Specialty Adapted Housing (SAH) and Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) Grants

- Designed to help veterans with a service-connected disability adapt their homes for accessibility
  - Grants can cover the cost of wheelchair ramps, wider doorways, or accessible bathrooms, etc.



# Supportive Services: Housing (2 of 2)

- State and Local Housing Benefits
  - Many states offer additional property tax exemptions, state funded rental assistance, or veteran housing projects
  - Local CoCs often prioritize veterans for housing programs
  - **Note:** Most benefits require veteran status, honorable or other-than-dishonorable discharge, and may have income or disability requirements
    - Coordinated Entry System, VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) help veterans apply and connect to housing

# Supportive Services: Homelessness

- A deep understanding of the housing resources available:
  - Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
    - Rapid Rehousing and Prevention for short-term financial assistance, case management, and housing search support
  - Grant Per Diem (GPD)
    - Transitional Housing, time limited housing with supportive services to help veterans move toward permanent housing
  - HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
    - Permanent supportive housing that is long-term with rental subsidies and case management for chronically homeless veterans

# Supportive Services: Shelter and Helpful Resources

- Utilize resource search engines that connects individuals with information and referrals for supportive services. Having a strong understanding of cross-sector collaboration between VA, CoC, behavioral health providers, and community-based organizations to coordinate veteran centric care
- Local Emergency Shelter Systems of Care
  - Connect with the regional continuum of care (CoC)
    - [211](#)
    - Local [Community Resource and Referral Centers \(CRRCs\)](#)
    - [Findhelp.org](#)
    - [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#)

# Justice System

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# Justice System: Risk Factors and Barriers to Employment

# Justice System: Risk Factors and Barriers to Employment (1 of 4)

- Criminal Record
  - Felony or misdemeanor convictions can disqualify veterans from many jobs, particularly in health care, finance, education, or government roles
  - Background checks may trigger automatic disqualification even when the offense is unrelated to job duties
- Mental Health and Substance Use Challenges
  - High rates of PTSD, depression, anxiety and substance use challenges among justice involved veterans
  - Conditions may interfere with job retention, reliability or workplace behavior, especially without support or accommodations

# Justice System: Risk Factors and Barriers to Employment (2 of 4)

- Service-connected trauma and readjustment challenges
  - Traumatic experiences while in the military can lead to difficulties adjusting to civilian workplaces and team dynamics
  - Veterans may experience challenges translating military experience into civilian language or resume formats
- Gaps in work history
  - Incarceration and transitions from military service may result in long periods of unemployment
  - Employers may misinterpret gaps as laziness or lack of skills
- Lack of civilian credentials or certifications
  - While veterans often have extensive experience, they may lack civilian-recognized licenses (e.g., CDL, HVAC, IT) required for employment

# Justice System: Risk Factors and Barriers to Employment (3 of 4)

- Employer Stigma
  - Some employers may lack an understanding of homelessness in a trauma informed approach and may be bias against people with criminal records and/or veterans with visible behavioral health challenges
- Housing Instability
  - People having a lack of stable housing post-incarceration or homelessness reduces the ability to maintain work routines or access to certain job opportunities



# Justice System: Risk Factors and Barriers to Employment (4 of 4)

- Lack of Access to Job Searching Tools
  - Veterans may have limited digital literacy, transportation or professional clothing
- Worry about a loss of public benefits (e.g., housing, health care, or VA disability income), especially if jobs are temporary or low wage
- Limited Reentry Support
  - There may be a lack of strong veteran-focused reentry or workforce development programs

# Justice System: Other Important Services

# Justice System: Other Important Services (1 of 3)

## ➤ VA Veterans Justice Programs

### ➤ Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

- Helps veterans avoid unnecessary incarceration by connecting them to treatment and support services in lieu of jail or prison
- Supports veterans in courts, jails and law enforcement diversion programs
- VJOs can attend court hearings, coordinate housing and health services, and assist with discharge planning

# Justice System: Other Important Services (2 of 3)

- VA Veterans Justice Programs, Continued;
  - Health Care for Reentry Veterans Support (HCRV)
    - Helps incarcerated veterans plan for a successful reentry into the community
    - Provides pre-release assessments, linkage to the VA health care, housing programs (HUD-VASH, SSVF), and benefits assistance
    - Priority given to veterans with mental health and substance use challenge

# Justice System: Other Important Services (3 of 3)

- Veterans Treatment Courts
  - Alternate to incarceration focused on treatment and rehabilitation
  - Participants work through a structured program including case management, sobriety monitoring, and wraparound services
- Legal Aid
  - VA benefits claim and appeals
  - Discharge upgrade
  - Housing barriers (e.g., eviction and credit repair)
  - Expungement and reinstatement of civil rights

# Justice System: Identifying Employers That Accept Criminal Backgrounds

# Justice System: Identifying Employers That Accept Criminal Backgrounds (1 of 2)



- [Reentry Employment Opportunities-DOL](#)
- Search job boards:
  - [Honest Jobs](#) – A national fair chance hiring platform
  - [Next Chapter](#) – Connects formerly incarcerated individuals with tech employers
  - Use filters on job boards with keywords such as:
    - “fair chance”
    - “background friendly”
    - “reentry friendly”
    - “second chance employer”

# Justice System: Identifying Employers That Accept Criminal Backgrounds (2 of 2)



- Assist veterans with knowing their rights
  - Many cities and states have “Ban the Box” laws limiting when employers can ask about convictions
  - [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)
    - Provides guidelines prohibiting blanket discrimination based on criminal history
    - Legal aid organizations
      - May help with record sealing, expungement, or rights restoration, which can improve employability



# Resources (1 of 2)

- [VA Home Loan Program](#)
- [Specially Adapted Housing \(SAH\) & Special Housing Adaptation \(SHA\) Grants](#)
- [211](#)
- [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#)
- Local [Community Resource and Referral Centers \(CRRCs\)](#)
- [Findhelp.org](#)
  - [Reentry Employment Opportunities-DOL](#)
- Search job boards:
  - [Honest Jobs](#)
  - [Next Chapter](#)

# Resources (2 of 2)

- [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)
- [HUD Exchange](#)
- [CoC Program](#)
- [Coordinated Entry](#)
- [HUD-VASH](#)
- [SSVF](#)
- [GPD](#)
- [Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans \(DCHV\)](#)
- [Health Care for Homeless Veterans \(HCHV\)](#)
- [Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams \(HPACT\)](#)
- [Supported Employment: Building Your Program](#)
- [Healthcare and Homelessness](#)
- [Understanding the Impact of Homelessness on Health and Wellbeing](#)



**Questions?**

# Thank you!

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