



U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

Annual Report to Congress on Targeted Programs That Help People Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness

January 2024

BACKGROUND

Authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act 42 USC § 11313. Section 203[c], the mission of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) 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.” USICH is required to report annually on programs that assist people experiencing homelessness, including (1) the number of homeless individuals served by each program, (2) any statutory and regulatory restrictions that impede individuals experiencing homelessness from obtaining services or benefits under each program and (3) agency efforts to increase opportunities for homeless individuals to get shelter, food, and supportive services.

Pursuant to Section 203[c] of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11313 (c)(1)), this document serves as USICH’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Annual Report on Targeted Programs That Help People Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness. We have opted to include some non-targeted programs (i.e., programs serving a broader population that includes but is not limited to people experiencing homelessness).

PROCESS

USICH collaborated with its federal partner agencies to compile the data summarized in this report. Specifically, USICH asked agencies to briefly describe programs that address the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and provide data on the number of individuals served for the most recently completed fiscal year.¹ USICH also asked agencies to provide a brief program narrative to identify impediments, successes, challenges, and future actions to help people experiencing homelessness. For most programs, the most recent available data is for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023 (FY 2023).²

The following table provides a list of targeted homeless programs with levels of federal funding enacted in Fiscal Years 2020-2023:

¹ At the time of the report’s draft, 2023 was the most recently completed federal fiscal year.

² In some instances, agency program data for the most immediate past fiscal year are not available at the time of this report’s creation. In those instances, USICH has included data from the most recent fiscal year for which data is available.

Table 1: List of Targeted Programs Assisting Individuals Experiencing Homelessness and Federal Funding Enacted (in Millions)

Agency	Program	FY 2020 Enacted	FY 2021 Enacted	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Enacted
USDA	USDA/FNS: The Emergency Food Assistance Program	402	422	481	538
ED	Education for Homeless Children and Youths	102	107	114	129
HHS	HRSA: Health Care for the Homeless	479	498	481	501
HHS	SAMHSA: Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness	65	65	65	67
HHS	SAMHSA: Mental Health, Programs of Regional and National Significance for Homelessness ³	33	33	33	36
HHS	SAMHSA: Substance Use Services, Programs of Regional and National Significance – Treatment Systems for Homeless ⁴	36	36	36	37
HHS	ACF: Runaway and Homeless Youth	132	137	140	146
HHS	ACF: Head Start	582	632	682	766
FEMA	Emergency Food and Shelter Program ⁵	125	130	130	130
HUD	Homeless Assistance Grants	2,777	3,000	3,213	3,633
HUD	HCV Homeless Vouchers	-	43	-	-
HUD	New HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program Vouchers ⁶	40	40	50	50
DOJ	Transitional Housing Assistance Grants to Victims of Sexual Assault	37	40	43	50
DOL	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program	55	58	61	66
VA	Health Care for Homeless Veterans ⁷	173	187	202	229
VA	Domiciliary Care	196	204	198	232
VA	Compensated Work Therapy / Transitional Residence	62	64	62	193

³ The Mental Health PRNS is composed of the “Homelessness Prevention Programs” and “Homelessness” budget line items in SAMHSA’s Mental Health Account.

⁴ The Substance Abuse PRNS is composed of the “Treatment Systems for Homeless” budget line item in SAMHSA’s Substance Abuse Treatment Account.

⁵ Due to the sunset of Emergency Food and Shelter-Humanitarian, this crosscut will no longer reflect funding levels for the Emergency Food and Shelter-Humanitarian and the Shelter and Services Program, which had been previously reported.

⁶ HUD-VASH Vouchers have been appropriated since FY2008 and are renewed within the HUD Voucher account. This table does not report on total renewal funding for HUD-VASH or Tribal HUD-VASH - only new funding for incremental vouchers.

⁷ VA funding levels for FY 2021 and FY 2022 exclude CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act funding.

VA	HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program Services	644	699	883	958
VA	Grant and Per Diem Program	237	252	321	276
VA	Veterans Justice Outreach Program	59	63	67	73
VA	Supportive Services for Veteran Families	381	420	395	740
VA	Other Programs	94	99	148	170
USICH	United States Interagency Council on Homelessness	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0
Total		6,714	7,232	7,808	9,024

PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

This section provides a general description for each program, including (where available) the number of people served annually and a program summary identifying impediments to serving people experiencing homelessness.

In this section, we make a distinction between “targeted” and “non-targeted” programs:

- A targeted program is a program dedicated to serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- A non-targeted program is a program that is targeted to a broader population – such as low-income Americans, persons with disabilities, or older adults – that may include people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

NOTE: Some agencies have elected to submit information on additional programs not listed in the table above.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

Targeted Programs:

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Program Description: The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), authorized in the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. § 7501 et seq.), provides low-income Americans with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost through distributing state agencies. Each state is allocated food based on the number of residents who are either unemployed or living below the poverty line. States receive allotments and provide the food to local agencies, such as food banks, which distribute the food to local soup kitchens and food

pantries. States also provide food to local organizations, such as community action agencies, which distribute the food directly to low-income households. Participating organizations may use the food to prepare meals in congregate settings. Recipients of food for individual use, including people experiencing homelessness, must meet income eligibility criteria set by the states. Individuals experiencing homelessness can also receive immediate food assistance in the form of prepared meals in a congregate setting, and they are not required to meet any income eligibility criteria to access such meals.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2021: Not Applicable. TEFAP does not collect participant-level data.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: TEFAP has program regulations and guidance flexibilities to promote access for individuals experiencing homelessness. For example, current program regulations require TEFAP distribution sites to collect the address of an individual receiving TEFAP foods for individual use. TEFAP policy memorandum FD-036 TEFAP – Local-Level Record-Keeping Requirements (Revised) offers some flexibility, recognizing that individuals experiencing homelessness may be unable to provide an address. Further, through rulemaking, USDA FNS is proposing to remove the regulatory requirement for address collection for TEFAP participants receiving foods for home consumption, recognizing this poses a difficulty for unhoused participants. Program regulations also prohibit TEFAP meal sites—often soup kitchens and shelters—from employing a means test for individuals seeking meals so that all individuals, including individuals experiencing homelessness, can access emergency food assistance.

USDA works collaboratively with program stakeholders—including nonprofit partners addressing hunger and homelessness—to improve program effectiveness and access. TEFAP program regulations encourage state agencies to establish a state advisory board to inform how states allocate TEFAP resources among various eligible outlet types. Advisory boards further inform the program on which areas and populations most need food assistance and how to serve eligible populations best. USDA does not maintain information on the number of advisory councils in place or current activities, as these are optional.

In FY 2022-2023, USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) awarded \$100 million in TEFAP Reach and Resiliency grants to TEFAP state agencies as supplemental funding to expand TEFAP’s reach into remote, rural, tribal, and/or low-income areas that are underserved by current program operations. USDA FNS’ proposed rulemaking, “Food Distribution Programs: Improving Parity and Access,” published in August 2023, focuses on increasing access for TEFAP recipients and simplifying requirements for state and local program operators. USDA FNS is beginning to develop the final rule to implement regulatory changes based on comments received.

Non-Targeted Programs:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Program Description: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the largest federal domestic nutrition assistance program, provides nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income households via a monthly allotment of benefits placed on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which works like a debit card and is used to purchase food at authorized retailers.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2021: USDA suspended SNAP data collection from March 2020 through June 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, USDA is unable to provide comprehensive data for FY 2021. In FY 2020, SNAP served 987,000 households, representing 1.2 million SNAP participants, who reported experiencing homelessness at the time the household was certified for SNAP benefits. These figures are based on data from October 2019 through February 2020 and are weighted to represent the entire fiscal year.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: People experiencing homelessness can access SNAP benefits via special provisions to support their unique needs, including the use of authorized representatives, flexibilities regarding mail pick up, and, in some States, access to restaurant programs to enable the purchase of prepared foods. Seven States (AZ, CA, IL, MD, MI, RI, VA) operate the optional Restaurant Meals Program, which allows the elderly, people who are disabled, and people who are homeless to use SNAP benefits to buy prepared meals at state-approved restaurants. However, not all programs are statewide; some are only in selected counties. Furthermore, SNAP does not require a permanent address for program participation, and people experiencing homelessness can use shelters or local SNAP offices to receive SNAP-related mail. SNAP also confers categorical eligibility to participants in other FNS programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, TEFAP, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

SNAP continues to prioritize ensuring access to nutrition benefits for low-income people eligible for SNAP. Annually, FNS issues guidance to the State agencies, encouraging them to implement outreach strategies to inform underserved populations about nutrition assistance available through SNAP. States may choose to focus on specific populations, including people experiencing homelessness, and FNS reimburses state agencies 50% of their allowable costs for outreach activities.

The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 added new exemptions to time-limited participation in SNAP by Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) for individuals experiencing homelessness, Veterans, and individuals who are 24 years of age or younger and in foster care on their 18th birthday.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ED)

Targeted Programs:

Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Program Description: The Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, assists states to:

- Establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth;
- Develop and carry out a state plan for the education of children experiencing homelessness and
- Make subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support the education of those children.

The purpose of the assistance is to ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education that is available to other children.

Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness Enrolled in Public School Districts During the 2021-2022 School Year: 1,205,292

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: The COVID-19 pandemic and the pivot to virtual instruction in many public school districts from March 2020 through Spring 2021 resulted in significant decreases in the number of children and youth who identified as homeless. While all the causes of the decline are not known, data shows that more students became disengaged or disenrolled during this time, making it more difficult for schools to identify them as experiencing homelessness.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress appropriated \$800 million as part of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY). This funding was awarded to state educational agencies (SEAs) in April 2021 to supplement existing subgrantee LEAs or to manage a new competition. In July 2021, the remaining 75% of funding was disbursed to SEAs to award to public school districts on a formula basis. These funds are available through September 30, 2024. The goals of the ARP-HCY funding are to increase the identification of children and youth experiencing

homelessness, particularly in historically underserved communities, and to connect them to educational and wraparound services to support academic success.

Additionally, the program supports efforts to address youth experiencing homelessness through technical assistance and collaborations. The department's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program and its contractor, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), have supported coordinated technical assistance and evaluation for Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grantees since FY 2017.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

Targeted Programs:

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA): Health Care for the Homeless

Program Description: HRSA's Health Center Program provides affordable, accessible, quality, and cost-effective primary healthcare services to vulnerable populations. In 2022, 299 Health Center Program grantees received funding under the Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Program, which provides comprehensive primary health care, including substance use services as needed, to people experiencing homelessness, including children, youth, and Veterans. Comprehensive services include basic health services, diagnostic laboratory and radiologic services, preventive health services, emergency medical services, and pharmaceutical services.

Outreach, case management, and eligibility assistance are among other required services that are especially critical to ensure patients experiencing homelessness can access all appropriate programs. Optional services include mental health, oral health, optometry, recuperative care, environmental health, and occupational therapy. Recipients of services include people who are experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, individuals who are at risk of homelessness and are doubled up, and people who are living in permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, or other housing programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness. HCH health centers are also required to provide temporary continued provision of services to certain formerly homeless individuals.

Additionally, HRSA supports two National Training and Technical Assistance Partners through cooperative agreements that fund training and technical assistance to health centers that serve people experiencing homelessness. The technical assistance aims to support health centers in delivering comprehensive care,

addressing emergent public health issues and health needs, improving operational effectiveness and quality, and advancing health equity.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served by All 1,373 Health Centers (Including Health Care for the Homeless Grantees) During FY 2022: 1,357,683

Number of Patients Served by Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Grantees During FY 2022: 940,499

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Despite ongoing challenges related to COVID-19, HCH grantees continue to provide quality primary care and other services to people experiencing homelessness. In 2022, HCH health centers served 101,867 patients diagnosed with substance-related disorders (excluding tobacco use). Moreover, HCH health centers provided nearly 527,390 visits for substance use services in 2022.

In addition to brick-and-mortar service sites, some HCH grantees offer “street medicine” and health center services through mobile units to meet the needs of the unsheltered individuals where they reside. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council’s (NHCHC) National Institute of Medical Respite Care has been active since July 2020. NHCHC continues to champion the medical respite work by hosting learning collaboratives, creating online training courses on medical respite, and providing ongoing technical assistance to grantees launching new programs.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

Program Description: Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) is a formula grant program administered by SAMHSA to provide financial assistance to states and territories to support services for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness and who have serious mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders. Eligible programs and activities include outreach services, screening and diagnostic treatment services, habilitation and rehabilitation services, community mental health services, alcohol or drug treatment services, staff training, case-management services, supportive and supervisory services in residential settings, and referrals for primary health services, job training, educational services, and limited housing services. Across the country, there are approximately 450 local PATH provider organizations.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2021⁸: PATH program staff contacted 103,933 people experiencing homelessness, of whom 58,821 were actively enrolled in PATH at some point.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: During COVID-19, SAMHSA received requests from PATH grantees for program flexibility to meet the challenges of the pandemic. Grantees requested changes such as re-programming funds to provide temporary shelter for unsheltered individuals and adjusting the 20% program cost cap on housing. Additionally, grantees requested administrative flexibility, including extending grant performance periods, suspending certain data collections, and allowing PATH funds to assist with personal items such as food, copays for prescription medications, and pre-paid cell phones to unsheltered individuals. SAMHSA assessed the grantees' request and determined that the agency does not have the authority to change any administrative, financial, or performance-related statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to the PATH program. However, SAMHSA determined that it does have the authority to repurpose funds if it is within the legal and statutory requirements of the program.

SAMHSA: Mental Health, Programs of Regional and National Significance (PRNS) - Homelessness Prevention Programs and Substance Use Services PRNS - Treatment Systems for Homeless

Program Description: SAMHSA funds the following programs to address serious mental illness (SMI), serious emotional disturbance (SED), substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorder treatment and recovery support services through the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT):⁹

- **CMHS** strengthens the nation's mental health system by helping states improve and increase the quality and range of their treatment, rehabilitation, and support to behavioral health resources by increasing outreach and access to mental health programs and ensuring evidence-based practices. The program supports outreach and case management programs for the thousands of Americans who are homeless and the improvement of these services.
 - The **Treatment for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness (TIEH)** is a competitive grant program administered by CMHS. The purpose of this program is to provide comprehensive, coordinated, and evidenced-based services for individuals, youth, and families with a serious mental illness (SMI), serious emotional disturbance (SED), or co-occurring

⁸ FY 2021 is the most recent year for which data is available for this program.

⁹ The Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) is no longer active. In FY 2021, only six grantees remained operating under a no-cost extension to close-out the grant. The CABHI-States Program, as well as the Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals—Services in Supportive Housing (GBHI-SSH) Program are also not active.

disorder (COD) who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness (e.g., people exiting jail or prison without a place to live).

Grantees use funds to provide the following categories of services:

- 1) Engage and connect the population of focus to behavioral health treatment, case management, and recovery support services.
 - 2) Assist with identifying sustainable permanent housing by collaborating with homeless services organizations and housing providers, including public housing agencies.
 - 3) Provide case management that includes care coordination/service delivery planning and other strategies that support stability across services and housing transitions.
- CMHS started the **TIEH Collaborative Innovation and Implementation Network** to promote grantee collaboration and information sharing. Grants are awarded for up to five years to states, governmental units within political subdivisions of a state, federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native tribes, tribal organizations, Urban Indian Organizations, a consortium of tribes or tribal organizations, and domestic public and private nonprofits.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: 5,762

- **CSAT's** mission is to promote community-based substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services for individuals and families in every community. CSAT provides national leadership to improve access, reduce barriers, and promote high-quality, life-saving, and effective treatment and recovery support services.
 - **Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (GBHI)** is a competitive grant program administered by CSAT. The goal of the program is to help communities expand and strengthen treatment and recovery support services for individuals (including youth and families) experiencing homelessness who have substance use disorders or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders.

Grants are awarded to domestic public and private nonprofits, and the program supports:

- 1) Treatment and other recovery-oriented services for substance use disorders or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders,
- 2) Coordination of housing and services that support the implementation and/or enhance the long-term sustainability of integrated community systems that provide permanent housing and supportive services to the target population,

- 3) Efforts to engage and connect clients who experience substance use disorders or co-occurring disorders to enrollment resources for health insurance, Medicaid, and mainstream benefits programs (e.g., Supplemental Security Income [SSI]/Social Security Disability Insurance [SSDI], Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], and SNAP).

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Enrolled in FY 2023: 3,748

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Exacerbated by behavioral health workforce shortages and the COVID-19 pandemic, impediments that pose barriers to the full effectiveness of the programs (TIEH and GBHI) include limited housing availability for program participants and lengthy waitlists for access to services. COVID-19 impacted grantees because of limited or no in-person access to shelters, the need to address community priorities to ensure the safety of both staff and clients, and the disruption to service access, such as difficulties enrolling clients in inpatient treatment due to a lack of access to rapid COVID-19 testing services. Transitions to virtual service delivery also created challenges in engaging and retaining clients in telehealth due to technology literacy and access to technology—including internet services, computers, cell phones, and limited cell phone data coverage. To address these challenges, SAMHSA allowed flexibility for grant recipients affected by the loss of operational capacity and increased costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic by developing a COVID-19 resource page and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Related to COVID-19 for SAMHSA Discretionary Grant Recipients.

Homeless Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB): Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program

Program Description: The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program provides funding to local community-based organizations to address the needs of youth and young adults by providing shelter, programming, and comprehensive, individualized supports to improve outcomes for youth and young adults in four core outcome areas: (1) Safe and stable housing (2) Education and employment (3) Social and emotional well-being, and (4) Permanent connections. The four primary RHY grant programs include:

- *Basic Center Programs (BCP):* meets the immediate needs of youth under age 18 through temporary shelter for up to 21 days, including individual counseling, family reunification/connection, crisis intervention, and aftercare services.
- *Street Outreach Programs (SOP):* provides street-based services to youth under age 21 who have run away or are experiencing homelessness and may be living on the street.

- *Transitional Living Programs (TLP)*: provide safe, stable, and appropriate housing for youth 16 to under 22 years of age who have run away or are experiencing homelessness.
- *Maternity Group Home Programs (MGH)*: TLPs specifically designed to meet the needs of pregnant and/or parenting youth and young adults.

In FY 2022, the most recent RHY data shows that RHY program grant recipients provided shelter and outreach services to 48,664 youth. In October 2023, the RHY Program awarded 673 grants, including 301 Basic Center Programs, 135 Street Outreach Programs, 162 Transitional Living Programs, 64 Maternity Group Homes, and 11 Runaway and Homeless Youth – Prevention Demonstration Programs.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start: Head Start

Program Description: The Head Start Program, through Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start, is a comprehensive child development program that serves children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and their families. Head Start is a child-focused, multi-generational program that aims to increase the school readiness of young children in low-income families. The children of families experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for Head Start, and programs may reserve up to 3% of their funded enrollment for 30 days before they have an additional 30 days to fill that slot.

Head Start provides nutrition, developmental screenings, medical and dental screenings, immunizations, mental health and social services referrals, family engagement, and, in some cases, transportation.

Number of Families Facing Homelessness Served in FY 2022: 47,200

Number of Children Facing Homelessness Served in FY 2022: 50,600

Number of Families Who Accessed Housing in FY 2022: 11,000

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: In FY 2023, the Office of Head Start has **implemented** a strategic plan to increase enrollment and provide responsive services to families experiencing homelessness. The plan includes strategic communications about prioritizing children experiencing homelessness for enrollment; training and technical assistance to support informed program outreach, recruitment, and supportive services; and policy guidance to clarify common **staff questions** about applying the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness to HS/EHS families' living circumstances.

Non-Targeted Programs:

Medicaid

Program Description: The Medicaid Program provides health coverage to millions of Americans, including eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults, and people with disabilities. States administer Medicaid according to federal requirements. The program is funded jointly by states and the federal government.

Program Data: 68% of Continuum of Care (CoC) program participants reported receiving Medicaid benefits.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Program Description: TANF is a block grant program that provides federal funding to states to give monthly cash assistance payments and other benefits and services to financially eligible families with children. The goals of the TANF program are to:

- 4) Assist needy families so children can be cared for in their homes.
- 5) End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage support.
- 6) Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
- 7) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

TANF agencies provide various services to eligible families, such as job skills training, childcare assistance, transportation, and other work-related expenses. TANF agencies may also use TANF funds to serve families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. For example, they may use TANF funds to help families on a short-term basis with support related to housing and employment. The 2013 Information Memorandum *Use of TANF Funds to Serve Homeless Families and Families at Risk of Experiencing Homelessness* and 2016's *Enhancing Family Stability: A Guide for Assessing Housing Status and Coordinating with Local Homelessness Programs for TANF Agencies* provides more information.

Administration for Community Living, Adult Protective Services (APS)

Program Description: APS programs across the country work to support older adults and adults with disabilities who experience or who are at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation. APS programs investigate reports of maltreatment; conduct case planning, monitoring, and

evaluation; and provide or connect people who have experienced maltreatment to a variety of medical, social service, economic, legal, housing, law enforcement, and other protective, emergency, or support services to help them recover.

APS has been designed and administered wholly at the state or local level until recently. Consequently, there is wide variation in APS services and practices between, and even within, states. The Administration for Community Living took steps to provide more Federal guidance and stewardship by proposing the first-ever regulations for APS programs in the Fall of 2023. By Spring of 2024, the proposed guidance is expected to be finalized.

Research shows that at least one in 10 older adults who live in the community experiences some form of maltreatment each year – and this is likely an undercount because only 1 in 14 cases is reported. People who experience abuse have higher rates of depression, hospitalization, and institutionalization – and they are more likely to die prematurely. The isolation and loss of services during the COVID-19 pandemic placed older adults at increased risk, and incidents of abuse are estimated to have doubled.

Maltreatment of older adults can have serious physical and mental health, financial, and social consequences, including homelessness. APS programs work with clients whose experience of maltreatment has forced them into homelessness or who are experiencing homelessness.

Legal Assistance for Older Adults

As is required by the Older Americans Act Sections 102 (33) and 307(a)(11)(E), legal assistance is a priority service provided by contract by every Area Agency on Aging in the country. Legal assistance providers work with their clients to prevent and mitigate homelessness among older Americans by contesting unwarranted evictions and foreclosures in communities and by representing long-term care residents facing unlawful involuntary removal from long-term residential facilities. Many older adults facing problems with legal solutions will only receive them if the demand for legal assistance consistently exceeds the capacity of legal assistance programs to meet it.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS)

Targeted Programs:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)

Program Description: The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) was established on March 24, 1983, with the signing of the “Jobs Stimulus Bill,” Public Law 98-8, and later authorized under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77), signed into law July 24, 1987. It was renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and reauthorized under Public Law 100-628, signed into law on November 7, 1988. The program’s purpose is to provide funding to local social service organizations, both nonprofit and governmental, to help meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness and hunger. The law requires FEMA to award appropriated funds to the EFSP National Board. It requires the National Board to sub-award the funding to eligible local social service organizations. Though the law establishes EFSP as a FEMA program, it is not a disaster or emergency assistance program covered under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. However, it is an emergency program in terms of meeting the immediate needs of those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, hunger and homelessness.

The National Board governs EFSP and is chaired by a FEMA representative and comprised of representatives from six national nonprofit agencies: American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, The Jewish Federations of North America, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, The Salvation Army, and United Way Worldwide. The National Board allocates funds to qualifying jurisdictions (counties or cities) based on a formula. Those jurisdictions convene Local Boards that determine which local service organizations are to receive funding in their communities. An additional small portion of funds is allocated to State Set-Aside Committees that select jurisdictions for funding based on need indicators that they choose. Funds can be used for food (in the form of served meals or groceries), lodging mass shelters or hotels/ motels, rent or mortgage payments up to 90 days, utility payments up to 90 days, transportation costs associated with the provision of food or shelter, minimal repairs to mass feeding or sheltering facilities for building code violations or for handicap accessibility, and supplies and equipment necessary to feed or shelter people.

Program Data: Neither FEMA, the National Board, nor the United Way Worldwide, which acts as the Board’s fiscal agent, collects data specifically on the number of at-need people assisted with EFSP funding. FEMA can provide data collected by the National Board on the number of meals provided, nights of lodging provided, rent/mortgage payments made, and utility payments made using EFSP funds during FY 2018—the latest year for which actual data is available.

- **Meals Provided:** 66,658,525
- **Nights of Lodging Provided:** 2,782,253
- **Rent/Mortgage Payments Made:** 44,458
- **Utility Payments Made:** 41,648

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act allows the National Board to take up to 5% of the total appropriated in administrative allowance. However, appropriations legislation has continually capped the National Board’s administrative allowance at 3.5%, and there are cases where Local Boards and/or Local Recipient Organizations (LROs) have declined EFSP funds because they are not able to absorb the financial burden of administering the funds in their communities. Declinations of awards due to administrative burdens pose a clear impediment to maximizing EFSP implementation at the local level.

The National Board allows and encourages partnerships between small and larger LROs operating in the community to share administrative burdens in an effort to overcome the challenge posed by the low administrative allowance. Although this approach does not fully address the issue of the low administrative allowance for regular EFSP funds, it illustrates how the National Board flexibly administers the program to maximize limited LRO resources.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Board implemented policy changes to allow for greater flexibility in the assistance offered to those in need. LROs could allow EFSP funds for rent and mortgage assistance to be extended from one to three months, thus allowing greater support in preventing evictions and foreclosures. Additionally, the National Board revised its policy to allow three months’ worth of total rent or mortgage assistance to be paid in partial monthly payments over an extended period. The National Board also implemented similar policy changes to extend utility payments from one to three months.

LROs can also use EFSP funds to pay for food in the form of served meals or groceries and lodging in mass shelters or hotels. National Board policy had been to budget \$2 per meal per person and \$7.50-\$12.50 per night per person for mass sheltering. Amid rising costs due to inflation, the National Board implemented policy changes to increase budget caps to \$3 per meal per person. It eliminated the range of sheltering budgets in favor of a single rate of \$12.50 per person per night. These increases better reflect the actual costs of feeding and sheltering.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

Targeted Programs:

Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG)

HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants fund state and local governments, Indian Tribes, Tribally Designated Housing Entities, and nonprofit providers to serve individuals and families across the U.S. affected by homelessness. The grants include both formula grant programs (Emergency Solutions Grants) and competitive (Continuum of Care) programs. Included in the CoC program is the Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Bonus (DV Bonus), which funds projects targeted to serve people fleeing these circumstances. The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) has been included in annual appropriations for HUD since FY 2016 and is another competitive grant program governed under the CoC Program regulation.

Homeless Assistance Grant - Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)

Program Description: The Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program is a formula program that provides funds to states, qualified metropolitan cities, urban counties, and territories. States must subgrant most ESG funds to local governments and private nonprofit organizations to implement the program components. The funds may be used for five program components: street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing assistance, and HMIS.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2022, Emergency Shelter Program:

570,000

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2022, Rapid Rehousing Program:

94,000

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2022, Homeless Prevention

Program: 109,000

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: COVID-19 provided a unique opportunity to improve coordination among homelessness assistance, healthcare, and public health providers. In FY23, HUD helped communities balance their public health response while remaining focused on the long-term programs that support a sustainable system to end homelessness. From an operations standpoint, agencies continue to address inadequate staffing for grant administration and service provision for direct assistance. Both challenges impact program operations. Also, rising rent prices and the need for more deeply affordable housing units limited housing options for program participants exiting into permanent housing. Additionally, the

program continues to work to integrate its racial equity priorities and recommendations and perspectives of people with lived expertise fully.

Homeless Assistance Grant - Continuum of Care (CoC) Program

Program Description: The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is a competitive program that awards funds through CoCs to states, local governments, Indian Tribes, Tribally Designated Housing Entities, and nonprofit organizations to promote community-wide efforts to end homelessness. The CoC Program awards funds to eligible organizations through five components:

- **Permanent Housing (PH)** is community-based housing with no designated length of stay. Grant funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, leasing, rental assistance, operating costs, and supportive services. This component includes permanent supportive housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and rapid rehousing (RRH).
- **Joint Transitional Housing and Permanent Housing- Rapid Rehousing (TH/PH-RRH)** projects provide a safe place for people to stay – transitional housing – with financial assistance and wrap-around supportive services determined by program participants to help them move to permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- **Transitional Housing (TH)** facilitates the movement of individuals and families experiencing homelessness to PH within 24 months of entering TH. Grant funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, leasing, rental assistance, operating costs, and supportive services.
- **Supportive Service Only (SSO)** funds may be used for the acquisition, rehabilitation, relocation costs, or leasing of a facility from which supportive services will be provided to unsheltered and sheltered people experiencing homelessness. Street outreach is an allowable cost under SSO.
- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** funds may be used by HMIS leads for operations or to lease space where HMIS can operate and for other costs eligible in 24 CFR § 578.57.
- **Homelessness Prevention** funds may be used by recipients in CoC-designated high-performing communities for housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium-term rental assistance, as described in 24 CFR § 576.105 and 24 CFR § 576.106, that are necessary to prevent an individual or family from experiencing homelessness.

Within the CoC program is the Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Bonus (DV Bonus). The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 provided at least \$52 million for “rapid re-housing projects and supportive service projects providing coordinated entry, and for eligible activities that the

Secretary determines to be critical in order to assist survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.” In March 2023, HUD awarded approximately \$54 million in DV Bonus projects.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in CoC Residential Programs in FY 2022:
330,000¹⁰

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Collaborative Applicants and project-level recipients under the CoC Program face staff shortages and capacity limitations impacted by staff turnover, lack of training, and limited resources and infrastructure. CoCs are tasked with a level of responsibility associated with coordination, partnership, strategy implementation and system change, and resource development but with very limited funding to support the level of staffing needed to carry out these roles effectively. In recognition of this gap, the FY 2023 CoC Program Notice of Funding Opportunity established an alternative maximum amount for CoC planning grants under this NOFO, which has previously been capped at 3%. Depending on which will be greater, the new maximum amount for CoC Planning Grant applications will be \$50,000 or 5% of the applicable Final Pro Rata Need (FPRN) so long as the total grant amount for CoC planning activities does not exceed \$1.5 million.

HUD continues to improve effectiveness by investing in technical assistance that can be deployed to develop guidance and training materials or provide direct technical assistance to CoCs based on a broad range of topics. HUD routinely engages people experiencing or who have experienced homelessness and other stakeholders, including advocacy and constituent groups, in the office’s work.

HUD demonstrated its responsiveness to pressing issues by releasing of the Special Notice of Funding Opportunity to Address Rural and Unsheltered Homelessness and the Stability Vouchers. In early 2023, HUD announced \$486 million in awards, enhancing communities’ capacity to humanely and effectively address unsheltered homelessness by connecting vulnerable individuals and families to housing, healthcare, and supportive services. This Special NOFO strongly promotes partnerships with healthcare organizations, public housing authorities, mainstream housing providers, and people with lived expertise of homelessness. In addition, HUD made \$43m available to Public Housing Authorities who partnered with Special NOFO grantee communities to accept approximately 3,300 Stability Vouchers to provide rental assistance to people experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, including survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or human trafficking. This package of grants and vouchers from HUD is part of a first-of-its-kind funding initiative to address homelessness among people in unsheltered settings and rural communities. This initiative

¹⁰ This data is based on grants funded with FY2020 CoC Awards that have an operating date beginning after January 1, 2021, but ending by December 31, 2023. While this appears to be 2 years of funding, it is actually 1 year of funding, acknowledging that grants can start any time in 2021 and will end 12 to 18 months later (depending on the grant term).

responds to the rising problem of unsheltered homelessness and homeless encampments, as well as to the unmet homelessness problem in rural areas.

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)

Program Description: The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is a competitive demonstration program that awards funds to states, local governments, Indian Tribes, Tribally Designated Housing Entities, or nonprofit organizations to develop and implement a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness. YHDP has been included in each annual appropriation for the Homeless Assistance Grants account since FY 2016. As of September 2023, HUD has awarded YHDP funding to 110 communities, representing a \$440 million investment to prevent and end youth homelessness.

YHDP generally follows the CoC Program rules but allows communities to innovate by seeking waivers to regulatory and statutory requirements to better serve youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Selected communities must develop a coordinated community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, and all projects must be consistent with the community's coordinated community plan.

Selected communities can generally apply for the following types of projects:

- **Permanent Housing** is community-based housing without a designated length of stay and includes permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing.
- **Joint Transitional Housing and Permanent Housing- Rapid Rehousing** provides a tool to develop projects specially tailored to meet the unique developmental needs of youth and help them move quickly into permanent housing with available supportive services to help them maintain that housing.
- **Transitional Housing** facilitates the movement of individuals and families experiencing homelessness to PH within 24 months of entering TH.
- **Homeless Management Information System.** Funds are available to use the CoC's designated HMIS.
- **Supportive Service Only** are projects dedicated to coordinated entry, housing search, and placement services, case management, drop-in centers, legal services, or street outreach.
- **Host Homes and Kinship Care** subsidize the increased expenses to the family that houses a youth or young adult if the costs are eligible CoC Program costs.
- **Shared Housing** provides tenant-based rental assistance for a youth or young adult to reside with a family so long as all CoC Program requirements are met.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2022: 7,100 people served in residential programs.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: While Integrating Youth Action Boards (YABs) into CoC governance on a permanent and sustainable basis has been a challenge, YHDP communities have been successful in creating YABs and empowering the YAB members to lead YHDP planning and implementation. Communities have had success facilitating flexible program design through waivers and special YHDP activities, such as youth peer housing navigators, extended rapid rehousing, and joint TH-RRH projects, even as programs have also encountered challenges with staffing shortages and access to a lack of affordable housing options. YHDP projects that have been most successful have created partnerships that can best leverage funds to assist youth. These partnerships include collaborations with K-12 schools, higher education institutions, child welfare agencies, and the justice system. Nonetheless, communities still have opportunities to increase collaboration among these systems.

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)

Program Description: The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program provides a significant opportunity for Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), Continuums of Care (CoCs), and Victim Service Providers (VSPs) to develop collaborative partnerships and strategies that effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations in their communities. Through EHV, HUD provided 70,000 housing choice vouchers to local PHAs to assist individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability.

Number of Vouchers allocated in FY 2023: 69,972

Number of Vouchers leased in FY 2023: 61,654

Percentage of Allocated Vouchers Leased in FY 2023: 89.32%

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: EHV's were funded under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), and statutory provisions prohibit the re-issuance of turnover EHV's after September 30, 2023. This temporary assistance program to serve families and individuals experiencing homelessness has been extraordinarily successful, as evidenced by the utilization rate of almost 90%. HUD has provided extensive outreach and technical assistance to public housing agencies (PHA) to ensure program success in addressing homelessness through collaborative community partnerships.

HUD-VA Supportive Housing (VASH) Program Vouchers

Program Description: HUD-VASH combines HUD Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program rental assistance for Veterans experiencing homelessness with case management and supportive services provided by the VA at its medical facilities and in the community. Veterans experiencing homelessness are first screened by their local VA medical facility (VAMC). They are then referred to the partner public housing agency (PHA) for the HCV eligibility determination and issuance of the voucher. Veterans must agree to participate in case management to receive rental assistance.

Number of New Admissions in FY 2023: 15,253

Number of Vouchers available as of the end of FY 2023: 109,294

Number of Vouchers leased in FY 2023: 80,849

Percentage of Allocated Vouchers Leased in FY 2023: 73.97%

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: HUD's publication of updated HUD-VASH Operating Requirements Federal Register Notice (FR-6243-N-01) provided additional waivers and program flexibilities and awarded 4,047 new HUD-VASH vouchers in FY 2022-2023.

HUD and VA regularly collaborate to increase voucher utilization.

In FY2023, HUD and VA collaborated to host a series of ten (10) HUD-VASH Boot Camp Process Improvement workshops. These HUD-VASH Boot Camps were two-day, action-oriented, in-person workshops designed to improve coordination and collaboration, streamline and improve systems and processes, and increase referrals and utilization for HUD-VASH programs.

Non-Targeted Programs:

Family Unification Program (FUP) and Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers

Program Description: FUP is a program under which Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) are provided to (1) families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in either the imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care or the delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care or (2) Youth at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old who left foster care or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and are homeless; or are at risk of homelessness. Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers serve the same population as FUP-Youth vouchers. By statute, FUP vouchers used by youth are

limited to 36 months of housing assistance or up to an additional 24-month extension, as applicable under the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) Amendments. Public housing agencies (PHAs) administer FUP in partnership with Public Child Welfare Agencies (PCWAs) and, in some cases, the Continuum of Care (CoC) or other third-party community partners.

Number of Vouchers awarded as of the end of FY 2023: 30,910

Number of Vouchers leased in FY 2023: 22,634

Percentage of Allocated Vouchers Leased in FY 2023: 73.22%

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: The FUP and FYI programs experience utilization challenges related to a lack of affordable housing, referral partnerships, and unique challenges confronting youth. HUD actively partners with HHS's Children's Bureau to provide training and outreach, promote the program, and troubleshoot local concerns. In FY2024, HUD plans to host ten regional one-and-a-half-day convenings on youth housing solutions, engaging youth with lived experience, PHAs, CoCs, PCWAs, and other local community partners to ensure the successful utilization of available resources to address youth homelessness.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)

Targeted Programs:

Office on Violence Against Women (OVW): Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking Program

Program Description: The Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking Program (Transitional Housing Program) supports programs that assist people experiencing homelessness or those in need of transitional housing or other housing assistance because of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Housing assistance is most commonly provided in the form of vouchers or rental subsidies. Transitional housing programs may also offer individualized services like counseling, support groups, safety planning, and advocacy services, as well as practical services like licensed childcare, employment services, transportation vouchers, telephones, and referrals to other agencies.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2022: During the first half of calendar year (CY) 2022, OVW Transitional Housing Program grantees reported serving more than 2,100 survivors fleeing domestic/sexual violence, providing them with support to help them locate, secure, and maintain permanent housing and economic stability. Grantees also reported serving over 2,900 children of survivors during the same six-month period. Note: OVW collects data from Transitional Housing Program grantees twice per CY. The most current data available are from the first half of CY 2022 (January – June).

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Transitional Housing Program grantees cite a lack of safe and affordable long-term housing as the biggest obstacle confronting victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. In addition to high prices and low availability of rental units, victims encounter additional challenges to securing housing, including long waitlists for Section 8 and public housing, no credit or poor credit history, inability to meet the income requirements of landlords and property managers; a history of evictions; the presence of a criminal background; and outstanding debt.

OVW's 2020 Biennial Report to Congress on the Effectiveness of Grant Programs under the Violence Against Women Act includes information about issues and challenges grantees cite as impediments to project success and barriers to survivor safety and justice. OVW also provides grantees with training and technical assistance to support their efforts to serve survivors and hold offenders accountable using promising and proven approaches.

Non-Targeted Programs:

Grants to Indian Tribal Governments

Program Description: The Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program (Tribal Governments Program) enhances tribes' ability to respond to violent crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women, enhance victim safety, and develop education and prevention strategies. The program's objectives are to support Indian tribes in using their sovereign authority to respond to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sex trafficking; to provide services to survivors (including emergency and transitional housing), and to ensure that people who commit these crimes are held responsible for their actions through a strong coordinated community response.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2021: During the first half of calendar year (CY) 2021, OVW Tribal Governments Program grantees reported providing emergency shelter services to 876 survivors and transitional housing to 178 survivors. Note: OVW collects data from Tribal Governments

Program grantees twice per CY. The most current data available are from the first half of CY 2021 (January – June) because of challenges related to data collection systems.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Tribal Governments Program grantees cite housing—including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and long-term affordable housing—as their biggest unmet need. While shelter services were sometimes available in nearby areas, grantees report that victims are often reluctant to use these resources, preferring to remain within their own communities. Additionally, grantees report that victims struggle to achieve independence due to their inability to access basic necessities, such as transportation, employment and job training, and childcare.

OVW’s 2020 Biennial Report to Congress on the Effectiveness of Grant Programs under the Violence Against Women Act includes information about issues and challenges grantees cite as impediments to project success and barriers to survivor safety and justice. OVW continues to provide grantees with training and technical assistance to support their efforts to serve survivors and hold offenders accountable using promising and proven approaches.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)

Targeted Programs:

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)

Program Description: HVRP provides services to help veterans experiencing homelessness obtain meaningful employment and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems to address the complex problems facing Veterans experiencing homelessness. Funds are awarded through competitive grants, and eligible entities include state and local Workforce Development Boards, Native American tribal governments (federally recognized), Native American tribal organizations (other than federally recognized tribal governments), public agencies, and nonprofits, including community- and faith-based organizations. Veterans receive intensive case management, employment and training services, and critical links to supportive services within their communities. Job placement, training, job development, career counseling, and resume preparation are other services grantees provide.

Through HVRP, funding is also available for “stand downs”—local events typically held for one to three days, during which various employment and social services are provided to Veterans experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Women Veterans and Homeless Veterans with Children Program targets the subpopulation of

women Veterans and Veterans with children experiencing homelessness. The Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program (IVTP) targets Veterans who are at risk of homelessness as they transition from incarceration.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness (Excluding Stand Down participants) Served in FY 2023: 17,389

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: DOL emphasizes equity for underserved and underrepresented populations in its latest HVRP funding opportunity announcement (FOA). Content from DOL's *Job Quality and Equity Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Draft Language for Federal Agencies* is embedded throughout its HVRP FOA. DOL is strengthening its relationships with community partners in the homeless space to make connections between DOL grant recipients and other local service providers where Veterans go for assistance and support.

In FY 2023, DOL began a Customer Experience study to assist DOL in understanding how Veterans experience HCRP services. DOL is also initiating a research study across service-connected and non-service-connected disabled Veterans, including unemployment, labor force participation, and employment and training programs. DOL has expanded its Off-Base Transition Training pilot program to extend its traditional Transition Assistance Program beyond transitioning service members separated from active military installations to serve areas where large Veteran populations face high unemployment rates.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

Overall:

- Housed more than 74,878 Veterans and their families or prevented them from becoming homeless.
- Housed 35,148 as part of VA's Calendar Year (CY) 2023 Homelessness Goals (January 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023).
- Engaged more than 31,400 unsheltered Veterans (current as of September 30, 2023).

Targeted Programs:

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program

Program Description: HCHV connects Veterans experiencing homelessness to needed health care and social service programs via extensive outreach. HCHV outreach is conducted by clinical teams at 135 VA Medical Centers (VAMCs), making it possible for Veterans to enter the network of VA-funded health care and

social service programs to eliminate homelessness. HCHV also provides residential treatment for mental health and substance use problems through contracts with community service providers, as well as long-term case management for Veterans in permanent housing who need ongoing support.

Number of Veterans Served with Residential Services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023: More than 4,900 Veterans exited HCHV Contracted Residential Services (CRS) programs to permanent housing. An additional 1,300 Veterans completed some program components and advanced toward their permanent housing goals. The average length of stay in an HCHV CRS program is 82 days.

Number of Veterans Served with Outreach in FY 2023: HCHV provided outreach services to over 23,800 Veterans and case management services to over 9,600 Veterans.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: As the homeless Veteran population ages, there is a need for more transitional housing that can provide immediate shelter and meet the complex medical needs of aging Veterans. Additionally, there is a need for more outreach workers and homeless program staff to coordinate with community partners to ensure that VAMCs are fully integrated into local coordinated entry systems.

In FY 2023, HCHV funded 17 Medical Respite pilot contracts to help meet the complex medical needs of aging Veterans. In addition, over 30 new contracts were funded to address emerging needs and gaps like transitional housing options for justice-involved Veterans and the need for flexible, single occupancy design to accommodate vulnerable Veteran populations, including female Veterans and LGBTQ+ Veterans. HCHV is in the process of developing a grant program to coordinate substance use disorder (SUD) services for homeless Veterans with an emphasis on rural and tribal areas.

To address the need for additional outreach workers and homeless program staff to coordinate with community partners to ensure that VAMCs are fully integrated into local coordinated entry systems, HCHV funded 160 new Full-time Equivalent (FTE) in FY 2023.

HCHV continues to advocate for and support the expanded eligibility for the HCHV program for those Veterans who are ineligible for health care, which will require congressional action. This expanded eligibility would align the HCHV program with other homeless programs like HUD – VA Supportive Housing) (HUD-VASH), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Grant and Per Diem (GPD). HCHV continues to advocate for and support legislation to reinstate flexibilities made possible by temporary 4201 authority in providing funds to assist with the safety and survival of homeless Veterans and Veterans in the HUD-VASH

program. This is currently known as the CHARGE Act of 2023.

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)

Program Description: DCHV is a supportive residential rehabilitation and treatment program for Veterans experiencing homelessness who have complex and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, medical conditions, and/or psychosocial needs. This intensive clinical care program emphasizes self-care and personal responsibility in addition to treatment programs for conditions that inhibit Veterans from exiting homelessness.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: The DCHV program provided services to over 4,200 Veterans. (Note: DCHVs typically serve over 6,000 Veterans each year. The reduction in the number of unique Veterans served in FY 2023 reflects sustained challenges returning to pre-pandemic levels of operation. Programs continue to increase operational capacity).

The DCHV program offered more than 1,700 operational beds at 43 VA Medical Centers to support of homeless Veterans.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: The current authority for establishing DCHV programs limits the number of programs to no more than 45 individuals (38 U.S.C. § 2043(a)). Additionally, the pandemic continues to have an impact on mental health residential program operations broadly, including DCHV, resulting in sustained reductions in utilization. VA has submitted proposed legislation that would remove the limit on the number of Domiciliary programs that can be established. The Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention continues to work actively with the DCHV programs to address remaining operational challenges to increase overall capacity and utilization.

Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR)

Program Description: The CWT/TR program is a work-based Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment (MH RRTP) Program offering a therapeutic residential setting for Veterans involved in compensated work therapy. The CWT/TR program provides a rehabilitation-focused residential setting for Veterans recovering from chronic mental illness, substance use disorders, and homelessness. CWT/TR bridges hospitalization or intensive outpatient treatment and successful community reintegration.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: At the end of FY 2023, 39 CWT/TR programs with 500 operational beds served 750 unique Veterans. The number of completed CWT/TR treatment episodes during FY 2023 was over 500, and the average length of stay was approximately 153.3 days.

Of the Veterans discharged during FY 2023, 50% of those Veterans eligible for employment had secured competitive employment at discharge. An additional 20.1% of Veterans discharged from CWT/TR remained in CWT following discharge, continuing to receive vocational support. In FY 2023, 57.2% of Veterans discharged from CWT/TR were discharged to permanent housing. Among all Veterans discharged from CWT/TR, 28% were discharged to another MH RRTP, a healthcare institution, or transitional housing (including temporary stays with family and friends).

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: The program continues to have challenges with aging infrastructure, resulting in homes being taken out of service and, at times, program closures. VA is exploring options to make General Post Funds available to address repair and maintenance needs.

Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)

Program Description: The VA partners with HUD to serve Veterans experiencing homelessness through a housing subsidy provided through HUD’s Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program with community-oriented clinical case management provided by the VA. VA case managers provide various supportive services focused on helping Veterans obtain and sustain community housing. The program targets the most vulnerable Veterans who will benefit from ongoing support and case management, utilizing the principles of Housing First.

Number of Homeless Individuals Who Received Case Management in FY 2023: During FY 2023, the HUD-VASH Program provided case management services to 91,195 homeless and formerly homeless Veterans.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: At the end of FY 2023, 82,522 Veterans were housed with a HUD-VASH voucher. This is the highest number of formerly homeless Veteran families housed in the program’s history. While the number of Veteran families housed in HUD-VASH has increased most years since the program expansion in 2008, the percentage of vouchers allocated under lease has fallen every year since 2017.

Various factors, internal and external to VA, impact HUD-VASH voucher utilization. Barriers to full utilization vary widely from VAMC to VAMC and even among Public Housing Agencies (PHA) but broadly include factors such as the availability of safe and affordable housing stock, VAMC and PHA staffing, and the number of eligible Veterans in the PHA/VAMC catchment area. Of note, Congress has continued to provide funds for new HUD-VASH vouchers annually, increasing the availability of vouchers in the field and impacting voucher utilization rates year-over-year.

Efforts VA is making to address voucher utilization concerns include the following:

- Prioritizing and expediting the recruitment of vacant positions, including through recruitment, retention, relocation incentives, special salary rates, and student loan repayment options,
- Increasing HUD-VASH case management capacity and expediting housing placements through internal collaboration with VA and VA-funded programs (such as GPD and SSVF), expanding contracting efforts, and expanding external collaboration through the VA Secretary designation of community partners as designated service providers (DSP) instead of VA,
- Partnering with HUD to encourage the utilization of HUD-VASH vouchers in project-based developments, thereby increasing the supply of appropriate and affordable housing for HUD-VASH Veterans,
- Increasing the use of HUD special housing types (such as shared housing and Single Room Occupancy) in HUD-VASH. This can be especially helpful info for Veterans with special needs, such as aging and disabled Veterans,
- Increasing landlord recruitment and retention efforts,
- Partnering with HUD to ensure full utilization of all available flexibilities and waivers for HUD-VASH vouchers, including serving Veterans up to 80% of area median income (AMI) and setting voucher payment standards above local fair market rent.

HUD and VA have also collaborated to conduct regional meetings with partnering VAMCs and PHAs in each of HUD's ten regions. These "HUD-VASH Boot Camps" focus on improving collaborative operations of the HUD-VASH program at the local level, aiming to increase voucher utilization overall.

Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program

Program Description: The GPD Program is the VA's largest transitional housing program for Veterans experiencing homelessness and is permanently authorized under Public Law 109-461. Since 1994, the GPD Program has awarded grants to community-based organizations to provide transitional housing with wraparound supportive services to assist vulnerable Veterans in obtaining stable housing. The grants are designed to meet Veterans at various stages as they move to permanent housing. Community-based organizations receiving GPD grants offer focused transitional housing services through various housing models targeted to different populations and needs of Veterans. The GPD program plays a vital role in the continuum of homeless services by providing supportive services to those Veterans who would otherwise be among the unsheltered homeless population.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: GPD is the VA’s largest transitional housing program, with approximately 12,000 beds nationwide. The GPD programs successfully exited more than 11,000 Veterans to permanent housing in FY 2023.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: In FY 2023, the COVID-19 public health emergency ended (after May 11, 2023), which meant that GPD grantees could no longer be reimbursed at enhanced per diem rates (up to three times the normal rate) for services to Veterans experiencing homelessness. In preparation, GPD supported efforts to increase the maximum per diem rate for grantees serving Veterans. For example, GPD provided technical assistance to Congress on bills to increase the maximum rate and proposed legislation to increase the maximum rate, which was approved by the Office of Management and Budget for the FY 2024 President’s Budget and is pending enactment.

In FY 2023, GPD offered three grant opportunities to help vulnerable Veterans obtain or retain housing and supportive services. As a result, the VA awarded approximately 450 grants totaling approximately \$257 million to community-based organizations that provide Veterans with transitional housing and case management — including connecting Veterans to VA benefits, community-based services, and permanent housing.

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program

Program Description: The VJO program seeks to provide timely access to VA services for eligible Veterans to prevent homelessness while providing resources for mental health and clinical treatment aimed toward lasting rehabilitation and independence for the involved Veterans. Veterans who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness, those in frequent contact with the criminal justice system, and those reentering the community from incarceration are the primary beneficiaries of these programs. VJO provides outreach to Veterans involved with the local justice system (e.g., police, jails, and courts). Each VAMC has at least one VJO specialist who liaises between the VA and the local criminal justice system.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: The VJO program provided services to over 41,600 justice-involved Veterans. VA provided support to 680 Veterans Treatment Courts and other Veteran-focused court programs. VA partnered with legal providers to offer 170 pro-bono legal clinics to Veterans on-site at VAMCs.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Effective outreach to justice-involved Veterans depends on accurately identifying Veterans among larger criminal justice populations. To assist its criminal justice partners with this process, the VA offers the Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS), a web-

based tool that prisons, courts, and jails can use to identify Veterans among the inmates or defendants in their systems and simultaneously notify Veterans Health Administration (VHA) outreach staff. In FY 2023, VRSS had 455 criminal justice users, including the Bureau of Prisons and 35 state prison systems. Although substantial, this number of users represents a small fraction of the more than 3,000 criminal justice agencies in the U.S., leaving unrealized opportunities for identifying Veterans in many jurisdictions.

VA is promoting the use of VRSS by more criminal justice agencies, particularly jails and courts. With the assistance of the Department of Justice (DOJ's) Bureau of Justice Assistance, the National Institute of Corrections, and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, VA advocates adopting VRSS in national training venues for criminal justice professionals.

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

Program Description: HCRV provides pre-release outreach, assessment, linkage, and brief post-release case management services for incarcerated Veterans released from state and federal prisons. HCRV specialists across the country partner with state and federal correctional staff to identify incarcerated Veterans, perform pre-release assessments, and facilitate post-release linkages.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: The HCRV program served over 8,400 Veterans.

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Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program

Program Description: SSVF works with nonprofit organizations to provide social services for low-income and very low-income Veterans and their families currently residing in or transitioning to permanent housing. Funding to these organizations provides outreach and case management to families to help them access all VA and mainstream benefits for which they are eligible. These benefits include health care, housing counseling, temporary financial assistance, transportation, childcare, and legal services. This program allows families (defined as a single person or a family in which the head of household or the spouse of the head of household is a Veteran) to receive guidance and case management to access a full range of community benefits available to maintain stable housing.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: SSVF assisted over 115,800 individuals, with over 80,400 Veterans assisted. In FY 2023, SSVF also served more than 11,100 children. Seventy-four percent of those discharged from the SSVF program obtained permanent housing. More information, including demographics and outcomes, is available in the SSVF Annual Reports.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: The primary challenge for the SSVF program is the lack of affordable housing and the growing number of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the shortage of affordable housing and rent-burdened low-income households has impacted every state and community, leaving few options for placements. SSVF has several initiatives to address the growing affordable housing crisis and the growth of street homelessness. These initiatives include:

- Providing shallow subsidies with the potential for renewal and a 2-year subsidy worth up to 50% of rent,
- Offering landlord incentives to assist in recruiting landlords who are wary of housing higher-risk tenants,
- Offering tenant incentives and augmented housing navigation services to help homeless Veterans find and move into housing,
- Providing Rapid Resolution that places homeless or imminently at-risk Veterans with family or friends as an alternative to entering the homeless system.

Other VA Programs:

Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRC)

Program Description: CRRCs are collaborative, multi-agency programs that provide “one-stop” access to housing, health care, job development programs, and other VA and non-VA benefits through a partnership with local community-based homelessness providers and other federal and state partners engaged in providing services to people experiencing homelessness. All centers are in community settings, facilitating access to services for Veterans and their families.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: More than 58,000 Veterans were served by 33 CRRCs.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Outreach to unsheltered Veterans is one of the primary functions of a CRRC, and many sites find it challenging to perform this duty with their current resources. In FY 2023, the HCHV Program added 160 new FTEs. The positions were approved to enhance street and community outreach to unsheltered homeless Veterans and/or lead VHA’s local efforts in Coordinated Entry integration at local VAMCs.

Stand Downs

Program Description: Community agencies hold stand-downs in partnership with the VA to reach out and provide services to Veterans experiencing homelessness. Stand-downs are 1- to 3-day events providing health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to various other necessary services, such as housing, employment, and substance use disorder treatment.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: The HCHV program supported 241 Stand Downs, providing outreach to over 44,600 Veterans.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: HCHV is looking at ways to advance innovative and effective national stand-down efforts. In FY 2023, our program spoke with the Executive Director of Transgender and Diverse Veterans of America about ways to increase diversity and engagement with this subpopulation of Veterans. We will continue to look for ways to advance innovative stand-down efforts.

Veterans Benefits Assistance (VBA) Outreach Program

Program Description: Each of the 56 VBA regional offices (ROs) has a homeless Veteran coordinator. These coordinators can be either a Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinator (HVOC) responsible for outreach to homeless Veterans or a Homeless Veterans Claims Coordinator (HVCC) responsible for homeless Veteran outreach, case management, and expediting the processing of homeless claims. The HVOCs and HVCCs

perform outreach to homeless Veterans at homeless shelters, homeless stand-downs, and other areas where Veterans may be located, and through coordination with state and local community partners. The HVOCs and HVCCs provide information and assistance through outreach efforts and direct Veteran engagements. In addition to efforts to support homeless Veterans, HVOCs and HVCCs also serve as Justice-Involved Veteran Outreach Coordinators, providing outreach at VTCs and federal and state prisons to assist justice-involved Veterans and their families.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2022¹¹: VBA Regional Office outreach personnel conducted over 7,720 hours of outreach directed towards homeless Veterans and over 930 hours of outreach specifically for justice-involved Veterans. VBA completed 31,120 homeless Veterans' Compensation and Pension claims (29,672 compensation claims and 1,448 pension claims).

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Outreach activities were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to limitations on in-person outreach efforts. VBA resumed in-person outreach efforts in the first quarter of FY 2022 (including homeless outreach efforts).

Homeless Veterans Dental Program (HVDP)

Program Description: HVDP works with VA-sponsored and VA-partnered homelessness rehabilitation programs nationwide to increase access to quality dental care.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: Over 8,200 Veterans received dental care through the HVDP.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: For the last several years, limited-use, special purpose funding (i.e., Homeless Veteran Dental Initiative [HVDI]) has been utilized by approximately 40 VA dental facilities, per their request. If the HVDI funding ceases, there could be diminished access to dental care for homeless-experienced eligible Veterans. By statute, an episode of dental benefits only becomes available when the health care enrolled Veteran meets a 60-day minimum stay in certain transitional residential rehabilitation programs.

The Office of Dentistry's HVDP Directorate provides fund oversight and management of the HVDI to ensure proper utilization. HVDP Veteran care data at all dental sites is also monitored. The HVDP Directorate ensures

¹¹ The agency has confirmed that FY 2022 is the most recently available data.

continuous and frequent communications with dental services and homelessness care providers to maximize appropriate dental services for homeless-experienced Veterans.

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT)

Program Description: HPACT provides a coordinated “medical home” specifically tailored to the needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness. At selected VA facilities, Veterans are assigned to an HPACT care team that includes a primary care provider, nurse, social worker, homeless program staff, and others who provide medical and mental health care, case management, housing, and social services assistance, to provide and coordinate the health care they may need while assisting them in obtaining and staying in permanent housing.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: Nationally, over 17,200 homeless and at-risk Veterans were actively enrolled in the HPACT model of care in 2023, with over 22,000 served annually. In FY 2023, over 89 HPACT teams and providers were operating at 62 VAMCs, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC), and CRRCs nationwide.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Access and engagement in health care and supportive services continues to be a challenge for Veterans experiencing homelessness. The HPACT Program Office has worked to address this with the funding of 6 new HPACT sites in FY 2023 to serve homeless Veterans and with the HPACT Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) project. 25 VAMCs were awarded an MMU in FY 2023 to bring primary care, mental health, and social services directly to Veterans in the community setting. This project works to increase access and long-term engagement in the VA system for homeless Veterans, including unsheltered Veterans while meeting them where they are. In addition, HPACT only serves Veterans eligible for VA medical benefits, but the program office continues to advocate for expanding eligibility amongst homeless Veterans.

Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services (HVCES)

Program Description: HVCES is staffed by Vocational Development Specialists who are embedded in homeless programs at VAMCs, complement existing medical center-based employment services, and are a bridge to employment opportunities and resources in the local community. HVCES provides a range of site-specific employment services.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: Approximately 5,900 Veterans exited homeless residential programs with competitive employment (e.g., GPD, Low-Demand Supportive

Housing [LDSH], and HCHV– Contract Residential Services [HCHV-CERS]). More than 12,000 Veterans were employed at exit from all VHA homeless programs and services. There were 13,250 newly documented, unique instances of employment for Veterans engaged in or exited from VA Homeless Programs or Services.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Employment for Veterans who have experienced homelessness is complicated, as they often have multiple barriers to re-entering the workforce, such as disabling medical conditions, mental health problems, substance use disorders, histories of justice involvement, and long periods of unemployment. VA continues to enhance access to employment services through collaboration between VHA homeless programs and Department of Labor (DOL) programs such as, but not limited to, Veterans’ Employment and Training Services (VETS), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), and Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), which offer opportunities for joint training for staff, improved cross-agency communication, and public-facing stories of Veteran successes as a result of these collaborative efforts. Employment outcomes for homeless Veterans improve when these services, and others, are well integrated into housing and case management activities. This integration continues to be a focus for HVCES.

CHALENG Program: The Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG) Program for Veterans

Program Description: CHALENG enhances coordinated services by bringing VA together with community agencies and other federal, state, and local governments that provide homeless services to assess the needs of homeless Veterans and develop plans to meet those needs. CHALENG includes two components: CHALENG meetings and the CHALENG survey, which consists of the perspective of Veterans, the VA,+ and community providers.

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Served in FY 2023: In 2022, 4,403 individuals completed a CHALENG Participant survey. This included 1,992 homeless Veterans and 2,411 providers (VA staff, state and public officials, community leaders, and volunteers).

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Collecting CHALENG survey information changed from a paper and pencil survey to an online survey, and not all Veterans and homeless service providers have consistent access to computers, which can limit stakeholder input. VA designed a printable copy of the survey so VAMC homeless programs can collect pencil and paper surveys for stakeholders who prefer

that method.

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV)

Program Description: NCCHV provides 24-hour assistance to Veterans experiencing homelessness, those at risk of homelessness, and community organizations to make connections to local resources for help in times of crisis.

Number of Calls Received in FY 2023: The NCCHV received more than 203,219 actionable contacts. In addition, VAMC staff have responded to over 107,620 VA Medical Center points of contact.

Summary of Program Impediments and Agency Actions: Homeless program staff responding to NCCHV referrals at VA facilities perform these functions outside their primary duties and responsibilities. Calls and referrals continue to increase with a small budget provided to NCCHV and no budget within the VHA Homeless Programs Office for program management. The VHA Homeless Programs Office plans to seek approval to begin a pilot to obtain dedicated homeless program full-time equivalent employees nationwide in FY 2023 to mitigate risks associated with the continued use of collateral duty positions.

CONCLUSION

USICH coordinates and catalyzes the federal response to homelessness, working in close partnership with senior leaders across its 19 federal member agencies. By organizing and supporting leaders—such as governors, mayors, Continuum of Care leaders, and other local officials—USICH drives action to achieve the goals of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and ensures that homelessness in America is ended once and for all.

USICH recognizes that ending homelessness requires an adequate supply of housing and the availability of community-based, high-quality, low-barrier, and voluntary supportive services. To address barriers identified in this report and others, the FSP focuses on a wide range of activities designed to increase the uptake and effectiveness of federal programs and benefits. The FSP recommends specific strategies and actions directly

intended to reduce eligibility barriers, eliminate program inefficiencies, and promote cross-system collaborations.

The federal programs and resources described in this report are vital to our efforts to end homelessness. USICH looks forward to collaborating with our partners to address many of the impediments identified in this document as part of implementing the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.