

VETERANS FOR CHRIST, INC.
P.O. BOX 362234
DECATUR, GA. 30036



September 30, 2020

Fellow Veterans Grace and Peace to you and your family



In case you missed it...

RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS AND AT-RISK VETERANS

VA and [Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#) recently teamed up to host a [Facebook Live event](#) about the ways in which Veterans and their family members can access VA homelessness resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Veterans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. This vulnerability is caused by the prevalence of pre-existing conditions and limited access to basic infection prevention and control methods. The [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) has allowed for the expansion of several VA homeless programs, including [Grant and Per Diem \(GPD\)](#), [Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\)](#), and [Health Care for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Services \(HCHV CRS\)](#)). Leaders from each program briefed viewers with information to get assistance or advise fellow Veterans on how to seek help.

Terrence Hayes, director of communications and public affairs for VFW, began the event by asking the panelists how VA is helping our nation's diverse group of Veterans during this challenging health emergency.

John Kuhn, national director of the SSVF program, explained that SSVF grantees in each community have been able to quickly place homeless Veterans into emergency housing or hotels during the pandemic with help from an online tool called “SQUARES.”

With VA’s [SQUARES](#) online tool, Veterans no longer need to worry about having the correct documents to prove their Veteran status when going to a SSVF grantee for assistance. SSVF grantees can put the Veteran’s information into the SQUARES tool to determine immediately if the Veteran is for SSVF services, then place the Veteran into emergency housing while working to secure permanent housing.

Jefferey Quarles, director of the GPD program, noted that with additional funding from the CARES Act, VA provides grantees with cleaning supplies, sanitizers and more to ensure a safe environment for Veterans. He also mentioned that approximately 6,500 Veterans have been admitted to the GPD program since February 2020, right before the pandemic began.

“There is a no-wrong-door philosophy that we take very seriously at VA,” said Eileen Devine, director of the HCHV program, when discussing where Veterans should go to receive help and resources. “If you take that first step of reaching out to us by contacting the call center or calling your local VA medical center, then we can take it from there in terms of hearing what you need help with and getting you connected with the resources you’re eligible for.”

All panelists encouraged Veterans or those who may know a Veteran who is at risk of or experiencing homelessness to call the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838).

“I think the most important thing is that first step, which is often the hardest to take. Veterans don’t typically ask for help; they’re proud and independent. This is something they have earned because of their service to our country,” Kuhn said. “It sometimes takes a person to notice that they’re struggling to encourage them. The folks on this call are our outreach force.”

During the event, participants had their questions answered by VA subject matter experts. If you missed this event, check out some of the highlights below.

Veteran finds new career with assistance from HVCES

In 2017, Army and OIF Veteran Samantha Norment’s number one priority was finding a home to live in with her three daughters. Following discharge from the Army Reserve in 2010, she worked several temporary jobs but was unable to secure stable employment, which left her discouraged.

After leaving an unhealthy relationship, Norment found herself homeless and decided to reach out to VA for help. VA pointed Norment to local [Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services \(HVCES\) staff](#). HVCES strives to improve employment outcomes for Veterans who have experienced homelessness. HVCES’ goal is to help Veterans exit homelessness, or help them avoid homelessness altogether



With assistance from HVCES and the [Grant Per Diem \(GPD\)](#) program, Norment traveled to the [Fresno VA Medical Center](#) to enroll in a posttraumatic stress disorder clinic to address her mental health and substance use. HVCES also recommended she volunteer with [Habitat for Humanity](#) and [Our Heroes Dreams](#) to create opportunities for full-time employment. Over the course of the year, she followed their guidance and volunteered at both.

When I first met with Samantha [Norment] to gather information, she knew where she wanted to be. She wasn't scared to try looking for a new career, which led to me proposing the unpaid volunteer opportunities.

Finding employment

At the beginning of 2019, Norment was more than one year sober and ready to take the next step toward full-time employment. I sat down with her to discuss career goals and encouraged her to apply for an administrative support assistance position at the Fresno VAMC. She did and received the position shortly after.

“When I first came on board, my primary duty was interacting with Veterans who came through the door at VA,” Norment said. “I saw myself as every Veteran that came in — and I still do.”

From there, she was one of the few Veterans selected to take a peer support course, which led to her current role as a peer support specialist. In her role, she helps other Veterans successfully engage in mental health and substance use treatment. Once hired, she organized the first women's recovery group at the Fresno VAMC with the hope of giving a voice to women who haven't yet found theirs.

“Sometimes you have to try something new and reach out for help — not trying to handle everything on your own,” said Norment. “I'm a walking billboard of what VA can do. I went from homeless to having my own home. It is possible.”

Norment recently re-enrolled at the University of Phoenix to complete her bachelor's degree in criminology. Along with her other position at VA, she is also the female resource and outreach coordinator with Women Warriors, which is a chapter of [Our Hero's Dreams](#). She is looking forward to celebrating two years of VA employment in early 2021 – with her three daughters in their new home.

More Information

- Learn about the HVCES program by visiting va.gov/homeless/HVCES.
- Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838)**.
- To find up-to-date information and resources on COVID-19, check out VA's new [resource page](#).

Demetri Henry is a vocational rehabilitation specialist at VACCHCS Social Work Homeless Program. He assists homeless Veterans with finding sustainable employment by providing vocational training resources and mentorship.

To register to vote you must

For those who have not registered to vote please go to www.veteransforchristinc.org and click on the drop down box and register to vote before the October 5th deadline. October 12th is the first day of early voting for the November general election and special election.

- 1, You must be a citizen for the United States.
2. You must be a resident of the county.
3. You must be at least 17 ½ years of age to register and 18 years of age to vote.
4. You must not be serving a sentence for conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.
5. You must have not been found mentally incompetent by a judge.

October 24th Mandatory Saturday voting for the November general election and special election.

October 30th Last day of early voting for the November 3rd general election and special election.
The deadline to an absentee ballot for the November 3rd general election and special election.

November 3rd : General election and special. Absentee ballot must be received by 7:00 PM.

If you know anyone through PTSD or been thinking about Suicide, provide below is the HOTLINE Contact Information to help some live another day.

PTSD Hotline Phone Number

855-698-4677

National Suicide Prevention Hotline Phone Number

1-800-273-8255



Verse of the Day

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:23 KJV

YOU TOO CAN BE A MEMBER OF THE VETERANS FOR CHRIST, INC.

Sign up online to become an associate member. The annual associate membership of \$120.00 which can be used as a tax deduction for supporters. Registration fees can be paid online through our PayPal account. You will get a free VFC T-shirt with your associate membership. Your tax deductible membership fee will support the VFC mission.

All Honorably Discharged Veterans are welcome to come and observe the VFC; feel free to ask questions and learn more. If we don't know the answer we know someone who does. Please browse our web site www.veteransforchristinc.org. There you'll find information on many subjects of interest to veterans. You'll also find a Newsletter for your branch of service and links to Social Security and many other links with an abundance of information.

Our monthly meetings are on hold until the pandemic is cleared and a vaccine is developed. No meetings are being held at the Wesley Chapel Library at 2861 Wesley Chapel Rd., Decatur, Ga. Our meetings are the fourth Thursday of every month and start at 6:30 (PM) for approximately one hour and a half, unless otherwise advertised. We will be respectful of your time.

Thank you for your interest in the VFC. We look forward to communicating and fellowshiping with you soon. We are looking for a corporate sponsor for our VFC Gerald Prince College Scholarship which is donated each September at our Anniversary Luncheon

"Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, being men of courage, be strong." 1Cor 16:13

Sincerely,

William A. Harris, Jr.

William A. Harris, Jr., USAF Retired
President, Veterans for Christ, Inc.
www.veteransforchristinc.org