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September 1, 2022

Certified in Salesforce and looking for work?

Hiring Our Heroes helps Veterans and military spouses connect with companies ready to hire Salesforce professionals

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) offers fellowships for transitioning service members, Veterans and military spouses wanting to work in the tech and cloud-based industry.

The HOH Salesforce Fellowship Program (SFP), in partnership with Salesforce, has placed more than 200 certified professionals with 100% remote, paid 12-week fellowships across 55 companies. Participating employers include Amazon, Booz Allen Hamilton, and PenFed Credit Union.

Salesforce fellows

Through this program, Salesforce fellows gain hands-on work experience leading to employment opportunities. The program currently has a 95% job offer rate and average salary of $88,500 for fellows.

Salesforce Military offers self-paced, online training and certification exams at no cost for active-duty service members, Veterans and military spouses. Visit the website to learn more and to sign up for the free training.

Fellows must earn at least one Salesforce certification before the cohort application deadline. They do not earn the certification as a participant in the fellowship.

The program has three cohorts each year. The application deadline for the first cohort of 2023 is Oct. 13, 2022.

For more information about becoming a Salesforce fellow through Hiring Our Heroes, visit HiringOurHeroes.org/Salesforce.

Hiring Our Heroes hosts monthly SFP Information sessions on the first Thursday of each month. Each webinar starts at 3 p.m. ET. Registration is recommended to attend a session.

Tiny shelters one solution to Veteran homelessness

Finding housing models that suit every Veteran's "pallet"

Sometimes, it's the "tiny" things that make the biggest differences in our lives.

On this month's episode of Ending Veteran Homelessness, Chanin Santini of the VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System describes how Veterans' requests for VA to host "tiny shelters" has evolved into a new care delivery model offering big potential.

Listen to "S1EP4: Tiny Shelters and the Low-Barrier Revolution" on Spreaker.

A viral housing shortage

The onset of COVID-19 demanded urgent adjustments across VA homeless programs. As the pandemic raged, more Veterans were pushed into, and continued to experience, homelessness. Social distancing guidelines and limited shelter capacities played an important role in keeping patrons safe. But it exacerbated unsheltered homelessness (homelessness experienced in places not meant for human habitation such as cars, tents, and sidewalks) across America.

The crisis was especially dire in Los Angeles, where there are more Veterans experiencing homelessness than anywhere else in America.

Just listen

Of all the strategies VA employed to combat the pandemic's impact, one proved paramount: listening to Veterans.

A group of Veterans experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles heard about a nearby community that used "tiny shelters" (also referred to as "Pallet Shelters") to temporarily house Veterans. They are typically 8'x8′ structures equipped with air conditioning, heating and electricity. These Veterans were curious, asking, "Why don't we do that here?"

"We listened to Veterans and said, 'Let's see how we can make this happen,'" recalls Santini.

Santini and her team made it happen. In October 2021, the West LA VA Campus got three tiny shelters. That number would continue to grow. Today, the campus boasts 140 of these small structures that are able to house those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. While the tiny shelters are not quite as large as the trending "tiny homes," they can fit much of what Veterans are looking for in transitional housing.

Fitting Veteran preferences

Perhaps the primary reason for the pallet shelters' success is their low-barrier, low-demand model. Veterans do not need to complete paperwork, receive referrals, or be sober to live in these shelters. The only requirement to enter is a negative COVID-19 test.

Having VA caseworkers and medical professionals available on-site eliminates many barriers to health care that people experiencing homelessness often face, including transportation, paperwork and expenses. Still, some Veterans may be uncomfortable engaging in care

immediately, and that is okay. The tiny shelter delivery model prioritizes Veteran comfort and autonomy, allowing Veterans as much time and space as they want before using VA resources.

Santini describes the empathetic approach of caseworkers, who say, "If you're ready, I'm ready for you. But if not, I'll come back to you tomorrow."

Tiny shelters, big impact

The tiny shelters are also popular among Veterans because of something they do not have: a time limit on Veterans' stay. In contrast to many traditional temporary housing arrangements, Veterans are welcome to live in their tiny shelter for an indefinite length of time.

"Not giving a time limit takes the pressure off Veterans, especially those who have been chronically homeless, or struggle with mental illness or substance use," explains Santini. "Not offering this very rigid model is allowing the Veterans to say, 'This is who I am and this is what I want.'"

As caseworkers help Veterans move on from the tiny shelters and into permanent housing, their space is not vacant long. The demand for the shelters has grown immensely in the past few years, inspiring VA to potentially expand the delivery model to other cities.

"We're learning a lot as we're growing," Santini says. "A lot of Veterans see that and say, 'Oh wait, this is a cool program I could be a part of.'"

VA encourages all Veterans to learn about and be a part of all the programs we have to offer. No matter what a Veteran is going through, we promise to find solutions that suit every Veteran's "pallet."

Learn about VA programs

- Learn more about VA's tiny shelter program.
- Veterans who are homeless or at risk for homelessness should contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).
- Visit the VA Homeless Programs website to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.
- Check out the Ending Veteran Homelessness podcast to learn more about what VA is doing about Veteran homelessness.
- For more stories like these, visit the HPO website and subscribe to the Homeless Programs Office newsletter to receive monthly updates about programs and supportive services for Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Everything you need to know about monkeypox

Questions and answers about monkeypox

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a contagious viral disease that is closely related to the one that causes smallpox, but the disease is generally less severe and less contagious. Unlike the COVID-19 virus, which was a virus that was not known until 2020, monkeypox is a well-known illness that was first recognized in research animals in 1958.

Prior to the current outbreak, this infection was only found occasionally in some countries in central and western Africa. Prior outbreaks outside of these countries were small and short-lived.

Is the virus in the United States? If so, how is VA addressing it?

On May 7, 2022, the world was alerted to a confirmed case of monkeypox in the United Kingdom. Since then, the virus has spread to many countries including the United States, and the World Health Organization has declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

On Aug. 4, 2022, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared it a Public Health Emergency in the United States.

VA is working in close collaboration with local and state public health authorities, as well as other federal agencies like Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to ensure Veterans have access to testing, treatment and prevention tools, such as antivirals and vaccines.

In addition, VA is closely following clinical, infection control, and occupational health guidance provided by the CDC.

How does the virus spread?

Monkeypox spreads in a few ways.

- It can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including:
  - Most commonly through direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs or body fluids from a person with monkeypox.
  - Less commonly from touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox or with respiratory secretions.
- This direct contact can happen during intimate contact, including:
  - Oral, anal and vaginal sex, or touching the genitals of a person with monkeypox.
  - Hugging, massage and kissing.
  - Prolonged face-to-face contact.
  - Less commonly in the current outbreak, through touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys.
  - A pregnant person can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

How long does it last?

Monkeypox normally takes about two weeks to four weeks to run its course. If you are diagnosed, your provider will monitor you until the illness is resolved.

Is it fatal?

The less severe Clade II strain is causing the current world outbreak (2022). To date, no one has died from this outbreak in the United States. But monkeypox can lead to other problems (complications) like pneumonia and infections in your brain (encephalitis) or eyes, which can be fatal.

Should I get tested?

Ask your health care provider if you should get a monkeypox test if you have symptoms (like an unexplained rash).

- Your VA provider can help you get a test.
- Get a list of monkeypox symptoms on the CDC website
- Send a secure message to your provider

Can I get the vaccine at VA?

VA received an initial allocation of 13,000 vials (up to 65,000 doses) of JYNNEOS™ monkeypox vaccine from Department of Health and Human Services in August. VA will continue to receive additional allocation of vials of JYNNEOS™ to reduce the spread of monkeypox as more product is available within the supply chain.

What can you tell me about the vaccine?

For Veterans who need the vaccine, the series requires 2 doses per person, 28 days apart.

- Due to the limited supply, and to ensure availability for Veterans who need it, most Veterans will receive their dose of the vaccine in the shallow layers between their skin (intradermal) on their forearm, as authorized by an FDA Emergency Use Authorization. This route, which is being used across the country, uses less vaccine per person and is safe and effective.
- Some Veterans who have had a type of scarring called a "keloid" will get a dose in the upper arm that is injected in the layer of fat below the skin (subcutaneous).

Who is eligible for the monkeypox vaccine?

Any person who comes in direct skin-to-skin contact with another who is infected may catch monkeypox. The current outbreak has, for now, disproportionately affected the gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men who should be prioritized for vaccine based on their personal risk of exposure.

Contact your nearest VA health facility for the latest information.

- Learn more about monkeypox vaccines on the CDC website
- Find your nearest VA health facility

“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

Need to contact VA?

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255
Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838 or Chat
White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311

1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) is never the wrong number