

# HUD-VASH: Combining Rental Subsidies with Integrated Health Care Services

## Housing First Partners Conference 2024

Meghan C. Deal, LICSW, ACSW  
National Director, HUD-VASH  
Department of Veterans Affairs

Molly Allen, Senior Housing Program Specialist  
National HUD-VASH Lead  
Department of Housing and Urban Development



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# Session Overview

## **Abstract:**

Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) serves a broad range of Veterans with an array of supportive service needs. The integration of HUD-VASH into the larger VA healthcare system allows a unique opportunity to connect Veterans to services utilizing Housing First principles and a holistic approach to care.

## **Objectives:**

- Participants will be able to describe the structure, scope, and basic operations of the HUD-VASH program.
- Participants will understand various methods of integrating supportive health care services into the Housing First case management team.
- Participants will understand the potential challenges and barriers of health care integration and identify at least one method of overcoming those barriers.

# Agenda



# HUD-VASH Program Overview

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# HUD-VASH Background

- HUD-VASH is a collaborative program that pairs HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance with VA case management and supportive services.
- HUD-VASH enables homeless Veterans and their families to use a voucher to access safe, affordable housing while receiving various VA services.
- HUD-VASH vouchers are authorized under section 8(o)(19) of the US Housing Act of 1937, as modified by the requirements in The 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 110-161).
- All Congressional Appropriations Acts since 2008 have continued to authorize this program, the most recent being the Appropriations Act of 2024.

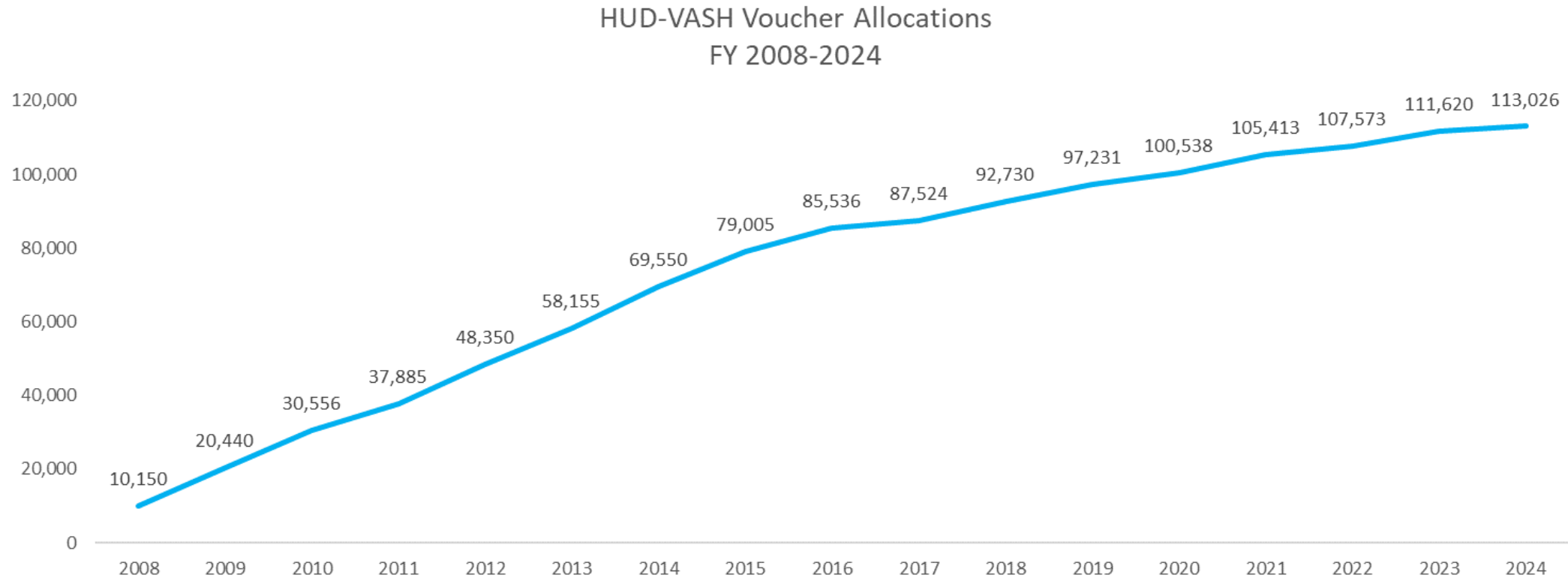
# Tribal HUD-VASH

- Provides rental assistance and supportive services to American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness living on or near a reservation or other Indian areas.
- HUD provides grant funding to Indian Tribes and Tribally-Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) to fund this rental assistance and associated administrative fees.
- Indian Tribes and TDHEs participating in this program must partner with VA to provide case management and supportive services to eligible American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans.
- Funding comes through a different department within HUD, the Office of Native American Programs.

# Mission and Vision

- **Mission:** To assist Veterans and their families in obtaining permanent and sustainable housing with access to high-quality health care and supportive services and to ensure that homelessness is otherwise prevented.
- **Vision:** To end homelessness for all Veterans and their households by providing access to permanent housing using evidence-based, innovative practices and utilizing partnerships to ensure services are Veterans-centered, equitable, and inclusive, leading to personal empowerment and increased independence.

# HUD-VASH Voucher Allocations\*



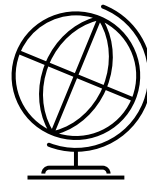
***\*Includes Tribal HUD-VASH rental subsidies.***



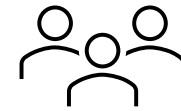
# PHA and VAMC Partnerships



**113,000**  
HUD-VASH vouchers  
have been awarded.



**Over 746** PHA/TDHE  
nationwide administer HUD-  
VASH vouchers  
in partnership with **139**  
VAMCs.

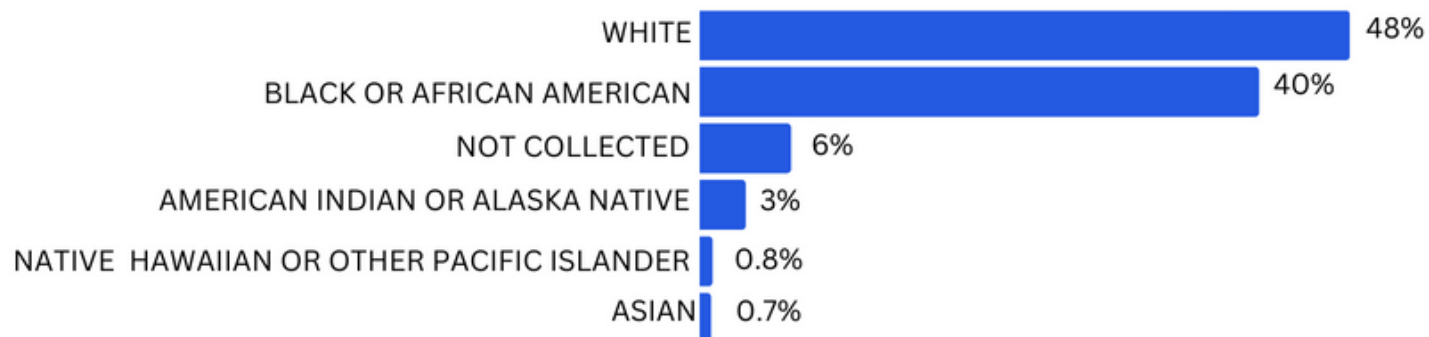


**Over 4,500** staff  
and contractors to  
provide  
case management  
and supportive services.

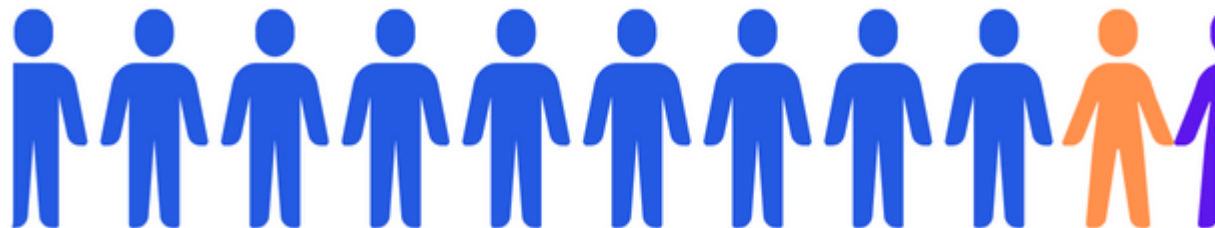
***There is at least one PHA administering HUD-VASH in each of the 50 states  
and all U.S. territories.***

# Who is Being Served in HUD-VASH?

## RACE



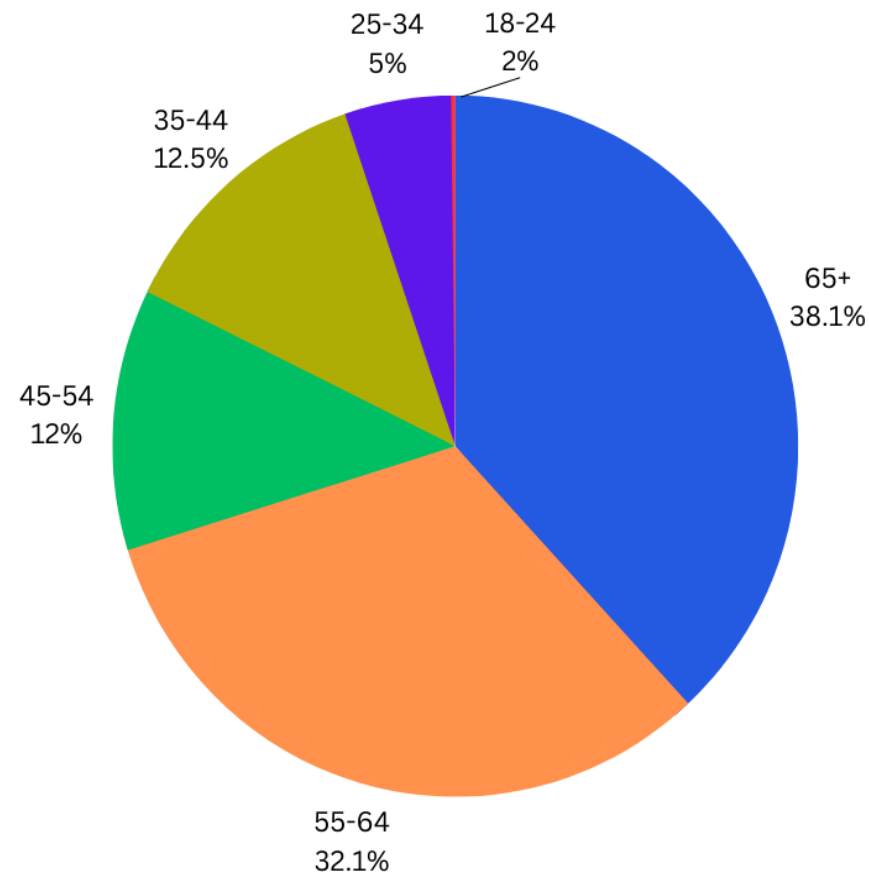
## GENDER



87% MALE | 12 % FEMALE

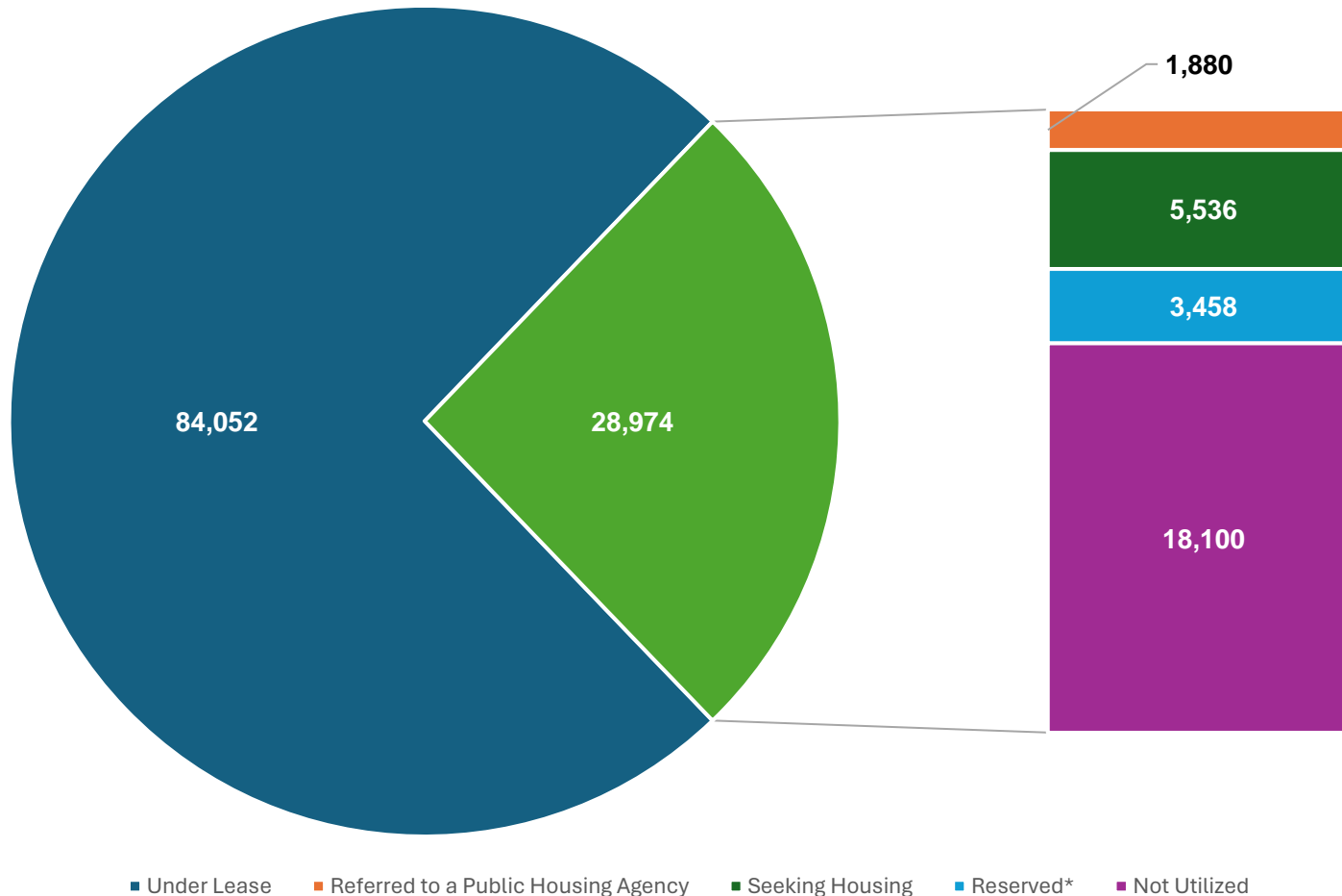
.25% TRANSGENDER & GENDER NON CONFORMING

## AGE GROUP



# HUD-VASH Voucher Utilization

Voucher Utilization as of February 29, 2024



- **113,026** subsidized housing vouchers allocated to HUD-VASH
- **94,926** are assigned to a Veteran or reserved for a specific purpose\*
- **18,100** remain available for use

\*Reserved vouchers include those dedicated to housing projects in development, Collaborative Case Management, and Tribal HUD-VASH vouchers that cannot be utilized due to inadequate housing stock.

# Program Structure and Partnership

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# HUD-VASH Operating Requirements

- The HUD-VASH program is administered in accordance with regular HCV and PBV program requirements.
- The 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act ([Public Law 110-161](#)) allows HUD to waive or specify alternative requirements for any provision of any statute or regulation affecting the HCV program to deliver and administer HUD-VASH voucher assistance effectively.
- All standard waivers and alternative requirements are established in the [HUD-VASH Operating Requirements](#).
- PHAs may also seek individual HUD-VASH waivers through the regular HUD Field Office waiver process. Moving to Work (MTW) PHAs may seek HUD approval to apply their MTW flexibilities to their HUD-VASH program.

# Operating Requirements: Special Rules for HUD-VASH

- Family Eligibility and Selection
- Income Eligibility
- Initial Search Term
- Initial Lease Term
- Ineligible Housing
- Mobility and Portability
- Case Management Requirements
- Termination of Assistance
- Turnover of HUD-VASH Vouchers
- Moving to Work Agencies
- Project-Based Assistance
- Section Eight Management Assessment Program SEMAP
- Reallocation of vouchers
- HQS Inspections
- Exception Payment Standards
- Special Housing Types

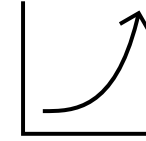
# Leveraging Flexibilities Promotes Housing First Practice



Reduces barriers and preconditions to obtain stable housing.



Ensures equity and access to address systemic disparities.



Expedites voucher lease-up and increase utilization.

# Partner Roles and Responsibilities

## VAMC

- Identifies Veterans experiencing homelessness, often in partnership with a local CoC's coordinated entry system.
- Screens for eligibility.
- Makes referrals to PHA.
- Provides housing location assistance and ongoing case management and supportive services.

## PHA

- Screens for voucher eligibility.
- Issues vouchers or connects Veterans with a project-based HUD-VASH unit.
- Inspects unit, enters the housing assistance payment agreement with the landlord, and conducts all recertifications, re-verifications, and re-inspections.

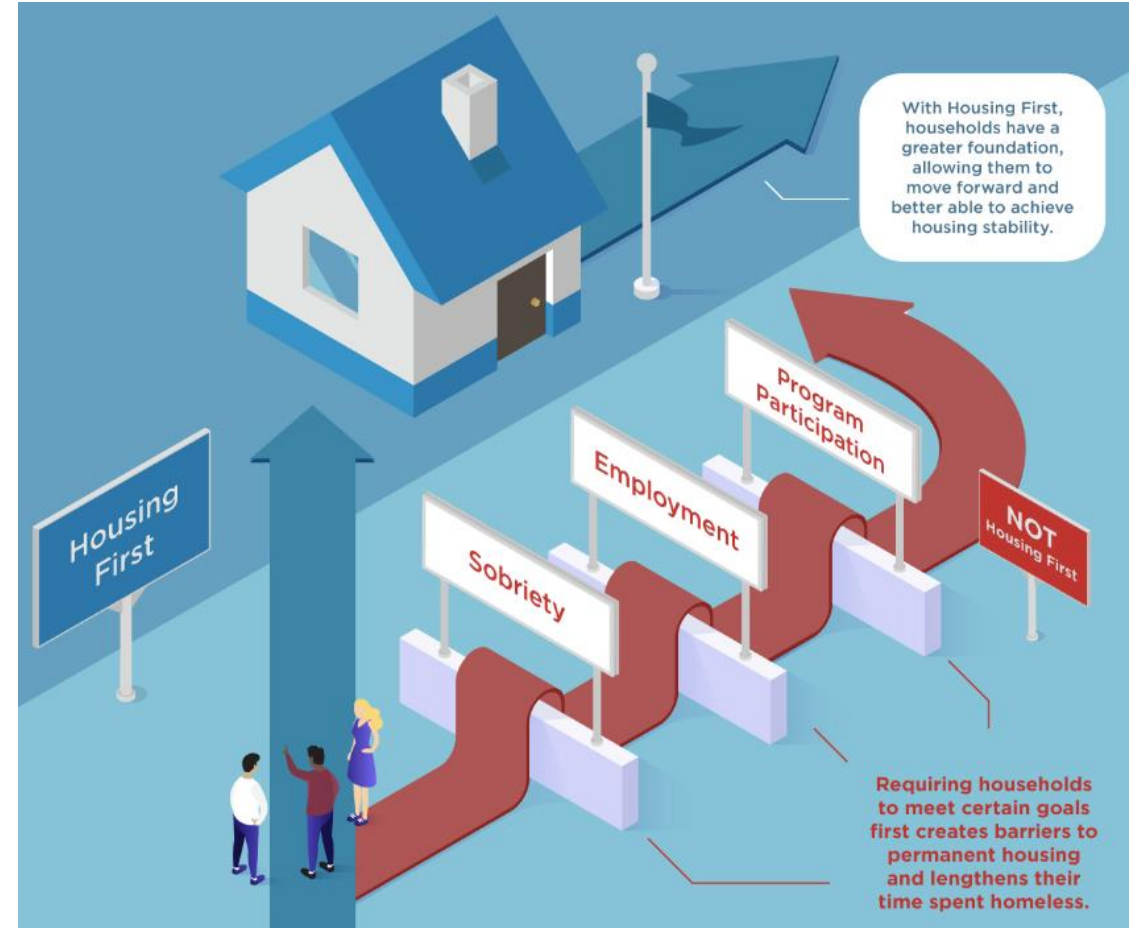


# Shared Roles and Responsibilities

- Address barriers to lease up.
- Support Veteran in obtaining and leasing up with the voucher.
- Ongoing support through tenancy.
- Data reconciliation.
- Clear communication.
- Set meetings to address both program operations and Veteran level needs.
- Landlord engagement and affordable housing development.

# Shared Commitment to Housing First

- Housing First reduces the barriers to access housing when paired with tailored, flexible, creative supportive services to maintain and sustain housing.
- It works and is backed by data...
  - Keeps Veterans housed.
  - Reduces health care costs.
  - Improves mental health and other outcomes.
  - Its how we effectively end Veteran homelessness.



# Housing First in Practice

## **Increasing access to housing while reducing barriers:**

- Virtual briefings, briefings on the road.
- Data sharing and partnering to share documents that might already be in the CoC's Homeless Management Information System or with the VAMC.
- Increasing language resources.
- VA and PHA staff assist Veterans, even those with significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing, throughout the lease-up and tenancy process

# Housing First in Practice

- Promoting reasonable accommodations for Veterans with disabilities.
- Reviewing program demographics to ensure parity in access and outcomes for Veterans regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and other intersectional characteristics.
- Maximizing the use of waivers and flexibilities to lower barriers.
- Incorporating best practices such as Trauma Informed Care, Harm Reduction, Racial Equity approaches, and Person-First Language.

# Case Management Services and Health Care Integration

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# HUD-VASH Case Management

- As a condition of HUD-VASH rental assistance, a HUD-VASH Veteran must receive the required case management services, as needed, directly from or arranged by the VAMC.
- The VAMC, in consultation with the Veteran, is responsible for determining if case management is required and if/when the requirement is satisfied.
- If a Veteran no longer requires case management but maintains their HUD-VASH voucher assistance, the VAMC will maintain contact with the Veteran family to provide support and help.



# Case Management Responsibilities

- Screening Veterans experiencing homelessness to determine whether they are eligible;
- Assisting Veterans with the PHA application and obtaining needed documentation to ensure rapid voucher issuance;
- Referrals of homeless Veterans to the PHA;
- Providing case management and supportive services to potential HUD-VASH program participants, as needed, before PHA issuance of rental vouchers;
- Providing housing search assistance;
- **Identifying the social service and medical needs and providing, or ensuring the provision of, regular ongoing case management, outpatient health services, hospitalization, and other supportive services;** and
- Maintaining records and providing information for evaluation purposes.

# Case Management Team Structure

- Because Veterans experience homelessness for a variety of reasons, case management is individually tailored to meet the needs of each HUD-VASH Veteran.
- Case management:
  - Is not time limited.
  - Assists Veterans in obtaining and sustaining housing over time.
  - Varies in intensity based on Veteran needs and desires.
  - Supports treatment engagement, community integration, and Veteran goals.



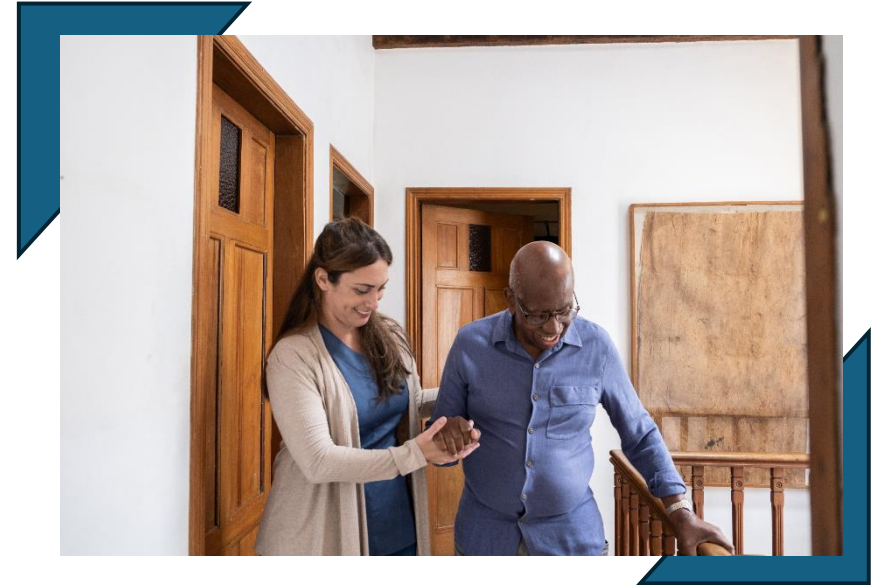
# Case Management Team Structure

- HUD-VASH case management utilizes a multi-disciplinary, team-based approach.
- Teams include a broad range of roles and disciplines based on Veteran need, including:
  - Social Work
  - Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselor
  - Substance Use Disorder Specialist
  - Peer Support Specialist
  - Nursing
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Recreational Therapy
- Roles may be attached to the HUD-VASH team or integrated into the larger health care system based on local needs and geography.

# Supports for Aging and Disabled Veterans

VA has developed the Homeless Aging and Disabled Veterans Initiative, designed to:

- **Better integrate** VA and community health care, social services, and housing programs to enable Veterans to age in place for as long as possible and avoid nursing home placement.
- **Create** more flexible housing criteria.
- **Educate** homeless care providers about available resources.



# Strategies & Solutions

Increasing  
access to  
Geriatric and  
Extended  
Care  
services.

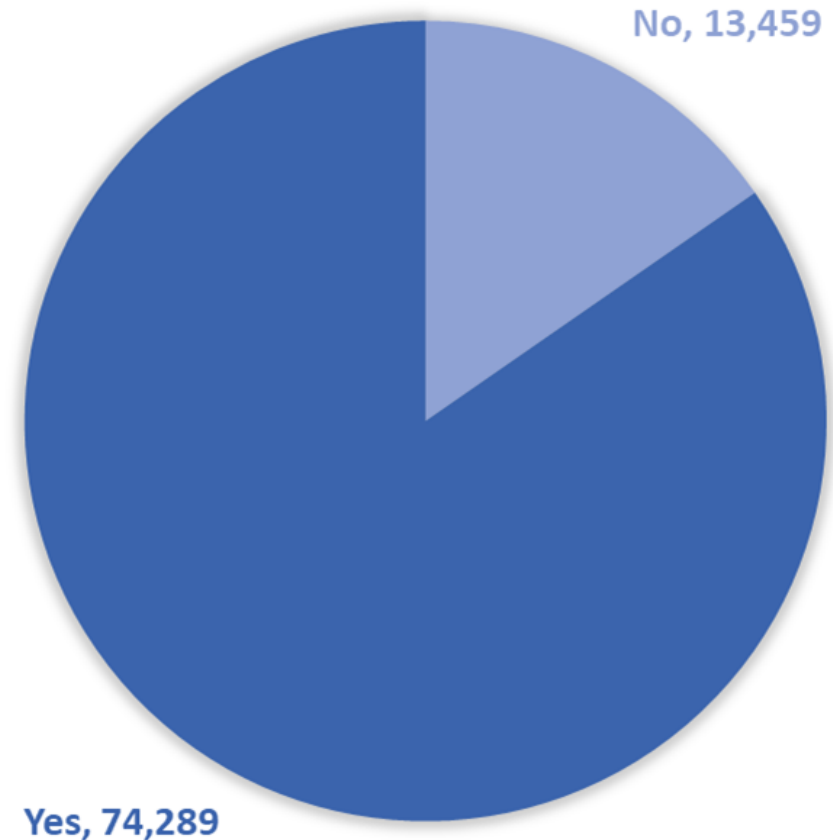
Developing  
housing  
options using  
HUD-VASH  
vouchers in  
specialized  
programs.

Expanding  
the use of  
HUD-VASH  
project-based  
vouchers.

Proactively  
developing  
partnerships  
with  
community  
agencies.

# Primary Care Engagement

- Currently, 84.66% of VHA healthcare eligible HUD-VASH Veterans are enrolled in VA primary care.
- In FY 24, VA is placing a renewed focus on increasing access to and enrollment in primary care for HUD-VASH Veterans.



# Program Impacts

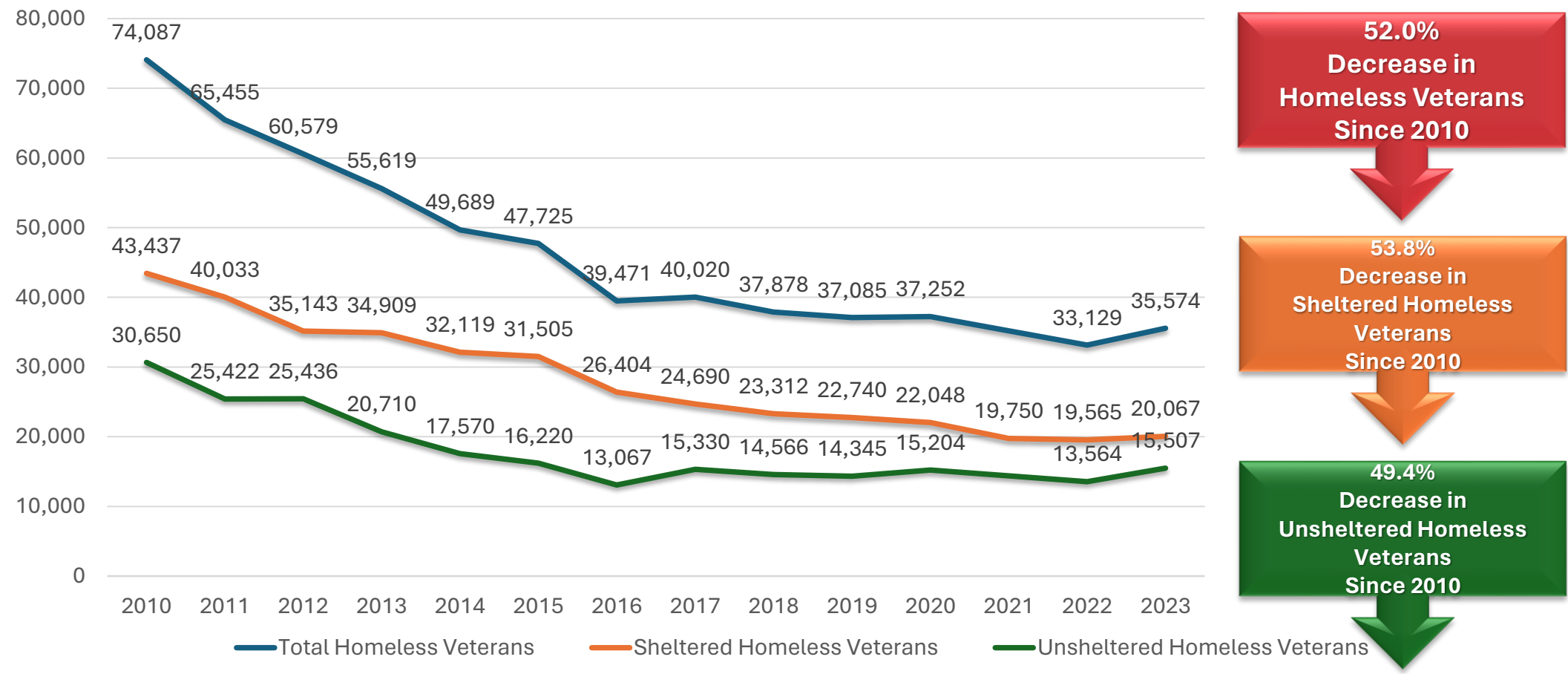
**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# Annual Homeless Assessment Report Point-In-Time, 2010-2023 Reduction in Veteran Homelessness



Source: HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, 2010–2023

# HUD-VASH Impact

- A 2019 study<sup>1</sup> demonstrated that between 2008-2017, the HUD-VASH program had a significant impact on the decline in Veteran homelessness. For each HUD-VASH voucher:
  - Permanent supportive housing units increased by 0.9
  - The number of homeless Veterans decreased by 1.0



<sup>1</sup>William N. Evans, Sarah Kroeger, Caroline Palmer, Emily Pohl, "Housing and Urban Development–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers and Veterans' Homelessness, 2007–2017", American Journal of Public Health 109, no. 10 (October 1, 2019): pp. 1440-1445.

# Questions and Discussion



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs





# Thank You for Attending!

Meghan C. Deal, LICSW, ACSW  
National Director, HUD-VASH  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
[Meghan.Deal@va.gov](mailto:Meghan.Deal@va.gov)

Molly Allen, Senior Housing Program Specialist  
National HUD-VASH Lead  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
[Molly.K.Allen@hud.gov](mailto:Molly.K.Allen@hud.gov)