

HOUSING FIRST

NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION
NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS
CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Housing First Serves Veterans & Promotes Recovery

March 20, 2023

*Moderated by Ann Oliva, Chief Executive Officer,
National Alliance to End Homelessness*



Agenda

Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Ann Oliva, NAEH

Guest Speakers

- Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)
- Representative Mike Bost (R-IL)
- Representative Mark Takano (D-CA)

Housing First Ends Veteran Homelessness

- Monica Diaz, Department of Veterans Affairs
- Shawn Liu, Department of Veterans Affairs

(continued)

- William E. Higgins, Jr., Homeless Advocacy for All

Housing First Promotes Recovery

- Dr. LaMont Green, Technical Assistance Collaborative

Take Action & Closing Remarks

- Steve Berg, NAEH



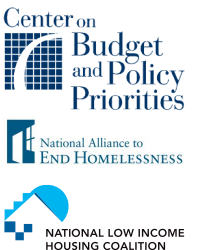
Welcome & Opening Remarks

Ann Oliva

Chief Executive Officer

National Alliance to End Homelessness

aoliva@naeh.org



Guest Speaker

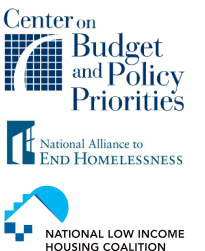
Senator Jon Tester

Montana

Chairman

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

United States Senate



Guest Speaker

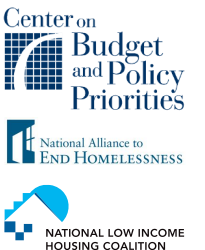
Representative Mike Bost

12th District of Illinois

Chairman

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

U.S. House of Representatives



Guest Speaker

Representative Mark Takano

41st District of California

Ranking Member

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

U.S. House of Representatives



Housing First Ends Veteran Homelessness

Monica Diaz

Executive Director

U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs,
Veterans Health Administration
Homeless Programs Office



Housing First Ends Veteran Homelessness

Shawn Liu, LCSW, VHA-CM

Director of Communications

U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs,

Veterans Health Administration

Homeless Programs Office



The Impact of Housing First on Veteran Homelessness

Shawn Liu, LCSW, VHA-CM
Director of Communications
Homeless Programs Office
Veterans Health Administration
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

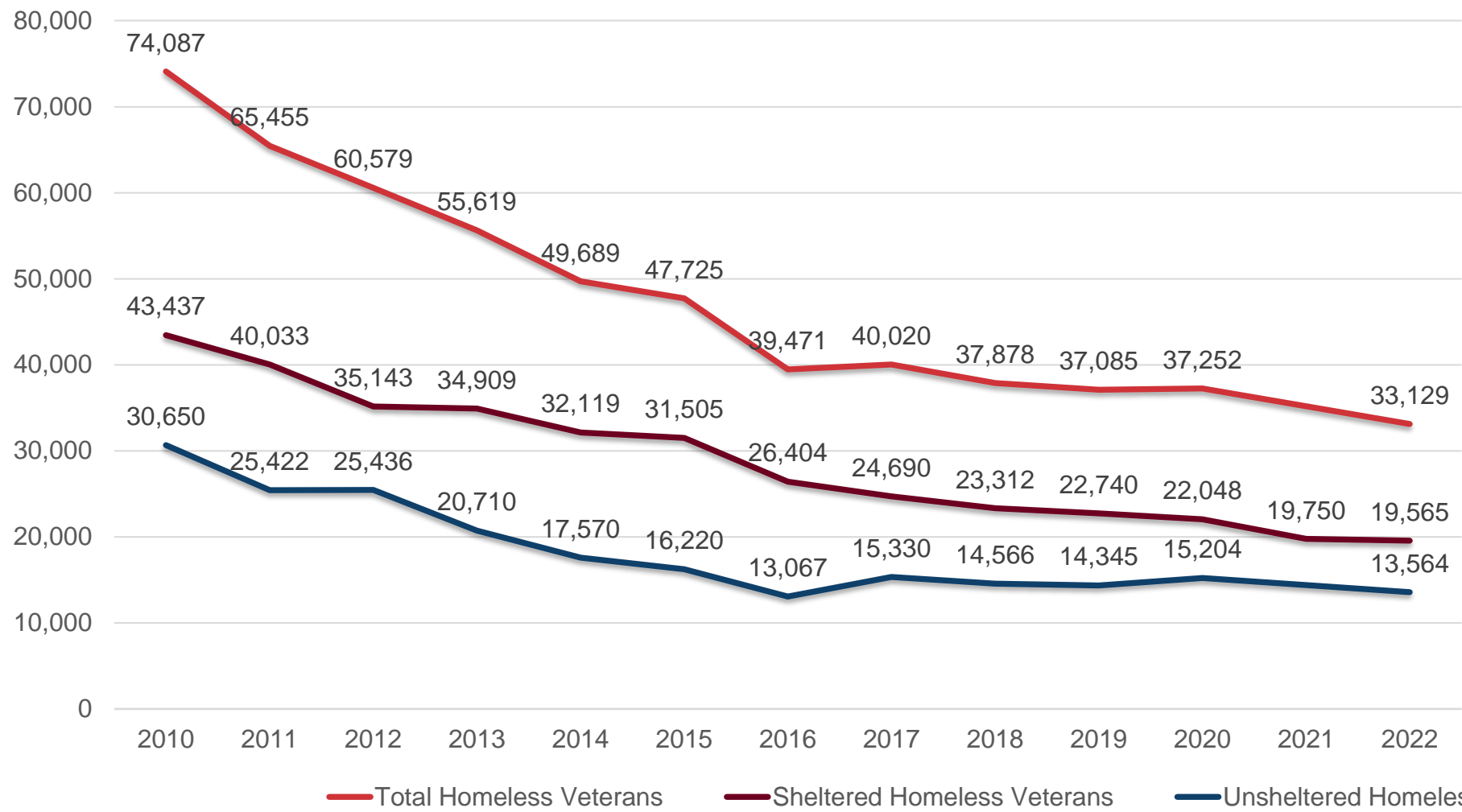
VA and Housing First

VA's efforts to end Veteran homelessness are built around the evidence-based, Housing First approach which prioritizes getting a Veteran into housing and then assists the Veteran with access to health care and other supports that promote stable housing and improved quality of life.

The model does not try to determine who is “housing ready” or demand treatment prior to housing. Instead, treatment and other support services are wrapped around Veterans as they obtain and maintain permanent housing.

Reduction in Veteran Homelessness

Annual Homeless Assessment Report, Point-in-Time, 2010 – 2022



55.3% Decrease in Homeless Veterans Since 2010

54.9% Decrease in Sheltered Homeless Veterans Since 2010

55.7% Decrease in Unsheltered Homeless Veterans Since 2010

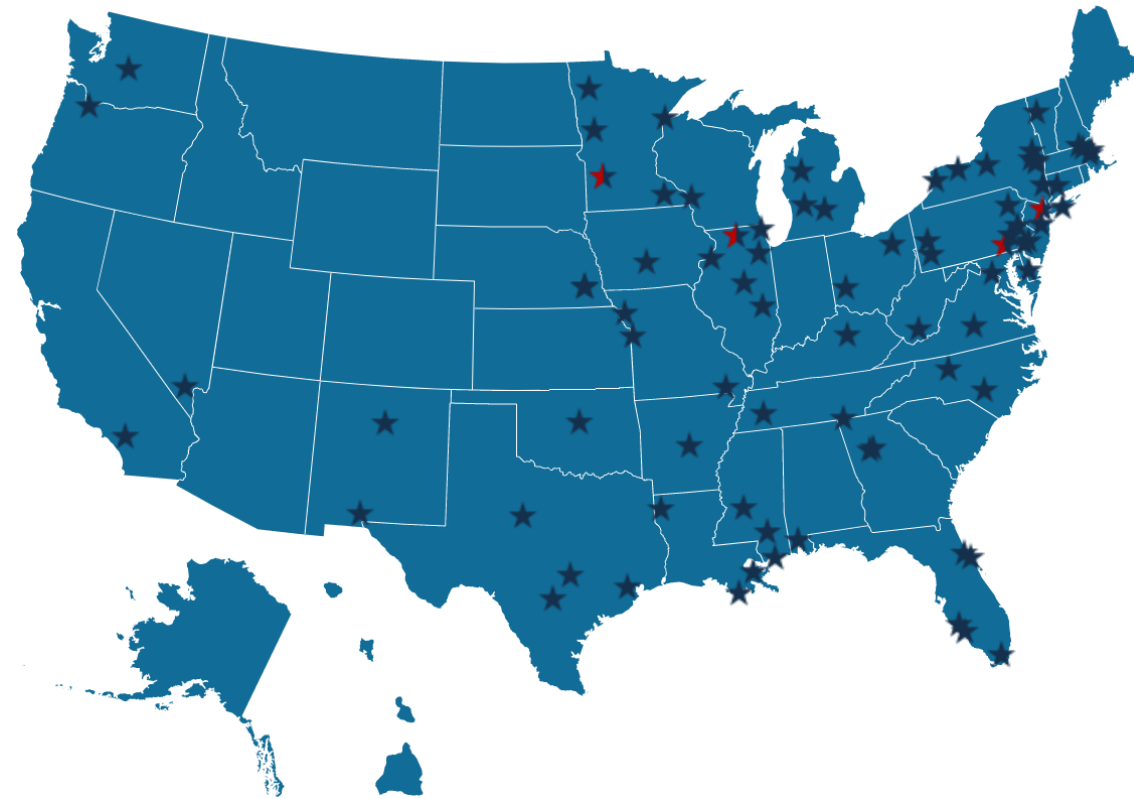


Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, 2010 – 2022



Communities That Have Ended Homelessness

- ★ 83 communities and 3 states have ended Veteran homelessness.
- ★ 4 communities have ended Chronic & Veteran homelessness.



VA's 2023 Homelessness Goals

Consistency in Permanent Housing

- VA will **house at least 38,000 more** individual Veterans in CY 2023.

Prevention of Returns to Homelessness

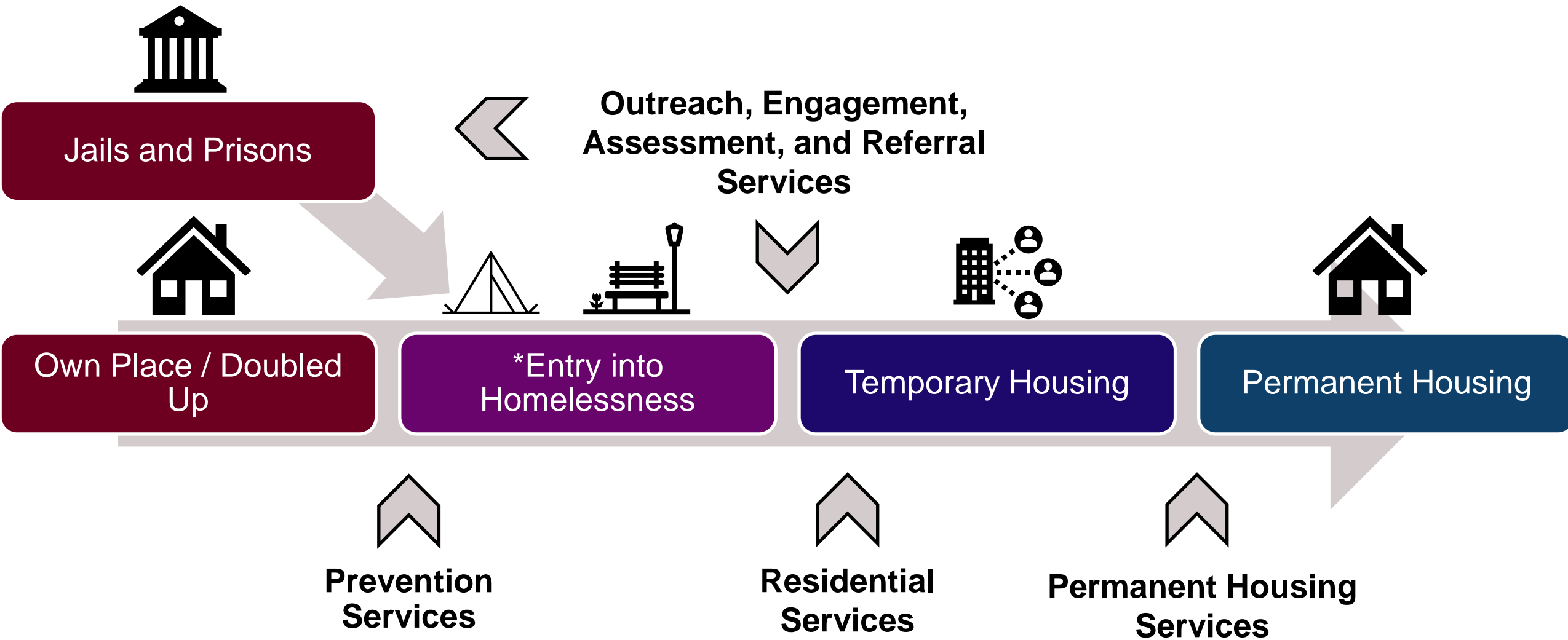
- VA will accomplish the ambitious goal of ensuring that **at least 95% of Veterans housed during this initiative stay housed**.
 - At the end of CY 2023, VA will ensure that at least **90% of Veterans who returned to homelessness are rehoused or on a path to rehousing**.

Engagement of Unsheltered Veterans

- VA will accomplish the ambitious goal of **engaging with at least 28,000 unsheltered Veterans** in CY 2023, an increase of 10% from CY 2022.
- In addition, VA intends to **decrease the number of unsheltered Veterans counted in the 2024 Point-in-Time Count by 15%**.

[VA announces goal to house 38,000+ Veterans experiencing homelessness in 2023](#)

The Homeless Service System



VHA Homeless Programs

Homelessness Prevention Services

- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

Outreach, Engagement, Assessment, and Referral Services

- Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Outreach
- Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC)
- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV)
- Justice-involved Veterans
 - Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)
 - Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV)

Residential Services

- HCHV Contract Residential Services (CRS)
- HCHV Low Demand Safe Haven (LDSH)
- Grant and Per-Diem (GPD) Transitional Housing

Permanent Housing Services

- Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)

Specialty Services

- Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
- Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (HPACT)
- Legal Services for Veterans (LSV)

Housing First Ends Veteran Homelessness

William E. Higgins, Jr.

*Executive Director, Homeless Advocacy for All
At-Large Officer with Lived Experience, Maine CoC Board
Board Member, National Coalition for the Homeless*

whigginsha4all@gmail.com



William E Higgins Jr. – LCDR USN
US Naval Academy Class of 1981
5 years of Active Duty as a Submariner
10 years of Reserve Duty in Submarine
Repair

What happened... Medical diagnosis of Lyme Disease, wrong medication, insomnia, justified refusal to take over duty as Officer of the Deck, ordered back to home port for psychiatric evaluation, removed from submarine program, left navy to perform commercial nuclear repair services for 8 years, 2 layoffs, 3-year leading engineering company startup, divorce, former wife ended company, return to Maine to be closer to remaining family... succession of multiple demeaning jobs (even flipping burgers at McDonald's).

Personal Lived Experience as a Homeless Veteran

- I was a homeless veteran four times between 2002 and 2010. One of the times was for three years. During that time, you would not recognize me. I felt such shame at situation. Depression but no drug or alcohol use. Shame to have no family contact, including not even with three brothers that lived in Portland.

Results-

Think how that felt, from initial success to complete failure and severe depression with no treatment. I spoke to no one for many months, other than checking in each night at the shelter.

Sometimes I didn't shower or wash clothes for month, or even change them). I literally crawled into a cave and pulled a rock blocking it behind me. Add to that, my former wife would allow no visits or contact with two children (even though she has a Master's Degree in Psychology and Counseling).

Start of Recovery – Former Navy Command Master Chief facilitated application for VA disability, approval within 5 months including mental health treatment. I was given Placement in project- based apartment

Housing First Experiences

Project included weekly visits for the first year

I kept stability and I earned my security deposit

I felt worthy of housing, bonding with the three fellow veterans in the building

I realized that I had a lot to give to the system, helping with Leadership and how programs could be improved

Services **MUST** be included !!

I would have done better if the support was longer. At times I lapsed back into depression

What has happened since?

Homeless advocacy work suggested

Preble Street Homeless Voices for Justice

Formation of Homeless Advocacy for All for National Advocacy and Process Improvement

Statewide Homeless Council and Continuum of Care Work (including Board Officer Service)

National Homeless Advocacy Organizations along with Board Service

Multiple CoC participation to learn and share best practices

Drive to Improve Services for and experiences of those now homeless (with Leadership and Business Expertise)

- Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF) provider is Preble Street

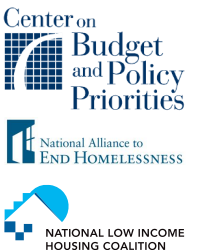
Housing First Promotes Recovery Housing

Dr. LaMont Green

Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Technical Assistance Collaborative

lgreen@tacinc.org



NAEH Homelessness & Housing First Webinar Series

Addressing Overdose Deaths: *Housing First with Combined Interventions Work!*

Dr. LaMont Green, DSW, LSWAIC

Background...

- 108,000 lives lost to overdose deaths in 2021
- The rate of drug overdose deaths among Blacks has quadrupled in the last eight years.
- American Indian or Alaska Native individuals experienced the highest rate of overdose mortality in 2020, which was 30.8% higher than that for White individuals.
- Hispanic or Latina(o)(x) individuals experienced a large percentage increase in drug overdose rates in 2020 (40.1%)
- A growing body of research has documented that substance use is strongly associated with homelessness and that there are disproportionately high numbers of overdose deaths among individuals experiencing homelessness.

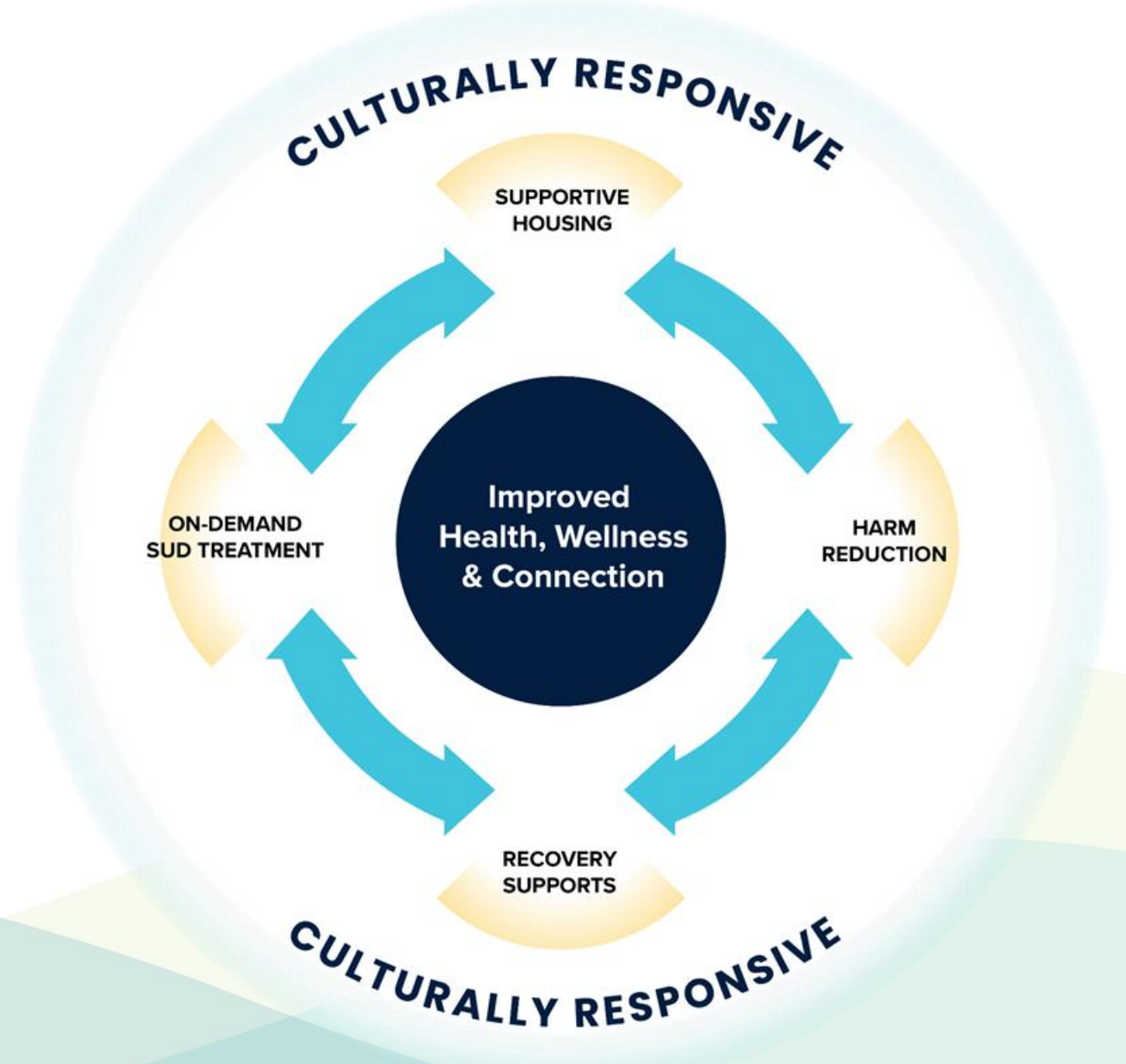
Personal Story...Navy Vet



Combined Interventions Save Lives

TAC
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
COLLABORATIVE

Housing First →





Questions & Comments...

Dr. LaMont Green, DSW, LSWAIC
Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
he/him/they



Technical Assistance Collaborative

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Boston, MA 02108

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Housing and Human Services Strategies

that Advance Racial, Social, and Disability Justice.



Take Action & Closing Remarks

Steve Berg

Chief Policy Officer

National Alliance to End Homelessness

sberg@naeh.org



Take action on Homeless Assistance funding

- Needed for 2024: \$3.833 billion
- 2023: \$3.633 billion
- Contact your House members now!

<https://endhomelessness.org/help-end-homelessness/take-action/>

Housing First Resources

- [Factsheets on Housing First](#)
 - Why Housing First is a [critical strategy](#) for ending homelessness.
 - [Research](#) on the effectiveness of Housing First.
 - How Housing First [cut veteran homelessness](#) in half.
 - How Housing First [supports recovery](#) from substance use disorders
 - How Housing First supports people with [mental health conditions](#)
 - [Key facts](#) about Housing First
 - [Q&A](#) on Housing First
 - [Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness](#)
- [Talking Points to Oppose the Cicero-Backed Legislation](#)
- [Talking Points to Oppose the Housing PLUS Act](#)



Take Action

- [Sign your organization on to the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding's \(CHCDF\) annual budget letter](#), calling on Congress to reject spending cuts and instead provide the highest possible allocation for HUD's and USDA's affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs in FY24.
- [Use NLIHC's advocacy toolkit](#), "Oppose Dramatic Cuts to Federal Investments in Affordable Housing," for talking points, sample social media messages, and ideas about other ways to get involved!
- [Sign on to NAEH's statement of values](#) opposing the criminalization of homelessness.

Webinars

Next Webinar: Monday, April 17, from 2:30-4:00 pm ET

Register at: <https://bit.ly/3XJFKoe>

Did you miss previous webinars? Check out recaps at:

<https://bit.ly/3ZQk2j2>

Learn more about Housing First: <https://bit.ly/3vHf8YR>

