

About Us

Volunteers of America (VOA) is a 125-year-old, faith-based, nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential. The VOA network includes more than 16,000 full-time professionals empowering 1.5 million people annually through our 30 affiliates in 46 states. We provide hundreds of service programs, including those for seniors and people with disabilities, those experiencing homelessness, and those recovering from addiction. VOA is one of the nation's most comprehensive human services charities, offering programs for communities, individuals, and families. We are:

- One of the nation's largest nonprofit providers of quality affordable housing, providing homes to nearly 25,000 people each year.
- A major provider of skilled long-term nursing care and health services, as well as an operator of nursing facilities, residential assisted-living complexes, and retirement communities.
- Proud to serve more than 27,000 veterans and their families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness nationwide.
- An innovative service provider addressing the needs of children and youth, correctional/offender reentry, intellectual disabilities, mental health, substance abuse, and more.

2021 Policy Priorities

1. Affordable Housing

The demand for safe, stable affordable housing currently outpaces the supply. We are committed to developing permanent supportive housing and preserving federally assisted housing in danger of being lost. VOA supports:

- Increasing the annual Housing Credit allocations by 50 percent to help meet the need for affordable housing.
- Lowering the threshold of Private Activity Bond financing – from 50 to 25 percent – required to trigger the maximum amount of 4 percent Housing Credits for financial feasibility.
- Passing the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (S.1136/H.R.2573), which will increase housing credit allocations to expand the supply of affordable rental homes.

2. Veteran Services

Every veteran deserves the dignity, respect, and support they need to achieve well-being for themselves and their families. We are one of the nation's largest nonprofit organizations addressing the needs of vulnerable veterans and their families. VOA supports:

- Increasing the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) administrative cost cap from 10 percent to reflect federally approved indirect costs.

- Allowing program flexibility in Grant and Per Diem (GPD) to support transitional housing as well as Housing First focused permanent housing and homelessness prevention support.
- Contracting GPD operators to provide case management services through HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (VASH) to address the critical shortage of VASH case management services in many communities.

3. Charitable Giving Incentives

Individuals donate to nonprofits for several reasons, one of which includes charitable tax deduction, which is a large funding source for nonprofits. Congress brought back very limited changes to allow smaller deductions in 2020. However, immediate action is needed to expand these changes. VOA supports:

- Expanding the above-the-line charitable deduction by raising the cap to one-third of the standard deduction (\$4,133 for individuals and \$8,267 for married couples) from \$300.
- Passing the Universal Giving Pandemic Response and Recovery Act (S. 618/H.R.1704) to increase the current cap on the temporary universal charitable deduction and extend the deduction through 2022.

4. Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Substance use disorders (SUD) affect families, the economy, and public safety. VOA uses a continuum of supportive services and residential treatment options to help adolescents, adults, and their families escape addiction. VOA supports:

- Extending Medicaid eligibility for women from 30 days to 12 months post-partum. We have found post-partum treatment to be especially impactful for women experiencing SUD.
- Family-based residential treatment programs that help both the mother and child thrive and strengthen families.
- Increasing Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) by 5 percentage points for two years for states that newly expand in order to incentivize states to expand Medicaid

5. Correctional Re-entry Services

The successful transition from prison back to society can be met with many barriers.

Encouraging access to jobs, housing and community participation provides for more stable and secure communities, and lowers rates of recidivism. VOA supports:

- Allowing Medicaid eligibility for inmates 30 days prior to release to assure that returning citizens can received essential care for all physical, mental health, and substance use disorder needs.
- Supporting reconnection to family and community networks by allowing formerly incarcerated people to join spouses, partners, and children in HUD supported housing.
- Reducing occupational licensing restrictions (e.g. nail tech and barbering) that make it difficult to secure employment.