

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Homeless Programs Office
Project CHALENG for Veterans**

Agency Information Collection Activity:

Project CHALENG for Veterans Survey - OMB Control No. 2900-0843

Project CHALENG for Veterans Survey renewal received two comments in response to the 60-Day Federal Register Notice, one received June 26, 2024, #lxw-0d9b-fcbd, and one received July 12, 2024, #lyj-kyq5-ydmq.

VA-2024-VACO-0001-DRAFT-0055— We appreciate the commentor’s suggestions, and Homeless Programs Office-Project CHALENG for Veterans responds as follows:

- For Q5/6-Add new race/ethnicity category for “Middle Eastern or North African” which is now a new OMB standard. *VHA agrees it is important to align with OMB race/ethnicity standards and will make this update to the CHALENG survey.*
- For Q2-For the response of “literally homeless,” break it out into two to differentiate sheltered (i.e., in shelter) from unsheltered homelessness (i.e., on streets, public encampment, in car). *VHA will make this update to the CHALENG survey.*
- Consider eliminating Q9 because this seems subjective and presumably all Veterans who participate are unstably housed to some degree. *The current CHALENG collection includes Veterans who have previously experienced homelessness and are currently permanently housed. Among that group of Veterans, 20% responded to Q9 that their permanent housing is at risk. VHA declines to eliminate Q9, since the perspective of these Veterans may be different than Veterans whose permanent housing is not at risk, and eliminating Q9 would eliminate the ability to detect any specific needs among the permanently housed but at risk of losing housing group.*
- Under the Housing category, include two additional questions, one about “Utility Assistance” and another on “Preparation for Natural Disaster/Extreme Weather.” *VHA declines to add “Utility Assistance” under the Housing category since it is already a question in the Income/Benefits Services category. VHA will add “Preparation for Natural Disaster/Extreme Weather” to the Housing category.*
- Under the Treatment Services category, suggest removing “Treatment for Dual Diagnosis” because ill-defined and you already ask about Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment. Suggest adding “Complementary and Alternative Medicine (acupuncture, herbal medicine, meditation).” *VHA will remove the “Treatment for Dual Diagnosis” question. VHA will add “Complementary and Alternative Medicine (acupuncture, herbal medicine, meditation)” as a replacement for “Health and Wellness (preventing illness and prolonging life through diet, exercise and self care).”*

- Under the Digital Access category, include two additional questions that ask “Do you use the Internet to access VA services” and “Do you use any phone apps for your healthcare?” *VHA will make this update to the CHALENG survey.*
- Under the Education/Job Services category, include an item for “Assistance with Safe Firearm Storage” *VHA will include the item “Assistance with Safe Firearm Storage” but will add it to the Housing category instead of the Education/Job Services category.*

VA-2024-VACO-0001-0164– We appreciate the commentor’s suggestions, and Homeless Programs Office-Project CHALENG for Veterans responds as follows:

- That VHA should consider ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. Perhaps the VHA could ask more detailed questions in the survey to better understand homeless veterans’ specific challenges. *The current CHALENG collection is detailed and specific in the questions Veterans are asked to reply to. CHALENG also includes an open-ended qualitative response option so Veterans may add additional detail to the static questions. Since no specific change to survey questions is requested, VHA will not modify the CHALENG collection in response to this suggestion.*
- That VHA should use automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology to help minimize the burden of the information collection on respondents. *VHA offers the CHALENG survey online and it can be accessed through a direct link or through QR code. To increase accessibility of the survey to Veterans experiencing homelessness, it is also offered in a paper format for Veterans who may not have internet access or access to a smart phone, laptop, or computer. However, the premise of CHALENG is that it directly seeks feedback from human stakeholders, there is not a way to automate data collection of this type from other existing data sources. Since CHALENG requires human input, VHA declines the suggestion to automate data collection.*

Homeless Programs Office-Project CHALENG for Veterans appreciates the opportunity to review and respond to the comments. As noted above, we will make most of the changes suggested to the information collection, but decline some suggestions due to their lack of clarity or negative impact on the collection.

Submitted by:

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