

Office Hours: Permanent Housing Placement National Challenge to House 38,000 Veterans

VHA Homeless Programs Office – April 22, 2022

Anchoring Our Work

Reminder: Guiding Principles for Reaching Our Goal

- **House literally homeless Veterans**, with priority on the most vulnerable Veterans, identified through coordinated entry processes, local by-name lists (BNL), and VA and community-partner outreach services.
- **Honor Veteran choice**, including needs and preferences for care, when determining appropriate services and housing placements. Center Veterans' lived experience in the effort.
- **Lead with equity** across housing, health care, economic, and social systems, while addressing disparities and continuing to prioritize housing resources for all Veterans. A key driver of homelessness and health disparities is a system wide lack of equity across systems of care stemming from structural racism and systems of discrimination.
- **Provide supportive services** to Veterans with complex needs and/or histories of chronic homelessness through a trauma-informed, Veteran-centered approach that is based in cultural humility.
- **Enhance coordination** among VA homeless programs and community partners, including Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Grant and Per Diem (GPD), Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contract Residential Services (CRS) and Low Demand Safe Haven (LDSH) providers; Continuum of Care (CoC) partners; public housing authorities (PHA); advocacy groups for and made up of Veterans with lived experience; landlords; city and county officials; and other service providers.

Strategies for Local Success

Breaking It Down

- Tips to Achieve Your Local Housing Placement Goal:
 - Ensure your community has captured all year-to-date placements.
 - I.e., Timely documentation as well as entering all late or missing data into in HOMES and HMIS.
 - Review the PHP Dashboard to identify the remaining placements needed to meet or exceed your goal and break it out by month.
 - I.e., “Current Trends” and “Monthly Status”.
 - As a community, monitor progress and reassess your plans to achieve the goal at least monthly.

Data-Driven Strategies for Local Success

- Review dashboard at regular intervals, both internally and with staff in community programs, including your CoC, SSVF, GPD, and HCHV CRS/LDSH partners.
- Ensure accurate and complete data entry.
 - **In HOMES:**
 - Timely data entry (HOMES policy is three business days).
 - Follow business rules regarding exits from GPD and HCHV CRS/LDSH and lease-ups in HUD-VASH.
 - Avoid exits to “unknown” statuses.
 - Following the HOMES Reporting Policy.
- **In HMIS:**
 - Capture complete client information and move-in dates in HMIS with a special focus on full social security numbers and residential move-in dates.
 - Avoid exits to “unknown” statuses.
 - Ensure timely data entry as outlined in your community data quality plan.
 - SSVF providers should plan to attend the [SSVF Office Hours](#) on 4/29/22 to learn more.

Utilizing Available Resources for Landlord Incentives

Crafting Landlord Incentives: Existing Resources

- VA Homeless Programs have an array of eligible costs and activities that can be packaged to landlords as incentives to rent to Veterans.
- Tight rental markets and voucher competition create urgency to craft or leverage available landlord incentives.
- Incentives should be **packaged** for frontline staff to use in negotiations.
 - Supportive Services
 - Double deposits
 - Homelessness prevention costs
 - ESG or other locally funded landlord incentives

4201 Overview

- Public Law (PL) 116-315 section 4201(a) provides VA with the authority to use appropriated funds for homeless Veterans and those enrolled in the HUD-VASH program during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declared by Federal, State or local authority.
- VA may provide homeless Veterans and those enrolled in the HUD-VASH program with assistance required for safety and survival, transportation, and digital communications.
- VHA Office of Finance’s Financial Alert 2022-004 operationalizes this law and provides guidance on the use of appropriated funds for expenditures to support homeless Veterans and those in the HUD-VASH program.
 - VA staff can access the Financial Alert from the VHA Homeless Programs Hub.
 - SSVF, GPD, and HCHV CRS/LDSH staff who do not have access to the VA intranet can [access the Financial Alert via Google Drive](#).

4201 Expenditures Guidance

- Expenditures allowed under this authority:
 - An item or service will enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing, or living conditions of the Veteran; and
 - If the item or service is not provided, it will increase the Veteran's risk of adverse outcomes, including but not limited to loss of housing or continuation of homelessness, infection, hunger, hypothermia, poor hygiene, unemployment, missed health care and service appointments, social isolation, or exacerbation of physical and mental health symptoms.
 - Allowable expenses include:
 - Security deposits.
 - Tenant screening reports.
 - Personal items.
 - Household goods (e.g., furniture).
 - Transportation required to support stability and health.
- For questions on using this authority, email 11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov.

Supportive Services & Tenancy Supports

- Strategies for Success: Packaging Services
 - List concrete services you provide.
 - Break down generic, social service terms like "case management".
 - Ensure your program can deliver well on whatever you advertise.
 - Do not overpromise and under-deliver; landlords do not forget.
 - Rather than selling your individual client, build landlord trust in your program model.
 - Whenever possible, organize a central point of contact to triage landlord calls.

Leveraging Local Landlord Incentives: Emergency Solutions Grant – CARES Act (ESG-CV) and Centralized Landlord Engagement Entities

Leveraging Local Landlord Incentives: Your community may have local landlord incentives to explore.

- ESG-CV Landlord Incentives
 - What can they offer?
 - ESG-CV funding allows funds to be used for:
 - Signing bonuses up to 2 months' worth of rent.
 - Security deposits up to 3 months' worth of rent.
 - Damages & cleaning.
 - Max cap/participant of the above costs: 3 months' worth of rent.
 - Making the Case
 - Many communities are working to dramatically decrease literal homelessness for all populations with these funds.
 - ESG-CV must be spent by 9/30/2023 with reallocation deadlines between now and 6/2022 – use it or lose it!
 - Considerations

- A jurisdiction may have not invested or allowed landlord incentives as an eligible cost (they can do that).
 - A jurisdiction may have narrow eligibility criteria.
 - Jurisdictions may have insufficient funds for new partners.
 - Contacts
 - ESG-CV funds are given by HUD to jurisdictions (cities, counties or states) using a formula grant. These are called ESG Recipients.
 - Not every city or county receives an allotment of ESG-CV. If a city or county does not, they may receive some of the state funding.
 - Contact your ESG-CV recipient to ask:
 - Is ESG-CV being used for landlord incentives?
 - Who is the eligible population(s)?
 - What organization can you leverage these funds from?
 - [Look up your city, county and/or state on HUD's website](#) to find the ESG-CV recipient contact.
- Centralized Landlord Engagement Entities
 - What can they offer?
 - Some communities have centralized landlord engagement. Key roles they play include:
 - Pool available units for the system's homeless population.
 - Manage a unit inventory.
 - Oversee a system-wide service package landlords can count on.
 - Administer flexible landlord incentive funds.
 - Making the Case
 - Offer to contribute units to the pool or inventory.
 - Offer to adhere to their standard service package
 - Considerations
 - These entities are sometimes their own nonprofit, an arm of the Continuum of Care or housed within a government agency.
 - Some entities may have narrow eligibility criteria
 - Contacts
 - The ESG recipient in your area may know if there are any centralized landlord engagement entities in your area.
 - If not, contact your Continuum of Care(s) lead to inquire. Often CoC's establish, run and/or influence these entities.
 - [Look up your area's CoC lead on HUD's website.](#)

Additional Resources

- [FY 2022 SSVF VA Data Guide](#)
- [Flexible Assistance for Homeless Veterans](#) (4201 Guidance)
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Leveraging ESG-CV Landlord Financial Incentives to Expedite Engagement](#)
- [HUD COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Coordination with the Veteran System](#)

