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

VHA Homeless Programs Office – August 26, 2022

## SSVF Supplemental Award Details

### Background and Framing

- In June 2022, SSVF issued a [Notice of Funding Availability](#) (NOFA) to address barriers to permanent housing placement
- NOFA Table 1 identifies targeted VAMCs.
- Formal award announcements are expected in early September.
- Some flexibilities may be available nationally with the next NOFA.
- SSVF and HUD-VASH partnerships support success.

### Supplemental Funding Key Features

- In Targeted Communities, the Supplemental Award:
  - Adds housing navigation services to HUD-VASH.
  - Creates landlord incentive worth up to 2-months' rent (in addition to security deposits) as a community level resource.
  - Creates tenant incentive of up to $1,000 as a community resource.
  - Increases SSVF income limit from 50% to 80% of local Area Median Income (AMI).

### Funding Key Features

- 4-year awards supplement existing capacity. Annual grant funds can also support flexibilities offered in NOFA.
- Flexibilities are limited to VA catchment areas included in NOFA.

### Activities and Applicable Populations

- **Activity / Services:** Housing Navigation
  - **Applicable Population:** Co-enrolled SSVF HUD-VASH Veterans.
  - **SSVF Funding Stream(s):** Supplemental funds.
- **Activity / Services**: Landlord Incentives
  - **Applicable Population**: Any SSVF enrolled Veteran in VAMC Catchment area, if necessary to secure housing.
  - **SSVF Funding Stream(s):** Supplemental and/or standard SSVF budget, based on capacity.
- **Activity / Services:** Tenant Incentives
  - **Applicable Population:** Any SSVF enrolled Veteran in VAMC Catchment area.
  - **SSVF Funding Stream(s):** Supplemental and/or standard SSVF budget based on capacity.
- **Activity / Services:** Eligibility Change to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)

- o **Applicable Population:** Any Veteran in VAMC Catchment area, depending on prioritization and capacity while maintain commitment to housing first and equity considerations.
- o **SSVF Funding Stream(s):** SSVF-only participants can be served and/or recertified up to 80% of AMI.

# HUD-VASH/SSVF Collaboration Guidance

## Shared Principles in Serving Veterans

- **Housing First:** Obtaining and keeping housing assistance is not based on income, ability to maintain sobriety, recovery or other pre-requisites beyond basic program policies.
- **Veteran Choice:** Veterans choose where they want to live (as feasible) and how their service and treatment plans are implemented.
- **Crisis Response:** Homelessness is a crisis, and we must respond quickly.
- **Equitable Access and Outcomes:** We seek to identify and address disparities for Veterans (including BILPOC, female, and/or LGBTQ2S+ Veterans).

## Veteran-Centered Considerations

- What processes, protocols or service considerations need to improve to ensure the Veteran is quickly linked to and provided support in permanent housing?
- How do we improve the experience for the Veteran in both obtaining and maintaining permanent housing?
- How do we adjust our system to better meet the Veterans' needs?

## Use Progressive Assistance to Meet Veterans Needs

- SSVF and HUD-VASH should collaborate using the strengths of each program to help Veterans achieve housing stability.
    - o Tailored assistance to each Veteran's individual needs and choices.
    - o Supports start small. Assistance flexes up or down based on needs.
    - o Ensures intensive support and financial assistance remains available to those with the greatest needs.

## Progressive Engagement Details

- HUD-VASH and SSVF staff should routinely meet to ensure that progressive engagement strategies have been fully implemented.
- It is important to note that [Veterans retain their eligibility for all HUD and VA homeless services](#), including Shallow Subsidies, HUD-VASH and other voucher programs, while they receive rapid rehousing services (i.e., after permanent housing placement by SSVF).
- SSVF and HUD-VASH must provide separate and distinct services to Veterans.

## SSVF Exit to HUD-VASH

- Once permanent housing placement is complete, SSVF closes the case.
- SSVF may continue landlord engagement and refer to HUD-VASH if client needs services.

### *Available SSVF Services for Eligible Veterans*
- Housing Navigation
  - o Housing search
  - o Assistance with lease up process
  - o SSVF initial inspection
  - o Coordinating move-in
- Other Assistance
  - o Benefits, including SOAR
  - o Employment, including limited training & supplies
  - o Legal services
  - o Healthcare navigation support
  - o Temporary financial assistance (e.g., move-in, security deposit, rent & utilities, transportation, childcare, bedding, supplies)

### *HUD-VASH Services for Eligible Veterans*
- The HUD-VASH program office expects HUD-VASH teams to be active and collaborative partners with SSVF and all community partners.
- HUD-VASH teams should work jointly with SSVF grantees to plan for staffing and other considerations.
- Use local data (through HOMES, HMIS, etc.) to drive decision making.
- HUD-VASH teams should be clear about what available resources can best respond to local Veterans' needs.

### *HUD-VASH Clinical and Enhanced Services*
- HUD-VASH must still provide clinical case management services to all Veterans enrolled in HUD-VASH, including HOMES data entry requirements
- HUD-VASH and SSVF should establish a regular feedback loop when coordinating to serve Veterans.
- VA medical centers can, but is not required to, provide co-location office space for SSVF staff.
  - o The focus should be on the close coordination and planning with SSVF that will be essential to reach the PHP goal.

## Drilling Down on Details

### *Collaboration Best Practices*
- Case conferencing at enrollment, housing plan and service package.
- Clarify roles of SSVF and HUD-VASH case managers when working with Veterans.
- Identifying timelines for transitioning from SSVF case managers to HUD-VASH and where each program can complement the other.
- Written description of program roles, responsibilities protocol.
- Use of a standard information sharing tool/process for Veterans with higher clinical or behavioral health needs.

- Clear, consistent messaging to Veterans, landlords, CoC/VA partners on the who, what, where, when, and how of the Veterans' housing plans.

## *Keys to Success*

- Agreed upon meeting frequency, purpose and shared agenda.
- Review data, discuss referrals and cases, assess whether any processes need to be adjusted.
- Each partner accountable for continuing their agreed upon role in the system and for individual Veterans.
- Partners should not change role without discussion in the group.
- Assume good intentions even if something doesn't go as planned.
- Unified messaging and communication with Veterans.

## *Co-Enrollment Considerations*

- In cases where SSVF capacity exists to support housing navigation for Veterans, consider the following during the placement process:
  - Document that a Veteran qualifies for HUD-VASH prior to enrollment in SSVF
    - Literally homeless status- provide this to HUD-VASH to establish eligibility.
    - Policies in place or in process that allow for such transfers within the local coordinated entry system.
  - Ensure the unit will likely pass Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspection should a HUD-VASH or another mainstream voucher ultimately be needed. SSVF grantees are encouraged to be familiar with HQS requirements as a best practice generally.
  - Be aware of the local public housing authority rent standards for HUD-VASH and seek units that would meet those rent standards. Emphasize advantages landlords have when working with tenancy support programs such as SSVF and HUD-VASH.