

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**News Release**Office of Public Affairs
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SEPTEMBER 30, 2014**VA Announces New Grants to Help End Veteran Homelessness
*Initiative Targets 70,000 Homeless and At-Risk Vets and Families in High Need
Communities***

WASHINGTON – In addition to the \$300 million in Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program grant awards announced on August 11, 2014 serving 115,000 Veterans and their family members, today Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced the award of \$207 million in SSVF grants that will help an additional 70,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants will be distributed to 82 non-profit agencies and include “surge” funding for 56 high need communities.

During the brief history of this program, VA has helped tens of thousands of Veterans exit homelessness and prevented just as many from becoming homeless. The “surge” funding will enable VA to strategically target resources to high need communities where there are significant numbers of Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Under the SSVF program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is awarding grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in – or transitioning to – permanent housing. Those community organizations provide a range of services that promote housing stability among eligible very low income Veteran families (those making less than 50 percent of the area median income). The grants announced today will fund the fourth year of the SSVF program.

“The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to using evidence based approaches such as SSVF to prevent homelessness and produce successful outcomes for Veterans and their families,” McDonald said. “This is a program that works, because it allows VA staff and local homeless service providers to work together to address the unique challenges that make it difficult for some Veterans and their families to remain stably housed.”

Under the terms of the SSVF grants, homeless providers offer Veterans and their family members outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits and assistance in receiving other public benefits. Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs. In the first 2 years of SSVF operations (through FY 2013), nearly 100,000 Veterans and their family members received direct assistance to exit homelessness or maintain permanent housing, including over 25,000 children.

“With the addition of these crucial resources, communities across the country continue a historic drive to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans,” said Laura Green Zeilinger, Executive Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. “The SSVF program gives Veterans and their families the rapid assistance they need to remain in permanent housing or get back into permanent housing as quickly as possible.”

In 2009, President Obama announced the federal government’s goal of ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. The SSVF grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2014 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 33 percent since 2010.

Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed more than \$1 billion in FY 2014 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to homeless Veterans, including health care, housing, job training, and education.

More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.