

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT RETURNS TO HOMELESSNESS GRANT AND PER DIEM AND HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS CONTRACT RESIDENTIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

July 11, 2023

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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

AGENDA

- Review of VA's Calendar Year (CY) Goal #2: Preventing Returns
- Strategies to Prevent Returns to Homelessness
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) General Overview
- SSVF Shallow Subsidy and Grant and Per Diem (GPD)/Contract Residential Services (CRS) Programs
- Coordination Considerations
- Questions

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand a range of strategies to prevent Veterans from returning to homelessness.
- Provide an overview of the SSVF Shallow Subsidy to GPD and HCHV CRS providers.
- Understand how to assess Veterans residing in GPD/HCHV CRS for the Shallow Subsidy service.
- Understand coordination considerations with your SSVF partner.

REVIEW OF VA'S CALENDAR YEAR GOAL #2: PREVENTING RETURNS

GOAL 2: PREVENTING RETURNS TO HOMELESSNESS

At least 95% of Veterans housed during CY 2023 will remain permanently housed. Of Veterans who do experience homelessness again, 90% will be re-engaged in a permanent housing pathway during 2023.

This goal requires a new or renewed focus on creative housing retention strategies, including:

- Landlord mediation, legal services and an emphasis on avoiding negative exits from VA homeless programs.
- Community-level diversion and prevention strategies focused on Veterans originally housed via VA homeless programs.
- Coordinate rehousing strategies for Veterans who re-enter homelessness after being housed through VA services.
- Elevate the role of people with lived experience in outreach and engagement settings, and to help support successful tenancies.

CONTEXT

This year's goals build upon the housing placement efforts of CY 2022, integrating prevention and outreach components to achieve comprehensive and holistic outcomes.

- Of the 40,401 individual Veterans housed in CY 2022, 2,443 (6%) Veterans returned to homelessness last year.
- Of the 2,443 Veterans who returned to homelessness:
 - 785 (32%) Veterans were rehoused and are in permanent housing.
 - 1,325 (54%) Veterans were re-enrolled in VA homeless programs and on a path to permanent housing.
 - 333 (14%) Veterans are not currently enrolled in VA programs but are actively being outreached by VA homeless program staff and community partners to re-engage and re-enroll in services.
- Although the overall national trend has reflected increases in unsheltered homelessness:
 - Both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness for Veterans has declined since 2020.
 - According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, 33,129 were experiencing homelessness. Out of that total, 13,564 (~41%) Veterans experiencing homelessness were unsheltered.

OUR *ONE TEAM* APPROACH

- All VA homeless programs must prioritize housing placements and retention strategies for Veterans currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- This will require an effective *One Team* approach among all VA homeless programs, especially:
 - HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
 - SSVF Rapid Rehousing (RRH)
 - GPD Transitional Housing and Case Management
 - HCHV Outreach and CRS/Low Demand Safe Haven
 - Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services, Veterans Justice Program and other specialized service programs

OUR ONE TEAM APPROACH (continued)

- Each individual Veteran is our collective responsibility. We must support their housing needs and goals by:
 - Leading a progressive, equity-centered approach to offer the necessary supports to sustain long-term tenancies and limit returns to homelessness, with co-enrollment in certain circumstances.
 - Coordinating outreach and connections to interim housing with “same day” access and cross-referral protocol.
 - Leveraging data to develop strategies that ensure equitable access to and effective delivery of critical outreach and housing services.
 - Committing to case conferencing, list management and cross-program collaboration in the overall system, and in individual Veteran planning.

WHAT THE DATA IS SHOWING US

- Permanent housing placements (PHP) from GPD and HCHV CRS represent approximately 25% of placements nationally.
- Of these placements, approximately 17% are housing placements to family or friends.
- A significant number of these Veteran placements are returning to homelessness.
- In general, the length of stay for PHPs to family or friends is approximately 4 months on average.
- The length of stay for PHPs to family or friends who later return to homelessness is approximately 3 months on average.

The above data is a snapshot of CY 2023 as of May.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT RETURNS TO HOMELESSNESS

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Develop Veteran Housing Plans and Support Their Housing Search

- Ensure Veterans are informed of all options to support them with permanent housing (HUD-VASH, SSVF and potential Shallow Subsidy service, GPD Case Management grant).
 - Honor Veteran choice.
- Review each Veteran's housing plan to ensure they are enrolled in some type of rental assistance or subsidy, where appropriate (e.g., HUD-VASH or SSVF RRH).
 - Reinforce the benefits of rental assistance and associated housing supports to obtain and keep housing.
 - Assess every Veteran without a rental subsidy for SSVF and potential Shallow Subsidy service.
- Consider referring Veterans who choose to pursue housing with family or friends to an SSVF provider for Rapid Resolution.
 - Ensure referrals happen before the Veteran moves in with family or friends (while still considered homeless).
- Prioritize support for Veterans who choose to pursue housing with family or friends after leaving GPD or those with a history of returns by ensuring those Veterans are informed of all available services.

Supporting a Veteran's Ongoing Tenancy

- Offer some level of support and contact with a Veteran and/or the landlord/host family, understanding that both GPD/HCHV CRS are not responsible for support after program exit.
- If possible, identify critical instabilities with the tenancy via the Veteran or landlord/host family and engage your local GPD Case Management or SSVF partner (Homelessness Prevention (HP) services) for mediation and support.

Supporting a Veteran at Imminent Risk of Losing Their Housing and Is Seeking Interim Housing Services Through GPD/HCHV CRS

- If a Veteran identifies at the “front door” of the homelessness response system (e.g., coordinated entry access point, services center, emergency shelter), immediately offer Rapid Resolution/Housing Problem Solving intervention in coordination with your SSVF partner(s) to divert a Veteran from returning to homelessness.

GRANT & PER DIEM OVERVIEW

GPD GENERAL OVERVIEW

- The GPD program allows VA to award grants to community-based agencies to create transitional housing programs and offer per diem payments.
- The purpose of the program is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or related services — with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination.
- GPD-funded projects offer communities a way to help homeless Veterans by providing housing and other services and at the same time assist VAMCs by augmenting or supplementing care.
- GPD has various program models that target Veterans with service different needs and desires.
- GPD Case Management Grants allow grantees to serve Veterans who are entering into permanent housing, making these grants unique in the GPD portfolio.

GPD CASE MANAGEMENT

- Provides funding for up to six months of housing stabilization services for Veterans who have entered permanent housing
 - Critical case management services can lead to greater housing retention and ensure connections are maintained should a Veteran become at risk of losing housing in the near term.
 - Service commitment may give landlords confidence in renting to Veterans exiting GPD programs or with other housing access barriers in the private market.
- New authorities beginning October 1, 2023 also include ability for housing navigation supports
 - Allows for Veteran enrollment prior to housing placement, carrying GPD relationship from homeless situation to permanent housing.
 - Adds housing navigation capacity locally for Veterans who may need GPD aftercare but also need support in accessing housing.

SSVF GENERAL OVERVIEW

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SSVF

- Provides rapid re-housing (RRH) assistance to Veterans experiencing literal homelessness (including in GPD/HCHV) and homelessness prevention (HP) for those who are at imminent risk of homelessness.
- Is highly flexible, tailoring resources and services based on individual Veteran preferences (choice) and needs.
- Operates under a Housing First crisis response model serving Veterans with a range of housing barriers.
- Can service the entire household, not just the Veteran.

SSVF ELIGIBILITY

Homeless or At-Risk Status

- Experiencing literal homelessness - RRH
 - Sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, shelter or transitional housing
 - Exiting an institution (hospital, incarceration, rehab, treatment facility, etc.) where they have resided for less than 90 days and were homeless prior to entering
- Imminent risk of homelessness – HP
 - Indicates risk of experiencing literal homelessness in next 30 days
 - Can include Rapid Resolution and traditional SSVF services based on need and targeting

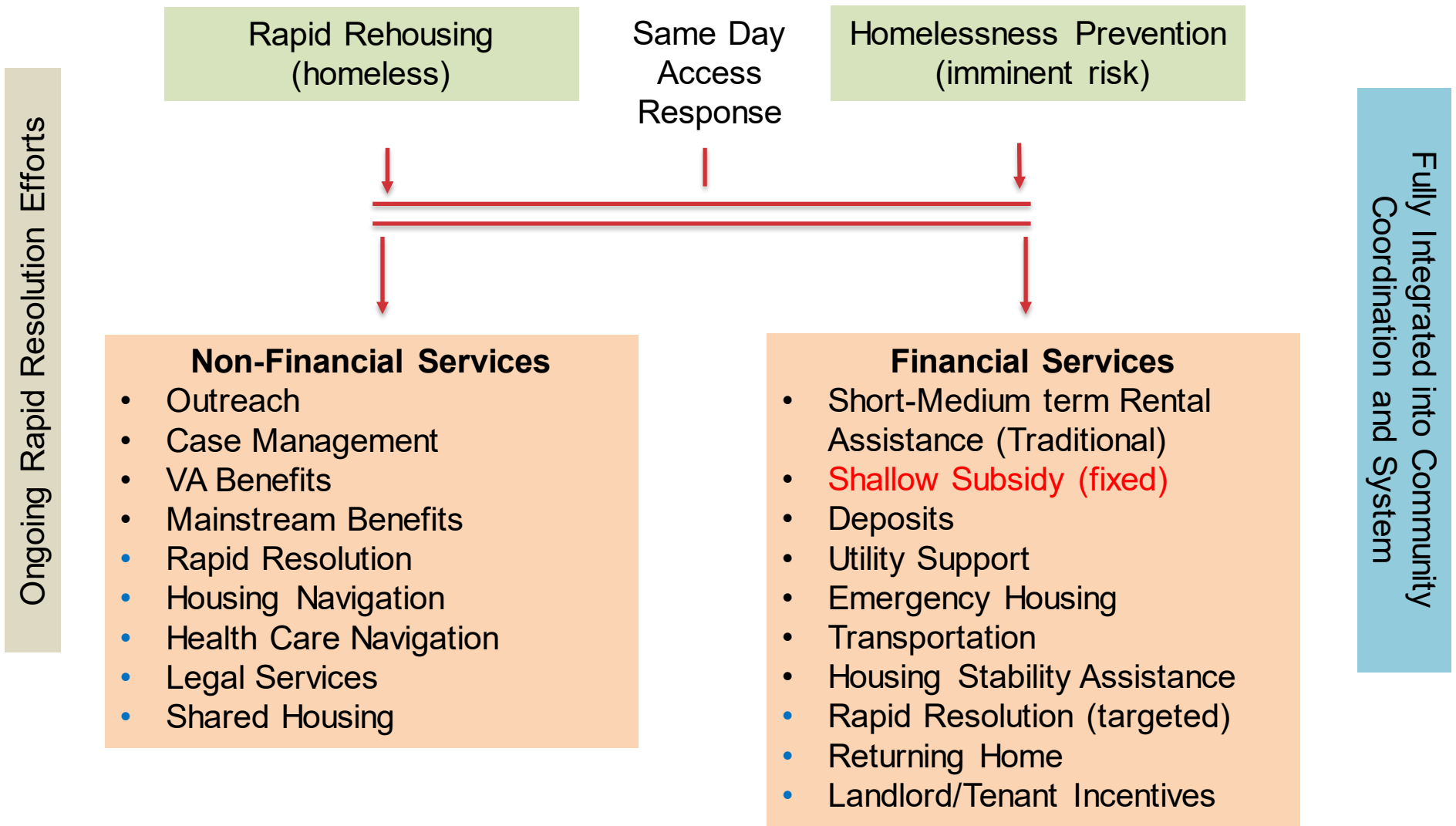
Veteran Status

- Consistent with GPD
- See SSVF guidance for more detail ([SSVF Program Guide \(va.gov\)](#) p. 24)

At or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)

- Further income targeting may be driven by local prioritization
- Financial assistance has additional limitations for Veterans at 30-80% AMI

SSVF PROGRAM SERVICES



NEW FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO GRANTEEES

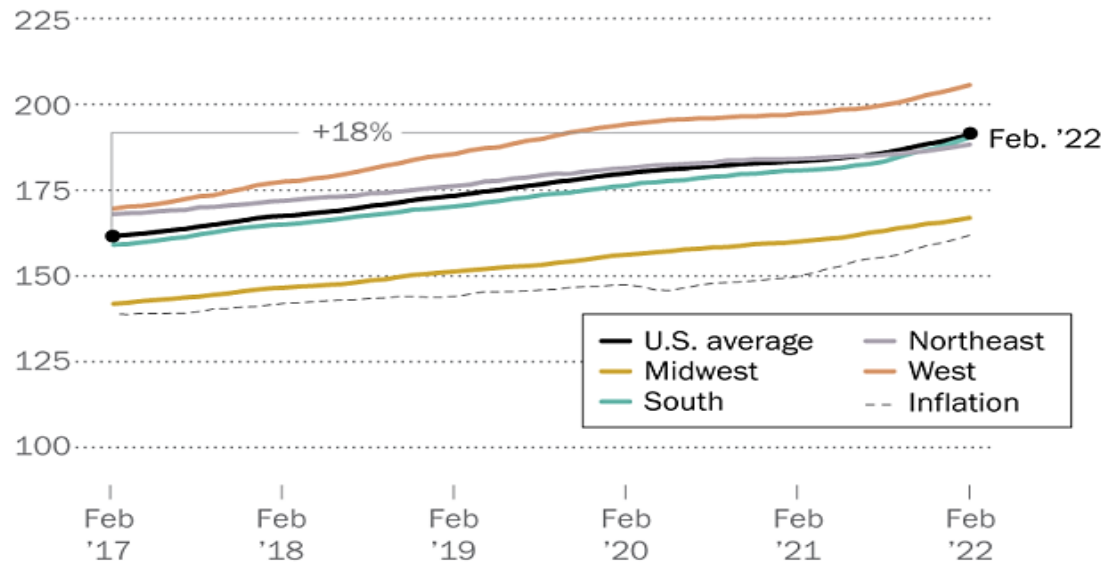
- Landlord incentives worth up to two months rent, where necessary.
- Tenant move-in support up to an additional \$1,000 for selected quality of life items for Veterans.
- Veterans coming from other homeless programs (shelter, HCHV, outreach, GPD) are eligible if both SSVF eligibility and capacity exists.

SSVF SHALLOW SUBSIDY AND GPD/CRS PROGRAMS

THE NEED FOR SHALLOW SUBSIDY SERVICES

The average U.S. rent has risen 18% over the last five years

Consumer price index for rent of primary residence in ...



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

THE GAP THE PROBLEM:

The U.S. has a shortage of more than **7.2 MILLION** rental homes affordable and available to extremely low income renter households.



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SHALLOW SUBSIDIES

- Shallow Subsidy offers a 50% rental subsidy for two years, which increases the supply of affordable units.
 - Veterans with incomes above 30% AMI receive a two-year commitment, less the months of traditional rental assistance already provided.
 - Veterans with incomes at or below 30% AMI receive two-year Shallow Subsidy commitment regardless of any other traditional rental assistance provided.
- SSVF uses rent reasonableness, not Fair Market Rent (FMR), to increase flexibility in the tight housing market.
 - FMR is based on an annual publication from HUD and set specific to a geographic area.
 - Rent reasonableness for a unit is confirmed by comparing three similar units in the community; this is often more reflective of real time market conditions than FMR.
- Shallow Subsidy is a service of SSVF, not a separate program. Veterans in Shallow Subsidy still have access to the broad range of SSVF services, including traditional rental assistance if the Veteran's needs change.

SHALLOW SUBSIDIES (continued)

- Subsidy amount is generally fixed over the 24-month commitment.
 - Different from RRH, which can be a deeper subsidy, but more short term.
 - No income recertification is required for entire Shallow Subsidy period, so increases in income do not affect Veteran enrollment during the initial two-year period.
- Veterans can be recertified at the end of the 24-month assistance period, if they still income eligible and need assistance.
- Can be used in one-bedroom, multi-bedroom and shared housing situations.
- Can be used while a Veteran is applying or waiting for other types of mainstream or VA affordable housing assistance.

VA PERMANENT HOUSING PROGRAMS COMPARISON

Domain	Traditional SSVF RRH/HP Services	SSVF Shallow Subsidy Services	HUD-VASH Services
Income Review	Income is recertified every 90 days. Veterans whose income increases over 50% AMI are no longer eligible for the program	No income recertification during two-year period ensuring no disincentive to increase income	Annual income recertification and interim income change reports
Service Design	Highly flexible case management and supportive services ranging from light touch to intensive non-clinical services based on Veteran needs	Generally, provides light case management services, which may be increased if a crisis or unanticipated need arises	Intensive, clinically focused housing and supportive services
Progressive Assistance Context	Use of Housing Problem Solving strategies and Rapid Resolution services in effort to end the immediate housing crisis and provide stabilization services, followed by robust housing planning via traditional SSVF service and financial assistance packages	Veterans can receive traditional RRH or HP support and begin Shallow Subsidy services if/when it is recognized they need longer-term subsidy assistance to maintain permanent housing	The most intensive resource available with potential targeting to Veterans for whom other VA homeless program interventions has shown to be insufficient

VA PERMANENT HOUSING PROGRAMS COMPARISON (continued)

Domain	Traditional SSVF RRH/HP Services	SSVF Shallow Subsidy Services	HUD-VASH Services
Subsidy Length	General maximum of 7 to 9 months of subsidy based on income at enrollment, unless transferred to SSVF Shallow Subsidy	Two-year housing subsidy (less for higher income) commitment to household via SSVF financial assistance; ability to re-enroll if still under 50% AMI	Permanent, deep subsidy committed to the household in form of housing voucher; public housing authority may have income requirements
Subsidy Design	Subsidy amount is highly flexible and based on each individual Veteran household's unique housing plan and needs	Subsidy is based on rent reasonableness of unit, so no increase on Veteran portion of rent if income increases	Subsidy is 30-40% of Veteran's gross income; generally, Veteran portion of rent increases as income increases

SHALLOW SUBSIDY VETERAN CONSIDERATIONS

- In many cases, Veterans enrolled in SSVF are provided some traditional rental assistance and deposits before transitioning to Shallow Subsidy, but some may begin SSVF enrollment with Shallow Subsidy in place immediately.
- Must be income eligible for SSVF when transitioning to Shallow Subsidy.
- Traditional case management and other supportive services are available, but SSVF can provide light touch services if that is what the Veteran needs and desires.
- Veterans must have the ability to pay the balance of rent (50% of unit rent) while in Shallow Subsidy. Veterans needing greater financial assistance would remain in the traditional SSVF service package where rental assistance is more flexible.
- SSVF can use traditional financial assistance (increased flexibility but shorter term) before transitioning to Shallow Subsidy to stabilize Veterans or if a crisis occurs.

VA HOMELESS PROGRAM OFFICE GUIDANCE

- At the initiation of a housing plan, proactively assess all Veterans who do not already have rental assistance (i.e., HUD-VASH or other permanent subsidy) for SSVF RRH or Shallow Subsidy service.
- If assessed to be an appropriate candidate for a Shallow Subsidy, refer the Veteran to your SSVF partner while emphasizing that the Veteran may be well-suited for the Shallow Subsidy service.
- Once the Veteran is co-enrolled, coordinate services with your SSVF partner based upon the needs of the Veteran.
- GPD or HCHV CR will continue to offer primary case management until housing placement (i.e., execution of the lease) when the Shallow Subsidy service is initiated.

COORDINATION CONSIDERATIONS

IMPLICATIONS FOR GPD/HCHV COORDINATION

- GPD/HCHV should consider SSVF referrals, via coordinated entry and consistent case conferencing across providers, if a Veteran needs and wants (based on choice) additional support beyond the GPD enrollment.
 - Note: Veterans retain their homeless status eligibility for SSVF while still enrolled in GPD/HCHV.
 - If a Veteran is permanently housed before SSVF enrollment, they would no longer be eligible for SSVF Rapid Rehousing, but would qualify under homelessness prevention, which is a higher bar.
- SSVF's services have great flexibility and can adapt to meet a Veteran's needs. It can be, but does not need to be, an intensive intervention.
- Local coordinated entry processes should reflect the various tools VA homeless programs have and their ability to adapt service delivery based on those tools.
- When available, leverage and coordinate utilization of GPD Case Management services for Veterans to assist in transitioning to and retaining permanent housing.
- Veterans in GPD/HCHV who desire housing and need further support should be considered for SSVF enrollment (whether traditional or Shallow Subsidy service), consistent with local policies.
- All Veterans in GPD/HCHV, regardless of model, are eligible for SSVF. Local capacity for new cases must be communicated across partners.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION