

Support Services for Homeless Veteran Families (SSVF) Frequently Asked Questions for Continuums of Care (CoCs)

1. What is the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program?

The SSVF program, funded by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), assists very low-income Veterans and their families who are literally homeless imminently at-risk of becoming literally homeless in obtaining or retaining permanent housing.

2. What are the main forms of assistance that can be provided through the SSVF program?

SSVF offers two types of assistance: Rapid re-housing assistance for Veteran families who are *literally homeless* and Homelessness Prevention services for Veteran families who are at *imminent risk* of becoming literally homeless. Grantees provide eligible Veterans and Veteran families with outreach, case management, stabilization services and assistance in obtaining VA and other public benefits. SSVF can also provide temporary financial assistance to assist Veteran households in resolving their housing crisis.

3. The goal of SSVF is housing stability. What does VA mean by housing stability?

Answer: The immediate housing crisis is over and is not expected to recur in the near term. Research is showing that Rapid Re-Housing has a very high success rate. SSVF is effective with a broad range of Veteran families, including households with the highest barriers. Recent data from SSVF shows that households who enter SSVF with zero income are only slightly less likely to still be in permanent housing one year after discharge as those households with incomes over \$2000 (80% vs. 88%), and SSVF grantees have found that zero income households are not more expensive to assist. Therefore, VA strongly promotes assisting households with the highest barriers. Grantees are monitored to assure they are not selectively assisting only households with lower barriers.

4. Who can apply for SSVF funding?

Potential grantees for SSVF funding are private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives. Grantees may enter into subcontract agreements with a wide range of providers including for-profit, governmental agencies, and other private non-profits or consumer cooperatives for the direct provision of services, as outlined in the grantee's application and as approved by VA.

5. Are there SSVF funding opportunities available in my community?

The [SSVF Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2014 Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) was released on January 14, 2014. Through the NOFA, the VA has made available up to \$600 million, up to \$300 million of which will be awarded as three year, non-renewable grants to eligible applicants in 76 priority CoCs.

6. The NOFA outlines different funding priorities. What's the difference between Priority 1, Priority 2, and Priority 3 SSVF funding allocations?

Under Priority 1, the VA will provide 3-year non-renewable grants to eligible entities proposing services for one of the 76 priority CoCs outlined in the NOFA; the total available funds for Priority 1 under this NOFA is \$300 million. Under Priority 2, VA will provide renewal grants for existing SSVF Program grantees. Under Priority 3, VA will provide 1-year grants to eligible entities applying for a new grant if funds are available following Priority 1 and 2 awards. The total available funds for Priorities 2 and 3 combined under this NOFA is approximately \$300 million.

7. The NOFA states that Priority 1 applications must be endorsed by the CoC. How many SSVF applications can a CoC endorse?

For Priority 1 applications, a CoC can endorse up to 2 SSVF applications by providing a letter of endorsement that should explicitly note that the CoC is endorsing the applicant for a Priority 1 application. Priority 1 applications must receive this letter of endorsement from the CoCs in their service area to be considered for funding. Priority 1 applicants must also receive a support letter from their VA Homeless Network Coordinator. For Priority 2 & 3 applications, CoC support letters are strongly encouraged but not required.

8. What does endorsing an application mean?

By endorsing an application, CoCs are providing formal approval for that applicant to pursue Priority 1 funding, based on the maximum allocation listed in the NOFA. CoCs are encouraged to review the SSVF NOFA and other guidance materials, including a recently posted [Webinar](#) focused on CoC involvement, when deciding which applicants in their service area to endorse. The VA has released an [SSVF Continuum of Care Pre-Application](#) in an effort to provide CoCs with a template to review prospective applicants and determine whether to endorse their application. The tool is entirely voluntary and may be adapted by CoCs in order to meet CoC needs. The tool may also be used by CoCs considering whether to provide a letter of support for Priority 2 or 3 applicants.

9. Can a CoC Lead apply directly for Priority 1 funds and subcontract with direct service providers within the CoC's geographic region?

Yes, if a CoC Lead is a private non-profit organization or consumer cooperative the CoC Lead may apply for Priority 1 funds. The CoC Lead must still obtain CoC endorsement from the CoC Board or other decision-making entity authorized by the CoC and in accord with the CoC governance model. The CoC Lead may also subcontract those funds) as long as those subcontractors are noted, where appropriate,

in the funding application and subsequently approved by VA. Please note that a CoC Lead who applies directly for the Priority 1 funds may provide a letter of endorsement on its own behalf. However, the endorsement letter must identify the CoC Board or other decision-making entity as the authorized official making the endorsement, in accord with the CoC governance model.

10. Can a Priority 1 Grantee serve Veteran families outside of the designated CoCs formal geographic catchment area?

Priority 1 funds are specifically designed to address housing needs within the designated CoC's geography. All participants served by Priority 1 grantees should either originate from the CoC geography at program entry or obtain/maintain permanent housing within the CoC geography by the time of program exit.

11. What happens if the CoC endorses two applicants and the total amount requested exceeds the Priority 1 allocation for that CoC?

The Priority 1 CoC allocations listed in the NOFA are the maximum amount available for Priority 1 grantees within that particular CoC. If the total request of two applications for a CoC exceeds the available funds, VA will make award decisions based on the highest score of the two applications as long as that request does not exceed the allocation for that particular CoC. VA will not negotiate budget amounts during the application review process. For example, if a CoC is allotted \$3 million and each of two applicants apply for \$2 million (\$4 million total), then one or both of those applicants may receive less funding than requested or one applicant may not receive funding at all. Available funds that are not awarded to Priority 1 applicants may be made available to Priority 2 and 3 applicants. CoC are encouraged to work with potential applicants to ensure that the applications submitted request the amount equal to or less than the available amount for that CoC.

12. If a CoC endorses one or two Priority 1 applicants, is the CoC Lead responsible for any aspect of that grantee's performance or grant management/oversight?

No. CoCs and SSVF grantees are strongly encouraged to coordinate efforts toward the goal of ending homelessness among veterans and monitor progress to assure goal attainment; however, CoCs are not responsible for grantee compliance or performance.

13. The SSVF Continuum of Care Pre-Application refers to "SSVF mentors". What is an SSVF mentor?

An SSVF mentor is a current grantee organization that has administered and operated its programs effectively and is willing to assist other grantees by sharing best practices and management expertise. SSVF Mentors must be grantees who have met their targeting goals, been in compliance with all program requirements, and who have not required a Corrective Action Plan based on the VA monitoring process.

14. The SSVF Continuum of Care Pre-Application asks information about an organization's accreditation by CARF or COA? What does it mean to be accredited by CARF or COA?

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and Council on Accreditation (COA) provide organizational and program-specific accreditation options for human and social service providers using a comprehensive set of standards focused on organizational management/governance and the planning and delivery of services across a range of disciplines. Accreditation requires a service provider to commit to quality improvement, focus on the unique needs of each person the provider serves, monitor the results of services, and submit to peer monitoring and appropriate corrective actions in order to achieve accreditation. Interested CoCs and grantees should visit the [CARF](#) and [COA](#) websites for more information pertaining to accreditation.

15. The SSVF Continuum of Care Pre-Application template asks about an applicant's involvement in the CoC's centralized or coordinated assessment system. Are SSVF grantees required to participate in a CoC's Coordinated Assessment System?

Both new and renewal applicants are required to describe their participation in their CoCs coordinated assessment efforts. Applicant's response to this question is a factor in their grant application score. Therefore, SSVF grantees are strongly encouraged to participate in the local CoC's coordinated assessment system. SSVF homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services are a critical component of the CoC's programmatic infrastructure. Coordinated assessment is an opportunity to enhance service coordination, improve client outcomes, and assist VA in their goal of ending homelessness among veterans. Veterans experiencing a housing crisis should be able to quickly access assistance to resolve their crisis as part of the broader coordinated assessment system established by the CoC.

16. Are SSVF grantees required to participate in HMIS? Are there different data standards?

Yes, HMIS participation is a statutory requirement for SSVF grantees and sub-grantees.

17. Where can I get more information about the SSVF Program?

The [SSVF program webpage](#) provides information about the SSVF Program to Veterans, applicants, and interested stakeholders. On this page you will find the Final Rule, the most recent [Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#), application templates, the SSVF Program Guide as well as a list of current SSVF Providers and other useful information. In addition to the webpage, you can submit questions directly to: SSVF@VA.gov.

