

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

New Grantee Program Start-up Checklist

This document provides a checklist of tasks involved in setting up your SSVF program. The checklist contains seven primary activities with multiple tasks within each activity. All steps should be completed within one to two months prior to implementation.

Activity	Tasks
1. Hire/Designate Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop job descriptions and qualifications ✓ Hire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program manager/supervisor ○ Key program direct service staff
2. Train Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff training content areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a plan for orientation and ongoing staff training ✓ VA SSVF program manual, requirements ✓ Local SSVF program design, policies, procedures, and forms ✓ Local referral partnerships and protocols ✓ SSVF best practice standards ✓ Customized best practice training using SSVF Knowledge University resources ✓ Incorporate the experiences of formerly homeless households into the training plan
3. Develop Program Policies, Procedures, and Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify required and optional policies, procedures and forms to develop based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ VA SSVF program manual and requirements ✓ Policies and procedures to implement SSVF proposal and contract with VA ✓ SSVF best practice standards • Develop program policies and procedures consistent with VA requirements, program design, and SSVF best practices, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Targeting, eligibility and prioritization criteria ✓ Outreach and engagement ✓ Screening and program admission determination ✓ Participant assessment ✓ Housing plans ✓ Case management and tenancy supports ✓ Financial assistance amount, duration, and limitations, including participant share of housing costs ✓ Financial assistance request, review and approval process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Landlord recruitment and retention ✓ Landlord supports, including such supports as communication, mediation, follow-up to landlords, any payments the program may offer for rental arrears, damage to the unit, move-out without notice, etc. ✓ Tenancy supports for program participants, including such supports as landlord-tenant rights/responsibilities education, home visits, tenant skill-building ✓ Eligibility review and redetermination ✓ Applicant appeals process ✓ Housing habitability inspections ✓ Participant rights and responsibilities ✓ Participant grievance and appeals process ✓ Service termination and case closing ✓ Recordkeeping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop homelessness prevention targeting threshold score for your program. Complete “SSVF Homelessness Prevention Grantee Screening and Targeting Threshold Plan” form and submit to VA Regional Coordinator. • Develop program forms, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Program screening and referral forms to make and receive referrals from other providers and/or your community’s coordinated assessment system ✓ Eligibility assessment, documentation and intake determination ✓ Homeless certification form ✓ “SSVF Homelessness Prevention Eligibility Screening Disposition Form,” with any additional VA-approved risk factors and scores, and with the threshold score for this program. ✓ Assessment of the participant’s housing situation, housing barriers and other information needed to obtain and/or retain housing. ✓ Housing Plan, with goals, action steps, timeline, assigned responsibility (staff or participant) and review date ✓ Budget worksheet(s) for expenses and income ✓ Participant Consent to Obtain and Release Information ✓ Financial assistance request form ✓ Rental assistance payment agreement ✓ Case closing criteria, information to be reviewed and determination
<p>4. Outreach and Referral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop program information materials, including program brochures, fact sheet, and other handouts. • Identify and contact key outreach and referral sources to establish

referral arrangements, including each of the following below for persons who are homeless (RRH) or at-risk of homelessness (HP).

Rapid Re-Housing

- ✓ CoC coordinated assessment provider(s), if one has been established for your community
- ✓ Homeless street outreach providers including (but not limited to):
 - Healthcare for the Homeless
 - PATH program(s)
- ✓ Mainstream-funded emergency shelter programs for individuals and families
- ✓ VA-funded emergency shelter programs, including:
 - VA Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program(s)
 - VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Projects, including:
 - Community Contract Emergency Housing
 - Community Contract Residential Treatment Programs
- ✓ Mainstream-funded transitional housing programs for individuals and families
- ✓ VA-funded transitional housing projects, including:
 - Grant and Per Diem Program(s) (GPD)
 - Compensated Work Therapy – Transitional Residences
- ✓ VA Community Resource and Referral Center(s)
- ✓ Veterans Service Organizations
- ✓ City, county and state law enforcement representatives
- ✓ Local/state/federal parks representatives
- ✓ Local welfare offices, food pantries, hot meal programs, and other programs offering basic needs to very low-income families and individuals
- ✓ Local hospitals, jails, treatment centers, and other institutions where people who are homeless may go (for less than 90 days or longer periods of time)
- ✓ 24/7 establishments frequented by people who are homeless, such as bus or train stations
- ✓ Other known locations where people who are homeless may go for assistance (such as churches/mosques/temples)

Homelessness Prevention

- ✓ CoC coordinated assessment provider(s)
- ✓ Community information and referral/2-1-1 service
- ✓ Emergency shelters (to enable diversion, when possible)
- ✓ Veterans Service Organizations
- ✓ VA Medical Center
- ✓ VA Community Resource and Referral Center(s)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Legal services, courts ✓ Other homelessness prevention and emergency assistance providers • Establish a written outreach plan for outreach and engagement with homeless and at-risk Veterans. The plan should describe outreach strategies, key partners, program staff roles, and referral protocols.
<p>5. Service Referral and Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key service referral and coordination partners and points of contact, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Other SSVF grantees serving the same and/or adjoining geography ✓ CoC and other CoC providers, including all homeless assistance and homeless prevention providers that may serve Veterans; VA and targeted Veterans programs; and other community service providers • Meet with other SSVF grantees to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program services, case coordination, and information sharing protocols ✓ Determine program coordination plan, including which Veterans each program will serve and when to triage Veterans to another SSVF provider or another CoC provider ✓ Share information on key community services, housing resources, and landlord partners • Meet with CoC representative(s) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria and program service information ✓ Identify SSVF role in CoC coordinated assessment system and strategies/process(es) for linking Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to SSVF ✓ Identify strategies and process(es) for linking homeless or at-risk Veterans on street or in shelter to SSVF • Meet with local VA Medical Center, VA Community Resource and Referral Center(s), other programs targeting at-risk/homeless Veterans (e.g., GPD, VASH, HVRP, etc.), and local Veterans Service Organizations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program services, case coordination, and information sharing protocols ✓ Determine screening and referral processes for each VA benefits and service • Meet with other service providers, such as employment assistance, child care, healthcare, mental health, and substance abuse providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program services, case

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordination, and information sharing protocols ✓ Determine screening and referral processes • Obtain and/or develop a directory of services, key contacts, and referral protocols for staff reference
<p>6. Housing Referral and Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key public and private housing options, partners, and points of contact, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Public housing authority(ies) ✓ VASH program representative(s) ✓ Other non-VASH permanent supportive housing ✓ Privately owned subsidized housing ✓ Private market landlords and landlord associations • Meet with other housing providers and landlords to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program participant services and landlord supports, participant financial assistance, communication and mediation protocols ✓ Housing screening criteria, unit locations and sizes, general unit availability, rental and security deposit amounts, and willingness to accept third party financial assistance ✓ Determine screening and referral processes • Obtain and/or develop a directory of housing options, key contacts, and referral protocols for staff reference
<p>7. Financial Assistance Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and document process steps for requesting, reviewing, approving and issuing SSVF financial assistance requests. • Develop accounting policies and procedures for review, approval and issuing of financial assistance requests
<p>8. Subgrantees (if applicable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute subgrantee contracts, consistent with VA and grantee requirements, policies, and best practices. • Establish subgrantee invoice and payment policies, procedures and forms, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Minimum supporting documentation to subgrantees must submit to grantee with invoices ✓ Invoice submission process, frequency and timelines, review, and payment /reimbursement schedule ✓ Monitoring policy and procedure for both subgrantee and grantee to review programmatic and fiscal operations • Train subgrantees on program policies, procedures, forms, etc.

required under the SSVF program and via the contract between VA and grantee.

- **Require subgrantees to develop specific policies and procedures necessary to implement subcontracted services. This includes staff roles, timelines, and processes.**
- **Establish a subgrantee monitoring plan, including:**
 - ✓ Schedule for on-site review of each subgrantee
 - ✓ List of program activities and records to be reviewed during monitoring and, if less than 100% of records will be monitored, the approach to selecting representative sample of financial and client records to be reviewed
 - ✓ Approach to issuing monitoring findings/concerns and correcting findings