



## RESEARCH BRIEF

February 2021

### Temporary financial assistance and stable housing among Veterans in the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program



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**Funding:** Health Services Research and Development (IIR 17-029)

#### What do we know?

Since October 2011, the US Department of Veterans Affairs has partnered with community organizations (called “grantees”) to provide housing support and services through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. A key component of SSVF is temporary financial assistance (TFA). TFA provides funds for rent, utility payments, security deposits, and other housing-related expenses for Veterans who have lost or are at risk of losing stable housing. The goal of TFA for housing-related expenses is to prevent homelessness or to quickly house those who have become homeless to prevent more costly interventions later. In this study, we sought to estimate the association between TFA and housing stability outcomes for Veterans enrolled in SSVF.<sup>1</sup>

We conducted this analysis for all Veterans enrolled in SSVF in our cohort, as well as separately for those enrolled in the rapid re-housing (RRH) component, which targets Veterans who are homeless, and the homelessness prevention (HP) component, which targets Veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless.

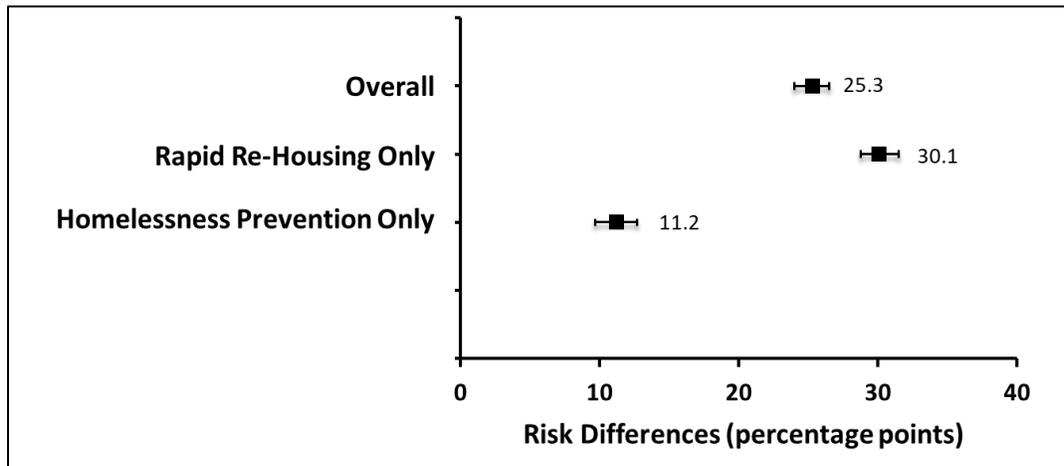
#### New information provided by the study

Our analysis cohort consisted of 41,969 Veterans who enrolled in the SSVF program between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2018. These Veterans accessed the SSVF program through 203 grantees in 49

states and territories throughout the US. The SSVF episodes for these Veterans lasted an average of 90.5 days. The mean (standard deviation) age was 50.3 (13.0). More than two-thirds of the Veterans in this study (69.5%) received TFA during their SSVF episode and the mean (standard deviation) amount of TFA they received was \$6,070 (\$7,272). Overall, stable housing was achieved in 81.4% of the episodes.

In multivariable regression analyses shown in Figure 1, we found that the probability of having a stable housing outcome was 25.3 (95% CI: 24.0-26.5) percentage points greater for Veterans receiving TFA compared to those not receiving any TFA. This effect was larger in magnitude for those enrolled in the RRH component compared to those in the HP component.

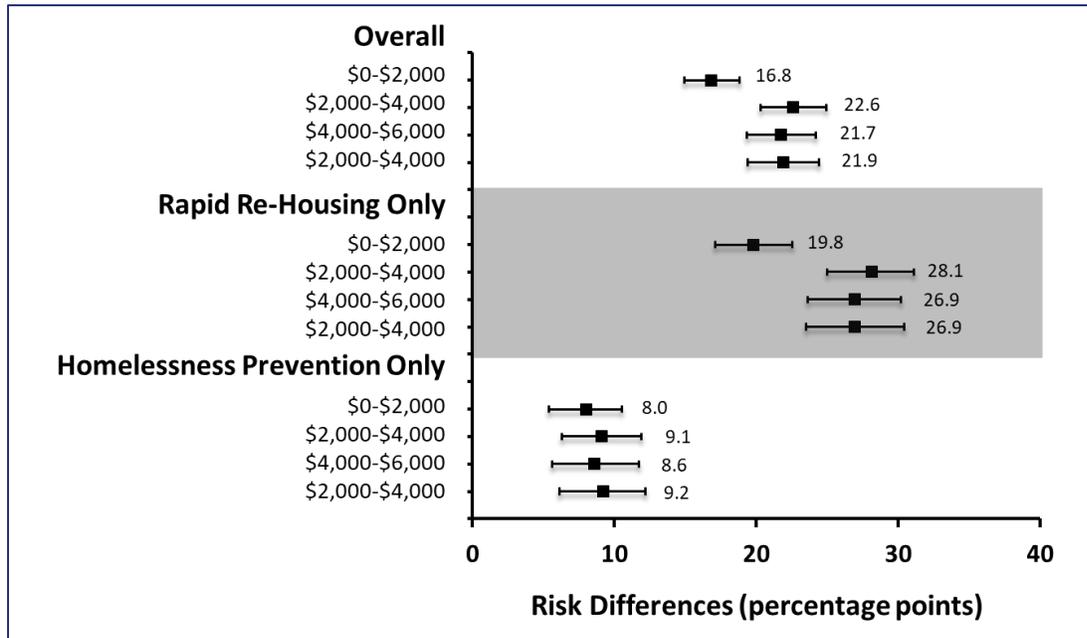
**Figure 1:** Differences in the risk (or probability) of stable housing for Veterans receiving TFA relative to Veterans not receiving TFA estimated from multivariable logistic regressions



When considering the association between the dollar amount of TFA and stable housing rates (Figure 2), those in the RRH component of SSVF receiving some TFA but less than \$2,000 were 19.8 (95% CI: 17.1-22.5) percentage points more likely to have stable housing relative to those who did not receive TFA. However, the magnitude of the effect for those receiving \$2,000-\$4,000, \$4,000-\$6,000, or \$6,000+ in TFA was fairly similar. For those in the HP component of SSVF, the size of the positive effect of TFA amount on stable housing outcomes rose steadily from 8.0 (95% CI: 5.4-10.5) percentage points for \$0-\$2,000 to 9.2 (95% CI: 6.1%-12.2%) percentage points for \$6,000+.

Our findings are highly relevant to policy makers given the increasing emphasis in federal homeless policy over the past decade on RRH programs that, like SSVF, provide TFA.<sup>2,3</sup> For example, between 2013 and 2019, there has been a nearly five-fold increase in the availability of RRH.<sup>4</sup> Given the high cost of providing services to homeless individuals and the significant negative impact that this experience has on both individuals’ physical and mental health, the primary goal of any RRH program is to facilitate stable housing. From this perspective, our results offer support for a continued and perhaps expanded policy shift towards offering this type of assistance to larger number of households experiencing homelessness.

**Figure 2:** Differences in the risk (or probability) of stable housing for Veterans receiving different amounts of TFA relative to Veterans not receiving TFA estimated from multivariable logistic regressions



## References

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3. Culhane D, Metraux S, Byrne T. A prevention-centered approach to homelessness assistance: a paradigm shift? *Housing Policy Debate*. 2011;21(2):295-315.
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