VETERAN STATUS QUERY AND RESPONSE EXCHANGE SYSTEM (SQUARES)
OVERVIEW

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WHAT IS SQUARES?

SQUARES: Status Query and Response Exchange System

- Allows HMIS CoC or SSVF Grantee Repository users to instantaneously determine a homeless client’s Veteran status

- The system functions by sending the personal identifiers for an individual client record as an electronic query to the VA Department of Defense Identity Repository (VADIR). VADIR then uses its standard match logic to determine whether the particular individual has a matching record of military service.

- The goal of SQUARES is to provide homeless service providers the ability to make preliminary VA service and benefit eligibility determinations for their clients in order to initiate targeted enrollment referrals. A DD-214 also must be secured before any enrollment is finalized.
ACCESSING SQUARES

• To register and access SQUARES, type [www.hmisrepository.va.gov](http://www.hmisrepository.va.gov) into any web browser.

• HMIS Repository/SQUARES system consists of two aesthetically similar, but different user interfaces that are both accessible from the same URL – one designed for SSVF grant recipients to upload client data, as well as use SQUARES for verifying their client’s Veteran status, the other for SQUARES-only users, with the sole function of providing CoC users access to the Veteran Status Query page.
**ACCESSING SQUARES CONT.**

- If you are an SSVF Grantee, SQUARES will be activated once your HMIS Repository account is approved.

- If you are a person identified by your CoC HMIS to be the designated SQUARES, not receiving SSVF funding (Non-Repository User), you must register for a SQUARES Non-Repository User account.

- To register, go to [www.hmisrepository.va.gov](http://www.hmisrepository.va.gov) and select the ‘Register for a new SQUARES Account’ option after accepting the HMIS Repository and SQUARES Terms and Conditions of Use.
The Terms and Conditions of use are as follows:


3. Administrative Safeguards. VA will restrict access to the data transmitted to it via this Web site to only those authorized employees and officials who need it to perform their official duties in connection with the uses of the information described above.

4. Limited Use. VA will use data transmitted to it via this Web site to identify individuals for whom it has a record of military service, and for no other purpose. VA will not use the information in any determination of benefits nor will the PII be added to a Privacy Act system of records.

5. Disposition of Data. VA may retain data pertaining to your use of SQUARES for lawful purposes, such as to perform tests and to conduct and facilitate audits of the use of the SQUARES application.

6. Data disposal. For cases where a match was found, the system shall only store an identifier linking the Veteran back to a record in the database used for the match. The system shall immediately purge all personally identifying information for Veterans and non-Veterans and any other data included in the query and not included in the audit trail after the response is provided. VA will dispose of PII and data pertaining to your use of the SQUARES application in accordance with NARA approved records control schedules.
USING SQUARES

- To utilize the system, you will be prompted to enter basic identification information for an individual with questionable Veteran status.

- Your request is then sent to the VA/DOD Identity Repository (VADIR) database via a secure transfer where the data is extracted and verified against all VA client records that originate in various identity repositories. Below are the possible results that could be returned:
  - **Yes**: A matching Veteran record was found in a VA identity repository.
  - **No**: No matching Veteran record was found in a VA identity repository.
  - **Inconclusive**: A matching person’s record was found in NCVAS, but veteran status cannot be verified.

- The status of the individual you submit will immediately be sent back to your SQUARES query page.
Once the Main Menu is displayed, click the SQUARES link that appears under your User Options.

To use SQUARES, you may only enter a status request for one individual client record at a time. The status request must include:

- Social Security Number
- First Name
- Last Name
- Date of Birth

You will also have the option to enter Middle Name, Gender, Zip Code of Last Permanent Address, to increase the likelihood if identifying a match, but these fields are not required.
Once all required data fields are entered correctly, click Submit Query.

After sending your request, the system will send a result back in the Potential Veteran Status box instantaneously.
When the data is sent to VADIR, VADIR then queries various VA identity repositories to search for matching credentials to that of the client record provided.

VADIR queries identity repositories until a match is made or no record is found. VADIR queries run in the following order:
- Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)
- Master Veteran Index (MVI)
- the Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS)
- National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS) Social Security Administration (SSA) Verification File.

You will see the ‘Inconclusive’ result when a match was found in NCVAS, but no other repositories. It is inconclusive because although the record was found, no military service could be verified.
• VADIR queries multiple repositories because each repository has proven to contain gaps in its record of service members. For example:
  • DEERS was created in the 1970’s, so only current service members or DoD retirees were included and all Veterans that served before 1970 are excluded.
  • BIRLS consists of the hard copy translation of all Veterans entered into the DoD Veteran Assistance at Discharge System (VADS) or the records of hard copy DD-214 records brought to any VBA Regional Office. The services didn’t always reliable send the records, so some records are missing in BIRLS as well.
  • MVI includes Veteran records that exist in VistA, but do not include Veterans who never claimed VA health benefits.
  • The NCVAS file has record of the existence of an individual, but does not include conclusive military data such as a DD-214, so veteran status cannot be verified.

• The nature of the identity Repositories allows SQUARES to provide a highly certain Veteran Status determination, but not completely conclusive.

• No matter what the result, you should always secure a DD-214 for those clients who are eventually enrolled in VA benefits or services
NEXT STEPS

- Assist local Continuums of Care (CoCs) develop and configure a web interface within their Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) that connects directly to SQUARES via the DAS gateway/EVH service, without requiring access to the HMIS Repository application.

- Identify five CoCs by November 2015 that will be committed to interface testing by March 2016.

  - **Risk Notice:** If Data Access System (DAS) doesn’t mitigate their Conditional Authority to Operate (ATO) in a timely manner, local CoC efforts will encounter schedule delays outward of the planned March 2016 testing.