

September 2015



VETERAN STATUS QUERY AND RESPONSE EXCHANGE SYSTEM (SQUARES)

OVERVIEW



- What is SQUARES
- Accessing SQUARES
- Using SQUARES
- Next Steps

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



Welcome to the HMIS Repository and the Veteran Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES)

The Repository is a secure web-based application. Its primary functions are to:

- Process uploads of HMIS data from SSVF grantees
- Verify that the uploaded data sets meet VAs data upload and integration specification
- Combine the data sets from all SSVF grantees into a single database
- Provide reporting on the SSVF program at the national level
- Provide access to the Veteran Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES)
- Register for SQUARES only access for Non-Repository users

Veterans Status Query and Response Exchange System - Terms and Conditions of Use

This secure Web site enables authorized SQUARES users to identify clients who have served in the United States (U.S.) military through a real time query of a client's personal identifying information (PII) to the VA Department of Defense Identity Repository (VADIR). The result will not contain PII about the client. To use the site, you will provide the following information on the individuals whose history of military service you wish to inquire about: Note: * denotes a required field

1. First Name
2. Middle Name
3. Last Name *
4. Social Security Number *
5. Date of Birth *
6. Gender
7. Zip Code of last permanent address

VA will use the information you provide to identify individuals for whom it has a record of military service. Once this process of identification is complete (please allow at least 24 hours), you will be able to access on this secure Web site a list of the booking numbers or prison ID numbers of individuals with a record of military service. VA will also provide its outreach staff with sufficient information to locate and contact individuals identified through this process.

VA makes the following assurances about its use and handling of such data:

I have read and accept the Terms and Conditions of Use

Username

Password

[Register a new SQUARES account](#) | [Register a new Repository account](#) | [I forgot my password](#)

- To register and access SQUARES, type 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 and select the '**Register for a new SQUARES Account**' option after accepting the HMIS Repository and SQUARES Terms and Conditions of Use.

I have read and accept the Terms and Conditions of Use

Username

Password

[Register a new SQUARES account](#) | [Register a new Repository account](#) | [I forgot my password](#)

ACCESSING SQUARES CONT.: TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE



The Terms and Conditions of use are as follows:

Veteran Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES) - Terms and Conditions of Use

This secure Web site enables authorized SQUARES users to identify clients who have served in the United States (U.S.) military through a real time query of a client's personal identifying information (PII) to the VA Department of Defense Identity Repository (VADIR). The result will not contain PII about the client. To use the site, you will provide the following information on the individuals whose history of military service you wish to inquire about:

Note: * denotes a required field

1. Local HMIS Client ID
2. First Name *
3. Middle Name
4. Last Name *
5. Social Security Number *
6. Date of Birth *
7. Gender
8. Zip Code of last permanent address

VA makes the following assurances about its use and handling of such data:

1. Data Protection and System Security: VA will protect PII in the SQUARES application in accordance with all applicable federal laws and regulations, VA policies and procedures, and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and guidelines, including, but not limited to, the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a), the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3541-49), 38 U.S.C. § 5701, and VA Directive and Handbook 6500.
2. Breach Notification. VA complies with federal statutes and regulations in reporting data breach and loss of PII, in particular 38 U.S.C. §§ 5721-27.
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

USING SQUARES CONT.



HMIS Repository / SQUARES Account Menu

User Options

- [Upload FY15 Data](#)
- [SQUARES](#)
- [My Account](#)
- [Activity History](#)
- [Support](#)
- [Logout](#)

Only available to Repository Users

Grant/Programs:

- ZZ Test Program
- ABC TEST MARCH 20142

CoC:

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 of identifying a match, but these fields are not required

USING SQUARES CONT.



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

Veteran Status Lookup Query

Please complete the following fields to register for a Repository account.
Note: A (*) denotes a required field.

Local HMIS Client ID

* First Name

Middle Name

* Last Name

* Social Security Number

* Date of Birth

Gender

ZIP Code of last permanent address

Probable Veteran?

USING SQUARES CONT.: MATCH LOGIC EXPLANATION



- 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



USING SQUARES CONT.: MATCH LOGIC EXPLANATION

- 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 reliably 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