

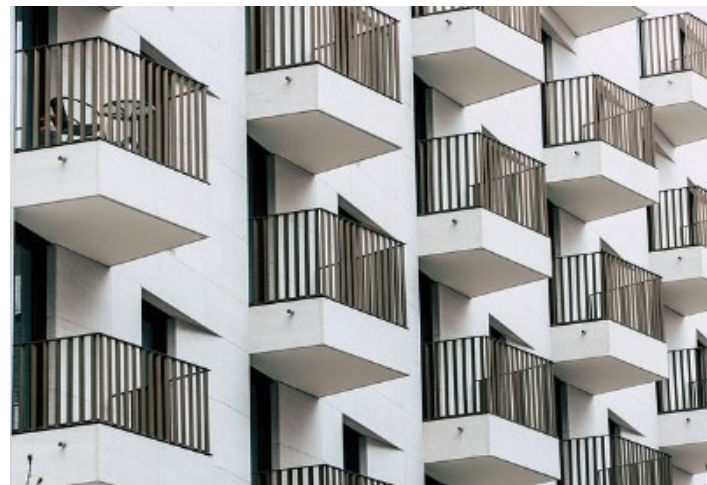
2023 VA Permanent Housing Conference

SSVF Shallow Subsidy as a Tool for Long Term Success

Who is in the room?

- **SSVF Staff**
- **HUD-VASH Staff**
- **VA leadership**

2023 VA Permanent Housing Conference



PRESENTS

SSVF Shallow Subsidy as a Tool for Long Term Success

Facilitator: Dr. Abraham House-EL

Program Coordinator of Featherfist SSVF Program - Chicago

Presenter's Bio:

Dr. Abraham House-EL works for the Featherfist Organization in Chicago, Illinois. He has been working with Chicago's homeless population since 2005. He has a Doctorate Degree in Education and a Masters Degree in Public Administration. He has managed VA funded Grant and Per Diem transitional housing facilities and has been the Program Director of Featherfist SSVF Program since 2014. This program currently has over 475 veteran households enrolled during this fiscal year. Over 165 of those veterans are enrolled in Featherfist Shallow Subsidy Intervention.



Key Learning Objectives

- Get a full understanding of what the Shallow Subsidy intervention is all about.
- When is it appropriate to transfer veterans over to Shallow Subsidy?
- The learned Pros and Cons of Shallow Subsidy
- What does a Shallow Subsidy exit strategy look like?



What is Shallow Subsidy?

The SSVF Shallow Subsidy service **provides rental assistance to very low-income and extremely low-income Veteran households** who are enrolled in SSVF's Rapid Rehousing or Homeless Prevention projects. It is likely that most participants will have already received rental assistance via traditional SSVF projects (Rapid Rehousing or Homeless Prevention) but remain **rent burdened**.

What is Shallow Subsidy? (Con't)

Under the Shallow Subsidy service, SSVF grantees provide rental assistance payments to landlords on behalf of the Veteran household. The rental assistance is at a fixed rate every month, **regardless of changes in the Veteran household's income or monthly rent amount.** SSVF grantees are also expected to offer **light touch case management services** but may adjust as needed.

What is Shallow Subsidy? (Con't)

For SSVF's Shallow Subsidy service, the maximum amount of rental subsidy that can be provided on behalf of the Veteran household is **up to 50% of rent** on a unit that is deemed **rent reasonable**.

How To Measure Successful Housing Stability?

- **Shallow Subsidy is a tool to lead to housing stability.**
- **Yet, what defines whether a veteran's household is successful under the Shallow Subsidy intervention?**
 - 1) **Since exit strategy begins on Day-1 of enrollment into SSVF, it is crucial that a comprehensive housing assessment of the veteran's housing needs are completed.**
 - 2) **Does your organization engage in referrals to outside community resources?**
 - 3) **What type of attention are you giving to the SSVF Housing Plan? Is it updated quarterly?**
 - 4) **How connected are you to your program participant's landlords/realtors.**
 - 5) **Does your organization conduct Landlord Tenant Rights & Responsibilities Workshops?**

When is it Appropriate to Transfer Veterans Over to Shallow Subsidy?

- This decision should always be weighed with the organization's ability to sustain the veteran household in Shallow Subsidy over a 24-month period (A requirement that Grantees are asked to commit to).
- Based on the community's input on who should be prioritized (This is a suggestion only).
- Veterans whose income are somewhat stable (i.e., receiving social security, VA benefits, has established steady employment)
- Those veterans that are rent burdened.
- Veterans who are working toward increasing their income.
- Large families where expenses are cumbersome.

Before Transferring a Veteran to Shallow Subsidy:

- It should first be determined if the veteran has shown himself/herself to be responsible.
- Are there any unresolved landlord / tenant issues?
- Has the landlord been informed (in advance) of veteran moving over to Shallow Subsidy?
- Does the veteran fully understand what he/she will be asked to do under the Shallow Subsidy intervention?

How to Prepare a Veteran Household for Shallow Subsidy?

- One of the lessons learned is that exit strategy begins on Day 1 of SSVF enrollment.
- Waiting until your organization is getting ready to transfer the veteran household over to Shallow Subsidy to start talking about Shallow Subsidy will never work.
- Veterans with minimum to zero income must start Day 1 of SSVF enrollment working to improve their financial situation.
- Check in with the landlord to see what type of tenant the veteran has been.

Pros and Cons of Shallow Subsidy

Veteran households between 30-80% AMI	Veteran households at or below 30% AMI
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shallow subsidy is up to 50% of rent on a unit that is deemed rent reasonable• Rental assistance for 2 years minus X months of rental assistance they received during traditional SSVF projects (Rapid Rehousing or Homeless Prevention).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shallow subsidy is up to 50% of rent on a unit that is deemed rent reasonable• Rental assistance for 2 years.

Pros and Cons of Shallow Subsidy



Veteran households will not undergo recertification while they are receiving a shallow subsidy. At the end of the shallow subsidy period, however, the Veteran household may be re-certified, and the fixed rental assistance amount would be updated at 50% of the current rent on a unit that is deemed rent reasonable.

Lessons Learned:

Some veterans will attempt to break their lease in an effort to get into a larger unit since they will only be responsible for paying 50% of the rent.

Pros and Cons of Shallow Subsidy

Through Progressive Engagement, in Chicago SSVF Grantees have continued to follow a **Progressive Engagement approach** for all interventions provided to Veteran households enrolled in the program. This means that we as SSVF grantees are providing minimal support to Veteran households to help them obtain or maintain their permanent housing, and then scale that assistance to increased or decreased intensity as needed throughout the engagement.

Lessons Learned:

- While the request of SSVF Grantees is to provide light touch case management services to Shallow Subsidy veterans, a significant amount of SSVF enrollees remain in need of “Intensive Case Management” services.

COLLABORATION



Chicago SSVF grantees share service areas and work in partnership to determine how Veteran households are prioritized and provided the Shallow Subsidy intervention services. We consult with each other at very minimum once monthly in collaboration with both of our Chicago area VA Medical Centers.

Exiting Shallow Subsidy



Suggested Steps to Follow:

- Always check in with the landlord to ensure there are no issues/challenges the SSVF Grantee should be aware of.
- Revisit veteran's budget.
- Update veteran's housing stability plan. Is there room for improvement?
- Always register the veteran for the VA exit survey online.
- Be sure the veteran is informed that he/she can contact the organization for future help if needed.

First, SSVF grantees will, in coordination with the Veteran household, review the Veteran household's income and ability to maintain permanent housing near the end of the 2-year shallow subsidy period.

- Some Veteran households might exit from both the Shallow Subsidy service and the SSVF program due to their increased income and stability.
- Other Veteran households may be recertified and remain in the Shallow Subsidy service for continued rental assistance to ensure further housing stability.
- There may also be Veteran households who will have used their time in the Shallow Subsidy service to apply for a deeper rent subsidy and work their way up a waiting list for a permanent tenant-based rent subsidy or an affordable project based rental unit.
- Lastly, some Veteran households may be progressively engaged and referred to the HUD-VASH program or another higher level of care to meet any clinical needs that were identified while in the Shallow Subsidy service.

- SSVF grantees may find it necessary to exit Veteran households from the Shallow Subsidy service if the household abandons the housing unit, enters an institution of care like a hospital long term treatment, or cannot be located for more than 90 days.
- SSVF grantees may also exit Veterans households who are arrested and expected to be incarcerated for a period of longer than 90 days.
- Please note that SSVF grantees should not exit Veteran households from the Shallow Subsidy service **due to failure to pay the tenant portion of rent or eviction.**
- Instead, SSVF grantees are expected to work closely with the Veteran households to identify barriers and determine next steps that ensure housing stability.

