2023 Permanent Housing Conference
A One Team Approach
Reaching Our Goals Together

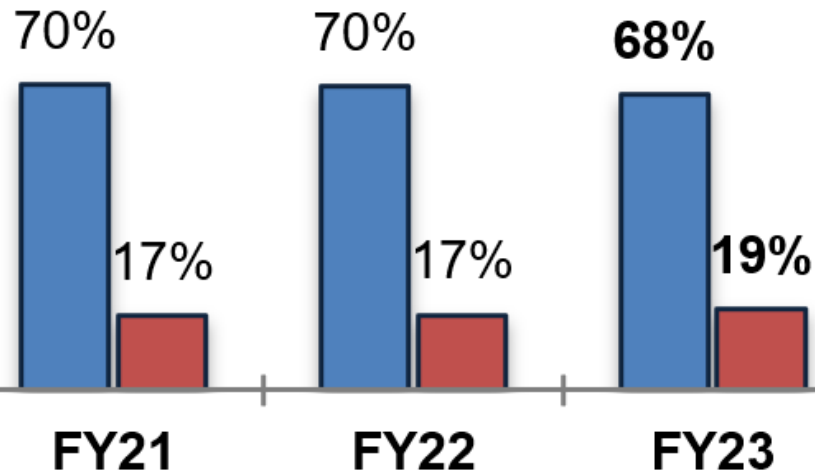## SSVF
December 2023

- Welcome

  ➢ Year in Review

  ➢ Finance Update

  ➢ SSVF Eligibility Update

  ➢ Preparing For Your Financial Operational Fitness Assessment (FOFA)

  ➢ Customer Service

Year in Review

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

Legend: ■ % Veterans ■ % Children

	FY21	FY22	FY23
FY21	70%		
FY22	70%		
FY23		68%	

(Bar chart values: FY21 Veterans 70%, Children 17%; FY22 Veterans 70%, Children 17%; FY23 Veterans 68%, Children 19%)

	FY21	FY22	FY23
SSVF Grants Awarded	266	261	251

	FY21	FY22	FY23
Children Served	19,266	17,588	22,262
Veterans Served	80,049	71,386	81,240
Persons Served	114,175	102,306	119,879

	FY21	FY22	FY23
Homeless Veterans Placed in PH (Includes Exits)	29,135	25,448	30,582

Choose VA

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Year in review

Successful Housing Outcomes by SSVF Program Type						
	FY21		**FY22**		**FY23**	
	#	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
Homelessness Prevention						
Veterans	16,346	87%	11,600	82%	**12,030**	**84%**
Veterans & Family	27,791	88%	18,809	82%	**19,895**	**85%**
Rapid Re-Housing						
Veterans	23,082	68%	17,663	65%	**20,090**	**70%**
Veterans & Family	30,051	69%	22,822	65%	**26,493**	**71%**
Prevention and RRH						
Veterans	39,229	75%	29,094	71%	**31,903**	**75%**
Veterans & Family	57,585	77%	41,380	72%	**46,062**	**77%**

Financial Overview

- ➢ FY22 and ARP final end date 9/30/23
  - FY22/ARP End of Year (EOY) Closeout Due 11/14/23
    - Please email Regional Coordinator with EOY questions and/or requests for EOY UDPaaS Activity Due Date Extension
- ➢ FY23 target end date 03/31/24

  - Please email Regional Coordinator with amount for voluntary return or increase

- ➢ FY24 target budget cycle 04/01/24-12/31/24 (nine months)
  - 11/21/23 FY24 Budget Office Hours
  - 12/1/23 Due Date for FY24 Budget Submission in UDPaaS

- ➢ Concurrently, Shallow Subsidy expansion funding end by 9/30/24

- ➢ Concurrently, if awarded, Supplemental NOFA end by 9/30/26

Fiscal Management Best Practices

- Coordination between Program and Fiscal Staff
  - Recommend meet bi-weekly or at least monthly

- Frequent drawdowns in HHS Payment Management System (PMS)

- Grantee Spending Tracking

- Timely processing of invoices and internal controls

- Finance communication with Program Office – Regional Coordinator is Point of Contact

Q&A

Questions!

Veteran Status: Eligibility & HMIS SQUARES

FACTS&MYTHS

National Guard & Reserves who are active duty for training (ACDUTRA) only are eligible for SSVF.

Veteran Status: Eligibility

The term **_"Veteran"_** for SSVF eligibility purposes is defined as "a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, regardless of length of service, and who was discharged or released therefrom," excluding anyone who received a dishonorable discharge from the Armed Forces or was discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial (38 U.S.C. § 2002(b)).

Eligibility is confirmed by reviewing **both** the **character of discharge** and **type of service**. The minimum duty requirements do not apply.

National Guard & Reserves:

- National Guard who are active duty for training (ACDUTRA) only are not eligible. To be eligible, they must have been called to active duty under Title 10.
- Veterans in the Reserves are eligible if they are ACDUTRA only.

NOTE: A service member (Active/Guard/Reserve) is not eligible for VHA homelessness program services, for themselves or their family, while they are on active-duty service.

Veteran Status: Eligibility Documentation

To prove a participant's Veteran status, grantees should obtain ONE of the following documents:

- SQUARES 2.0 Printout

- DD Form 214 Certificate of Release Discharge from Active Duty

- NA Form 13038

- Veteran Health Administration (VHA) Veteran's Identity card

- VA Veterans Choice Card

- VA Photo ID Card

- Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Statement of Service (SOS)

- VISTA printout from VHA health care provider

- Veteran Information Solution (VIS) Printout

- VBA award letter of service-connected disability payment or non-service-connected pension

Due to the complexity in the definition of active military service, it is important to have a strong level of communication with your local VA Medical Center to verify if a potential participant has active military service and to verify their type of discharge.

If such documents proving eligibility are not immediately available, an Affidavit of Veteran Status signed by the Veteran can be used to allow grantees to temporarily enroll Veterans who are Pending Verification of Veteran Status and initiate supportive services. However, temporary financial assistance **will not be provided** until the grantee/Veteran can obtain documentation proving Veteran status.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A DD214 IS NOT REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT OR CONTINUED SERVICES IF ONE OF THESE FORMS OF VERIFICATION IS OBTAINED.

If the Veteran is not in possession of his or her DD Form 214, the grantee should assist the Veteran in submitting an SF-180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, Information on how to submit this form can be found on the National Archives website: http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/.

NOTE:. Should a Veteran later be determined ineligible, grantees should document the information clearly and work to transition the household to other VA or community supports available to address their needs.

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Veteran Status: HMIS

VA Homeless Programs may serve clients who only had service time in Basic Training. Please be aware that the HMIS definition of a Veteran requires at least 1 day of active-duty service, but that is not a requirement for SSVF or GPD program eligibility.

For **HMIS** purposes, Veteran Status should be **'Yes'** for anyone who has ever been on full time active duty in the armed forces of the United States, regardless of length of service, excluding anyone who received a dishonorable discharge from the Armed Forces or was discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial. For members of the active military, naval, air, or space services:

- Active duty begins when a military member reports to a duty station after the completion of their training,
- Includes any period of active duty for training during which a person is disabled or dies from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty,
- Includes a period of inactive duty for training during which the individual concerned was disabled or died from an injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or from an acute myocardial infarction, a cardiac arrest, or a cerebrovascular accident occurring during such training.

For members of the Reserves and National Guard, active duty is:

- Reservist activation or deployment, either within the United States or abroad under Active Duty as defined in section 101(d)(1) of Title 10 USC (12304, 12302, or 12301a); or
- Members of the Reserves who are active duty for training (ACDUTRA) only; or
- National Guard called to active duty under Title 10; or
- Anyone who was disabled in the line of duty during a period of active-duty training; or
- Anyone who was disabled from an injury incurred in the line of duty or from an acute myocardial infarction, a cardiac arrest, or a cerebrovascular accident during a period of inactive duty training.

Veteran Status: HMIS

For **HMIS** purposes, Veteran Status should be **'No'** for anyone who has not been on active duty, including:
- Individuals who attended basic training, officer training school, and/or technical training but were discharged before reporting to a duty station.
- Members of the National Guard who are active duty for training (ACDUTRA) only.
- Members of the Reserves or National Guard who were never activated or deployed as described above.

For VA funded projects, every adult **must have** a Veteran Status of either Yes or No. Neither Client doesn't know nor Client prefers not to answer are permissible responses.

Documentation of the client's eligibility for the project should be retained on file for the client for monitoring purposes, and this guidance can be saved as backup to **explain** the apparent discrepancy between the client file and the HMIS record.

If there is already a record in HMIS for the client and Veteran Status is incorrect, please correct it.

SQUARES

Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES) is a web-based application that returns unique information regarding the Veteran's particular status and eligibility for healthcare and/or homeless program services in a secure environment. Depending on the SQUARES outcomes, VA employees and homeless service providers are provided with an eligibility determination so they can begin the enrollment or referral process to assist Veterans with accessing VA healthcare and homeless programs--Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) and Grant and Per Diem (GPD). For more information, watch the SQUARES Video and visit: SQUARES Resource Website
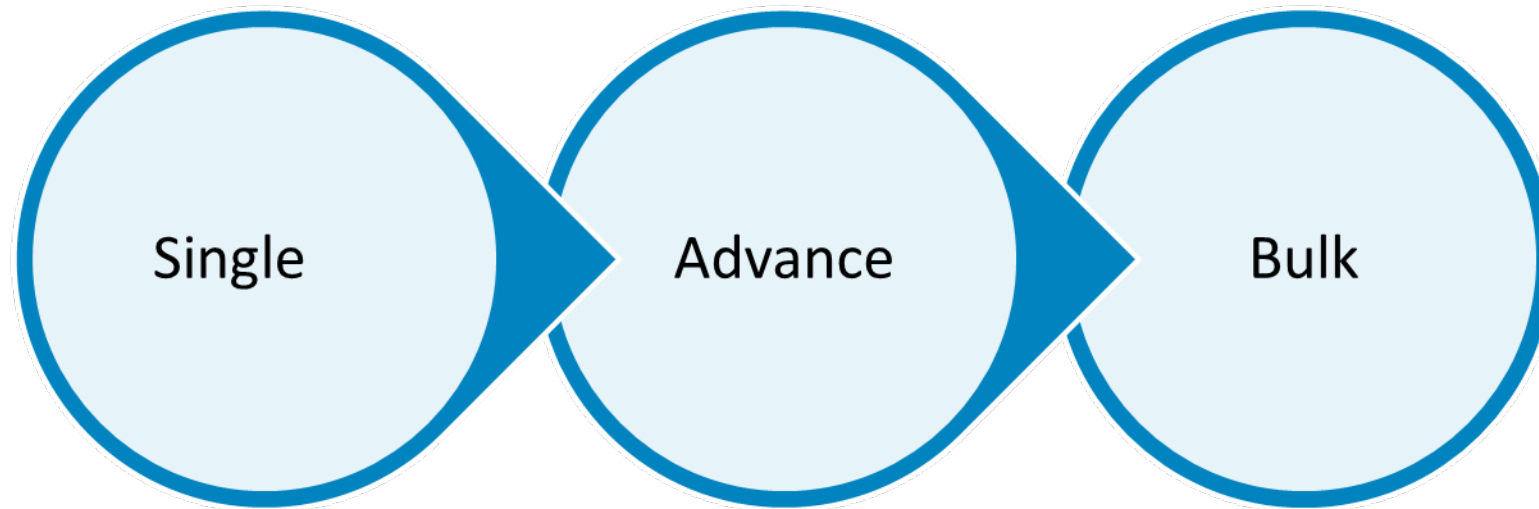
SQUARES

Single Search

Populate the fields with specific identity attributes (Name, DOD, SSN, Gender) and click on search.

The system will return information regarding Veterans' status and eligibility from homeless programs

Refer to the Single Search Guide for more information.

Help Desk   Manager Resources   User Resources   UAT

SQUARES
Using data to end Veteran homelessness

Single Veteran Search

...uals with very common names, searches will almost always fail without SSN.

First Name
Lisa

SSN
601507656

Gender

Last Name
Orwell

Date of Birth

Search

⊗No Veteran record found: By clicking the "Triage Search" button to the right, you can automatically triage this search against the Advanced database.   Triage Search

If you need additional information, click on Triage Search (in the bottom left corner) and you will be redirected to the Advanced Search.

Choose VA

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SQUARES

Advanced Search

Single Veteran Search - Advanced

Enter as many fields as possible. The SSN field is required for the Advanced Search. If triaged from the basic search, fields will be pre-populated, but can be edited if need-be. There are 3 databases that can potentially return results. If a database returns a result, its section will automatically display on the screen. If it does not, it will not display. If no results are returned, an error message will return. Click on the Section title to expand it and view the results. Field codes will display automatically below search results. See here for standalone document.

First Name

* SSN

Gender

Last Name

Date of Birth

Search

In addition to reaching the Advanced Search from the Triage (noted on the previous slide—Single Search), you can reach it directly by clicking on Advanced Search from the Navigation bar.

After you populate all fields: Name, DOB, SSN, Gender to conduct an Advanced Search, you will be redirected to additional data. (Refer to the next slide)
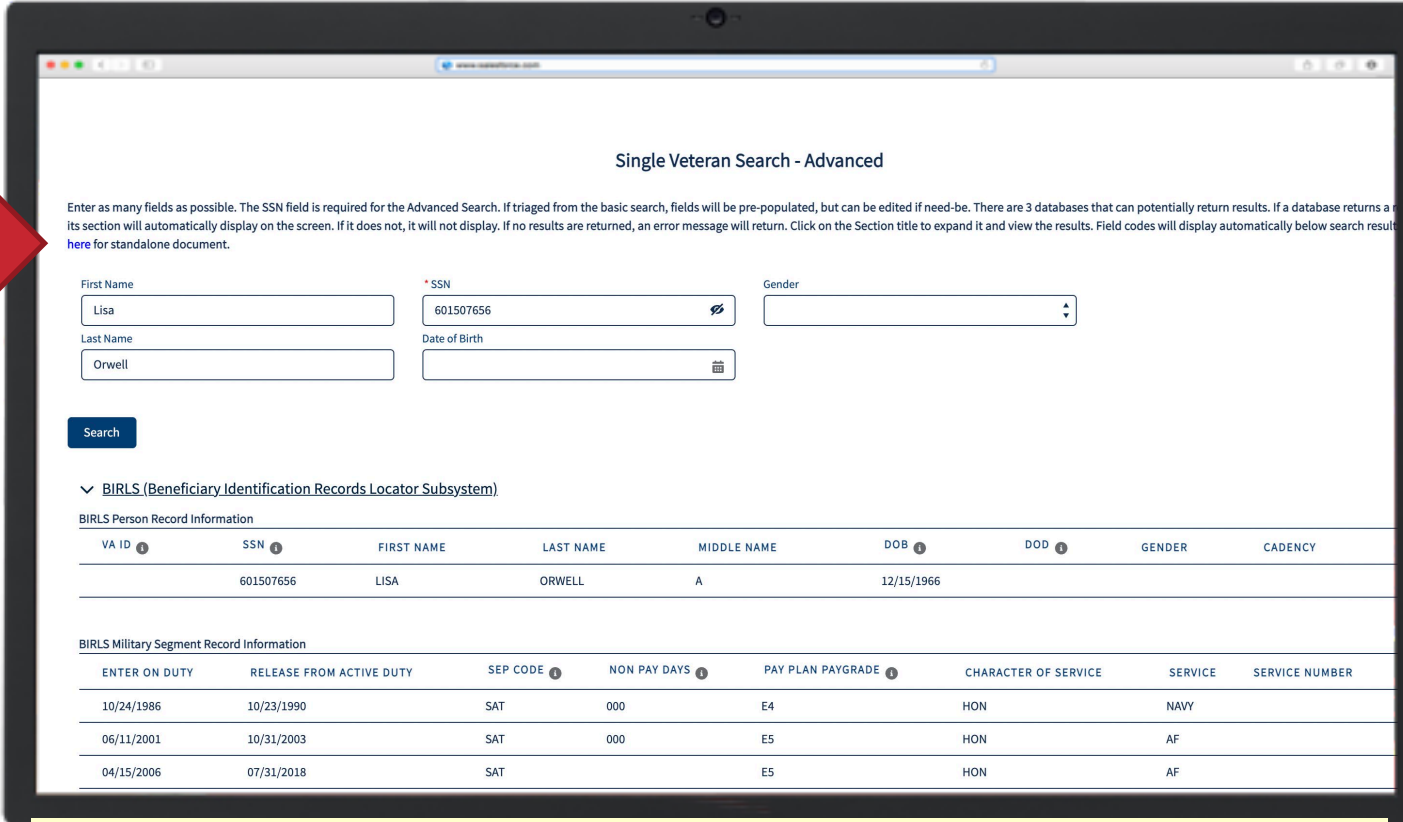
SQUARES

Advanced Search (Continued)

Single Veteran Search - Advanced

Enter as many fields as possible. The SSN field is required for the Advanced Search. If triaged from the basic search, fields will be pre-populated, but can be edited if need-be. There are 3 databases that can potentially return results. If a database returns a [result?] its section will automatically display on the screen. If it does not, it will not display. If no results are returned, an error message will return. Click on the Section title to expand it and view the results. Field codes will display automatically below search result[s]. [See] here for standalone document.

First Name
Lisa

* SSN
601507656

Gender

Last Name
Orwell

Date of Birth

[Search]

∨ BIRLS (Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem)

BIRLS Person Record Information

VA ID ⓘ	SSN ⓘ	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	DOB ⓘ	DOD ⓘ	GENDER	CADENCY
	601507656	LISA	ORWELL	A	12/15/1966			

BIRLS Military Segment Record Information

ENTER ON DUTY	RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY	SEP CODE ⓘ	NON PAY DAYS ⓘ	PAY PLAN PAYGRADE ⓘ	CHARACTER OF SERVICE	SERVICE	SERVICE NUMBER
10/24/1986	10/23/1990	SAT	000	E4	HON	NAVY	
06/11/2001	10/31/2003	SAT	000	E5	HON	AF	
04/15/2006	07/31/2018	SAT		E5	HON	AF	

For your situational awareness, a list of the field codes is hyperlinked at the top of the page and bottom of the page.
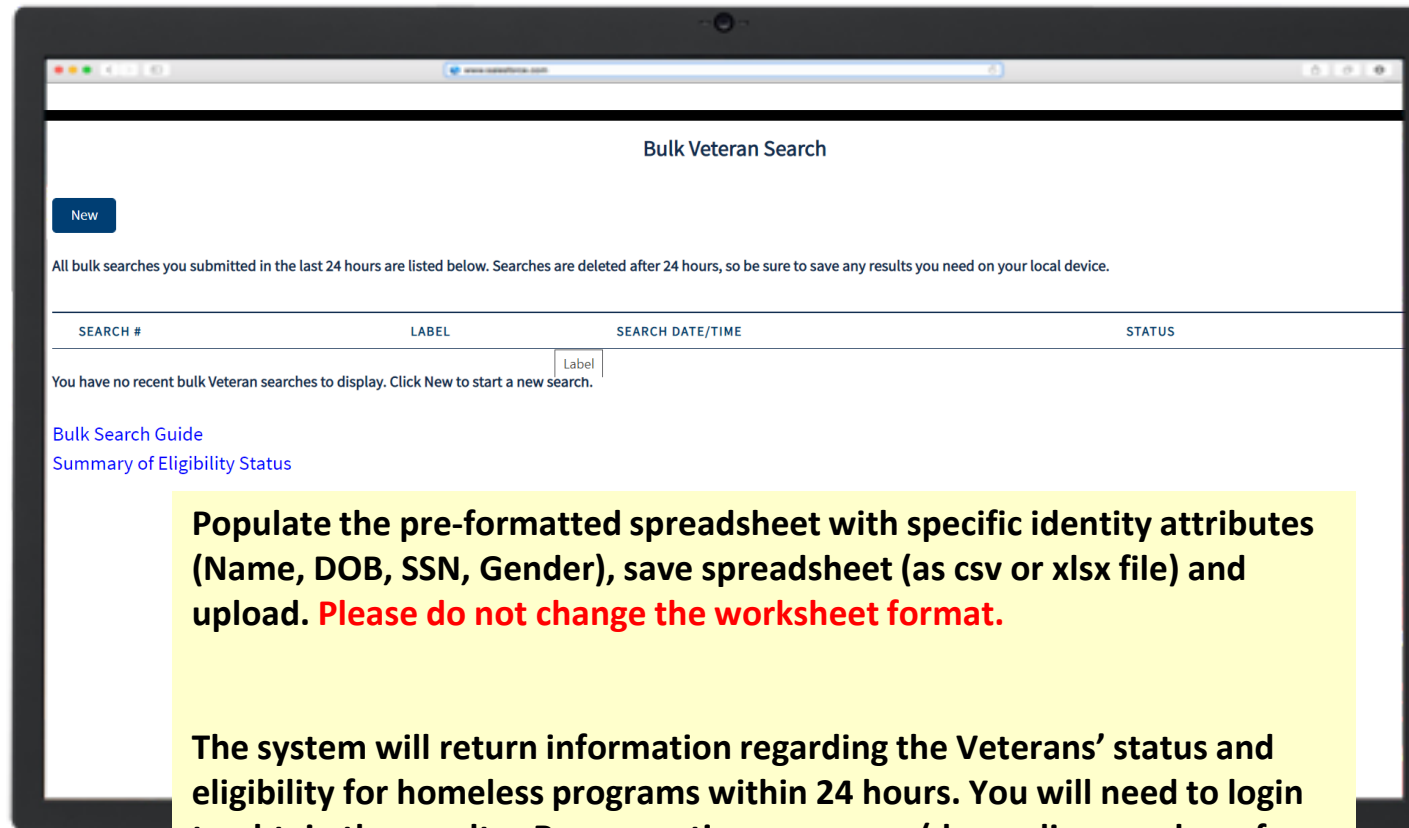
Choose VA

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

SQUARES

Bulk Search

Populate the pre-formatted spreadsheet with specific identity attributes (Name, DOB, SSN, Gender), save spreadsheet (as csv or xlsx file) and upload. **Please do not change the worksheet format.**

The system will return information regarding the Veterans' status and eligibility for homeless programs within 24 hours. You will need to login to obtain the results. Response time may vary (depending number of records) in your spreadsheet. Refer to the <u>Bulk Search Guide</u> for more information.

Q&A

Questions!

PREPARING FOR YOUR FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT (FOFA)

Presentation for:
SSVF Community – PHC
November 2023

FOFA GOALS

As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the **highest standards of transparency**, **accountability**, and **efficiency in the use of federal funds**, we would like to emphasize the importance of the FOFA process. Rather than viewing the FOFA as a mere compliance exercise, we believe they should be a means to foster a mutually beneficial understanding and collaboration. We welcome open and transparent communication throughout the FOFA process.

Our **Primary goal** is to **support Veteran homelessness and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve**. To achieve this, we encourage you to see the FOFA process as an **opportunity to work together** with the auditors to identify and rectify any issues that may arise. By doing so, we can **collectively improve compliance and program effectiveness**, enhance the impact of the SSVF Program and the outcomes for Veterans in need and ensure federal funds are used effectively to achieve this goal.

By Fostering a **collaborative approach**, we can make the most of our shared resources, **ultimately benefitting the Veterans** we are dedicated to serving.

Preparing for a FOFA

Don't wait until you have been "Officially" notified, begin preparing now and treat the process as an ongoing effort.

a. Ensure all compliance activities are documented and supported in some shape or form (**Audit Trail**) via documentation or other evidence that is supported within the case files…all review work is facts-based and must be available for the review team or other parties. If we can't see it, did it happen?

b. Ensure your operational environment and fiscal activities reflect the general expectations as outlined within the Grant Agreement, Program Guide, and applicable Regulatory Guidance

c. Ensure **open and unrestricted communication** between Operational and Fiscal Teams…do not forget about your subcontractors

d. Ensure a Quality Assurance/Quality Control program is in place

e. Ensure Management Oversight and Support is in place

f. Review the SSVF FOFA Tool Kit

g. Review the SSVF Learning Management System (LMS)

h. Ensure there is an **Audit Trail**

SSVF FOFA Toolkit

- SSVF FOFA Timeline - What to expect during a FOFA including pre-site, onsite and post site visit activities.

- SSVF FOFA Checklist - Steps and actions to prepare for the pre-site visit, onsite visit, post-site visit, reporting process, and subsequent actions to complete a FOFA

- SSVF FOFA Self-Assessment & Preparation Tool

- SSVF FOFA Case File Review – Manager's Tool - Provides a guide for managers/staff to assess each case file for the required elements and identify any missing documents

- SSVF FOFA Subcontractor Monitoring Tool – Highlights critical elements required for successful administration and monitoring of subcontractor

- How to Prepare for your FOFA - LMS Training Series

- Compliance (va.gov) or https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/compliance/

Preparing for a FOFA

- Have a sound understanding of the SSVF Program Guide by supervisors, staff, and applicable finance team members supporting SSVF

- Ensure agency Policies, Procedures, and Standard Operating Procedures reflect the current program guidance available

- Verify all references to CFR (law) within the Program Guide have been identified and specific actions have been designed to ensure compliance

- Ensure periodic (annual) review of all Program Guide updates are included as a control within internal guidance

- Supervisors and staff understand what internal controls are and ensure a sufficient "audit trail" to support compliance

- Develop a solid relationship with the Finance and Accounting team to understand how they support the SSVF mission

Preparing for a FOFA

- Focus on **transparency and ease of tracking and reporting** - utilizing the finance and accounting system as primary tracking tool, minimizing the number of different tracking mechanisms for expenses, participants, TFA, and such

- Ensure all **close out/end of year responsibilities are assigned to applicable staff** (Federal Financial Reporting, Single Audits, etc.)

- Develop and periodically assess the **Quality Assurance/Quality Control** process

- Ensure **consistent application and development of case file system** (hard or soft copy) to ensure all actions and methodologies are the same **across multiple offices or locations**

- Ensure **subcontractor management and oversight** follow the **same requirements as the prime**

- Ensure all compliance requirements and critical functions has an **Audit Trail**

Q&A

Questions!

SSVF
Customer Service and the Veteran Experience
November 2023

FY 23 End of Year Survey Reporting

Customer Service in SSVF

Quality Control

SSVF Grievance Policy

Registering Veterans within 30 days of exit for the Participant Satisfaction Survey is ?

Optional

Required

Depends whether you have already exceeded 70% registration rate for the month

VA SSVF Program Satisfaction Survey

- Goals
  - Monitor and enhance the Veteran experience from the VA and Grantees
  - Register all Veterans (except HUD VASH packet) within 30 days to participate in the confidential Satisfaction Survey
  - **Capture quantitative and qualitative Veteran survey response data to glean actionable insights**
  - Share best practices, seek opportunities to enhance services, and resolve challenge areas
  - Continuously improve the registration -> survey -> data reporting process year over year

- What is the FY 23 SSVF Satisfaction Survey response rate?
  - 4%
  - 8%
  - 17%
  - 25%

When

Before

- How do Veterans access or inquire about services?
- That first access point- critical interaction
- The enrollment process

During

- Interactions with staff, case managers…etc.
- Acknowledgement, celebrate progress and deal with any setbacks

After

- Willingness to reach out when assistance is needed

Customer Service Quality Control (Yearly)

- "Front Door" Assessment
  - Online (Grantee and SSVF Website) searches show accurate contact information
  - Address (Physical location, easily to navigate, signage)
  - Phone, Email other initial points of contact

- Policies and Procedures to ensure same day access to care, emergency housing

- Phone log tracking – return calls and results of warm handoff. No Veteran falls thru the cracks!

- Training
  - Support in interacting with Veterans in crisis and in the process(es) required to ensure immediate Veteran health and safety needs are met
  - How the local coordinated entry process works and have knowledge of crisis and housing services being coordinated in the community

Customer Service Quality Control

- Established a deliberate process to gain feedback from Veterans with lived experience

- Lived experience council or similar body, either focused on SSVF specifically or within the context of the larger community, to directly influence program design and community planning efforts.

- "Secret Shopper" effort and used the results to train staff or make adjustments to improve veteran experience.

- Ongoing professional development and training for front line and office staff who may interact with Veterans in crisis.

- SSVF grantees are a formal Coordinated Entry access point

Additional Inputs on Customer Service

- Staff feedback

- Stakeholder feedback

- SSVF Inbox communication

- Critical Incidents

- Grievances and Complaints
  - SSVF Grievances
    - 57% increase in FY23
    - 63% related to Customer Service

SSVF Grantee must maintain financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to an award for a period of three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

True or False

Bonus: Any difference between a Priority 1 or 2 awardee?

What did you learn from the Conference and can take back to your agency?

What about the One Team approach are you excited about?

"Homeless and at-risk veterans need more than just shelter. We must give them the tools to empower themselves and reclaim the self-worth and dignity which comes from occupying a place in the American dream. It is a dream they fought so hard to defend for the rest of us."

Homelessness advocate and film producer Maria Cuomo Cole