

2023 VA Permanent Housing Conference

C1 Dallas Preventing Returns Preserving Tenancies through
Mediation, Rapid Resolution and Legal Services

Agenda

- ▶ The importance of preserving tenancies.
- ▶ Overview of mediation, tenant law, and rapid resolution.

Who is in the room?

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



CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES
OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

Tewana Martin, BA
Disabled Army Veteran
SSVF Program Manager
IV
King County



Preserving
Tenancies
Through
Mediation, Rapid
Resolution and
Legal Services

Objective

By the end of this presentation, SSVF programs will be able to understand the importance of mediation in maintaining tenancies, implementing effective mediation techniques to address conflicts, and develop strategies to sustain positive landlord tenant relationships.

To utilize Tenant Law as a mediation tool to effectively prevent homelessness for our veterans.


To explore and implement rapid resolution strategies to effectively preserve tenancies in a time-efficient manner



Definition

- ▶ Mediation is a form of dispute resolution.
- ▶ Trained mediators facilitate collaboration.
- ▶ Parties determine outcomes, not mediators.

Mediation and SSVF

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- Problem-solving process.
 - Informal and collaborative.
 - Context-specific resolution.
 - Tailored dispute resolution.

Key Elements for Successful Mediation

- ▶ Willingness to collaborate.
- ▶ Positive and forward-looking approach.
- ▶ Flexibility.
- ▶ Exploring mutually agreeable solutions.

SSVF's Role in Mediation

- To keep Veterans housed
- Focus on housing stability.
- To help resolve landlord/tenant concerns
- Protecting tenants from having an eviction on their records.

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Benefits of Mediation

- Allows for creative solutions.
- Creates agreements that Veterans are more likely to follow than court orders.
- Preserves relationships with the landlord and tenant.
- Less stressful than court.
- Potential for positive publicity.
- Protects Veteran households from the long-term consequences of eviction
- Allows Veterans to be proactive and come up with their own solutions.

Outcomes with SSVF assistance

The veteran can continue to live in their home.

The veteran can arrange to make back rent payments to the landlord over time.

The veteran may move out on a certain date allowing SSVF to help relocate.

The court will not be involved and there will not be a judgment against the tenant if they follow the agreement.

There will not be an eviction on the tenant's credit report.

Catholic Community Service Tenant Law Center

- ▶ The mission of Tenant Law Center is to reduce homelessness by preventing illegal and unnecessary evictions. We assist vulnerable tenants in our community by focusing on negotiated resolutions that preserve tenant housing, preserve subsidies, or allow for relocation to suitable housing without the stigma of eviction.



How CCS SSVF and CCS Tenant Law Center (TLC) Partnered

During CCS' 2019 SSVF program expansion, we built a legal position into the SSVF program design to help address legal issues impacting Veterans long term housing stability

Fortunately, CCS had an existing Tenant Law Center that was a largely untapped resource for our program.

SSVF met with the TLC and now have one staff attorney dedicated to SSVF and Veterans in the community

SSVF staff testimonials on benefits of having TLC in-house

We now have a fluid referral process and the ability to communicate in real time about specific issues with clients and general housing law issues.

Easy access to them. Also, with them being at arms reach, it lessens the load a bit on the CM when the TLC is focused on an issue that a veteran may have with the property. Torri SSVF CM

Yes the ease of access, they are one TEAMS message away and quick to respond for us. Meg SSVF PM VI

I also like that in our partnership they are referring Veterans our way who may not have otherwise known about SSVF and we're able to quickly look them up and see if they qualify for services. This has resulted in HP Veterans who might otherwise have been evicted. Kiam SSVF Program Director

I like the fact they are {acesable by] TEAMS and they are willing to answer any questions we have on leases or notices that our clients have. They are willing to go to bat for our clients just as hard as we do. Minda SSVF CM

SSVF staff testimonials continued

Easy access and having paralegals take over the case to figure things out does lessen the load. They can dig deeper into things than we can. Helps them realize what these landlord are doing. Could help with changing some housing laws and regulations down the line. TLC helped determine my clients landlords are no good and owes my client lots of money. **Tanisha SSVF Lead CM**

I have used TLC to help with clients that aren't even on our caseload. They are able to get messages to other attorneys or get us direct contact to those attorneys to get clients released from jail to be able to attend housing application appointments for VASH. **Meg SSVF PM VI**

I was able to use Tennant Law for myself when my landlord tried to serve me a notice. They answered my questions and gave me some sound advice what the next steps I needed to take. **Minda SSVF CM**

This is powerful and holistic advocacy

TLC works with many programs but CCS SSVF program is one of few that allows TLC to refer veterans in need of support to the SSVF program. This helps more veterans resolve their housing issue and obtain the resources needed beyond the housing crisis! **Andra Kranzler, CCS Directing Attorney**

Rapid Resolution:

- ▶ SSVF services that promote housing problem solving strategies to assist Veterans in diverting or rapidly exiting homelessness, even to temporary options, while SSVF or other partners support longer term housing needs.
- ▶ All SSVF programs engage in rapid resolution conversations to explore safe alternatives to entering homelessness or to help clients exit homelessness quickly.

How SSVF and VA Partnered to Provide Rapid Resolutions



As part of King County's CoC approach to ending Veteran homelessness, the 3 SSVF providers serving the community along with the VA and KCRHA have been able to hone their expertise in different areas to leverage resources.

Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRC)

SSVF have staff on site at
the CRRC

Meet and greet sessions

Weekly meetings

Access to VA on site



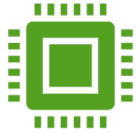
For rapid resolution our partners, Sound SSVF, specialized in providing Rapid Resolution utilizing the one-time TFA to help Veterans move in with family members, friends, and return to their communities of origin.



Rapid Resolution to Returning Home

Engaging in rapid resolution conversations has led Veterans to identify alternatives to remaining homeless in King County and returning to their places of origin to get permanent housing, move in with family and accept jobs.

If the one-time assist isn't enough, rapid resolution can progress into a Returning Home.



**Top of the line
Computer/HMIS
System**



**VA and community
partners has
access to Veteran
information**



**Weekly meetings
to discuss cases
and referrals
(Navigators, VOLT
and SSVF)**



**Able to contact
VASH supervisor
by phone or email**

Questions?

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