

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA SSVF PROGRAM OFFICE

NATIONAL WEBINAR

OCTOBER 12, 2023

[Link to Audio](#)



AGENDA

- Welcome- Nikki Barfield, Deputy Director SSVF
- Presentations
 - Increasing Access to Social Security Disability Benefits: SOAR for Veterans
 - SSVF/HUD-VASH Collaborative Case Management (CCM)
 - FY 24 Veteran Satisfaction Survey Registration Process and Survey Update
 - 2024 SSVF Program Guide release and review of revisions



WELCOME

- Welcome to FY24! 256 SSVF Grantees
New SSVF Grantees

24-VA-463 LINK of Hampton Roads Inc

24-TX-468 Volunteers of America Texas

24-TX-461 CPLC Texas Inc

24-TN-465 Tennessee Homeless Solutions

24-MD-464 St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

24-MA-460 Clear Path for Veterans New England Inc.

24-IL-259 A Safe Haven Foundation

24-DE-462 Delaware Center for Homeless Veterans, Inc.

24-CO-466 The Salvation Army

24-CA-467 Village for Vets

Increasing Access to Social Security Disability Benefits: SOAR for Veterans

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
(SAMHSA) SOAR Technical Assistance Center
Policy Research Associates, Inc.

SSVF Grantees National Call
VHA Homeless Programs Office
October 12, 2023



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Presenters



Kristin Lupfer, Project Director
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center



Jen Elder, Senior Advisor
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Kristin Lupfer, Project Director, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)

Overview

Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Purpose and Objectives

- Identify the benefits of using the SOAR model to serve Veterans
- Provide an overview of SSI/SSDI and documenting disability
- Discuss income maximization and combining SSI/SSDI with other income sources
- Explore Veterans Affairs (VA) and SOAR Resources
- Access SOAR training and connect with local SOAR contacts

What is SOAR?



- A model for assisting eligible adults and children to apply for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits
- For individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities
- Sponsored by SAMHSA in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005
- All 50 states and Washington, DC currently participate

SOAR Works!

2023 Outcomes

INITIAL APPLICATIONS APPEALS

APPROVAL RATE

66% 42%

NUMBER OF APPROVALS

2,604 324

NUMBER OF DECISIONS

3,918 763

AVERAGE DAYS TO DECISION

167 196

Cumulative Outcomes

65%

CUMULATIVE INITIAL APPROVAL RATE

50%

CUMULATIVE APPEAL APPROVAL RATE

56,481

CUMULATIVE INITIAL APPROVALS

8,891

CUMULATIVE APPEAL APPROVALS

65,372

PEOPLE RECEIVING BENEFITS BECAUSE OF SOAR



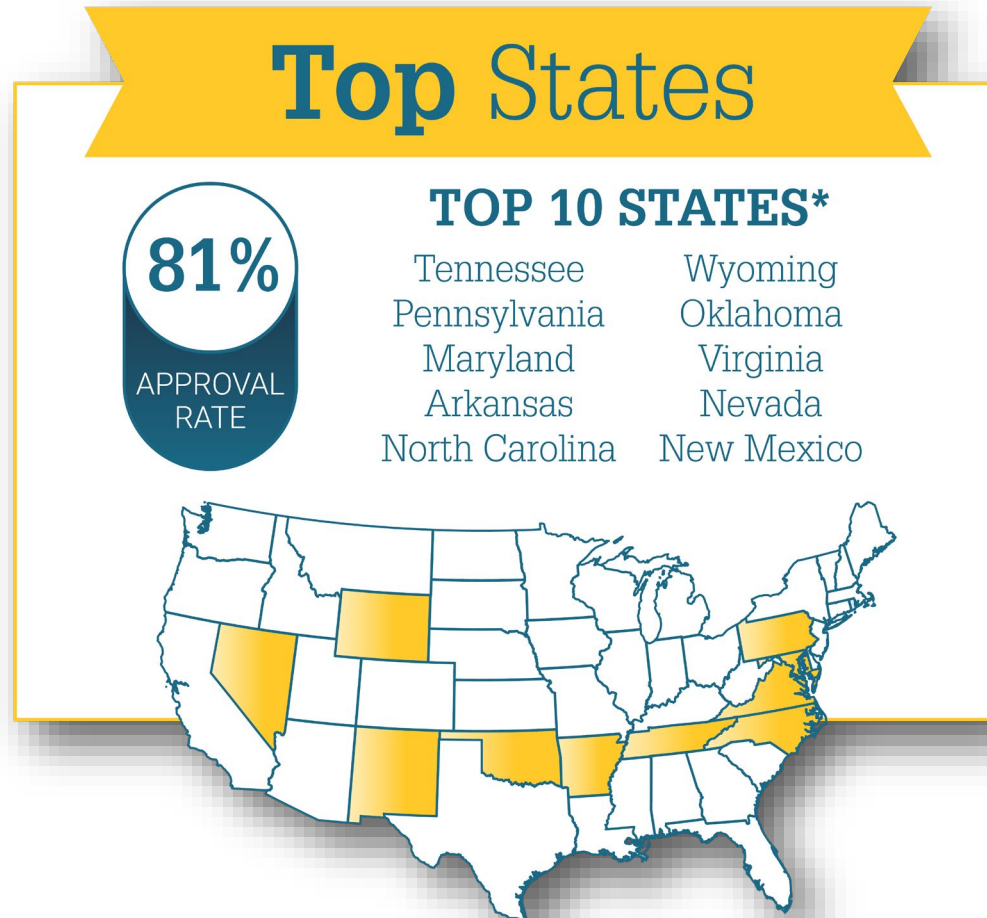
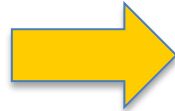
105,013

TOTAL SERVED

*National SOAR outcomes as of June 30, 2023

<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/about-the-model/oat-and-outcomes>

SOAR Super Stars!



SOAR Critical Components

Using these five SOAR Critical Components, case workers play a central role in gathering complete, targeted, and relevant information for SSA and DDS, resulting in high-quality SSI/SSDI applications. These components significantly increase the likelihood of an approval for those who are eligible.

1. Serving as the Applicant's Representative
2. Collecting and Submitting Medical Records
3. Writing and Submitting a Medical Summary Report (MSR)
4. Obtaining a Co-signature on the MSR by an Acceptable Medical Source
5. Completing a Quality Review of Applications Prior to Submission

*Inclusion: Highest cumulative approval rates on initial application for states with at least 250 cumulative decisions, at least 24 decisions in 2023 (2 per month), and a 2023 approval rate above the national average.

11 Combined, these states had 22,245 decisions

Importance of SSI/SSDI for Veterans

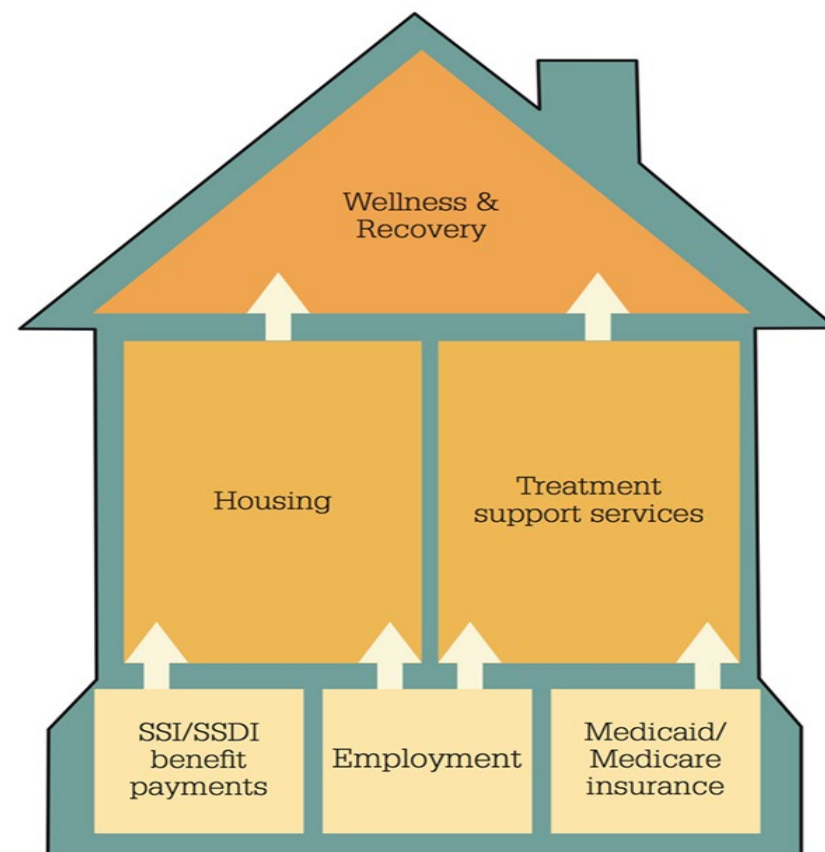
- SSA disability benefits can provide access to:
 - **Income:** Veterans can receive Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, VA disability benefits
 - **Health insurance:** Veterans can use the Medicaid and Medicare health benefits that come with SSI/SSDI to supplement VA health services
- For Veterans with disabilities, SSI/SSDI can increase income and housing stability, and reduce their future risk of homelessness
- Opportunity for staff serving Veterans to help with both SSA and VA disability benefits

A Foundation for Recovery and Resiliency

More Than Income

- Access to health care and housing
- Increased education and employment opportunities
- Decrease in incarcerations, institutionalization, and hospitalizations

SSI/SSDI: One Brick in Foundation



SSI and SSDI: The Basics

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Eligibility based on need: low income and resources; living arrangement
- Monthly amount based on Federal Benefit Rate: \$914/month (2023)
- Date of eligibility based on Protective Filing Date/Application Date
- Health insurance: Medicaid

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Eligibility based on insured status (FICA payments)
- Monthly amount based on earnings history
- Date of eligibility based on “date of onset” of disability, 5 month waiting period
- Health insurance: Medicare

SSI/SSDI Eligibility: Definition of Disability for Adults

SSA's Definition of Disability



Medical Condition(s)



Functional Impairment(s)

- Diagnosis
- Documentation
- Duration

- Severity
- Work
- SGA

How SSVF Grantees Can Help

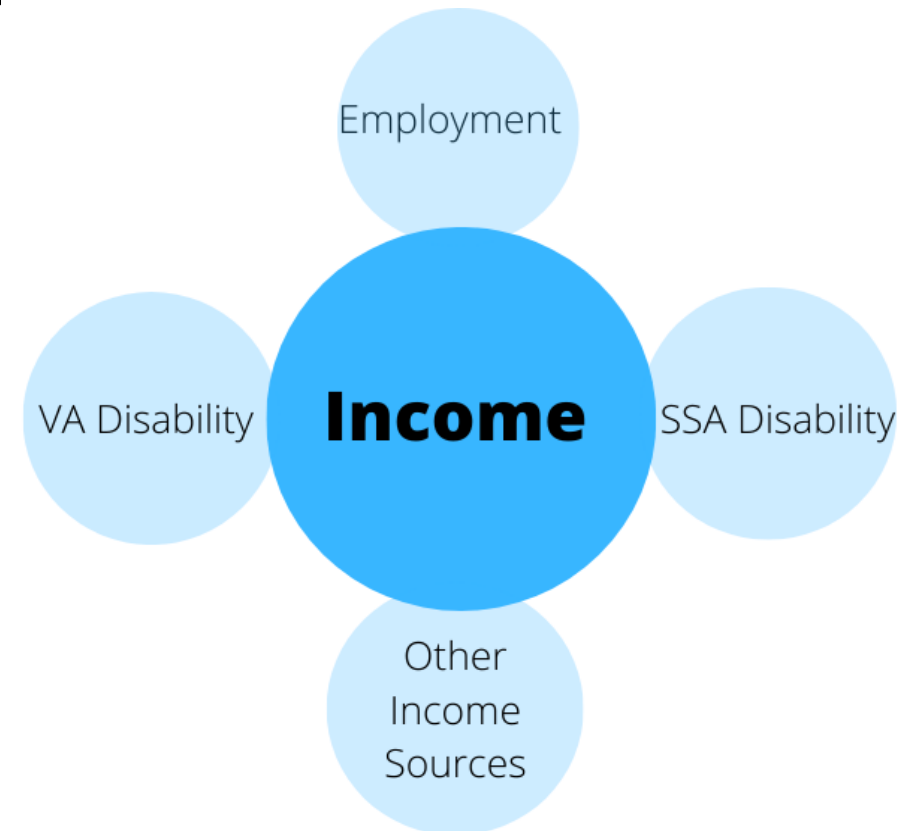
- Connect the Veteran to health care
 - Arrange for mental health and medical evaluations
 - Gather medical records in support of SSI/SSDI application
- Documenting disability
 - Your documentation of the Veteran's symptoms and limitations in daily activities, social interactions, and concentration supports the SSI/SSDI application

Jen Elder, Senior Advisor, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Income Maximization and Connecting with Resources

Income Maximization

- SSI/SSDI can work **in combination** with other income sources to support the Veteran/Veteran family in securing income and housing stability
- Veterans may be eligible to receive both SSA and VA disability benefits
- Employment is possible and encouraged while applying for and receiving disability benefits



VA Income and Benefits Calculator

- Designed to encourage individuals to utilize SSA work incentives to maximize their income.
- Includes separate calculators for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries
- Provides a visual and calculated representation of how increasing income from employment or other benefits will affect overall income.

SSI Calculator: Employment and Unearned Income

To estimate total gross monthly income, fill in the box below using monthly amounts:

	Unearned Income (VA or state benefits, etc.)
	Gross Monthly Wages (before taxes)
	Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)
	Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWEs)

Unearned Income

\$0.00	Unearned Income (VA benefits, state benefits, etc.)
-\$20.00	General Income Exclusion
\$0.00	Total Countable Unearned Income

Earned Income from Wages

\$0.00	Gross Monthly Wages (before taxes)
-\$65.00	Earned Income Exclusion
-\$20.00	Any remaining General Income Exclusion
\$0.00	PASS Plan
\$0.00	Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWEs)
\$0.00	Gross wages, after subtracting exclusions
÷ 2	Divide by 2 (SSA counts \$1 for every \$2 earned)
\$0.00	Total Countable Earned Income

\$0.00 Total Countable Income (Unearned + Earned)

Calculating SSI Benefit Amount

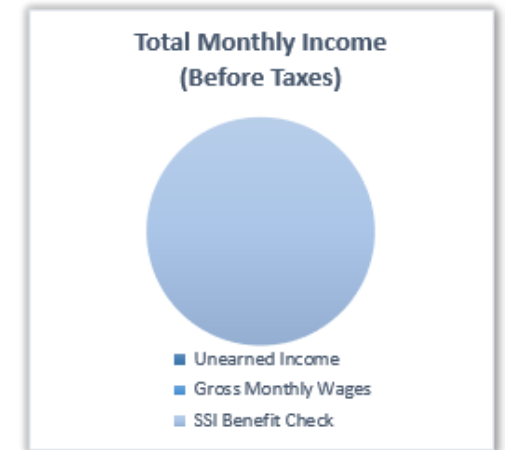
\$771.00	SSI Federal Benefit Rate (\$771 in 2019)
\$0.00	Add an SSI State Supplement (if applicable)
\$0.00	Total Countable Income
\$771.00	SSI Benefit Check

Calculating Gross Monthly Wages

\$0.00	Hourly Pay
0.00	Hours Worked (monthly)
\$0.00	Gross Monthly Wages (pre-tax)

Total Monthly Income (Before Taxes)

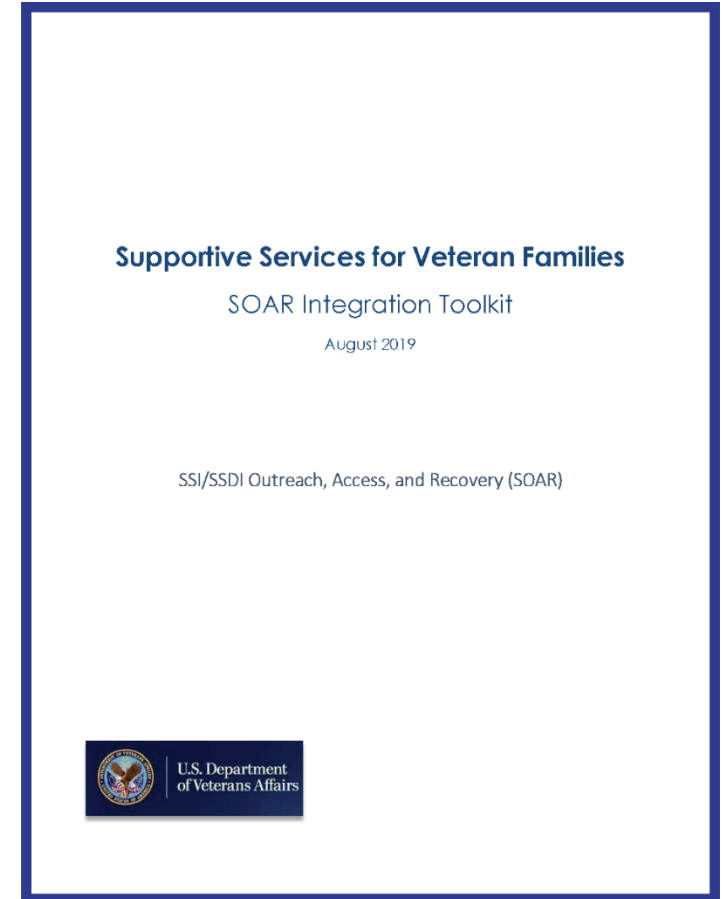
\$0.00	Unearned Income
\$0.00	Gross Monthly Wages
\$771.00	SSI Benefit Check
\$771.00	Total Gross Monthly Income



Note: This calculator is for estimating income only. The Social Security Administration will make the official determination when you report your unearned income and wages.

SSVF and SOAR Implementation Guide

- Helpful guide to review:
 - SSI/SSDI eligibility criteria
 - SSA work incentives
 - Combining income streams
 - Collaborating with other community programs
 - Connecting with SOAR State and Local Leads



<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/article/ssvf-soar-integration-toolkit>

How SSVF Grantees Can Help

- Explore all potential income sources with the Veteran, along with eligibility criteria
 - Connect the Veteran with disability application assistance and employment supports
- Use the VA Income and Benefits Calculator to start discussions about income maximization
 - Connect the Veteran with a benefits planner
 - SSA: Ticket to Work – <https://choosework.ssa.gov>
 - VA: VSOs and Regional Benefits Office

Benefits of the SOAR Online Courses

- Standardized training provided across all geographic areas
- SOAR Leaders can coordinate follow-up training and support
- Courses are FREE, web-based, and self-guided
- 20 CEUs from National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

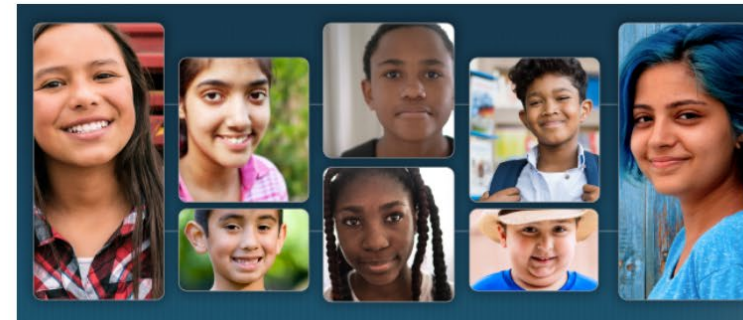


A collage of ten diverse adult faces, including men and women of various ethnicities and ages, representing the target population for the adult curriculum.

SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum

This course trains case workers to assist adults (age 18+) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder to apply for the Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability programs, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

[Learn More](#)



A collage of ten diverse children and young people of various ethnicities and ages, representing the target population for the child curriculum.




SOAR Online Course: Child Curriculum

This course trains case workers to assist children (under age 18) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefit program.

[Learn More](#)


Getting Involved: Time Commitment

- Training: 20 hours
- 20-40 hours per complete application
- SOAR Critical Components
- Outcome Tracking
- Benefit to Your Agency and the Individuals You Serve



Getting Involved With SOAR

YOU WANT TO BE A SOAR PROVIDER? THAT'S GREAT! HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT.

 SOAR promotes recovery and wellness through increased access to Social Security disability benefits for eligible individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. SOAR providers assist individuals with complete and quality applications. This is not an easy task, and we want to be sure that you understand the commitment required—it is well worth the effort!

TRAINING

The **free** SOAR Online Course (soarworks.samhsa.gov/online-courses) trains providers to assist individuals with the Social Security disability application process. The course includes an Adult Curriculum for assisting with Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) claims for adults and a Child Curriculum for assisting with SSI claims for children.

Each curriculum has 7 classes, each of which has a series of articles, short quizzes, and a practice case component. The practice case provides an opportunity for trainees to apply what they have learned in the course by completing a sample application for a fictitious applicant using SOAR techniques.

It takes approximately 20 hours to complete each curriculum, and participants can work at their own pace. We encourage students to complete the curriculum within 30 days to retain the information learned.

Upon successful completion, participants will receive **20 continuing education units** from the National Association of Social Workers.

Many SOAR Local Leads offer SOAR Online Course Review Sessions to review key components of the curriculum, discuss local/state practices, and connect new providers to local Social Security Administration (SSA) and Disability Determination Services (DDS) offices.

TIME COMMITMENT

We estimate that each SOAR application will take approximately **20-40 hours** to complete, from initial engagement to receiving a decision on a claim. This generally occurs over the course of **60-90 days**.

The time spent on each application will vary depending on the amount of engagement that is needed as well as other variables such as the experience level of the SOAR worker. For example, engagement with an applicant who is residing in an institution may take 20 hours, while it may take longer to connect with someone who is living outside or difficult to contact.

Oh, the Support You Will Receive!

SOAR TA Center Activities and Support



SOAR Online Course



SOAR Leadership Academy



SOAR Online Application Tracking (OAT) Program



SOARWorks Library



Individual Technical Assistance



SOARing Over Lunch

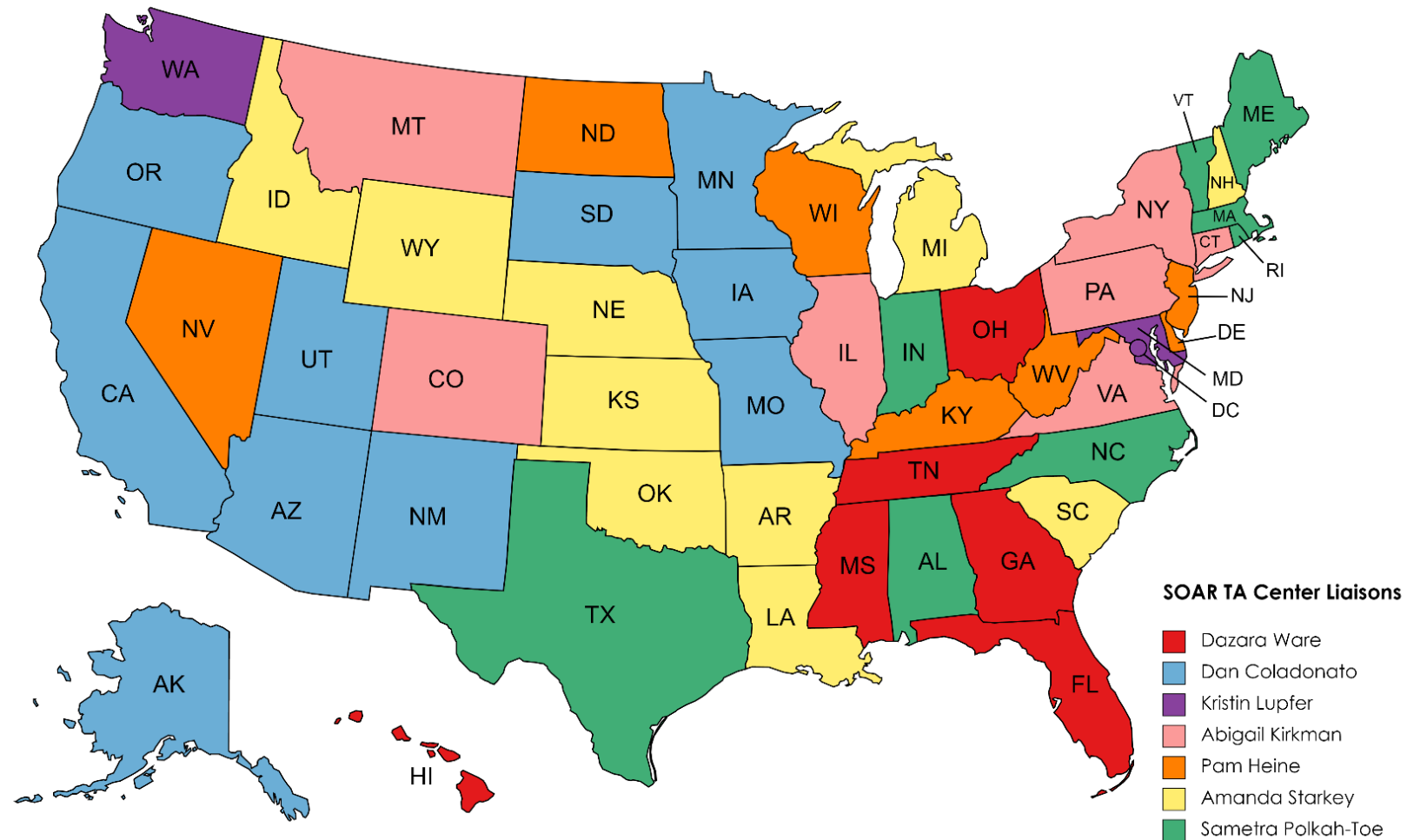


SOAR eNews



Bi-Monthly Webinars

Connect with SOAR in Your State



<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/state-directory>

What's Next?

- Review the SOARWorks website:
 - Starting Your SOAR Initiative:
<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/about-the-model/your-soar-program>
 - SOAR Online Course Catalog:
<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/online-courses>
 - SOAR and Veterans:
<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/topics/veterans>
 - Reach out to your SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison (<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/contact>) if you are interested in learning more about SOAR!

Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov>

soar@prainc.com

[**www.samhsa.gov**](http://www.samhsa.gov)

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

SSVF/HUD-VASH Collaborative Case Management (CCM)

Jennifer Colbert

SSVF Regional Coordinator Supervisor

Tracy Emmanuel

Deputy Director, National HUD-VASH Program Office



Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department
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SSVF HUD-VASH SSVF May 2023 Memo

- 1. Progressive Engagement:** Every formerly homeless Veteran housed by SSVF through Rapid Rehousing (RRH), who has been receiving ongoing RRH services and who lacks a clear and sustainable exit to permanent housing, should also be considered for a HUD-VASH voucher where the resource is available
- 2. Bridging:** In circumstances where HUD-VASH case management and/or voucher resources are not immediately available for a Veteran who would otherwise be appropriate for the program, and where SSVF has the capacity, Veteran families may be co-enrolled and provided SSVF housing navigation services, financial assistance (including rental assistance), and non-clinical housing case management supports.
- 3. Hotel Prioritization:** Every homeless Veteran placed in temporary accommodation (e.g., hotel or motel) by SSVF should be considered and prioritized for a HUD-VASH voucher where the resource is available.



Choose **VA**

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Guidance for SSVF and HUD-VASH Collaborative Case Management (CCM)

- May 19, 2023, memorandum authorized co-enrollment in HUD-VASH and SSVF programs to expedite housing placements.
 - *“In circumstances where HUD-VASH case management and/or voucher resources are not immediately available for a Veteran who would otherwise be appropriate for the program and where SSVF has the capacity, Veteran families may be co-enrolled and provided SSVF housing navigation services, financial assistance (including rental assistance), and non-clinical housing case management supports. HUD-VASH is responsible for assuring the delivery of clinical care related to health and behavioral health needs, while SSVF is providing these additional supports.”*

How is this different?

- SSVF/HUD-VASH CCM does not replace all existing means of collaboration.
- Offers supplementary opportunities to ensure all available resources are utilized to support staff and Veterans in achieving the goal of ending Veteran homelessness.
- In this agreement, SSVF staff will assist a predetermined number of eligible and/or enrolled HUD-VASH Veterans from the VAMC in identifying, securing and successfully transitioning into permanent housing with their HUD-VASH vouchers.

Process and Shared Responsibilities

- **Grantees and HUD-VASH teams should meet together to determine need in their community.**
- **Sample agreements are available on the HUB and SSVF Website**
 - **Agreements outline responsibilities of both programs**
- **Agreements should be completed together and submitted to the HUD-VASH Program Office for review**
 - **Communities may not begin the efforts until the agreement has been approved by both HUD-VASH and SSVF Program Offices**

Why participate in this effort?

- These optional directives allow for greater flexibilities in co-enrolling Veterans in SSVF and HUD-VASH in order to expedite appropriate housing placements
- Operational agreements have proven valuable in clarifying partner roles and capacity to avoid confusion at the program and Veteran level
- The minor data capture requirements allow VA to understand the impact of these collaborations and assess current and future policy or practice needs at the national level

VA



U.S. Department
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VA SSVF Program Participant Satisfaction Survey

FY 24 Veteran Registration Process and Survey Update

October 12th, 2023

Ben Knudsen
Aptive Resources
Project Manager | OCM SME

Kim Wyborski
Fors Marsh Group
Director Survey Operations Data Collection

The logo for Aptive, featuring the word "aptive" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "a" is white and set against a dark blue square background, while the remaining letters "ptive" are in a dark red color.

The logo for Fors Marsh Group, featuring a stylized orange cube icon above the text "FORS | MARSH" in a dark blue, uppercase, sans-serif font, with the word "GROUP" in a smaller, orange, uppercase, sans-serif font below it.



VA SSVF PROGRAM SATISFACTION SURVEY

- Goals
 - Monitor and enhance the Veteran experience from the VA and Grantees
 - Register all Veterans 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



KEY ROLES

- **VA SSVF Program Office**
 - Administers survey registration, survey (online and phone), data reporting and recommendations
- **Regional Coordinators**
 - Facilitate key messaging to Grantees, and elevate Grantee feedback and observations to the Program Office
 - Monitoring registration data -All Veterans enrolled are registered (except HUD VASH packet referrals)
- **Grantees**
 - Grantee staff and subcontractors register the Veteran just before service conclusion (T-30 days)
- **Veteran**
 - Shares their thoughts through a less than 15-minute confidential survey (multiple choice and open ended)



SATISFACTION SURVEY UPDATE

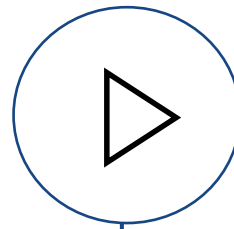
- Survey has been shortened!
- Easier to understand
- Tested with several SSVF Grantee staff, Veterans, Homeless, current and former SSVF participants
- Thank you!
Margaret Hart, Leigh Evans, and Calista McCracken Garcia
- PDF Version available



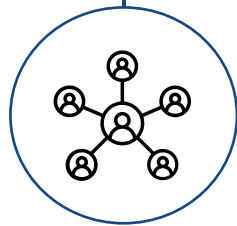
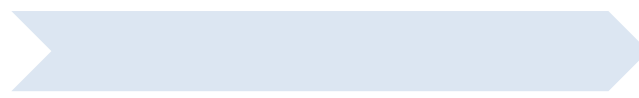
REGISTRATION TIMELINE



October 12th, 2023
Registration Webinar
covering details of the VA
SSVF Program Participant
Satisfaction Survey



October 13th, 2023
8:00 am Eastern
Survey (online and
phone) is live for the
Veteran to complete the
survey



October 12th, 2023
3:00 pm Eastern
Email with NEW
Registration Link is sent
to Grantee point of
contact to share with
staff/contractors.



VETERAN REGISTRATION PROCESS

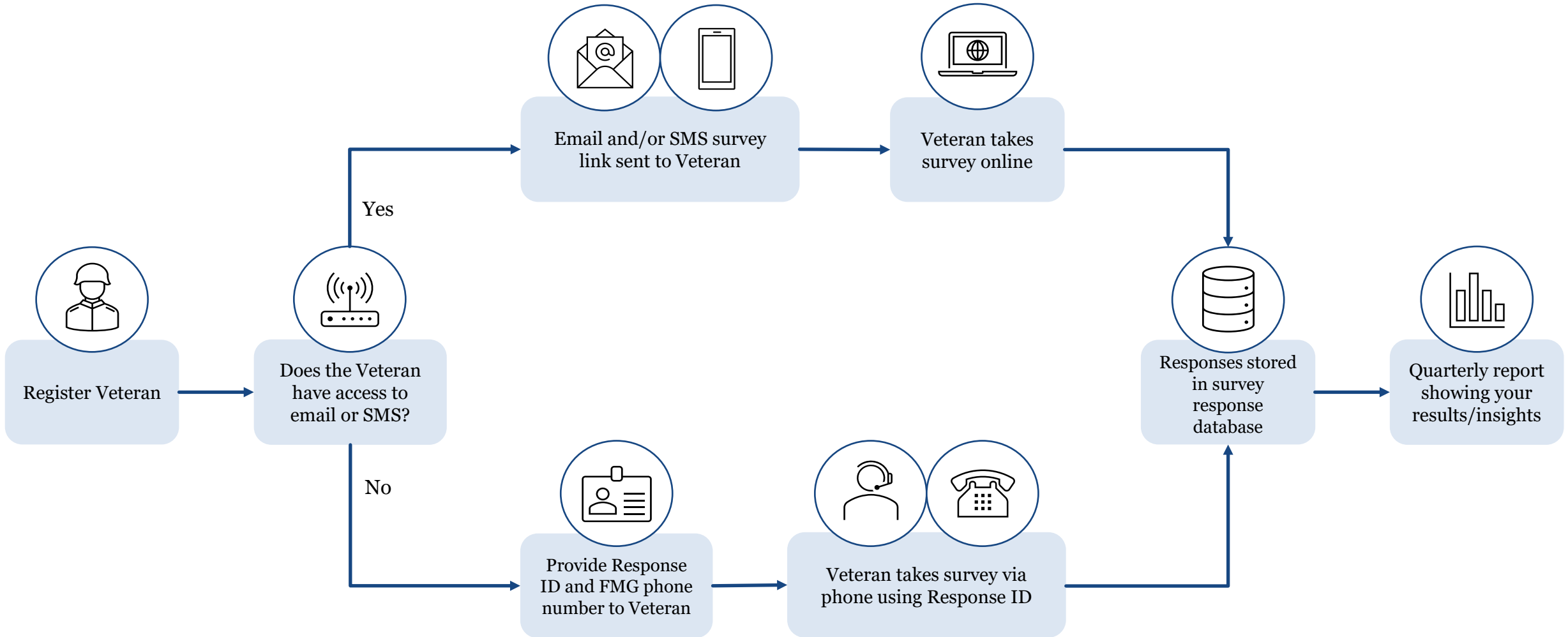
- Grantee point of contact receives email
 - From: SSVF@forsmarsh.com
 - Subject: SSVF Survey Registration Link 2024
 - Includes Grantee ID, Registration Link, and registration guidance
- POC shares link with Grantee staff and contractors
- Save registration link as a desktop shortcut



- Register Veteran
 1. Confirm with Veteran and input:
 - Cell Phone Number
 - E-mail Address
 2. Print two copies of the “Thank you for registering...” page
 1. Give one copy to the Veteran for them to complete the survey
 2. Save one copy in the Veteran case file
 3. Save (or screen shot) “Thank you for registering...” page for Grantee record keeping of registration numbers



VETERAN REGISTRATION PROCESS FLOWCHART





REGISTRATION WELCOME SCREEN

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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Progress  30%

Please enter your grantee ID to proceed to the registration page.

Grantee ID (XX-XX-XXX):

Next »



REGISTRATION WELCOME SCREEN

VA



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of Veterans Affairs

Progress  50%

Grantee Registration Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) Program

Welcome, 12-AK-001

- Please only register individuals once, and within 30 days of exit from the SSVF Program.
- If you provide an email/or cell phone number, Veterans will be emailed and/or texted a link to take the survey.
- If Veteran does not have online access, they can call 1-888-669-6752 (Mon-Fri: 9:00 AM ET to 9:00 PM ET; Sat-Sun: 10:00 AM ET to 6:00 PM ET) to take the survey with a live interviewer. Voice mails from respondents can be left 24/7 with a response/call back made within 1 business day. This line is also available 24/7 for the Veteran to take the survey via phone prompts (IVR).
- Please provide the Veteran with the **phone number 1-888-669-6752 and their respondent ID** that will appear on the following page.
- Without the Respondent ID, the Veteran will not be eligible to take the survey over the phone.

Please encourage Veterans of the importance of their feedback on this anonymous survey. Their feedback can help improve the program for other Veterans and all feedback positive or negative is very important.

Next »



REGISTRATION DATA FIELDS

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Progress



80%

You **must fill in one or both fields** below. If Veteran does not provide data for one of the fields, please leave it blank and hit next. You will then be prompted to confirm the empty field is accurate, after confirming please select next to continue to validation page.

Veteran's Cell Phone Number (XXXXXXXXXX).

Please ask about text message consent.

Veteran's Email Address (yourname@xxx.com).

One of two fields may remain blank if information is not supplied by the Veteran, please do not enter dummy data to proceed.

Please check this box if you have received text message consent from the Veteran.

« Back

Next »



REGISTRATION THANK YOU SCREEN

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Progress



100%

Thank you for registering a Veteran to take the VA SSVF Survey!

BEFORE HITTING SUBMIT BELOW, please [print this page](#) twice. Provide one copy to the Veteran, and put the other copy in the Veteran case file.

If you do not have online access, please call 1-888-669-6752 (Mon-Fri: 9:00 AM ET to 9:00 PM ET; Sat-Sun: 10:00 AM ET to 6:00 PM ET) to take the survey with a live interviewer. Voice mails from respondents can be left 24/7 with a response/call back made within 1 business day. This line is also available 24/7 to take the survey via an automated operator.

VA SSVF Survey Line: 1-888-669-6752
the Veteran's response ID: 345163

Tuesday, October 10, 2023
KIM_FMG_TEST

Submit



BEST PRACTICES

- When you get the “SSVF Survey Registration Link” email, check that the registration link is live by entering your grantee ID. If you get an error, contact the email helpdesk to confirm your ID is accurate.
- If you did not get an email, check your spam folder for the “SSVF Survey Registration Link” email from vassvf@forsmarsh.com
- Grantee ID is specific to your location
 - Share link only with your Grantee staff and contractors working with Veterans in your agency.



BEST PRACTICES (CONT.)

- Save the registration link as a desktop shortcut on all computers used to register Veterans.
 - Check your new desktop shortcut (right-click, “properties”) link looks like this:
“<https://survey.forsmarshgroup.com/SE/1/VaStart/?urlimport=1&questlist=GRANTEEID&GRANTEEID=>” ...
 - Do not save as a web browser “favorite” or “bookmark”
- Confirm the Veteran’s phone number and email twice (Veteran to you, you to the Veteran) before clicking “Next”
- Close your browser window between Veteran registrations
 - Do not use the browser “Back” button or have tabs open



QUESTIONS?

Contact: Team Aptive

E-mail (best): vassvf@forsmarsh.com

Phone: 888-669-6752

Mon-Fri: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm (Eastern)

Sat-Sun: 10:00 am - 6:00 pm (Eastern)

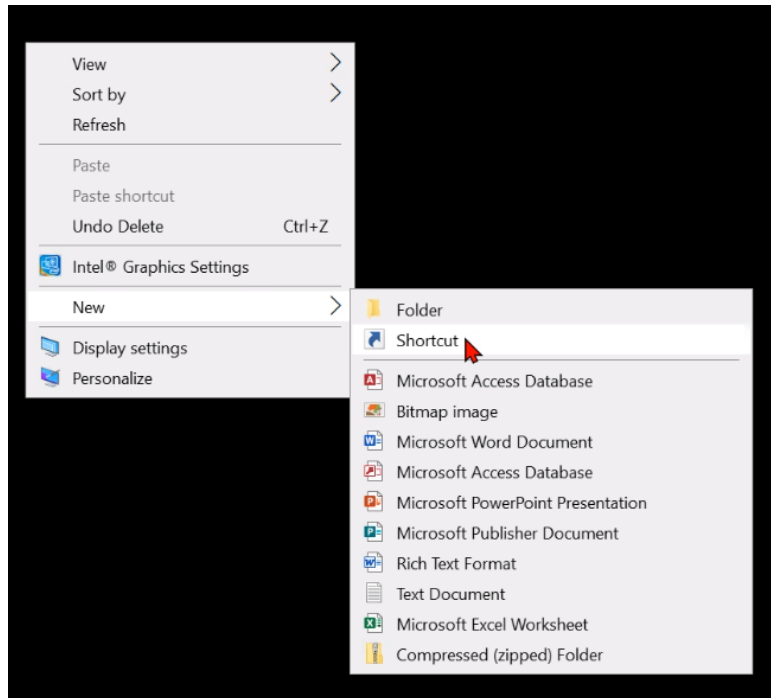




SAVE REGISTRATION LINK TO DESKTOP

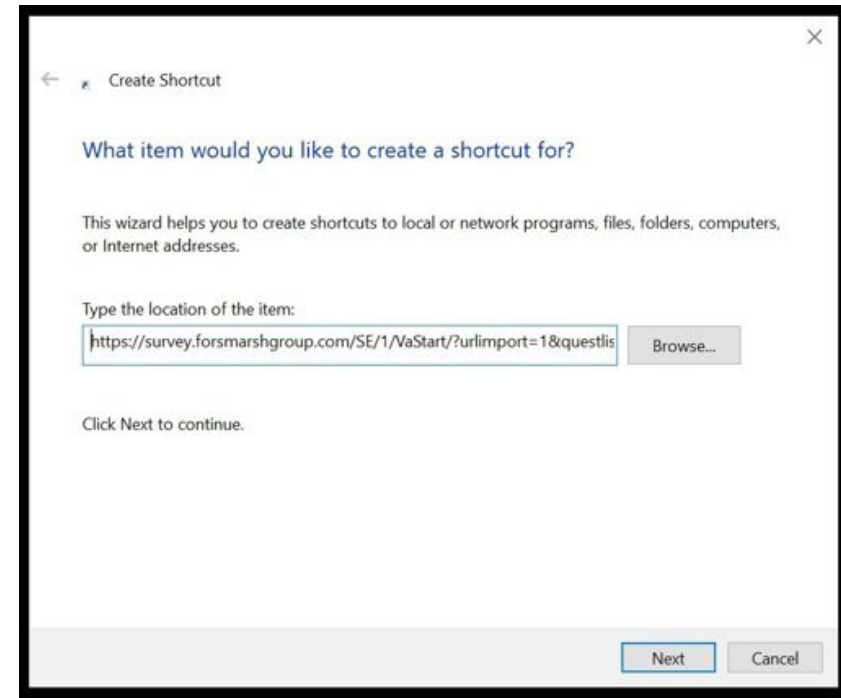
1. Create Shortcut

- Right-mouse click on Desktop
- Mouse over “New”
- Select “Shortcut”



2. Input Registration Link

- Copy web address from browser
- Paste to “Type the location...” field
- Click “Next”



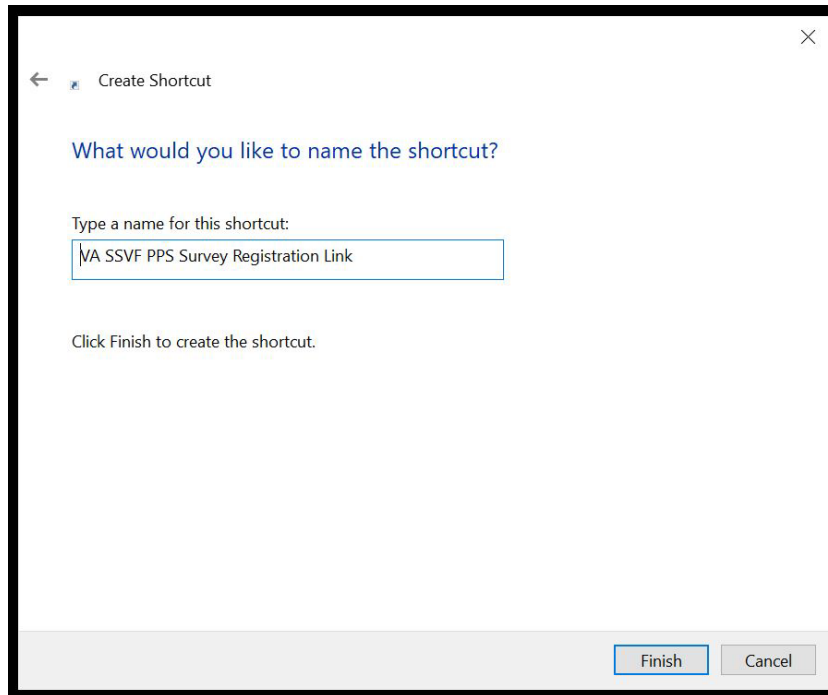


SAVE REGISTRATION LINK TO DESKTOP (CONT.)

3. Name Registration Link Shortcut

→ Input “VA SSVF PPS Survey Registration Link” to “Type a name...” field

→ Click “Finish”



4. Desktop Shortcut for Registration Link is ready for positioning and use





QUESTIONS

- Q & A

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Webinar Series

REVISIONS MADE TO THE 2023 SSVF PROGRAM GUIDE



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Homeless
Program
Office

Revisions to 2023 SSVF Program Guide

1. Updates throughout the Guide to reflect new Veteran definition and income eligibility
2. Updated guidance related to new SSVF services including Health Care Navigation, Shallow Subsidy, Rapid Resolution, Landlord and Tenant Incentives and permanent housing resources, Legal Services, Etc.
3. Updated Emergency Housing Assistance guidance
4. Updates to General Housing Stability Assistance limits
5. Updates to utility cost types





Veteran Definition and Income Eligibility



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Veteran Definition and Income Eligibility

- **Veteran:** 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. As defined by 38 U.S.C §2002, this definition excludes a person 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.
- **Income Eligibility:** The SSVF Program defines an eligible low-income Veteran family as one whose annual income, as determined in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609, does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for an area or community.





Updated guidance related to new SSVF services including:

Health Care Navigation, Shallow Subsidy, Rapid Resolution, Landlord and Tenant Incentives and permanent housing resources, and Legal Services



Healthcare Navigation and Shallow Subsidy

- **Health Care Navigation Services:**
 - SSVF Health Care Navigators support participants in accessing health care from their local VA Medical Center and other health care providers.
 - This includes primary care, mental health treatment, substance abuse services, daily living services (also known as home care), and other specialty health care that an individual participant needs and chooses to utilize.
 - Grantees, primarily via SSVF Health Care Navigators, must cultivate strong relationships with their points of contacts at local VA Medical Centers and/or community-based outpatient clinic and utilize those relationships to make and monitor referrals.
 - For participants with a history of reluctance to seek care from VA settings, case managers leverage the trust established with participants to support reestablishing connections.
 - Grantees must also identify non-VA health care resources. Grantees must also be able to assist participants in applying for Medicaid and/or subsidized insurance through local health care exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).



- **Shallow Subsidy Service:**

- An SSVF service that allows for two years of rental subsidy not to exceed 50% of unit rent without the need to recertify Veteran income eligibility.
- SSVF Shallow Subsidy service provides up to 50% of the rent for an initial commitment of two years for Veterans at or below 30% of AMI and two years less the number of months of traditional rental assistance for Veterans at 31% to 80% of AMI.
- Veterans may be recertified for additional two year cycles if needed to sustain permanent housing and if still eligible for the program.



Rapid Resolution & Landlord and Tenant Incentives

- **Rapid Resolution:** SSVF services that promote housing problem solving strategies to assist Veterans in diverting or rapidly existing homelessness, even to temporary options, while SSVF or other partners support longer term housing needs.
 - SSVF grantees may make reasonable, one-time payments to support host situations where a Veterans is expected to remain temporarily housed (without a lease) for at least 90 days. This is often when a Veteran is connected to a family member, friend or other temporary host, allowing them to avoid the trauma of staying in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation while enrolled in SSVF and supported in long term housing plans.
 - Veterans must be enrolled in SSVF to receive any sort of financial assistance or supportive services. Once a Veteran is in a lease situation (whether in the host unit or in their unit obtained with SSVF support), all normal financial assistance payments and restrictions apply.



Rapid Resolution & Landlord and Tenant Incentives

- **Resources to Secure Permanent Housing (aka Landlord Incentives)**
 - SSVF grantees are allowed to provide up to two months' worth of rent as a direct incentive to landlords or housing owners.
 - These incentives should be used to help overcome housing barriers of individual Veteran households and to mitigate risk and fears among housing owners if Veterans otherwise would have been screened out or their housing units.
 - Landlord incentives are not security deposits and are not bound by security deposit requirements.
 - Landlord incentives may only be used for new leases that are at least 12 months in duration, and where such an incentive would make an appreciable difference in the grantee's ability to quickly connect the Veteran to permanent housing.
 - These payments should generally be made at the beginning of the lease or broken into two parts, with the second installment made no later than 90 days after move in.
 - Landlord incentives may be used, where there is capacity, on any eligible and enrolled Veteran, including Veterans referred by other VA homeless programs or those entering a unit support by a HUD-VASH voucher.



- **Resources to Secure Permanent Housing (Miscellaneous Move In Costs aka Tenant Incentives)**
 - Up to \$1,000 per household in purchases of goods and services to promote general comfort one would reasonable expect to have in permanent housing.
 - Purchases made from third parties and delivered/provided to Veteran at beginning of new permanent housing situation.
 - Ledger demonstrating cap limit of \$1,000 by individual Veteran household
 - Proof or note that Veteran received all items purchased



Legal Services Assessment

- **Legal Services Assessment**

- All SSVF grantees are required to assess Veterans for legal service needs utilizing their local legal services assessment.
- Legal services assessments are an integral part of progressive engagement and Veterans should be asked about legal needs at various points during their SSVF enrollment, as legal needs may change as Veterans and SSVF deal with and resolve the immediate housing crisis.
- SSVF grantees should have a process with their in-house counsel or legal services subcontractor to provide referrals or direct services when eligible SSVF legal service needs are identified.
- If non-eligible SSVF legal service needs are identified, SSVF grantees should work to locate appropriate resources in the community for the Veteran and provide a referral.





Emergency Housing Assistance guidance, General Housing Stability Assistance & Utility Payment Assistance



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Emergency Housing Assistance & General Housing Stability Assistance

- **Emergency Housing Assistance:**
 - Max. 60 days for enrolled household
 - May be used once during 2-year period
 - If permanent housing, appropriate shelter beds and transitional housing are not available then a grantee may place a participant in emergency housing.
 - Subsequent housing has been identified generally but is not immediately available for move-in
 - May be used as an outreach tool to engage and offer housing to unsheltered homeless Veterans with significant housing needs who refuse to access traditional emergency shelter services in the community.
 - No viable access to available in local VA (GPD, HCHV) programs or community shelter
 - Cost must be reasonable



Emergency Housing Assistance & General Housing Stability Assistance

- **General Housing Stability Assistance:**
 - Max. of \$1,948 per participant household for “four classes” during 2-year period
 - Max. of \$500 per participant household for items for life/safety (falls within \$1,948 max)
 - Broker fees allowable once in a 2-year period



Emergency Housing Assistance, General Housing Stability Assistance & Utility Payment Assistance

- **Utility Payment Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.34(b)):**
 - Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a utility company or 3rd party. Participant, legal representative or a member of the household must have an account in their name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make payments.
 - Utilities include electricity, heating sources, telephone, and basic internet.
 - This includes reasonable charges for a basic cell phone plan. Costs toward the purchase of the device are not allowable.



Questions

- Q &A

FY24 Program Guide

[SSVF_Program_Guide.pdf \(va.gov\)](#)

