

# SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

## Rapid Resolution Service Compliance Guidance

V5. January 2020

Applicable only to approved SSVF Rapid Resolution Grantees

\*Document Subject to Change\*

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# Description of Rapid Resolution Services and Design

## Introduction

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program provides homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing assistance to Veterans at imminent risk of or experiencing literal homelessness. In an effort to identify and promote new and creative responses to homelessness among Veterans, the SSVF Program Office is implementing Rapid Resolution services as an allowable activity for SSVF grantees under current grant agreements. Rapid Resolution is an added service under existing SSVF grant agreements.

This guide discusses enrollment guidelines for Veterans who are seeking SSVF services and have been assisted with Rapid Resolution. The guide also describes allowable costs and activities for Veterans engaged in a Rapid Resolution intervention. Since many Veterans receiving Rapid Resolution services will not have a formal lease in place during the initial enrollment period, this document provides detailed guidance on the types of assistance, including TFA, that can be used when assisting Veterans with SSVF Rapid Resolution without a lease in place. Veterans who have a formal lease agreement either with a host family or friend or in their own unit can receive traditional SSVF services for which they would be eligible. Rapid Resolution guidance provides additional flexibility to provide services and support while a Veteran is avoiding street or shelter stays by utilizing other community or social supports such as staying with family or friends where a formal lease is not in effect. Veterans who receive Rapid Resolution services remain eligible for traditional SSVF or other housing services for Veterans if these services are needed at a later date.

## Rapid Resolution Defined

- Rapid Resolution (RR) is an intervention designed to prevent Veterans from becoming homeless or immediately resolve a household's homelessness once they enter shelter, transitional housing or an unsheltered situation.
- RR includes both Diversion and Rapid Exit strategies with the aim of ensuring that homelessness is avoided or is as brief as possible when it does occur.
- RR solutions should be explored with every eligible Veteran as part of the enrollment process or immediately after the Veteran has been enrolled.
- RR and other similar approaches are system-wide interventions that can be used for all populations, not just Veterans. While SSVF specifically serves eligible Veterans, the strategies and approaches that support strong Rapid Resolution interventions may look similar or the same for other non-Veteran populations.

SSVF Rapid Resolution is designed to give SSVF grantees and their partners new ways to support Veterans immediately before or directly after they become homeless to assist them in avoiding continued time living on the streets or in emergency shelter settings. This type of service can reduce the trauma and expense associated with extended periods of homelessness and the strain on the housing crisis response system and affordable housing resources in the community. Rapid Resolution services are intended to provide supportive services and targeted financial assistance to help enrolled households identify a safe

alternative housing option, even if temporary, at or immediately after entry into the emergency shelter or housing crisis response system. This often happens by reconnecting Veterans to family, friends or other community networks that are willing to provide a temporary or permanent place to stay as an alternative to literal homelessness. Grantees are encouraged to enroll eligible Veterans immediately as described below. Veteran households who receive Rapid Resolution services but are unable to stabilize in the housing identified through Rapid Resolution can receive more traditional SSVF services, as needed, consistent with a progressive assistance approach. Veterans receiving Rapid Resolution services are afforded more, not fewer, options as they work to end their housing crisis.

## SSVF Rapid Resolution Process and Principles

The following bullets outline suggested steps in engaging Veterans in Rapid Resolution. The process in each community will vary based on the design developed and implemented by the grantee, CoC, VAMC, Coordinated Entry Entity, and other community stakeholders.

- Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry access points, VA Medical Centers and other emergency shelter or housing providers identify a Veteran immediately before or immediately after their homeless episode begins, and rapidly refer or connect the Veteran to an SSVF grantee who can meet with and enroll the Veteran that day, or if needed, shortly after their initial contact. Some communities have also cross-trained VA and community staff to engage in Rapid Resolution conversations absent the immediate connection to an SSVF grantee.
- All Veterans who have identified an alternative housing situation through Rapid Resolution should remain enrolled for a minimum of 90 days, even if the active intervention ends after a brief period. This ongoing enrollment allows for progressive engagement/assistance if necessary (participant will retain initial enrollment status) and is important for periodic follow-up. Grantees are expected to provide follow up services with Veterans based on each individual Veteran's need, desires and housing plan.
- Through the Rapid Resolution conversation SSVF grantees work with the Veteran household to identify any potential immediate safe place, even if temporary, such as within the Veteran's network of family, friends, or other social or community supports, in order to avoid the trauma of entering the homeless system or staying in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation.
  - If this effort is unsuccessful, the grantee, in partnership with other community stakeholders, ensures immediate or continued access to housing crisis services/shelter and connection to permanent housing options. Note that all eligible Veterans should be enrolled in the SSVF program prior to or during the initial Rapid Resolution engagement regardless of whether a safe alternative housing option is found.
  - Where an alternative housing option is identified that is expected to last fewer than 90 days, SSVF provides supportive services to identify a longer-term housing plan, which may include traditional SSVF services later, or not. Certain

considerations apply to Homelessness Prevention enrollments, as discussed in this guide.

- Where an alternative housing option is identified that is expected to last more than 90 days, and there is a possibility that this placement could become a long-term housing placement, SSVF provides supportive services and may provide, as necessary, limited TFA to support that housing solution (TFA restrictions described below). Veterans remain eligible for traditional SSVF services if the alternative housing option does not come to fruition.

## Rapid Resolution Enrollment and Service Guidelines

### General Enrollment Principles and Summary

- All eligible Veterans should be engaged and enrolled by SSVF as quickly as possible at the point of seeking shelter or soon after initial contact with the homeless system. Given the diversity of geographies and service areas of SSVF grantees, there is no defined timeline for how long a Veteran may be in literal homelessness prior to SSVF enrolling the Veteran and engaging the Veteran in a Rapid Resolution conversation; however, grantees are strongly encouraged to review their referral and point of contact protocols to ensure rapid connections to any Veteran who becomes homeless in their service area.
- Veteran status, income status and basic enrollment data should be documented at the outset of the engagement.. If the Veteran is not eligible for SSVF then grantees should provide a warm hand-off to other community or crisis services providers. VA strongly encourages the use of Squares 2.0 to expedite Veteran status verification. Income documentation may initially be self-reported, with formal documentation of income coming shortly after the initial crisis is resolved or explored.
- SSVF grantees are expected to enroll and engage in Rapid Resolution conversations with any and all Veterans who present for assistance, regardless of perceived or real barriers to housing or other known vulnerabilities.
- All Veterans enrolled in SSVF and receiving a Rapid Resolution service after identifying an alternative housing option will be entered in HMIS using the “V2 Services Provided – SSVF” data element, “Rapid Resolution” service type. More detailed information regarding SSVF data requirements can be found in the FY2020 VA Data Guide.
- For the purposes of monitoring and program review, case files should in some way be distinguished to note the household received Rapid Resolution services.
- If a Veteran household is not able to identify an alternative housing option through Rapid Resolution, SSVF grantees should continue to support that enrolled Veteran household in their next steps toward a permanent housing situation. The depth of allowable support may vary for certain Homelessness Prevention participants.
- Veterans enrolled in SSVF as a result of the Rapid Resolution effort should maintain their enrollment in SSVF for a minimum of 90 days to allow for continued work with the Veteran to identify permanent housing if the initial housing identified through Rapid Resolution is not permanent, or to ensure the new or current housing situation is stable.

If necessary, continued enrollment allows Veterans to retain their original at-risk or homeless status.

- This means a Veteran who is diverted or rapidly exited from shelter on a temporary basis can still retain their initial homeless status from the point of enrollment allowing for longer term services, if needed and as appropriate. Veterans do not need to be exited or re-enrolled in SSVF in order to receive more traditional services; the initial enrollment designation of RRH or HP will remain throughout the engagement with the Veteran. See below for further information.
- If longer term, more traditional SSVF services are needed, all Program Requirements, including lease and housing requirements, must then be met. Further clarification regarding Homelessness Prevention enrollments is described below.
- Limited TFA can be provided to support a housing situation that will last for at least 90 days. All TFA payments must meet regulatory guidelines for eligible costs, and agencies must maintain appropriate documentation validating and describing all such payments.. Certain types of TFA may be available to the host family if the host is added to the Veteran household.

## Documentation of SSVF Eligibility

All Veterans enrolled in SSVF via an initial Rapid Resolution service must be eligible for traditional SSVF services, consistent with SSVF regulations. Given the rapidity with which this intervention occurs, grantees may need to rely more on self-declaration of income and continue to pursue more formal income documentation during the term of the engagement. Grantees are expected, via Squares 2.0 or other means, to quickly verify Veteran status at the onset of the engagement. Grantees should document efforts to obtain full documentation of income and include that documentation in each Veteran's case file, similar to traditional SSVF documentation requirements. For the purposes of ensuring Rapid Resolution services can be provided immediately at the point of a housing crisis, the following applies:

Status of Documentation	Supportive Services Allowable	Rapid Resolution TFA Allowable	Enrollment Status
No documentation/verbal only	Yes – limited to initial Rapid Resolution Conversation	No	Screened but Not Enrolled unless otherwise able to establish documentation, even if self-certified
Pending Verification of Veteran Status	Yes – limited to initial Rapid Resolution Conversation	No	Enrolled in SSVF; pursue formal documentation soon after
Self-Declaration of Income	Yes	Yes	Enrolled in SSVF; pursue formal documentation soon after
Confirmed Veteran Status	Yes	Yes	Enrolled in SSVF
Confirmed Income Status	Yes	Yes	Enrolled in SSVF

Veterans enrolled in SSVF via an initial Rapid Resolution intervention are eligible for the full suite of non-TFA SSVF Supportive Services. SSVF grantees are strongly encouraged to work closely with the Veteran household in order to determine whether a temporary stay is likely to lead to long term housing without further SSVF assistance, or whether a longer term suite of SSVF services will be needed. This determination is part of a phased assessment, progressive approach similar to traditional SSVF services and relies on the professional judgement and consideration of SSVF Grantee staff.

**Rapid Resolution: Homeless Status and SSVF Enrollment Summary**

All Veteran households who are eligible for SSVF and are assisted through Rapid Resolution will be enrolled in SSVF. Rapid Resolution is not a separate program, but rather a service package provided in the context of a normal SSVF enrollment.

If a Veteran was in housing last night but anticipates, but for the SSVF intervention, sleeping on the streets or in shelter tonight, then the Veteran would be enrolled in SSVF Homelessness Prevention because they have not yet spent a night in a literal homeless situation. Grantees can demonstrate this by using Stage 1 Eligibility for HP section of the HP Screener and noting that the Veteran would have entered shelter had SSVF not intervened. Grantees must also complete the Stage 2 Targeting for any Veteran who did not spend a night homeless; this allows for accurate HMIS data entry and, in some cases, will allow the Veteran to access additional services, if needed, later in the engagement. More detailed Homelessness Prevention guidance is included below.

Veterans who were homeless last night and anticipate continuing to be homeless tonight are considered homeless and would be enrolled in SSVF Rapid Rehousing services.

### **Rapid Rehousing Enrollments via Rapid Resolution Interventions**

Veterans who were homeless and enrolled as RRH and are able to move into a temporary housing situation through the Rapid Resolution intervention can still receive longer term traditional Rapid Rehousing support, as needed. This support may be identified at the beginning of the SSVF enrollment or later during the 90 day enrollment period. If traditional Rapid Rehousing support is needed within or after the initial 90 days then all traditional SSVF assistance and requirements are in effect, including the ability to conduct housing search and pursue a permanent lease with the Veteran household. Grantees must document in case files the reasons and justification for continuing SSVF services beyond the initial 90 day period.

### **Homelessness Prevention Enrollments with Rapid Resolution Interventions**

Veterans who present for shelter and engage in a Rapid Resolution conversation, but who were not homeless the night before they presented, should be screened and enrolled in Homelessness Prevention because they are not, by definition, homeless. This guidance is specific to those Veterans who otherwise would have entered literal homelessness tonight “but for” SSVF having intervened. Grantees should use the concepts and discussion points included in Stage 1 Eligibility section of the HP Screener and Rapid Resolution conversation principles to determine that homelessness is imminent. Grantees should also complete the Stage 2 Targeting section for all Veterans during the initial screening and conversation process.

The outcome of the Rapid Resolution conversation and Threshold Score then determine the level of services available to the Veteran household at that time:

- Veterans who meet Stage 1 of the HP Screener and are assisted in identifying an alternative to shelter or the streets are eligible to receive the flexible Rapid Resolution services, including RR TFA, discussed in this guide regardless of whether the HP Threshold Score is met.
- Veterans who meet Stage 1 of the HP screener and are enrolled in SSVF HP but are not successfully assisted in identifying an alternative to shelter through Rapid Resolution may be eligible for the full suite of traditional SSVF Services if they become homeless regardless of whether the Threshold Score is met. This is because the Veteran ultimately became homeless and would have been served otherwise by a RRH enrollment.
- Veterans who meet Stage 1 of the HP Screener and are enrolled in SSVF HP but do NOT meet the grantees Threshold Score, do NOT become homeless and are not assisted with Rapid Resolution are limited to non TFA services only.
- Veterans who meet Stage 1 of the HP Screener and are enrolled in SSVF HP and DO meet the grantee’s Threshold Score should first be provided limited RR services but

remain eligible for the full suite of HP Services if these services are required after attempting Rapid Resolution consistent with a progressive assistance approach. Grantees should still work with the Veteran to identify alternatives and support those alternatives with a lighter Rapid Resolution service package; however, full HP Services may be available if the Rapid Resolution intervention is unsuccessful.

This flexibility to the HP enrollment guidance does NOT apply to Veterans who fear or anticipate housing loss in the near or medium term future; this flexibility is specifically for those Veteran who would have become homeless tonight absent SSVF’s intervention.

The following chart summarizes the bullets above and is specific to those Veterans who present for emergency services and anticipate being literally homelessness tonight.

HP Stage 1	HP Threshold Met	Rapid Resolution Alternative Secured?	Allowable Services
No	N/A	N/A	Not Eligible
Yes	No	Yes – does not enter homelessness	RR Limited Services and TFA Only
Yes	Yes	Yes – does not enter homelessness	RR Limited Services to start, full HP resources if only after RR attempted
Yes	Yes	No – becomes homeless that night	Eligible for SSVF resources to assist with re-housing
Yes	No	No – becomes homeless that night	Full SSVF resources if needed to assist with re-housing

## Temporary Financial Assistance and Rapid Resolution

Rapid Resolution financial assistance allows for limited, need based payments to be paid to family, friends, or other networks willing to provide temporary housing, with or without a lease in place, and where all of the following minimum requirements are met:

- First, SSVF Grantees should consider with the Veteran whether that Veteran has income to contribute to the host household prior to offering SSVF resources, even when a 90 day commitment is secured.
- The household or family is willing to house the Veteran for a minimum of 90 days and is willing to consider a longer-term stay.
- The household indicates a need for financial assistance in order to allow the Veteran to stay with them. TFA is NOT the primary service associated with Rapid Resolution and should not be used as an incentive, but instead only used when necessary to facilitate a safe alternative to homelessness and overcome financial constraints to that alternative.
- Financial assistance for housing is limited to one month or one time per cost type and should be prorated based on space allocated to the Veteran. For instance, if the Veteran will be residing in one bedroom of a 3 bedroom unit, TFA would be limited to one-third of

the fair and reasonable costs associated with that unit. These payments would come from Emergency Housing Assistance. Rental Assistance is only applicable when a lease is in place, and therefore, not applicable during a Rapid Resolution non-lease situation.

- The Veteran and household family agree on the terms of their stay. Although a formal lease is not required, the head of household offering housing to the Veteran needs to provide this commitment in writing.
- The SSVF grantee works with the Veteran and the household or family to develop an understanding that describes expectations for the Veteran’s placement. This understanding may or may not be formalized in writing and could include use of common facilities, allowable times to invite guests, and contributions to household support and maintenance.

The following chart provides an overview of allowable TFA costs associated with Rapid Resolution Services when no formal lease is in place for the Veteran:

Assistance Type	Limitations Under Rapid Resolution (no lease)
Emergency Housing Assistance	Limited to one-time payment equal to one month of rent; can be paid directly to the host family members with 90-day commitment in place to house the Veteran
Utility Assistance	Limited to one-time payment up to one month of utility cost; can be paid directly to the host family members with 90-day commitment in place to house the Veteran
General Housing Stability Assistance	Can be used to offset costs for host family and can be paid directly to family members with 90-day commitment, or GHSA can be used to pay for items for Veteran (i.e. shoes for employment) with or without 90-day commitment
Transportation	Can be provided on behalf of host family if the family is added to the Veteran household and enrolled in SSVF, or can be paid on behalf of the Veteran with or without 90-day commitment, must be paid to third parties in all cases and cannot be paid directly to the Veteran or host family member
Child Care	Can be provided on behalf of host family if the family is added to the Veteran household and enrolled in SSVF or can be paid on behalf of the Veteran with or without 90-day commitment, must be paid to third parties in all cases and cannot be paid directly to the Veteran or host family member
Moving Costs	Can be provided on behalf of host family if the family is added to the Veteran household and enrolled in SSVF, or can be paid on behalf of the Veteran with or without 90-day commitment, must be paid to third parties in all cases and cannot be paid directly to the Veteran or host family member
Security Deposit	Not allowable unless formal lease is in place.
Rental Assistance	Not allowable unless formal lease is in place.

## Emergency Housing Assistance

- Financial assistance only offered if necessary to remove barriers or financial constraints for host to allow Veteran to stay
- Can be used for Rapid Resolution when host household is able to commit to a minimum stay of 90 days with the possibility of a longer-term housing placement.
- No lease or formal living agreement in place required, but host household must agree to 90 days in writing.
- Limit one-time payment (equal to one month of assistance based on rent reasonableness and portion of overall space occupied by Veteran). For example, a host home with three bedrooms where the Veteran occupies one of those bedrooms would allow for a total payment of 33% of the total payment (rent or mortgage) for a single month. All payments must conform to standards for rent reasonableness. Whether the host owns or leases their housing does not matter. SSVF staff should document the basis for the determination of the amount of assistance in the Veteran's case file.

## General Housing Stability Assistance

- Financial assistance only offered if necessary to remove barriers or financial constraints for host to allow Veteran to stay
- Can be used for Rapid Resolution when host household is able to commit to a minimum stay of 90 days with the possibility of a longer-term housing placement,
- No lease or formal living agreement in place required, but host household must agree to 90 days in writing.
- Limit of \$1948 per Veteran in a two-year period, which contributes to overall cap outlined in the traditional SSVF regulation.
- Targeted TFA GHSA payments may be made on behalf of the Veteran absent the 90 day host commitment if such support would help the Veteran pursue or obtain permanent housing. For instance, reasonable car repairs for a vehicle the Veteran owns could be considered an eligible expense even if the Veteran does not have a lease but where that car repair will allow the Veteran to travel to employment or other important benefits or services.

## Utility Payments

- One time utility support may be offered to a host when the host household is able to commit to a minimum stay of 90 days with the possibility of a longer-term housing placement.
- Other utility support only allowable if the Veteran enters a leased situation, at which point all traditional SSVF requirements go into effect.

## Relocation Payments to Permanent Housing Destinations

Grantees may, in limited circumstances when delivering Rapid Resolution services, assist Veterans to move to an area where they have strong social or housing supports or an offer of employment, as outlined in the [SSVF Returning Home Initiative](#) procedures. This requires careful coordination with an SSVF grantee in the community the Veteran wants go. This service can only be provided for those who are literally homeless, and each potential instance must be reviewed and approved by the SSVF Regional Coordinator.

## Documentation Requirements for TFA

- Documented/written commitment from the household or family that Veteran can stay for at least 90 days
- Case notes demonstrating SSVF diligence in assessing necessity of such payment
- Other traditional ledger and receipt documentation based on payment type

## Household Support

- SSVF grantees can support members of the new/re-united household if the Veteran identifies those individuals as members of their own household. In this case, SSVF may provide the full range of family or other supports similar to traditional SSVF services.
- If the Veteran does NOT choose to include the new household members as part of their “Household”, then SSVF supportive services are limited only to the eligible Veteran being served.
- The Veteran’s income status at enrollment (prior to joining a new “Household”) is maintained for the first 90 days of the SSVF enrollment. However, at the 90 day recertification the income of all identified “Household” members would need to be counted if the Veteran household needs longer term services. In this case, the newly defined household’s income may be too high for continued SSVF eligibility, at which point the Veteran and entire household would need to be exited from SSVF.

## Habitability or Housing Quality Standards Inspections and Rent Reasonableness

Habitability and Rent Reasonableness are program regulations and generally apply to Rapid Resolution placements and any associated TFA payments, as described in the chart below.

Rapid Resolution Outcome	Habitability/Housing Quality Standards*	Rent Reasonableness?
Returning to a host or other situation that the Veteran had previously, at any time, resided in, even if temporarily	No	Yes
Moving to a host or other situation where the Veteran has never resided	Yes	Yes
Veteran provided traditional SSVF services or when Rapid Resolution is not possible. Standard HP or RRH Enrollment and Services	Standard SSVF Guidance	Standard SSVF Guidance

\*Note: While Habitability/HQS inspections are not required when a Veteran is returning to a previous residence, it is expected that all Grantees will engage Veterans in a conversation to ensure that any housing or host situation is safe for the Veteran.

## Transition from Rapid Resolution Services to Traditional SSVF Services

The purpose of SSVF Rapid Resolution is to promote alternative housing options for Veterans seeking or having recently accessed emergency shelter or other emergency homeless services. VA acknowledges that these temporary solutions may not always be sufficient to help the Veteran avoid homelessness over the medium or long term. Veterans provided Rapid Resolution services at the start of their housing crisis should remain enrolled in SSVF for at least 90 days and would retain their eligibility for continued SSVF assistance.

Veterans who are diverted or rapidly exited from shelter to temporary or permanent destinations that turn out not to be stable may be provided traditional SSVF services such as housing search, case management and TFA (within the service's limitations as described in this document) while residing in the temporary situation if the SSVF staff determine the Veteran needs this assistance to obtain permanent housing.

- Where a Veteran's housing situation does not have potential for being sustained or stabilized with limited Rapid Resolution services and resources, grantees may provide traditional SSVF services such as housing search, relocation, and TFA.
- For those requiring the more robust services SSVF has to offer, all traditional SSVF Program requirements are in effect.
- For Homelessness Prevention clients, household must meet grantee's HP Screener Threshold Score in order to receive services beyond the limited RR service package.

## Fraud Prevention

The SSVF Program Office would like grantees to be mindful of potential situations and instances where fraud could occur. Reviewing preventative measures and risk mitigation is key and aligns with SSVF standard protocols. SSVF grantees are required to review the Audit Fraud Waste and Abuse Webinar annually at <https://tacinc.adobeconnect.com/FraudAwareness>

## HMIS and Data Capture Requirements

SSVF grantees are advised to enroll Veterans in SSVF HP or RRH projects prior to or at the beginning of Rapid Resolution conversations. Veterans who are assisted by SSVF in identifying a safe alternative to entering the homeless system such as moving in with family or friends are eligible for Rapid Resolution services and must be tracked in HMIS as having a Rapid Resolution service by adding a service under [V2 Services Provided](#) using the Field Response #9: “Rapid Resolution.”

## Documenting Rapid Resolution Services in HMIS

Step 1: Enroll Veteran as HP or RRH based on enrollment guidance in Rapid Resolution Program Guide

Step 2: Complete all required SSVF data elements

For Veterans requesting assistance who were housed last night but have no place to stay tonight

- SSVF staff conducts both Stage 1 and 2 of the HP screener and enrolls the Veteran in HMIS into the HP project
- SSVF staff helps the Veteran find a place to stay through the Rapid Resolution conversation as part of the screening process

Step 3: Select ‘Rapid Resolution’ in “V2 Services Provided – SSVF” for the Veteran Head of Household (only needs to be entered for Veteran)

Field 1: Date of Service

Field 2: Type of Service select option 9 “Rapid Resolution”