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**Study Suggests Temporary Financial Assistance Improves Homeless Veterans’ Odds of Becoming Stably Housed**

**CITATION:** Nelson R, Byrne T, Suo Y, et al. [Association of Temporary Financial Assistance with Housing Stability among US Veterans in the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program.](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33566108/) *JAMA Network Open*. February 10, 2021;4(2): e2037047.

**BACKGROUND:**

Programs that provide financial assistance for housing-related expenses with a goal of facilitating housing for previously homeless individuals can be an important to better health outcomes. Since October 2011, VA has partnered with community organizations to provide housing support and services through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. A key component of SSVF is temporary financial assistance (TFA), which provides funds for rent, utility payments, security deposits, and other housing-related expenses for Veterans who have lost – or are at risk of losing – stable housing. This retrospective cohort study sought to determine whether TFA improves housing outcomes for Veterans with housing instability. Using data from VA and HUD’s Homeless Management Information System ([HMIS](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/)), investigators identified 41,969 Veterans with SSVF episodes (mean duration = 91 days) between October 2015 - September 2018. The main outcome was stable housing – defined as permanent, independent residence paid for either by the client or through housing subsidy – upon exit from SSVF. The main independent variable was whether the Veteran received TFA during their SSVF episode.

**FINDINGS:**

* Compared to Veterans not receiving temporary financial assistance, those receiving TFA were substantially more likely to have stable housing outcomes (risk difference=25%).
* Investigators also found a positive association between the amount of TFA received and stable housing. More than 90% of Veterans with TFA amounts of at least $2,000 exited the SSVF program to stable housing.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

Given the high cost of providing services to homeless individuals and the significant negative impact of homelessness on both physical and mental health, the primary goal of any rapid re-housing program is to facilitate stable housing. From this perspective, results offer support for a continued and perhaps expanded policy shift toward offering TFA to more homeless Veterans.

**LIMITATIONS:**

* The stable housing outcome was measured at exit from the SSVF program with episodes lasting, on average, 91 days; therefore, investigators were able to draw conclusions only about the relationship between TFA and *short-term* housing stability.
* Even though the HMIS and VA electronic data allowed researchers to control for a number of confounders in the relationship between TFA and stable housing, it was impossible to completely capture all of the factors that would influence a grantee to allocate TFA to a Veteran or not.

**AUTHOR/FUNDING INFORMATION:**

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