

# **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Overview**

*Housing Homeless and Imminently  
At-Risk Veteran Families*

Nikki Barfield  
Deputy Director  
November 2022

# SSVF Funds Services with Grants

VA funds  
community  
non-profits



Grantees  
provide services  
to Veterans and  
their families

***Grantees are responsible to work with household on what services to provide. Program office provides guidance & oversight.***

# Tailor Plans to Individual Needs

Young Veterans

Women

Dependent  
children

Disabled



# Serve Entire Household

*Which Household Members Have Needs Impacting Housing Stability?*

- Address needs of non-Veterans to support housing stability
- 20% of participants are dependent children
- Able to serve family members if household separates
  - DV provision resets TFA clock



# SSVF: A Culture of Learning, Partnerships, & Innovation

## 2011-2013 *Start Up & Advancement*

- SSVF Begins
- Accreditation
- Practice Standards

## 2014-2017 *Community Planning to End Veteran Homelessness*

- Surge Grants
- Community Plans
- CoC Support
- Fed CB

## 2018-2020 *Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis*

- Integration in CES
- Returning Home
- Rapid Resolution
- Shallow Subsidies

## 2020-2022 *Responding to COVID & Increasing Coordination*

- Rapid Expansion of Motel Sheltering
- SSVF & HUD-VASH Coordination
- SSVF Housing Navigation NOFA
- Health Navigation and Legal



# Tools Available to Grantees

- Outreach
- Case management
- Benefits Assistance
- Housing Navigation
  - Specialized position
  - Active involvement, not just a list
- Financial assistance (TFA)
  - More than rent and utilities
- Transportation
- Link to health care
- Employment and training
- Credit counseling
- Legal Assistance
  - *National service expansion*

# TFA in Target Communities

- Landlord incentives worth up to 2-months rent.
- Tenant move-in support an additional \$1000 for consumer selected quality of life items.
- Expanded eligibility to 80% AMI (up from 50%).

# Priority One: Rapid Re-housing

- Triage priority  
→ Literally homeless
- Budget sufficient resources,  
Demand = BNL (or PIT) + inflow

**BNL** or By-Name-List. Used to assign and track individual services.

**PIT** is annual Point-in-Time count of homelessness.



*U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Imani N. Daniels*



# Priority Two: Homelessness Prevention

- Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) limited to 40% without a waiver (can be just services).
- Targets **imminent** risk of homelessness
- Use Diversion/Rapid Resolution – may straddle into early shelter intervention. Should be part of initial conversation at time of housing crisis.
- HP or Diversion clients a great target group for HVRP referrals

# A note about Homelessness Prevention...

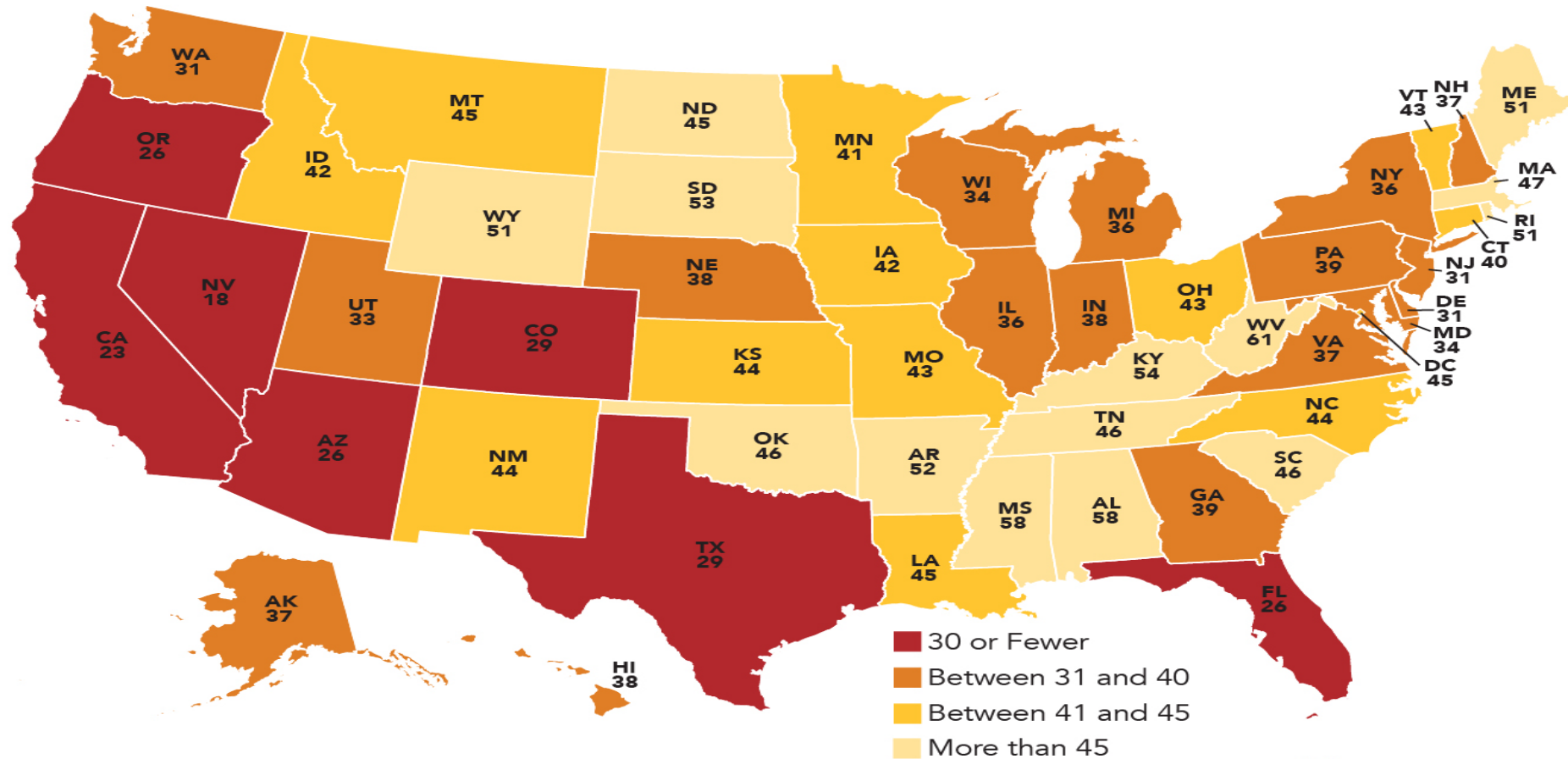
- Homelessness Prevention (HP) is NOT the same as eviction prevention. Grantees use limited HP resources focused on those most likely will become homeless
- HP Service are not limited to TFA – Grantees offer case management or other services to help stabilize the household

# Rapid Resolution (Family Reunification)

- Divert from homeless system, preventing trauma and opening alternative housing resources
- Conflict Mediation and reduction in social isolation
- Modest financial assistance
- Household members (Veteran's family) eligible for services
- May be a good target group for HVRP or employment services

# THE GAP

## RENTAL HOMES AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE PER 100 EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY STATE



Note: Extremely low-income (ELI) renter households have incomes at or below the poverty level or 30% of the area median income. Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2020 5-Year ACS PUMS Data.  
©2022 National Low Income Housing Coalition

  
NATIONAL LOW INCOME  
HOUSING COALITION  
<https://nlihc.org/gap>



Choose **VA**

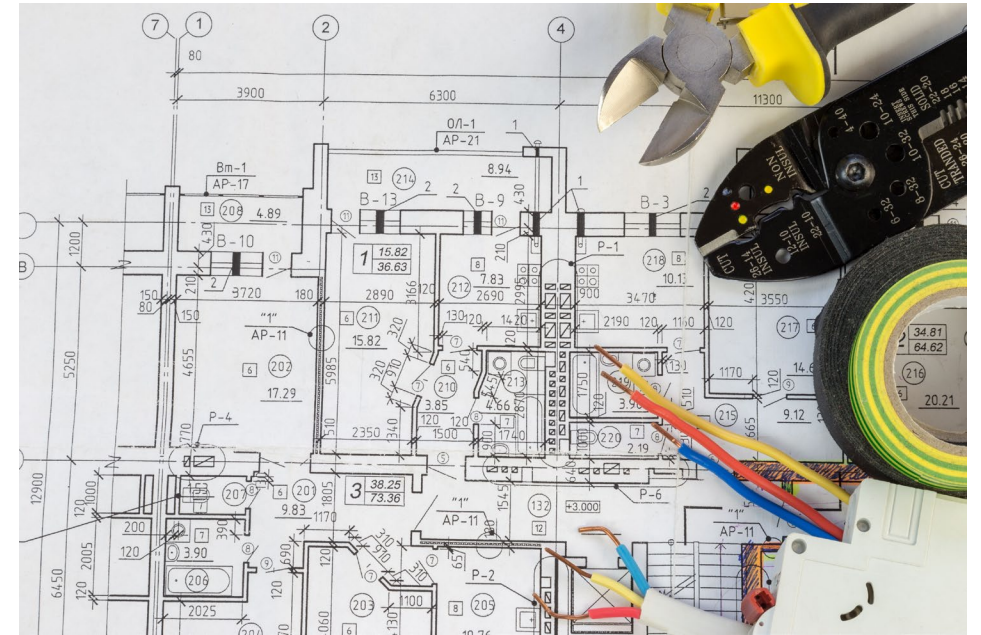
**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs 12

# How Do We Increase Supply?

- Build new units
  - Expensive
  - Takes years
- Identify “new” housing within existing supply
  - Shallow Subsidy
  - Shared Housing
- Increase income to meet market needs with support
  - HVRP and Employment
  - SOAR





# Tools to Ensure Participant Safety

- Housing First is SSVF policy
- Same Day Screening and Enrollment
- Emergency Housing Assistance
- General Housing Stability Assistance
- HVRP Grantees should be aware of emergency needs of Veterans and link to VA/SSVF if Veteran in danger

# Housing First

- Serve without pre-condition
- Evidence-based
- Not Housing Only
- Income not a requirement for program but a strong emphasis to promote stability long term

# Same Day Screening and Enrollment

- Those eligible for services face higher mortality and morbidity risks.
- SSVF is a social services ER.
- Use SQUARES and if necessary self-certification of income to begin services.



## 4. General Housing Stability Assistance

- Items necessary for safety
- Employment assistance: uniforms, tools, certifications, licenses
- Kitchen utensils, bedding, supplies
- Housing applications, tenant screening reports, background checks, inspection fees

# Finding/Keeping Housing

- Plans address household barriers
- Housing Specialists with local knowledge of market
- Sustainability means affordability
  - Likely still rent burdened
  - Income
  - Housing costs



# Shallow Subsidies

- Offers 50% rental subsidy for 2-years, increasing supply of affordable units
  - Subsidy does not change even if income increases
  - No income recertification for 2 years
- Partnership with DOL's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) to provide boost to income and potential for self-sufficiency

# Shallow Subsidies cont.

- Subsidy amount is fixed over the 24-month commitment
  - Differentiating it from Rapid Rehousing which can be a deeper subsidy but is shorter term
  - No income recertification required for entire Shallow Subsidy period so no disincentive to increase income
- Veterans have the ability to be re-certified at the end of the 24 month assistance period, if income eligible and still need assistance
- Can be used in typical one-bedroom, multi-bedroom families, and shared Housing situations

# Shallow Subsidies Targeting

- Must be income eligible for SSVF when transitioning to Shallow Subsidy
- Generally requires minimal supportive services/tenancy supports. May rely on more community connections (HVRP for instance)
- Has the ability to pay the balance of rent. Only needs moderate rental assistance differentiating it from HUD-VASH services.

# Shallow Subsidy and RRH or HP

Veteran may be transitioned from traditional SSVF RRH or Prevention services to Shallow Subsidy

- Generally expected to be part of a progressive engagement approach, employed after initial Rapid Re-housing or Homeless Prevention assistance.
- All Veterans must be enrolled as either RRH or Prevention for purposes of eligibility, HMIS, and grant management – Shallow Subsidy is a new service not a new enrollment.

In some cases, Veterans begin utilizing at initial intake if they do not need rental assistance or deposits from traditional SSVF

- For literally homeless Veterans consider providing traditional SSVF RRH first to help them move into housing
- Veterans needing Prevention may be more likely to refer directly to Shallow Subsidy
- Tradition flexibilities of SSVF Rental Assistance not available once Shallow Subsidy begins – subsidy is set for two year period

# Target Populations for Shallow Subsidy

Veterans who may be a good candidate for Shallow Subsidy could be but not limited to:

- Employed with the ability to build income (work or non-work) over time
- Potentially a good candidate for or already enrolled HVRP or other employment service (not required)
- On fixed incomes such as retired seniors or disabled Veterans - effective prevention tool
- On the waiting list for affordable housing opportunities or engaged in pursuing shared housing opportunities



# Implications for HVRP and Other Employment

- Veterans who can or are willing to work can now continue to receive ongoing assistance for at least two years even if income increases significantly during enrollment
- Connections for employment services should be considered as soon as Veteran is housed or expresses interest
  - Can use normal SSVF assistance to offer deeper or more flexible subsidy while Veteran is gaining training or employment
  - Once Veteran can pay 50% of rent (assuming still under AMI cap) can offer Shallow Subsidy service commitment while continuing to maintain or build income
- HVRP and SSVF should be actively coordinating cross referrals for Veterans willing or wanting to work to expedite income growth
- Communication critical between SSVF, HVRP and Veteran to time transition to Shallow Subsidy as income begins to increase
- Veteran is still enrolled in same SSVF program so does not effect HVRP eligibility
- New SSVF Legal Services may pair well with income supports for justice involved Veterans

# Potential Next Steps

- Meet with your SSVF grantee counterparts to discuss their progress in implementing Shallow Subsidy services, including overall targeting of service and other program decisions
- Review HVRP capacity to take new enrollments from SSVF and timing of employment outcomes to help plan referrals
- Discuss a referral process for Veterans seeking employment or training, including overall demand, equity considerations for historically marginalized groups and program requirements
- Establish a regular communication plan to review make/review outstanding referrals, update on income trajectory of those enrolled in both programs and other coordination matters

# Shallow Subsidy Services

- While providing Shallow Subsidy services
  - Lighter level of case management generally expected for Veterans
    - Monthly check-ins
      - Verify tenancy in assisted housing unit
      - Verify household is able to make rental assistance payments
  - Grantees must still have the ability to elevate supportive services for Veterans as needed
- Connection to HVRP and other employment and income supports seen as critical given 2-year certification flexibilities
- Document Check Ins
  - Client Files
  - HMIS

# Transitions from Shallow Subsidy

- After 24 months of Shallow Subsidy Veteran needs to be recertified as eligible for SSVF:
  - If Veterans have increased household income through employment, benefits or other options, they will be exited from SSVF
  - If Veterans still need assistance maintaining, re-certification is possible for an additional two years, if income eligible
- At any time, Veterans can transition to Permanent Housing Subsidy
  - Site based subsidized unit
  - Voucher (HUD VASH, Section 8)
  - Section 811 Project Based Assistance

# Transitions from Shallow Subsidy (cont.)

- Termination from SSVF – Abandoned Unit or Unknown Whereabouts
  - Abandoned unit, unable to locate Veteran
  - SSVF provider may terminate Veteran after 90 days
  - May pay SSVF portion of rent unless lease is terminated
- Termination from SSVF – Absence from Unit
  - Incarceration for longer than 90 days
- Eviction alone is not a reason for termination from SSVF



# Progressive Assistance

- NOT one size fits all. Policies describing “what everyone gets” will only lead to failure.
- Begin with least amount of assistance needed and scale up from there when required.
- The Services are JUST AS or MORE important than the financial assistance.