

SSVF Priority 1 Community Plan

Date Completed/Revised:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|-----|---|---|------|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | / | 0 | 1 | / | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Month | | | Day | | | Year | | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Continuum of Care (CoC) Name: Spokane City/County | | CoC #: WA - 502 |
| CoC Representative: Fawn Schott | | Title: General Manager of Grant Funded Programs |
| Phone/Email: (509) 344-0169 fawns@giin.org | | |
| Person Completing this Plan: Heather M. Simmons | | Title: SSVF Program Manager |
| Phone/Email: (509) 232-1133 heathers@giin.org | | |

1. Primary Planning and Coordination Group: Identify the primary group responsible for planning and coordinating efforts to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in the CoC. Identify the principal members of this group and their affiliation.

| Primary Group Name: | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Principle Members | Affiliation |
| Lily Haken | Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) *CoC Member* |
| Fawn Schott | Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest (GIIN) *CoC Member* |
| Beth Kerr | Volunteers of America (VOA) |
| Heather M. Simmons | GIIN |
| Ilze Zatins-Ilgien | CHAS |
| Roszell Delong | CHAS |
| Tennille Lightfoot | Pioneer Victory Human Services |
| Pete Lockwood | House of Charity – Respite Program Manager |
| Crystal Alderman | Frontier Behavioral Health |
| Sheila Morley | City of Spokane CoC Lead |
| Stephanie Beernink | House of Charity – Homeless Case Manager |
| Jon Carollo | Volunteers of America *CoC Co-Chair* |
| Shawna Sampson | Spokane Neighborhood Action Program (SNAP) – Coordinated Entry for Singles |
| Pam Tietz | Spokane Housing Authority |
| Daniel Ramos | Salvation Army – Coordinated Entry for Families |

2. Ongoing Review and Coordination: Briefly describe how often (e.g., monthly) the above group or a related review/coordination group meets to review Veterans who are homeless, track progress toward re-housing, and coordinate efforts. Include a summary of what information is reviewed during these meetings.

The Spokane County/City CoC meets monthly to review the homeless plan and identify action steps, review and discuss available and possible funding opportunities, and gather data from providers, HMIS, and the PIT count.

3. SSVF Grantees Serving CoC Geography: Identify each SSVF funded agency serving Veterans in the CoC geography and each SSVF total grant award amount for FY15, including priority 1 (“surge”), 2 (renewals), and 3 (other new) awards. If one agency has multiple awards, list each separately. Pro-rate a grant award amount if the award covers more than one CoC geography. Include the projected annual number of households each grantee can serve and the total number of households across all grantees.

| Grantee Agency Name | Grant Amount | Total Annual Projected Households | Total Annual Projected Households: Rapid Re-Housing | % of Total Households to be Assisted with Rapid Re-Housing |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Goodwill Industries – Priority I | \$2.96 million (over 3 years) | 160 | 128 | 80% |
| Goodwill Industries – Priority II | \$1.34 million (1 year) | 250 | 150 | 60% |
| TOTAL | \$ 4.3 million | 410 | 278 | N/A |

4. Annual Demand and Need for Rapid Re-Housing Assistance: Using the *Veterans Demand Analysis and Progress Tracking Tool* or other demand analysis data agreed to by the primary group above, identify:

- The most recent actual or projected annual unduplicated number of homeless Veterans (on street and/or who access emergency shelter, Safe Havens, or transitional housing, including GPD) in the CoC geography, by household type
- The number of those Veterans who will need rapid re-housing assistance to exit homelessness
- The number of Veterans needing rapid re-housing assistance who are projected to be eligible for SSVF RRH assistance.

| | Annual Unduplicated Homeless Veteran Households | Estimated # of Needing RRH (a) | Projected # to be Assisted with SSVF RRH (b) | Projected # to be Assisted with Other RRH (c) | Gap (a-(b+c)) |
|--|---|--------------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| Households without Children | 151[HS1] | 85 | 85 | 23[HS2] | 0 |
| Households with Children | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Total Homeless Veteran Households | 158 | 87 | 87 | 24 | 0 |

5. CoC Goals for Ending Homelessness among Veterans: List the CoC's goals for ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 (fill in additional related goals the CoC has determined, if relevant).

What are the CoC's goals for the estimated number of Veterans, including chronically homeless Veterans, who will be homeless as of the night of the January 2016 PIT Count[HS3]?

| | All Homeless Veteran Households (including CH) | | | Chronically Homeless Veteran Households[HS4] | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------|------------|--|-------------|-----------|
| | Sheltered | Unsheltered | TOTAL | Sheltered | Unsheltered | TOTAL |
| Households without Children | 91 | 75 | 166 | 5 | 20 | 25 |
| Households with Children | 6 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Households | 97 | 76 | 173 | 5 | 21 | 26 |

Has the CoC established other goals related to preventing and ending homelessness among Veterans by the end of 2015? Yes No

If "Yes", please describe:

"The Road Home," Spokane region's ten-year plan to end homelessness is newly revised in 2015 with new goals and objectives specific to ending Veteran homelessness. The plan reflects the ongoing need and commitment to reduce civilian homelessness by 50% by 2015 within the Spokane Regional CoC. The plan is based on government agencies and local city and county agencies' commitment to end homelessness in the most vulnerable and disabled citizens who reside on the streets and in shelters, and those experiencing chronic homelessness, including homeless veterans. Core strategies implemented are:

- Prevention - Reduce the incidence of homelessness by providing tools to families and single persons at-risk of becoming homeless.
- Reduce the period of time that families and single persons are homeless.
- Increase the capacity to assist homeless families and single persons to return quickly to self-sufficiency.
- Improve access to services and housing for families and single persons experiencing homelessness.
- End Homelessness for our most vulnerable populations (including chronic homeless persons) by providing permanent supportive housing to disabled homeless persons.
- Develop coordinated, multi-system responses to end homelessness.
- Enhance coordinated solutions through regional planning and expanded funding capacity.

Since the implementation of this plan, there has been a decline in Veteran homelessness, as last reported in the 2010 One Day Count and 2009 HMIS. It is believed that improved access to supportive services, as well as an increase in VA benefits, are responsible for this decline. However, based on the surveys collected during the point-in-time count, the number of homeless individuals that reported themselves as veterans was significantly lower than national averages; which leads to the belief that the number of homeless Veterans is significantly higher than what was reported. Also, there are such disparities in how personal information is reported in HMIS, the total number of Veterans are not being captured, suggesting a reduction in homelessness among the Veteran population, but is really a discrepancy in data collection.

The CoC will be meeting to discuss the updates and changes to the plan, reflecting the new processes in place to reduce data duplication and to move forward with the goal of reducing homelessness in the Spokane Region. The CoC has also approved the creation of the Veteran's CoC Sub-Committee, whose one and only focus is the elimination of Veteran homelessness. The sub-committee meets bi-weekly to prioritize the needs of the Veteran community and develop action steps to address those needs. We are currently working to maximize the number of Veterans served through coordination of services between SSVF, HCHV and the VA.

6. SSVF Integration into CoC Coordinated Assessment System: Briefly describe how Veterans access SSVF assistance (across all SSVF grantees) via the CoC's coordinated assessment system (e.g., "All Veterans who present to the CoC coordinated assessment center are screened for their current situation, needs, and SSVF eligibility. Then....). If not yet fully developed, describe your plans and implementation timeframe. Specifically address:

- a) How Veterans who present for shelter are screened and diverted to SSVF homelessness prevention assistance when they have somewhere safe and appropriate to stay that night.
- b) How Veterans who become literally homeless are screened and triaged to SSVF rapid re-housing assistance as soon as possible once it is clear the Veteran is unable to resolve their homelessness without assistance.

The SSVF Outreach team have developed referral processes with all of the shelters in Spokane counties. They maintain a set schedule each week to visit and chat with those residing in the shelter. If a Veteran is identified and willing, an eligibility screening and the VI-SPDAT assessment are completed on-site and an appointment scheduled with case management, if eligibility is met. If a Veteran is identified and an Outreach Specialist is not on-site, shelter staff can contact the SSVF Outreach Hotline for an instant eligibility screening to be done via phone or to meet the Veteran on-site.

In conjunction with the SSVF's outreach team's efforts, the Veteran's CoC Sub-committee ventured to streamline the referral process with the one of the most highly utilized shelters, House of Charity (HOC). HOC reported 199 unduplicated Veterans were registered with their sleeping program in 2014. The Sub-committee took shifts at HOC, from 4am until 8 pm for one week, and identified 27 unduplicated Veterans and 6 current enrollees of SSVF or HCHV. The Outreach team was able to identify the most lucrative times to visit HOC to maintain the created momentum. The committee will continue these projects to further identify untouched Veterans.

The Single Housing Coordinated Assessment began in October 2014. Within several months' time, it was recognized that the Veterans were getting lost in the transfer from the assessment sites to the Veteran Services programs (i.e. SSVF and HCHV). Therefore, the Veteran's CoC Sub-committee made a motion to remove Veterans from the SHCA process. The new process is when Veterans are identified by an assessor, the assessor will call the newly established SSVF Outreach Hotline. The hotline is manned by an Outreach Specialist who can determine eligibility over the phone. If the Veteran is eligible, the Outreach Specialist will meet the Veteran in the field to complete eligibility paperwork, which includes the VI-SPDAT assessment, and schedule an appointment with a Case Manager. After enrollment, the VI-SPDAT data and score will be entered into HMIS. The Case Manager will then work with Healthcare for Homeless Vets (HCHV) to share the Veteran's information and link to services available through HCHV.

7. Long-Term System Improvements: Briefly describe how the CoC plans to utilize SSVF Priority 1 and all other SSVF funding over the next three years to foster long-term system improvements and optimization so that homelessness is prevented whenever possible and when it does occur, it is rare and brief. Specifically address areas for improvement related to:

- a) Further integrating SSVF assistance into the CoC's planning, oversight processes and coordinated assessment system.
- b) Ensuring comprehensive coordination with VA systems and other VA funded programs.
- c) Improving or establishing partnerships with community-based services and public/private housing providers.

SSVF Priority I and all other SSVF funding will be utilized in the following ways to foster long-term system improvements and optimization:

- The CoC committee is comprised of the leaders in the community on Homelessness Prevention and Reduction including a representative from the VA and the city of Spokane. This committee has chosen to establish a sub-committee dedicated to eliminating Veteran homelessness. The following areas will be discussed in the sub-committee's bi-weekly meetings:
 - Create formal ways to track progress in reducing homelessness and using available data to determine if surge funds and resources are being used for their intended purposes.
 - Gather data in order to revise and update the "The Road Home," Spokane region's plan to reduce homelessness by 2015.
 - Offer suggestions on increasing available permanent housing units by establishing Veteran preference units.
 - Formalize the process of identifying Veterans who are staying in shelters, as the men's shelters currently are not using HMIS for data collection.
- Streamline intake sharing between SSVF and HCHV to make the intake process less cumbersome and repetitive, thus making the process more efficient and Veteran friendly.
- Coordinate a warm hand-off from SSVF to other resources so that no Veteran is lost when referred from one agency to another.
- SSVF Housing Resource Specialists will continue to build relationships with affordable and subsidized housing providers and private landlords.
- Non-VA related services will be offered to those who aren't eligible for VA services.

8. Other Strengths and Challenges: Briefly describe any additional strengths and/or challenges relevant to your achieving VA and local goals.

Strengths:

- Veteran Experience – Partnering with the VA and other local agencies has been invaluable to the success of the SSVF Program. They bring years of experience with the Veteran population to the table and the SSVF Program is able to grow in its approach to services to ensure the Veteran is getting the best assistance needed.
- Recidivism – The SSVF Program has assisted over 149 Veterans transition from homelessness to stabilized housing over the first year of the program. To-date, there have been 7 who required additional SSVF assistance and support after being housed.
- Coordinated Entry – The Single's Coordinated Entry has been revised to ensure that no Veteran is lost in the referral process and obtain immediate screening for eligibility to community Veteran services..
- Surge Funding – The surge funding has provided much needed financial resources; and local providers, as well as the local VA service providers, meet more regularly and continue to look for others.
- Relationship with local VA - A VA representative is now co-located with the SVVF team to be accessible to Veterans needing transitional and permanent supportive housing; as well as to register Veterans for applicable benefits and services.
- Outreach Hotline - The SSVF Outreach hotline is established and implemented to provide easy access to eligibility determinations. Hotline information is shared with SHCA assessment sites through the learning community, as well as community partners through current outreach channels.

8. Other Strengths and Challenges: Continued...

Challenges:

- Mobility of vets – As most Veterans assisted are literally homeless, it is difficult to locate them should contact be lost; as well the Veteran population is very migratory and move often which makes it difficult for Outreach to find them and offer SSVF assistance.
- Variable Funding – As with any grant funded program, funding comes and goes, which often times leaves the local agencies scrambling to offer comparable services with little to no financial backing.
- County Vets Resources – The Spokane County Veteran’s Center offers preventative services in a limited capacity. Once a Veteran has reached his/her cap, he/she can no longer be assisted and are referred to the SSVF program. Due to the high restrictions on prevention services, the SSVF program may not be able to assist, causing frustration and friction with the Veteran and the Veteran’s Center.
- HUD-VASH Restrictions – Often times the only thing keeping a Veteran with a HUD-VASH voucher from being housed is the affordability of an application fee and security deposit. Though the SSVF program is able to assist with the security deposit, it often can’t because the Veteran is not identified as chronically homeless, and application fees are not allowed at all. This causes friction and frustration with the VA service providers, and the Veteran potentially remains homeless.
- Coordinated Entry – Now that Veterans are being referred out of the SHCA process, it is important to provide the assessment site with the SSVF Outreach hotline information, so that the assessors know who to contact. We are currently training on the new process in the SHCA learning community, as well as encouraging participants in the Veteran Sub-committee meetings to inform their staff.