



# **Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program**

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## **Program Guide**

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## I. Introduction

### A. Purpose of the Program Guide

The purpose of this Program Guide is to provide an overview of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program. This Program Guide has force for oversight, auditing and program review purposes, and is to be used by applicants to the SSVF Program, grantees, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) staff members, and other interested third parties involved in the SSVF Program. The Program Guide provides the following information:

1. Program Overview
2. Renewal Process
3. Technical Assistance
4. Participant Eligibility
5. Supportive Services
6. Program Operations
7. Fiscal Administration
8. Training and Evaluation
9. Reporting Requirements
10. Program Resources

The guidelines provided in this Program Guide are intended to be consistent with SSVF Program regulations (38 CFR Part 62), and other applicable laws, Executive Orders, OMB Circulars, and VA regulations. In the event of a conflict between this Program Guide and VA regulations, applicable laws, OMB Circulars, or Executive Orders, such regulations, laws, OMB Circulars, or Executive Orders shall control. Guidelines should not be construed to supersede, rescind, or otherwise amend such laws, Executive Orders, OMB Circulars, and regulations. Grantees are responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the SSVF Program regulations, the supportive services grant agreement, and other applicable laws and regulations.

### B. SSVF Program Description and Background

Section 604 of the Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008, Public Law 110-387, authorized VA to develop the SSVF Program. Supportive services grants will be awarded to selected private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that will assist very low-income Veteran families residing in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees will provide a range of supportive services to eligible Veteran families that are designed to promote housing stability.

The statutory authority for the SSVF Program is found at 38 U.S.C. 2044. The implementing regulations are found at 38 CFR Part 62.

### C. Definitions

Please refer to 38 CFR 62.2 and 38 CFR 62.10 for definitions of terms used in the SSVF Program. A summary of key definitions used within this Program Guide is provided below.

Applicant: An eligible entity that submits an application for a supportive services grant announced in a Notice of Fund Availability.

Area or community: A political subdivision or contiguous political subdivisions (such as a precinct, ward, borough, city, county, State, Congressional district or tribal reservation) with an identifiable population of very low-income Veteran families.

Consumer cooperative: See section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q).

Continuum of Care (CoC): A community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the needs of people who are homeless as they move into stable housing and maximize self sufficiency.

Department of Defense (DD) Form 214: The Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty issued by the Department of Defense to each Veteran, identifying the Veteran's condition of discharge – honorable, general, other than honorable, dishonorable or bad conduct.

Dependent: For SSVF reporting purposes only, dependents are defined as children under the age of 18 at program entry. This reflects an alignment with HUD's definition of "households with children and adults," and can now be tracked in and reported out of HMIS. *(Note: a Veteran may identify adult dependents as part of their "household." These adult dependents may be served as part of the Veteran family, but for SSVF and HMIS reporting purposes, would not be reported as a "dependent.")*

Eligible child care provider: A provider of child care services for compensation, including a provider of care for a school-age child during non-school hours, that: (1) is licensed, regulated, registered, or otherwise legally operating, under state and local law, and (2) satisfies the state and local requirements, applicable to the child care services the provider provides.

Eligible entity: (1) private non-profit organization, or (2) consumer cooperative.

Emergency housing: Temporary housing provided under 38 CFR 62.34(f) that does not require the participant to sign a lease or occupancy agreement.

Emergency Housing Assistance: The provision of up to 45 days of temporary housing for a Veteran family with dependents (up to 72 hours for a single Veteran) that does not require the participant to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. The cost cannot exceed the reasonable community standard for such housing. Emergency housing is limited to short-term commercial residences (private residences are not eligible for such funding) not already funded to provide on-demand emergency shelter (such as emergency congregate shelters).

Extremely Low Income (ELI): An income category for a Veteran family whose annual income, in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609, does not exceed 30 percent of the area median income. Note that this ELI category determination is made only at participants' entry into the SSVF program.

General Housing Stability Assistance: The provision of goods or payment of expenses not included in other sections but which are directly related to support a participant's housing stability, and are authorized under 38 CFR 62.34(e), which are not available through existing mainstream and community resources.

Grantee: An eligible entity that is awarded a supportive services grant.

Homeless: The “homeless” definition has the meaning given by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 24 CFR 576.2.

[https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_ESGInterimRule&ConPlanConfirmingAmendments.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_ESGInterimRule&ConPlanConfirmingAmendments.pdf). For an at-a-glance reference see: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/24/576.2>

Homeless, “Literally”: The “literally homeless” definition is a more narrow definition than “Homeless” defined above. It is this “literally homeless” definition that is a critical requirement to qualify Veterans for SSVF rapid re-housing (consistent with the Emergency Solutions Grant program). This means every participant in SSVF rapid re-housing (category 2 and 3) is carefully qualified within the parameters of “literally homeless.” Note that a Veteran who is residing in what is commonly referred to as a “doubled up” or a “couch surfing” situation in permanent housing, or otherwise residing in permanent housing, would not fit the “literally homeless” definition below. Note that such persons would be considered category 1 and could qualify for homelessness prevention.

As per HUD 24 CFR 576.2, “literally homeless” is defined as:

- (1) An individual/family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
  - (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
  - (ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals);
  - (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): The information system designated by the Continuum of Care to comply with the HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards and used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at-risk of homelessness.

Household: All persons as identified by the Veteran, together present for services, and identify themselves as being part of the same household.

Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA): A NOFA is published in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 38 CFR 62.40, which announces the availability of funds for supportive services grants.

Occupying permanent housing: A very low-income Veteran family will be considered to be occupying permanent housing if the very low-income Veteran family:

(Category 1) Is residing in permanent housing and at risk of becoming *literally homeless* but for grantee's assistance;

(Category 2) Is *literally homeless*, and at risk to remain in this situation but for grantee's assistance, and scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing; or

(Category 3) Is *literally homeless* after exiting permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to the very low-income Veteran family's needs and preferences.

Regarding above references to *literally homeless*: for specifics as to what circumstances do and do not constitute *literal homelessness*, see the definition: Homeless, Literally.

Participant Household: A very low-income Veteran family occupying permanent housing who is receiving supportive services from a grantee.

Permanent Housing: Community-based housing without a designated length of stay where an individual or family has a lease in accord with state and Federal law that is renewable and terminable only for cause. Examples of permanent housing include, but are not limited to: a house or apartment with a month-to-month or annual lease term, or home ownership.<sup>1</sup>

Private non-profit organization: Any of the following:

- (1) An incorporated private institution or foundation that:
  - (i) Has no part of the net earnings that inure to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual;
  - (ii) Has a governing board that is responsible for the operation of the supportive services provided under the SSVF Program; and
  - (iii) Is approved by VA as to financial responsibility.
- (2) A for-profit limited partnership, the sole general partner of which is an organization meeting the requirements of paragraphs (1)(i), (ii) and (iii) of this definition.
- (3) A corporation wholly owned and controlled by an organization meeting the requirements of paragraphs (1)(i), (ii), and (iii) of this definition.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Transition in Place (TIP) programs where the very low-income Veteran family maintains an independent lease with a landlord and maintains lease rights to the unit throughout TIP program enrollment and conclusion without exception are considered permanent housing.

(4) A tribally designated housing entity (as defined in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)).

Rapid re-housing: An intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and transition to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing assistance is offered without required preconditions such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety. Support services are tailored to the unique needs of each individual participant household to facilitate a rapid transition to permanent housing. The three goals of rapid re-housing are identifying housing, providing rent and move-in financial assistance, and offering case management and related services. While a rapid re-housing program must have all three core components, it is not required that a single entity provides all three services nor that a household utilize them all.

State: Any of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, any territory or possession of the United States, or any agency or instrumentality of a State exclusive of local governments. The term does not include any public or Indian housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937.

Subcontractor: Any third party contractor, of any tier, working directly for an eligible entity.

Supportive services: Any of the following provided to address the needs of a participant:

- (1) Outreach services as specified under 38 CFR 62.30.
- (2) Case management services as specified under 38 CFR 62.31.
- (3) Assisting participants in obtaining VA benefits as specified under 38 CFR 62.32.
- (4) Assisting participants in obtaining and coordinating other public benefits as specified under 38 CFR 62.33.
- (5) Other services as specified under 38 CFR 62.34.

Supportive services grant: A grant awarded under the SSVF Program.

Supportive services grant agreement: The agreement executed between VA and a grantee as specified under 38 CFR 62.50.

Suspension: An action by VA that temporarily withdraws VA funding under a supportive services grant, pending corrective action by the grantee or pending a decision to terminate the supportive services grant by VA. Suspension of a supportive services grant is a separate action from suspension under VA regulations implementing Executive Orders 12549 and 12689, "Debarment and Suspension."

VA: Department of Veterans Affairs

VBA: Veterans Benefits Administration

Very low-income Veteran family: A Veteran family whose annual income, as determined in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609, does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for an area or community (current income limits can be found at: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>).

Veteran: A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable. Note that the period of service must include service in active duty for purposes other than training.

Veteran family: A Veteran who is a single person or a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran.

VHA: Veterans Health Administration

Withholding: Payment of a supportive services grant will not be paid until such time as VA determines that the grantee provides sufficiently adequate documentation and/or actions to correct a deficiency for the supportive services grant. Costs for supportive services provided by grantees under the supportive services grant from the date of the withholding letter would be reimbursed only if the grantee is able to submit the documentation or actions that the deficiency has been corrected to the satisfaction of VA.



## II. Program Overview

### A. Goal of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program

The goal of the SSVF Program is to promote housing stability among very low-income Veteran families who reside in or are transitioning to permanent housing.

### B. Eligible Participants

To become a participant household under the SSVF Program, the following conditions must be met:

1. **A member of a “Veteran family”**: Either (a) a Veteran<sup>2</sup>; or (b) a member of a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran. (*Note: The head of household should be identified by the Veteran family.*)
2. **“Very low-income”**: Household income does not exceed 50% of area median income. Unless VA announces otherwise in the NOFA, the median income for an area or community will be determined using the income limits most recently published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for programs under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f), which can be found at: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>.
3. **“Occupying Permanent Housing”**: A very low-income Veteran family is considered to be “occupying permanent housing” if they fall into one of three categories:
  - (category 1) Is residing in permanent housing and at risk of becoming *literally homeless* but for grantee’s assistance;
  - (category 2) Is *literally homeless*, and at risk to remain in this situation but for grantee’s assistance, and scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing; or
  - (category 3) Is *literally homeless* after exiting permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to the very low-income Veteran family’s needs and preferences.

Regarding the above references to *literally homeless*: for specifics as to what circumstances do and do not constitute *literal homelessness*, see Section I.C. definitions: Homeless, Literally. Grantees must ensure that *literally homeless* participants qualify under this definition.

*Note: There are time restrictions and limitations on uses of grant funds with respect to the categories of participants grantees may serve. The following table describes the three categories of “occupying permanent housing” as well as the time restrictions related to each.*

<sup>2</sup> See Section I.C. of this Program Guide for the definition of Veteran.

Category of Occupying Permanent Housing	Time Restriction
<p><b>Category 1:</b> If a very low-income Veteran family is residing in permanent housing and is at risk of becoming <i>literally homeless</i> but for the grantee’s assistance.</p>	<p>A grantee may continue to provide supportive services to a participant within Category 1 so long as the participant continues to meet the definition of Category 1.</p>
<p><b>Category 2:</b> If a very low-income Veteran family is <i>literally homeless</i>, and at risk to remain in this situation but for the grantee’s assistance, and is scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing.</p>	<p>A grantee may continue to provide supportive services to a participant within Category 2 so long as the participant continues to meet the definition of Category 2, even if the participant does not become a resident of permanent housing within the originally scheduled 90-day period.</p>
<p><b>Category 3:</b> If a very low-income Veteran family is <i>literally homeless</i> after exiting permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to the very low-income Veteran family’s needs and preferences.</p>	<p>A grantee may continue to provide supportive services to a participant within Category 3 until the earlier of the following dates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The participant commences receipt of other housing services adequate to meet the participant’s needs</li> </ol> <p><u>OR</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 90 days from the date the participant exits permanent housing.</li> </ol>

Grantees are required to certify the eligibility each participant at least once every three months, per 38 CFR 62.36(a), as described in Section V of this Program Guide.

### C. Supportive Services Provided

Through the SSVF Program, VA aims to improve the housing stability of very low-income Veteran families. Towards this end, SSVF grantees provide a set of required SSVF services and have the option of providing additional SSVF services as outlined below.

#### Required SSVF Support Services

1. Outreach
2. Case management
3. Connection to VA benefits and programs
4. Connection to public benefits and mainstream, community resources
5. Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)

*Note that Section VI of this Program Guide provides specifics for each of these required SSVF support services. Details in Section VI include lists of the key benefits and community resources that are fundamental for each SSVF grantee to navigate in their local SSVF jurisdictions.*

#### Optional SSVF Support Services

1. Complementary services from SSVF “public benefits” list (proposed to and approved by VA)
2. Other unique, grantee-designed services (proposed to and approved by VA)

*Note that Section VI of this Program Guide provides specifics for each of these optional SSVF support services. Details include lists of common complementary services that some SSVF grantees optionally elect to provide themselves as a component of their direct service.*

### **D. Rapid Re-Housing Assistance**

Grantees must use a minimum of 60 percent of supportive services grant funds to serve very low-income Veteran families who either (i) are homeless and scheduled to become residents of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing or (ii) have exited permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to their needs and preferences - as per 38 CFR.

### **E. SSVF Coordination with Local Continuums of Care (CoCs)**

SSVF grantees work in coordinated partnership with their local Continuums of Care (CoCs). A CoC is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the needs of all people who experience homelessness in a given community. SSVF grantees engage as active members in each and every CoC that lies within their SSVF jurisdiction. In particular, SSVF grantees formally participate in planning the local coordinated intake and assessment processes, which each CoC establishes for itself, for how all households experiencing homelessness access homeless assistance services and are matched with best fit resources. SSVF grantees are responsible for ensuring that SSVF is formally integrated into this local CoC process.

### **F. Housing First**

VA policy supports a “Housing First” approach in addressing and ending homelessness. Housing First establishes housing stability as the primary intervention in working with homeless persons. The Housing First approach is informed by research demonstrating that a homeless individual or household’s first and primary need is to obtain stable housing, and that other issues impacting the household can and should be addressed as housing is obtained. Research supports this approach as an effective means to end homelessness. Under Housing First, housing is not contingent on compliance with support services. Instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and supports that are necessary to help them do so successfully.

### **G. Extremely Low Income**

The VA created a separate category for extremely low income (ELI) participants to allow grantees the flexibility to provide extended temporary financial assistance for participants whose

annual income does not exceed 30 percent of the area median income (AMI). The intention of this categorization is to allow grantees to effectively serve participants with pronounced financial vulnerability and provide extended timeframes for the temporary financial assistance provided to them (for specific time limits for temporary financial assistance, see Section VI.F.). Importantly, this ELI income determination is made only at participants' first entry into the SSVF program.

Note that once a participant household is categorized as ELI, that household retains this designation for as long as that household continues to meet all other SSVF eligibility requirements and up until exiting the program. In other words, an ELI household remains in the ELI category even if income exceeds 30 percent AMI at the point of recertification. Note that, in keeping with regulations that apply to all SSVF participants, any ELI participant household with an income fluctuation that exceeds 50 percent of AMI at the point of recertification must be exited from SSVF.

### III. Renewal Process

If funding is available, VA will announce renewal opportunities in a NOFA. If funding is available for renewals, a grantee may submit an application for grant renewal in accordance with any requirements set forth in the NOFA. To apply for renewal of a supportive services grant, the grantee's program must remain substantially the same (otherwise, the grantee should submit a new application instead of a renewal application). VA will use the criteria and selection process described in 38 CFR 62.24 and 38 CFR 62.25 to evaluate and award supportive services grant renewals. Additional information concerning the renewal process will be provided in the NOFA.

#### A. Accreditation and Renewal Awards

Grantees receiving renewal awards that have had ongoing SSVF program operation for at least one year may be eligible for a 3-year award. Grantees meeting outcome goals defined by the VA and in substantial compliance with their grant agreements (defined by meeting their targets and having no outstanding corrective actions plans) and who, in addition, receive a 3-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Employment and Community Services or a 4-year accreditation from the Council on Accreditation (COA) in Case Management Services are eligible for a 3-year grant renewal pending funding availability. If awarded a multiple year renewal, grantees may be eligible for funding increases as defined in NOFAs that correspond to years 2 and 3 of their renewal funding. Note that the cost of accreditation for an SSVF program (not an organization) is an allowable cost.



## IV. Technical Assistance

### A. Introduction

Per 38 CFR 62.73, technical assistance will be available as necessary to eligible entities to assist them in meeting the requirements of 38 CFR Part 62. The technical assistance provided is designed to help eligible entities apply for supportive services grants under the SSVF Program and administer, develop, and operate supportive services programs.

### B. Pre-Award Technical Assistance

Pre-award technical assistance will be provided to eligible entities in the form of grant-writing seminars, SSVF Program webcasts, and PowerPoint presentations and other information posted on the SSVF Program website. The goals of these efforts are to raise public awareness of the SSVF Program, provide interested parties with information about the SSVF Program, and assist eligible entities in developing and submitting thorough applications that meet the requirements, goals, and objectives of the SSVF Program. Information on how to obtain technical assistance can be found on the SSVF Program's website:

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/SSVF.asp>.

### C. Post-Award Technical Assistance

Post-award technical assistance will be available in the form of activities related to the planning, development, and provision of supportive services to very low-income Veteran families occupying permanent housing. Specifically, this technical assistance will help grantees start their programs quickly and effectively and comply with the requirements of the SSVF Program. Trainings, both in-person and via teleconference, will be offered throughout the year – some of which will be mandatory for grantees. The post-award technical assistance is designed to assist grantees to successfully implement and operate their supportive service programs. Information on how to obtain technical assistance can be found on the SSVF Program's website:

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/SSVF.asp>.



## V. Participant Eligibility

It is important that each participant household's file includes documentation verifying that the participant meets SSVF Program eligibility requirements and specifies the participant's category of "occupying permanent housing." Grantees with insufficient case file documentation may be found out of compliance with SSVF Program regulations during a VA monitoring visit. Grantees must develop policies and procedures that ensure appropriate documentation is obtained and included in participants' files. VA encourages grantees to use this Program Guide to help them ensure appropriate and sufficient information is collected, documented, and maintained in participant case files to document program compliance.

### A. SSVF Eligibility Requirements

As described in Program Guide Section II.B, to become a participant household under the SSVF Program, the following conditions must be met:

1. **A member of a "Veteran family"**: Either (a) a Veteran; or (b) a member of a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran. (*Note: The head of household should be identified by the Veteran family.*)
2. **"Very low-income" Household**: income does not exceed 50% of area median income. Unless VA announces otherwise in the NOFA, the median income for an area or community *will be determined using the income limits most recently published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for programs under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f)*, which can be found at:  
<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>.
3. **"Occupying Permanent Housing"**: A very low-income Veteran family is considered to be occupying permanent housing if it falls into one of three categories:

(category 1) Is residing in permanent housing and at risk of becoming *literally homeless* but for grantee's assistance;

(category 2) Is *literally homeless* and at risk to remain in this situation but for grantee's assistance and scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing; or

(category 3) Is *literally homeless* after exiting permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to the very low-income Veteran family's needs and preferences.

Regarding the above references to *literally homeless*: for specifics as to what circumstances do and do not constitute *literal homelessness*, see Section I.C. definitions: Homeless, Literally. Grantees must ensure that *literally homeless* participants qualify under this definition.

## B. Determining Veteran Household Status Eligibility

As discussed above, eligible participants will be part of a “Veteran family,” meaning that the person to be served is either (a) a Veteran; or (b) a member of a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran.

### 1. Verifying Veteran Status

As per 38 CFR 62.2, “Veteran” is defined as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable.” Note that bad conduct discharges are not the same as dishonorable, and as such, are eligible. Furthermore, for Veterans with multiple discharges, the best discharge status may be used for SSVF eligibility.

To prove a participant’s Veteran status, grantees should obtain at least one of the following documents:

- Veteran’s Department of Defense (DD) Form 214 Certificate of Release Discharge from Active Duty
- VBA Statement of Service (SOS)
- VHA Veteran’s Identity card
- VISTA printout from VHA healthcare provider
- Hospital Inquiry System (HINQS)
- VBA award letter of service connected disability payment or non-service connected pension
- Veterans Choice Card

If such documents proving eligibility are not immediately available, an Affidavit of Veteran Status signed by the Veteran can be used to allow grantees to temporarily enroll Veterans who are Pending Verification of Veteran Status and initiate supportive services. However, temporary financial assistance will not be provided until the grantee/Veteran can obtain documentation proving Veteran status. For further guidance on Pending Verification of Veteran Status, see Exhibit D.

If the Veteran is not in possession of his or her DD Form 214, the grantee should assist the Veteran in submitting an SF-180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, to confirm the individual’s status. Information on how to submit this form can be found on the National Archives website: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/> Please note that grant funds cannot be used to help an individual change his or her discharge status.

### Additional Helpful Links

- Applications for Veterans Choice Card: <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>
  - Eligibility information provided via hotline
- E-benefits enrollment: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>
  - Download documents

- Online application for VHA service: <https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez>
  - Eligibility confirmation will be mailed to the Veteran
- DD214 online: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>
  - Put “Expedite: Homeless Veteran” in the comments section
- DD214 telephone application: call 314-801-0800 to request same day service.
  - Form will be mailed to the Veteran

The Department of Veteran Affairs utilizes several methods of Veteran eligibility verification:

- The Health Eligibility Center (HEC) supports VA's health care delivery system by providing centralized eligibility verification and enrollment processing services.
- Hospital Inquiry System (HINQS) is used by VA Medical Centers to query VBA's compensation and pension Benefits Delivery Network (BND) to secure information on Compensation and Pension (C&P) entitlements and eligibility.
- Veteran Information Solution (VIS) is a web-based application that provides a consolidated view of comprehensive eligibility and benefits utilization data from across VBA.

To request verification through an existing VIS or HINQS user, grantees can call a designated staff member at the local VA medical center with VIS access. Some facilities work out a call process with the VHA registration staff. Grantees unfamiliar with either of these processes may contact their SSVF Point of Contact at the local VA Medical Center or their SSVF Regional Coordinator for assistance.

## 2. Verifying Veteran Household Status

The SSVF Program defines a Veteran family as “a Veteran who is a single person or a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran.” Grantees should document head of household status in the form of self-declaration or other documents deemed appropriate to document household composition. As noted previously, a household is defined as “All persons who together present for services and identify themselves as being part of the same household.” Self or staff declarations are acceptable. *(Note: Proof of family status is not required, but may serve as proof of household status in some circumstances.)*

## C. Determining Income Eligibility

The SSVF Program defines an eligible very low-income Veteran family as one whose annual income, as determined in accordance with 24 CFR 5.609, does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for an area or community. Unless VA announces otherwise in the NOFA, the median income for an area or community will be determined using the income limits most recently published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for programs under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f). Grantees must ensure that they are using the most current of these HUD established income limits found at: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>. Towards this end, grantees should develop a process for regularly checking for updates to HUD’s income limits. Adjustments may be made

to the required income level based on family size and other mitigating factors listed in the NOFA. The grantee must establish the size of the Veteran family's household to verify that the Veteran family meets the income eligibility requirement.

### 1. Area Median Income (AMI)

As indicated in the SSVF regulations, to be eligible to receive any type of SSVF assistance, a Veteran family must have a gross annual income that is at or below 50% of AMI, (which is considered "very low-income"). In their grant application, grantees may have indicated they were targeting Veterans with even lower incomes, such as 30% of AMI. AMI is based upon income data for the state or local jurisdiction in which a household resides, and is dependent on the size of the household (i.e., number of household members). The AMI for each state and community can be found at: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>. Please note this data set is updated annually and grantees are required to use the most recent data posted by HUD. HUD hosts a site which allows agencies the ability to be notified of data releases, such as new income limits, via email. The site is as follows:

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/subscribe/subscribe.html>

### 2. Income Definition

The SSVF income definition contains income "inclusions" (types of income to be counted) and "exclusions" (types of income that are not to be counted as income) for SSVF purposes. Annual income means all included amounts that go to or are on behalf of, another family member during the 12-month period. Note that annual income is assessed at both entry to SSVF and at recertification. The *Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook, Income Inclusions*, contains the complete definition of annual income as published in the regulations and *Federal Register* notices. Annual income means all amounts that are not specifically excluded by regulation.

The following types of income must be counted (inclusions) when calculating annual income for SSVF eligibility purposes:

- Earned Income—Wages, Salaries, etc. for any adult member of the household (note: wages that are garnished are included as earned income)
- Self-Employment/Business Income
- Interest & Dividend Income
- Pension/Retirement Income
- Unemployment & Disability Income (excluding lump sum payments)
- TANF/Public Assistance, including the portion of the grant designated for child(ren)
- Alimony and Child Support Income
- Armed Forces Income
- G.I. Bill Housing Stipend

The following types of income are NOT counted (exclusions) when calculating current gross income for SSVF eligibility purposes:

- Earned income of participant household members under age 18 years.

- Inheritance and Insurance Income
- Medical Expense Reimbursements
- Income of Live-in Aides
- Student Financial Aid, including G.I. Bill Student Financial Aid
- Armed Forces Hostile Fire Pay
- Self-Sufficiency Program Income
- Other Income (i.e. temporary, non-recurring or sporadic income)
- Reparations
- Income from full-time students (excluding head of household)
- Foster Care Income
- Adoption Assistance Payments
- Deferred and Lump Sum Social Security & SSI payments
- Income Tax and Property Tax refunds
- Home Care Assistance
- Other Federal Exclusions

For a detailed list with an explanation of these inclusions and exclusions, see Exhibit A of this Program Guide.

Some types of excluded income, such as tax refunds, could be counted by grantees to be household assets. Grantees are required to include in the calculation of annual income any interest or dividends earned on assets held by the family. For additional information on determining income from assets, please see next subsection b: “Determining Income from Assets” section.

### 3. Income Calculation

After determining and documenting specific sources of income that must be included in the income calculation for each household, grantees then calculate the household’s (not just the Veteran’s) annual income.

#### a. Annualizing Wages and Periodic Payments

When calculating income based on hourly, weekly, or monthly payment information, add the gross amount earned in each pay period for which there is documentation and divide by the number of pay periods. This provides an average wage per payment period. Depending on pay periods used by the employer or the schedule of periodic payments, the following calculations convert the average wage into annual income:

- Hourly Wage multiplied by hours worked per week multiplied by 52 weeks
- Weekly Wage multiplied by 52 weeks
- Bi-Weekly (every other week) Wage multiplied by 26 bi-weekly periods
- Semi-Monthly Wage (twice a month) multiplied by 24 semi-monthly periods
- Monthly Wage multiplied by 12 months

Grantees may choose among the following two methods of calculating annual income:

- Calculating projected annual income by annualizing *current* income

**OR**

- Using information available to average *anticipated income* from all known sources when the sources are expected to change during the year.

For example, a Veteran works as a teacher's assistant nine months annually and receives \$1,300 per month. During the summer recess, the Veteran works for the Parks and Recreation Department for \$600 per month. Grantees may calculate the Veteran family's income using either of the following two methods:

- *Calculate Annual Income Based on Current Income:* \$15,600 (\$1,300 x 12 months). If recertification falls during summer recess, the grantee would recalculate the Veteran family's income during the summer months at a reduced annualized amount of \$7,200 (\$600 x 12 months).

- *Calculate Annual Income Based on Average Experience:*

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \$11,700 \quad (\$1300 \times 9 \text{ months}) \\
 + 1,800 \quad (\$ 600 \times 3 \text{ months}) \\
 \hline
 \$13,500
 \end{array}$$

Using the first method requires documentation of only one source of income; under the second method, the Veteran family's intake file would include documentation of both sources of income. If a household's periodic benefits and/or period of employment are capped, grantees should not annualize benefits/pay beyond the maximum level of benefit/pay that can be received. For example, a client receives \$100 of unemployment per week, but unemployment is capped at \$4,000 per year. The client's annualized unemployment benefits should be calculated at \$4,000, and not  $\$100 \times 52 = \$5,200$ . Another example, the household is employed for a quarter and will receive \$500/week. The client's annualized pay should be calculated at \$6,000 and not  $\$500 \times 52 = \$26,000$ .

Furthermore, to the extent that there is certainty about expected income, future income should be taken into account when determining whether a household has other financial resources. Remember, grantees are encouraged to assess all circumstances and document that the household would be homeless ***but for*** the SSVF assistance. As such, case managers should carefully evaluate the circumstances and probability of future income. For example, while a seasonal worker may expect to earn income during an upcoming season, if s/he has no promise of future employment, the potential of future employment should not be counted as a resource. In contrast, if a school teacher has a promise of future employment (by way of a renewed employment contract), the potential of future employment should be accounted for in the assessment of other financial resources. This is not to say that the school teacher in the example would be automatically determined ineligible. Rather, grantees should determine when the employment opportunity will take effect (i.e. when the income will be earned) and create financial assistance plans that account for an eligible Veteran family's financial resources.

Documentation of a Veteran family’s annual income and the percent of AMI that income represents (not to exceed the SSVF maximum of 50% of AMI) must be maintained in the participant’s file as documentation of eligibility.

**b. Determining Income from Assets**

Grantees are required to include in the calculation of annual income any interest or dividends earned on assets held by the family. When net family assets are \$5,000 or less, use the actual income from assets. When family assets are more than \$5,000, use the greater of:

- Actual income from assets; or
- A percentage of the value of such assets based upon the current passbook savings rate as established by HUD.<sup>3</sup> This is called imputed income from assets.

**c. Summary of Asset Inclusions and Exclusions**

Asset Inclusions	Asset Exclusions
A. Amounts in savings and checking accounts	1. Necessary personal property, except as noted in Inclusion #9.
B. Stocks, bonds, savings certificates, money market funds and other investment accounts	2. Interest in Indian trust lands.
C. Equity in real property or other capital investments. Equity is the estimated current market value of the asset less the unpaid balance on all loans secured by the assets <i>and</i> reasonable costs (such as broker fees) that would be incurred in selling the assets.	3. Assets that are part of an active business or farming operation.
D. The cash value of trusts that may be withdrawn by the family.	4. NOTE: Rental properties are considered personal assets held as an investment rather than business assets unless real estate is the applicant’s / tenant’s main occupation.
E. IRA, Keogh and similar retirement savings, even though withdrawal would result in a penalty.	5. Assets not controlled by or accessible to the family and which provide no income for the family.
F. Some contributions to company retirement/pension funds.	6. Vehicles especially equipped for the disabled.
G. Assets, which although owned by more than one person, allow unrestricted access by the	7. Equity in owner-occupied cooperatives and manufactured homes in which the

<sup>3</sup> Please contact your HUD field office in order to determine the applicable passbook savings rate. See [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC\\_11847.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_11847.pdf) for more information.

Asset Inclusions	Asset Exclusions
applicant.	family lives.
H. Lump sum receipts such as inheritances, capital gains, lottery winnings, insurance settlements, and other claims.	
I. Personal property held as an investment such as gems, jewelry, coin collections, antique cars, etc.	
J. Cash value of life insurance policies.	
K. Assets disposed of for less than fair market value during the two years preceding certification or recertification.	

*NOTE: A key factor in whether or not to include an asset in the calculation of annual income is whether any member of the family has access to the asset.*

**Assets Calculation Example**

*Compare Actual Income from Assets to Imputed Income from Assets*

Applicant has \$7,900 in assets. (Assume passbook rate of 3.5 percent.)

Applicant actual income from assets is paid at 1.5% simple interest annually = \$119.

Assets:	\$ 7,900
HUD-determined passbook rate	<u>x .035</u>
Imputed income from assets	\$ 277

Compare actual interest of \$119 to imputed interest of \$277. The actual interest of \$277 (the greater of the two) will be used as income from assets in the calculation of annual income.

**d. Additional Guidance on Calculating the Value of Assets and Income from Assets**

***Contributions to Company Retirement/Pension Funds***

While a participant is employed, count as an asset only amounts the participant could withdraw from a company retirement or pension fund without retiring or terminating employment.

After retirement or termination of employment, count as an asset any amount the employee elects to receive as a lump sum from the company retirement/pension fund.

Include in *annual income* any retirement benefits received through periodic payments.

In order to correctly include or exclude as assets any amount now held in retirement/pension funds for employed persons, the grantee must know whether the money is accessible before retirement.

### ***Equity in Real Property***

Real property includes land or real estate owned by the participant or participant household. Equity is the portion of the market value of the asset which is owned by the participant (the amount which would be available to the household if the property were to be sold). It is equal to the market value less any mortgage or loans secured against the property (which must be paid off upon sale of the property).

Calculate equity in real property as follows:

$$\text{Market Value} - \text{Loan (Mortgage)} = \text{Equity}$$

Calculate the cash value of real property as follows:

$$\text{Equity} - \text{Expense to Convert to Cash} = \text{Cash Value}$$

Expenses to convert to cash may include costs that would be paid to liquidate the asset, such as sales commissions, settlement costs, and transfer taxes.

### ***Assets Disposed of for Less Than Fair Market Value***

At initial certification or reexamination, grantees must ask whether a household has disposed of an asset for less than its market value within the past two years. If the family has, the grantee must determine the difference between the cash value of the asset at time of sale or other disposal and the actual payment received of for the asset.

Some of the types of assets that must be considered include cash, real property, stocks, bonds, and certificates of deposit. They must be counted if the household gave them away or sold them for less than the market value. Note: generally, assets disposed of as a result of a divorce, separation, foreclosure, or bankruptcy are *not* considered assets disposed of for less than fair market value.

VA does not specify a minimum threshold for counting assets disposed of for less than fair market value. A grantee may establish a threshold that will enable it to ignore small amounts such as charitable contributions. (HUD Handbook 4350.3, for multifamily subsidized housing, uses \$1,000 as a threshold.) Verification of assets disposed of for less than fair market value is generally done by participant certification. Grantees need verify only those certifications that warrant documentation.

### ***Valuing Assets***

Because of the requirement to include the greater of the actual interest/dividend income earned or a percentage based upon a HUD published passbook rate when assets are greater than \$5,000, the value of assets *may* affect the family's annual income.

Grantees must determine the *market value* of the asset and then calculate the *cash value* by subtracting the estimated expense required were the participant to convert the asset to cash.

Expenses to convert to cash include costs such as:

- Penalties for premature withdrawal (e.g., the 10% penalty paid when a retirement account is closed prior to retirement age, or a certificate of deposit is withdrawn prior to maturity);
- Broker and legal fees (e.g., a percentage of the value of the asset incurred in the sale of stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.); and
- Settlement costs incurred in real estate transactions (e.g. the typical percentage of sales price for settlement in the locality).

*Note: Grantees must not require participants to dispose of assets in order to determine the costs to convert to cash. These amounts simply reflect a realistic estimate of costs, and by deducting them from the market value of the asset, the imputed income from the asset is based on an amount the participant would have in hand if they converted their assets to cash.*

#### **Federal Tax Refunds Received within the Previous 12 Months**

If Federal tax refunds received within the previous 12 months make up part of a household's cash assets, that part of the household's cash assets must not be counted among the household's financial resources when determining the household's eligibility or need for assistance under SSVF. See "Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010," Pub. L. No. 111-312, § 728, 124 Stat. 3296, 3317.

For example, if a household applying for SSVF assistance in July 2011 has \$2,000 in total assets that includes a \$500 federal income tax refund received in April 2011, no more than \$1,500 of the household's total assets may be considered when determining whether the household has the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain immediate housing or remain in its existing housing or when determining the amount or type of assistance that household needs.

This exclusion does not apply to Federal tax refunds received prior to the previous 12 months or state tax refunds. If those tax refunds make up part of a household's cash assets, they are treated the same as the other cash assets.

#### **D. Determining Housing Status Eligibility**

As with income eligibility, upon entering the SSVF program, all participants applying for SSVF assistance must undergo a housing status eligibility determination. The results must be documented in the case file. This section provides detailed information on housing status eligibility.

## 1. Category 1 Eligibility (Homelessness Prevention)

Homelessness prevention assistance is intended for eligible Veteran families who are imminently at-risk of becoming literally homeless (e.g., entering an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation) **but for** SSVF assistance. Note that these Veteran families include “couch surfing” households (defined as homeless under the HEARTH Act). Targeting SSVF assistance in this manner helps ensure limited SSVF resources are directed to Veteran families most in need of assistance to avoid falling into or experiencing literal homelessness.

To qualify under **Category 1**, a Veteran family must be “residing in permanent housing.” This encompasses many different housing situations, including where a Veteran family is residing in (i) a leased unit, (ii) a house with a mortgage, (iii) a unit shared with others (i.e. doubled-up), or (iv) a hotel or motel not paid for by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations. The ideal Category 1 participant is an individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days of application for assistance.

Veteran families who are presently in such permanent housing should meet the following criteria to qualify for homelessness prevention assistance:

- A. Be imminently losing their current primary nighttime residence (housing an individual or family owns, rents, or lives in with or without paying rent; housing shared with others; and rooms in hotels or motels paid for by the individual or family); **AND**
- B. Be at risk of becoming literally homeless **but for** SSVF assistance, meaning the Veteran family:
  - Has no other residence; **AND**
  - Has no resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from becoming literally homeless.
- C. Additionally, in order to ensure resources are targeted to those most at risk, a Veteran family in Category 1 should meet at least one of the following conditions:
  - Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
  - Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
  - Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
  - Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
  - Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, or correctional institution) without a stable housing plan; **OR**
  - Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.
- D. Lastly, a Veteran family must be assessed and scored for VA targeting criteria using the VA’s “Homelessness Prevention Eligibility Screening Disposition Form” and receive a score

at or above the “targeting threshold” for the program. Targeting threshold scores for each grantee’s program must be approved by the VA. For those households that do not meet the targeting threshold but are at imminent risk of homelessness, “light touch” services may be offered. “Light touch” assistance includes case management, without temporary financial assistance, to prevent literal homelessness. For further guidance regarding homelessness prevention screening and targeting thresholds please see Exhibit E of this Program Guide.

Those Veteran families that qualify under **Category 1** may require assistance to help them remain in their existing permanent housing or identify new housing that will better meet their needs and be sustainable. For example, the Veteran family may imminently lose their housing if rent arrears are not paid, and the grantee may assist that Veteran family to pay the arrears and develop a housing stability plan that will reasonably result in the Veteran family being able to afford the rent for that unit in the future. Alternatively, if that same Veteran family would not reasonably be able to afford that unit in the future, the grantee may assist the Veteran family to locate an alternate housing arrangement that is sustainable for the Veteran family.

## 2. Categories 2 and 3 Eligibility (Rapid Re-Housing)

SSVF’s rapid re-housing assistance is intended for eligible Veteran families who are *literally homeless* as per definition bulleted below. Persons qualifying as *literally homeless* include persons who at the time of application or reassessment lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including Veteran families who are:

- Staying in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; **OR**
- Staying in a supervised publicly- or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); **OR**
- Exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

To qualify under **Category 2**, the Veteran family must ALSO be:

- Scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of suitable permanent housing.
- Not otherwise be eligible under Category 1.

To qualify under **Category 3**, a Veteran family must also:

- Have exited from permanent housing in the last 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to the Veteran family’s needs and preferences; **AND**
- Not otherwise be eligible under Category 1.

## E. Recertification of Eligibility

In order to ensure that SSVF programs fully evaluate participants' needs and eligibility for services, SSVF requires recertification at least once every three months. While the intent of SSVF is to provide short-term intervention, it is acceptable for SSVF grantees to provide lengths of service that are either shorter or longer than three months. A simple recertification step is required to determine whether the service timeframe warrants an exit from the program or continued provision of services.

Grantees close out those cases where participants are assessed as no longer requiring or qualifying for SSVF assistance. Grantees recertify only those participant households that are both eligible for (see reassessment areas below) and in need of services (see "But For" eligibility in 1.c. below). The recertification requirement applies to all participants regardless of whether or not temporary financial assistance is offered.

Note that, in situations where there is a break in assistance (e.g., the participant receives two months of assistance, is exited from the program, and later re-applies for assistance), the household must be reevaluated as if they were going through the initial certification process not a recertification.

### 1. Reassessment Areas

At recertification, the following areas should be reassessed by grantees:

- a. **Income Eligibility:** At recertification, the participant's income must still be at or below 50% AMI. Grantees must recalculate and document household income as they did during the initial certification, given that circumstances may have changed in the intervening months. If a household is over 50% AMI at the time it is reassessed, that household is no longer eligible for SSVF assistance.
- b. **Housing Status:** At recertification, the participant's initial SSVF housing status (Category 1, 2, or 3) is simply carried over from their initial certification regardless of changes that have transpired since then. For example, a participant enrolled as Category 2 upon initial certification will remain in this category at every recertification interval thereafter.
- c. **Other Resources/Support Networks ("but for") Eligibility:** At recertification, participants must still meet the threshold of need in the "but for" assessment. This means SSVF staff must again assess and document whether the participant, absent the help of SSVF, continues to lack the financial resources and support networks to either obtain new housing or remain in housing.
- d. **Confirmation of Veteran Family Status:** At recertification, the grantee must confirm whether the participant remains part of a Veteran family. If the Veteran becomes absent from a household or dies while other members of the Veteran family are receiving

supportive services, then services may continue to the remaining family members for a grace period established by the grantee. The grace period cannot exceed 1 year from the date of absence or death of the Veteran, and all other requirements for eligibility remain the same. The grantee is required to notify the Veteran’s family member(s) of the duration of the grace period.

## 2. Adjusting Assistance at Reassessment

As explained above, the appropriate level of supportive services and temporary financial assistance, if given, should be based on a participant’s specific needs. It is important for case managers to consider during each reassessment if circumstances have changed and how much assistance a household actually needs for housing stability at that point. Assistance levels for services or financial assistance can then be adjusted to be greater or less than included in the original plan. (For more information on different types of subsidies, see “Designing and Delivering HPRP Financial Assistance,” available on the HUD Exchange at:

[https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HPRP\\_FinancialAssistance.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HPRP_FinancialAssistance.pdf).)

If a participant becomes ineligible to receive supportive services with SSVF funds during the recertification process, the grantee is required to provide the participant with information on other available programs or resources.

Each person who conducts a reassessment and eligibility screening should complete an *SSVF Staff Recertification of Eligibility for SSVF Assistance*, for every participant case file.

## F. Case File Documentation Requirements

Grantees are responsible for maintaining case files for each participant household. During the annual monitoring visit, case files will be inspected for the following forms:

	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Re-Housing
<b>Grantee Designed Forms</b>		
1. Intake Screen	√	√
2. Housing Stability Plan	√	√
3. Release(s) of Information	√	√
4. Grievance Procedure with Participant Signature	√	√
5. Case Notes	√	√
6. Program Agreement	√	√
<b>Required SSVF Forms – Download Format from SSVF University</b>		
1. Homelessness Prevention Screening Disposition Form	√	
2. Staff Certification of Eligibility for SSVF	√	√
3. Incident Report	as needed	

4. Participant Satisfaction Survey	√	√
<b>Official* SSVF Forms - Download Recommended Format from SSVF University</b>		
1. Staff Recertification of Continued Assistance	as needed	
2. Pending Verification of Veteran Status	as needed	
3. Income Verification Template OR Self-declaration of Income**	√	√
4. Asset Income Calculation Worksheet	√	√
5. Income Calculation Worksheet	√	√
6. Literally Homeless Certification Template OR Self-declaration of Literal Homelessness**		√
7. Self-declaration of Housing Status**	as needed	
8. Documentation Checklist 1: Participant Eligibility	√	√
9. Documentation Checklist 2: TFA and Housing Unit	√	√
10. Recertification Checklist 3: Participant Eligibility	as needed	
11. Rent Reasonableness Checklist	√	√
12. Housing Habitability Standards	Required for new (different) units	
13. Emergency Housing Assistance Verification	√	√

\* “Official” SSVF forms are recommended for SSVF grantees to use to fulfill requirements. However, grantees may create a form of their own design to fit the same purpose.

\*\* Self-declaration formats are only to be used when third party documentation cannot be obtained.

### 1. Documentation Standards

Grantees are responsible for verifying and documenting the eligibility of all Veteran families prior to providing SSVF assistance. They are also responsible for maintaining this documentation in the SSVF participant case file once approved for assistance. Grantees with insufficient case file documentation may be found out of compliance with SSVF program regulations during VA monitoring. It is important for grantees to develop policies and procedures to ensure appropriate documentation is obtained and included in SSVF participants’ files.

For purposes of SSVF, VA allows various types of documentation, ranging from third-party written verification to participant self-declaration. Minimum acceptable types of documentation vary depending on the type of income or particular housing status and circumstance being documented. See **Exhibit B** for detailed documentation standards. General documentation standards, *in order of preference*, are as follows:

- a. **Written Third Party** — Verification in writing from a third party (e.g. individual employer, Social Security Administration, welfare office, emergency shelter provider, etc.) either directly to SSVF staff or via the Veteran family is most preferred. Third party verification of income, such as a deposit slip for a paycheck, might show income after deductions have been made; grantees must document gross income, before any deductions.

Written third-party documentation may include completion of a standardized form, such as a verification of income statement.

- b. **Oral Third Party** — Verification from a third party (e.g. individual employer, Social Security Administration, Welfare Office, etc.) provided over the telephone or in-person directly to SSVF staff who, in turn, create a written record in the case file. Oral third party verification is acceptable only if written third party verification cannot be obtained in time to resolve the housing crisis. SSVF staff must document reasons why third party written verification could not be obtained in the SSVF participant file.
- c. **Participant Self-Declaration** — An affidavit of income and/or housing status as reported by the household is allowable, but is only acceptable if written or verbal third party verification cannot be obtained. Self-declaration of housing status (e.g., eviction) should be rare. SSVF staff must document reasons why third party written or oral verification could not be obtained in the SSVF participant file.

VA encourages grantees to carefully review what documentation is included in participant case files through periodic monitoring and be sure it is sufficient to document that the household meets all eligibility criteria. Remember, specifically for housing status, determining eligibility can be a multi-level process. Veteran families must meet ALL criteria and evidence of this must be present in the case file.

## 2. SSVF Staff Certification of Eligibility for SSVF Assistance

The *Staff Certification of Eligibility for SSVF Assistance Form* should be maintained in each participant's file and is subject to review by VA. This form should be completed for each household deemed eligible for SSVF assistance. The form should be completed and signed by both the person determining eligibility and his or her supervisor for all households. While this form should be completed at intake, a *Staff Recertification of Continued Assistance Form* should be completed at the time of recertification.

## 3. Determining Acceptable Level of Documentation

VA expects that all grantees will make a conscientious and reasonable effort to use the highest documentation standard possible. Detailed tables outlining all acceptable forms of homelessness and income documentation are included in Exhibit B of this Program Guide and on the SSVF University website.

To determine the highest documentation standard that is reasonable, each SSVF grantee should review their own existing resources (i.e., funding, capacity, pre-existing income verification process for other programs). Some grantees already utilize a third-party verification process that could be reasonably incorporated into the SSVF eligibility determination and documentation process. However, for other types of organizations (e.g., small non-profits), a lower level of income or housing status verification and documentation may be all that is reasonable.

Establishing a reasonable documentation standard also depends on the type of service provided. For example, the highest level of income documentation for one-time or emergency assistance may not be reasonable given the urgency of the participant's housing crisis and/or short-term nature of the assistance. It would not be reasonable to delay SSVF assistance if third party documentation cannot be obtained in time to allow assistance to be provided and literal homelessness averted. Rental assistance over multiple months and/or other ongoing assistance (i.e., case management) may allow for a higher documentation standard. The SSVF grantee is encouraged to provide a brief written description of efforts to obtain third-party documentation in the participant case file (e.g., in case notes, participant assessment form, or participant self-declaration).

The income and housing status documentation tables in Exhibit B of this Program Guide outline the minimum documentation standards. SSVF staff must clearly and briefly describe in participant case files each instance when a documentation standard is used that is lower than the most preferred, third-party standard, per the tables in Exhibit B of this Program Guide. This may be done as part of the documented client assessment or as part of other case file documentation (e.g., in case notes, on income verification form).

Grantees should note that self-declaration of housing status for participants who are at-risk of losing housing should be used ONLY in very limited circumstances. VA recognizes there may be some unusual cases where a third party is not able to provide documentation that a participant is at-risk of losing housing (e.g., death of a landlord). In these rare cases, grantees should clearly document the situation in the case file including all attempts to obtain verification of housing status. If the circumstances for allowing third-party (written or oral) verification are not clearly documented in the case file, the grantee may be found in non-compliance with the SSVF Program.

#### 4. Timeliness of Income Documentation

The definition of income for the SSVF program reflects a Veteran family's annual income at the time of application. Accordingly, documents and information collected to verify income should be recent and current at time of application for SSVF assistance.

#### 5. Families Fleeing Domestic Violence

A participant household experiencing domestic violence receives special consideration in SSVF with regards to supportive services. This is a consideration designed for participants fleeing a domestic violence situation mid-stream during their SSVF participation such that the original participant household breaks apart. Under this policy, the victim of domestic violence (whether or not the victim is the Veteran), if forming a new participant household, will have the "tolling period" for SSVF's temporary financial assistance reset back to the beginning. The "tolling period" refers to the limited timeline of months for paying temporary financial assistance within a 12-month or 2-year period (for details, see Section VI.F.). For these newly formed households, that timeline begins again at zero months. Note that, under these circumstances, a new participant household may be created even without a Veteran in it. See below for case filed requirements.

## 6. Documenting Domestic Violence

As outlined above, for all participant households newly created under circumstances of domestic violence, SSVF resets the tolling period for receiving temporary financial assistance. For participants for whom this policy applies, grantees must certify a participant's domestic violence situation using the *SSVF Domestic Violence Certification Form*. Note that this form only requires third party verification, from a social worker or legal service provider for example, in cases where performing this due diligence does not jeopardize the safety of household members. Where safety might be jeopardized, this form allows participants to provide a self-certification as to their circumstances.

## VI. Supportive Services

### A. Introduction

The primary aim of the supportive services of the SSVF Program is to help Veteran families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. Grantees must use supportive services grant funds to provide supportive services to very low-income Veteran families that fall within one of the three categories of occupying permanent housing. Grantees will assist participant households by providing a range of supportive services designed to resolve the immediate crisis and promote housing stability. Grantees are required to provide the following supportive services:

- Outreach services
- Case management services
- Assistance in obtaining VA benefits
- Assistance in obtaining and coordinating other public benefits available in the grantee's area or community
- Temporary financial assistance

### B. Outreach

#### 1. Description of Services

Performing outreach is a critical component of grantees' programs. Outreach services must be customized to the target populations being served by the grantee (i.e., a plan to target very low-income Veteran families transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing will be different from a plan to target very low-income Veteran families residing in permanent housing). Outreach plans also depend upon the area or community in which supportive services will be provided (e.g., urban vs. rural) and the available resources in those areas or communities. There are two parts to the provision of outreach services: identifying very low-income Veteran families and screening them to determine eligibility for supportive services provided by a grantee.

#### 2. Identifying Veteran Families

Effective outreach should ensure that supportive services are provided to very low-income Veteran families who are "most in need" and who would otherwise be difficult to locate or serve. As part of providing outreach, grantees should:

- Develop relationships with local social services and public benefit agencies, shelters, and faith-based and community-based organizations serving low-income, at-risk, and homeless Veteran families;
- Develop relationships with local VA facilities, including Vet Medical Centers and Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) offices;
- Host local informational events; and
- Participate in Stand Down (or similar) events.

Maintaining contact with local organizations who serve Veterans will help grantees to identify additional participants. Such organizations are able to provide referrals, which will simplify the process of recruiting new participants to the grantee's program. The grantee should leverage the following sources to identify very low-income Veteran families in the area:

- Local VA facilities, including VBA Regional Offices and Vet Centers;
- Grant & Per Diem Programs;
- CHALENG network;
- Emergency shelters;
- Existing supportive housing programs;
- Department of Defense (DoD) Resources (e.g., Transition Assistance Program);
- VA Medical Center Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/ Operation New Dawn (OND) Care Management Teams; and
- Community agencies serving low-income populations, including but not limited to:
  - Board of Education (assistance in identifying children who have been absent from school);
  - Churches and other places of worship;
  - Domestic violence agencies (**See Exhibit F** for guidance on entering DV households into HMIS);
  - Groups assisting people in foreclosure;
  - Energy assistance agencies;
  - Housing courts;
  - Landlords;
  - Legal aid organizations;
  - Public Housing Authority waiting lists;
  - Rental agencies;
  - Food/clothing shelters; hot meals programs;
  - Day/Temporary labor programs;
  - Detoxification programs;
  - Hospitals that offer uncompensated care; and
  - Welfare offices.

### 3. Eligibility Screening and Evaluation

Screening is the first step of the intake process. Grantees should develop screening tools to assist them in (a) confirming a very low-income Veteran family's eligibility for supportive services and (b) prioritizing those families in the greatest need.

It is important that grantees are able to quickly screen, assess, and assist the Veteran family as they are likely in crisis. Delays that occur between the first outreach contact and service delivery can result in missed opportunities to mitigate the crisis or the Veteran may no longer be interested in receiving services. Grantees must also evaluate whether eligible participants will be best served by the SSVF Program rather than other available services. Note that an SSVF Program is one intervention available within a spectrum of care supported by VA. Using the

guiding principle of providing “the right service, at the right time, using the right amount of assistance,” grantees should always assess if other interventions - whether less intensive or more - may better serve the Veteran being screened.

In screening potential participants who either (i) are homeless and scheduled to become residents of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location or development of housing suitable for permanent housing (Category 2), or (ii) have exited permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that is responsive to their needs and preferences (Category 3), grantees’ screening tools should assist in *prioritizing those eligible Veteran families who are in the greatest need*. For example, a grantee’s screening tool may assist in identifying and assigning priority status to eligible Veteran families earning less than 30% area median income, chronically homeless and formerly chronically homeless Veteran families, and/or Veterans with one or more dependents.

Similarly, in screening very low-income Veteran families residing in permanent housing (Category 1), VA’s *Homelessness Prevention Eligibility Screening Disposition Form* (see **Exhibit E** for instructions) is used to assist in identifying and then prioritizing those families who are most at risk of homelessness. This required SSVF form also documents the eligibility of persons applying for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance. This screening disposition form should be completed by SSVF grantee staff using information obtained from the head of household. Screening disposition forms should be supported by additional assessment and documentation of the eligibility conditions and targeting factors indicated. All screening forms should be signed and dated by the authorized SSVF staff person completing the form.

When serving participants who are residing in permanent housing, it is helpful to remember that the defining question to ask is: “Would this individual or family be homeless ***but for*** this assistance?” Proper screening of applicants according to VA eligibility criteria should result in identifying such households. To aid grantees in targeting SSVF Program funds towards this group, a number of potential “risk factors” are listed below that could indicate a higher risk of becoming (or remaining) homeless. This list represents examples of some commonly identified risk factors for homelessness from scholarly research and practical experience drawn from existing homelessness prevention programs. One way a grantee could use these factors would be to require an eligible participant to demonstrate some combination of the risk factors to qualify for any assistance. Grantees should note that this list is optional and is not exhaustive; grantees may consider other risk factors or other ways to target persons at risk of homelessness when developing local programs and requirements. The risk factors for homelessness for grantees to consider in developing their programs are as follows:

- Eviction within two weeks from a private dwelling (including housing provided by family or friends);
- Discharge within two weeks from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 180 days (including prisons, mental health institutions, hospitals);
- Residency in housing that has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer meant for human habitation;

- Sudden and significant loss of income;
- Sudden and significant increase in utility costs;
- Mental health and substance abuse issues;
- Physical disabilities and other chronic health issues, including HIV/AIDS;
- Severe housing cost burden (greater than 50 percent of income for housing costs);
- Homeless in last 12 months;
- Young head of household (under 25 with children or pregnant);
- Current or past involvement with child welfare, including foster care;
- Pending foreclosure of housing;
- Extremely low income (less than 30 percent of area median income);
- High overcrowding (the number of persons in household exceeds health and/or safety standards for the housing unit size);
- Past institutional care (prison, treatment facility, hospital);
- Recent traumatic life event, such as death of a spouse or primary care provider, or recent health crisis that prevented the household from meeting its financial responsibilities;
- Credit problems that preclude obtaining of housing; or
- Significant amount of medical debt.

Grantees should establish a file for each incoming participant that contains documentation confirming the participant's eligibility for the SSVF Program and assigning the participant to one of the SSVF Categories of Occupying Permanent Housing.

#### **a. Participant Eligibility Verification and Documentation**

Grantees are required to serve very low-income Veteran families occupying permanent housing as defined in 38 CFR 62.2 and 38 CFR 62.11(a). Staff should be familiar with SSVF Program eligibility requirements in order to determine a very low-income Veteran family's eligibility. See Section V. of this Program Guide for detailed eligibility determination and documentation guidance.

#### **b. New Participant Health Screening (Physical and Mental)**

By coordinating the provision of health screenings of new participant households, grantees assist VA in ensuring the health and well-being of very low-income Veteran families. Although grantees do not provide health screenings directly, SSVF grantees do refer all new SSVF participants for health screenings. Grantees are encouraged, with participant agreement and consent, to coordinate these screenings at intake. For the Veteran, this may mean connecting the Veteran to the local VA facility to ensure he or she receives medical care. For the Veteran's family members, this may mean identifying local community health resources that can assist non-Veteran household members. Screenings should assess, as appropriate, both the mental health and the general physical well-being of new participants. It is important to note that the performance of these assessments directly, rather than coordination of the assessments by way of referral to another organization, including psycho-social assessments and screenings to diagnose physical and mental health issues, is not an eligible use of SSVF grant funds. (If a

grantee wishes to perform these services directly, the grantee must utilize an alternative funding source.)

### c. Referral When Sufficient Resources are not Available

When there are not sufficient resources to accommodate additional participants at a given time, grantees should make efforts to refer eligible Veteran families to other programs run by VA and/or public or private entities that will provide the assistance they require. Grantees should have established relationships with local VA homeless programs to facilitate such referrals. Assistance from the VA can also be obtained by contacting the VA National Call Center at 877-424-3838.

### d. Referral of Ineligible Veteran Families

If grantees encounter Veteran families who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the SSVF Program, they should make efforts to refer such Veteran families to another program that will provide them with the assistance and services they require.

## 4. Eligible Expenses for Outreach

Outreach activities and costs are typically made up of direct outreach staff time. However, SSVF may pay for SSVF marketing materials to enhance conventional staff-driven outreach provided that all of the following terms are met before incurring such costs:

- Traditional staff-driven methods of outreach were tried but target numbers are still unmet.
- An assessment was performed to ensure chosen marketing method will be effective.
- A comparison was made between effectiveness of staff outreach versus marketing.
- Care was taken to market only the SSVF program itself and not the sponsoring agency.
- Marketing was designed to ensure effectiveness in connecting Veterans to SSVF.

## C. Case Management Services

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### 1. Description of Services

To effectively assist participant households in achieving housing stability, grantees must provide ongoing housing-focused case management services. The primary objective of housing-focused case management is to extend support to participants, through an individualized case management relationship, that will ultimately translate to increased housing stability. This service, carried out by the grantee's team of case managers, is the central focus of the grantee's supportive service program. The routine for housing-focused case management delivery is regular consultations with participants in individualized meetings. These sessions are dedicated to assessing and reassessing needs, educating participants on VA and community resource opportunities, developing housing stability plans, scheduling appointments, and providing necessary follow up to ensure housing stability plans are progressing on schedule and needs are adequately being addressed. Grantees also use housing-focused case management to determine how to allocate SSVF temporary financial assistance to participants on the basis of relative need. Structurally, housing-focused case management is central to

SSVF's collection of supportive services. It establishes a foundation upon which linkages with public benefits and mainstream community resources can be layered. To create such linkages (outlined in detail by Section VI. E that follows.), grantees research the availability of local programs including healthcare, affordable housing, employment, income support, legal assistance, transportation, and other services to address identified needs and goals. The trusting relationships, cultivated in case management, position grantees to effectively build connectivity between their participants and these resources.

## 2. Intake

### a. Needs Assessment

Once the participant's eligibility has been confirmed, the case manager will begin by consulting with the participant to determine his/her household's needs and priorities and performing an assessment of the participant's needs. Participants entering the grantee's program will be experiencing varying degrees of housing instability, from those who require temporary support in getting through a difficult period to those who require long-term support in overcoming a combination of challenges. As such, case managers should gather as much information as possible about the participant's health, income, eligibility for public benefits, employment skills, background, family relationships and support, and living situation in order to identify and coordinate those services that will be most effective and acceptable to the participant in improving housing stability. Some of this information will also be required for HMIS data collection.

### b. Housing Stability Planning

To maximize the effectiveness of services provided to or coordinated on behalf of the participant, the case manager will work with the participant household to develop an individualized housing stability plan that will be based upon the household's strengths, weaknesses and priorities, as identified through the needs assessment. In some situations, the participant will have entered the program with a well-defined idea of their discrete needs and goals. In other situations, the participant may not understand how the options available through SSVF might contribute to housing stability. The case manager should explain the SSVF, VA and community services that are available and, with the participant, establish reasonable milestones for obtaining greater housing stability. These milestones will become a set of actionable goals intended to address the participant's obstacles to housing stability. Goals should be appropriate, time oriented, and reasonable.

Once goals have been set, the case manager and participant will monitor the progress toward achieving the established goals, including requesting updates from the participant's service providers, as necessary.

## 3. Role of Case Manager in Coordinating Provision of Supportive Services

The case manager will be the participant's primary point of contact within the grantee's SSVF program. In addition to assisting the participant to assess his/her needs, the case manager will be responsible for coordinating the provision of supportive services. The case manager will

coordinate supportive services that are offered by the grantee and provide referrals for other supportive services not offered by the grantee (or more efficiently or effectively provided elsewhere). An effective case manager should be familiar with the area or community in which the program operates and actively cultivate a working knowledge and connections to relevant area resources such as affordable housing; emergency, mental and physical health care professionals; public benefits offices; employment training and job placement programs, etc.

## **D. Assistance in Obtaining VA Benefits**

### **1. Description of Benefits/Services**

As part of participant intake, the grantee should determine whether the participant household is already receiving services from VA. If the participant is already receiving services, the grantee's assessment should focus on what additional services the participant may need, want and be eligible for, to refer the participant to the appropriate VA office for assistance. If the participant is not already receiving services from VA, the grantee should make the participant aware of the services for which he/she may be eligible and offer to refer the participant to the nearest VA facility. Potential VA benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- Income Assistance;
- Vocational and rehabilitation counseling;
- Employment and training service;
- Educational assistance; and
- Health care services.

Income assistance, employment, training, and educational resources are especially important for the target population of the SSVF Program. Participants will need to establish regular incomes to support the program's primary goal of housing stability. Health care benefits will offer participants mental and physical health services that are not currently being addressed. VA offers health care services at over 1,400 locations nationwide, including hospitals, clinics, community living centers, domiciliary care facilities, readjustment counseling centers, etc. A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for VA health care.

### **2. Guidance on Administration of Benefits/Services**

If a participant has not yet enrolled in the VA health care system, the grantee should provide assistance in the enrollment process. Additional information on VA healthcare and benefits can be found on the following VA websites: <http://www.va.gov/health/index.asp> and: <http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/>.

If necessary, assistance provided to participants should also include helping Veterans locate an accredited claims agent or attorney and other services short of actual representation before VA. Although grantees will assist participants in obtaining available benefits from VA, grantees will not be permitted to represent Veterans in benefit claims before VA unless the individual providing representation is an accredited claims agent or attorney.

### 3. Using Community Linkages to Enhance Effectiveness

Grantees should develop relationships with local VA facilities, State Veterans Affairs Offices and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs). A list of State Veterans Affairs Offices can be found on the following VA website: <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>. VA also maintains a searchable database of VSOs that can be accessed online at:

<http://www.va.gov/vso/index.cfm?template=search>.

Grantees who maintain lines of communication with VA facilities will be able to stay aware of new benefits and services for which participants may be eligible and make or receive referrals as appropriate.

## E. Assistance in Obtaining and Coordinating Other Public Benefits

### 1. Description of Services

Grantees are required to assist participant households to access both public benefits and mainstream community resources that are available from federal, state, local, or tribal agencies, or any eligible entity, in their communities. The terms “public benefits” and “community resources” are defined broadly to include healthcare (medical, mental health, and substance abuse services) and daily living services, affordable housing, employment and vocational services, income support (from public benefits), legal services, transportation, personal financial planning and credit counseling, VA fiduciary and representative payee services, and childcare. The goals for connecting with these external programs are, first, to meet immediate housing-related and non housing-related needs and, second, to avoid a future housing crisis.

This external linkage dimension of SSVF supportive service fosters participants’ ready access to benefits and community resources. It is a layer of supportive service delivery that builds upon, and thereby extends the impact of, SSVF’s housing-focused case management (described in Section VI.C). On this next level, SSVF cultivates external supports that will outlast the short term, temporary nature of the SSVF. Indeed, given the time limited nature of SSVF, fostering these connections may be among the most lasting contributions SSVF has in the lives of participants. Grantees should therefore strive to strengthen each participant’s ties to external resources to the extent that they will be maintained long after SSVF is no longer available to the Veteran.

While all grantees deliver this connectivity component of supportive services, the work to link with each resource listed above may be organized by the grantee using two possible approaches:

1. **Direct:** by grantee staff OR by subcontract to partner organization (Note: SSVF funds cannot pay for direct provision of healthcare or daily living services).
2. **Indirect:** refer out to external resources with grantee utilizing a conventional information and referral approach and building upon in-house knowledge of external resources.

**a. Connection to Healthcare and Daily Living Services**

*Options for Grantee: 2: Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to access healthcare and daily living services from their local VA Medical Center and other healthcare 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 requires. To optimize access, grantees capitalize upon established relationships with their points of contacts at local VA Medical Centers and/or community based outpatient clinic, their in-depth knowledge of specific health delivery programs at their local VA Medical Centers, and their follow ups with participants to ensure referred Veterans availed themselves of needed care. For participants with a history of reluctance to seek care from VA settings, grantees leverage their own trusting relationships, established through case management with participants, to support reestablished connections.

In consideration of the healthcare needs of participants who are ineligible for VA healthcare and of their non-Veteran household members, for whom healthcare is critical in establishing the household's housing stability, grantees must identify non-VA healthcare resources. Grantees must also be positioned to assist participants in applying for Medicaid and/or subsidized insurance through local healthcare exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

**b. Connections to Affordable Housing via Housing Counseling**

*Options for Grantee: 1: Direct; 2: Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported in the multi-steps of searching for affordable housing. Commonly referred to as housing counseling, this effort can optionally be carried out by in-house "housing specialists" on the grantee's staff team. Regardless of staffing arrangements, housing counseling work is ideally performed directly by the grantee or its subcontractors. The service should be delivered to all participants in the rapid re-housing category and those in homelessness prevention that require new housing. The term "housing counseling" is defined broadly. It involves multiple steps from searching for an appropriate unit to securing it. Specific tasks include researching available market rate and subsidized housing units that match a participant's housing budget, evaluating options that fit rent reasonableness, negotiating rents and terms when possible with landlords, appealing tenant selection decisions, drawing upon external advocates as needed to appeal tenant selection decisions, assessing units using the Habitability Standards, securing leases, and devising move in plans. This service also includes educating participants on local housing options, standard lease agreements, fair housing laws, tenant rights, tenant-landlord relationships, reasonable accommodations, lease compliance, lead paint laws, home maintenance, and efficient use of home systems such as heat. It also involves advance work with participants to devise household budgets and plan a schedule for regular and timely rent payments.

To optimize outcomes of housing counseling, this service requires that grantees build staff expertise on the availability of both affordable, private market rate units and publicly subsidized, affordable housing. For success in the private market, staff must cultivate a network of willing

local landlords and their management companies as well as carry out efforts to maintain and expand that network exponentially over time. For success in the subsidized arena, staff must research, via information clearinghouses and online locators, housing programs dedicated to Veterans, to households exiting homelessness, to low and extremely low income households in general, and to special populations such as persons who are elderly or with disabilities. Furthermore, staff must be knowledgeable of admissions preferences established in any and all subsidized housing.

**c. Connections to Employment and Vocational Services**

*Options for Grantee: 1. Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to connect with services that foster workforce participation, job readiness, and job opportunities with the aim of maximizing income and thereby increasing housing stability. This effort could optionally be carried out by an in-house employment specialist position on the grantee's staff team. Alternatively, participants can be referred to such services through community resources, such as Goodwill Industries and Workforce Investment Act funded local job centers, or VA sponsored workforce development programs such as the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. From these programs, participants may be offered assistance with resume writing, job search, job interviewing, and job skill development. Grantees should also explore the availability of local job fairs, particularly those dedicated to Veterans, and local employers advertising new job development specifically for Veterans.

**d. Connections to Income Support (Public Benefits)**

*Options for Grantee: 1. Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to obtain public benefits including Social Security Disability Income, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran Benefit Administration benefits, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Such benefits can be an essential resource for maximizing participants' income and thereby increasing housing stability. For applications to the Social Security Administration, participants should be assisted by staff who are trained in the SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery Program (SOAR) available to direct human service workers. For applications to the Veteran Benefits Administration, participants should be assisted via referrals to local Veteran service organizations or via direct application through the established SSVF liaison for the local Veteran Benefit Administration office in the grantee's jurisdiction.

**e. Connections to Legal Services**

*Options for Grantee: 1. Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to connect with legal services, on an as needed basis and for housing stability purposes, which are provided by community based legal aid organizations in the grantee's jurisdiction. As the local demand for such services typically exceeds the supply, grantees must proactively engage such agencies in their communities.

Note that this effort to connect with legal services may optionally be organized through a sub-contract for an anticipated volume of legal services that will be used by the grantee's participants. In yet another approach, legal services may be obtained through formal or informal agreements with local law schools, chapters of the American Bar Association, or other entities providing pro bono assistance.

Participants should utilize legal services to improve access to Social Security Disability Income, Supplemental Security Income and other income benefits that will contribute to their housing stability. Other potential uses of legal services that relate to housing stability include forestalling eviction proceeding, addressing housing code violations, protecting tenant rights, protecting security deposits, providing lease reviews, pursuing debt forgiveness, processing personal bankruptcies, and reinstating revoked drivers licenses for participants seeking a job that requires a commute. Note, in addition to the resource access approach outlined here for legal services, document court filing fees may be paid for directly by SSVF temporary financial assistance under the general housing stability assistance category.

#### **f. Connections to Transportation**

*Options for Grantee: 1: Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to connect with transportation, on an as needed basis and for housing stability purposes, when the Veteran lacks access to a car or public transportation. Where available, grantees should help participants take advantage of subsidized transportation and free bus passes in their jurisdiction. These are typically offered for low income people who have disabilities or are elderly. Participants should also be connected to local shuttle services for accessing VA Medical Centers that typically leave from Veteran service organization sites. To supplement local transportation assistance, grantees have the option to provide transportation to participants themselves via a leased vehicle that is used to transport participants to service appointments and housing search related destinations. When transportation is provided through an agency's leased vehicle, grantees must devise a written policy requiring that all drivers have a valid driver's license, cell phone access inside the vehicle, and training on agency transportation procedures. Such policies also must call for insurance for all vehicles used to transport participants. Note, in addition to the resource access approach outlined here, transportation may also be paid for directly by SSVF temporary financial assistance.

#### **g. Connections to Personal Financial Planning and Credit Counseling Services**

*Options for Grantee: 1: Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to connect with services that improve their day-to-day finances and help achieve long term budgeting and financial goals. These services may include individualized counseling or workshops that teach critical skills such as budgeting, setting up bank accounts, managing money in the long term, accessing a free credit report, and repairing credit. In particular, grantees should seek services for participants who need to resolve poor credit so as to reduce the negative influence such histories have on tenant selection decisions.

Community action agencies, adult education community centers, and non-profit workforce development organizations are typical sponsors of such services. Grantees may also utilize the National Foundation for Credit Counseling ([www.nfcc.org](http://www.nfcc.org)) as a resource for their participants. When desired, participants may also be assisted in opening personal savings and checking accounts. In addition to the resource access approach outlined here, the cost of a class on financial literacy or personal credit may also be paid for directly by SSVF temporary financial assistance under the general housing stability assistance category.

#### **h. Connections to VA Fiduciary and Representative Payee Services**

*Options for Grantee: 1: Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported with the option of enlisting a VA fiduciary or representative payee arrangement on an as need basis. These arrangements may help participants who cannot manage their own financial affairs due to injury, disability, or age. Instead, a participant may choose to designate a VA fiduciary or representative payee to manage their Veteran Benefits Administration benefits, Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplementary Security Income, or other income on their behalf. The designated party then uses the individual's income to consistently pay for current and foreseeable needs including rent. Grantees should help interested participants to explore availability of this option.

#### **i. Connections to Childcare Services**

*Options for Grantee: 1: Direct; 2. Indirect*

SSVF participants should be supported to access childcare when needed by heads-of-household undertaking new tasks related to increasing housing stability. Childcare may be especially useful to participants engaged in a busy schedule of housing search visits or job interviews or in the initial weeks of new employment that has yet to yield sufficient savings to pay for childcare. To meet this need, grantees should research the availability of subsidized or free childcare for low income and homeless households in their jurisdiction. Ideally, grantees will find emergency childcare services that could bridge participants through a period of instability until more long term arrangements can be secured that are affordable to the household. Note, in addition to the resource access approach outlined here, childcare may also be paid for directly by SSVF temporary financial assistance. Note that grantees would turn to paying for childcare out of temporary financial assistance when no other free or reduced cost options can be found for a participant in their community.

### **2. Using Community Linkages to Enhance Effectiveness**

Grantees should actively develop linkages with community organizations to effectively connect participants to these other public benefits. In deciding whether to provide or to refer a participant for a needed service, the grantee must consider the availability of local offerings, as well as the grantee's own level of expertise in providing the service/benefit. A grantee who has not investigated the community's service/benefit offerings will not be able to maximize the cost-effectiveness of direct service delivery.

## F. Other Supportive Services / Temporary Financial Assistance

### 1. Other Supportive Services

A grantee may provide other services that are set forth in the NOFA and applicants may propose additional supportive services in their SSVF grant application. Grantees may also propose additional services by submitting a written request to modify the supportive services grant in accordance with 38 CFR 62.60.

### 2. Eligible Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)

Grantees may choose to provide TFA to participant households. However, not all households require such assistance. Supportive services grant funds should only be used as direct financial assistance when “but for” criteria are met. That is, after first considering readily available homeless and mainstream benefits (such as TANF, general assistance, and food stamps), the grantee must explore whether the household would be homeless “but for” the provision of SSVF TFA. When grantees do choose to provide TFA, it should be used as a supplement to services provided to a participant as part of a plan to increase the participant’s housing stability. Per 38 CFR 62.34, eligible forms of temporary financial assistance are:

- Rental assistance;
- Utility-fee payment assistance;
- Deposits (security or utility);
- Moving costs;
- Transportation (public transportation or car repair);
- General Housing Stability Assistance;
- Emergency Housing Assistance; and
- Child care

When deciding whether to provide temporary financial assistance, consider this:  
**“Would this Veteran family be homeless but for this assistance?”**

Grantees should focus on the most critical threats to the participant’s housing stability in providing the “minimum necessary” level of assistance. Grantees should keep in mind that SSVF funds for temporary financial assistance are limited. Providing a disproportionate amount of temporary financial assistance to one participant will limit the total number of participants grantees will be able to serve. As stated in the previous section VI. E. (“Assistance in Obtaining and Coordinating Other Public Benefits”), all participants should be referred to mainstream income supports for which they may qualify. By leveraging and utilizing public sources of emergency and ongoing financial assistance, grantees can minimize the temporary financial assistance payments made with SSVF grant funds. See the NOFA for the maximum percentage of total supportive services grant funds that can be used for this purpose. Wherever possible, grantees should attempt to connect participants to community resources, such as ESG programs, to obtain comparable assistance. Grantees should develop internal guidelines for the

payment of temporary financial assistance and ensure that participants receiving temporary financial assistance as part of a housing stability plan are informed of such guidelines.

**a. Rental Assistance**

Rental assistance includes the payment of rent, mobile home lot rent when participant owns or rents the mobile home, and penalties or fees to help a participant remain in or obtain permanent housing. *(Note: Where a rental fee is inclusive of utilities, the entire amount will be considered “rental assistance” and will be subject to the applicable conditions).* Rental assistance payments can be provided for amounts that are currently due (including first month or prorated rent paid prior to or at move in) or are in arrears, and for the payment of penalties or fees that have been incurred by the participant and are required to be paid under an existing lease or court order. Such allowable fees are typically late rent fees that are paid directly to a landlord.

Grantees may find it beneficial to require participants to share in the cost of rent payment as a condition of receiving assistance. Grantees are also encouraged to negotiate with landlords and utility companies to waive fees, security deposits, and, where possible, accept partial payments to satisfy arrearages. In this way, grantees conserve SSVF grant funds for future use and also empower participants to share in the responsibility. Grantees should determine the level of assistance provided on a case-by-case basis, based on the minimum amount needed to prevent the program participant from becoming homeless or returning to homelessness in the near term.

Rental assistance may be provided to eligible participants using SSVF grant funds, with the following restrictions:

<b>Restrictions on Rental Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.34(a))</b>	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Must be paid by the grantee directly to the third-party provider to whom rent is owed.</li> </ul>
Rent Reasonableness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grantee must determine reasonableness of rent, penalties or fees prior to providing assistance by conducting a market study.</li> <li>▪ A market study involves documenting details of three comparable advertised rental units. Grantees may substitute a letter from the property manager of the unit under consideration that cites details of three comparables within the manager’s portfolio. Note that citing Fair Market Rents (FMRs) is insufficient for market study purposes.</li> <li>▪ Details documented for each comparable unit cited in the market study must include: rent, location, quality, number of bedrooms, size, type, age of unit, amenities, level of housing services such as maintenance, and if utilities are included.</li> <li>▪ In general, the assisted unit must be comparable to rents charged during the same time period for similar units in the private, unassisted market.</li> <li>▪ In general, the assisted unit must not be in excess of rents charged by the property owner during same time period for other unassisted</li> </ul>

Restrictions on Rental Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.34(a))	
	<p>units.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online platforms that assess rents for a specific area are only allowable as a tool to evaluate rent reasonableness if they examine all of the required elements listed above.</li> </ul>
Shared Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent charged for a participant must be proportional to the size of the participant's private space in comparison to other private space in the unit (i.e., excluding common space).</li> <li>Participation in shared housing arrangement must be voluntary.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental assistance payments cannot be provided on behalf of participant households for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided by any and all other Federal, State, or local subsidized affordable housing programs such as HUD-VASH, public housing, and other subsidized programs. This restriction includes a tenant's own portion of rent owed when in subsidized housing. SSVF may not pay the tenant's portion of rent under these circumstances.</li> <li>When the cost type is different than what is paid by the housing subsidy, SSVF rental assistance may be used. This means SSVF may pay for a security deposit for a Veteran who is receiving HUD-VASH or receiving another form of subsidized rental assistance. Furthermore, SSVF may be used to pay rent arrears for a Veteran who is receiving HUD-VASH rental assistance or receiving other forms of subsidized housing. These costs are both considered a different cost type.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible for payments currently due or in arrears (<i>Note: the number of months in arrears paid for through rental assistance counts towards the maximum allowable months of assistance</i>).</li> <li>Maximum of 10 months in a 2-year period.</li> <li>Maximum of 6 months in a 12-month period.</li> <li>Must be in compliance with rent reasonableness.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit for Extremely Low Income Families <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum of 12 months in a 2-year period.</li> <li>Maximum of 9 months in a 12-month period.</li> <li>Must be in compliance with rent reasonableness.</li> </ul>

As with all temporary financial assistance under the SSVF Program, rental assistance may only be provided if the payment of such assistance is necessary to enable the participant to obtain or retain permanent housing. As a condition of assistance, the grantee must help the participant develop a reasonable plan to address the participant's future ability to pay rent. The grantee

<sup>4</sup> See Extremely Low Income definition in Section I. C. Definitions

should assist the participant to implement such a plan by directly providing necessary supports or by helping the participant to obtain necessary public or private benefits or services. If the grantee determines that the rent is not reasonable or that rental assistance will not allow the participant to obtain or retain permanent housing because the participant cannot reasonably be expected to afford to remain in the selected unit once SSVF rental assistance ends, SSVF grant funds should not be used to provide rental assistance. In such cases, the grantee should assist the participant in locating affordable housing that meets the participant's needs or, if affordable housing is not readily available, attempt to connect the participant with a program that offers long-term rental assistance (e.g., HUD-VASH, CoC funded supportive housing programs, etc.). If necessary, the grantee should attempt to connect the participant with short-term support if long-term support is not readily available.

**b. Utility Payment Assistance**

Utility payment assistance includes the payment of utility costs (i.e. heat, electricity, water, sewer and garbage collection) to help the participant obtain or retain permanent housing. Utility assistance may consist of payments for multiple types of utilities. Telephone or cell phone services are not eligible expenses. Utility assistance can be provided for amounts that are currently due or are in arrears. Amounts owed for telephone, cable, and other utilities not listed above are not eligible. A grantee may choose to require participants to share in the cost of utility-fee payments as a condition for receiving assistance.

Utility payment assistance may be provided to eligible participants using supportive services grant funds, with the following restrictions:

<b>Restrictions on Utility Payment Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.34(b))</b>	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a utility company.</li> <li>▪ Participant, legal representative or a member of the household must have an account in his/her name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make payments.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payments for utilities cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another Federal, State, or local program.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximum of 10 months utility payments in a 2-year period</li> <li>▪ Maximum of 6 months utility payments in a 12-month period</li> <li>▪ Arrears may be paid up to, but not exceed, the maximum allowable months of assistance. In other words, each month of payment past due is counted individually towards the maximum number of allowable months.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, Jeff owes \$900.00 in utilities accrued over 9 months with \$100.00 owed each month. The SSVF program may pay up to \$600.00 for debt accrued over 6 months. Note: Utility assistance may consist of payments for multiple types of utilities. For example, over a 2-year period, a grantee could assist a participant with 10 months of assistance for gas, electricity, and water, provided the payments cover the same ten months.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Assistance Limit for Extremely Low Income Families <sup>5</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximum of 12 months utility payments in a 2-year period</li> <li>▪ Maximum of 9 months utility payments in a 12-month period</li> </ul>

As with all temporary financial assistance payments made under the SSVF Program, utility payment assistance necessitates the development of a reasonable plan to address the participant's future ability to make utility payments. The grantee should assist the participant to implement such a plan by providing necessary assistance directly or by helping the participant to obtain any necessary public or private benefits or services. In the creation of the plan, grantees must consider that many regions have seasonal fluctuations in the cost of utilities. If the grantee cannot help the participant to develop a reasonable plan to address the participant's ability to pay future utility payments, supportive services grant funds should not be used to provide utility-fee payment assistance. Instead, the grantee should attempt to connect the participant with a program offering long-term assistance.

<sup>5</sup> See Extremely Low Income definition in Section I. C. Definitions

**c. Deposits**

Deposit payment assistance includes the payment of security or utility deposits to help the participant obtain permanent housing. Deposit payment assistance may be provided on behalf of eligible participants using SSVF grant funds, and do not count towards the monthly assistance restrictions for both rent and allowable utilities, and have the following restrictions:

<b>Restrictions on Deposit Payment Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.34(c))</b>	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment must be made by the grantee directly to the third party to whom the security or utility deposit is owed.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payments for deposits cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided for by any and all other Federal, State, or local subsidized affordable housing programs such as rapid re-housing programs that pay for security deposits.</li> <li>▪ When the cost type is different than what is paid by the housing subsidy, SSVF deposit payment assistance may be used.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximum of one security deposit during a 2-year period</li> <li>▪ Utility deposit assistance is limited to one time during a 2-year period. In cases where water and power are not included in the rent and are billed separately, deposits can be paid on each utility.</li> </ul>

A grantee may choose to require participants to share in the cost of a deposit payment as a condition for receiving assistance. A deposit equivalent of no more than two months' rent is typically considered to be the maximum reasonable level.

Deposit payment assistance may only be provided if the payment of such assistance will directly allow the participant to obtain permanent housing. The grantee must work with the participant to develop a reasonable plan to stabilize housing so that additional deposits are not needed, and should assist the participant to implement a housing stability plan by directly providing necessary assistance or by helping the participant to obtain necessary public or private benefits or services. If the grantee cannot help the participant to develop a reasonable plan to address the participant's future housing stability, supportive services grant funds should not be used to provide deposit payment assistance.

Grantees have discretion to determine how to handle security deposits if and when an assisted household moves from the assisted unit (assuming the landlord has not retained the deposit to pay for damages incurred by the tenant). The grantee may recover the security deposit (in which case it must be treated as program income) or the grantee may allow the Veteran family to keep the deposit and use it towards their next unit.

**d. Moving Costs**

Moving costs payment assistance includes costs necessary to help the participant obtain permanent housing. Moving costs may include reasonable costs such as truck rental, hiring a

moving company, or short-term storage fees for a maximum of 3 months or until the participant is in permanent housing, whichever is shorter. Relocation transportation expenses such as bus, train or plane tickets are not allowable moving costs. Moving costs payment assistance may be provided on behalf of eligible participants using supportive services grant funds, with the following restrictions:

<b>Restrictions on Moving Costs Payment Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.34(d))</b>	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a third party.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payments for moving costs cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another Federal, State, or local program.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximum of one time during a 2-year period.</li> </ul>

As a condition of providing moving costs assistance, the grantee must help the participant develop a reasonable plan to address the participant's future housing stability and assist the participant to implement such a plan. Grantees may require participants to share in the cost of moving as a condition of receiving assistance with moving costs.

**e. General Housing Stability Assistance**

General Housing Stability Assistance refers to provision of goods or payment of expenses not included in other SSVF categories but which are directly related to supporting a participant's housing stability. All such expenses relate to a participant's ability to gain or keep employment or permanent housing. Such assistance is offered only if and when it is not available through existing mainstream resources. Note that this assistance must be paid directly to a third party (not to a participant).

Four Classes of Housing Stability Assistance

There are four classes of Housing Stability Assistance expenses, outlined below, that can be authorized up to a maximum of \$1,500 per participant household during any 2-year period.

(1) Expenses associated with gaining or keeping employment:

Eligible items include but are not limited to uniforms, tools, driver's license fees, license/certification costs required for employment, documentation acquisition fees such as for Social Security Number or birth certificate, document court filing fees, and short term training leading to employment where other funding is not available.

(2) Expenses associated with moving into permanent housing:

Eligible items include but are not limited to furniture delivery costs, furniture bank fees, bed frames, conventional mattresses, air mattresses, box springs, basic kitchen utensils, and cleaning supplies.

(3) Expenses necessary for securing appropriate permanent housing:

Eligible items include but are not limited to fees for rent applications, background checks, housing inspections, credit score checks, credit counseling, financial literacy class, document court filing fees, and documentation acquisition such as for Social Security Number or birth certificates.

(4) Items necessary for life or safety provided on a temporary basis to address an emergency.

Eligible items include food, baby formula, diapers, and winter clothing. These items are allowable up to \$500 per participant household in a 2-year period and are included in the overall \$1,500 cap.

Brokers Fee

(1) Reasonable amount for a realtor broker's fee. This may be paid once during a 2-year period. The reasonableness of this fee must be determined based on the condition of the local housing market.

Items that cannot be funded under General Housing Stability Assistance are: phone cards, gift cards of any kind, and furniture (except beds). Major appliances are also generally non-eligible with the rare exception of circumstances when the VA allows such an item for an individual case.

Restrictions on General Housing Stability Assistance	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a third party.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payment under General Housing Stability Assistance cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another Federal, State, or local program.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items in the four classes add up to a maximum total of \$1,500 per participant household during any 2-year period. Items for life and safety add up to a maximum of \$500 within the overall \$1,500 limit.</li> <li>Realtor broker fees are once in a 2-year period.</li> </ul>

**f. Emergency Housing Assistance**

Emergency Housing Assistance is a category of assistance that allows SSVF programs to provide temporary housing for eligible literally homeless participants who are awaiting permanent housing **if** no other shelter is available. As SSVF resources must be focused on securing and sustaining placement in permanent housing, grantees are expected to exercise great care in committing resources to emergency housing, ensuring no alternative VA resources (such as Grant and Per Diem or Healthcare for Homeless Veterans residential contract housing) or community resources exist.

Emergency housing is limited to short-term commercial residences, not already funded to provide on-demand emergency shelter, that does not require the participant to sign a lease or occupancy agreement (private residences are not eligible). Note that the *Emergency Housing Assistance Verification* is used to confirm eligibility.

If permanent housing, appropriate shelter beds, and transitional housing are not available and subsequent rental housing has been identified generally but is not immediately available for move-in by the participant, then a grantee may place a participant in emergency housing, subject to the following limitations:

Limitations:

- Placement for a single Veteran may not exceed 72 hours, unless the grantee can certify that shelter beds and transitional housing are still unavailable at the end of 72 hours. Extensions beyond the 72 hours may not exceed 45 days.
- Placement for a Veteran and his or her spouse with dependent(s) may not exceed 45 days.
- A participant may be placed in emergency housing only once during any 2-year period, beginning on the date the grantee first pays for emergency housing.
- The cost of the emergency housing must be reasonable in relation to the costs charged for other available emergency housing considering the location, quality, size, and type.
- At least one viable option for a permanent housing unit must be identified for the participant who is temporarily receiving emergency housing assistance.

Restrictions on Emergency Housing Assistance	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a third party.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payments for emergency housing assistance cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another Federal, State, or local program.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximum of 45 days for Veterans with spouse and/or dependents.</li> <li>▪ Maximum of 72 hours (extensions for up to 45 days) for a single Veteran.</li> <li>▪ No more than once in a 2-year period for all participants.</li> </ul>

**g. Transportation Assistance**

A grantee may provide transportation assistance if it will enhance housing stability. For example, a participant may require assistance with transportation to a job interview or a medical appointment. Because the use of public transportation is generally less expensive than the use of private vehicles and may be more sustainable in the long-term, grantees should consider providing public transportation tokens or vouchers before offering financial assistance for personal vehicles. If sufficient public transportation options are not locally available, a grantee may provide car repair or maintenance assistance on behalf of a participant. The following table outlines restrictions applicable to temporary transportation financial assistance:

<b>Restrictions on Transportation Payment Assistance (per 38 CFR 62.33(d))</b>	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a third party.</li> </ul>
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payments for transportation cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another Federal, State, or local program.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No financial limit on amount of public transportation assistance for participants</li> <li>▪ No time limit on public transportation assistance</li> <li>▪ Maximum of \$1,200 car repairs/maintenance in a 2-year period on behalf of a participant</li> </ul>

The provision of money or gift cards to a participant to pay for gasoline is not permitted with SSVF funds. However, in rural areas with limited to no public transportation, the issuance of Gas Vouchers may be allowable under the conditions listed below:

1. A gas voucher is allowable as transportation cost only towards needs directly related to housing stability and is incorporated in the participant’s Housing Plan.
2. Payment must be made by the grantee directly to a third party. For example, the grantee may make arrangements with a local gas station by pre-paying for gasoline only, require gas station to view identification of participant prior to approval of any gasoline purchase, and provide grantee with receipts for all gasoline purchases.

As with all temporary financial assistance payments made under the SSVF Program, the provision of transportation assistance requires the development of a housing stability plan. The grantee should consider a participant’s unique situation, as well as the area’s transportation options in creating such a plan, weighing the costs and benefits of different options. If the grantee cannot help the participant develop a reasonable plan to address the participant’s future ability to pay for transportation, supportive services grant funds should not be used to provide transportation assistance. In that case, transportation assistance should be limited to the grantee’s efforts to connect the participant with a program offering long-term assistance.

**h. Child Care Assistance**

A grantee may make payments on behalf of a participant to an “eligible child care provider” providing child care services. Such child care payments should only be provided by the grantee if the assistance will improve a participant’s housing stability (e.g., if the provision of child care assistance will allow the participant to obtain or maintain employment). The following table outlines restrictions applicable to child care assistance payments:

<b>Restrictions on Child Care Assistance Payment (per 38 CFR 62.33(h))</b>	
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Payment must be made by the grantee directly to an “eligible child care provider.” An “eligible child care provider” is a provider of child care services for compensation, including a provider of care for a</li> </ul>

Restrictions on Child Care Assistance Payment (per 38 CFR 62.33(h))	
	school-age child during non-school hours, that: (1) is licensed, regulated, registered, or otherwise legally operating under state and local law, and (2) satisfies the state and local requirements applicable to the child care services the provider provides.
Cost-Sharing with Other Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payments for child care cannot be provided on behalf of participants for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another Federal, State, or local program.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum of 10 months in a 2-year period, per child in household</li> <li>Maximum of 6 months in a 12-month period, per child in household (<i>Note: Household may include multiple children</i>)</li> <li>Begins on the date grantee first pays for child care on behalf of participant</li> <li>Child care assistance can be provided for children under the age of 13, unless a child has a disability. Child care assistance can be provided for children with a disability under the age of 18.</li> </ul>
Assistance Limit for Extremely Low Income Families <sup>6</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum of 12 months in a 2-year period, per child in household</li> <li>Maximum of 9 months in a 12-month period, per child in household</li> </ul>

As with all temporary financial assistance payments made under the SSVF Program, the provision of child care assistance requires the development of a reasonable housing stability plan to address the participant’s future ability to pay for child care. Grantees should assist the participant to implement such a plan by providing any necessary assistance or helping the participant to obtain any necessary public or private benefits or services. If the grantee cannot help the participant develop a reasonable plan, child care assistance should be limited to the grantee’s efforts to connect the participant with a program offering long-term assistance.

### 3. Restrictions on Payments

Temporary financial assistance payments cannot be paid to the participant and must be paid directly to a third party on behalf of a participant. In order to prevent temporary financial assistance from consuming a disproportionate amount of grant funds, VA has set a limit in the NOFA of a maximum allowable percentage of funds used for temporary financial assistance. Additionally, timing and other restrictions on the use of eligible temporary financial assistance can be found in 38 CFR 62.33 and 38 CFR 62.34. *Grantees may choose to impose additional limitations on such assistance. Please see Section VIII.E. for a list of ineligible activities, including costs associated with temporary financial assistance.*

<sup>6</sup> See Extremely Low Income definition in Section I. C. Definitions

#### 4. Documentation Required

Grantees must maintain records that justify the provision of temporary financial assistance. Program Guide Section VIII.C. outlines the case file documentation required to verify the eligibility of a temporary financial assistance payment.

## VII. Program Operations

### A. Participant Agreements

Prior to providing SSVF assistance to a participant household, grantees enter into a written agreement between their agency and each participant household. This agreement describes the grantee's SSVF grant program and any conditions or restrictions on the receipt of supportive services by the participant. Participant agreements and conditions should be fully disclosed to potential participants and acknowledged in writing by both parties.

### B. Participant Fees

Grantees may not charge a fee to participant households for providing supportive services that are funded using funds from a supportive services grant. *Note: this prohibition does not prevent grantees from requiring participants to cost-share with a grantee, any expenses for which temporary financial assistance is provided.*

### C. Participant Safety and Critical Incident Reports

A critical goal of the SSVF Program is to ensure the safety of all participant households, supportive service coordinators, and their staff. Grantees are encouraged to develop a comprehensive safety plan to maintain the safety of participants and staff and the confidentiality of the program's participants and their records. In developing a plan, VA recommends that grantees:

- Establish goals and objectives that reduce and eliminate accidents, injuries, and illnesses related to administering supportive services to participants;
- Develop plans and procedures for evaluating the safety program's effectiveness, both at the program office and in the field;
- Develop priorities for remedying the identified factors which cause accidents, injuries and illnesses;
- Conduct adequate safety and health training for officials at different levels, including supervisory employees, employees responsible for conducting participant home visits and/or habitability inspections (see Habitability Standards section below), employee representatives and other employees; and
- Ensure that all staff, students, and volunteers receive initial and annual training on how to respond to critical incidents.

If a grantee becomes aware of a health or safety issue related to the participant, including unsafe accommodations, the grantee must report the issue to the appropriate authorities. Grantees are expected to comply with all applicable laws. If a participant's actions pose a health or safety risk to that participant or another person, the grantee must notify the police or another appropriate authority. Once the appropriate authority has been alerted, the grantee should notify the SSVF Program Office about a critical incident involving a participant as soon as possible, but within a timeframe not to exceed 48 hours after the grantee has been made aware of the situation. Critical incidents include, but are not limited to, death, attempted or

completed suicide, arrests for violent crimes, an assault on program staff, or inappropriate staff involvement.

#### **D. Habitability Standards**

Grantees using SSVF grant funds to provide rental assistance, payments of utilities fees, security deposits or utilities deposits, (as defined under 38 CFR 62.34) on behalf of a participant moving into a new (different) housing unit will be required to conduct initial and any appropriate follow-up inspections of the housing unit into which the participant will be moving. Grantees assisting a participant to move into a new housing unit should ensure the housing unit meets the conditions set forth in 24 CFR 583.300(b). Inspections should occur no later than three (3) working days after the housing unit has been identified to the SSVF grantee, unless the alternative inspection method outlined below is used to meet requirements. The habitability inspection does not need to be performed by a certified inspector.

The habitability standards requirement can be met through an alternative inspection method. If a prior inspection was completed on a property/unit, this will be sufficient to fulfill the Habitability Standards requirement if all of the following criteria are met:

- The inspection was conducted pursuant to the requirements of a Federal, State, or local housing program (including, but not limited to, the Home investment partnership program under title II of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act or the low-income housing tax credit program under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986);
- If the inspection was not conducted pursuant to the requirements of a Federal housing program, the public housing agency has certified to the Secretary that such standard or requirement provides the same (or greater) protection to occupants of inspected dwelling units;
- Pursuant to the inspection, the property was determined to meet the requirements regarding housing quality or safety applicable to properties assisted under such program; and
- The inspection was conducted within the past 2 years.

#### **E. Notification to Participants**

Before providing SSVF assistance to a participant household, grantees must notify the participant that the assistance will be paid for, in whole or in part, by VA.

To ensure that Veteran families receiving supportive services under the SSVF Program are receiving quality services, the grantee must give a VA-designated satisfaction survey to each participant on two separate occasions – (i) once within 45 to 60 days of the participant’s entry into the grantee’s program, and (ii) again within 30 days of the participant’s pending exit from the grantee’s program.

## F. Confidentiality

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Grantees are required to maintain confidentiality of records kept on participant households. Grantees and subcontractors must comply with all applicable federal and local laws to assure the confidentiality and security of participant's physical and electronic records. Furthermore, grantees must ensure the security of records such that computer systems are equipped with technologies to prevent unauthorized use (such as encryption, strong passwords, and biometrics).

Grantees that provide family violence prevention or domestic violence treatment services must establish and implement additional procedures to protect participants by ensuring the confidentiality of:

- (1) Records pertaining to any individual provided services, and
- (2) The address or location where the services are provided.

The SSVF Program Office conducts annual reviews of grantee programs that include an assessment of policies and procedures for protecting client information. Many SSVF grantees utilize a combination of physical and electronic document management procedures, as well as conduct mobile office outreach and services. It is important that grantees assess their privacy and security policies at least once per year in order to ensure the highest level of protection of client information.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) protocols include standards for the privacy and security of information entered into the HMIS system. These standards were developed by HUD based on Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards for securing and protecting client information. HUD has defined baseline standards that are required of any and all organizations (such as a Continuum of Care, homeless assistance provider, Veteran service organization, or HMIS software company) that record, use, or process personal protected information on homeless clients for an HMIS. Some communities have elected to adopt additional laws, protocols or policies to further enhance the privacy and security of information collected through HMIS. Users of HMIS products must comply with the baseline HUD standards and must also comply with any additional federal, state and local laws that require additional confidentiality protections. Grantees are strongly encouraged to enter data into HMIS for all members of the household receiving SSVF services.

## G. Releasing Participants from Program

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A grantee may establish reasonable requirements unique to their program. These requirements can be included as part of targeting and eligibility screening processes. However, those requirements must be clearly communicated (in writing) to all participant households and a copy of the requirements must also be provided to VA. In the event a participant violates a grantee's program requirements, a grantee may stop providing assistance to the participant. Grantees may resume assistance to a participant whose assistance was previously suspended. In terminating assistance to a participant, the grantee must first provide a formal process that

recognizes the rights of individuals receiving assistance to due process in the termination decision. This process, at a minimum, must consist of:

- (1) Written notice to the participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination,
- (2) A review of the decision, in which the participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a grantee's staff member other than the staff member (or a subordinate of that staff member) who made or approved the termination decision, and
- (3) Prompt written notice of the final decision to the participant.

## **H. Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedures**

Grantees are required to establish an internal policy for processing and reviewing participant grievances and complaints. This policy should be presented to the participant household upon enrollment for services. Grantees are also required to establish a policy that allows for participant appeals to a rejection for services. The appeals policy requires the agency to provide the participant with the reason for rejection and the right to appeal it to agency supervisory staff. The policy must also include a review process and a timeframe established for such review. The appeals policy should be presented to the participant at the initial intake appointment.

## VIII. Fiscal Administration

### A. Overview of HHS PMS Disbursement Platform

Supportive services grant funds are disbursed via the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS). PMS is an internet-based system supported by staff from the HHS Division of Payment Management (DPM). Current HHS Payment Financial System account users will use their existing username and password to access the SSVF grant account. Current users will be notified by HHS that the SSVF grant award has been added to the organization's account, but this will not affect the ability to request payments from other accounts.

#### 1. PMS Registration

Each new grantee must be registered in the PMS in order to draw down supportive services grant funds. In order to be registered in the system, a Standard Form 1199A (SF-1199A) and a Primary Contact Information Form must be sent to the SSVF Program Office at:

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program Office  
National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans  
4100 Chester Avenue  
Suite 201  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

#### SF-1199A: Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form

**To Access SF-1199A:**

- Visit [www.dpm.psc.gov](http://www.dpm.psc.gov)
- Under "Grant Recipient Info", click on "Forms"
- Click on "Grantee Banking Information – SF 1199A"

The SF-1199A is composed of three sections and includes form directions and definitions of terms. Please note that any alterations to the form such as erasures, correction fluid and strike-outs will invalidate the form. Section 1 must be completed by the grantee and consists of payee (grantee) information, including bank account information. Section 2 may be completed by the grantee or by a representative of the grantee's financial institution and should identify the SSVF Program Office, who will review this form before forwarding it to DPM. Section 3 must be completed by a representative of the grantee's financial institution, who will mail the completed form directly to the SSVF Program Office. The form must bear the original signatures in Sections 1 and 3. Photocopies will not be accepted.

## PMS Access Form

### To Access Primary Contact Information Form:

- Visit [www.dpm.psc.gov](http://www.dpm.psc.gov)
- Under “Grant Recipient Info”, click on “Forms”
- Click on “PMS/FFR User Form”

This form must be completed in its entirety, with responses to **all** entry prompts. Forms that are incomplete will not be processed. This form must be completed and mailed to the SSVF Program Office. If possible, the PMS Access Form should be mailed together with the SF-1199A. *Note: If grantee did not receive a Payee Identification Number (PIN), the grantee should contact the SSVF Program Office to obtain the PIN.*

### Finalizing PMS Registration

In order to complete the PMS registration, the SF-1199A and PMS Access forms must be sent to the SSVF Program Office, who will submit the forms to DPM. Once received by DPM, grantee registration takes approximately one to three weeks to finalize. Once registered, the grantee will be sent a temporary password for PMS/Smartlink access via certified mail and can access the system to submit draw down requests, track past draw down transactions, and view the grantee’s remaining available funds. Grantees can have up to six (6) user accounts. To add users, please complete the HHS Account Access Form ([https://www.dpm.psc.gov/grant\\_recipient/guides\\_forms/ffr\\_user\\_form.aspx](https://www.dpm.psc.gov/grant_recipient/guides_forms/ffr_user_form.aspx)) and send to the VA HHS Liaison at [anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov). The SSVF grant funds are categorized in the HHS Financial Payment System as Type B accounts.

## 2. Change of PMS Information

If a grantee changes its financial institution, they will need to complete a Direct Deposit Form SF-1199A ([http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/GPD/HHS\\_DPM\\_1199a.pdf](http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/GPD/HHS_DPM_1199a.pdf)) and submit to the VA HHS Liaison at [anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov) who will make the changes to the organization's HHS Financial Payment System account. Grantees must also inform their SSVF Regional Coordinator of this change. In order to change the grantee’s primary contact information, the grantee must submit a completed PMS Access Form to the VA HHS Liaison at [anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov) who will make the changes to the organization's HHS Financial Payment System account.

## B. Grant Draw Down Process

### 1. Overview of Disbursement

Grantees may draw down supportive services grant funds prospectively via the internet-based PMS in accordance with any restrictions laid out in the NOFA. Draw down requests are submitted and processed online via the request functions of the PMS platform. Once a draw

down request is approved, disbursement is completed by electronic funds transfer to the grantee's bank account the following business day. Grantees have three days to expend the funds that are drawn down from the HHS system. If funds are not expended within three days, a grantee must contact the VA to make a plan for paying interest on those funds.

To meet obligation for spending of SSVF funds, and ensure effective and efficient grant expenditure, the following targets for quarterly grant draw downs is strongly recommended:

- Q1 - 35%
- Q2 - 60%
- Q3 - 80%
- Q4 - 100%

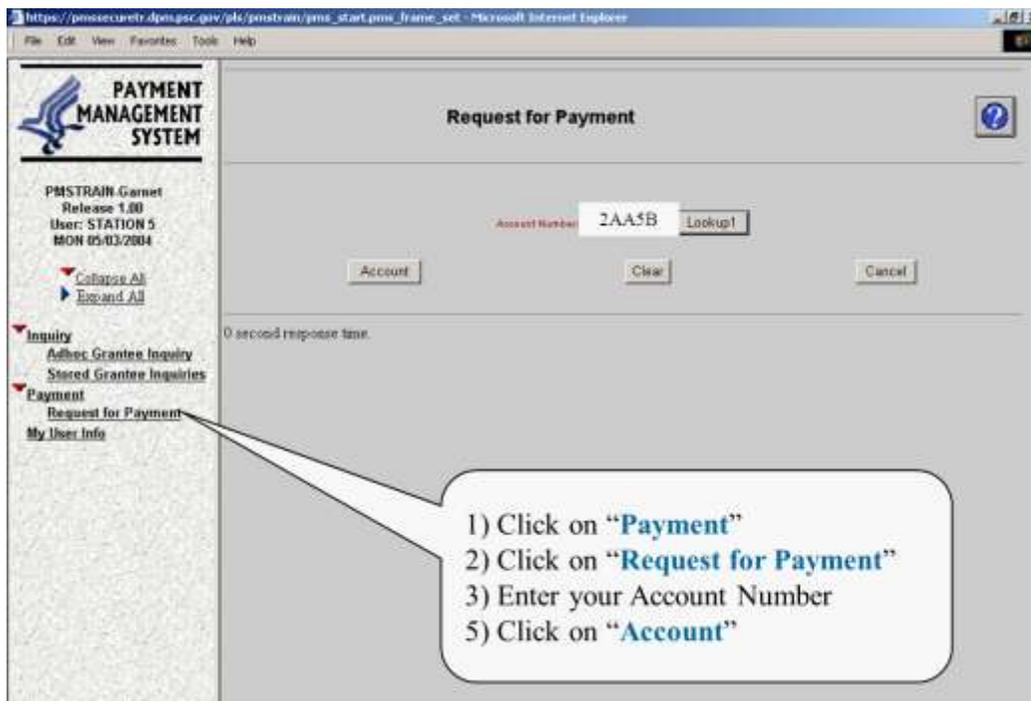
## 2. Grant Draw Down

### To Access Payment Management System's Online Platform:

- Visit [www.dpm.psc.gov](http://www.dpm.psc.gov)
- At the top of the page, click on "Payment Management System"
- Under "Service," click on "Payment Management System"
- Enter User Name (established by DPM) and Password (initial password provided by DPM)
- Click on "Click Here for Access to the Payment Management System"

Grantees must access PMS/Smartlink via the DPM website ([www.dpm.psc.gov](http://www.dpm.psc.gov)) in order to draw down SSVF Program grant funds. Once logged in to the PMS online platform, you may make a request for payment under the "Payment" tab. The grantee will first locate their SSVF account by entering the assigned account number after the prompt, as shown in the screenshot that follows.

PMS Screenshot #1 - Account Access



Once the grantee’s SSVF account has been entered, the grantee will be able to complete a request for supportive services grant funds. The following image is a screenshot of the “Request for Payment” form.

PMS Screenshot #2 - Request for Payment Form



As shown in the image above, the grantee is required to complete the following information for each drawdown request:

- DUNS
- Updates to Requestor Information [Click checkbox if no changes are required]
- Payment Due Date [list next business day]
- Expected Disbursement Amount [total amount requested]
- Cash on Hand [SSVF Program funds remaining since last draw down]
- Payment Request Amount [total amount requested]

On the next screen, grantees must indicate from which of the three subaccounts the funds should be drawn (more than one account may be selected):

- Administrative Costs
- Supportive Services Costs (Costs associated with provision and coordination of supportive services, excluding temporary financial assistance)
- Temporary Financial Assistance

To determine the total amount of funds in each of these subaccounts, grantees should refer to their approved budgets.

PMS Screenshot #3 – Subaccount Identification

The screenshot displays a web form titled "DPM User Request for Payment". The form contains the following fields and information:

- Account Number: B4891P1
- DUNS: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: PMS \_\_\_\_\_ TRAINER
- Phone: ( 301 ) 443 - 2292 Ext.: \_\_\_\_\_
- E-Mail Address: info@dsc.gov
- Payment Due Date: 03/15/2005
- Payment Request Amount \$: \$1,000.00

At the bottom of the form, there are two subaccount selection options, both with checked checkboxes:

- SLMAQMD40R161
- SLMAQMD40R167

Buttons for "SubAmount" and "Cancel" are located at the bottom of the form.

On the following screen, grantees must specify the amount of funds being requested from each subaccount.

PMS Screenshot #4 – Amounts Requested from Each Subaccount

**DPM User Request for Payment**

Account Number: B4891P1  
DUNS: \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_

Name: PMS \_\_ \_\_ TRAINER  
( 301 ) 443 - 2292 Ext: \_\_ \_\_ \_\_  
E-Mail Address: info@psc.gov

Payment Due Date: 03/15/2005  
Payment Request Amount \$: \$1,000.00

Subaccount	Bank Account	Funds Available \$	Subacct Amt Requested \$
SLMAGMD49R161	05400120400019-2108-3053	\$240,000.00	500
SLMAGMD49R167	05400120400019-2108-3053	\$63,761.00	500

Request Payment      GOTO Subacct      Cancel

When all of the information has been entered, grantees should click “Request Payment” and a confirmation screen will appear. Once a request has been approved, funds will be disbursed by direct deposit into the grantee’s bank account the following business day.

In order to receive SSVF Program Office approval, the request must meet the following requirements:

- Request amount must not exceed remaining grant funds; and
- Request amount must not exceed agreed-upon quarterly maximum.

If a request for payment is not approved by the SSVF Program Office, the grantee’s request will be denied. To make changes to payments or drawdown requests that have been approved, grantees must contact the VA HHS liaison at [anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:anthony.holland@psc.hhs.gov) to request any reversals to previously approved payments. Any corrections made to the SSVF account will appear on the summary page report.

### C. Eligible Expenses and Financial Close-outs

Payment of SSVF grant funds up to the amount specified in the SSVF grant agreement will be made only for appropriately documented eligible expenses that are allowable, allocable, and reasonable costs of operating a program under the Supportive Services grant. Eligible expenses must be in accordance with the applicable Federal Cost Principles set forth in OMB

Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations, codified at 2 CFR Part 235. Ineligible expenses are those costs charged by a grantee that VA determines to be unallowable based on applicable Federal cost principles, the SSVF Program regulations or the Supportive Services grant agreement. All SSVF grant funds must be expended by the end of the contract year. Any remaining funds will be returned to the Department of the Treasury. SSVF grantees will have 45 days from the end of the agreement term to finalize programmatic and financial close-outs. Subcontractors are held to the same standards as the SSVF grantee regarding compliance with the Final Rule and OMB circulars. Grantees are responsible for the monitoring and oversight of subcontractors, as well as maintaining appropriate financial and program performance documentation.

Grantees must submit all required final reports no later than 45 days after the end of the grant term.

Under 38 CFR 62.71, grantees are required to comply with VA reporting procedures. For SSVF, grantees are required to complete the Federal Financial Report (FFR) SF-425. Grantees must complete this report within the Payment Management System.

The SSVF Program Office will provide instructions for SSVF grantees to complete this requirement, and grantees should use the SSVF grant account number provided by VA.

The submission of the FFR will be on an annual basis, at the completion of the grant term. For SSVF, the reporting period end date shall be the end date of the project or grant period. Grantees who received an extension from the SSVF program office shall use the date the extension ended.

Annual reports shall be submitted no later than 45 days after the project or grant period end date. Each FFR report must represent only one SSVF grant award.

The following Sections 1 and 2 outline expenses that are eligible under the supportive services requirements of the SSVF Program.

### **1. Administrative Costs (10% Maximum)**

Administrative costs include all direct and indirect costs associated with the management of the program, including supplies, phone and internet, photocopies, the administrative costs of subcontractors, etc. Per OMB Circular A-122, direct costs are those that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective (i.e., a particular project, service, or other direct activity). Indirect costs are those that have been incurred for a common or joint objective and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective (e.g., depreciation, costs of operating and maintaining a facility, salaries of administration and accounting personnel, etc.). Administrative costs may not exceed 10 percent of the total amount of the supportive services grant. Please see OMB Circular A-122 to determine what costs are and are not allowable direct and indirect costs.

## 2. Provision and Coordination of Supportive Services (90% Minimum)

### a. Outreach

Eligible expenses associated with providing outreach services may include costs such as outreach staff time, promotional materials, and marketing materials. SSVF may pay for such SSVF marketing materials to enhance conventional staff-driven outreach provided that all of the following terms are met before incurring such costs:

- Traditional staff-driven methods of outreach were tried but target numbers are still unmet.
- An assessment was performed to ensure chosen marketing method will be effective.
- A comparison was made between effectiveness of staff outreach versus marketing.
- Care was taken to market only the SSVF program itself and not the sponsoring agency.
- Marketing was designed to ensure effectiveness in connecting Veterans to SSVF.

### b. Case Management

Eligible expenses associated with providing case management services such as case manager salaries and other program (non-administrative) staff time. These expenses may include the costs associated with training and supervising case management staff. The time associated with case managers entering participant records into HMIS can also be budgeted in this section.

### c. Assistance in Obtaining VA Benefits

Grantees are required to assist participants in obtaining VA benefits such as vocational and rehabilitation counseling, employment and training service, educational assistance and health care services. This supportive service is a component of each participant's ongoing needs assessment and, as it is primarily a referral service, does not involve specific expenses beyond non-administrative staff time for the case manager.

### d. Assistance in Obtaining and Coordinating Other Public Benefits

Grantees are required to assist participants to obtain, and coordinate the provision of public benefits that are being provided by Federal, State, local, or tribal agencies, or any eligible entity in the area or community served by the grantee. Services included in this section are referrals for health care services, referrals for daily living services, personal financial planning services, transportation services, income support services, fiduciary and representative payee services, legal services, child care services and housing counseling. At a minimum, these services will involve the time of the case manager who provides and coordinates referrals. Professional services are also an eligible expense (e.g., legal services, real estate services). In some cases, grantees may be able to directly provide necessary supportive services; however, it may sometimes be more cost-effective for grantees to provide a referral for participants to obtain a service in the community. Costs involved with administering these services, such as administrative staff time and supplies, are included in the program's administrative costs.

### e. Temporary Financial Assistance

A temporary financial assistance payment made on behalf of a program participant must help the participant remain in permanent housing or obtain permanent housing and meet all other

requirements set forth in 38 CFR 62.33 and 38 CFR 62.34. Temporary financial assistance must be reasonable and must be provided as part of a plan to address the participant’s future ability to pay their own expenses. Outside of such a plan, temporary financial assistance payments are not an eligible use of SSVF Program funds.

Temporary financial assistance payments should augment the grantee’s program by supporting the housing stability of participants and should not consume a disproportionate amount of grant funds. Grantees must ensure that temporary financial assistance payments do not exceed the percentage of total grant funds established in the NOFA. Temporary financial assistance must comply with the limitations set out in 38 CFR 62.33 and 62.34. Eligible temporary financial assistance restrictions and suggested documentation are shown in the table below (further restrictions may be set forth in the NOFA).

Temporary financial assistance **must** be paid directly to a third party on behalf of a participant. Temporary financial assistance **must never** be paid directly to a participant.

Temporary Assistance	Associated Restrictions	Suggested Documentation
Child Care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided by “eligible child care provider.”</li> <li>▪ Max. 10 months in a 2-year period, per child</li> <li>▪ Max. 6 months in a 12-month period, per child</li> </ul> <p><b>Extremely Low Income<sup>7</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Max. 12 months in a 2-year period, per child</li> <li>▪ Max. 9 months in a 12-month period, per child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copy of invoice for services</li> <li>▪ Receipt of payment</li> </ul>
Transportation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No restrictions on public transportation</li> <li>▪ Max. \$1,200 in car repair in 2-year period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copy of bill for services</li> <li>▪ Receipt of payment</li> </ul>
Rental assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eligible for payments currently due or in arrears (<i>Number of months in arrears paid for with rental assistance counts towards the max. allowable months of assistance</i>).</li> <li>▪ Penalties or fees must be reasonable and must directly allow participant to obtain/ remain in permanent housing.</li> <li>▪ In compliance with rent reasonableness<sup>8</sup></li> <li>▪ Max. 10 months in a 2-year period.</li> <li>▪ Max. 6 months in 12-month period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copy of payment demand from landlord/ management company, clearly identifying participant and unit</li> <li>▪ Document indicating participant’s portion of rent</li> <li>▪ Receipt of payment</li> <li>▪ Signed lease</li> <li>▪ W9 from landlord required for payment</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> See Extremely Low Income definition in Section I.C. Definitions

<sup>8</sup> Rent reasonableness means the total rent charged for a unit must be reasonable in relation to the rents being charged during the same time period for comparable units in the private unassisted market and must not exceed rents charged by the property owner during the same time period.

Temporary Assistance	Associated Restrictions	Suggested Documentation
	<p><b>Extremely Low Income<sup>9</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. 12 months in a 2-year period</li> <li>Max. 9 months in 12-month period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required Habitability Standards inspection (if new/different unit)</li> </ul>
Utility payment assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible for payments currently due or arrears</li> <li>Participant, legal representative or a member of the household must have an account in his/her name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make payments.</li> <li>Max. 10 months in 2-year period</li> <li>Max. 6 months in 12-month period</li> </ul> <p><b>Extremely Low Income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. 12 months in 2-year period</li> <li>Max. 9 months in 12-month period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of utility bill, itemized by month</li> <li>Proof that participant is responsible for payment</li> <li>Receipt of payment</li> <li>Required Habitability Standards inspection (if new/different unit)</li> </ul>
Security deposits/ Utility deposits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Security deposit assistance limited to one time during a 2-year period</li> <li>Utility deposit assistance limited to one time during a 2-year period</li> <li>Approved deposits do not count towards maximum rental assistance limitations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written statement from landlord/management or utility company that deposit is required. In cases where water and power are not included in rent and are billed separately, this is to be included in the statement from landlord/t.</li> <li>Signed lease or utility agreement</li> <li>Required Habitability Standards inspection (if new/different unit)</li> <li>Receipt of payment</li> </ul>
Moving costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. of one time during a 2-year period</li> <li>Short-term storage for a max. of 3 months or until participant is in permanent housing, whichever is shorter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of receipts for: moving costs, short-term storage fees</li> <li>Receipt of payment</li> </ul>
General Housing Stability Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. of \$1,500 per participant household for “four classes” during 2-year period</li> <li>Max. of \$500 per participant household for items for life/safety (falls within \$1,500 max)</li> <li>Broker fees allowable once in a 2-year period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of bill or invoice</li> <li>Copy of receipts for allowable expenses</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> See Extremely Low Income definition in Section I. C. Definitions

Temporary Assistance	Associated Restrictions	Suggested Documentation
Emergency Housing Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Max. 45 days for Veteran with dependents</li> <li>▪ Max. 72 hours for single Veterans - extension in limited circumstances up to 45 days.</li> <li>▪ May be used once during 2-year period</li> <li>▪ At least one viable option for a permanent housing unit must be identified for participant who is receiving this assistance.</li> <li>▪ No space available at community shelter</li> <li>▪ Cost must be reasonable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copy of invoice and receipt</li> <li>▪ Emergency Housing Assistance Verification Form</li> </ul>

Payments cannot be made on behalf of the participant for the same period and for the same cost types that are being provided for the same participant through another Federal, State or local subsidy program.

Grantees should maintain records that justify the provision of temporary financial assistance payments. Such records should include the details and documentation of the payment as well as the participant’s housing stability plan. The plan provided must justify the provision of the temporary financial assistance in terms of the urgency of the assistance at the time of payment, as well as the participant’s plan to pay the costs for housing in the future.

**f. Other Supportive Services**

In accordance with grantees’ grant agreements or otherwise approved by VA, other supportive services may be provided.

**D. Documentation Required**

Grantees must use adequate financial management systems that follow generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and provide adequate fiscal control and accounting records, including cost accounting records supported by documentation. Grantees’ financial management systems must comply with the requirements of 38 CFR 49.21.

**E. Ineligible Activities**

SSVF grantees are encouraged to read OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations. Supportive services grant funds may *not* be used to pay for any of the following items (*Note: this list of ineligible activities is not exhaustive*):

- Mortgage costs or costs needed by homeowners to assist with any fees, taxes, or other costs of refinancing;
- Construction or rehabilitation of buildings;
- Credit card bills or other consumer debt;
- Extensive car repairs for participant households (beyond the eligible \$1,200 in repairs/maintenance);

- Car payments for participants;
- Relocation transportation expenses such as bus, train or plane tickets;
- Medical or dental care and medicines for Mental health, substance use, or other therapeutic interventions designed to treat Axis I or II diagnostic conditions in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Addition;
- Home care and home health aides typically used to provide care in support of daily living activities (Note: This includes care that is focused on treatment for an injury or illness, rehabilitation, or other assistance generally required to assist those with handicaps or other physical limitations.);
- Food, including food provided at staff and other meetings or trainings (except as a qualified emergency supply);
- Pet care, including additional deposit for pet;
- Entertainment activities;
- Direct cash assistance to program participants;
- Purchase of gift cards for program participants;
- Court-ordered judgments or fines. Note that late rent fees are an allowable expense.
- Court-ordered fees that are related to a court order/adjudication;
- Petty cash for program staff;
- Gift cards of any kind; or
- Advertising.

Funds may *not* be released directly to the participant. All funds are to be issued to a third party such as a landlord or utility company.



## IX. Training and Evaluation

### A. SSVF Program Staff Training and Mentor Program

The SSVF Program Office has developed a Mentor Program, which identifies “Mentor Sites” that have effectively developed interventions that successfully meet VA’s goals of preventing and ending homelessness. Mentor Sites work with new grantees to accelerate their skill development and knowledge acquisition of the SSVF Program. This mentoring program should help new grantees adopt promising practices from the very start of their program operations. Mentor Sites will provide experiential, rather than didactic training, as the latter will continue to be offered through VA’s technical assistance provider. New grantees are encouraged to have a program manager spend a week at their assigned Mentor Site to observe how that program organizes and delivers SSVF services. It is hoped that by shadowing key Mentor Site SSVF staff, new grantees will be better able to apply formal training and quickly organize effective and productive services upon return to their home agency.

In addition, grantees must attend VA-mandated training sessions. Trainings will be conducted by VA and its technical assistance providers. Information on training, including eligible training expenses, will be emailed to grantees. It is also expected that grantees will provide training for case managers and staff who will provide supportive services to very low-income Veteran families. VA mandated training will be provided at no-cost to grantees.

### B. Ensuring Adequate Fiscal and Operational Controls

The HHS Payment Management System systematically manages the disbursement of SSVF Program funds. The HHS Payment Management System provides the SSVF Program Office with electronic financial reports to ensure effective management of program activities, as well as timely and accurate financial reporting. In addition to complying with the HHS Payment Management System requirements, grantees must also comply with VA’s Financial Service Center auditing procedures.

VA’s Financial Services Center will ensure grant accountability by performing fiscal audits for selected SSVF Program grantees. These audits will include an evaluation of costs to confirm compliance with applicable OMB circulars, the SSVF Program Final Rule and NOFA. The Payment Data Inquiry lists all account transactions for the organization and can be customized by date and specific grant account. The report can be printed and provided to auditors. The Financial Services Center will also provide technical assistance to grantees regarding financial requirements.



## X. Reporting Requirements

### A. Goals

The reporting requirements in 38 CFR 62.71 have been designed to provide VA with the information required to assess the outcomes associated with grantees' programs. VA anticipates grantees' programs will assist in reducing the number of Veteran families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

### B. Reporting Process

#### 1. HMIS

Grantees are required to enter data on all participants into HMIS.<sup>10</sup> The FY 2015 VA Data Guide provides comprehensive guidance on HMIS setup for SSVF grants, data collection and data quality requirements, reporting, and other data-related topics to assist grantees and sub-grantees with meeting data collection requirements.

On a monthly basis, grantees will upload client-level SSVF data from the HMIS system in which SSVF Program data are managed to a secure SSVF Data Repository ("Repository") managed by VA. Each upload of SSVF data to the Repository will contain a complete data set reflecting program activity from program inception to the date of export.

The format for the upload of SSVF Program data to the Repository is the HUD HMIS Comma-Separated Value (CSV) Format v4.0;<sup>11</sup> a subset of the complete set of CSV files will be required. The VA Data Guide includes detailed information on the files required as well as specific data quality requirements for relevant fields.

Data exported from HMIS systems should be packaged in a ZIP file prior to upload to the Repository. For detailed specifications, upload instructions, data quality standards, and data use and disclosure descriptions, please read the FY 2015 VA Data Guide available on the SSVF University website:

[http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/program\\_requirements/hmis\\_and\\_data](http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/program_requirements/hmis_and_data)

#### 2. Quarterly Reports

In addition to use of HMIS, grantees are also expected to complete quarterly reports addressing programmatic and financial information. The quarterly reports consist of a series of questions related to grantees' program operations over the course of the quarter (e.g. requests for information concerning significant events that have occurred in the program, major sources of

<sup>10</sup> Only programs whose primary mission is to serve victims of domestic violence are prohibited by VAWA from entering client data into HMIS. All other SSVF grantees are required to collect and enter data for 100% of SSVF participants into HMIS.

<sup>11</sup> For complete documentation of the current HUD HMIS CSV format, see [http://www.hudhdx.info/Resources/Vendors/4\\_0/HMISCSVSpecifications4\\_0FINAL.pdf](http://www.hudhdx.info/Resources/Vendors/4_0/HMISCSVSpecifications4_0FINAL.pdf).

participant referrals, lists of services provided directly and by referral, participant safety issues, best practices, etc). In addition, the quarterly financial report template asks grantees to identify and explain all budget variances, quarterly spending by subcontractor, and quarterly draw downs. Grantees will receive customized Quarterly Report templates from their Regional Coordinator to use for quarterly submissions.

### 3. Participant Satisfaction Surveys

Pursuant to 38 CFR 62.36(c)(2), grantees must provide each participant with a satisfaction survey which can be submitted by the participant directly to VA, within 45 to 60 days of the participant's entry into the grantee's program and again within 30 days of such participant's pending exit from the grantee's program. The SSVF satisfaction survey is electronically distributed to Veterans at entry and exit. Grantees must register Veterans, using the electronic survey link provided by VA. Once the Veteran is registered, the electronic survey will be emailed automatically to the Veteran. In situations where the grantee is actively assisting a participant in transitioning to another location or program, grantees should provide the participant with a satisfaction survey as close to exit as possible. In situations where a participant exits the program unexpectedly, grantees should attempt a follow-up contact with the participant to provide them with the survey. Please note that if the Veteran does not have an email address, the SSVF Program Office strongly encourages grantees to work with the Veteran to establish an email account. Contact the SSVF Program Office at [SSVF@va.gov](mailto:SSVF@va.gov) with additional questions regarding the survey.

## C. Process of Program Remediation

It is the responsibility of the grantee to contact the VA with any requests for grant agreement amendments, program changes, and/or budget changes.

### 1. Allegations of Impropriety

Any and all allegations of impropriety by the grantee, VA employees, or participant households must be addressed immediately and documented through use of the appropriate VA mechanism (i.e., SSVF Program Office or Office of Inspector General (OIG)).

- i. Information about actual or possible violations of criminal laws related to VA programs, operations, facilities, or involving VA employees, where the violation of criminal law occurs on VA premises, will be reported.
- ii. Criminal matters involving felonies must be immediately referred to VA.

### 2. Corrective Actions

In accordance with 38 CFR 62.60(b), if a grantee's actual SSVF grant expenditures vary from the amount disbursed for a given quarter or actual SSVF activities vary from the grantee's program description provided in the grant agreement, VA may require that the grantee initiate, develop and submit to VA for approval a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Such variances in activities are measured according to targets established in the grant agreement, requirements for the use of temporary financial assistance, and meeting mandated SSVF data reporting

requirements. The CAP must identify the expenditure or activity source that caused the deviation, describe the reason(s) for the variance, provide specific proposed corrective action(s), and provide a timetable for accomplishment of the corrective action. After receipt of the CAP, VA will send a letter to the grantee indicating that the CAP is approved or disapproved. If disapproved, VA will make helpful suggestions to improve the proposed CAP and request resubmission, or take other actions in accordance with 38 CFR Part 62.

### 3. Withholding and Suspension of Funds

In accordance with 38 CFR 62.80, when a grantee fails to comply with the terms, conditions, or standards of the supportive services grant, VA may, with 7 days notice to the grantee, withhold further payment, suspend the SSVF grant, or prohibit the grantee from incurring additional obligations of Supportive Services grant funds, pending corrective action by the grantee or a decision to terminate. VA will allow all necessary and proper costs that the grantee could not reasonably avoid during a period of suspension if such costs meet the provisions of the applicable Federal Cost Principles.

### 4. Funding Recovery and Appeals Process

VA will recover any SSVF grant funds that are not used in accordance with 38 CFR Part 62. The recovery of funds process, as described in 38 CFR 62.80, is as follows:

- i. VA issues a notice of intent to recover Supportive Services grant funds to the grantee. The notice outlines the aspects of the grantee's program that are not in compliance with 38 CFR Part 62 and indicates that VA will recover SSVF grant funds if the grantee cannot provide documentation to VA demonstrating why supportive services grant funds should not be recovered.
- ii. The grantee has 30 days upon receipt of the notice to submit documentation to VA demonstrating why supportive services grant should not be recovered.
- iii. The SSVF Program Office reviews the response from the grantee for adequacy and may, if necessary, request additional information.
- iv. If the response is adequate, VA will not take action to recover funds.
- v. If the response is not adequate or it is determined that supportive services grant funds were not used in accordance with 38 CFR Part 62, VA may on 7 days notice to the grantee, withhold further payment, suspend the SSVF grant, or prohibit the grantee from incurring additional obligations of SSVF grant funds, pending corrective action by the grantee or a decision to terminate.

### 5. Supportive Services Grant Termination

A Supportive Services grant may be terminated in accordance with 38 CFR 62.80 if any of the following three conditions applies:

- i. By VA, if a grantee materially fails to comply with the terms and conditions of a SSVF grant award and of 38 CFR Part 62.
- ii. By VA with the consent of the grantee, in which case VA and the grantee agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.
- iii. By a grantee upon sending to VA written notification of grant termination, including the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. *(Note: If VA determines that the remaining portion of the SSVF grant will not accomplish the purposes for which the grant was made, VA may terminate the grant in its entirety if any of the other conditions for termination are met.)*

## 6. De-obligation of Funds

VA may de-obligate all or a portion of the amounts approved for use by a grantee if:

- i. The activity for which funding was approved is not provided in accordance with the approved application and the requirements of 38 CFR Part 62;
- ii. Such amounts have not been expended within a 1 year period from the date of the signing of the supportive services grant agreement; or
- iii. Other circumstances set forth in the SSVF grant agreement authorize or require de-obligation.

At its discretion, in accordance 38 CFR 62.80, VA may re-advertise in a NOFA the availability of funds that have been de-obligated or award de-obligated funds to applicants who previously submitted applications in response to the most recently published NOFA.



## XI. Program Resources

The following tables identify online resources that may be useful to grantees developing and operating supportive services programs. VA does not take any responsibility for the content contained in these resources. It is up to the reader to determine what is appropriate.

The resources are divided into the following categories (*Note: There is some overlap in resources across categories*):

- A. Program Development and SSVF University
- B. Program Operations
  - 1. Outreach
  - 2. Case Management
  - 3. Assistance in Obtaining VA Benefits
  - 4. Assistance in Obtaining and Coordinating Other Public Benefits
- C. Sample Forms
- D. Miscellaneous

## A. Program Development and SSVF University

In 2013, the SSVF Program Office launched the SSVF University – a collection of program information, guidance, and training resources for grantees. Grantees can access information regarding program development, as well as other resources for SSVF program operations such as those listed below. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvfuniversity.asp>.

## B. Program Operations

### 1. Outreach

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
National Alliance to End Homelessness	Homelessness Prevention Program	A resource guide published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness that helps organizations to develop a homelessness prevention program or improve an existing prevention program.	<a href="http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2451">http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2451</a>
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Research Materials – Average Fair Market Rents	Average fair market rents, as published in the Federal Register.	<a href="http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr.html">http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr.html</a>
HUD	Research Materials – Annual Household Income Calculation	Provides guidance on calculating annual household income.	<a href="https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2079/cpd-income-eligibility-calculator/">https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2079/cpd-income-eligibility-calculator/</a>

### 2. Case Management

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	HUD Sponsored Local Homeless Assistance Programs	Identifies local support organizations that administer a range of services including shelter, food, counseling, and job skills programs to homeless persons.	<a href="http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/homelessness/localassist">http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/homelessness/localassist</a>
HUD	HUD Approved Home Counseling Agencies	List of HUD sponsored home counseling agencies that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues.	<a href="http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm">http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm</a>

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
National Alliance to End Homelessness	Homelessness Prevention Program	A resource guide published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness that helps organizations to develop a homelessness prevention program or improve an existing prevention program.	<a href="http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2451">http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2451</a>

### 3. Assistance in Obtaining VA Benefits

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors	Summary of Federal Benefits Available to Veterans, Dependents & Survivors, 2011 Edition.	<a href="http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp">http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp</a>

### 4. Assistance in Obtaining and Coordinating Other Public Benefits

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	HUD Sponsored Local Homeless Assistance Programs	Identifies local support organizations that administer a range of services including shelter, food, counseling, and job skills programs to homeless persons.	<a href="http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/homelessness/localassist">http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/homelessness/localassist</a>
National Alliance to End Homelessness	Homelessness Prevention Program	A resource guide published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness that helps organizations to develop a homelessness prevention program or improve an existing prevention program.	<a href="http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2451">http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2451</a>
U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness	Funding Opportunities and Resources	Listing of several Federal funding opportunities and resources available to organizations that aim to prevent homelessness.	<a href="http://usich.gov/about_us/funding_programs/programs/">http://usich.gov/about_us/funding_programs/programs/</a>
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	Programs and Initiatives	Summary of Homeless programs and initiatives available to homeless Veterans.	<a href="http://www.va.gov/homeless/">http://www.va.gov/homeless/</a>

### C. Sample Forms

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	Verifying Veteran Status	A military Veteran may use VA's online military personnel records request system, eVetRecs, to request verification of Veteran status. Grantee may also complete and submit the Standard Form 180 (SF 180) to verify Veteran status. Verification will come in the form of a copy of the Veteran's DD Form 214.	<a href="http://www.archives.gov/veterans/">http://www.archives.gov/veterans/</a>
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	Payment Management System (PMS) Forms	To be registered in PMS for grant fund draw down, the grantee must have SF 1199A and Primary Contact Information forms on file with HHS.	<a href="http://www.dpm.psc.gov">www.dpm.psc.gov</a> (Under "Grant Recipient Info", click on "Forms")

### D. Miscellaneous

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
Corporation for Supportive Housing	Research Materials – Chronic Homelessness and Health Care	Access to supportive housing research that focuses on chronic homelessness and health care issues.	<a href="http://www.csh.org/resources/">http://www.csh.org/resources/</a>
U.S Interagency Council on Homelessness	Research Materials	Links to research studies and technical assistance materials produced by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness as well as its member agencies, and national organizations.	<a href="http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/research_and_evaluation/">http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/research_and_evaluation/</a>
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Research Materials	Publications relating to housing and supportive services for people with special needs and the homeless. Topic areas focus on affordable and fair housing, homeownership, housing finance, community and economic development, supportive services, as well as other related issues.	<a href="http://www.huduser.org/portal/taxonomy/term/38">http://www.huduser.org/portal/taxonomy/term/38</a>
Supportive Housing Network of New York (SHNNY)	Research Materials – Homelessness Factsheet	Links to studies, reports, and publications relating to homelessness and supportive housing.	<a href="http://shnny.org/research-reports/research">http://shnny.org/research-reports/research</a>

Organization	Program / Resource	Description	Resource Link
U.S Interagency Council on Homelessness	State Interagency Web pages	Links to State website for the Interagency Council on Homelessness.	<a href="http://www.usich.gov/partnerships/state_and_local_governments/">http://www.usich.gov/partnerships/state_and_local_governments/</a>
University of Pennsylvania	Article: Evaluating a Community-Based Homelessness Prevention Program: A Geographical Information System Approach	This article discusses the application of the Geographic Information System (GIS), which can assist social service providers to assess the extent to which their program was properly implemented in accordance with its principles and goals. The GIS also helps providers identify geographical areas in its region that have unmet service needs.	<a href="http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&amp;context=spp_papers">http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&amp;context=spp_papers</a>
U.S Interagency Council on Homelessness	Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve	Report discusses homeless assistance providers and the characteristics of homeless persons whom they serve. The survey used in this study was designed to provide up-to-date information about the homelessness assistance providers, the characteristics of those people who use these services and how this population has changed in metropolitan areas since 1987.	<a href="http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/homeless/homeless_tech.html">http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/homeless/homeless_tech.html</a>



## XII. Exhibits

### Exhibit A: Income Inclusion and Exclusion Tables

#### 1. Income Inclusions

This table presents SSVF income inclusions and can be found in Exhibit 5-2 of HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook. The following types of income must be counted when calculating annual income for purposes of determining SSVF eligibility:

General Category	Description
1. Earned Income	The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, overtime pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services.
2. Self Employment/Business Income	The net income from operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as deductions in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family.
3. Interest & Dividend Income	Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Expenditures for amortization of capital indebtedness shall not be used as a deduction in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation is permitted only as authorized in paragraph (2) of this section. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested by the family. Where the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, annual income shall include the greater of the actual income derived from net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook savings rate, as determined by HUD.
4. Pension/Retirement Income	The full amount of periodic payments received from social security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, lotteries, disability or death benefits, and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum payment for the delayed start of a periodic payment (but see No. 13 under Income Exclusions) (e.g., SSDI).

General Category	Description
5. Unemployment & Disability Income	Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment, worker's compensation, and severance pay (but see No. 3 under Income Exclusions).
6. TANF/Public Assistance	<p>a. TANF/Public assistance received by the household.</p> <p>b. The amount of reduced TANF/Public assistance income that is disregarded specifically because the family engaged in fraud or failed to comply with an economic self-sufficiency or work activities requirement.</p> <p>c. If the TANF/Public assistance payment includes an amount specifically designated for shelter and utilities that is subject to adjustments by the TANF/Public assistance agency in accordance with the actual cost of shelter and utilities, the amount of TANF/Public assistance income to be included as income shall consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; plus</li> <li>(ii) The maximum amount that the TANF/Public assistance agency could in fact allow the family for shelter and utilities. If the family's TANF/Public assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under this paragraph shall be the amount resulting from one application of the percentage; (e.g., TANF, AFCD, SSI, and general assistance available through state welfare programs).</li> </ul>
7. Alimony and Child Support Income	Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from persons not residing in the dwelling.
8. Armed Forces Income	All regular pay, special pay, and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces (whether or not living in the dwelling) who is head of the family, spouse, or other person whose dependents are residing in the unit (but see paragraph (7) under Income Exclusions).
9. G.I. Bill Housing Stipend	The monthly housing stipend received by a Veteran from VA while they are attending school under the G.I. Bill.

## 2. Income Exclusions

This table presents SSVF income exclusions and can be found in Exhibit 5-2 of HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook. The following types of income are not counted when calculating annual income for purposes of determining SSVF eligibility:

General Category	Description
1. Earned Income of Children	Earned income from employment of household members under the age of 18 years (including foster children).
2. Income from Foster Care	Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually individuals with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone).
3. Inheritance and Insurance Income	Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker's compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses (except as provided in number 5 of Income Inclusions).
4. Medical Expense Reimbursements	Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member.
5. Income of Live-in Aides	Income of a live-in aide (as defined in 24 CFR 5.403).
6. Student Financial Aid	The full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution. Note: includes G.I. Bill Student Financial Aid.
7. Armed Forces Hostile Fire Pay	The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire.
8. Self-Sufficiency Program Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD.</li> <li>b. Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS).</li> <li>c. Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, childcare, etc.) and which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program.</li> <li>d. Amounts received under a resident service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the PHA or owner, on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination, and serving as a member of the PHA's governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time.</li> <li>e. Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying state or local employment training programs</li> </ul>

General Category	Description
	(including training not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded by this provision must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives, and are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program.
9. Other Non-Recurring Income	Temporary, non- recurring, or sporadic income (including gifts).
10. Reparations	Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era.
11. Income from Full-time Students	Annual earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household or spouse).
12. Adoption Assistance Payments	Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 annually per adopted child.
13. Social Security & SSI Income	Deferred periodic amounts from SSI and Social Security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts.
14. Income Tax and Property Tax Refunds	Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under state or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit.
15. Home Care Assistance	Amounts paid by a state agency to a family with a member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep this developmentally disabled family member at home.
16. Other Federal Exclusions	<p>Amounts specifically excluded by any other federal statute from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which the exclusions of 24 CFR 5.609(c) apply, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The value of the allotment made under the Food Stamp Act of 1977;</li> <li>▪ Payments received under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (employment through VISTA, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Foster Grandparents Program, youthful offender incarceration alternatives, senior companions);</li> <li>▪ Payments received under the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act;</li> </ul>

General Category	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Income derived from the disposition of funds to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians;</li> <li>▪ Income derived from certain sub-marginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes;</li> <li>▪ Payments or allowances made under the Department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program;</li> <li>▪ Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 ( 25 U.S.C. 1721);</li> <li>▪ The first \$2,000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the U.S. Claims Court and the interests of individual Indians in trust or restricted lands, including the first \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Indians from funds derived from interests held in such trust or restricted lands;</li> <li>▪ Amounts of scholarships funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, including awards under the Federal work study program or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs;</li> <li>▪ Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1985 (Green Thumb, Senior Aides, Older American Community Service Employment Program);</li> <li>▪ Payments received on or after January 1, 1989, from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in the In Re Agent Orange product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.);</li> <li>▪ Earned income tax credit refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991, including advanced earned income credit payments;</li> <li>▪ The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990;</li> <li>▪ Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Job Training Partnership Act (employment and training programs for Native Americans and migrant and seasonal farm workers, Job Corps, state job training programs and career intern programs, AmeriCorps);</li> <li>▪ Payments by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation;</li> <li>▪ Allowances, earnings, and payments to AmeriCorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990;</li> <li>▪ Any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1805 to a child suffering from Spina Bifida who is the child of a Vietnam Veteran;</li> <li>▪ Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime</li> </ul>

General Category	Description
	<p>Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance) as determined under the Victims of Crime Act because of the commission of a crime against the participant under the Victims of Crime Act; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="456 478 1341 546">▪ Allowances, earnings, and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.</li></ul>

## **Exhibit B: Documentation Standards**

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Standards and procedures for documenting eligibility related to housing status are further detailed in the tables on the following pages. Documentation requirements are organized according to the following:

- 1. Income Documentation Standards**
- 2. Housing Options / Resources Eligibility Documentation (for all participants)**
- 3. Occupying Permanent Housing Category 1 Eligibility Documentation**
- 4. Occupying Permanent Housing Category 2 Eligibility Documentation**
- 5. Occupying Permanent Housing Category 3 Documentation**

### 1. Income Documentation Standards

Standards and procedures for documenting eligibility related to income are further detailed in the tables on the following pages. While VA has established standards for various types of income, VA recognizes that in some instances only participant self-declaration may be possible. This method should be used only as a *last resort* when all other verification methods are not possible or reasonable. When using participant self-declaration, grantees should document why a higher verification standard was not used. Be sure to include this in the case file.

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards	
Wages and Salary, etc.	Yes	Copy of most recent paystub(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent pay stub(s) from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>	
		<b>OR</b>		
		Written verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mail, fax or email written verification of income request directly to the employer(s).</li> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated verification of income from employer(s). At a minimum, written verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of employer and participant name</li> <li>○ Pay amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Average hours worked per week</li> <li>○ Amount of any additional compensation</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized employer representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized employer representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include verification of income in participant file.</li> </ul>	
		<b>OR</b> <i>(if written third party documentation cannot be obtained)</i>		
		Oral verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact the employer(s) by phone or in person to obtain oral verification of income.</li> <li>▪ Document oral verification of income. At a minimum, oral verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of employer and participant name</li> <li>○ Date of hire</li> <li>○ Pay amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Average hours worked per week</li> <li>○ Amount of any additional compensation</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized employer representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF staff who obtained oral verification</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>	

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		<b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation or oral third party verification cannot be obtained)</i>	
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-Employment / Business income<sup>12</sup></b>	Yes	Copy of most recent federal or state tax return showing net business income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of most recent federal or state tax return from the participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation cannot be obtained)</i>	
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Interest and Dividend Income</b>	Yes	Copy of most recent interest or dividend income statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent interest or dividend income statement from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b>	

<sup>12</sup> It can be a challenge for Grantees to obtain 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification of self-employment income. When 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification is not available, the Grantee should always request a notarized tenant declaration that includes a perjury statement.

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		Copy of most recent federal or state tax return showing interest, dividend or other net income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of most recent federal or state tax return from the participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation cannot be obtained)</i>			
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Pension/ Retirement Income</b>	Yes	Copy of most recent payment statement or benefit notice from Social Security Administration (SSA), pension provider, or other source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent benefit notice, pension statement or other payment statement from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation cannot be obtained)</i>			

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		Written verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mail, fax or email verification of income request directly to the Social Security Administration, pension provider or other source.</li> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated verification of income from income source. At a minimum, written verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized income source representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if written third party documentation cannot be obtained)</i></p>			
		Oral verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact the source(s) by phone or in person to obtain oral verification of income.</li> <li>▪ Document oral verification of income. At a minimum, oral verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF staff who obtained oral verification</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation or oral third party verification cannot be obtained)</i></p>			
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
Unemployment and Disability Income	Yes	Copy of most recent unemployment, worker's compensation, SSI, SSDI, or severance payment statement or benefit notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent payment statement(s) and/or benefit notice(s) from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b>	
		Written verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mail, fax or email verification of income request directly to the unemployment administrator, worker's compensation administrator, or former employer.</li> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated verification of income from income source. At a minimum, written verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized income source representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include verification of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b> <i>(if written third party documentation cannot be obtained)</i>	
Oral verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact the source(s) by phone or in person to obtain oral verification of income.</li> <li>▪ Document oral verification of income. At a minimum, oral verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF staff who obtained oral verification</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>		
<b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation or oral third party verification cannot be obtained)</i>			

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		Self-declaration of income. .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
TANF/ Public Assistance	Yes	Copy of most recent welfare payment statement or benefit notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent benefit notice(s) or payment statement(s) from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b>	
		Written verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mail, fax or email verification of income request directly to the welfare administrator.</li> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated verification of income from income source. At a minimum, written verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized income source representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include verification of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b> <i>(if written third party documentation cannot be obtained)</i>	
		Oral verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact the source(s) by phone or in person to obtain oral verification of income.</li> <li>▪ Document oral verification of income. At a minimum, oral verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF staff who obtained oral verification</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation or oral third party verification cannot be obtained)</i>			

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
Alimony, Child Support Payments	Yes	Copy of most recent alimony and/or child support or other contributions or gift payment statements, notice, or order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent payment statement(s), notice(s) or order (e.g. court ordered child support) from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>
		<b>OR</b>	
		Written verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mail, fax or email verification of income request directly to the child support enforcement agency, court liaison, or other source.</li> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated verification of income from income source. At a minimum, written verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized income source representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>OR</b> <i>(if written third party documentation cannot be obtained)</i>			

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		Oral verification of income. .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact the source(s) by phone or in person to obtain oral verification of income.</li> <li>▪ Document oral verification of income. At a minimum, oral verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF staff who obtained oral verification</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation or oral third party verification cannot be obtained)</i></p>			
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Armed Forces Income</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Copy of pay stubs, payment statement, or other government issued statement indicating income amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy(ies) of most recent payment stub(s), statement(s), or other government issued statement from participant.</li> <li>▪ Include copy(ies) in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OR</b></p>			

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		Written verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mail, fax or email verification of income request directly to the appropriate armed services representative.</li> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated verification of income from income source. At a minimum, written verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized income source representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if written third party documentation cannot be obtained)</i></p>			
		Oral verification of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact the source(s) by phone or in person to obtain oral verification of income.</li> <li>▪ Document oral verification of income. At a minimum, oral verification should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of income source, and participant name</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Contact information for authorized income source representative</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF staff who obtained oral verification</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Verification of Income in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if written documentation or oral third party verification cannot be obtained)</i></p>			
		Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of income</li> <li>○ Income amount and frequency</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain third party verification (written or oral) and sign self-declaration of income.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>

Type of Income	Include in Income Calculation?	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
No Income Reported	N/A	Self-declaration of income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration of income from participant. At a minimum, self-declaration should include the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Statement indicating “no current income”</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by SSVF participant</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Have participant sign a self-declaration of no income but seek a third-party verification of job loss or public benefit income loss if possible.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declaration of income in participant file.</li> </ul>

## 2. Housing Options/Resources Eligibility Documentation

Note: Grantees are encouraged to assess and document other housing options and resources for all SSVF participants.

Housing Options and Resources	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
<b>Other Subsequent Housing Options</b>	Assessment form or other documentation (e.g., case notes) of housing options by SSVF case manager or other authorized SSVF staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess with participant all other appropriate (i.e., safe, affordable, available) subsequent housing options.</li> <li>▪ Verify that no other appropriate subsequent housing options are available.</li> <li>▪ <i>Assessment Form or Other Documentation Should</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be documented by SSVF case manager or other authorized staff.</li> <li>○ Include assessment summary or other statement indicating that participant has no other appropriate housing options.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by SSVF case manager or other authorized SSVF staff.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include assessment indicating no other subsequent housing options in participant case file.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Resources and Support Networks</b>	Assessment form or other documentation (e.g., case notes) of financial resources and support networks by SSVF case manager or other authorized SSVF staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess with participant all financial resources AND support networks (i.e., friends, family or other personal sources of financial or material support)</li> <li>▪ Verify that participant lacks financial resources and support networks to obtain other appropriate subsequent housing or remain in their housing.</li> <li>▪ <i>Assessment Form or Other Documentation Should</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be documented by SSVF case manager or other authorized staff.</li> <li>○ Include review of current account balances in checking and savings accounts held by participant household.</li> <li>○ Include assessment summary or other statement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Housing Options and Resources	Acceptable Types of Documentation	Documentation Standards
		<p>indicating that participant lacks financial resources and support networks to obtain other appropriate subsequent housing or remain in their housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be signed and dated by SSVF case manager or other authorized SSVF staff</li> <li>▪ Include assessment indicating insufficient financial resources and support networks in participant case file.</li> </ul>

### 3. Occupying Permanent Housing Category 1 Eligibility Documentation

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation (in order of preference)	Documentation Standards
<p><b>Rented by Participant</b></p> <p><i>Potential loss of housing due to non-payment of rent</i></p>	<p>Copy of written lease</p> <p>Oral lease (if all that exists) <i>only</i> to verify housing status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lease should identify the payee, the SSVF participant as tenant, the terms of the agreement (dates of tenancy, monthly amount due, etc.), and be current, signed by both parties and dated.</li> <li>▪ Documentation of SSVF staff conversation with current landlord if all that exists at time is an oral lease. Please see note below regarding on-going financial assistance.</li> </ul> <p>Note that a written lease is required for on-going financial assistance. If a written lease does not exist, one should be executed before on-going financial assistance can be provided. Self-declaration and third party verification of a pre-existing oral agreement cannot be used as a substitute when providing on-going financial assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include any documentation related to non-payment of rent in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rented by Participant</b></p> <p><i>Potential loss of housing due to utility non-payment</i></p>	<p>Copy of utility shut-off notice from utility company. If no shut-off notice is available, other evidence of housing being unfit for habitation due to utility shut-off</p> <p>AND</p> <p>If renting: copy of written lease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of utility shut-off notice AND copy of lease. If no utility shut-off available, then third party provider assessment or SSVF staff assessment that housing is unfit for habitation due to utility shut-off.</li> <li>▪ <i>Lease Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the payee, the SSVF participant as tenant, the terms of the agreement (dates of tenancy, monthly amount due, etc), and be current, signed by both parties and dated.</li> <li>○ Indicate that utility at risk of shut-off is tenant responsibility.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note that a written lease is required for on-going financial assistance. If a written lease does not exist, one should be executed before on-going financial assistance can be provided.</p>

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation (in order of preference)	Documentation Standards
	<p>indicating that tenant is responsible for utility at risk of shut-off. If an oral lease is all that exists then oral verification of tenant's responsibility for utilities. <i>(Please note documentation standard for on-going financial assistance)</i></p>	<p>Self-declaration and third party verification of a pre-existing oral agreement cannot be used as a substitute when providing on-going financial assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shut-Off Notice Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the SSVF participant and unit where SSVF participant is the leaseholder</li> <li>○ Indicate that utility shut off/disconnection will be shut-off if payment not received</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by utility company representative and/or include utility company contact information</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Include utility shut-off notice and copy of lease in participant file.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Rented by Participant</b></p> <p>OR</p> <p><b>Other Housing Occupied by Participant without Paying Rent (including housing shared with friends or family)</b></p> <p><i>Potential loss of housing due to foreclosure on rental property</i></p>	<p>Copy of notice indicating building in which participant is renting or otherwise residing is being foreclosed on</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Copy of written lease</p> <p>Oral lease (if all that exists) <i>only</i> to verify housing status</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Copy of written lease between the owner and host family/friend</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of foreclosure notice (may include notice from landlord/property manager, court, published in local newspaper or other print or on-line public record documentation) AND copy of lease.</li> <li>▪ <i>Lease Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the payee, SSVF participant (or host family/friend) as tenant, the terms of the agreement (dates of tenancy, monthly amount due, etc), and be current, signed by both parties and dated.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ If oral lease, documentation of SSVF staff conversation with current landlord if all that exists at time is an oral lease. Please note written lease required for on-going financial assistance.</li> <li>▪ <i>Foreclosure Notice Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the building or unit where SSVF participant is the leaseholder or is otherwise residing</li> <li>○ Indicate that housing is being foreclosed on</li> <li>○ If written notice to participant be signed and dated by the landlord or property manager.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include notice and copy of lease in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Housing Occupied by Participant without Paying Rent (including housing)</b></p>	<p>Copy of notice that terminates housing, or eviction letter from host family or friend who owns or rents the housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of notice that terminates housing, or eviction letter (typed or handwritten) AND copy of lease.</li> <li>▪ <i>Lease Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the payee, the SSVF host family/friend as tenant, the terms of the agreement (dates of tenancy,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation (in order of preference)	Documentation Standards
<p><b>shared with friends or family)</b></p> <p><i>Potential loss of housing due to housing termination by host family/friend</i></p>	<p>that notifies the participant that they must leave</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Copy of written lease between the owner and host family/friend; oral lease if all that exists <i>only</i> for verification of housing status</p>	<p>monthly amount due, etc), and be current, signed by both parties and dated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If oral lease, documentation of SSVF staff conversation with current landlord if all that exists at time is an oral lease. Please note written lease required for on-going financial assistance.</li> <li>▪ <i>Eviction Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the SSVF participant and unit where SSVF participant is residing</li> <li>○ Indicate that participant must leave owner's/renter's housing</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by the host owner/renter</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include eviction letter and copy of lease in participant file.</li> <li>▪ Documentation of SSVF staff conversation with current host regarding verbal eviction if all that exists at time is an oral lease. Please note written lease required for on-going financial assistance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rented by Participant</b></p> <p>OR</p> <p><b>Other Housing Occupied by Participant without Paying Rent (including housing shared with friends or family)</b></p> <p><i>Potential loss of housing due to uninhabitable conditions</i></p>	<p>Copy of notice from landlord/property manager, public health, code enforcement, fire marshal, child welfare or other government entity that housing is condemned</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Copy of written lease; oral lease if all that exists <i>only</i> for verification of housing status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of notice (may include notice published in local newspaper or government jurisdiction's website) AND copy of lease.</li> <li>▪ <i>Lease Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the payee, the SSVF participant (or host family/friend) as tenant, the terms of the agreement (dates of tenancy, monthly amount due, etc), and be current, signed by both parties and dated.</li> <li>○ If oral lease, documentation of SSVF staff conversation with current landlord if all that exists at time is an oral lease. Please note written lease required for on-going financial assistance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Notice Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify the building or unit where SSVF participant is the leaseholder or is otherwise residing</li> <li>○ Indicate that housing is condemned (i.e., unfit for human habitation)</li> <li>○ If written notice, be signed and dated by the landlord, property manager, public health, code enforcement, fire marshal, child welfare or other government entity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include notice and copy of lease in participant file.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Owned by Participant</b></p>	<p>Copy of deed or mortgage and if applicable, copy of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain copy of deed or mortgage and if applicable, foreclosure notice.</li> <li>▪ <i>Foreclosure Notice Should:</i></li> </ul>

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
<i>Potential loss of housing due to non-payment of mortgage and/or foreclosure on owner-occupied property</i>	foreclosure notice from lending institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on financial institution letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify the SSVF participant and residence where SSVF participant is the homeowner</li> <li>○ Indicate that participant must leave their housing</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by financial institution</li> <li>▪ Include documentation in participant file.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Occupying Permanent Housing Category 2 Eligibility Documentation

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
<b>Sleeping in an Emergency Shelter</b>	Written documentation or oral third-party verification that the Veteran family is scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from future landlord / housing provider OR SSVF staff certification that housing will be developed or located within 90 days or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
	HMIS record of shelter stay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain HMIS record showing shelter stay concurrent with SSVF program entry date.</li> <li>▪ Include HMIS record in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record cannot be obtained)</i>	
Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from shelter provider. This is a form that, at a minimum, contains the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of the shelter program</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying Emergency Shelter program is in the local CoC inventory or otherwise recognized by the CoC.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Statement verifying current shelter occupancy of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized shelter provider representative</li> <li>▪ Include SSVF Literally Homeless Certification in file.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record and SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i></p>	
	Emergency shelter provider letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from emergency shelter provider.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on shelter provider letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify shelter program</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current shelter occupancy of SSVF participant, including most recent entry and exit (if applicable) dates.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by shelter provider</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include emergency shelter provider letter in participant file.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i></p>	
	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign self-declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>
Place Not Meant for Human Habitation (e.g., cars, parks, abandoned buildings, streets/sidewalks)	Written documentation that the Veteran family is scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from future landlord / housing provider OR SSVF staff certification that housing will be developed or located within 90 days or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>AND</b></p>	
	Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from homeless street outreach provider (may include other third-party referral source, such as a local law enforcement agency). This is a standardized form that, at a minimum, contains the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of the outreach program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Statement verifying current living situation of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized outreach provider representative</li> <li>▪ Include Literally Homeless Certification in file.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i></p>	
	Homeless street outreach provider or referral source letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from homeless street outreach provider or referral source (e.g. local law enforcement agency). The letter may be from the SSVF-funded rapid re-housing provider if the provider also provides outreach to persons on the street as part of engagement and admission activities.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on outreach provider or referral agency letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify outreach program or referral agency</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current homeless status of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by outreach provider or referral agency</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include letter in participant file.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i></p>	
	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign self-declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
<b>Hospital or Other Institution</b>	Written documentation that the Veteran family is scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from future landlord / housing provider OR SSVF staff certification that housing will be developed or located within 90 days or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
	Letter from hospital or other institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from hospital or other institution.</li> <li>▪ Letter Should:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on hospital or other institution letterhead</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current hospital/institution stay of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Include hospital/institution admission and discharge dates verifying that stay has been for 90 days or less</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by hospital/institution representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include hospital/institution letter in participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b> <i>(to verify literal homeless status prior to hospital or other institution admission)</i>	
	HMIS record of shelter stay <i>(if previously sleeping in emergency shelter)</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain HMIS record showing shelter stay.</li> <li>▪ HMIS record should indicate shelter stay immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>▪ Include HMIS record in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record cannot be obtained)</i>	
Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from shelter provider or homeless street outreach provider.</li> <li>▪ Certification should verify literal homelessness (residing in shelter or place not meant for human habitation) immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>▪ Include Literally Homeless Certification in file.</li> </ul>	

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
<b>Hospital or Other Institution</b>	<b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record or SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i>	
	Emergency shelter provider or homeless street outreach provider letter <i>(if previously sleeping in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain emergency shelter provider letter.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on shelter provider letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify shelter program</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying shelter stay immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by shelter provider</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Include</i> documentation in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>
	<i>(if HMIS record, SSVF Literally Homeless Certification, or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i>	
	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Self-declaration should verify literal homelessness (residing in shelter or place not meant for human habitation) immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign SSVF Self-Declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	Written documentation that the Veteran family is scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from future landlord / housing provider OR SSVF staff certification that housing will be developed or located within 90 days or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from transitional housing provider. This is a standardized form that, at a minimum, contains the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of the transitional housing program</li> <li>○ Statement verifying current transitional housing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
		occupancy of SSVF participant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Statement indicating the SSVF participant is graduating from or timing out of the transitional housing program</li> <li>○ Statement verifying the SSVF participant was residing in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to transitional housing admission</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized transitional housing provider representative</li> </ul> ■ Include Literally Homeless Certification in file.
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Obtain letter from transitional housing provider.</li> <li>■ <i>Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on transitional housing provider letterhead.</li> <li>○ Identify transitional housing program.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current transitional housing program is in the local CoC inventory or otherwise recognized by the CoC.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current transitional housing occupancy of SSVF participant.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying that SSVF participant is graduating from or timing out of transitional housing program.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying SSVF participant was residing in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to transitional housing admission.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by transitional housing provider.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> ■ Include transitional housing provider letter in participant file.
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	■ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Self-declaration should verify literal homelessness (residing in shelter or place not meant for human habitation) immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) transitional housing admission date.</li> <li>■ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third</li> </ul>

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
		party verification and sign SSVF Self-Declaration forms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include self-declaration in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	Written documentation that the Veteran family is scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from future landlord / housing provider OR SSVF staff certification that housing will be developed or located within 90 days or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document or attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign self-declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>

5. Occupying Permanent Housing Category 3 Eligibility Documentation

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
Sleeping in an Emergency Shelter	Written documentation or oral third party verification of the participant's exit from permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from prior landlord / housing provider / friend / family member or SSVF staff certification or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
	HMIS record of shelter stay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain HMIS record showing shelter stay concurrent with SSVF program entry date.</li> <li>▪ Include HMIS record in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record cannot be obtained)</i>	
	Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or a standard Homeless Certification from shelter provider. This is a standardized form that, at a minimum, contains the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of the shelter program</li> <li>○ Statement verifying current shelter occupancy of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized shelter provider representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include Literal Homeless Certification in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record and SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i>	
Emergency shelter provider letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from emergency shelter provider.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on shelter provider letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify shelter program</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying emergency shelter program is in the local CoC inventory or otherwise recognized by the CoC.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current shelter occupancy of SSVF participant, including most recent entry and exit (if applicable) dates.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by shelter provider</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include emergency shelter provider letter in participant file.</li> </ul>	
<b>OR</b> ▪ <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i>		

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document or attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign self-declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>
Place Not Meant for Human Habitation (e.g., cars, parks, abandoned buildings, streets/sidewalks)	Written documentation of the participant's exit from permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from previous landlord/ housing provider/ friend / family member or SSVF staff certification or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
	Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from homeless street outreach provider (may include other third-party referral source, such as a local law enforcement agency). This is a standardized form that, at a minimum, contains the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of the outreach program</li> <li>○ Statement verifying current living situation of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized outreach provider representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include Literally Homeless Certification in file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i>	
	Homeless street outreach provider or referral source letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from homeless street outreach provider or referral source (e.g. local law enforcement agency). The letter may be from the SSVF-funded rapid re-housing provider if the provider also provides outreach to persons on the street as part of engagement and admission activities.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on outreach provider or referral agency letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify outreach program or referral agency</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current homeless status of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by outreach provider or referral agency</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include letter in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i>		
Self-declaration of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from</li> </ul>	

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
	literal homelessness.	participant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign self-declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>
Hospital or Other Institution	Written documentation of the participant's exit from permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from previous landlord / housing provider/friend /family member or SSVF staff certification or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
	Letter from hospital or other institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from hospital or other institution.</li> <li>▪ Letter Should:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on hospital or other institution letterhead</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current hospital/institution stay of SSVF participant</li> <li>○ Include hospital/institution admission and discharge dates verifying that stay has been for 90 days or less</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by hospital/institution representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include hospital/institution letter in participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	
	<i>(to verify literal homeless status prior to hospital or other institution admission)</i>	
	HMIS record of shelter stay <i>(if previously sleeping in emergency shelter)</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain HMIS record showing shelter stay concurrent with SSVF program entry date.</li> <li>▪ HMIS record should indicate shelter stay immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>▪ Include HMIS record in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>OR</b>		
<i>(if HMIS record cannot be obtained)</i>		
Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from shelter provider or homeless street outreach provider.</li> <li>▪ Certification should verify literal homelessness (residing in shelter or place not meant for human habitation) immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>▪ Include Literally Homeless Certification in SSVF participant file.</li> </ul>	
<b>OR</b>		

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation (in order of preference)	Documentation Standards
Hospital or Other Institution	<i>(if HMIS record or SSVF Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i>	
	Emergency shelter provider or homeless street outreach provider letter <i>(if previously sleeping in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain emergency shelter provider letter.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on shelter provider letterhead</li> <li>○ Identify shelter program</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying shelter stay immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by shelter provider</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Include documentation in SSVF participant file.</i></li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if HMIS record, SSVF Literally Homeless Certification, or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i>	
Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Self-declaration should verify literal homelessness (residing in shelter or place not meant for human habitation) immediately prior to (i.e. the day before or same day as) hospital/institution admission date.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign SSVF Self-Declaration of Housing Status forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>	
Transitional Housing	Written documentation of exit from permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from previous landlord / housing provider /friend/family member or SSVF staff certification or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	<b>AND</b>	

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
	Written literal homeless certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated SSVF Literally Homeless Certification or standard Homeless Certification from transitional housing provider. This is a standardized form that, at a minimum, contains the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of the transitional housing program</li> <li>○ Statement verifying current transitional housing occupancy of SSVF participant.</li> <li>○ Statement indicating the SSVF participant is graduating from or timing out of the transitional housing program</li> <li>○ Statement verifying the SSVF participant was residing in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to transitional housing admission</li> <li>○ Signed and dated by authorized transitional housing provider representative</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include Literally Homeless Certification in file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification cannot be obtained)</i>	
	Transitional housing provider letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from transitional housing provider.</li> <li>▪ <i>Letter Should:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be on transitional housing provider letterhead.</li> <li>○ Identify transitional housing program.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current transitional housing program is in the local CoC inventory or otherwise recognized by the CoC.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying current transitional housing occupancy of SSVF participant.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying that SSVF participant is graduating from or timing out of transitional housing program.</li> <li>○ Include statement verifying SSVF participant was residing in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to transitional housing admission.</li> <li>○ Be signed and dated by transitional housing provider.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Include transitional housing provider letter in participant file.</li> </ul>
	<b>OR</b> <i>(if SSVF Literally Homeless Certification, or provider letter cannot be obtained)</i>	
Self-declaration of	Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from	

Living Situation	Acceptable Types of Documentation <i>(in order of preference)</i>	Documentation Standards
	literal homelessness.	participant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-declaration should verify literal homelessness (residing in shelter or place not meant for human habitation) immediately prior to (i.e., the day before or same day as) Transitional Housing admission date.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign SSVF Self-Declaration of Housing Status forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	Written documentation of exit from permanent housing within 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain letter from previous landlord / housing provider /friend/family member or SSVF staff certification or letter to the file.</li> </ul>
	Self-declaration of literal homelessness.	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obtain signed and dated original self-declaration from participant.</li> <li>▪ Grantee should document attempt to obtain written third party verification and sign self-declaration forms.</li> <li>▪ Include self-declarations in participant file.</li> </ul>

## Exhibit C: Collaborative Delivery of GPD/HUD-VASH/SSVF Services

### 1. Background

The VA has a variety of resources available to serve homeless Veterans. These resources must be deployed in an efficient and coordinated manner to support the VA's goal of ending homelessness among Veterans by 2015. Housing First is the guiding approach to the delivery of these services, so it is critical that program resources are employed as supports to housing placement, not barriers. The ability of program staff to screen and assess effectively, will allow Veterans to access the intervention appropriate to their needs.

### 2. Housing Resources

This guidance addresses three VA-specialized homeless programs: Grant and Per Diem (GPD), HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF). In general, these programs act along a continuum of care where each program places Veterans into permanent housing without drawing on resources from each other. The ability of these programs to function as designed allows resources to be made available for more Veterans, increasing the VA's ability to reduce homelessness among Veterans. However, due to the high barriers faced by some homeless Veterans, program collaboration is at times necessary to end a Veteran's homelessness. The requirements for such collaboration are as follows:

- 1) For SSVF Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) for HUD-VASH or GPD, participants must at a minimum meet all of the following criteria.
  - i) Veteran referred by HUD-VASH must be chronically homeless.
  - ii) Veteran household must have an area median income of less than 30 percent.
  - iii) GPD participant must be a resident of a GPD program for no longer than 30 days prior to referral to SSVF. The Veteran would be designated for Rapid Re-Housing in SSVF and therefore should have an individualized plan in GPD reflecting this approach.
  - iv) HUD-VASH participants must be referred prior to housing placement.
  - v) If a HUD-VASH referral is for a current resident in arrears,
    - (1) The Veteran must have a third party financial representative who can ensure that over the intermediate term, rent will be paid.
    - (2) The third party financial representative arrangement should continue until the Veteran meets agreed upon targets demonstrating their ability to resume control over their finances.
    - (3) A written plan must be developed by the HUD-VASH case worker, working in coordination with the SSVF grantee that will lead to a path of sustainability for the Veteran in their current housing. This plan must include clear targets for rent repayment/relief and include a revised rent amount if required to sustain current housing. It may also include requirements for money management classes, treatment for substance abuse disorders, credit counseling, resolution of outstanding legal issues, and other appropriate interventions.

- 2) An appropriate collaboration with an SSVF grantee may include the delivery of non-temporary financial assistance services when such services are not available to GPD or HUD-VASH participants. In such instances, the assessment must document the need for such services to support housing stability and chart notes must also document the lack of available community resources to meet identified needs. Some examples may include:
  - i) SSVF legal services, or
  - ii) Targeted case management services for non-Veteran family members.
  
- 3) In certain cases, an SSVF grantee may wish to serve a HUD-VASH or GPD involved Veteran whose status does not fall entirely within the specific eligibility criteria outlined in this exhibit. Examples include a Veteran residing in GPD for longer than 30 days and a HUD-VASH involved Veteran who is either not chronically homeless or lacks the required third party financial representative needed for arrears assistance. On a case by case basis, at the discretion of the SSVF grantee and in partnership with the involved HUD-VASH and GPD providers, exceptions to specifics in this exhibit here are allowable. However, the SSVF grantee must both determine and then fully document that such exceptions are necessary and required to resolve this particular Veteran's homelessness.

### 3. Designation of a SSVF Point of Contact

Each VAMC shall designate an SSVF point of contact that will have the responsibility to support the integration of SSVF services with local VAMC health care, mental health, and other specialized homeless services. In addition, the point of contact's responsibilities shall include:

- i) Participating in regular planning calls with VA Regional Coordinators assigned to SSVF grantees;
- ii) Participating in regular planning meetings with SSVF grantees that standardize processes for referrals both to SSVF grantees and from grantees to VAMCs;
- iii) Facilitate presentations by SSVF grantees at VAMCs to educate staff about accessing available services; and
- iv) Coordinate this work with the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Homeless Coordinator

## Exhibit D: Guide for Pending Verification of Veteran Status (PVVS)

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### 1. Issue

As per 38 CFR 62.2, enrolling participant households in SSVF requires that grantees verify Veteran status to determine program eligibility. This entails a documentation collection process that can take weeks. The VA recognizes that the crisis nature of SSVF services often means that Veteran families require immediate intervention.

### 2. Resolution

At the time of screening, SSVF grantees may make a determination of *Pending Verification of Veteran Status*. This determination allows for the immediate provision of supportive services, other than temporary financial assistance (TFA).

### 3. Process and Restrictions

1. TFA cannot be offered during the period of Pending Verification of Veteran Status. TFA can only be offered once Veteran status is confirmed.
2. Pending Verification of Veteran Status must be documented by an affidavit of eligibility signed by the participant.
3. Until Veteran status is confirmed, Pending Verification of Veteran Status must be re-certified at least once every 90 days. If participant is found to be ineligible for SSVF, the participant must be discharged with appropriate community referrals.
4. Upload client data in HMIS , as required for all SSVF clients, and include in monthly reports.
5. Service data will count towards program outcomes and final service numbers, regardless of final determination of Veteran Status.

## Exhibit E: Homelessness Prevention Eligibility Screening Instructions

Persons applying for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance (i.e., category 1 of persons occupying permanent housing) must first be screened for VA eligibility. Eligibility must be documented using the *SSVF Eligibility Screening Disposition Form* found on SSVF University. This exhibit provides instructions for use of the form which must be completed by SSVF grantee staff using information obtained from the head of household. Screening disposition forms should be supported by additional assessment and documentation of the eligibility conditions and targeting factors indicated. All screening forms must be signed and dated by the authorized SSVF staff person completing the form.

### 1. Stage 1: VA Eligibility

SSVF grantee staff should assess each applicant household according to the eligibility requirements listed below. Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements in order to receive SSVF assistance.

#### **SSVF Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance, **each** of the following VA conditions must be met. Note that SSVF grantees may require additional eligibility criteria in addition to the VA criteria listed below.

***A member of a Veteran family:*** Applicant households must either be a Veteran or a member of a family in which the head of household, or the spouse of the head of household, is a Veteran. Veteran is *defined as* “a person who served in the active military or air service, and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable.”

***Very low-income household:*** Household gross annual income does not exceed 50% of area median income based on the income limits most recently published at:

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html>.

***Imminently at-risk of literal homelessness but for SSVF assistance:*** Applicant households must (1) be imminently losing their primary nighttime residence, (2) have no other residence, and (3) not have sufficient resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) immediately available to prevent them from becoming literally homeless. To further qualify for services under category 1, the grantee must (4) document that the participant meets at least one of the following conditions:

- a) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
- b) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
- c) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
- d) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;

- e) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, or correctional institution) without a stable housing plan; or
- f) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved screening tool.

## 2. Stage 2: Targeting

Each grantee must establish priorities for prevention assistance based upon the targeting factors and point system included in the form. Targeting factors have been identified to help further assess risk of literal homelessness and to prioritize the provision of supportive services to those very low-income Veteran families most in need. Points have been assigned to factors based on research and practical experience. ***SSVF grantees must use these targeting criteria to prioritize or limit SSVF services for applicant households who score higher or above a minimum threshold. SSVF targeting criteria and thresholds must be approved by the VA.***

SSVF grantees should establish thresholds based upon the number of applicants vs. SSVF resources available. Community resources will also be a factor in determining a threshold score. A grantee may establish that the higher the ratio of applicants to capacity, the higher the point threshold. For example, a program that can only accept and assist 10% of the number of eligible households who apply for prevention assistance could set a minimum score of 9 or higher to assign priority, while a program that has capacity to accept and assist 75% of eligible applicants may require only a score of 4.

Additionally, grantees may establish and score other targeting factors with applicants. The Stage 2 scoring sheet includes rows for this purpose. Grantee-established factors must be approved by the VA and should be scored using a 1 to 3 scale. The targeting threshold score must be approved by the VA. Grantees may develop a policy and provide for a waiver to the threshold score. This should incorporate a methodology to monitor and change threshold score, as indicated.

Grantees may use this tool to determine which households will receive the full array of SSVF services, including temporary financial assistance, as indicated on the housing stability plan. **Only households that meet the established threshold score may receive temporary financial assistance.**

**Households that pass Stage 1 eligibility but don't meet threshold may receive "light touch" SSVF services.** "Light touch" assistance includes case management, without temporary financial assistance, to prevent literal homelessness. These households should be entered in the SSVF program and must be provided assistance in creating a housing stability plan.

## Exhibit F: SSVF Domestic Violence Guidance for HMIS Reporting

### 1. What is the policy on entering information about SSVF participant households that are victims of domestic violence into HMIS?

Only programs whose primary mission is to serve victims of domestic violence are prohibited by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) from entering client data into HMIS. All other SSVF grantees are required to collect and enter data for 100% of SSVF participants into HMIS. Grantees who perceive this SSVF requirement to be in conflict with state law, local law, or local HMIS policy must contact their Regional Coordinators with documentation of the specific law and/or policy. VA will review and, when possible, take additional action to facilitate the entry of this data into HMIS. If there is any doubt about a conflict, grantees should contact their Regional Coordinators immediately rather than waiting until a participant with a history of domestic violence requests SSVF assistance.

### 2. Why does VA require grantees to enter information about victims of domestic violence into HMIS?

National-level counts of SSVF participants and tracking of outcomes are based on HMIS data. Only clients for whom data is entered into HMIS and successfully uploaded to the Repository can be counted by VA as having been served by your program.

### 3. What steps can grantees take to ensure the security of HMIS data?

It is the responsibility of the grantee to take precautions to protect the client information of all of those served. Information in HMIS tends to be more secure than information in paper files. There are basic information security practices that you should follow to keep all personally identifying information secure:

1. Protect any computer that stores or accesses identifying information about any client – which includes accessing HMIS or data exported from HMIS for upload to the Repository – with a username and password.
2. Do not share the username and password for your computer or your HMIS account with anyone, and do not keep them written down in a place where anyone else could find them.
3. Log out or lock your computer when you are not at your desk.
4. The only VA-approved method of transmitting exported HMIS data for SSVF clients is by upload to the Repository; exported files may not be emailed.

### 4. Are there special safeguards grantees can implement for data related to victims of domestic violence?

If there is reason to believe that an abuser has or could gain access to HMIS data, contact your Regional Coordinator, who will work with you to develop a plan to enter data without compromising your participant's safety; it may be appropriate to delay data entry until after the participant has been discharged. In addition, although data required by VA for SSVF participants does not include an address or other contact information, some HMIS applications have the capacity to track such data, as well as information about employers, etc. In instances

where there is reason to believe that an abuser may have access to HMIS data, none of that additional information should be entered into HMIS.

## Exhibit G: History of Revisions Made to the Program Guide

### 1. Revisions made for the March 26, 2015 Edition:

- 1) Updated and added to Definitions for emergency housing, emergency housing assistance, extremely low income, homeless, literally homeless, occupying permanent housing, permanent housing, rapid re-housing, and Veteran (pg.2-6)
- 2) Updated Occupying Permanent Housing (pg.8-9, 16)
- 3) Added segment on Extremely Low Income (pg.10-11)
- 4) Added Veteran Choice Card to documentation options for Veteran Status (pg.17)
- 5) Updated Helpful Links (pg.17-18)
- 6) Updated Case File Documentation Requirements with an addition of Emergency Housing Verification (pg.30)
- 7) Added segments on Families Fleeing Domestic Violence and Documenting Domestic Violence (pg.32-33)
- 8) Expanded Case Management Services - Description of Services (pg.38-39)
- 9) Expanded Assistance in Obtaining and Coordinating Other Public Benefits - Description of Services (pg.41-45)
- 10) Clarified use of online platforms for rent reasonableness in Restrictions on Rental Assistance (pg.48)
- 11) Updated time limits for Temporary Financial Assistance used for rental assistance, utility payment assistance, deposit payment assistance, moving cost payment assistance, transportation assistance, and childcare assistance (pg.48-56)
- 12) Added Extremely Low Income category for Temporary Financial Assistance used for rental assistance, utility payment assistance, and childcare payment assistance (pg.48-56)
- 13) Updated specifics of General Housing Stability Assistance (pg.52-53)
- 14) Updated specifics of Emergency Housing Assistance (pg.53-54)
- 15) Updated maximum for car repair in Transportation Assistance (pg.55)
- 16) Updated Habitability Standards (pg.59)
- 17) Expanded Confidentiality (pg.60)
- 18) Updated and streamlined summary chart of Temporary Financial Assistance (pg.70-72)
- 19) Updated Ineligible Activities with clarification on mortgage costs, construction, rehabilitation, extensive car repairs, and court-ordered judgments or fines (pg.72-73)
- 20) Updated live links in Program Operations charts (pg.83-86)
- 21) Revised name of Homeless Verification to Literally Homeless Verification (pg.108-120)
- 22) Updated live links throughout guide
- 23) Revised minor wording for clarification purposes throughout guide

### 2. Revisions made for the October 31, 2014 Edition:

- 1) Modified formats throughout Program Guide for readability.
- 2) Shifted order of sections V and VI for readability
- 3) Added “literally homeless” definition (pg.4)
- 4) Clarified summary of Supportive Services Provided (pg.9)
- 5) Categorized Temporary Financial Assistance as “Required “(pg.9, 34)

- 6) Added summaries of Rapid Re-housing, Coordination with CoCs, Housing First (pg.10)
- 7) Added Accreditation and Renewal Awards (pg.12)
- 8) Clarified Recertification of Eligibility (pg.28)
- 9) Clarified Case File Documentation Requirements (pg.29,30)
- 10) Added Eligible Expenses for Outreach (pg.38, 64)
- 11) Clarified Eligible Temporary Financial Assistance (pg.42)
- 12) Clarified Restrictions on Rental Assistance (pg.43,44)
- 13) Clarified Restrictions on Deposit Payment Assistance (pg. 46)
- 14) Clarified General Housing Stability Assistance (pg.47,48)
- 15) Clarified Confidentiality security of records (pg.54)
- 16) Added Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure (pg.55)
- 17) Clarified Finalizing PMS Registration and Change of PMS Information (pg.58)
- 18) Clarified Overview of Disbursement (p.59)
- 19) Updated Reporting Process for HMIS (pg.73)
- 20) Clarified Exhibit C:Section 2.3) (pg.118)
- 21) Added Exhibit G: History of Revisions to Program Guide (pg.124)

**3. Revisions made for the March 31, 2014 Edition:**

- 1) Removed all references to Veteran Healthcare Administration eligibility as a requirement for SSVF eligibility
- 2) Addition of Exhibit F: Domestic Violence Guidance for HMIS Reporting
- 3) Addition of Federal Financial Report (FFR) guidance

**4. Revisions made for the March 20, 2014 Edition:**

- 1) Changed “Presumptive Eligibility” to “Pending Verification of Veteran Status” to more accurately identify the group
- 2) Exhibit C: Collaborative Delivery of GPD/HUD-VASH/SSVF Services added
- 3) Exhibit D: Guide for Pending Verification of Veteran Status added
- 4) Exhibit E: Homelessness Prevention Eligibility Screening Instructions added

**5. Revisions made for the March 4, 2014 Edition:**

- 1) Eligibility language adjusted to ensure consistency with new guidance (Veterans Health Administration) and documentation requirements
- 2) Electronic survey methods and guidelines clarified
- 3) Clarification regarding restrictions and uses of Emergency Housing Assistance
- 4) Clarification regarding restrictions and uses of Emergency Supplies, a subcategory of General Housing Stability Assistance
- 5) Removal of medical supplies in some areas in order to bring entire guide in line with current policy
- 6) Removal of current Exhibits B, C and D (samples, tools, and templates). All samples and tools will, as of this publishing, exist solely on the SSVF University Website. Exhibits A1, A2, A3 reassigned as Exhibits A, B, and C, respectively

**6. Revisions made for the December 19, 2013 Edition:**

- 1) Clarification of Veteran eligibility status, including updated forms and resources for determining SSVF eligibility
- 2) Further defined eligible homeless status conditions (ie: staying at a shelter or place not meant for human habitation)
- 3) Clarification of maximum TFA expenditures as related to total Supportive Service Grant Award (50%)
- 4) Addition of Homelessness Prevention Eligibility Screening Disposition Form and Instructions with guidance on eligibility and threshold screening requirements

**7. Revisions made for the October 22, 2013 Edition:**

- 1) Medical supplies removed as an allowable expense
- 2) Clarification on presumptive eligibility guidelines and documentation
- 3) Updated HPRP vs. SSVF comparison to clarify previous changes in allowable activities

**8. Revisions made for the August 26, 2013 Edition:**

- 1) Clarification of allowable mobile lot rent payments, rental assistance limitations, specification of gas voucher payments and utility arrear payments
- 2) Added new Housing Stability Assistance financial assistance category
- 3) Added new Emergency Housing Assistance category and incorporated this type of assistance as a subcategory of Housing Stability Assistance
- 4) Provided further guidance on Veteran eligibility status and documentation
- 5) Clarified that W-9s from landlords are required prior to any rental assistance payments