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VA Announces New Grants to Help End Veterans Homelessness

WASHINGTON –Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald today announced the award of approximately \$300 million in grants that will help approximately 115,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants will be distributed to 301 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is awarding grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in – or transitioning to – permanent housing. Those community organizations provide a range of services that promote housing stability among eligible very low income Veteran families (those making less than 50 percent of the area median income). The grants announced today will fund the fourth year of the SSVF program.

“By working with community non-profit organizations, we have enlisted valuable partners in our fight to end homelessness,” said McDonald. “The work of SSVF grantees has already helped thousands of homeless Veterans and their families find homes and thousands more have been able to stay in their own homes.”

Under the terms of the grants, homeless providers will offer Veterans and their family members outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits and assistance in receiving other public benefits. Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs.

In 2009, President Obama announced the Federal government’s goal to end Veteran homelessness by 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2013 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 24 percent since 2009.

“We want to make sure our Veterans receive the care and support that they have earned and deserve,” McDonald added. “This is a program that, indeed, makes a difference.”

Through the Eliminating Veteran Homelessness Initiative, VA committed over \$1 billion in FY 2014 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to homeless Veterans, including health care, housing, job training, and education.

More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

**Department of Veterans Affairs
2014 Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
Grant Awards
Fact Sheet
August 2014**

Summary:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 and has made it a priority goal for the agency. The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program is essential in accomplishing this goal. VA is announcing the award of approximately \$300 million to 301 community agencies to provide grants, commencing services in FY 2015, for supportive services to very low-income Veteran families that are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. The grants will help approximately 115,000 Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and their families.

Program Background:

- SSVF grantees provide supportive services to very low-income Veterans and their families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Required services provided by grantees include outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits, and providing or coordinating efforts to obtain needed entitlements and other community services.
- SSVF grantees secure a broad range of other services for participants: legal assistance, credit counseling, housing counseling, assisting participants in understanding leases, securing utilities, coordinating moving arrangements, employment, training leading to employment, providing representative payee services concerning rent and utilities when needed, and serving as an advocate for the Veteran when mediating with property owners on issues related to locating or retaining

housing.

- Grantees also offer temporary financial assistance that provide short-term assistance with rent, moving expenses, security and utility deposits, child care, transportation, utility costs, and emergency expenses.

Program History:

- In its first year of operations (FY 2012), with \$60 million funding awarded in FY 2011, SSVF served more than 35,000 participants in 40 states and the District of Columbia, of whom 3,416 Veterans served had never before accessed VA services.

- Through awards made at the end of FY 2012, in FY 2013, SSVF expanded to \$100 million and 151 grantees in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In FY 2013, SSVF served over 65,000 participants. In FY 2014, SSVF expects to serve approximately 115,000 participants.

- VA offered the FY 2014 SSVF NOFA at approximately \$300 million in FY 2014 funds. In FY 2015, SSVF expects to serve approximately 115,000 participants.

The SSVF Program Impacts for services delivered through September 2013:

- Significant impact on Veteran families, with 15,948 children assisted.

- Of 39,649 Veteran participants, 5,865 are women (15 percent of Veterans served) and 6,610 (17 percent of Veterans served) are Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn.

- Of those exiting SSVF, 84 percent have permanent housing.

- In a follow-up of SSVF participants one year after discharge from the program, 89 percent of single Veterans and 93 percent of Veteran families that received SSVF prevention assistance did not have a reported return to homelessness; for homeless Veterans that received rapid rehousing assistance, 84 percent of single persons and 90 percent of families did not have a documented return to homelessness one year after exiting the SSVF Program.