

# Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Overview

*Housing Homeless and Imminently At-Risk Veteran Families*

Adrienne Nash Meléndez  
VHA Homeless Programs Office

# Introductions

- Introductions
- Building a Relationship Together
- One Team for Veterans Approach

# Overview of SSVF

- 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.
- SSVF began in 2012 as part of one of the model programs under The National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans.
- Supportive services grants are awarded to non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives.
- SSVF grantees provides case management and a range of supportive services designed to promote housing stability.
- For FY26, 235 grants have been awarded at approximately \$818 million dollars.

# FY25 Data

## Homeless Programs Office (HPO)

- SSVF supported **58%** of all permanent housing placements (30,381)
- Unsheltered Outreach: SSVF supported **45%** of outreach to unsheltered Veterans (19,269)

## Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

- 99,603 Veterans Served (approximately 9,000 increase from FY24)
- 155,066 People Served (approximately 15,000 increase from FY24)
- 33,263 Children Served (approximately 3,000 increase from FY24)
- 73% identify with 1 or more disabilities (approximately 3% increase from FY24)
- 16% Women Veterans (same as FY24)

# SSVF Core Concepts

- Housing and Supportive Services
- Crisis Response
- Veteran Choice
- Progressive Assistance

# SSVF Funds Services with Grants

VA grants funding  
to community  
non-profits



Grantees provide  
services to Veterans  
and their families

***Grantees work collaborative with Veterans and Veteran families to identify their needs, using a progressive engagement approach.***

***The National SSVF Program Office leads strategy, policy, technical assistance, and guidance.***

# Two Missions

## Mission #1

Rapidly re-house homeless Veterans and their families



## Mission #2

Keep Veteran families imminently at-risk of literal homelessness, housed



# Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Anticipate FY27 NOFO in early winter 2025
- Online application through grants management system
- Corresponding documents as attachments in system
- NOFO will outline priorities

# SSVF Over Time

2011

## *Design/Start Up*

- SSVF Begins
- Annual Report
- \$60 million
- 85 grants

2012-2013

## *Advancing Practice*

- Accreditation
- Practice Standards
- Mentoring

2014-2017

## *Community Strategy & Planning to End Veteran Homelessness*

- Surge Grants
- Community Plans
- CoC Support
- TFA Expansion
- Federal Criteria and Benchmarks

2018-2020

## *Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis*

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

2020-2022

## *Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis*

- COVID Response
- Stafford Act
- Emergency Housing Assistance expand
- Supplemental Housing Navigation and Incentive Funds

2022-2025

## *Solidification One Team Approach*

- Collaborative Case Management
- Enhancing VA partnerships
- Community Planning
- Landlord Incentive
- Income Eligibility increased to 80%
- Rural Expansion
- Families with Children

# SSVF Role as a Change Maker

## ☐ Under a One Team Approach Framework

- Breaking down the barriers to collaboration
- Positioning amongst VA and Continuum of Care (CoC) Partners
- Using SSVF as a navigator for systems changes
- Using data to inform strategies that promote equitable access to and delivery of critical outreach and housing services.
- Community efforts to end homelessness among Veterans
  - Full commitment to case conferencing, list management and cross-program collaboration in the overall system and individual Veteran-level planning.

# Tailor Plans to Individual Needs

Young Veterans

Women

Dependent  
Children

Disabled



Choose **VA**

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs 11

# Tools Available to Grantees

- Outreach
- Case management
- Benefits Assistance
- SSI/SSDI
- Housing Navigation
  - Specialized position
  - Active involvement, not just a list
- Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)
  - More than rent and utilities
- Transportation
- Link to health care through Health Care Navigation Services
- Employment and training
- Credit counseling
- Legal Assistance



# SSVF Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)

TFA Type	Time/Amount Limitation
Rental Assistance	Max. of 10 months in a 2-year period; no more than 6 months in any 12-month period. For ELI: Max. 12 months in 2-year period; 9 months in any 12-month period
Utility-Fee Payment Assistance	Max. of 10 months in a 2-year period; no more than 6 months in any 12-month period. For ELI: Max. 12 months in 2-year period; 9 months in any 12-month period
Security Deposits or Utility Deposits	Max. of 1 time in a 2-year period for security deposit; Max. of 1 time in a 2-year period for utility deposit
Moving Costs	Max. of 1 time in a 2-year period
Gen Housing Stability	Max. \$1500 during a 2-year period (includes \$500 emergency supplies)
Child Care	Max. of 10 months in a 2-year period; no more than 6 months in any 12-month period. For ELI: Max. 12 months in 2-year period; 9 months in any 12-month period
Transportation	Tokens, vouchers, etc. – no time limit. Car repairs/maintenance – max. of \$1,200 during 2-year period

# TFA in Target Communities



Landlord incentives worth up to two months of rent.



Tenant move-in support, including an additional \$1,000 for consumer selected quality of life items.



Expanded eligibility from 50% to 80% Annual Median Income.

# Priority One: Rapid Rehousing

- Triage priority

 Literally homeless

- Budget sufficient resources, Demand = BNL (or PIT) + inflow

A **BNL** or By-Name-List is used to assign and track individual services.

The **PIT** is the Department of Housing and Urban Development's annual Point-in-Time count of homelessness.



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

# Priority Two: Homelessness Prevention

- TFA is limited to 40% without a waiver (can be services only).
- Targets **imminent** risk of homelessness.
- Uses diversion/rapid resolution – may straddle early shelter intervention and should be a part of the initial conversation at the time of the Veteran's housing crisis.

## *A Note About Homelessness Prevention:*

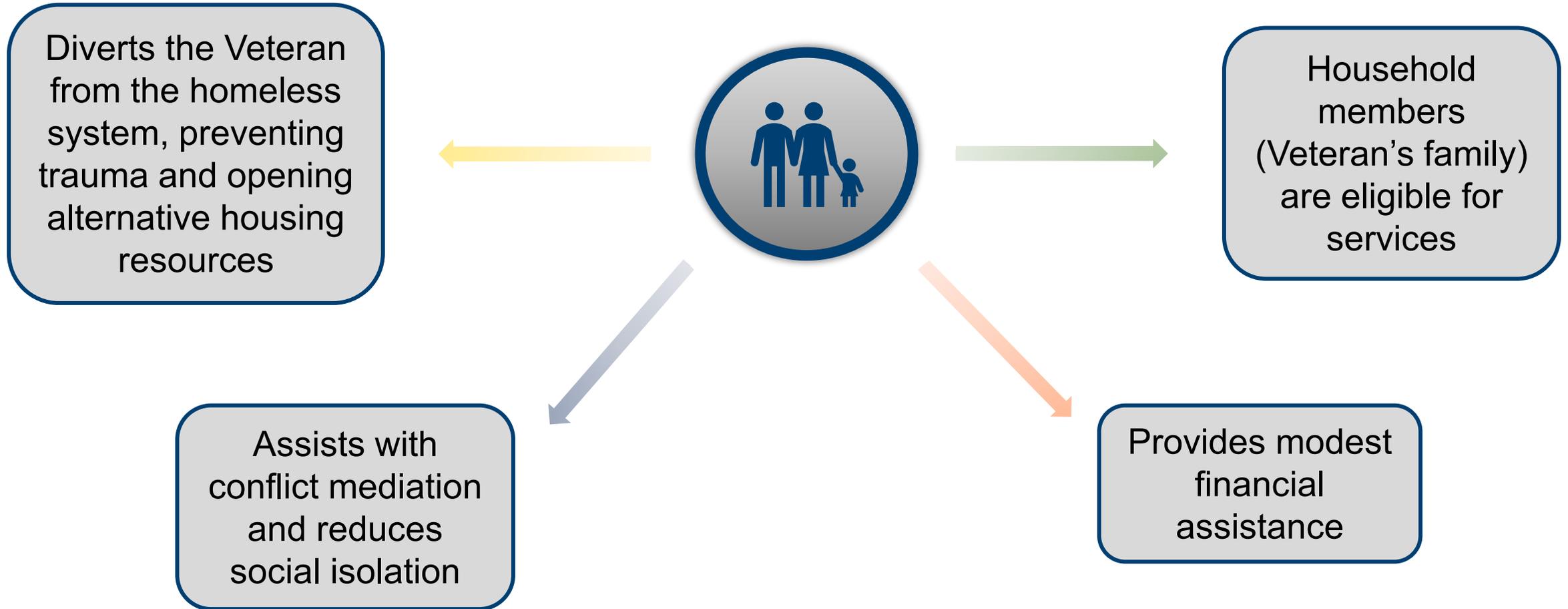
1. Homelessness Prevention (HP) is not the same as eviction prevention.
2. Grantees use limited HP resources for those who most likely will become homeless.
3. HP services are not limited to TFA. Grantees offer case management or other services to help stabilize the household.

# Priority Two: Homelessness Prevention, cont.

**In 2023, the SSVF Program Office announced that SSVF grantees would have more flexibility to prioritize Rapid Rehousing and Prevention Services.**

- SSVF grantees are urged to use problem-solving strategies such as Rapid Resolution to explore other safe and appropriate housing options that may be available to Veterans as they work on a pathway to their housing goal.
- Veterans not at imminent risk of homelessness may be enrolled in SSVF Prevention and provided Rapid Resolution services and support to help them avoid literal homelessness without the need for significant TFA.

# Rapid Resolution (Family Reunification)

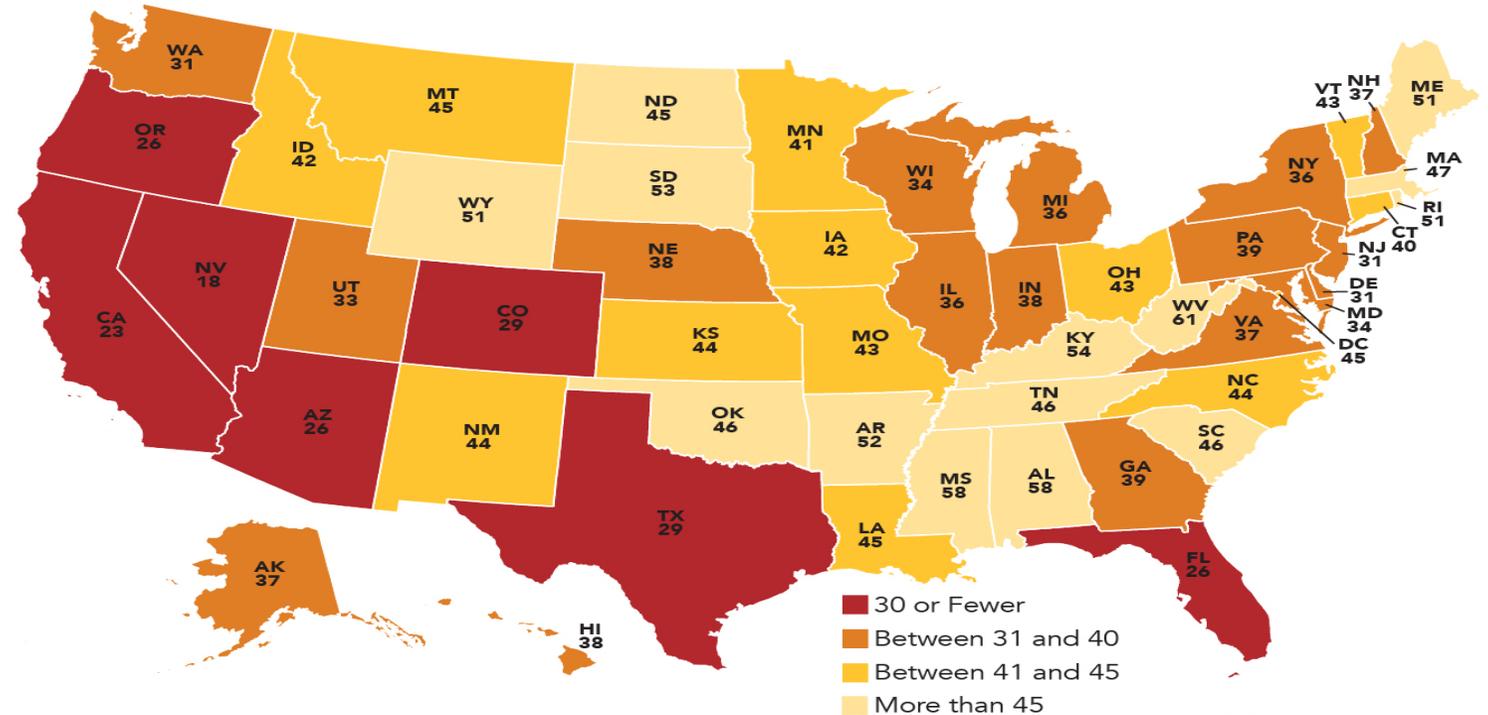


# How Do We Increase Supply?

- Build new units:
  - Expensive
  - Takes years
- Identify “new” housing within the existing supply

## THE GAP

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



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



# Shallow Subsidy

- Offers a 50% rental subsidy of “rent reasonableness” for two years, which increases the supply of affordable units.
  - Subsidy does not change even if income increases
  - No recertification for two years
- Partnership with the Department of Labor’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to provide a boost to income and increase the potential for self-sufficiency.

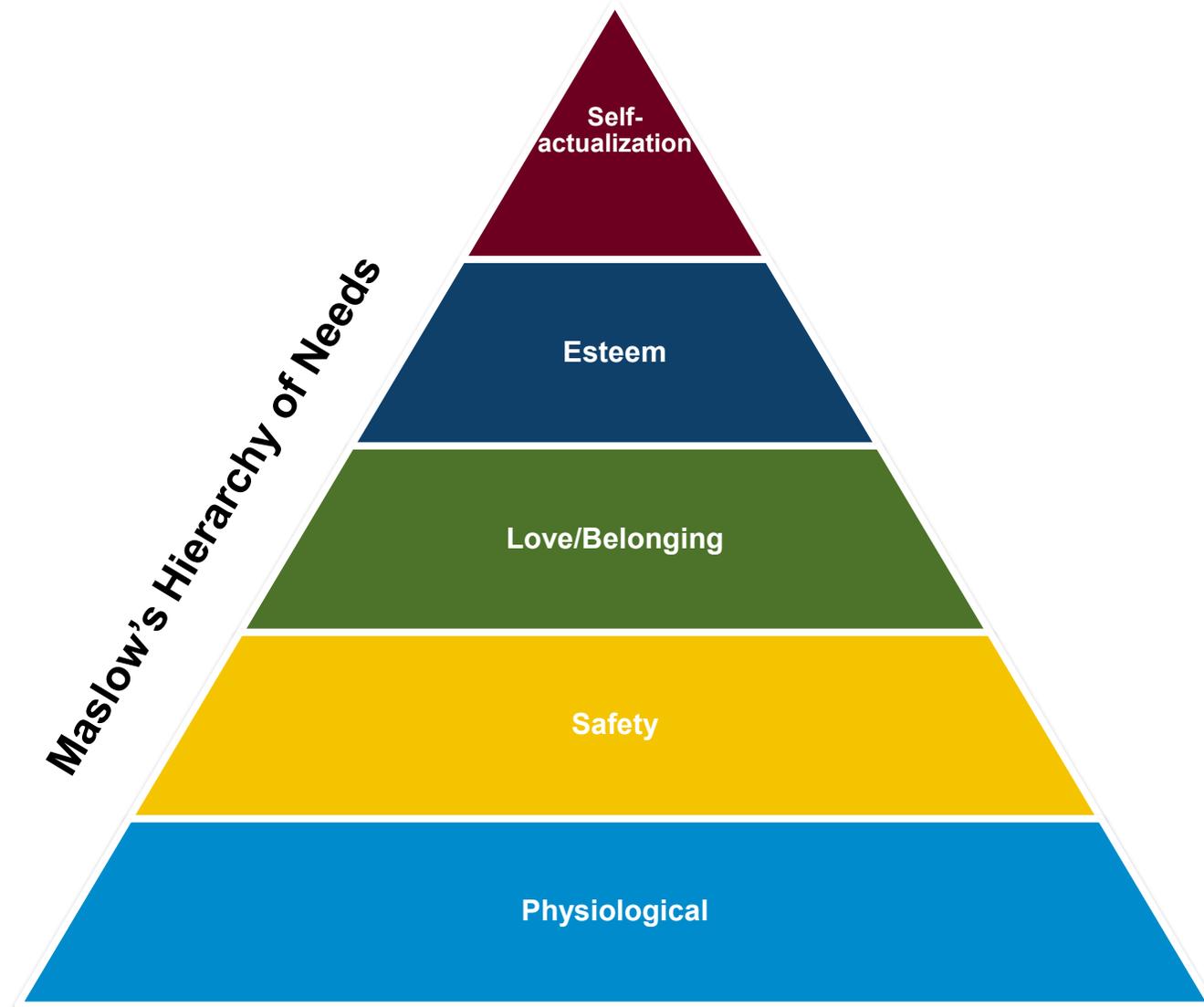
# Serves the Entire Household

## *Which Household Members Have Needs Impacting Housing Stability?*

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

# Tools to Ensure Participant Safety

- Same day screening and enrollment
- Emergency housing assistance
- General housing stability assistance



# Tools to Ensure Participant Safety, cont.

## Same Day Screening and Enrollment

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

# Tools to Ensure Participant Safety, cont.

## Emergency Housing Assistance

- Serves families up to 60 days in hotels/motels who generally cannot be served by GPD, HCHV or suitable community options.

## General Housing Stability Assistance

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

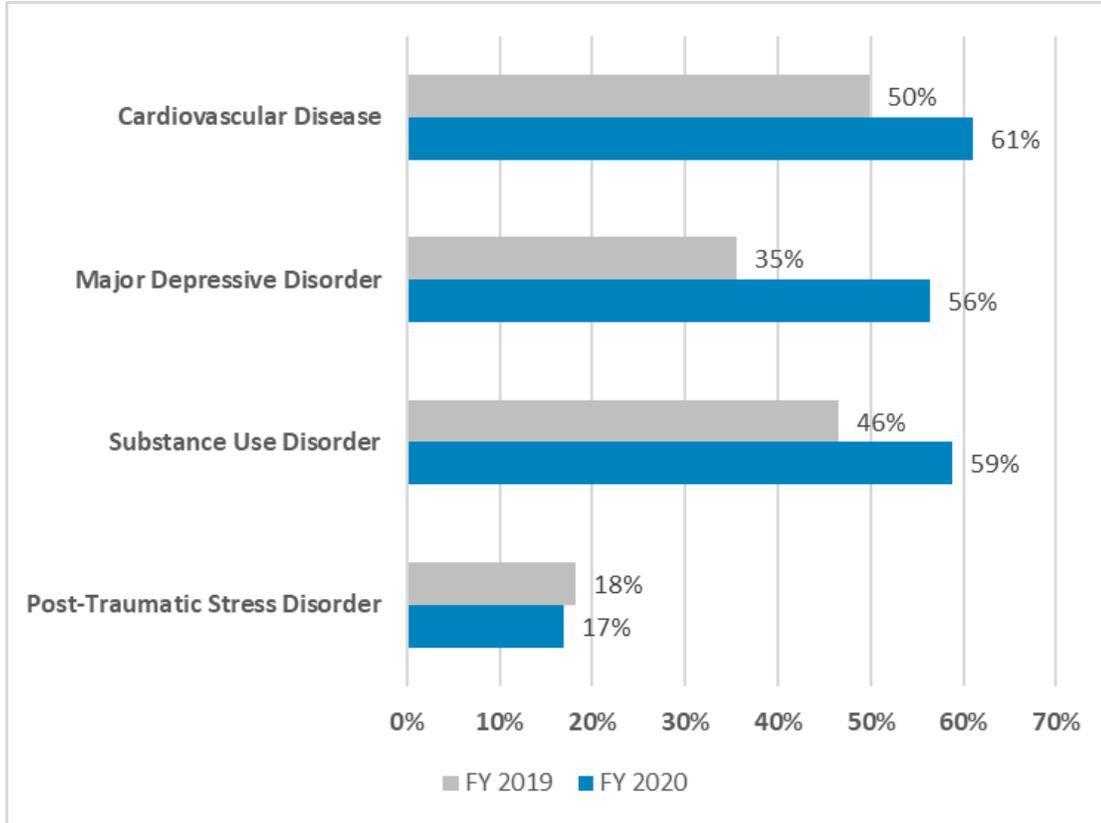
# Finding/Keeping Housing

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



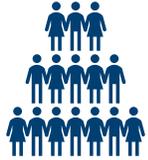
# Health Care Navigators (HCNs)

## Veterans Major Health Conditions Changes



- Links participants, including non-Veteran family members, to health and mental health services at VAMCs and/or community providers
- Helps participants overcome barriers to care
- VA allows appointment and basic service information to be shared between HCNs and VAMCs

# Progressive Assistance



**Not** one size fits all – Policies describing “what everyone gets” will only lead to failure.

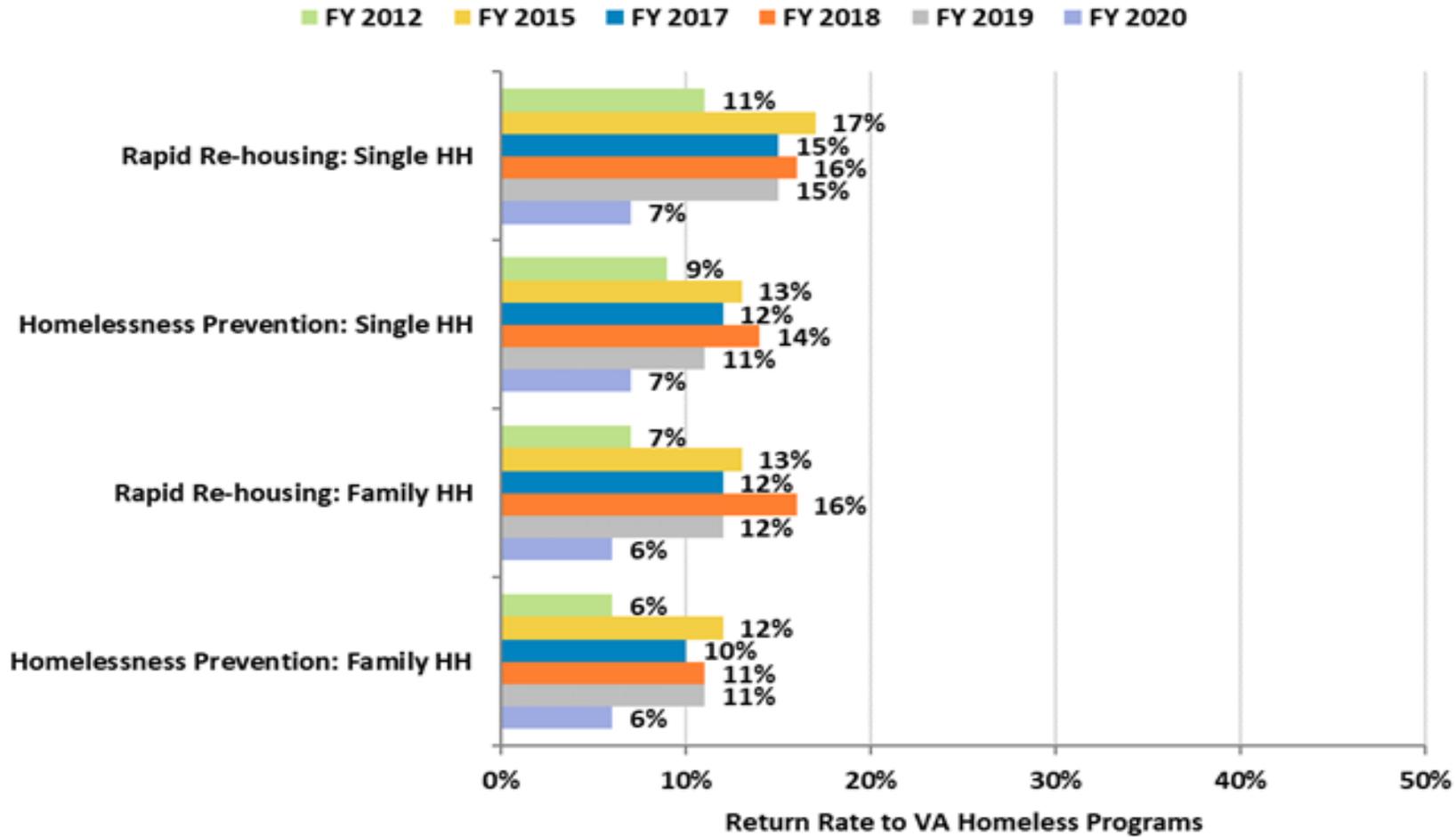


Begins with least amount of assistance needed and scales up as required.



The services are **just as or more** important than the financial assistance.

# One-Year Return Rate to Homelessness (VA Programs)



## Questions and Dialogue



## Contact Information

Adrienne Nash Meléndez

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

[adrienne.nashmelendez@va.gov](mailto:adrienne.nashmelendez@va.gov)

[ssvf@va.gov](mailto:ssvf@va.gov)

## SSVF Website

[Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/ssvf/)