

NCHV eNewsletter

July 2012



VA Announces Nearly \$100 Million in SSVF Grants **Will help approximately 42,000 homeless and at-risk veterans and their families**

WASHINGTON – On July 17, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki announced the award of nearly \$100 million in grants that will help approximately 42,000 homeless and at-risk veterans and their families. The grants are going to 151 community agencies in 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

“We are committed to ending veteran homelessness in America,” Shinseki said. “These grants will help VA and community organizations reach out and prevent at-risk veterans from losing their homes.”

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, VA is awarding grants to private nonprofit 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.

Under the grants, homeless providers will offer veterans and their family members outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits and assistance in getting 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.

This is the program’s second year. Last year, VA provided about \$60 million to assist 22,000 veterans and family members.

In 2009, President Obama and Secretary Shinseki announced the federal government’s goal to end veteran homelessness by 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2011 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, homelessness among veterans has declined 12 percent since January 2010.

Through the homeless veterans initiative, VA committed \$800 million in FY 2011 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.

To view a list of 2012 SSVF grantees, [click here](#).

More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Details about the SSVF program are online at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

Senate Unanimously Passes Bill to Reauthorize, Improve Critical Homeless Veteran Programs

House expected to pass H.R. 1627 in the coming weeks

On July 18, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed H.R. 1627, the "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012." This bill addresses several areas of concern for veterans, including health care, housing, education and benefits. Notably, the bill would reauthorize and improve several homeless veteran programs that are critical to the success of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s Five-Year Plan to End Veteran Homelessness.

In June 2011, NCHV submitted congressional testimony on Sen. Murray's S. 1148, the "Veterans Programs Improvement Act of 2011." Throughout the past 13 months, NCHV has regularly advised both House and Senate committees of jurisdiction. Many important homeless veteran provisions from S. 1148 were incorporated into the legislation passed by the Senate last week.

Among the bill's highlights are as follows:

- Reauthorization of the Grant and Per Diem Program at \$250 million, Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program at \$300 million, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program at \$50 million, and Special Needs Grant Program at \$5 million.
- Reauthorization of the VA's Enhanced Use Lease program – Authority for this program expired on Dec. 31, 2011. H.R. 1627 would modify the previous authority in part by limiting leases to programs that serve homeless and at-risk veterans and their families.
- Requirement for VA to study and improve the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program reimbursement method – Within one year, the VA Secretary must complete a study that would develop a more effective and efficient method for adequately reimbursing per diem recipients for services furnished to homeless veterans.
- Expansion of the VA's Special Needs Grant Program to include male homeless veterans with minor dependents – Current authority restricts these services to women who have care of minor dependents.

For more information, [click here](#).

2012 NCHV Annual Conference Presentations Online

View presentation materials from three days of sessions

Presentations from the 2012 NCHV Annual Conference – "Halfway Home: Progress in the Plan to End Veteran Homelessness" – are now available online. This year's conference featured three days of sessions, including the following tracks: Target Populations, Department of Veterans Affairs, Legal Services, and Community Engagement.

To view presentation materials from the 2012 NCHV Annual Conference, [click here](#).

If you presented at the 2012 NCHV Annual Conference and have not yet submitted your presentation materials, please email them to bcrone@nchv.org.

DoD Launches Helpline for Those Affected by Military Sexual Trauma

Free 24/7 support in partnership with RAINN

DoD Safe Helpline, a new resource for members and veterans of the Department of Defense (DoD) community, is a secure, anonymous and confidential support service that connects users with live sexual assault professionals.

Since its launch in April 2011, DoD Safe Helpline has helped thousands of military sexual assault survivors take the first steps towards recovery. By a simple click, call or text, users can access free support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. DoD Safe Helpline is operated by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), on behalf of DoD through a contract with the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO). DoD Safe Helpline also has a host of transitioning- and veteran-related services that are tailored to the user's individual needs.

For more information on the DoD Safe Helpline, [click here](#).

Joint VA/DOL Veterans Retraining Assistance Program Reaches Milestone

More than 25,000 unemployed veterans have applied

WASHINGTON – More than 25,000 unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 have already applied for new benefits to cover education costs for up to one year through a joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DOL) program that focuses on retraining up to 99,000 veterans for high-demand jobs.

Forty-five thousand veterans can start receiving benefits during the current fiscal year. VA began accepting applications on May 15. A maximum of 54,000 billets will be available for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2012.

As part of a provision of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) allows qualifying veterans to receive up to 12 months of assistance equal to the full-time Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty rate, currently \$1,473 per month.

Veterans can apply now on a first-come, first-serve basis for VRAP. Unemployed veterans should act quickly and apply online to avoid missing out on this great opportunity. Assistance under this benefit program will end on March 31, 2014.

To complete the application, veterans must know their direct deposit information (bank routing number and account number), the name and location of the school they will attend, the program they wish to pursue, and the high-demand occupation they are working toward.

To qualify veterans must:

- Be 35-60 years old, unemployed on the day of application, and not dishonorably discharged.
- Start education or training after July 1, 2012, in a VA-approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school leading to an associate degree, non-college degree or a certificate for a high-demand occupation as defined by DOL.
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program, such as Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment.
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job-training program within the last 180 days.
- Not receive VA compensation at the 100 percent rate due to individual unemployability.

Upon completion, DOL will contact participants within 30 days after their training to help them find good jobs that use their newly learned skills.

"It is encouraging that we have reached this milestone; however, there are still nearly 20,000 slots to fill by September 30," said Ismael "Junior" Ortiz, DOL's Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Veterans Employment and Training Service. "It is critical to continue to spread the word about this program to unemployed veterans or those who may know an unemployed veteran."

For more information on VOW, VRAP, the definition of "high-demand occupations," and how to apply, veterans may go to www.benefits.va.gov/VOW, or call VA's Call Centers toll free at 1-800-827-1000. Veterans may also access the VRAP application online at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> through eBenefits, a joint project of the Department of Defense and VA.

Veterans are also encouraged to visit the nearly 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers across the nation for assistance. To find a center near you visit www.servicelocator.org. For more information about DOL's veterans programs, go to <http://www.dol.gov/vets/>.

Funding Opportunities

Qualcomm Foundation and Qualcomm Incorporated focus their philanthropy primarily in geographic regions where they have a business presence with emphases including bettering the lives of underserved populations by providing basic human needs. There are no deadlines for letters of inquiry. For more information, [click here](#).

The TD Charitable Foundation has announced that it will award \$2.5 million in grants in 2012 to transitional housing and homeless shelter projects and initiatives through its seventh annual Housing for Everyone grant competition. Grants will be awarded to organizations serving states spanning the entire East Coast. The deadline for applications is Aug. 31. For more information, [click here](#).

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National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

333 1/2 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003
202-546-1969 or toll-free 1-800-VET-HELP
