



**Department of
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News Release

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VA Announces Local Grant to Help End Veteran Homelessness

LEBANON, PA – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of \$350 thousand in a homeless prevention grant to Reading based community agency Opportunity House – serving Berks and Schuylkill counties. The grant will aid approximately 369 homeless and at-risk Veteran families as part of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. Opportunity House is one of 151 community agencies in 49 states and the District of Columbia to receive a grant.

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

Under the SSVF program, 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.

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.

VA estimates these grants will serve approximately 42,000 homeless and at-risk Veteran families nationwide. 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.

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

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