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**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

VA Awards \$2.85 Million Locally in Grants to Help End Veteran Homelessness
Flexible Grants Help Lower Rates of Veteran Homelessness in South Central Pennsylvania

For Immediate Release – August 31, 2016

LEBANON, Pa. – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in an announcement Tuesday awarded \$2.58 million in grants to six local organizations serving Adams, Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Schuylkill and York counties under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program which helps thousands of very low-income Veteran families around the nation who are permanently housed or transitioning to permanent housing.

The organizations include: YWCA of Greater Harrisburg, serving Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon, Perry and York Counties; Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Allentown, serving Berks and Schuylkill counties; Commission on Economic Opportunity, serving Schuylkill county; Opportunity House, serving Berks, Lancaster and Schuylkill counties; Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living, Inc., serving Berks county; and Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania, Inc., serving Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties.

“SSVF is a key tool to promote housing stability among our most economically vulnerable Veterans and their families,” said Keisha Kerr, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program Coordinator at the Lebanon VA Medical Center. “This program empowers our community-based partners to provide the mix of services needed to prevent Veterans from becoming homeless and rapidly re-house those who become homeless.”

SSVF funding, which supports outreach, case management and other flexible assistance to prevent Veteran homelessness or rapidly re-house Veterans who become homeless, has been awarded to 275 non-profit organizations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These grants, key elements of VA’s implementation of the Housing First Strategy, enable vulnerable Veterans to secure or remain in permanent housing. A full list of SSVF grantees is located at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

Grantees will continue to provide eligible Veteran families with outreach, case management, and assistance obtaining VA and other benefits, which may include health care, income support services, financial planning, child care, legal services, transportation, housing counseling, among other services.

Grantees are expected to leverage supportive services grant funds to enhance the housing stability of very low-income Veteran families who are occupying permanent housing. In doing so, grantees are required to establish relationships with local community resources.

In fiscal year (FY) 2015, SSVF served more than 157,000 participants and is on track to exceed that number in FY 2016. As a result of these and other efforts, Veteran homelessness is down 47 percent since the launch of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010. Also since 2010, more than 360,000 Veterans and their family members have been permanently housed, rapidly re-housed, or prevented from falling into homelessness by VA’s homelessness programs and targeted housing vouchers

provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Today's grant recipients successfully competed for grants under a January 15, 2016, Notice of Fund Availability. Applications were due February 5, 2016. The funding will support SSVF services in FY 2017, which starts October 1, 2016, and ends September 30, 2017.

For more information about the SSVF program, visit www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

The Lebanon VA Medical Center is one of 152 medical centers in the nation with the sole purpose of providing world-class medical care to America's veterans. If you are veteran, you may be eligible to receive care and benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. To learn more, call 717-228-6000.

For more information about the Lebanon VA Medical Center, visit www.lebanon.va.gov, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VALebanon, or follow us on Twitter as www.twitter.com/VALebanon.

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