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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **VA grants going to Md. agencies to help end Veteran homelessness**

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced Thursday the award of \$4,462,988 in homeless prevention grants to the Maryland counties of Frederick and Washington. The grants will serve homeless and at-risk Veteran families as part of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. This award will serve Veterans' families associated with Alliance Inc., Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place and Operation Renewed Hope, three of 319 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

“With these grants, we are strengthening our partnership with community non-profits across the country to provide Veterans and their families with hope, a home and a future,” said Shinseki. “The work of Supportive Services for Veteran Families program grantees has already helped us prevent and end homelessness among tens of thousands of homeless Veterans and their families, but as long as a single Veteran lives on our streets, we have work to do.”

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (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.

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## 222 – VA grants going to Md. agencies

Thanks to the SSVF grants, those community organizations will provide a range of services that promote housing stability and play a key role in connecting Veterans and their family members to VA services such as mental health care and other 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 third year. Last year, VA provided about \$100 million to assist approximately 50,000 Veterans and family members.

In 2009, President Barack Obama and Secretary Shinseki announced the federal government's goal to end Veteran homelessness in 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2012 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 17.2 percent since 2009.

Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed over \$1 billion in fiscal year 2013 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](http://www.va.gov/homeless). Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at [www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp). Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and their family members and friends can call VA's National Homeless Veterans Call Center at 1-877-4AID-VET.

For more information about the homeless Veteran assistance program at the Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center, contact Rochelle Baltimore-Swan at 304-263-0811, ext. 2075 or 3835.

*The Martinsburg VA Medical Center mission is to honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. Located in West Virginia, the medical center offers a comprehensive range of services, including internal medicine, ambulatory surgery, audiology and speech pathology, dental, nursing home, nutrition, podiatry, prosthetics, women's health, mental health, and rehabilitation medicine. With a service area of nearly 130,000 Veterans in West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, the medical center operates four VA-staffed Outpatient Clinics in Cumberland, Hagerstown, Fort Detrick, Md., and Stephens City, Va. and three contract clinics in Franklin and Petersburg, W. Va. and Harrisonburg, Va.*