



H. Case Closing and Termination of Assistance

Policy:

Participants and their Case Manager start planning for discharge at intake. SSVF services are not designed to be long-term in nature, so when participants achieve their goals necessary to obtain or retain permanent housing, they are exited from the program.

A participant may voluntarily terminate their SSVF services at any time for any reason. Veterans First retains the right to involuntarily discharge a participant from services for failure to abide by program responsibilities, although such instances should be extremely rare.

Procedure:

Case managers discuss the short-term nature of the program and exit procedures during the initial intake with the Veteran household. Initial goals should have a completion date within 90 days of program entry to ensure timely results.

Throughout service participation, case managers and Veteran households must regularly review progress towards 90-day goals, discuss whether the timeframe is appropriate and make adjustments as necessary. Case managers shall ensure participants are aware of the time remaining in their certification period and transparently discuss the options and criteria for extending or terminating services.

Case Managers shall also consult with their direct supervisor during regular case review supervision meetings about whether a particular household is appropriate for recertification or exit from the program. While this consultation is critical for ensuring efficiency of services and adherence to program rules and regulations, it is of critical importance that this process remains participant-centered and includes participant input in meaningful ways to ensure their needs and desires are represented in the case closing process.

In general, a household will be deemed appropriate for exit from services when they have achieved or demonstrated significant progress towards achieving key housing goals. Key housing goals are those identified in a household's 90-day housing stability plan and typically focus on obtaining income necessary to provide for living expenses, lease compliance and overall housing stability, and/or connection to community resources the household needs and desires.

Households who have not made sufficient progress towards achieving key housing goals may be recertified under the conditions and procedures described in section III.E. of this document.



When case closing is determined to be the best path forward, Case Managers will arrange for a final meeting with the household in order to complete the Exit Interview/Discharge Summary packet (Appendix U). The Exit Interview provides participants with an opportunity to give feedback on the quality of services they received from the program, make recommendations for improvements, and address any remaining referral or service needs. Except in rare circumstances, all efforts should be made to conduct an in-person exit interview with the household to most effectively obtain this input and to avoid sudden, unexpected termination of services that may be traumatizing to participants.

The completed packet will be added to the household's file, the Case Manager will update all necessary information in the HMIS system, and the file will be turned in to the supervisor for review within 48 hours to be placed in the archives.

Involuntary exits from the program should be extremely rare, but may happen in the event that a participant significantly and repeatedly violates their responsibilities. Such violations include threats to the health or safety of staff or other participants, misrepresentation of eligibility information, or extended inability to contact the participant following repeated documented attempts to reach them by phone, email, home visits, or other outreach.

Households may also be exited from SSVF services if they begin receiving case management support from another VA program, such as HUD-VASH, and thus are no longer eligible for SSVF case management services.

Due process must be afforded to all participants facing involuntary termination consisting of:

- Written notice to the participant clearly stating the reasons for termination and, if appropriate, how to come back into compliance with program responsibilities (Appendix V)
- A review of the decision wherein the participant is allowed to present written or oral objections to a staff member other than the staff person or their subordinate who approved the termination (Appendix Q)
- Written notice of the final decision to the participant.

All SSVF services are voluntary, and participants may choose to discontinue services of their own free will at any time for any reason. Case Managers should still conduct an exit interview/discharge summary with such participants if they are willing and available.