



US DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Office of Audits and Evaluations

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Opportunities Exist to Improve the Accuracy of Veterans' Emergency Housing Assistance and Permanent Housing Placement Data

Management Advisory
Memorandum

21-02685-161

September 6, 2023

BE A
VOICE FOR
VETERANS

REPORT WRONGDOING
va.gov/oig/hotline | 800.488.8244

OUR MISSION

To serve veterans and the public by conducting meaningful independent oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

CONNECT WITH US     

Subscribe to receive updates on reports, press releases, congressional testimony, and more! Follow us at @VetAffairsOIG.

PRIVACY NOTICE

In addition to general privacy laws that govern release of medical information, disclosure of certain veteran health or other private information may be prohibited by various federal statutes including, but not limited to, 38 U.S.C. §§ 5701, 5705, and 7332, absent an exemption or other specified circumstances. As mandated by law, the OIG adheres to privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations protecting veteran health or other private information in this report.

QUALITY STANDARDS

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) has released this management advisory memorandum to provide information on matters of concern that the OIG has gathered as part of its oversight mission. The OIG conducted this review in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation except for the standard of reporting.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
WASHINGTON, DC 20001



July 14, 2023¹

MANAGEMENT ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

TO: Nikki Barfield, Acting Director
Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program

FROM: Larry Reinkemeyer, Assistant Inspector General
VA Office of Inspector General's Office of Audits and Evaluations (52)

SUBJECT: Opportunities Exist to Improve the Accuracy of Veterans' Emergency Housing Assistance and Permanent Housing Placement Data

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is one of the largest Veterans Health Administration (VHA) homelessness prevention programs, serving over 102,000 households in fiscal year 2022. The SSVF program works through grantees—typically nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives—to help veterans and their families who are experiencing homelessness and those at imminent risk of homelessness by providing outreach, case management services, assistance obtaining other public benefits, and temporary financial assistance.

Grantees may use emergency housing assistance to temporarily place veterans and their families in hotels or motels when permanent housing, shelter beds, transitional housing, and rental housing are not immediately available. Generally, veterans and their families are limited to receiving emergency housing assistance for no more than 60 days, beginning on the date the grantee first pays for emergency housing.² However, on January 31, 2020, the Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.³ As a result, the SSVF program office waived the 60-day time limit on emergency

¹ This memorandum was sent to the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program office on July 14, 2023, to provide the opportunity for review prior to publication.

² 38 C.F.R. § 62.34(f)(2) (2022).

³ US Department of Health and Human Services, *Determination that a Public Health Emergency Exists*, January 31, 2020.

housing.⁴ When the public health emergency ended on May 11, 2023, so too did the emergency housing limit waiver.⁵

Given the importance of VA's commitment to reduce homelessness experienced by veterans, and the significant resources involved in doing so, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated a project to assess the SSVF program's oversight of grantees' use of emergency housing assistance to place veterans in permanent housing, as well its efforts to place veterans in permanent housing in a timely manner.⁶ Grantees spent about \$67.1 million to place 12,490 veterans in emergency housing during the OIG review period from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.⁷

Grantees are required to report information to the SSVF program office on veterans who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. To do so, the grantees enter information into their version of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a class of software applications the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires grantees to use to record and store information on individuals and families experiencing homelessness.⁸ An HMIS may be commercially available or locally developed.⁹ Although grantees may use different versions of HMIS applications, HUD, the US Department of Health and Human Services, and VA have established data collection, management, and reporting standards for HMIS.¹⁰ These standards, which are managed by HUD, do not require that HMIS applications include an option for entering information about veterans' lengths of stay in emergency housing.

All SSVF grantees are required to track information in their HMIS related to payments made on behalf of veterans, including emergency housing assistance payments for hotels or motels and

⁴ SSVF Program Office, *Emergency Housing Assistance Guidance*, May 7, 2020. At the time this guidance was issued, the time limit on emergency housing was 45 days; however, this limit was updated to 60 days on November 10, 2021. Supportive Services for Veterans Families, 86 Fed. Reg. 62,482 (November 10, 2021).

⁵ SSVF Program Office, "SSVF Special Program Update—End of Stafford Act, May 11, 2023," accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/ssvf-program-updates/>.

⁶ The references in this memo to "veterans" placed in housing includes any eligible family members.

⁷ The OIG team analyzed emergency housing data in the SSVF data repository from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. The team's initial analysis of information from the repository identified a universe of 10,761 veterans; however, due to technical limitations of the repository, an additional 1,729 veterans who received emergency housing assistance were later identified. These additional veterans were not included in the review because their data were in the repository and their circumstances were accounted for; given the limited size of the group, excluding them did not materially affect the results of the review. Appendix A provides additional details on the team's methodology.

⁸ HUD, "HMIS Software Vendor Capacity Checklist," November 2020; HUD Exchange, "HMIS," accessed February 22, 2023, <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/>; VA, *FY [Fiscal Year] 2022 VA Data Guide*, September 2021.

⁹ HUD, "HMIS Software Vendor Capacity Checklist."

¹⁰ HUD, *FY 2022 HMIS Data Standards (Manual)*, December 2021; HUD Exchange, "HMIS Data Standards," accessed June 20, 2023, <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/>; *FY 2022 VA Data Guide*.

the dates the veterans moved into permanent housing.¹¹ Monthly, grantees upload their HMIS data into the SSVF program’s repository.¹² The SSVF program office uses the repository data to track information about housing and services provided to veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness and to assess the outcomes associated with grantees’ programs.¹³

During the project, the OIG team found VHA’s Homeless Program Office created a “permanent housing placement” dashboard in March 2022 that includes an SSVF report with information on veterans’ stays in emergency housing.¹⁴ The report relies on the information grantees uploaded to the repository to identify how long veterans have stayed in emergency housing. SSVF program officials require their regional coordinators to use the report to monitor how many veterans are experiencing homelessness and how long they are in emergency housing. In cases where veterans have been in emergency housing for 30 or more days, regional coordinators are required to follow up with grantees to determine if assistance is needed to place these veterans in permanent housing.¹⁵ Figure 1 illustrates the flow of information from each grantee’s HMIS to the SSVF report.

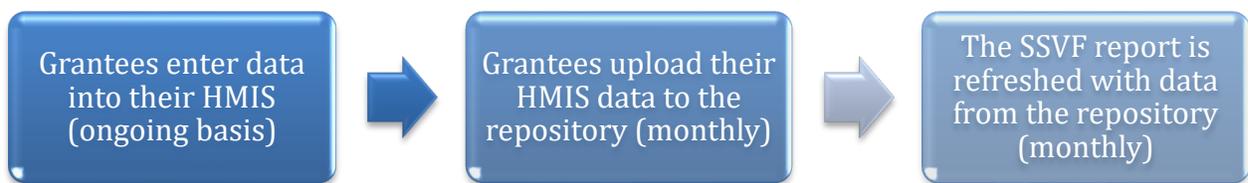


Figure 1. Overview of how data gets from each grantee’s HMIS into the SSVF report.

Source: VA OIG analysis of the SSVF Program Guide, March 2021, and VA Homeless Programs Guide, Homeless Programs Permanent Housing Placement Dashboard, July 2022.

The OIG team found three main areas of concern related to data in the SSVF report and the repository that could affect SSVF’s ability to oversee grantees’ use of emergency housing assistance:

- Data did not always accurately reflect the dates veterans started receiving emergency housing assistance or their actual lengths of stay.

¹¹ FY 2022 VA Data Guide.

¹² SSVF, *Program Guide*, updated March 2021.

¹³ SSVF, *Program Guide*.

¹⁴ The SSVF report discussed in this memorandum is the SSVF Rapid Re-housing Unhoused Detail report. “Rapid re-housing” is an intervention designed to help veterans quickly end a period of homelessness, return to permanent housing, and restabilize. Despite prior discussions with SSVF program office staff about their processes for overseeing grantees’ use of emergency housing, the OIG team was not informed of the report until November 2022, after it had started reviewing supporting documentation for sampled veterans and testing the accuracy of the repository data. As the report data are overwritten on a monthly basis, the team could not review and compare the data from the prior months to the sampled data to assess accuracy.

¹⁵ SSVF, “SSVF Program Office Data Review Policy and Procedure,” May 31, 2022.

-
- Gaps in veterans' receipt of emergency housing assistance may obscure the total number of days they received it.
 - Data did not always accurately reflect the dates veterans moved into permanent housing.

SSVF is responsible for ensuring the data used to monitor and report on veterans' receipt of emergency housing assistance are complete and accurate.¹⁶ Without accurate data, management tools such as the SSVF report will not provide the VHA Homeless Program Office and SSVF officials the information they need to monitor and improve program performance to assist veterans and to increase operational efficiencies.

As previously stated, SSVF regional coordinators are supposed to use the report to monitor veterans staying in emergency housing. During the review period, each regional coordinator was responsible for overseeing the status of about 1,200 veterans, on average, in emergency housing; inaccurate data can affect coordinators' ability to help grantees move veterans receiving assistance into permanent housing.¹⁷

The OIG recognizes that the changes necessary to address the HMIS data limitations and issues are not fully under VHA's control; therefore, the OIG is issuing this memorandum to formally convey the information that VHA leaders will need to determine if additional actions are warranted.¹⁸ The OIG has identified areas in which changes are encouraged but is taking no additional steps at this time.

Data Did Not Always Accurately Reflect Dates Veterans Started Receiving Emergency Housing Assistance or Their Lengths of Stay

The repository includes a "Date Provided" field that reflects each time a grantee issues a check to pay for emergency housing provided to a veteran.¹⁹ The VHA Homeless Program Office's SSVF report uses the first entry in the Date Provided field as the veteran's start date in emergency housing. However, the grantees did not typically pay hotel or motel invoices on the same day veterans began staying in emergency housing. After reviewing and testing the repository data for the review period, the OIG team estimated that the first entry in the Date Provided field did not

¹⁶ *FY 2022 VA Data Guide*.

¹⁷ The OIG team obtained the average by analyzing the repository data from the stated period and regional coordinator assignments for FY 2022.

¹⁸ This memorandum provides information that has been gleaned from OIG data analyses and provided to the SSVF program office to determine if it should take additional action on what appear to be data inaccuracies related to emergency housing assistance.

The OIG issues management advisory memoranda when exigent circumstances or areas of concern are identified by OIG hotline allegations or in the course of its oversight work, particularly when immediate action by VA can help reduce further risk of harm to veterans or significant financial losses. Memoranda are published unless otherwise prohibited from release or to safeguard protected information.

¹⁹ *FY 2022 VA Data Guide*.

accurately represent the emergency housing start date for almost 6,200 of the 10,800 veterans. For these veterans, the team estimated that the first entry in the Date Provided field was, on average, about 28 days after a veteran began staying in emergency housing.²⁰

Regional coordinators are expected to follow up with grantees and request updates when the report indicates that a veteran has resided in emergency housing for 30 days or more. Follow-up may include obtaining information on veterans' housing status, determining if grantees need help overcoming barriers to providing housing, or discussing referrals to other programs for housing assistance and support.²¹ However, SSVF regional coordinators may not follow up with grantees as soon as required if the report does not accurately indicate when veterans entered emergency housing. Some stays may start more than 30 days before grantees pay the related invoices; thus, the date in the Date Provided field reported by the grantees and recorded in the repository may be more than 30 days after the veterans' emergency housing actually started.

In its reports, VHA uses the date when grantees have issued payments to hotels or motels for emergency housing as a proxy for the start date of veterans' emergency housing stays. VHA does this because all SSVF grantees do not have the fields in their local HMIS to be able to enter start dates. Consequently, the OIG encourages VHA to consider working with HUD to determine the feasibility of adding a requirement for local HMIS to include a data field for grantees to record the date veterans actually start their stays in emergency housing. If all grantees had this field in their HMIS, then VHA would not have to rely on the Date Provided field when it generates the report. Alternatively, SSVF could address the HMIS data limitations by working with grantees to develop a process that tracks and better identifies emergency housing start dates.

Grantees Did Not Always Record Veterans' Receipt of Emergency Housing Assistance in a Timely Manner

The OIG team also found that data entry problems and omissions in the grantees' local HMIS may have contributed to the inaccuracies in veterans' reported lengths of stays in emergency housing in the SSVF report. As previously discussed, the report relied on the dates grantees reported they paid hotel and motel bills in the Date Provided field to track veterans' stays in emergency housing. However, the team found grantees sometimes omitted or delayed entering this emergency housing assistance information in their local HMIS or encountered issues uploading their data to the repository. The team estimated, based on a statistical sample, that these data problems contributed to inaccuracies in the length-of-stay data recorded in the repository for nearly 1,600 of 10,800 veterans considered during the review period. The team estimated that veterans' stays in emergency housing averaged about 61 days longer than what the repository showed. Without accurate data on veterans' lengths of stays in emergency housing,

²⁰ Appendix A provides additional information on the population and statistical sampling methodologies.

²¹ "SSVF Program Office Data Review Policy and Procedure."

the SSVF program office cannot ensure compliance with the time limits on emergency housing for veterans.²² Regional coordinators also might not follow up with grantees to assist further as needed. The OIG encourages VHA leaders to work with grantees to address data entry problems that affect the accuracy of data used to track veterans' stays in emergency housing.

Gaps in Veterans' Receipt of Emergency Housing Assistance May Obscure the Total Number of Days Received

During the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency, the length-of-stay limit of no more than 60 days in a two-year period was waived.²³ The public health emergency ended on May 11, 2023, according to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as did the time limit waiver for stays in emergency housing.²⁴ The OIG team found the SSVF report may not accurately reflect a veteran's length of stay in emergency housing when there was a break in the veteran's receipt of assistance. Veterans may temporarily stop receiving emergency housing assistance for many reasons, such as to leave emergency housing for substance use disorder treatment or to move in with family members.

According to a senior business operations specialist in the VHA Homeless Program Office's Business Intelligence Office, each time a grantee uploads data into the repository, the report overwrites most of the data reported the previous month. For emergency housing assistance, the OIG team determined that the report retains the start date from the first time the veteran received assistance and uses it to calculate the veteran's length of stay in emergency housing—as long as the grantee continues to report that stay in emergency housing. If, however, the veteran temporarily stops receiving emergency housing assistance and then resumes it, the specialist said the break in the reporting causes the veteran to no longer show on the report as having received assistance. Therefore, the team concluded that when the veteran starts receiving emergency housing assistance again and reappears on the report, the veteran will appear to be a new recipient with a new start date for emergency housing assistance. The report is focused on the most recent monthly data provided by the grantee, and it is not designed to retain cumulative data about veterans' lengths of stay in emergency housing when there is a break in receipt of assistance.

The OIG team's analysis of the repository data from July 2021 through June 2022 identified almost 1,100 veterans whose data showed a break and a restart in their emergency housing assistance. These breaks lasted from one month to nine months. The cumulative stay in emergency housing for veterans who had breaks in emergency housing assistance averaged about

²² 38 C.F.R. § 62.34(f)(2). Time limits are discussed in the following section.

²³ SSVF Program Office, Emergency Housing Assistance Guidance.

²⁴ SSVF program updates, "SSVF Special Program Update—End of Stafford Act, May 11, 2023," accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/ssvf-program-updates/>.

107 days. However, because the report treats each episode of emergency housing assistance as a new start date and does not capture the veterans' cumulative total days in emergency housing, the team concluded the monthly reports would not have accurately reflected the cumulative lengths of stay for the 1,100 veterans whose repository data showed a break. Accordingly, regional coordinators may not be aware of how long veterans have been in emergency housing in order to follow up with grantees to determine if assistance is needed to help place the veterans in permanent housing.

Further, the limitation in the data reported for emergency housing assistance for veterans who had a break in receipt hinders the SSVF program office's ability to monitor veterans' lengths of stays and ensure limitations on emergency housing are not exceeded.²⁵

The OIG encourages VHA leaders to explore ways to account for gaps in veterans' actual stays in emergency housing, which will help ensure veterans do not exceed length-of-stay limitations.

Data Did Not Always Accurately Reflect Dates Veterans Moved into Permanent Housing

The OIG team also found the "Housing Move-in Date" field in the repository was not always accurate.²⁶ This field should represent the date a veteran moved into permanent housing and no longer received emergency housing assistance.²⁷ However, the team found instances in which grantees entered the wrong move-in date, entered a date for veterans who did not actually move into permanent housing, or failed to enter a date for veterans who did move into permanent housing. Based on a sample of 103 veterans, the team estimated that almost 2,300 of 10,800 veterans had inaccurate move-in dates in the repository from July 2021 through June 2022. Based on further analysis of the sample, the team estimated that the incorrect data resulted in inaccurate reporting for 400 veterans.²⁸

In May 2022, the SSVF program created a process to improve permanent placement data accuracy, which required its regional coordinators to verify whether grantees entered a date in the Housing Move-in Date field for veterans who moved into permanent housing.²⁹ However, the regional coordinators have not been required to verify the accuracy of those move-in dates. Additionally, the SSVF program office introduced a new scorecard metric in fiscal year 2023 (starting October 1, 2022) to rate grantees' success in placing veterans in permanent housing. However, it relies on dates in the Housing Move-in Date field. Inaccurate data reduce VHA's

²⁵ 38 C.F.R. § 62.34 (f)(2) (2022).

²⁶ The term "Housing Move-in Date" is used in VA's data guide. *FY 2022 VA Data Guide*.

²⁷ *FY 2022 VA Data Guide*.

²⁸ For further information about this estimate, see appendix A.

²⁹ VHA Homeless Programs Office, "SSVF Regional Coordinator Housing Data Review One Pager," May 12, 2022.

ability to effectively evaluate grantees' success in placing veterans experiencing homelessness into permanent housing.

The OIG encourages VHA leaders to consider strengthening the data-validation process for the Housing Move-in Date field in the repository, which is key to the scorecard metric reporting and accurate tracking of the number of veterans placed in permanent housing.

Conclusion

The OIG recognizes the tremendous pressure VHA faced in meeting the unprecedented and significant challenges posed by the pandemic and the complexities in supporting veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness. However, with the end of the public health emergency, VHA will have to ensure compliance with the requirements related to the 60-day limit on veterans' stays in emergency housing. When repository data about grantees' use of emergency housing assistance is inaccurate, regional coordinators lack the information to not only ensure this compliance but to follow up with grantees in a timely manner and fulfill their duties to assist grantees as necessary. The OIG acknowledges that VHA implemented the SSVF report on the dashboard in March 2022 to track veterans' stays in emergency housing. However, the OIG encourages VHA leaders to explore ways to build on those efforts to improve the accuracy of data used to track veterans' actual stays in emergency housing and placements in permanent housing.

Requested Action

The OIG requested VHA inform the OIG of what action, if any, it would take to enhance the accuracy of data on veterans' stays in emergency housing and move-in dates. This included any actions taken in collaboration with HUD to update HMIS data fields, develop processes to improve grantees' data accuracy, and accurately track cumulative lengths of stay.

VA Comments and OIG Response

SSVF's acting director reported that to improve data accuracy, VHA worked with HUD to add data fields related to emergency housing assistance to HUD's HMIS data requirements. These data fields will include the start and end dates of emergency housing assistance, the amount paid, and the number of days covered by the payment. The acting director reported that the new requirement will begin October 1, 2023.

Appendix B contains the full text of the acting director's response. The OIG acknowledges VHA's efforts to work with HUD to add data fields to HMIS, which will improve the accuracy of SSVF emergency housing assistance information and should provide the program with the data it needs to ensure veterans do not exceed the 60-day limit on emergency housing assistance. The OIG requests VHA inform the OIG of what additional actions, if any, it takes to address the other issues raised in this memorandum.



LARRY M. REINKEMEYER
Assistant Inspector General
for Audits and Evaluations

Appendix A: Statistical Sampling Methodology

To evaluate the SSVF program's oversight of grantees' use of emergency housing assistance, as well as its efforts to place veterans in permanent housing in a timely manner, the OIG team reviewed a sample of veterans' records for which the repository indicated receipt of emergency housing assistance during the review period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. The team used stratified random sampling to quantify the number of records for which the data in the repository did not accurately reflect the veterans' receipt of emergency housing assistance.

Population

The initial population included 10,761 veterans who, based on the data in the repository, received emergency housing assistance during the review period. However, while looking at records for the sampled veterans, the OIG team found three cases in which grantees erroneously recorded the veterans had received emergency housing assistance when they had not. Based on these cases, the team estimated that the initial population included 156 veterans who did not receive emergency housing assistance and adjusted the population for the review to 10,605 veterans. Additional analysis of data in the repository identified an additional 1,729 veterans who received emergency housing assistance; however, these veterans were excluded from the sample and estimations because the team determined that their exclusion would not materially affect the results of the review.

Sampling Design

The OIG team selected a stratified sample of 200 veterans from the review population of 10,761 veterans who received emergency housing assistance. This sample was composed of 100 primary samples and 100 secondary samples. The secondary samples were selected to replace veterans from the primary sample if the latter were determined to be outside the scope of the review because they did not actually receive emergency housing assistance. The team reviewed emergency housing assistance records associated with 103 veterans, which included 100 in-scope veterans and three out-of-scope veterans. The population was stratified based on risks associated with potential data inaccuracies and categorized in eight strata as seen in table A.1.³⁰

³⁰ Veterans were allocated to the strata based on an analysis of the repository data. Therefore, the accuracy of the allocation was limited by the accuracy of the repository data and the OIG team's interpretation of the data. For example, stratum 1 should only include veterans who received one month of emergency housing assistance. However, due to possible problems with the repository data and difficulty in interpreting the data, some of these veterans may have actually received more than one month of assistance. Any such errors are inconsequential with respect to the statistical estimates in this memorandum. The strata were accounted for when producing estimates for the entire population, but no estimates were obtained for any of the individual strata alone.

**Table A.1. Total and Sampled Veterans
by Stratum**

Stratum	Number of veterans	Sample size
1	659	12
2	606	12
3	1,164	8
4	797	10
5	135	2
6	150	5
7	6,538	42
8	712	12
Total	10,761	103

Source: VA OIG statistician’s stratified population and samples reviewed by the OIG team. Data were obtained from the repository.

Strata:

1. Veterans who received one month of emergency housing assistance and had a move-in date or a “project exit date” (date the veteran left the SSVF program).³¹
2. Veterans who received one month of emergency housing assistance and had no move-in or project exit date, where the last month the veteran received emergency housing assistance did not include June 2022. The OIG team excluded June 2022 because veterans receiving emergency housing assistance during this month could have continued to receive emergency housing assistance after this month.
3. Veterans who received more than one month (consecutive months with no gaps) of emergency housing assistance and had no move-in or project exit date, where the last month of emergency housing assistance received included June 2022.
4. Veterans who received more than one month of emergency housing assistance and had a move-in or project exit date, where there was a gap in the months that they received emergency housing assistance.
5. Veterans who received more than one month of emergency housing assistance and did not have a move-in or project exit date, where there was a gap in the months that they received emergency housing assistance, and the last month of emergency housing assistance included June 2022.

³¹ The term “project exit date” is used in VA’s data guide. *FY 2022 VA Data Guide*.

-
6. Veterans who received more than one month of emergency housing assistance and did not have a move-in or project exit date, where there was a gap in the months that they received emergency housing assistance, and the last month of emergency housing assistance excluded June 2022.
 7. Veterans who received more than one month of emergency housing assistance (consecutive months with no gaps) and had a move-in or project exit date.
 8. Veterans who received more than one month of emergency housing assistance (consecutive months with no gaps) and had no move-in or project exit date, where the last date of emergency housing assistance received excluded June 2022.

Weights

Samples were weighted to represent the population from which they were drawn, and the weights were used in the estimate calculations. For example, the OIG team estimated the number of veterans in the population with emergency housing assistance gaps by summing the weights of all sampled households with emergency housing assistance gaps.

Projections and Margins of Error

The projection is an estimate of the population value based on the sample. The associated margin of error and confidence interval show the precision of the estimate. If the OIG repeated this review with multiple sets of samples, the confidence intervals would differ for each sample but would include the true population value approximately 90 percent of the time. The OIG statistician employed statistical analysis software to calculate estimates, margins of error, and confidence intervals that account for the complexity of the sample design.

The sample size was determined after reviewing the expected precision of the projections based on the sample size, potential error rate, and logistical concerns of the sample review. While precision improves with larger samples, the rate of improvement decreases significantly as more records are added to the sample review. Figure A.1 shows the effect of progressively larger sample sizes on the margin of error.

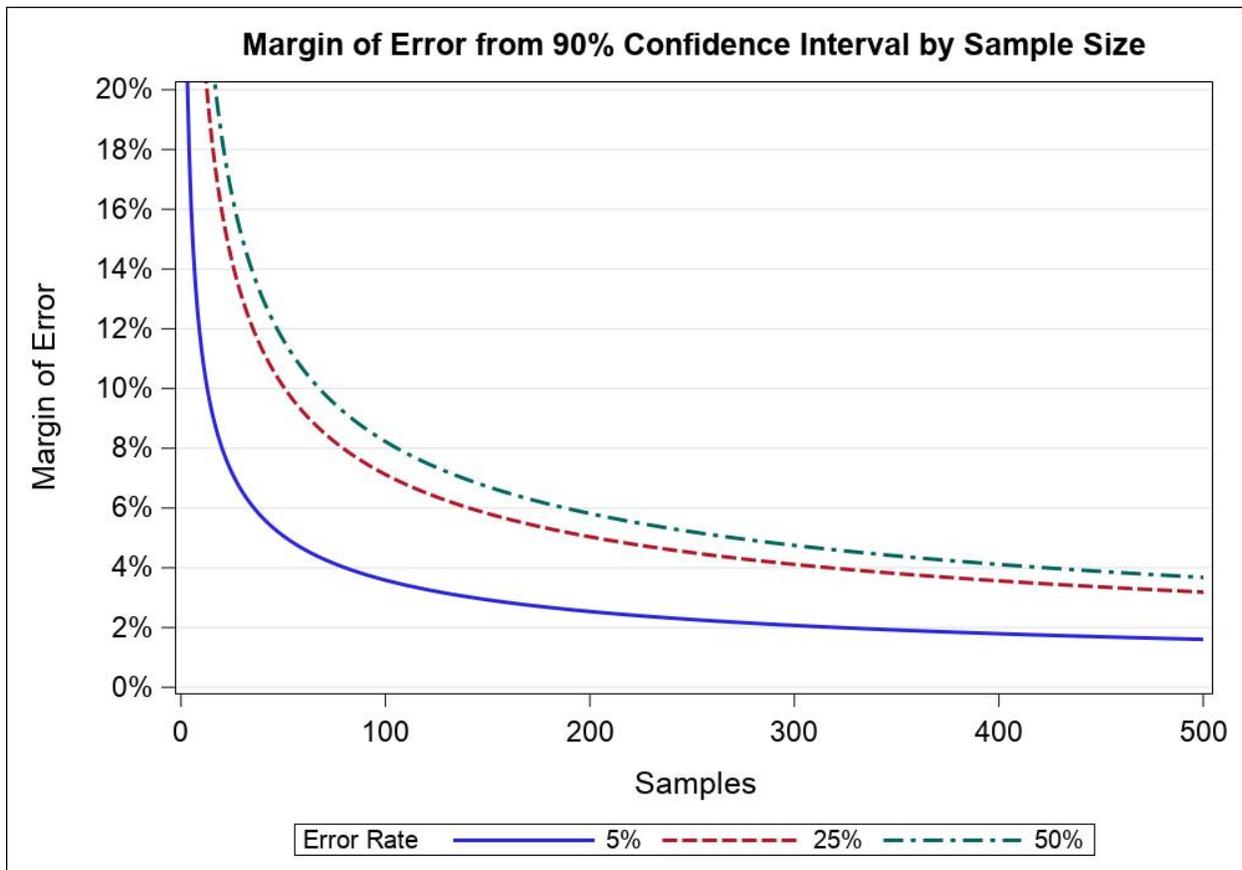


Figure A.1. Effect of sample size on margin of error.
 Source: VA OIG statistician’s analysis.

Projections

Table A.2. details the OIG team’s projections.

Table A.2. Statistical Projections Summary for Veterans Who Received Emergency Housing Assistance

Estimate name	Estimate number	90 percent confidence interval			Sample size
		Margin of error	Lower limit	Upper limit	
Veterans whose emergency housing assistance start dates were not accurate	6,179	1,031	5,125	7,188	103
Data did not accurately reflect how long veterans were	1,563	663	986	2,313	103

Estimate name	Estimate number	90 percent confidence interval			Sample size
		Margin of error	Lower limit	Upper limit	
receiving emergency housing assistance					
Veterans with inaccurate move-in dates	2,291	849	1,528	3,227	103
Veterans who moved into permanent housing, but data did not reflect this	742	342	400*	N/A	103
Average number of days in emergency housing before first entry recorded in the repository	28.15	9.32	18.84	37.47	59
Average number of days in emergency housing not reflected in the repository	61.49	19.24	42.25	80.73	21

Source: VA OIG analysis of statistically sampled veterans who received emergency housing assistance from June 2021 through July 2022.

*In the body of this memorandum, the OIG is conservatively reporting the one-sided 90-percent lower limit for this estimate, as opposed to the estimate number, which is reported for all other estimates. Because a one-sided limit is reported, no upper limit is provided. The one-sided lower limit is reported for this estimate because of the small number of errors found in the sample.

Appendix B: Management Comments

Department of Veterans Affairs Memorandum

Date: July 31, 2023

From: Acting Director, Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program

Subj: OIG Draft Report, Draft Management Advisory Memorandum, Opportunities Exist to Improve Accuracy of Veterans' Emergency Housing Assistance and Permanent Housing Placement Data (Project Number 2021-02685-AE-0121)

To: Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations (52)

1. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Management Advisory Memorandum, Opportunities Exist to Improve Accuracy of Veterans' Emergency Housing Assistance and Permanent Housing Placement Data (Project Number 2021-02685-AE-0121).
2. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) appreciates and agrees with OIG's findings as we continue to enhance the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. To assist with improving data accuracy, VHA worked with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to add data fields to HUD's Homeless Management Information Systems data requirements that include requiring the entry of Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) (Response #15). Emergency Housing Assistance is included as TFA to make available the inclusion of the start and end date for financial assistance, the amount paid and the number of days covered by the payment. This will allow the SSVF program to know service rendered dates as well as the cost for Veterans served in emergency housing. This new requirement will start on October 1, 2023.

(Original signed by)

Nikki Barfield

For accessibility, the original format of this appendix has been modified to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

OIG Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

Contact	For more information about this management advisory memorandum, please contact the Office of Inspector General at (202) 461-4720.
----------------	---

OIG Team	Janet Mah, Director Zachery Jensen Milan Gokaldas Parekh Andrea Salas Alex Timberman
-----------------	--

Other Contributors	Kathryn Berrada Kendal Ferguson Khaliah McLaurin William Tettermer
---------------------------	---

Management Advisory Memorandum Distribution

VA Distribution

Office of the Secretary
Veterans Benefits Administration
Veterans Health Administration
National Cemetery Administration
Assistant Secretaries
Office of General Counsel
Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction
Board of Veterans' Appeals

Non-VA Distribution

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
National Veterans Service Organizations
Government Accountability Office
Office of Management and Budget

OIG reports and memoranda are available at www.va.gov/oig.