

and to provide training and technical assistance to grantees.

These projects are authorized by section 1110 of the Social Security Act, and will be funded with cooperative agreements, which anticipate substantial involvement of the government in project design and operation.

Eligibility Information: Public and private organizations, including non-profit, profit-making, and faith-based organizations, may apply for cooperative agreement funding made available under this announcement. Applicants must have existing expertise and capacity to conduct outreach activities to locate and engage homeless individuals; be able to provide or arrange for health care services; and be able to provide culturally competent services to all members of the target population, without regard to race, sex, religion, or disability.

Cooperative agreement funds are not to be used to cover costs that are reimbursable under an existing public or private program. Awardees are required to contribute a non-Federal match of project costs of at least 5% of the total project cost. The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind (property or services).

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Section I. Program Description and Background

A. Introduction

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is making cooperative agreement funding available to support projects that provide outreach, supportive services, and application assistance for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and all forms of Social Security benefits to individuals who are chronically homeless. The cooperative agreement projects are part of a broad Federal strategy to end chronic homelessness. The projects will be designed to identify and remove barriers to the benefit application process by outreach and assistance to homeless individuals, particularly those who are members of "under-served" populations. Homeless under-served individuals include, but are not limited to, those who have difficulty accessing services due to a disabling impairment, such as mental illness or other cognitive impairment; individuals with limited English proficiency; persons in jails and institutions; persons with multiple impairments and co-occurring disorders, and persons who have symptomatic HIV infections. Homeless under-served individuals may also include veterans and children with disabilities.

Definitions of homelessness vary. For the purposes of defining the target population to be served by grantees in this project, homeless individuals are adults or children who lack permanent housing. Individuals are considered homeless if they live on the street, or other location not meant for habitation, such as an abandoned building or car; in a supervised facility such as a shelter; transitional or emergency housing; "doubled up", *i.e.*, living with a series of relatives or friends; or in an institution or correctional facility with no permanent address.

Further, this set of cooperative agreements will focus on individuals who are considered "chronically homeless," defined as "an individual

with a disability or multiple disabilities who has been homeless for at least one year or who has had multiple periods of homelessness in a multi-year period" (Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2003).

As an Agency, SSA is uniquely positioned through its network of over 1300 field offices to provide assistance to homeless individuals. For homeless individuals, who are either age 65 or older, blind or disabled, SSA plays a critical role in helping provide monthly benefit payments. These benefits can help homeless individuals to obtain housing, and also provide critical linkage to medical coverage.

For the purposes of this announcement, the word "claimant" is used to describe an individual who has applied for Social Security Benefits. The word "participant," may be used to describe an individual who is enrolled in the project to receive services from the grantee. The word "applicant" refers to organizations that apply for cooperative agreement funding under this announcement.

B. Data on Homelessness

National estimates on homelessness indicate there are anywhere from 500,000–700,000 homeless individuals on any given night. In the 2000 census, the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) did not attempt to accurately enumerate homeless individuals. The Census published a report on the "Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population," but cautions users of the data that the methodology allows only for identification of people who were in "non-conventional housing" at the time of the census count.¹ The census data does not provide an estimate of the numbers of homeless persons who are disabled or elderly.

The 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC), conducted by the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), was designed to provide information about the providers of homeless assistance and the characteristics of homeless persons who use services. Of approximately 4,000 homeless individuals surveyed, 11 percent received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits (see description in Section I. C.1).

Unfortunately, the survey methodology does not allow us to draw firm conclusions about numbers of homeless individuals who might qualify

¹ Smith, Annetta C. and Denise I. Smith, U.S. Census Bureau, Census Special Reports, Series CENSR/01-Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population: 2000, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20401.