# Team Liberty Joins Forces with Salesforce to Combat Veteran Homelessness with Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES) Development

In 2012, VA introduced the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, with the parallel goals of both preventing Veteran homelessness and rapidly re-housing Veterans and Veteran families who do fall into homelessness. The program provides a variety of time-limited services and financial assistance. By connecting VA eligibility data for Veterans with local care networks located anywhere in the country through a Salesforce community site, the Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES) quickly expanded the reach of the SSVF program.

## Challenge

Housing resources external to VA, such as homeless shelters, needed access to Veteran eligibility information to be able to determine a person's Veteran status and eligibility for benefits such as SSVF. Lack of access made it difficult for shelters to determine Veteran eligibility and led to denying or significantly delaying utilization of those necessary benefits. The previous process for accessing Veteran eligibility in SSVF required Veterans to submit paper forms to a VA Medical Center (VAMC) to initiate an inquiry. This process was paper-based, inefficient, and could take an unpredictable amount of time. VA required a modernized, efficient, and predictable digital workflow that could still interface with existing databases and systems. In addition, evolving requirements for Veteran housing needs necessitated digital workflow platform flexibility, scalability, and accessibility over time while maintaining operational compliance.

## How Liberty Helped

Liberty worked with key stakeholders to realize VA's vision of an application for SSVF that could be accessed from entities external to VA. Liberty developed detailed user requirements and a Product Roadmap for using the public off-the-shelf cloud architecture of Salesforce to quickly develop SQUARES, an external community site through which volunteers at homeless shelters and other local facilities can check Veteran eligibility status remotely. Two factors increased the speed with which SQUARES was developed and deployed. First, Mulesoft's support for integration with VA legacy systems enabled SQUARES to pull Veteran information from across DoD and VA databases without the need to modify any of these systems. Second, the Salesforce platform has an all-inclusive compliance clearance process for any applications deployed on the platform, meaning SQAURES inherited VA software clearance and 508 compliance certifications.

Liberty's speedy implementation of the SQUARES platform allowed the team to shift focus to the development of enhancements for the community, such as a bulk search feature which enables users to check the eligibility of more than one Veteran at a time, fuzzy search feature which provides search results with only a Veteran's last name and social security number, and access control which

In 2015 after the roll-out of SQUARES, the SSVF program aided over 157,000 individuals, of which nearly 99,000 were Veterans and over 34,000 were children

After being housed, only 9.4 percent of Veteran families returned to homelessness one year after exiting the program and only 15.5 percent returned to homelessness two years after exiting the program
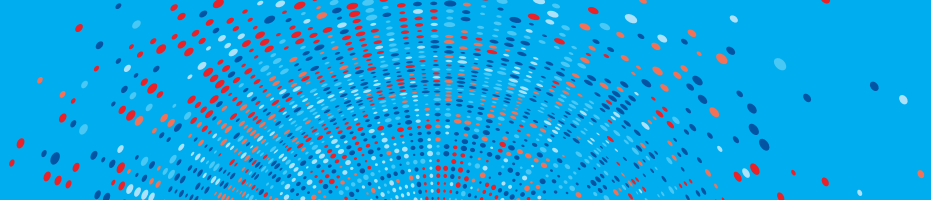
gives control to facility managers over user permissions for searches. Planned future enhancements include providing multiple possible matches in case of bad data, aggregating Veteran data in Salesforce, building reports and dashboards, and others. By delivering and iterating a solution that enhances the system with a flexible, off-the-shelf platform, our solution-oriented approach positions SQUARES as a system that can continue to grow and modernize according to Veteran needs.

## Why This Matters

The SQUARES initiative aligns with Liberty's ongoing mission to use modern solutions to bring benefits to the Veterans that deserve them and improve customer outcomes. The expanded reach of the SSVF program made possible by SQUARES enables Veterans without knowledge of the program or easy access to VA facilities to learn about additional resources from familiar and local care providers. Further, the ability of SQUARES to directly connect to data from different agencies in real-time enables more accurate eligibility determinations, producing a more complete picture of the Veteran's journey through the federal health network and increasing the impact of the SSVF program on the Veteran community.

Liberty is proud to support the goal of reducing Veteran Homelessness through SQUARES which is streamlining the processes taking place at homeless shelters and making detection and assistance of homeless Veterans easier and more readily available.

Salesforce | Cloud | HCD | Agile | Modernization