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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MAY 1, 2020

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### Goodwill Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program Receives Additional \$1.6 Million Through CARES Act

(Spokane, WA) – Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program received an additional \$1.6 million this week to provide rental assistance and emergency housing support to area Veterans impacted by COVID-19.

“This funding comes at a critical time for Veterans who are in shelters, on the street, or at-risk of becoming evicted,” said Michele Harris, Vice President of Workforce & Family Services. “With unemployment at all-time high levels, many of our citizens are struggling to pay rent and shelters are running at full capacity. This funding increases homeless prevention assistance, which is in very short supply in our community” explained Harris.

Goodwill’s SSVF program serves eligible Veterans residing in eleven counties in eastern Washington and north Idaho, including Spokane, Stevens, Ferry, Pend Orielle, Lincoln, Whitman Kootenai, Bonner, Shoshone, Benewah, and Boundary counties.

Veterans who need help should call the 24-hour Veteran hotline (509) 828-2449 or walk-in to the Goodwill Administration office located at 130 E. Third Avenue in Spokane, Washington, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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JUNE 8, 2020

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## VETERANS FACING HOMELESSNESS, EVICTION CAN TURN TO SSVF

(Spokane, WA) – In May, while the whole world was shut down from COVID-19, Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program received an additional \$1.6 million to provide rental assistance and emergency housing support to area Veterans impacted by COVID-19.

The SSVF program added more staff to help meet the need for additional services. The program has seen a dramatic increase in the need for services since COVID-19 hit our region in late March. “We usually see around 20 enrollments a month, but we had almost 40 in May,” reports Braden Fish, General Manager for Homeless Transition Services at Goodwill. The SSVF program saw 5 new enrollments on the first day of June alone.

Veterans are facing some big hurdles right now because of COVID-19. Like many people, veterans are losing their jobs and are unable to pay rent as a result. They are living paycheck to paycheck. And while evictions are mandated on-hold for the moment, those will come eventually. “The additional CARES funding we received allows SSVF to help Veterans who are behind on their rent and out of work to get caught up, and avoid becoming homeless,” explains Fish.

The SSVF program recently added to employment specialists who can assist Veterans who are unemployed to find work.

Availability of affordable housing is even more limited than usual, program staff say, mainly because evictions are on hold. One veteran yesterday went to apply for a 1-bedroom apartment and was told there was nothing available until July. To keep vets from living on the streets, SSVF can place eligible veterans into transitional or emergency housing, such as a hotel, until more permanent units become available.

In a report released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in January, the agency reported that homelessness in the U.S. increased 2.7% in 2019. It is anticipated that rate will continue to rise in 2020 because of multiple economic impacts from COVID-19.

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Veterans who need help in Spokane, Stevens, Ferry, Pend Orielle, Lincoln, Whitman Kootenai, Bonner, Shoshone, Benewah, and Boundary counties should call the 24-hour Veteran hotline (509) 828-2449. Veterans can also just walk-in to the Goodwill Administration office located at 130 E. Third Avenue in Spokane, Washington, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Staff are on hand to assess their needs and eligibility for services.

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