Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF):

Homelessness Prevention Screening
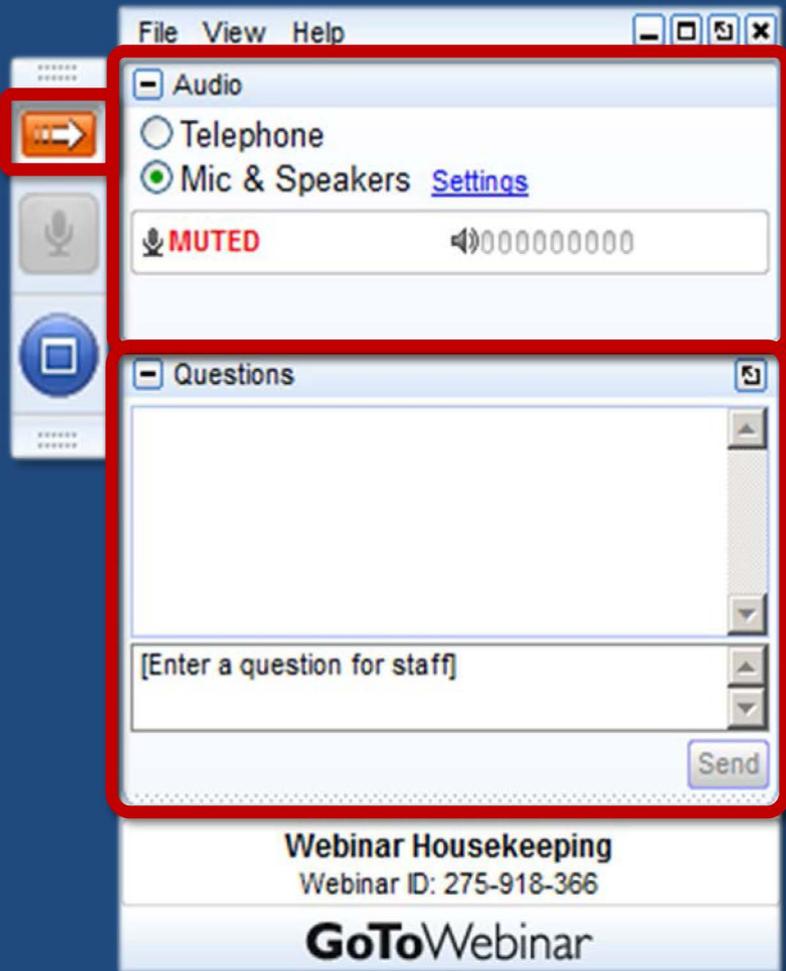
July 21, 2016

Webbinar Format

- Webinar will last approximately 1.5 hours
- Participants' phone connections are "muted" due to the high number of callers
  - Questions can be submitted during the webinar using the chat function
- Questions can also be submitted anytime to ssvf@va.gov

How to Submit Questions during the Webinar

Your Participation

Open and hide your control panel

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

Note: Today's presentation is being recorded and a link will be sent to you via email.

Objectives

- Provide overview of the revised Homelessness Prevention Screening tool and screening stages
- Review criteria for Veteran to be considered **"imminently at risk of homelessness"**
- Review steps for determining your program's planned allocation for HP, the HP targeting threshold score, and related considerations

Key Notes: Recent changes in prevention screening will be incorporated into HMIS. HP Screener is no longer customizable, other than the established score.

Preventing & Ending *Homelessness*

To achieve an end to homelessness according to Federal criteria and benchmarks…

- ✓ **1st Priority: Rapid Re-Housing**
  Ensure sufficient amount of SSVF resources allocated ensure all eligible literally homeless Veterans are assisted during the year to quickly end their homelessness

No RRH turn-aways or gaps

Preventing & Ending *Homelessness*

To achieve an end to homelessness according to Federal criteria and benchmarks…

- ✓ **2nd Priority: Homelessness Prevention**
  Use remaining SSVF resources to assist Veterans who will otherwise be literally homeless from becoming literally homeless

  Target to most imminently at-risk – those who will be homeless sooner and/or have greatest barriers that will keep them homeless

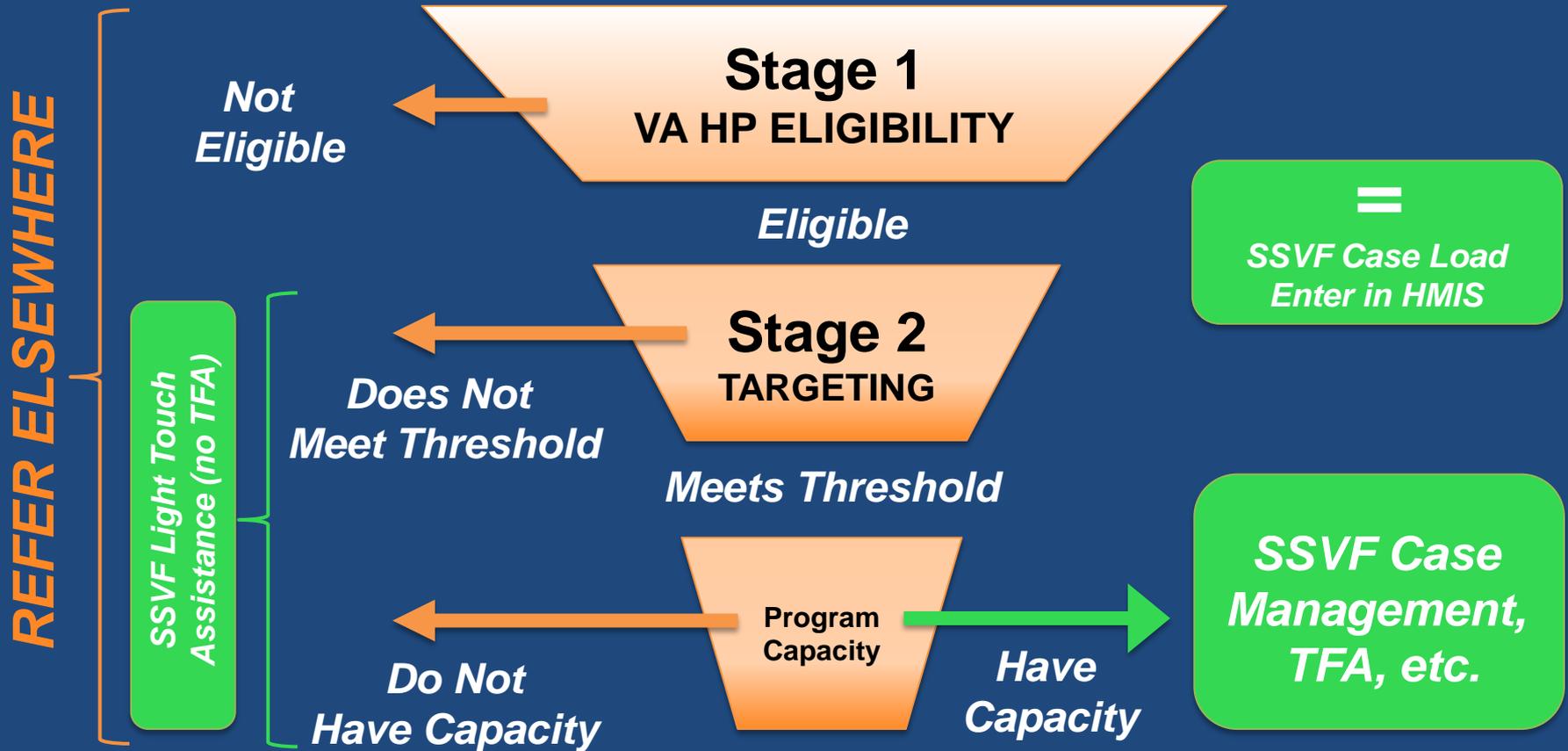# Overview of SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening and Tools

Who is eligible and a priority for SSVF Homelessness Prevention?

- Qualified Veterans who will be <u>literally</u> homeless (on street or in shelter) ***but for*** SSVF assistance

- **Homelessness prevention <u>is not</u> the same as eviction prevention**

- SSVF HP assistance, when limited, is prioritized for Veterans with more urgent needs, greater housing barrier and vulnerabilities

SSVF Homelessness Prevention: Eligibility Screening & Targeting Flow

REFER ELSEWHERE

Not Eligible

SSVF Light Touch Assistance (no TFA)

Does Not Meet Threshold

Do Not Have Capacity

Stage 1
VA HP ELIGIBILITY

Eligible

Stage 2
TARGETING

Meets Threshold

Program Capacity

Have Capacity

=
SSVF Case Load Enter in HMIS

SSVF Case Management, TFA, etc.

SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening Form

VERSION 1: All grantees required to use as of 10/1/2015
- ✓ Standardized screening questions to assure in-depth eligibility assessment

- ✓ Criteria and scoring to target assistance when # eligible exceeds SSVF capacity (Stage 2)

- ✓ Sections to document final staff determination for each condition

- ✓ Sections for Client Certification, SSVF Staff Certification, and SSVF Supervisor Approval

NEW VERSION (July 2016, v.2): all grantees required to use as of 10/1/2016 – *can start using now (contact Regional Coordinator if targeting threshold score needs to change)*

SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening Form, v.2:
What's New?

Stage 1: Eligibility:

- ✓ Enhanced screening questions
  - Current housing situation
  - Reason(s) for housing loss and timing

- ✓ Removed Section 3D *Other At-Risk Conditions*

- ✓ Additional embedded staff notes

- ✓ Additional clarifications
  - − "Imminent housing loss" means within 30 days and that imminent loss of housing requires formal eviction notice
  - − People fleeing/attempting to flee DV and people in institutional for 90 days or less (screen for SSVF RRH instead)

SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening Form, v.2:
What's New?

Stage 2: Targeting:

✓ Standardized targeting criteria and weighting
- − Removed option to add targeting criteria and assign point values
- − Based on analysis of grantee determined criteria
- − Ensures consistency with best practices and supports further evaluation
- − Criteria grouped by:
  - 1) Urgency
  - 2) Potential barriers and vulnerabilities

✓ Alignment with new HMIS Data Element *4.48: SSVF HP Targeting Criteria* (effective 10/1/16)
- − Replaces data element *4.44 HP Screening Score*
- − Records all Stage 2 Targeting criteria met, applicant score, and grantee Targeting Threshold Score

Stage 1: VA SSVF HP Eligibility

Purpose: Determine who is eligible or not eligible for SSVF Prevention services.

Eligibility Conditions:

Condition 1: Veteran Status
  ➢ *Is applicant a qualified Veteran?*

Condition 2: Very Low-Income Status
  ➢ *Is gross annual household income below 50% of area median income (AMI) for the household size?*

Condition 3: Imminently At-Risk of Literal Homelessness
  ➢ *Will applicant become <u>literally</u> homeless <u>but for</u> your SSVF program assistance?*

Condition 4: Other Program Eligibility Conditions (Optional)
  ➢ *Does applicant meet other eligibility requirements established by grantee and approved by VA? (Additional conditions MUST BE APPROVED BY VA)*

Stage 1: Determining "Imminent Risk" of Literal Homelessness

Condition 3: Imminently At-Risk of Literal Homelessness

3A: Imminent Housing Loss

➤ Where does applicant normally stay?

➤ Will applicant lose this place in next 30 days?

➤ What's causing them to leave and is this documented?

➤ Is there a way to avoid housing loss?

3B: Other Housing Options & Resources

➤ Does applicant have another have a safe, appropriate place to stay permanently or while they find other housing, if they lose current housing?

3C: Financial Resources

➤ Does applicant have financial resources to pay for their immediate housing costs?

STAGE 2 HP Screening: TARGETING

Purpose: Prioritize *eligible* (i.e., will soon be literally homeless) Veteran households when there is insufficient capacity to fully assist all eligible households. Prioritization based on:

1. **Urgency of Housing Situation**
2. **Potential Barriers and Vulnerabilities**
3. **VA Policy Priorities**

STAGE 2 HP Screening: TARGETING

1. **Urgency of Housing Situation**

   ➢ *Is applicant being diverted from shelter?*

   ➢ *How soon will applicant lose their current housing and become literally homeless?*

STAGE 2: TARGETING

TARGETING CRITERIA Use the following criteria to identify if the eligible applicant household is also a priority for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance. Check each condition that is true for the Veteran applicant.	Check if Applicable	Point Value	TOTAL POINTS (enter value for each box that is checked)
URGENCY OF HOUSING SITUATION (May indicate more urgent need for homelessness prevention assistance)			
Referred by Coordinated Entry or a homeless assistance provider to prevent the household from entering an emergency shelter or transitional housing or from staying in a place not meant for human habitation.	☐	5	
Current housing loss expected within... (select only one)			
0-6 days	☐	5	
7-13 days	☐	4	
14-21 days	☐	3	

STAGE 2 HP Screening: TARGETING

2. Potential Barriers and Vulnerabilities

➢ *What conditions does applicant face that may impact their ability to quickly secure housing and resolve literal homelessness independently, __IF__ they are not assisted and become literally homeless?*

- ✓ *Current and annual Income*
- ✓ *Major changes in income, expenses, household composition*
- ✓ *Past evictions*
- ✓ *Potential loss of permanent housing subsidy*
- ✓ *History of literal homelessness*
- ✓ *Disabling condition that directly affects housing*
- ✓ *Significant criminal record*
- ✓ *Household size and type*

STAGE 2 HP Screening: TARGETING

- Grantees must continue to use a VA approved "targeting threshold score"

- *All grantees will need to review and determine a new Targeting Threshold Score*

- *Only 1 Targeting Threshold Score per CoC per grantee*

- Veterans who meet or exceed score may receive all SSVF forms of assistance (i.e., including TFA)
  - *There may still be times when program capacity is low and you will need to further prioritize those who are eligible and pass threshold.*

Determining Your Annual Homelessness Prevention Allocation and Targeting Threshold Score

Determining Your
HP Allocation & Targeting Threshold Score

- Grantees must set a "targeting threshold score" for FY17 and submit to VA for approval as part of the Grant Resolution process in Quarter 1.
  - Use ***Grantee HP Eligibility Criteria & Targeting Threshold Score Form***
- ***5 Steps to determining***
  1. *Estimate Annual CoC Demand*
  2. *Estimate Number Who Will Need SSVF RRH Assistance*
  3. *Determine Remaining Capacity for SSVF HP*
  4. *Estimate Number Who Will Seek SSVF HP Assistance*
  5. *Determine Targeting Threshold Score*

Step 1: Estimate Annual Demand

- How many Veterans are estimated to be literally homeless in each CoC you serve in FY17?
  - Use data from master list (aka 'by-name list')
  - If needed, supplement real data with estimates to determine estimated annual total
  - *Determine with local CoC, VA and other community partners as part of community planning efforts*

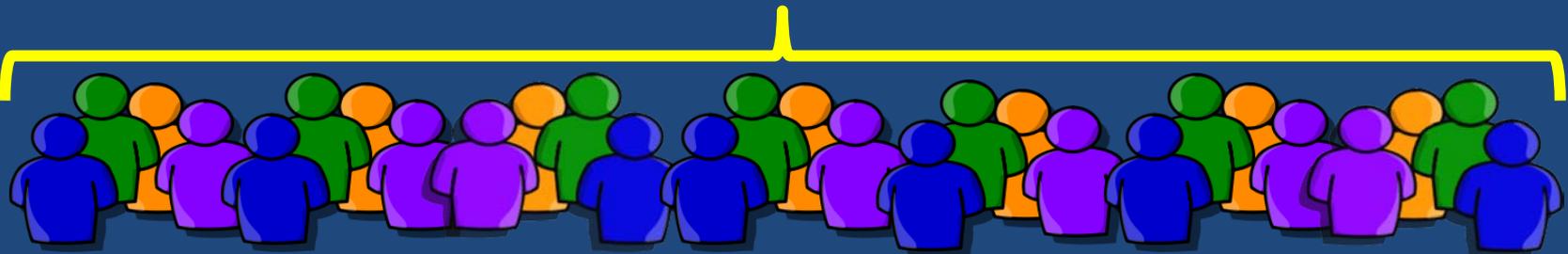# Step 2: Estimate Number Who Will Need SSVF RRH Assistance

- How many literally homeless Veterans will need SSVF RRH assistance to successfully obtain permanent housing?
  - Use data from master list, current FY SSVF RRH # served, etc.
  - Include those needing SSVF RRH with other forms of assistance, including HCHV, GPD, other TH, HUD-VASH, other PSH
  - *Again, determine with local community partners*

Determining Your
HP Allocation & Targeting Threshold Score

Veterans who become homeless each year…

Obtain permanent housing with…

No help/on own

Rapid Re-Housing
(SSVF, Other)

Combination

Other Assistance
(GPD, PSH/VASH, etc.)
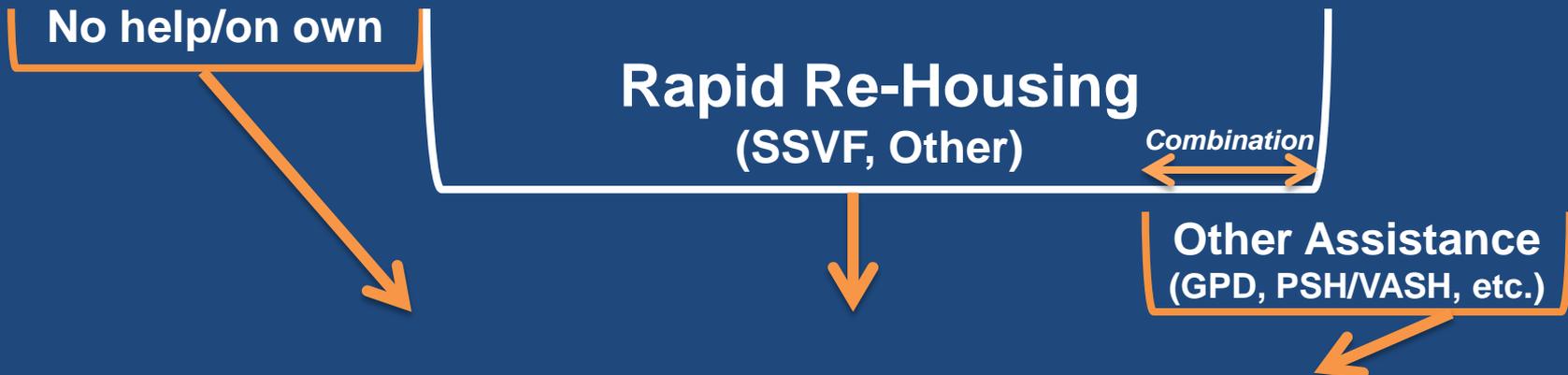
To ensure exit to PH within average 90 days or less, per Federal goal

Step 3: Determine Remaining Capacity for SSVF HP

- How many households can SSVF (all grantees) assist in the CoC in FY17?

- How much SSVF TFA and other service capacity is available AFTER ALL estimated demand for SSVF RRH is met?

Determining Your
HP Allocation & Targeting Threshold Score

Example:

FY17 COC ESTIMATE						
Total Literally Homeless Veterans	**700**					
-Self-Resolving	210	30%	*With RRH*			
Needing Assistance to Obtain PH	**490**	**70%**	*SSVF RRH*		*Other RRH*	
-HUD VASH or other PSH	98	20%	**49**	50%	10	10%
-GPD or other TH assistance	172	35%	**34**	20%	18	10%
-RRH Only (with or without ES)	221	45%	**187**	85%	34	15%
TOTAL SSVF RRH DEMAND			**271**			

FY17 SSVF Capacity for CoC	TOTAL	RRH	HP
Total Households (RRH & HP)	**360**	**271**	**89**
-Grantee A	150	100	50
-Grantee B	210	171	39

Result:
- ✓ **Meets demand estimate**
- ✓ **75% RRH**
- ✓ **Capacity for 89 HP households with SSVF**

Step 4: Estimate Number Who Will Seek SSVF HP Assistance

- Use data from recent 12 month period to estimate total Veterans who will be screened and eligible per Stage 1

- Calculate difference between Stage 1 eligible and HP capacity:

> Example:
> Estimated annual # Veterans eligible per Stage 1 = 200
> Estimated annual HP capacity = 89 (45%)
> Estimated annual # unable to assist = 111 (55%)

- Per example, ~55% of Stage 1 eligible applicants will need to be screened out during Stage 2

Step 5: Determine Targeting Threshold Score

Knowing that only ~50% of Stage 1 eligible applicants will need to be screened out during Stage 2…

Example approaches to determining score:

- Examine random sample of past applicants using new Stage 2 criteria to identify threshold score that only ~50% reach

- Use new Stage 2 criteria (alongside current form) with all new applicants for August-September to determine score that screens out ~50%

Additional Considerations

- How much SSVF TFA and other resources are available AFTER all estimated demand for SSVF RRH is met?

- Does your agency have enough resources to serve all who are imminently at risk (all those eligible per Stage 1)?
    - If yes, then no score is needed.
    - If no, then need to develop a threshold.

- What other community resources are available for Veterans who don't pass Stage 2 (Veterans will be referred to these resources) ?

- Consider piloting the threshold score for a short period and then adjusting

- Should the score be flexible throughout the year?

- What is your current carve out for Prevention from your budget?

- How do you manage the funds to last the year?

Additional Considerations

- Has the community met the Federal criteria and be benchmarks? Has it been confirmed?

- Are you serving a rural community that lacks shelter and therefore places greater emphasis on prevention when possible to avoid literal homelessness?

- If you are routinely running out of prevention funds and have to freeze TFA availability during portions of the grant cycle, your threshold score is ***SET TOO LOW***

Additional Considerations

- How many passed Stage 1 this year? Would you do that differently in hindsight?

- How many households met the threshold but you did not have the capacity to serve?

- How many needed TFA?

- What was average TFA per prevention household?
  - Of the top scoring households, was more TFA provided per household compared to all households served in prevention? Does that need to be accounted for when considering TFA budget (i.e., so budget spending doesn't exceed 40% TFA for HP)?

Understanding Stage 1 & Stage 2 Dispositions and Case Examples

Understanding Stage 1 & 2 Dispositions

- Stage 1 Disposition is *Not Eligible*
  - Provide other referrals when needed and desired
  - Track/document as "Screened, but not Enrolled"
  - Do not enter household data into SSVF HMIS
- Stage 1 Disposition is *Eligible*, but Stage 2 Disposition is *Does Not Meet Targeting Threshold*
  - May receive "light touch" (i.e., non-TFA) assistance if do not meet targeting threshold score in Stage 2
  - Enter in HMIS as served client
- Stage 1 and Stage 2 Dispositions are *Eligible* and *Meets Targeting Threshold*
  - Use progressive assistance approach – start with "light touch" when possible and effective in avoiding literal homelessness
  - Enter in HMIS as served client

Case Example: Mike

- OEF Veteran with other than dishonorable discharge
- Out of work last 6 months, evicted 2 months ago and now staying on friend's couch. Friend only allowing to stay 1 more week, no other friends/family to stay with.
- Presently -0- income, not able to find work due to mental health and substance use issues. No savings, no one else able to help him financially.

✓ **Meets Stage 1 VA eligibility.**

✓ **Meets Stage 2 Targeting threshold score.**

Mike is eligible (Stage 1), a priority (Stage 2), and is

enrolled in SSVF HP.

Case Example: Robert

- Vietnam War era Veteran
- Part-time job, income-eligible
- Losing housing in 3 weeks and has no other housing options or resources

✓ **Robert meets Stage 1 VA Eligibility**
X **Robert does not meet Stage 2 Targeting threshold score**

SSVF program enrolls Robert and offers "light touch" HP assistance to help him avoid literal homelessness

- Offered list of housing options
- Contacted some landlords sympathetic to Veterans in need
- Connected Robert to local WIA and VA job search assistance via "warm handoff"
- Contacted Robert's host friend and negotiated allowing Robert to stay for 1 more month so long as Robert was getting help (and was serious about) finding his own place
- Helped Robert put together budget to see how much he would need to come up with monthly to afford his own place, assuming he reduced some expenses and prioritized paying rent/utilities
- Connected Robert (via warm handoff) to other financial assistance (e.g., HEAP, local church mission committee emergency fund)

*And entered client information into HMIS as an SSVF client!

Case Example: Jane

- OIF Veteran honorably discharged
- Has 2 children, in-between jobs and behind on rent with a 30 day eviction notice.
- Mom has extra bedroom and willing to let Jane stay indefinitely, but Jane doesn't like idea of staying with Mom.
- Jane is actively looking for work and has some prospects, but presently has no $. Jane may be eligible for emergency TANF assistance.

X **Jane <u>does not</u> meet Stage 1 VA eligibility**

SSVF does not admit Jane, BUT the program…
- Refers Jane to county welfare department
- Provides information and referral to other community resources
- Advises about when/how to request SSVF assistance again should situation become worse AND BEFORE SHE MAY BECOME LITERALLY HOMELESS

*And tracked/documented as "Screened, but not Enrolled"

SSVF HP Toolkit

Access Toolkit and Forms at SSVF website under Participant Eligibility:

http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp

HP Toolkit Materials:

- Overview of VA HP Materials (PDF)
- *Grantee HP Eligibility & Targeting Threshold Score Form (form-fillable PDF) - includes instructions
- HP Screening Form (form-fillable PDF)
- HP Screening Form Companion Guide (PDF)
- ***Coming Soon***: SSVF Homelessness Prevention Allocation and Targeting Threshold Score Tool

*Must be VA-approved prior to implementation

Q & A

Send additional inquiries to
SSVF@va.gov

Thank you for participating!