

# **C2: Homelessness Prevention: Effective Targeting and Services**

*2019 Federal Permanent Housing Conference*

# ***Welcome and Introduction***

- Presenter Introduction
- Session Participant Introduction
  - Name
  - What role do you play in HP
  - How long have you been in that role



# ***Session Agenda***

- Targeting Homelessness Prevention – The Challenge
- Targeting Homelessness Prevention Case Study – SSVF HP Screener
- Effective Homelessness Prevention Practices
- Developing a Community-Wide Homelessness Prevention Approach
- Implementing Effective Homelessness Prevention – Small Group Discussion
- National Guidance – Homelessness Prevention, Diversion and Rapid Exit



# Measuring the Success of Homelessness Prevention (HP)

## Efficiency

Provides intervention to families most likely to become homelessness

**Key question:** *Who should get HP assistance?*

## Effectiveness

Stops families from becoming homeless

**Key question:** *What HP assistance works?*



# ***Targeting Homelessness Prevention – The Challenge***



# ***Defining Risk in HP Work***



Likelihood and immediacy of  
future homelessness



Level of need



Acuity



Impact of prolonged  
homelessness



# ***What are Risk Factors?***

Risk factors are **characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level** that precede and are **associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.**

What factors or attributes of the household or the situation increase the likelihood and immediacy of future homelessness?



# Risk Factors

## Highly Predictive:

Previous experience(es) of homelessness

Being doubled up and not being the lease holder

Receiving public assistance and having high levels of rent arrears or debt

Income shocks<sup>3</sup>

## Somewhat Predictive:

Being pregnant

Having a young child

Discord in current living situation

Head of household is <24

History of child protective services involvement<sup>1</sup>

Reintegrating into the community from an institutional setting

Overall housing cost burden (% income spent on housing)

## NOT Predictive:

Mental illness

Substance abuse

Criminal history

Domestic violence history

Adolescent motherhood<sup>2</sup>

Self-reported poor building conditions<sup>2</sup>





# ***Shocks and Homelessness***

- Unexpected changes in circumstances that can precipitate homelessness.
  - **Income shocks** appear to be the main economic shocks that lead to homelessness and are a better predictor than rent shocks (increases in rent prices).
  - **Relationship shocks** are the biggest social shock predictor for families (based on clients' perceptions).
  - Certain **health shocks**, such as the birth of a child with a severe health condition, increase the probability a family will experience homelessness – especially in cities with high costs of living.



# Risk Factors

- Research based risk models can be more effective at preventing homelessness than clinical judgment.
- The risk factors most associated with shelter entry or reentry:
  - Young age
  - Being pregnant or having a child under age 2
  - Facing an eviction threat
  - Frequent moves in the past year
  - Not holding a lease
  - Childhood adversity or disruptions
  - Current CPS involvement
  - Shelter history.
- Families with higher risk factors benefit more from HP services than families with lower risk factors.
- Even when risk factors are known, effective targeting is still difficult.



# NEW YORK HOMEBASE RISK SCREENING

## 1 POINT

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pregnancy</li><li>• Child under 2</li><li>• No HS or GED</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not currently employed</li><li>• Not leaseholder</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age 23-28</li><li>• Moves: 1-3</li><li>• Reintegrating into community</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruptive experiences in childhood: 1-2</li><li>• Discord in HH: moderate</li></ul> |
|--|--|---|--|

## 2 POINTS

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receiving public assistance</li><li>• Protective services</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evicted by landlord or leaseholder</li><li>• Applied for shelter in last 3 months</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age: under 23</li><li>• Moves: 4+</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruptive experiences in childhood: 3+</li><li>• Discord in HH: severe</li></ul> |
|---|---|---|---|

## 3 POINTS

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reports previous shelter stay as an adult</li></ul> |
|---|

# Targeting Summary

The single **best predictor** (*the highest risk factor*) of becoming homeless is having been **homeless previously**.

The **ability to predict** a potential participant's outcomes based on risk and protective factors is **limited**.

Even if the ability to predict is limited, it's still more effective to use an **empirically-based screening tool** than to rely entirely on caseworker judgment.



# ***Targeting HP Resources Case Study – SSVF HP Screener***



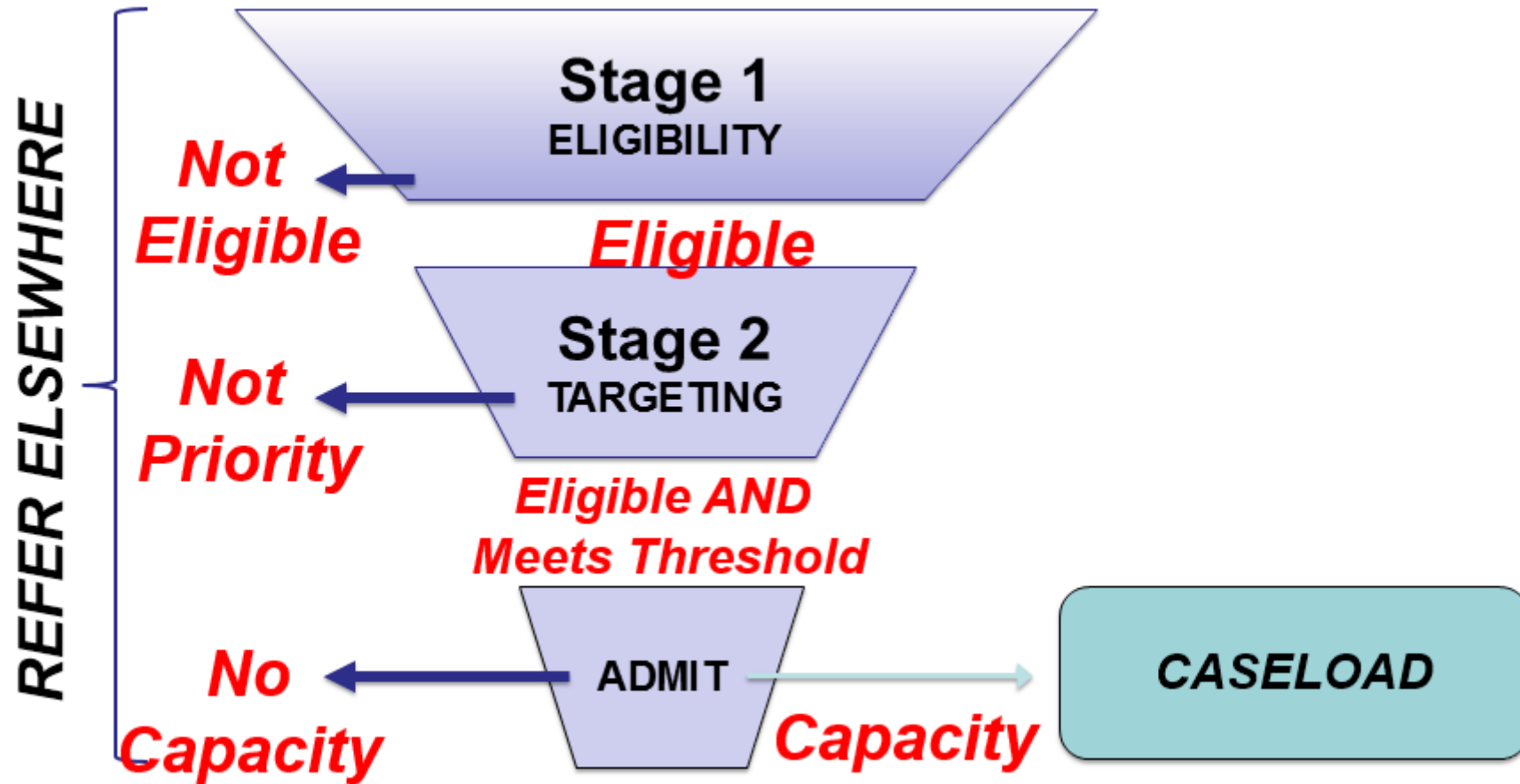
# ***SSVF Threshold Screening Tool – Targeting Example***

The SSVF Homelessness Prevention (HP) Screening Form is designed to help staff assess, document, and determine whether a Veteran household applying for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance is:

1. Eligible for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance (i.e., “Stage 1”), and;
2. A priority for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance in the event there are not sufficient resources to assist all eligible Veterans (i.e., “Stage 2”).



# SSVF HP Eligibility Screening & Targeting



# SSVF HP Eligibility Screening – Stage 1

## STAGE 1: ELIGIBILITY FOR VA SSVF HP

Eligibility Condition 1. Veteran Status			
Did you serve in the active military, naval, or air service?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> NOT SURE
Were you discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable? [Staff Note: Bad Conduct discharges are not the same as dishonorable, and as such, are eligible. Furthermore, for Veterans with multiple discharges, the best discharge status may be used for SSVF eligibility.]	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> NOT SURE
<b>SSVF STAFF DISPOSITION:</b> Is applicant an eligible Veteran (as defined above)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <b>IF "NO", STOP: APPLICANT NOT CURRENTLY ELIGIBLE.</b>			
Documentation obtained? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <b>IF "NO" AND DOCUMENTATION PENDING, CONTINUE. Please refer to the SSVF Program Manual for further guidance.</b>			
Eligibility Condition 2. Very Low-Income Status			
Household size (all adults/children):	<input type="text"/>		
Total Annual Gross Income from All Sources:	\$	<input type="text"/>	
50% of Area Median Income for Household Size:	\$	<input type="text"/>	
<b>SSVF STAFF DISPOSITION:</b> Is gross annual household income less than 50% Area Median Income for household size (grantee may set lower income threshold)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <b>IF "NO", STOP: APPLICANT NOT CURRENTLY ELIGIBLE.</b>			
Documentation obtained? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			





# SSVF HP Eligibility Screening – Stage 1

## Eligibility Condition 3. Imminently At-Risk of Literal Homelessness

### 3A: Imminent Housing Loss

*Next, we need to know some details about your current housing situation so we can understand how best to assist you.*

*[Staff Note: Applicants who are losing their housing because they are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence are eligible for SSVF Rapid Re-Housing assistance and should instead be screened for RRH assistance.]*

*Can you tell me about the place you stayed last night? Is this the primary place you stay or is there somewhere else you normally stay? If there's somewhere else you normally stay, can you tell me about that place?*

### 3B: Other Housing Options & Resources

*We would like to know if you have any other safe and appropriate place to stay – either permanently OR while you look for other housing. We would also like to know if you have family, friends or others you know that may be able to help you financially.*

*[Staff Note: Discuss and record below a summary related to each of the following potential housing options and sources of assistance: 1) family members or relatives; 2) close or trusted friends; and 3) faith-based group or network applicant associates with. Where appropriate, ask if a potential housing option can be contacted by you to help secure housing. Attach additional notes as necessary.]*

*Do you have a safe, appropriate place different types of options and whether either permanently or while you seek*

### 3C: Financial Resources

*We would like to find out if you have any funds or if there is other assistance immediately available to you and that you could access to help you keep your current housing or immediately find other housing.*

*Approximately how much money would you need to pay immediately in order to keep your housing OR obtain other housing?*

\$

*Do you have any funds or other assistance immediately available to you and that you could access to help you keep your current housing or immediately find other housing?*

*Approximately how much money do you currently have available in savings, assets or other accounts?*

\$

*Do you have enough money to pay for your current housing costs, including any rent or utility arrears?*

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

*Are there other community resources you've applied for, such as other eviction prevention programs, emergency financial assistance programs, utility assistance programs, or other local emergency assistance programs?*

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

But For



# SSVF HP Targeting Criteria – Stage 2

## 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)
<b>URGENCY OF HOUSING SITUATION</b> (May indicate more urgent need for homelessness prevention assistance )			
<b>POTENTIAL BARRIERS AND VULNERABILITIES</b> (May impact ability to quickly secure housing and resolve literal homelessness independently <u>if</u> household is not assisted and becomes literally homeless)			
<u>Current</u> household income is \$0 (i.e., not employed, not receiving cash benefits, no other <u>current</u> income)	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="text"/>
<u>Annual</u> Household Gross Income Amount (select only one)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>
0-14% of Area Median Income (AMI) for household size	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="text"/>
15-30% of AMI for household size	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
Sudden and significant decrease in cash income (employment and/or cash benefits) AND/OR unavoidable increase in non-discretionary expenses (e.g., rent or medical expenses) in the past 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="text"/>
Major change in household composition (e.g., death of family member, separation/divorce from adult partner, birth of new child) in the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="text"/>
Rental evictions within the past 7 years (select only one) [Staff Note: Only include formal eviction actions (i.e., Notice to Quit) taken by a landlord due to lease non-compliance and that ultimately resulted in loss of rental housing.]	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/>
4 or more prior rental evictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="text"/>
2-3 prior rental evictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
1 prior rental eviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
Currently at risk of losing a tenant-based housing subsidy or housing in a subsidized building or unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="text"/>



# ***Determining Targeting Threshold***

Grantees must set a “targeting threshold score” and submit to VA for approval as part of the Grant Resolution process.

Steps to determining threshold score:

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 to Meet HP Capacity



# ***Targeting Methods***

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 several months to determine score that screens out ~50%



# ***Effective HP Practices***



# ***Programs with Solid Evidence of Effectiveness***

Community-Based Outreach and Intensive Services

Permanent Deep Housing Subsidies

Eviction Prevention Assistance (*i.e., Temporary Financial Assistance*)

Critical Time Intervention (CTI) for People Leaving Institutional Settings



# HP Model: Homebase Program Model

## Program Model

Geographic targeting of services to zip codes that historically generate highest rates of homelessness

Intense outreach and marketing to local *tenants, landlords, & social service agencies*

Intensive case management with focus on *LL/T mediation & family conflict resolution*

Flexible use of temporary financial assistance



# ***HP Model: Homebase Program Features***

- Average amount of financial assistance: \$3,800
- Average length of enrollment: 4 months
- Case plan ratio: 1:25
- Staff specialize in: Screening, Employment, Financial Counseling, Housing Specialist
- Services provided through referrals: Benefits advocacy, Mediation, Employment assistance, Legal assistance





# ***HP Model: Homebase Evaluation Findings***

- Efficiency: Homebase model targeted families most likely to experience literal homelessness
- Effectiveness: Over 90% of Homebase participants did not enter shelter (9.3% did)
- Emergency shelter applications across New York City were cut in half
- Homebase program saved \$1.37 for every dollar invested in HP services



# ***Programs with Suggestive Evidence of Effectiveness***

Universal  
Screening

Housing  
Subsidies  
with  
Supportive  
Services

Shallow,  
Permanent  
Subsidies

Legal  
Represent-  
ation in  
Housing  
Courts

Landlord-  
Tenant  
Mediation



# ***Effective Service Strategies – Financial Assistance***

- Homebase provides an average of \$3,800 in financial assistance
- SSVF Temporary Financial Assistance for homelessness prevention in FY17 averaged \$1,155 per household



# ***Effective Service Strategies – Legal Aid***

- Legal Aid is not limited to eviction prevention, can be valuable in the following ways:
  - Negotiating reasonable accommodations
  - Fair Hearing representation for public benefits such as housing vouchers, SNAPS and/or city welfare resources
  - Income maximization and money management
    - Address garnishments
    - Interpreting and understanding credit reports for advocacy purposes with landlords
    - Represent clients on old debt matters



# ***Effective Service Strategies – Landlord Negotiation***

- Practice has shown that often landlords are willing to negotiate.
- Evictions can be very costly and often landlords would prefer to work things out with current tenants than proceed with evictions.
- Other negotiations could include:
  - Lease amendments for things like reasonable accommodations or roommates
  - Repayment plans for past rent
  - Additional time before move-out to find alternative housing for a household where eviction is inevitable



# ***Developing a Community-wide HP Approach***



# ***Developing a Community-wide Approach to HP***

- Institutional Coordination and Collaboration
  - Homelessness prevention is not the responsibility of the homelessness crisis response system alone.
  - Developing strong connections and pathways to the following:
    - Job training and apprenticeship programs
    - Primary and behavioral health services
    - Early childhood programs
    - Elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education.
    - strengthening connections to school- and community-based resources that encourage education retention,
    - high school completion programs
    - Services that address transportation



# Targeting Methods

- Focused Homeless Prevention Outreach to Institutions
  - Effective prevention approaches must include enhanced cross-system collaboration
  - Increased awareness and attentiveness to housing stability while in institutions
  - Effective transition and/or discharge planning that link people to other resources, including employment and other economic mobility supports, to reduce the risk of homelessness upon discharge
- Communities can also consider policies that increase access to home-visiting programs,
  - family support networks
  - school-based supports
  - Other community based programs that focus on strong families and positive youth development.
  - Family preservation and reunification can also be explored,





# ***Implementing Effective Homelessness Prevention***



# ***Small Group Discussion & Report Back***

- Take a couple of minutes by yourself to think of 2 things you plan to take back to your community from this session regarding HP Targeting and Effectiveness.
- Then take 5 minutes at your table for each person to discuss their 2 things.
- We will take 10 minutes to Report out to the larger group on common themes or questions you plan to take back to your community from this session regarding HP Targeting and Effectiveness.



# ***National Guidance - Homelessness Prevention, Diversion and Rapid Exit - USICH***



# National Guidance

- The document was developed collaboratively by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs
- It is intended to support more effective implementation of prevention, diversion, and rapid exit services

July 2019



## Homelessness Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Exit

*Home, Together*, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in America, recognizes that to end homelessness, every community must have in place a systemic response that ensures that homelessness is a rare, brief, and a one-time experience.

Resource:

[https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf)



# ***HP and Diversion***

- Important details about HP and Diversion

These strategies should be considered different elements of a unified, seamless approach to help the household avoid homelessness or exit as quickly as possible—even when they may not be prioritized for higher levels of financial assistance and support services.

Resource: [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf)



# Homelessness Prevention

- **Homeless Prevention** strategies fall into the following categories:
  1. Activities that reduce the prevalence of risk of housing crises within communities
  2. Activities that reduce the risk of homelessness while households are engaged with or are transitioning from systems
  3. Activities that target assistance to prevent housing crises that do occur from escalating further and resulting in homelessness.

Resource: [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf)



# ***Diversion***

- **Diversion** strategies and practices assist people to:
  1. Resolve their immediate housing crisis by accessing alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living
  2. This typically occurs at the point people request emergency services, such as entry into emergency shelter, or could take place in a day center or through outreach before a person spends a night unsheltered

Resource: [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Prevention-Diversion-Rapid-Exit-July-2019.pdf)



***Questions?***

