

## Context for Exceptional Circumstance Waiver

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program [Homelessness Prevention \(HP\) Screening Tool v6](#) is the primary tool used to determine eligibility for SSVF HP services and to prioritize households for HP Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA). Per the Screening Tool and published [Companion Guidance](#), SSVF Grantees may enroll Veterans households who meet eligibility criteria established in Stage 1 of the HP Screener (1. Veteran Status, 2. Income Status, 3. Imminent Risk of Homelessness), but only provide HP TFA assistance for Veteran households who meet or exceed the grantee's locally determined HP Threshold Score in Stage 2 of the HP Screener.

The SSVF Program Office is aware that rare, exceptional circumstances or cases may occur that require a deeper service package, including TFA, for Veteran households who meet basic SSVF HP eligibility criteria but who do not meet the grantee's Stage 2 Threshold Score. The ***SSVF HP Exceptional Circumstance Waiver*** is intended to address such situations and allows limited, targeted flexibility for grantees to provide full HP TFA services to eligible Veteran households who do not meet the grantee's Threshold Score. These exceptions should only occur in the rare instances where a Veteran household's situation is urgent, and the current or imminent vulnerability of a Veteran household is not adequately captured in the Stage 2 targeting and prioritization criteria. In all cases, SSVF programs can only provide TFA for Veteran households who are eligible for SSVF based on Stage 1 screening.

## Considerations for the Use of Exceptional Circumstance Waiver

The Homelessness Prevention Screening Tool is designed to leverage the most recent research and promising practices in effectively targeting limited prevention resources. However, the SSVF Program Office recognizes that grantees may encounter Veterans who do not meet their local Stage Threshold Score but would experience significant harm or safety issues if they become homeless. This waiver recognizes the dynamic nature of homelessness and the limitation in anticipating every urgent circumstance to which an SSVF Grantee may need to respond.

Some examples of Veteran cases that may be appropriate for this waiver include, but are not limited to: aging or elderly Veterans, Veteran families with a household member with significant disabilities, households who have no safe shelter options due their composition, Veterans representing marginalized groups such as LGBTQ+ Veterans who may be more susceptible to harassment or violence in the homeless system, and other Veterans with exceptional needs. SSVF is also committed to ensuring that the use of this waiver does not contribute to worsening disparities by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity in service delivery and expects grantees to account for these considerations in all aspect of SSVF program design and resource planning. Equity efforts must be informed by the individual Veteran's needs, community resources, and local system considerations.

## Process for the Use of Exceptional Circumstance Waiver

Prior to the use of this Waiver, Grantees must always first consider other available community resources and options the household may be able to access, including viable safe shelter options. Grantees must also be able to justify the use of the Waiver based upon the household's urgent need and current/imminent vulnerability in comparison to other Veteran households. Excess use of exceptions may be an indication that the local Stage 2 Threshold Score is set too high for the area's level of need and demand.

Use of this Exception Waiver is a local decision and does not require SSVF Program Office/Regional Coordinator approval. However, any exception to the Stage 2 Threshold Score must be documented on the attached form and receive supervisory approval prior to administering any TFA. Grantees are encouraged to use program and/or system level case conferencing to discuss and determine exceptions in these rare cases. Programs should be aware that VA staff may request to review these exceptions at any time, including during the monitoring and through SSVF quarterly reports. The SSVF Program Office may ask grantees to further justify the use of waivers to affirm and justify use of this flexibility per this guidance.

## SSVF Homelessness Prevention Exceptional Circumstance Waiver June 2022

<b>Household Name:</b>	<b>ID:</b>
<b>Staff Name:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

Describe the urgency and Veteran's unique characteristics, needs, and/or situation that justify making an exception to the standard Stage 2 Screening protocol for Temporary Financial Assistance demonstrating the waiver is necessary to prevent or avoid imminent threats to a Veteran household's health and safety:

Describe any of the equity considerations taken into account, and housing problem solving efforts undertaken to address the Veteran household's needs, including 1) attempts to assist the Veteran household with accessing alternative financial assistance resources, including other readily available federal, state, or local funds; and 2) other assistance to resolve immediate threats to housing or secure safe, alternative housing (e.g., with family or friends):

### SSVF Staff Certification

By signing below, I certify that I have made all efforts to address this Veteran's needs, and that the circumstance the Veteran or household is facing requires an exception to standard HP Stage 2 Prioritization protocol. Further, I certify that all required documentation for SSVF enrollment has been obtained and is contained in the participant's case file.

SSVF Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SSVF Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### SSVF Staff Supervisor Certification

SSVF Staff Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SSVF Staff Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_