

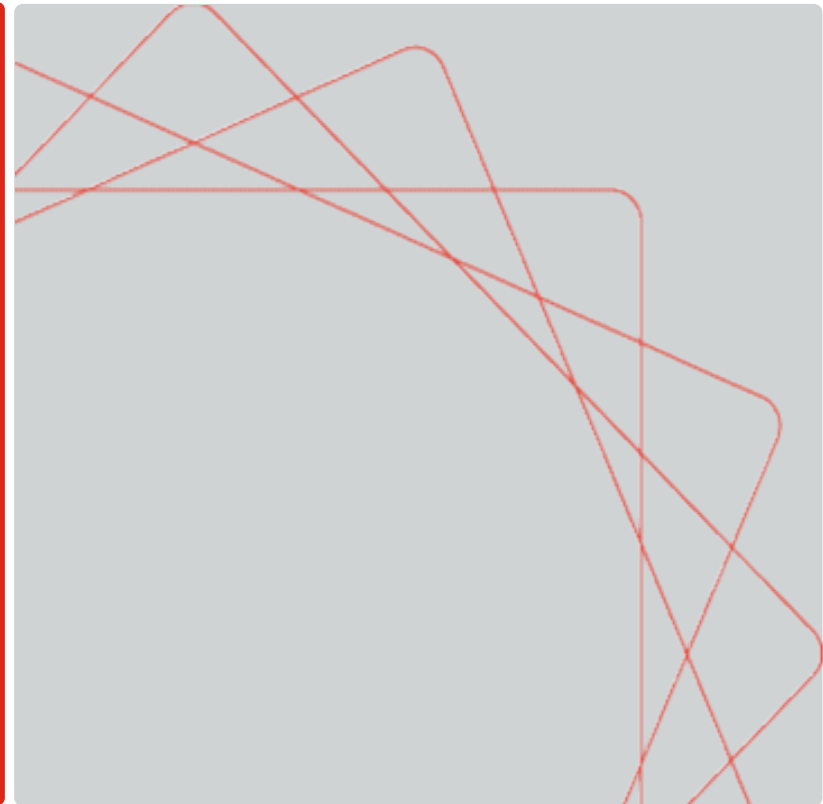


Homelessness Prevention: SSVF Targeting Approach

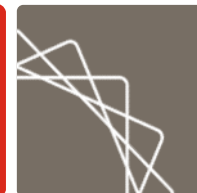
Tom Albanese, Abt Associates

CAEH Annual Conference

November 2, 2016

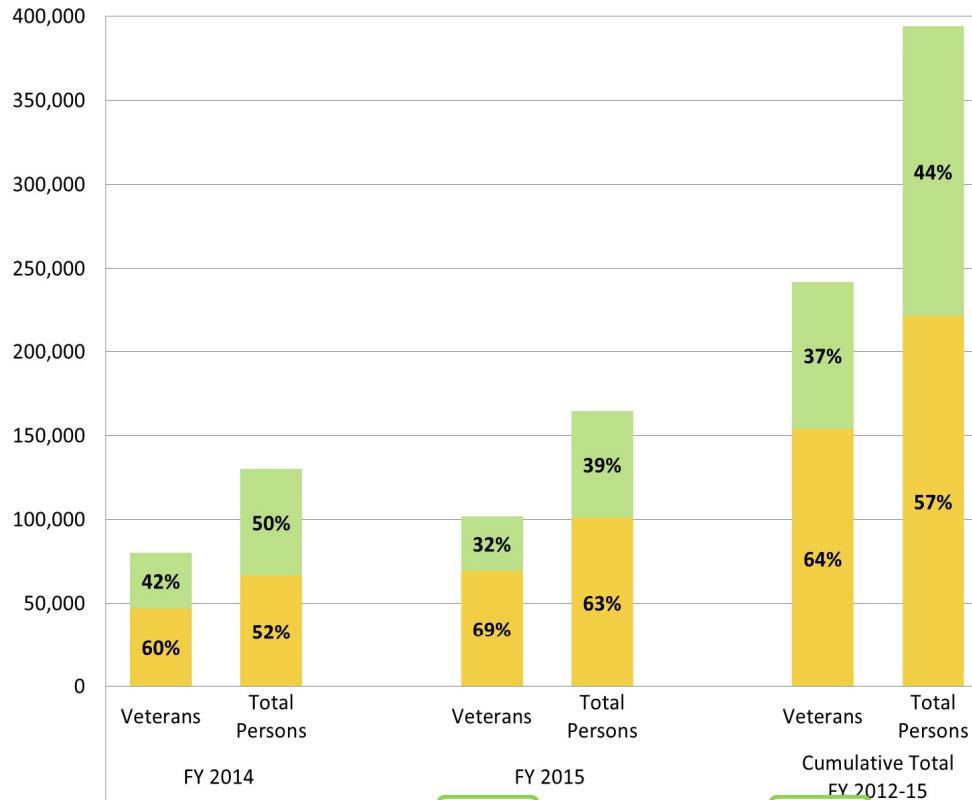
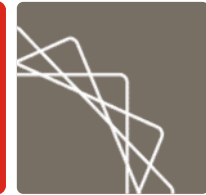


Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program Overview



- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program to assist U.S. military Veterans with:
 - Rapid Re-housing (literally homeless-street, shelter)
 - Homelessness Prevention (imminent risk literal homelessness)
- Annual grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives
- Started FY2012, now in its 6th year of operations
- FY 2016: \$396M awarded to 383 grantees serving all 50 states, DC, and some US territories
- Core services: outreach, case management, assistance obtaining VA and other benefits, temporary financial assistance (move-in, rent, utilities, other)

SSVF Overview, Con't



SSVF Homelessness Prevention FY2015:

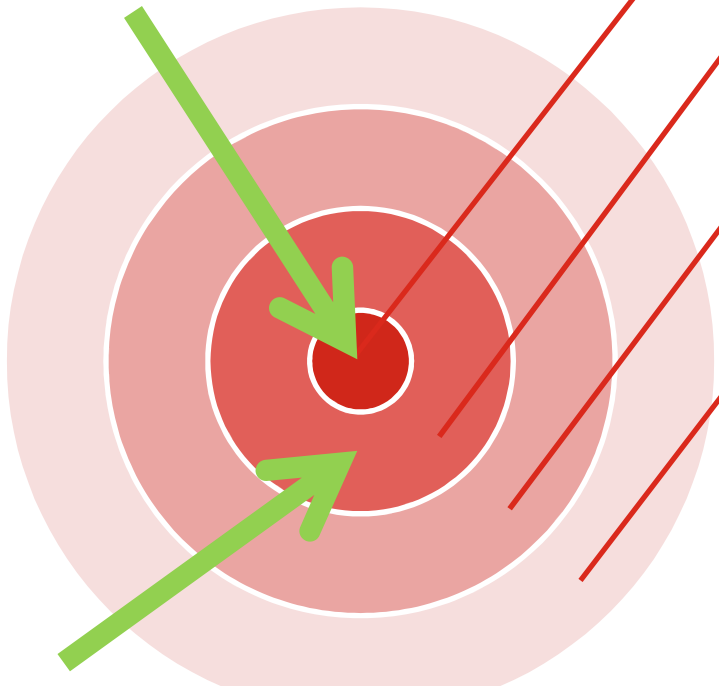
- ✓ 78% in own rental unit, 18% with family/friends at entry
- ✓ Average length of participation = 99 days
- ✓ 85 percent of exiters maintained housing or found other permanent housing and successfully avoided shelter or the street

Homelessness Prevention	33,027	63,735	32,503	63,636	88,467	172,080
Rapid Re-housing	47,056	66,480	69,419	101,068	153,684	221,787
Unduplicated Total	79,035	128,560	100,173	161,532	238,711	388,071

SSVF Targeting: RRH & HP



Rapid Re-Housing



“Literally Homeless”=
shelter, street

Imminently at-risk of
literal homelessness

Precariously housed

Stably housed

Homelessness Prevention

Why is *targeting* essential to SSVF homelessness prevention?



- Goal is to have as much direct impact on reducing literal homelessness versus preventing involuntary housing loss and instability commonly experienced by very low income households
- Predicting which households facing an eviction will become literally homeless is elusive – most who are evicted do not immediately become literally homeless, even if have characteristics associated with higher risk.
- Without targeting, limited HP resources can be used inefficiently and with little bearing on homeless crisis response system in-flow

Who is eligible and a priority for SSVF Homelessness Prevention?



- Qualified Veterans who will be literally homeless (on street or in shelter) **but for** SSVF assistance
- SSVF focus is on targeting Veterans whose current material conditions indicate imminent literal homelessness:
 - 1) Imminent housing loss
 - 2) Lack other viable housing options
 - 3) Lack other financial resources, supports
- SSVF HP assistance, when limited, is prioritized for Veterans with more urgent needs, greater housing barrier and vulnerabilities

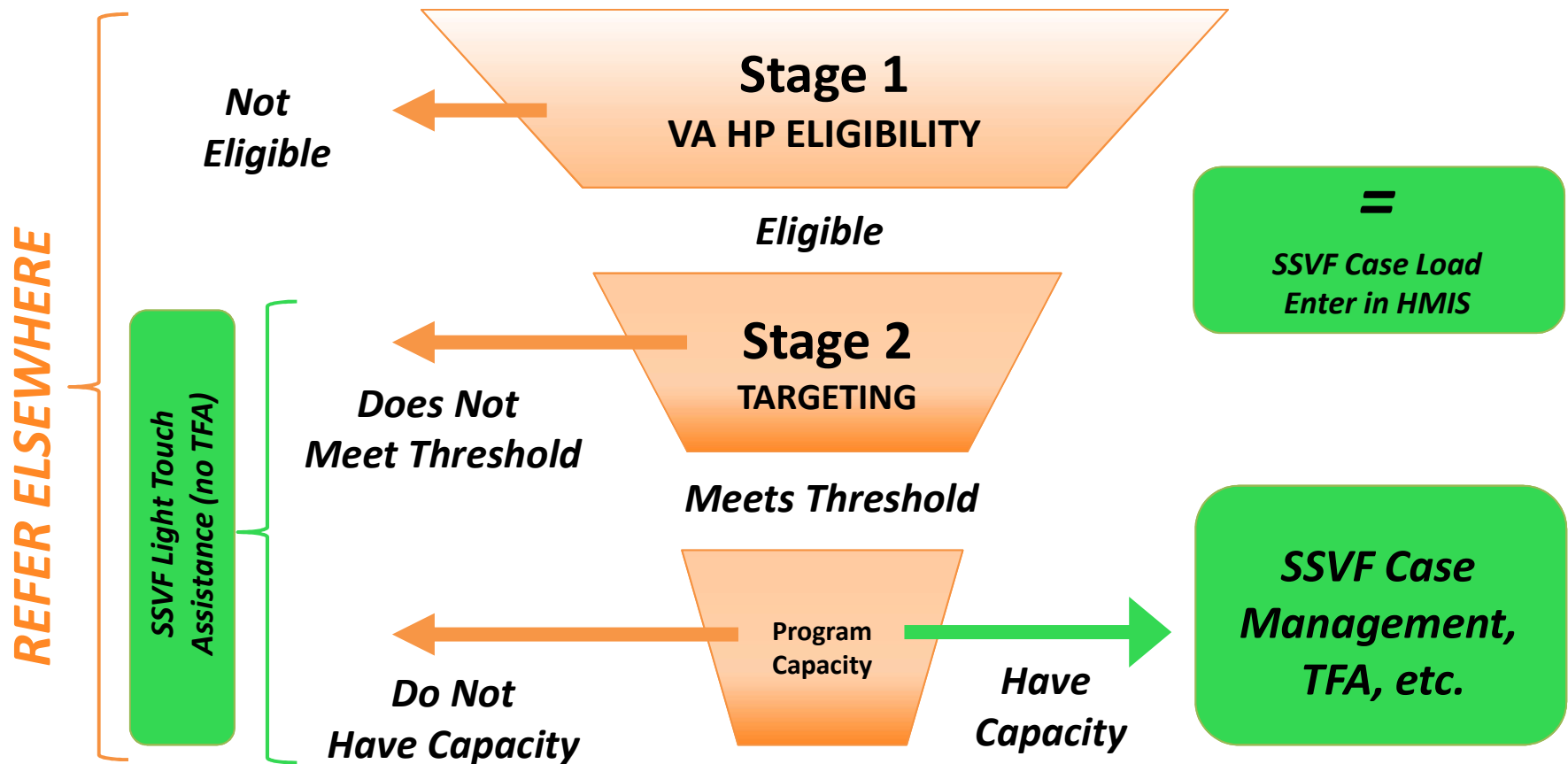
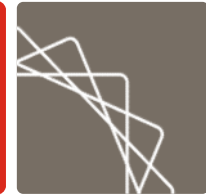


SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening Form



- Used by all grantees starting 10/1/2015
 - ✓ Standardized screening questions to assure in-depth eligibility assessment (Stage 1)
 - ✓ 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

SSVF Homelessness Prevention: Eligibility Screening & Targeting Flow



Stage 1: VA SSVF HP Eligibility



Purpose: Determine who is *eligible or not eligible* for SSVF HP assistance.

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?*

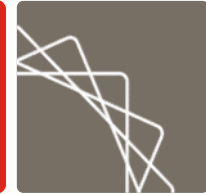
Condition 3: Imminently At-Risk of Literal Homelessness

- *Will applicant become literally homeless but for 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

(i.e., “**But for**” SSVF intervention household will soon need emergency shelter)

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

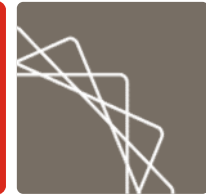
- Does applicant have another have a safe, appropriate place to stay permanently or while they find other housing, if they lose current housing?

3C: Financial Resources

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

Eligibility Condition 3. Imminently At-Risk of Literal Homelessness	
3A: Imminent Housing Loss	<i>Next, we need to know some details about your current housing situation so we can understand how best to assist you.</i> [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?	
Identify the primary place where applicant is staying (check only one):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house	
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with HUD VASH subsidy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent housing for formerly homeless persons (e.g., CoC Program funded unit)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy	

Stage 2: 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

- *Is applicant being diverted from shelter?*
- *How soon will applicant lose their current housing and become literally homeless?*

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? Examples: current and annual Income, past evictions, significant criminal record, past history of homelessness.*

3. VA Policy Priorities

STAGE 2: TARGETING			
TARGETING CRITERIA <small>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.</small>	Check if Applicable	Point Value	TOTAL POINTS <small>(enter value for each box that is checked)</small>
URGENCY OF HOUSING SITUATION <small>(May indicate more urgent need for homelessness prevention assistance)</small>			
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
Current housing loss expected within... (select only one)			
0-6 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
7-13 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
14-21 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	

Targeted Homelessness Prevention: Common Challenges & Solutions



- Intervene too early, and you might assist a household that could have stabilized their situation on their own.
 - Focus on material conditions, assessing options/resources
 - Create spectrum of prevention interventions (primary, secondary, tertiary) – enlist other community partners/systems and seek to use common, basic screening questions & process to ID & triage
- Intervene too late, and you might not be able to prevent literal homelessness, or only succeed in delaying it.
 - Assure program design is as flexible as possible (within funder constraints) to allow for min and max assistance – e.g., SSVF can provide up to 9 months of rental assistance and intensive case management.

Targeted Homelessness Prevention: Common Challenges & Solutions



- Households facing housing loss may not seek assistance until they're already well into eviction process.
 - Partner with legal services and local housing court to identify and assist those going through court eviction proceedings.
 - Partner with coordinated entry points to local homeless system and assist those seeking shelter who can be diverted.
 - Have capacity and landlord partners willing to work with you and your participants when they need to re-locate to new housing.

Targeted Homelessness Prevention: Common Challenges & Solutions



- It's hard to predict what a given household will need to avoid literal homelessness and it seems unethical to offer some households more and some less assistance.
 - Use an individualized, progressive assistance model, starting with the premise that the program will provide 'just enough' assistance to resolve the immediate housing crisis (and it's near term recurrence) – make sure staff and clients have shared understanding of program purpose and goals.
 - Where ever possible, start with non-financial interventions: mediation, budgeting, housing counseling, etc.

Targeted Homelessness Prevention: Common Challenges & Solutions



- Providing ‘just enough’ assistance to avoid literal homelessness immediately and in near-term can feel like we’re not doing enough to support long-term housing stability.
 - Ensure wide-array of community-based service partners and resources to support ongoing stability
 - Program focus on being a crisis intervention resource – impossible to predict and entirely avoid similar future housing crisis, but we can increase awareness, tenancy and housing-related problem-solving skills.

Targeted Homelessness Prevention: Common Challenges & Solutions



- Staff may have different ideas about who's most at-risk and how to assess this.
 - Use standardized, semi-structured interview tool.
 - Make sure staff understand what the program is trying to discern by assessing applicants, then use assessment as launching off point.
 - Screening and assessment is an art – train, supervise, and continually improve.