

New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers (VIC) JAIL DIVERSION PROGRAM

“Working with the community and court systems to minimize Veteran Incarceration”

Presenters

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Background

- Veteran Problem:
 - Number of letters received from Veterans who were incarcerated and needed place to live after leaving prison
 - Homeless
 - On Parole
 - Some Veterans thrown in jail on misdemeanor charges were being kept in jail due to lack of funds to post bail
 - The VIC and VA require interviews and assessments prior to acceptance into the Transitional Housing/GPD Program
- Information Issues:
 - Prison/Jail Systems do not keep Veteran Status Information, thus the number incarcerated is difficult to Quantify
- Geographic Issues: New Mexico is a large geographic state, thus prisons and jails are spread throughout the state

Approach

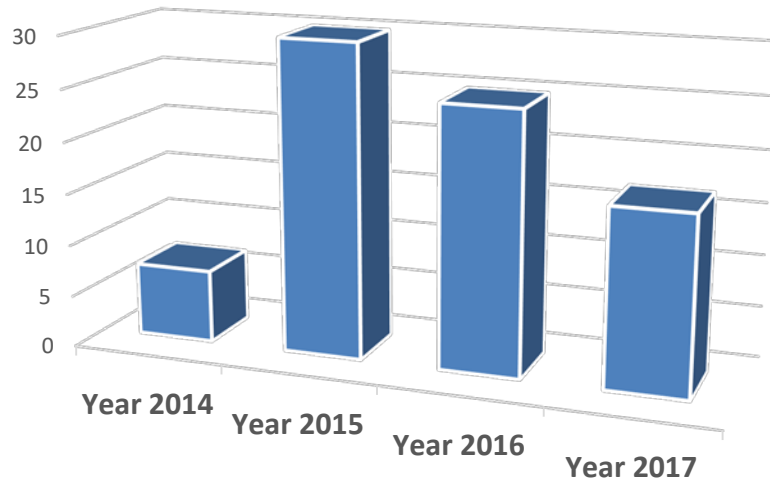
- Locations:
 - Research all the Jails and Prison locations in the territory
 - Determine location of Veteran Courts (if any)
 - Locate local VA Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) program
- Outreach:
 - Establish Contacts within the prison and jail Social Workers
 - Schedule Outreach activities to the Social Workers and Prison Veteran Groups at their facilities
 - Leverage the VJO program and local Veteran Courts for Support
 - Conduct Outreach to judges/lawyers working with Veterans (contacts from Stand Down events, call Judges)
- Interviews:
 - Setup collaboration to allow interviews at the facilities
 - The VIC setup a collaboration with the local Probation and Parole to use their video conferencing system with other jails/prisons who have the capability
 - VA Liaison support is important to obtain “buy-in” on the process
 - Interviews when the Veteran exits incarceration
 - Provide as much information to the Liaison as possible prior to release

Data

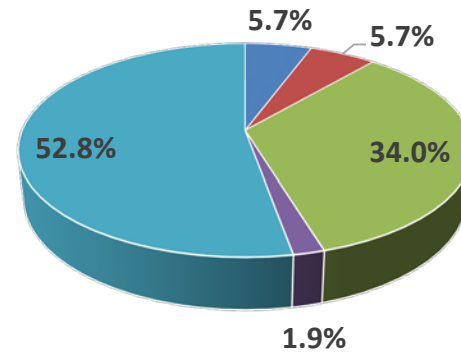
- Data for incarcerated Veterans similar to those not incarcerated
 - Less difficulty adapting to roommates & rules
 - Some struggle with freedom to come and go throughout the day
 - If issues arise, they are typically “immediate”
 - Relapse
 - Reconnect with previous “friends”

Data Continued

Population by Year

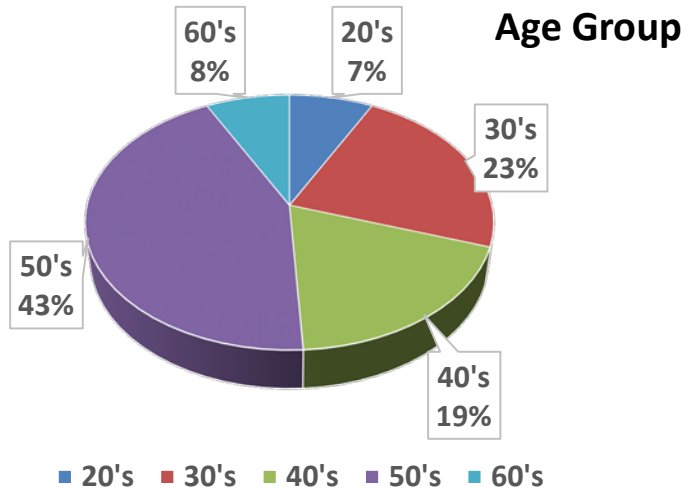


Ethnicity



- African-American ■ American Indian ■ Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian ■ White

Data Continued



Added Notes:

- 1 of the 53 was female
- 55% left the program stably housed
- Average stay is 4 months

Funding

- Local City funds
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- States
 - Department of Veteran Services
 - Behavioral Health Departments

Why is this a Community Benefit?

- Potentially reduces the number of Veterans sent to jail for misdemeanors:
 - Judges are open to having them transfer to the VIC versus jail
- Allows judges and lawyers to:
 - Work with the VIC for early paroles
 - Provide them with a stable environment while on parole
- Veterans
 - Gives them a place to “land” and work on stabilization
 - Provides resources to obtain jobs, benefits, medical and mental health