
BEST PRACTICES
PROFILES OF PROMISING
HOMELESS VETERANS
REINTEGRATION PROGRAM
GRANTEES



Edited by

NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

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INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) researched and produced a collection of successful Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) profiles from across the country, including a wide range of market models. The “Homeless Veterans Best Practices Profiles of Employment Assistance Programs” (Best Practices) publication received glowing reviews, and stands as the fifth-most accessed feature on the NCHV website. This project served as a springboard for many organizations planning to develop or expand employment assistance programs, and offered a comprehensive view of the program and its benefits for media, service providers, government officials and veterans who need assistance. NCHV has expanded this project to explore the unique aspects of programs such as income-producing ventures, most effective business skills training programs, and the role of Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) in program successes.

Of the existing HVRP grantees, 31 high performing HVRP grantees were identified as potential contributors to the Best Practices publication, using VOPAR data as a guide. All 31 grantees have exhibited unique approaches to reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment and stimulating effective service delivery systems. The Best Practices publication also includes grantees under the new Homeless Female Veteran/Homeless Veterans with Families Program (HFV/VF) and Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) grantees. While some contributing organizations have been profiled in previous versions of the Best Practices publication, others are new additions. All grantee results and activities are self-reported and based on the expertise of NCHV and the staff members of the service providers.

NCHV has continuously sought to include representative programs from both urban and non-urban areas, faith-based and community-based organizations, large and small operations, and government agencies that serve as community service network centers. The expansion of the Best Practices publication will continue to provide organizations with a blueprint of effective employment assistance programs that can be replicated, either on-site or through community partnerships.

ALBANY HOUSING COALITION

Service Area: Albany (New York)

“AHC’s case management team and peer support group supplements efforts by the VA Medical team to assist younger veterans in meeting challenges with depression, anger, PTSD, family relationships, and arrests that impact their ability to maintain employment.”

Overview

The Albany Housing Coalition, Inc. (AHC), a 27-year-old community-based non-profit housing company in Albany, New York, has provided specialized and comprehensive housing and case management services to homeless veterans for over 22 years. In 1989, AHC identified the needs of Vietnam veterans as a priority and embarked upon a program to hire knowledgeable staff to assist in the operation of a variety of housing options for homeless veterans.

In the years prior to receiving HVRP funding, AHC informally worked with homeless veterans in its housing program to secure meaningful employment. During that time, AHC worked closely with the local U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Homeless Program’s Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program and engaged local employers by showcasing the strong case management offered to homeless veteran participants. AHC, which first received HVRP funding at \$100,000 per year in 2006, is a relatively small program compared to others across the country.

In November 2009, AHC was awarded VA Secretary Eric Shinseki’s Secretary’s Award at the first Homeless Summit for its 20 years of outstanding service to homeless veterans. In the New York capital region, AHC is the recognized leader in service to homeless and at-risk veterans. With a focus on building peer support, raising self-esteem, and readying the veteran for an independent, successful life in the community, AHC successfully provides veterans with the resources and the encouragement they need to rebuild their lives and successfully maintain their independence. In 2010, AHC provided services to nearly 500 homeless and at-risk veterans of all eras. Of these 500, 44 veterans gained employment through HVRP services and 75 received resume and job coaching assistance. In its first four years of HVRP funding, AHC met its employment placement goal of 40 veterans per year. In year five, the recession and loss of 50 VA Grant and Per Diem (GPD) beds in the area reduced the goal of 44 by 8%.

Services

Employment and Training:

AHC has achieved successful employment outcomes for homeless veterans in its program by continuously developing and utilizing working relationships with the VA and key service providers in communities in and surrounding Albany at the local and state level. Using these major referral sources, AHC’s case management team incorporate comprehensive services into the veteran’s individualized plan with a goal of restoring self-esteem, putting in place a peer support network, and assuring that the veteran has the community resources necessary to successfully transition to independent living.

AHC’s relationships with local government partners have facilitated employment opportunities for veterans enrolled in the HVRP program. The partnership with the local VA CWT program has evolved to the point where all CWT participants are required to register with the AHC HVRP Program. Employment specialists meet weekly with CWT staff to provide joint case manage for veterans. After two years of advocacy, AHC developed a strong working relationship with the New York State Labor Department that resulted in a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist (DVOP) being assigned to the program. The DVOP now spends one day a week in the AHC office to meet and counsel HVRP participants.

Early in the development of program activities, AHC partnered with the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs, the Director of which helped coordinate state agency personnel from Labor, Office of General Services, Office of Civil Service, and several large area employers to institute monthly “Career Nights” at AHC’s Vet House. These dinner meetings provide veterans with information, role-playing interviews, and direct access to hiring agents for state government and private industry. These Career Nights also take advantage of a unique New York law which allows disabled veterans to obtain employment without taking a civil service exam and allows the state to hire disabled veterans when it is not hiring from existing civil service lists. These meetings, now conducted quarterly, continue to result in hires and have now been replicated in other parts of New York State. As a result of the Career Night project, a New York State Benefits Counselor was assigned to AHC’s Vet House one afternoon a week.

AHC has provided successful employment services by recognizing a change in needs as their participant population shifts from Vietnam-era veterans to veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to AHC staff members, older veterans often have employment skills and careers, yet they experience a recurring need for addiction and behavioral health services. As a result, once recovery is monitored and legal issues are addressed, these veterans are usually employment ready with minimal input. Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, on the other hand, tend to be younger, less patient with ancillary medical care, less experienced at meeting life’s challenges, and lacking critical employment skills and experience to facilitate a smooth transition into the workforce.

To meet these needs, in 2009, AHC began its Veterans Community Advocacy Program, which uses veteran volunteers to target younger veterans and to provide peer support throughout the reintegration process. Resources for this program include: local National Guard base, local Vet Center, independent veteran volunteers of all eras, local employers, local government and nearby schools. These resources help young veterans build a career track, often beginning with a return to formal education and, later, an apprenticeship with a local union or supervised training with a local employer.

In 2010, AHC provided services to nearly 500 homeless and at-risk veterans of all eras, including 44 veterans who gained employment through HVRP and 75 who received resume/job coaching assistance. In the 2010 Program Year, AHC fell short of its goals for the first time in five years, results attributed to the unanticipated decrease in GPD beds by 50 and a decrease in employment opportunities in the service region. AHC has adapted quickly, resulting in a current year enrollment rate at 125% of goal, a high hourly wage to support independent living, and a high retention rate due in part to the quality of the employment opportunities and the peer support and case management provided to the veterans.

Housing:

In 1989, AHC began constructing and operating a transitional residence for homeless veterans, a permanent supportive residence for homeless veterans, and family housing for veterans. AHC has served, on average over 22 years, 250 veterans a year. AHC currently owns and operates 33 units of transitional housing and 24 units of permanent supportive housing in the community. In addition, AHC manages 31 Shelter+Care housing vouchers. Over the last two years, AHC has managed two Homeless Prevention Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) programs targeted to at-risk populations, including veterans.

In 2010, AHC provided services to nearly 500 homeless and at-risk veterans of all eras: 72 received transitional housing; 35 moved into permanent supportive housing; an additional 35 were assisted with Shelter +Care and HUD-VASH housing placement; and 68 veterans received financial support for housing and to maintain housing through AHC’s HPRP. Twenty-one of the 51 entering AHC housing were chronically homeless. Of 52 leaving AHC housing, 73% moved on to independent living with the supports AHC provided, 20 had secured employment, 12 are now receiving VA benefits, 15 are enrolled in education or vocational programs, and 25 are enrolled in VA’s Compensated Work Therapy Program.

Legal Services:

Veterans with legal barriers to employment are referred to a cadre of pro bono attorneys. To meet the civil legal needs of veterans, including child support, bad debts and wills, AHC has partnered with several law firms, the local Legal Aid Society, and NYS Bar Association for pro bono legal representation. An attorney is available at the Vet House once a week, with telephone referrals made as needed.

AHC also offers a Veterans Treatment Court program (VetTrak), for which AHC provides veteran peer mentor training and coordination and court support in a direct response to the needs of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans charged with a crime. Modeled after the county drug court and using volunteer veteran peer mentors, VetTrak addresses the core behaviors that lead to arrest and typically diverts time in jail. Currently, VetTrak is operating in seven local county courts. In 2010, AHC provided 36 veterans with peer support through VetTrak and trained more than 20 volunteer veteran peer mentors to serve the seven county court systems.

Supportive Services:

In 2010 AHC provided services to nearly 500 homeless and at-risk veterans of all eras, including more than 200 senior veterans who were assisted with VA benefits assistance and access to community grants and benefits.

When program activities began, participants received housing through AHC and were referred to community partners and to the VA hospital for other needs. As the organization grew, it began providing in-house services to veterans and others. Now, in-house services include housing, employment services, daily behavioral case management, financial literacy, housing and self-determination counseling, and recovery meetings. Veterans needing health care and treatment services are referred to the VA and community providers. In addition to securing donated clothing and tools for veterans, AHC donates its in-house resources to a local Stand Down organized by a partner Veteran Service Organization (VSO).

In addition to employment-focused services like job training and employment placement, AHC offers or refers to supportive services such as addiction treatment and recovery services, legal services, mental health services, financial literacy education and disability services. AHC's case management team and peer support group supplements efforts by the VA Medical team to assist younger veterans in meeting challenges with depression, anger, PTSD, family relationships and arrests that impact their ability to maintain employment.

Each year, the Albany Housing Coalition plans and participates in the local "Stand Down," where services are provided to homeless veterans along with shelter, meals, clothing, employment services and medical attention. Stand Down is a community-based volunteer effort which brings together service providers such as: the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the local Continuums of Care (CoC), Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists (DVOP), Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER), State Workforce Agencies (SWA) staff, Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), military personnel, civic leaders and a variety of other interested groups and organizations. Many services are provided on-site with referrals also made for continued assistance after the Stand Down event. Stand Down events can often be the catalyst that enables homeless veterans to get back into mainstream society.

Partnerships

Albany Housing Coalition's partnerships for employment have developed over time and significantly cross-track with the relationships developed over 20 years for services that include health care, housing, addiction services, legal services, peer mentoring and community support services. They act not only as a

referral source, but in some cases as employers for veterans. These relationships are varied and represent some of the unique characteristics of the local program. Starting with local nonprofit homeless providers and extending to three Continuums of Care, AHC's partners include state agencies (Labor, Veterans Services, Housing, and Temporary Disabilities), federal partners (VA, HUD, Labor-VETS), local VSOs, and employers. Partners refer veterans to AHC housing and employment programs and provide both direct services to veterans and financial support to programs.

Partners in Stand Down and program activities include:

- VA Homeless Program's Compensated Work Therapy Program
- NYS Labor Department
- State Workforce Agencies (SWA) staff
- Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)
- Military personnel
- Civic leaders
- New York State Housing and Temporary Disabilities Agencies
- U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Labor
- National Guard base
- Local Vet Center
- NYS Bar Association

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	80	76	95%
Program Enrollments	61	53	87%
Employment Enrollments	44	40	91%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.50	\$13.91	146%
Placed in Permanent Housing	52	49	94%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	20	26	130%

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AMERICA WORKS OF NEW YORK, INC

Service Area: New York City

“Our Corporate Representatives and Sales Representatives get to know our participants on a very personal level and use the knowledge of a person’s goals, experiences, licenses, qualifications, barriers, and skills to match them with job openings that they have the best chance of succeeding at.”

Overview

Since its founding 27 years ago, America Works of New York, Inc. (America Works) has pioneered a “rapid attachment to work” model that makes employment paramount in a participant’s path towards self-sufficiency. In 2008, America Works leveraged its relationship with New York City’s Human Resource Administration and created a program, unique in the United States, to provide employment services to NYC veterans receiving food stamps.

America Works was first awarded an HVRP grant in Fiscal Year 2009, consistently receiving the \$300,000 maximum in each grant year. Although contingency funds are available in the event of an emergency, a carefully planned budget ensures that funds are used and allocated appropriately. After being awarded in New York City, the America Works network of companies has since been awarded HVRP grants in Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

America Works prides itself on meeting the full range of service needs for the homeless veterans of New York City who are in need of comprehensive services to achieve job readiness and identify the path toward self-sufficiency. Applying America Works’ “work first” model, in which employment comes first, this program has provided direct job placement and retention services paired with case management and supportive services to hundreds of New York City veterans to decrease and prevent homelessness. Thanks to strong, positive word of mouth from veterans who want to help their fellow veterans in need of work, America Works’ program assessments are continuously well above planned goals.

Services

Employment and Training:

Considering America Works’ extensive experience working with various populations of low-income individuals by placing them into employment and helping them get their lives back on track, America Works has been able to strategically approach the HVRP program model to provide innovation where possible.

According to America Works staff members, the greatest and more time sensitive need affecting almost all of the homeless veterans who are assessed is the need for full-time gainful and fulfilling employment. A lack of sufficient interview clothing and lackluster resumes are the most common barriers initially facing America Works’ veterans. Veterans are referred to Career Gear or the Mayor’s Office of Veteran’s Affairs to obtain interview clothing when necessary. America Works of New York partnered with the American Barber Institute in Manhattan to provide haircuts and shaves to all veterans. A fresh hair cut is beneficial to anyone looking for a job, let alone someone trying to overcome the stigma of being a homeless veteran.

With the guidance of staff, homeless veterans build confidence through resume writing and job-readiness preparation. Additional services provided directly by America Works includes: mock interviewing, vocational guidance, online job search training, career matching and interview referrals. America Works then facilitates job interviews with one of its employer partners, focusing on jobs for which veteran participants are qualified and can begin work immediately.

All direct job readiness and employment placement services are provided directly by America Works using

a “rapid attachment to work” model where direct relationships with employers are leveraged to help homeless veterans obtain interviews and be offered jobs, making them more competitive candidates. Corporate Representatives (the America Works version of Case Managers) and Sales Representatives (the America Works version of Job Developers) work closely with participants and use the veteran’s goals, experiences, licenses, qualifications, barriers, and skills to match job openings that offer the highest opportunity for success and career satisfaction. America Works has partnered with the Manhattan U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) through Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) William Bookstaver to provide comprehensive computer training that includes basic computer skills training, a resume writing workshop, and a USA Jobs workshop to help veterans become more job ready while expanding the places they can search for employment. Other partners provide occupational skills training depending upon the chosen field of the veteran.

America Works promises all of the employers that only participants who match their required qualifications will be sent to interview. Likewise, America Works promises all participants that the employer is expecting them specifically because of their specific qualifications, ability to fulfill the job requirements, and potential to excel in the position. This trust-building strategy improves the participants’ confidence, which results not only in obtaining employment but also maintenance of and flourishing in targeted careers. This approach also helps the participant have a successful and positive experience with America Works, and the focus on job placement and retention is critical to America Works’ mission.

Housing:

The largest obstacle faced by America Works staff members is placement of veteran participants into permanent and transitional housing. Given the limits of available subsidized housing options and dearth of low-income housing generally, as well as the lack of incentives for shelters to move homeless individuals into permanent housing, the HVRP program participants are presented with unique challenges.

The HUD-VASH housing voucher has been an incredible tool for some chronically homeless veterans to move into permanent housing. However, too few vouchers are currently available to meet the pressing need. America Works therefore focuses on maximizing the earning potential of participants while providing important financial counseling and encouraging saving. Also, many participants are being connected to permanent housing options, either through HUD-VASH or personal savings, but will not accomplish that goal within the HVRP reporting period.

New York City provides funding to different organizations throughout the city, including Credit Where Credit is Due and the Phipps Opportunity Center, to provide free credit counseling and repair services, as well as general financial empowerment training. All veterans are referred for credit counseling and repair services to ensure that a low credit score does not prevent a veteran from obtaining permanent housing.

Legal Services:

N/A

Supportive Services:

All trainings and services provided to help the homeless veteran prepare for employment are provided by America Works’ wrap-around service partners. This includes: interview clothing referrals, haircut and shave referrals, credit counseling and financial literacy training, computer skills training, VA benefits counseling, legal counseling and relevant occupational skills training.

Partnering with the Mayor’s Office of Veteran’s Affairs opens up a multitude of services to New York City veterans. In addition to recently completing a large clothing drive to provide interview attire to any veteran in need, the Mayor’s Office of Veteran’s Affairs can also assist a veteran who is having problems with

shelter or public assistance benefits.

Additionally, changes undertaken by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the VA, and the U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS), in particular with the recent expansion of the definition of homelessness, enable HVRP grantees to begin working with veterans who are “doubling up” on friends and family members’ couches, where before they had to enter the formal shelter system or sleep on the streets. This helps HVRP grantees because these newly included homeless veterans can maintain the social supports that are integral to success on the job and in the search for a new home because they have not yet “overstayed their welcome” and can contribute to the household income once employed.

Partnerships

Partners are identified through a strategic search to identify organizations that can best and most affordably provide the services needed by veterans in the HVRP program. These partnerships are governed by memorandums of understanding that lay out the services to be provided and the compensation, if any, for those services.

Some major partnerships include:

- Mayor’s Office of Veteran’s Affairs
- Manhattan VA through DVOP William Bookstaver
- Occupational skills training partners
- City of New York City
- Credit Where Credit is Due
- The Phipps Opportunity Center
- The American Barber Institute in Manhattan

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	200	254	127%
Program Enrollments	180	207	115%
Employment Enrollments	160	149	93%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$8.50	\$9.55	112%
Placed in Permanent Housing	180	80	45%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	20	17	85%

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AMERICAN GI FORUM NATIONAL VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM, INC.

Service Area: San Antonio, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Austin, Houston, El Paso (Texas)

“In ‘partnering’ there is also opportunity for growth.”

Overview

The American GI Forum National Veterans Outreach Program (NVOP) was founded in 1972 by members of the American GI Forum of the U.S., a congressionally chartered veterans’ organization, composed primarily of Hispanic American veterans. Many American GI Forum members vividly remembered the challenges and rejection they experienced after returning from service in World War II. Recognizing that Vietnam era veterans encountered similar rejection from many organizations and service agencies, they set out to do their part by creating the “Veterans Outreach Program.” The mission to “get the veterans the help they needed anyway we could,” has been a driving force for NVOP, including its current President and CEO Carlos Martinez, who was among the initial group of young veterans who were hired to help fellow veterans. His quick rise to the leadership of the organization, his vision for its development, and his dedication to the cause of serving veterans became the catalyst that propelled the NVOP to its current status. Controlled growth that addresses the comprehensive needs of veterans is the core commitment that has never changed for this organization.

The NVOP supports its programs and companies through an array of funding streams, including three U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) grants for serving the homeless; a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program; five U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants for housing homeless veterans; one U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS) grant for placing veterans in “Green Jobs” and one Texas grant for serving veterans with barriers to employment. The NVOP grants dedicated to serving homeless veterans total \$900,000 from HVRP (two in San Antonio and one in Dallas), and \$1.36 million from HUD Supportive Housing Programs (SHP) for housing, and \$900,000 from VA Grant and Per Diem for a total of \$3.17 million for this program year. Additional funding for the Texas Veterans program, which supports four sites in the state, and a new Army contract for the Work Center for Disabled Veterans provides an additional \$1.93 million of funding. Those projects also serve homeless veterans. The two business companies of the organization, Veterans Enterprises of Texas (VETS) Box Manufacturing and Packaging Company and American GI Forum Weatherization, are nonprofit entities, but they are self-sustaining companies that do not use grant funds.

The American GI Forum NVOP offers an array of services to a varied group of veterans, including recently discharged veterans, disabled veterans, women veterans, veterans with barriers to employment, and a focused effort in reaching out to homeless veterans. Services to homeless veterans also include special programs that reach out to women veterans and homeless veterans with families. In 2012 this organization will celebrate its 40th Anniversary of continuous service to veterans. Since its first grant from the DOL-VETS in 1972, the NVOP has addressed the contemporary needs of veterans as they evolved over the generations. This success was accomplished by a very experienced, well established organization that recognizes all organizations, especially newer organizations with less experience and fewer resources, are going to be facing extreme challenges serving the core population of homeless veterans that remains after many successful years of reducing the number of veterans in the streets.

Services

Employment and Training:

Homeless veterans have many challenging needs, and the American GI Forum NVOP with its diverse ser-

vice portfolio and its widespread network of community partners is perfectly positioned to offer a comprehensive and profound mix of remedies to these veterans. The NVOP first partnered with DOL-VETS for its first grant in 1972. This relationship of more than three decades has led to the expansion of services for veterans, not only with the addition of new programs, but also by expanding services to new cities. Experience with these service partners is a synergistic element of trust, credibility and proven success.

Eligible veterans receive assessment through a matrix analysis that categorizes the needs of the veteran to determine which of the five employment and training programs can combine with housing programs to best serve the veteran. The employment programs include traditional HVRP; HVRP for Female Veterans and Homeless Veterans with Families; Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) for green jobs; a HUD-funded Veterans Integration Program (VIP); and the Texas Veterans Outreach Program serving veterans with barriers to employment, including but not limited to homelessness. The NVOP, with 39 years of presence in the community, has many other partner options that provide assistance in community college training options.

NVOP owns and operates two business enterprises that offer veterans either short- or long-term employment opportunities, depending on the presented needs and skills of the veteran. Short-term employment positions can help facilitate financial stability and, in some cases, serve as a sheltered work environment to help homeless veterans reconnect with a strong work ethic and confidence. The American GI Forum Weatherization Company hires veterans to make homes more energy efficient in what is considered “green jobs,” while the Veterans Enterprises of Texas (VETS) Box Manufacturing and Packaging Company produces corrugate board products and also operates the Work Center. The VETS Work Center hires disabled veterans on temporary work assignments to package custom orders for a variety of customers. Most veterans currently employed at the Work Center are homeless veterans with physical or psychological disabilities that prevent them entering mainstream job opportunities.

Housing:

To parallel the employment and training programs at NVOP, eligible veterans receive assessment through a matrix analysis to determine which housing program options can best combine with employment services to serve the veteran. When needed, other partner organizations, such as the Salvation Army and Haven for Hope, also provide additional housing.

The American GI Forum Residential Center for Veterans, one of two main locations, is a nationally recognized housing center for homeless veterans. The housing options at the Residential Center include two separate permanent housing programs: one includes a total of 60 single room occupancy apartments for homeless disabled veterans and the other is a transitional housing program with 80 transitional beds in five separate bays for both male and female homeless veterans. The transitional units are supported by both HUD-SHP grants and the VA’s GPD program. Additionally, the NVOP is providing a new Veterans Lease Housing program to serve the growing need of homeless veterans with families.

In partnering with HUD for transitional and permanent housing grants initially, the NVOP later expanded this relationship by adding the VIP job placement component for homeless veterans housed in HUD units, and the Veterans Leased Housing program that became necessary as more homeless veterans’ families emerged.

Legal Services:

NVOP works with St. Mary’s University to provide legal services to homeless veterans.

Supportive Services:

In order to accomplish the array of services requested, and to fully perform as a “continuum of care,” the

NVOP has expanded significantly since its founding. Homeless veterans are a population with many challenging needs, and the American GI Forum NVOP has assembled an array of services to meet these special needs. The organization operates primarily out of two locations, one being the Veterans Service Center building in central San Antonio that receives all veterans for intake, assessment and case management services.

The NVOP, using Memorandums of Understanding with community partners, has added an array of medical services available to participants. The VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans is represented both at the Veterans Service Center and at the Residential Center. Excellent working relationships with the Audie Murphy VA Hospital for medical and psychological exams, with Centro-Med for TB testing and other medical and dental services, and the Center for Health Care Services for detoxification and mental health counseling services for homeless veterans are all critical to the mission of NVOP. A Detox Center with medical personnel and sleeping quarters is located immediately adjacent to the Residential Center. Other partner organizations also provide medical, optical and dental services, including Haven for Hope which is within one block of the Residential Center.

The NVOP has a strong relationship with the Texas Workforce Commission, which has a full-time Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Representative stationed at the Veterans Service Center.

The NVOP has many other partner options that provide assistance with benefits through VA, HUD-VASH or regular Section 8 housing, community college training options; sheltered workshop opportunities through Goodwill and the NVOP's sub-organization Veterans Enterprises of Texas; and outreach through the NVOP's annual Stand-Down, which features 35 guest organizations that provide counseling, various on-site assistance referrals, and many give-away items, including winter clothing. The City of San Antonio's Department of Community Initiatives offers local support services, and the San Antonio Food Bank offers nutritional assistance and training. Some corporate units, like USAA, offer special project funding for the Residential Center and field trips for the homeless veterans.

The American GI Forum NVOP previously operated a HOPE (Homeless Outreach Program and Evaluation) project through the Social Security Administration (SSA) that targeted homeless veterans for social security assistance. The program ran on a four-year trial and was very successful, leaving NVOP staff well versed on benefits and well connected to the Social Security partners that continue to help homeless veterans. Other mainstream partners include the Texas Food Stamp Program, the San Antonio Housing Authority, the University Hospital System for non-service related illnesses or injuries, and the Bexar County Community Court system.

A major aspect of the organization's success is its Veterans Service Center, which offers a "one-stop" setting with in-house NVOP case managers representing all the various grant programs, as well as housing representatives from the VA and the Texas Workforce Commission. Other visiting representatives from the VET Center, Bexar County Veterans Service Officer and other social service providers periodically work at the Veterans Service Center to expand the scope of services offered to veterans in HVRP and other NVOP programs.

Partnerships

Partnerships have always been a key ingredient in the success formula of the American GI Forum NVOP operations. The mission, to "get the veterans the help they needed anyway we could," served the NVOP well as it carefully developed an array of collaborators to serve the widespread needs of veterans.

All of these partners, and others, also use NVOP services for their participants who qualify for the array of assistance programs. This cross-referral of veterans serves to meet the objectives of each organization,

but most importantly it offers the veteran a widespread network of services and an extensive continuum of care.

Some of the major partners include:

- U.S. Department of Labor
- The American GI Forum Weatherization Company
- The Veterans Enterprises of Texas (VETS) Box Manufacturing and Packaging Company
- The VETS Work Center
- The Salvation Army
- Haven for Hope
- St. Mary's University
- Audie Murphy VA Hospital
- Centro-Med
- Center for Health Care Services
- The Texas Workforce Commission
- Goodwill
- Veterans Enterprises of Texas
- The City of San Antonio's Department of Community Initiatives
- The San Antonio Food Bank
- USAA
- Texas Food Stamp Program
- The San Antonio Housing Authority
- The University Hospital System
- Bexar County Community Court system

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	509	514	101%
Program Enrollments	440	487	111%
Employment Enrollments	313	309	99%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.90	\$10.48	106%
Placed in Permanent Housing	47	75	160%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	64	83	130%

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CENTRAL CITY CONCERN

Service Area: Portland metropolitan area (Oregon)

“Central City Concern is also the largest employer of formerly homeless individuals in Portland.”

Overview

Central City Concern (CCC) of Portland, OR, was created as the Burnside Consortium in the 1970s – a coalition to address the problem of alcoholism and substance abuse under a National Institute of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA) Public Inebriate grant. Under that funding program, the consortium organized the Homeless Alcohol and Drug Intervention Network (HADIN), through which publicly funded agencies could coordinate services, improve the region’s service delivery system, and track participants’ progress. The network has been meeting every week since 1980. Central City Concern (CCC) is now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to provide solutions to homelessness in the Portland, OR, and Vancouver, WA, metropolitan areas.

The organization has several contracts with federal, state, county and city governments, and has managed many federal grant programs. CCC has received grant funding from HVRP consistently since 1998. The total budget for all of CCC’s veteran assistance programs is more than \$1 million. CCC has over 600 employees and an annual operating budget of more than \$40 million. Its innovative continuum of services is administered by a central office that provides financial and contract services, and is supported by more than 100 funding sources. More than 3,500 individuals, businesses, corporations, civic groups, churches and private foundations make regular financial contributions to Central City Concern each year.

With a mission of “providing comprehensive solutions to ending homelessness and achieving self-sufficiency,” CCC’s housing, employment services, health care, mental health and substance abuse treatment programs serve more than 13,000 participants each year. At the conclusion of Program Year 2010, CCC received congratulatory recognition from the Coordinating Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH). Central City Concern’s Employment Access Center was the program recipient of the CCEH’s 2011 Achievement Award, with all of the employment programs in the center being honored for their contribution to the Portland Metro area’s efforts to end homelessness.

Services

Employment and Training:

With an estimated 5,270 homeless veterans in the service area, the organization is dedicated to expanding its services for the homeless veteran subpopulation. The goal of the Homeless Veterans Project is to assist veterans in their return to mainstream life and self-sufficiency. Homeless veterans who participate in the HVRP program receive skills and interest assessment, as well as individualized employment planning and case management. Staff members provide training and workshops on methods of seeking work, resume creation, interview skills, and other pre-employment training support such as tutorials and classes, computer skills training and vocational training.

During the employment search, veterans have access to a resource center, including personal voice mail, telephones, computers, printers, internet, and fax and copy machines. The Employment Access Center is a designated WorkSource Access center, providing 19 computers in the career center and ongoing access to additional classes and training opportunities. CCC works closely with Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) to provide additional services to veterans. WorkSource is a co-sponsor of the Stand Down every year.

Central City Concern is also the largest employer of formerly homeless individuals in Portland. Of its

nearly 600 staff members who work with homeless participants, roughly 50% are in recovery from addiction to drugs or alcohol, and many have experienced homelessness firsthand. This makes case managers more effective in their interaction with participants, and stronger advocates for CCC programs during discussions with area employers, government agencies and service providers. Veterans receive transportation assistance and extensive job development. CCC has an employment service program developed specifically for ex-offenders. After placement, CCC offers extensive follow-up and retention services, including employer support services.

CCC's community partners provide supplementary employment services, including loan programs and green career options. Mercy Enterprises provides assistance through Individual Development Accounts and loan programs to assist veterans interested in starting their own enterprises. Guidance is offered in the preparation of sound business plans to enhance project success. CCC joined the Coalition of Communities of Color in receiving a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)-funded Pathways Out of Poverty grant to provide green career training to individuals in poverty, including homeless veterans.

CCC has consistently met its goals in assessments, enrollments, and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) referrals, but fell below the mark on employment and housing placements due to extremely fragile and difficult economic conditions and slowly developing participant job readiness. However, as Oregon's employment rate begins to rise, CCC staff members are confident there will be improved placement outcomes. The current entered employment rate is more than double the previous year's rate (34%) and exceeds every annual rate since the first awarded HVRP grant. Even though placements were a struggle each quarter and retention was lower than predicted at some points in the grant cycle, the final rate of employment for the year is an impressive achievement that results from the extended remedial efforts during the fourth quarter.

Housing:

CCC's HVRP partners closely with other CCC departments, especially the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, a complimentary component of the larger "Veterans Team." Two case managers oversee the 50-resident men's GPD program, housed at CCC's Henry Building, and one case manager oversees the 22-resident women's GPD program, housed at the CCC managed Martha Washington Building. Employment specialists maintain at weekly contact with case managers in these programs – and sometimes more often – to ensure the ongoing success of their participants.

Many of CCC's participants arrived with some sort of transitional housing. As a result, while housing placements may seem low for the year, most participants are housed regardless of who was responsible for their placement.

Legal Services:

Multnomah County Department of Adult Community Justice provides assistance to participants who are returning to the community from incarceration, many of whom are veterans. In addition, HVRP staff visit Multnomah County Jails, the federal prison at Sheridan, and other correctional facilities to provide pre-release inmates with information about the services provided by HVRP.

Supportive Services:

Central City Concern's HVRP builds on the strength of the agency's Employment Access Center, its continuum of services and housing, and its collaborations with federal and state agencies, as well as community-based service providers. Connections to support services, housing, medical assistance, mental health counseling and drug and alcohol treatment are provided.

Access to Recovery (ATR) is a SAMSHA funded program administered through Impact Northwest, a

nonprofit agency with a mission to help people achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and to prevent and alleviate the effects of poverty. CCC's HVRP makes referrals to ATR programs for enrolled veterans who are seeking additional support services for recovery.

Extensive supportive services were provided through the Veterans Stand Down recently held in the Portland Metro area, at which more than 770 Veterans were served by 55 employers and 72 service providers at the Oregon Convention Center. CCC partners every year with a wide variety of community partners including WorkSource, Hire Oregon Vets, the VA, the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Retuning Veterans Project and Veterans for Human Rights. For the first time in the history of holding Stand Downs, CCC instituted an on-site HVRP assessment, where new participants met one-on-one with an Employment Specialist to determine emergent needs and make appointments for follow-up. This strategy led to a remarkable "new customer" attendance at the Access Center's orientation and an anticipated increase in assessments and enrollments.

CCC staff meets monthly with staff from local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices to discuss mutual participants and increase coordination of services. VR is also part of the Supported Employment Steering committee. CCC is an active participant in the VA's Community Reintegration Services. CCC's HVRP also participates in the CHALENG program. Staff members from the VA are on site several times a week, meeting with veterans to increase access to services, including a supported employment staff that works specifically with homeless veterans.

Partnerships

Collaboration to develop effective, comprehensive employment services for homeless veterans is a strength of CCC's campaign to help the homeless of northern Oregon and southern Washington. Program successes in housing and employment placements across two states attest to the value of the Central City Concern HVRP program as a replicable "Best Practice."

For more than 30 years, Central City Concern has devoted efforts to developing a powerful, effective coalition of employment service providers by establishing and strengthening collaborative agreements with:

- Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Faith-Based Organizations: Organizations include the Salvation Army, Union Gospel Mission, Teen Challenge, Portland Rescue Mission and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.
- Mercy Enterprises Inc., a division of Mercy Corps
- Pathways out of Poverty Coalition (Green Careers): Partners include: Urban League, Catholic Charities, El Programa Hispano, Hacienda CDC, Verde, Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good, Native American Youth Alliance, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Evening Trades and Apprenticeship Program, Irvington Covenant, Portland Youthbuilders and Oregon Tradeswomen.
- City Commissioners of Portland
- The Office of the Multnomah County Chair
- The Mayor's Office of Vancouver
- The County Administrator in Clark County
- Coalition of Communities of Color
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Multnomah County Department of Adult Community Justice

- Impact Northwest
- WorkSource
- Hire Oregon Vets
- The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Returning Veterans Project
- Veterans for Human Rights
- CHALENG program

To specifically support CCC’s HVRP activities, CCC participates in a wide variety of collaborative agreements and networking opportunities, including:

- Military Resource Network: Employment specialists attend monthly meetings across three counties to conduct outreach for and inform providers of CCC Veterans services.
- Stand Down (coalition of partners)
- Vet Coalition: CCC hosts the monthly Veterans Coalition Meeting at the EAC, with providers from Salvation Army’s Veteran and Family Service Center in Washington Co., Transition Projects, the Portland VA, and the CCC HVRP and Veterans Per Diem Programs.
- Women Veteran’s Networking Breakfast: CCC hosts a quarterly networking breakfast for area providers, schools, and veterans organizations, to discuss topics unique to women veterans.

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	268	265	99%
Program Enrollments	205	184	90%
Employment Enrollments	135	79	59%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.50	\$10.49	110%
Placed in Permanent Housing	204	162	79%
Employment Retention after 180 Days			

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EASTER SEALS OREGON

Service Area: Part of Portland, Salem, Marion, Polk County (Oregon)

“The first thing they see, standing in our entrance, is a white board with a list of recent jobs gained.”

Overview

Since 1947, Easter Seals Oregon has provided training, education, therapy, and support services to people throughout Oregon whose lives are affected by autism, developmental disabilities, physical and mental disabilities, and other special needs. Easter Seals Oregon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, community-based health and human service organization focused on ensuring that children and adults with autism and other disabilities, or special needs, and their families have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities.

Easter Seals Oregon began workforce development programs in the Portland and Salem areas in 2003 and in the Rogue Valley area in 2008, quickly realizing that homelessness among veterans in the Southern Oregon region was widespread and common. In response to this need, Easter Seals Oregon applied for and was awarded its first HVRP grant in 2009 as a non-urban grantee with funding at the maximum \$200,000 annually. Careful budgeting ensures that costs do not exceed that figure.

Easter Seals Oregon’s mantra continues to be “creating solutions, changing lives.” The benefits of their services is expressed in the many positive anecdotes shared by the Easter Seals Oregon team members, who state that the major changes accomplished in the lives of hundreds of veterans cannot be stated with simple numbers. Helping individual veterans obtain employment while moving into an apartment, using strong, personalized goals and plans for the future has been the untold story since the beginning of this program.

Services

Employment and Training:

Easter Seals Oregon’s HVRP strives to provide a positive environment with individualized case management. With a positive, up-beat and supportive approach, Easter Seals Oregon’s staff members treat all veterans with dignity and respect, regardless of their circumstances. When a veteran in the program is ready to find employment, Easter Seals Oregon begins job search preparation, with a focus on addressing all relevant barriers using creative solutions that leverage community assets. If the individualized case management process determines that a veteran is not yet job-ready, Easter Seals Oregon offers targeted referrals to agencies or organizations to meet the needs presented by the participant. All homeless veterans walking into Easter Seals Oregon’s Rogue Valley Service Center see a white board with a list of recent jobs gained through HVRP services.

In addition to job search preparation and individualized case management, staff members provide veterans with continuous guidance throughout the application process, including interview preparation, information from outside presenters, resume building, cover letter assistance and computer classes. Easter Seals Oregon offers proper interview attire, food and transportation assistance when needed.

Job search preparation includes building collateral and securing a stable living environment. This may include obtaining identification necessary for employment in the state of Oregon, addressing addiction and mental health barriers, legal issues and need for housing referrals. Once this has been established, a master application is completed to create a template which the participant may use as a future resource. The information in the template is the basis for a working resume for the participant that is saved to a thumb drive for revisions and updating as needed. A cover letter template is also saved to the thumb drive, and the participant is shown the proper way to address a specific job or employer. With these tools, an

application binder is provided to assist the participant organize the materials necessary for a job search. Items included in the binder are a business card holder, black ink pen, white-out tape, thumb drive, sheet protectors, job search worksheets, calendars and a map of the area. Case Managers have collected over 300 applications from employers in the area and participants can receive assistance completing the applications prior to entering the businesses.

Once a veteran is ready to commence the job search, Easter Seals Oregon offers mock interviews, computer classes and additional trainings such as CPR, flagger certification, food handler's certification, and others. Each of these trainings, certifications and tools become part of an individualized employment plan (IEP) created by the participant and Case Manager.

Easter Seals is connected to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) services through VA offices at two locations, as well as weekly Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) "Imatch" assistance. Proper referrals are given to participants in need of specialized services, including housing and employment. Gina Green from the Oregon Employment Department works at the Easter Seals Oregon office every Monday to assist participants with their Imatch accounts and employment needs. Case Managers and an Outreach Worker have established office hours at the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics (SORCC) both in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Integration Program departments to better meet the needs of the inpatients and those who are participating in various work experience programs.

A Veterans Employment Group, or "Vet Group," is a critical component of the Easter Seals Oregon's HVRP program. With transportation provided by the VA for the residents at the SORCC, and hot coffee and fresh donuts provided each week, homeless veterans are enthusiastic about their participation in the Vet Group. Focusing mainly on the employment needs and concerns of the group members, the Vet Group offers veterans a chance to discuss job goals or opportunities, speak freely about the frustrations and rewards of job searches, and to learn new or different techniques for approaching the job search and interviews. Guest speakers, such as Consumer Credit Counseling, or Frank Lucas – a local motivational speaker – address topics presented by the homeless veterans themselves. The meeting ends with a discussion of job leads and relevant community events, and participants are given the opportunity to utilize two hours of VA transportation to drop off resumes and completed applications or pick up applications anywhere in the county.

Motivated, and with updated resumes in hand, the veterans are ready to go out into the community and either find successful placement or, at the least, additional experience interacting with potential employers. However, the service area is faced with a severe unemployment rate, a lagging economy, and a shrinking business community. The assessments of program participants show a high level of need for employment opportunities and benefits, yet veterans are often not entirely employment ready when referred to Easter Seals Oregon. The unemployment rate has fluctuated been between 10% and 13% for the life of this program, and the county is saturated with job seekers, many of whom compete for the seasonal employment obtained by Easter Seals Oregon's job seekers.

Housing:

In the county served by Easter Seals Oregon, permanent housing is expensive and limited, making it more difficult for program participants to obtain a permanent residence and have a stable home. This housing barrier presents significant obstacles for homeless veterans who are also struggling to secure stable, non-seasonal employment opportunities. However, community partnerships create some housing opportunities that fit the needs of homeless veterans in the program.

A partnership with Access Inc. provides rental, utility, and move-in assistance for those in need. Additionally, the Housing Authority of Jackson County provides housing for low-income residents of Jackson

County, and local faith-based organizations assist with housing placements for homeless veterans. The William H. Moore Center and Columbia Care provide stable and supportive transitional housing for veterans and Oxford Houses provides recovery housing in the community for both men and women.

Legal Services:

Legal services are provided to participants in Easter Seals Oregon's HVRP program through community partners. In particular, Jackson County Community Justice provides supervision and alternative programs to veterans in need of additional legal support. Legal Aid provides legal representation at a nominal fee for veterans in the community. Addictions Recovery Center provides addiction counseling and DUI services at a reduced rate both in the community and at the SORCC.

Supportive Services:

Over the last two years, Easter Seals Oregon has created a network of partnerships to provide supportive services to veterans in the HVRP program, focusing strongly on creating a bond with the local VA SORCC and local government partners. The VA SORCC provides rehabilitation to veterans, including substance abuse and mental and physical health services on both an inpatient and outpatient basis. The community integration program at the VA SORCC provides transportation to the weekly Veteran's Employment Group and to all participants for employment purposes. The Veterans Service Office processes new and updated claims for service-connected disabilities, pensions and other veterans' benefits.

To address participant needs, Easter Seals Oregon either provides or facilitates the provision of various supportive services throughout the community. To combat transportation barriers, assistance is given to participants in the job search phase through tokens, bus passes and outside resources; greater success has been achieved through provision of small benefits that facilitate ongoing communication. Access Inc. provides food and a local food bank and area faith-based organizations also provide food, clothing, and spiritual services in addition to housing services. Consumer Credit Counseling of Southern Oregon provides money management, budgeting, and credit care to veterans and their families.

Easter Seals Oregon also partners with community networks to provide additional medical services for participants. A partnership with La Clinica allows for the provision of free or reduced medical and dental services to the residents of Jackson County. The William H. Moore Center offers detoxification services, while the Grants Pass Vet Center is an outreach clinic offering mental health counseling, group therapy and social events to veterans and their families living in rural areas.

Partnerships

Easter Seals Oregon's partnerships were developed in response to addressing demonstrated needs using creativity. When a potential service gap is elucidated or a veteran presents an unmet need, staff members reach out to community organizations and businesses for resources. To ensure strong relationships, they support the efforts of other organizations or populations. This quid-pro-quo ensures lasting partnerships on which staff members and participants can rely.

Current partnerships include:

- VA SORCC
- Veterans Service Office
- Access Inc.
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Housing Authority of Jackson County
- La Clinica

- National Guard
- Jackson County Community Justice
- Legal Aid
- Community Integration Program: Assists Veterans with reintegration into the community through a variety of activities including sober leisure skills, communication classes, life skills and more.
- Grants Pass Vet Center
- Stakeholders Council SORCC: A council of Veterans and community members created to address Veteran-specific issues both at the SORCC and in the community.
- Addictions Recovery Center
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Goodwill
- Job Council
- Oregon Employment Department
- William H. Moore Center
- Oxford Houses
- Columbia Care
- Consumer Credit Counseling of Southern Oregon

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	105	163	155%
Program Enrollments	95	82	87%
Employment Enrollments	67	40	60%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.35	\$9.69	104%
Placed in Permanent Housing	87	57	66%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	40	4	10%

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GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF HOUSTON

Service Area: Greater Houston metropolitan area (Texas)

“Our employment specialists have been highly successful in their job development efforts. They have built relationships with local employers who are willing to hire veterans with less-than-perfect backgrounds, including ex-offenders.”

Overview

Goodwill Industries Houston’s (Goodwill: Houston) service to veterans began when the organization received HVRP funding in July 2005. Over time, Goodwill’s staff members have become increasingly knowledgeable about the needs of homeless veterans and the best ways to place them into employment. They have built a strong network of community partners and employers that can meet the various needs of their participants.

For Program Years 2005 through 2007, Goodwill: Houston’s HVRP funding was \$299,010 per year. For Program years 2008 through 2011, grant funding has been \$300,000 per year. In 2010, Goodwill Industries Houston was also awarded \$300,000 for an Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) and \$300,000 for a Female Homeless Veterans and Homeless Veterans with Families HVRP program, and these awards were renewed at the same level for Program Year 2011. In addition to these HVRP awards, Goodwill: Houston serves veterans with other DOL funding through the Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP), funded at \$500,000 per year since PY 2009.

Services

Employment and Training:

Through HVRP services, Goodwill: Houston directly provides employment services to homeless veterans. These services include initial assessment, development of an Individual Employment Plan, program orientation, life skills training, work readiness training, job search assistance, resume preparation, interviewing skills, job leads, occupational skills training, job placement and retention services. Goodwill: Houston also provides limited direct assistance in the form of bus passes, license fees, clothes and tools for job interviews and new employment.

The main focus of the program is providing individual attention to each Participant. Participants meet one-on-one with their employment specialist to receive personalized advice and training about job search techniques, life skills, work readiness training and career counseling. These individual sessions reinforce and customize the general training provided in class settings. Strong retention outcomes are a result of targeted employment preparation from day one of the program. Building relationships with the participants encourages them to stay in touch, as does staff members’ efforts to collect multiple forms of contact information for follow-up. Goodwill: Houston provides participants with training in skills they will need to maintain employment, including soft skills like presentation and communication, the use of social networking, time management, interpersonal skills and organizational skills.

Goodwill: Houston’s employment specialists have been highly successful in their job development efforts through building relationships with local employers that are willing to hire veterans with barriers to employment, including ex-offenders with legal records. This gives HVRP participants a significant edge when they apply for available opportunities with these employers.

Community partners also provided critical employment and training services through two-way referrals. Houston Community College and Workforce Solutions provide job training, education, and employment services, while Dress for Success and Tie It Up provide interview clothing for participants.

Housing:

The United States Veterans Initiative (US VETS) has been the strongest partner of the HVRP program. Goodwill's HVRP is located inside US VETS' Midtown Terrace veterans housing program, and most of the HVRP participants are Midtown Terrace residents. US VETS provides outreach and case management services to the HVRP participants under a fees-for-services agreement with Goodwill: Houston.

Housing services are also provided to Goodwill: Houston's HVRP participants through extensive community partnerships that use two-way referrals to connect participants to needed housing and employment services. The Housing Corporation of Houston and Women's Home provide housing services to program participants. Other providers are available for veterans in need of substance abuse services, including Lieutenant House, Open Door Mission and the Salvation Army. Additionally, Goodwill's connection to the Continuum of Care (COC) and Coalition for the Homeless allows for additional connections to housing providers and program outreach activities.

Legal Services:

Legal services are provided through two main community partners. The Houston Volunteer Lawyers' Program and Lone Star Legal Aid provide legal assistance to HVRP participants.

Supportive Services:

Goodwill: Houston partners with a variety of area agencies to provide housing, food, clothing, health care, counseling, substance abuse treatment, transportation and legal assistance to its participants. The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides health and medical services to the veterans, while US VETS provides comprehensive case management for participants.

To support veteran families, Goodwill: Houston has a collection of community partners that provide family support services. Family Services of Greater Houston and Worklife Institute provide counseling on parenting and financial skills. The latter also provides substance abuse counseling. Neighborhood Centers offers childcare assistance, while the Houston Food Bank offers food assistance to low-income veterans and their families.

Partnerships

Goodwill: Houston's partnerships have grown naturally over time as program staff members explore the community and identify the agencies most likely to provide complementary services. In most cases, Goodwill: Houston has developed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with its community partners. Connection to the COC, administered by the Coalition for the Homeless- Houston, allows Goodwill to work in partnership with other community agencies.

Current partners include:

- Dress for Success
- Family Services of Greater Houston
- Housing Corporation of Houston
- Houston Community College
- Houston Food Bank
- Houston Housing Resource
- Houston Volunteer Lawyers' Program
- Lieutenant House

- Lone Star Legal Aid
- Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
- Open Door Mission
- Salvation Army
- Star of Hope Mission
- Tie It Up
- United States Veterans Initiative
- Veterans Administration
- Women's Home
- Workforce Solutions
- Worklife Institute

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	250	334	134%
Program Enrollments	180	235	131%
Employment Enrollments	152	156	103%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.00	\$10.26	114%
Placed in Permanent Housing	180	235	131%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	50	51	102%

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GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE HEARTLAND

Service Area: Scott, Rock Island, Henry, Whiteside, Muscatine, Clinton counties (Illinois and Iowa)

“The program has evolved into a major success as a result of its difficult first year.”

Overview

The first year of Goodwill Industries of the Heartland’s (Goodwill: Heartland) grant was fraught with obstacles. After taking the first few months of the grant cycle to hire the appropriate staff, they were fully staffed and operational by October. However, the program struggled through its first year as a result of staff turnaround and a misunderstanding of program requirements. They struggled to reach goals because of non-existent partnerships, a limited knowledge of how the program should be operated, no file system and no plan for participant retention. The program has evolved into a major success as a result of its difficult first year. After thriving during a second year of grant funding, they are now in their third year and have been very successful.

Goodwill: Heartland was awarded its first HVRP grant in July 2006 in the amount of \$199,000. They now receive \$200,000 per year. The organization operates in six counties in Illinois and Iowa – Scott, Rock Island, Henry, Whiteside, Muscatine and Clinton. The program currently has an annual budget of \$244,778, which includes U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem (GPD) funding and revenue generated by Goodwill stores.

The HVRP program is operated with three full-time staff members and two part-time staff members: a case manager, an employment specialist, a job coach and a rehabilitation counselor. They also have a Follow-Up Specialist who works two hours per week to gather information from veterans who have graduated from the program. The staff is dedicated to the mission of Goodwill Industries of the Heartland’s organization and participants, allowing them to take pride in reaching program goals and helping participants succeed.

Services

Employment and Training:

To keep veterans engaged from the initial point of enrollment, Goodwill: Heartland’s case manager immediately connects veterans to a job coach and employs the veterans in a local Goodwill store. Using an individualized service delivery approach to training, veterans work on punctuality, developing positive relationships with co-workers and management staff, and the various collaborative tasks that are involved in making a retail store run smoothly. Many enrolled participants have few work skills and substantial barriers, including addictions and mental health issues. Working in Goodwill stores for 12 hours per week offers veterans an ideal opportunity to maintain a job while working on the other obstacles in their lives that would otherwise jeopardize their employment.

While working at the Goodwill store, veterans attend weekly classroom sessions that discuss topics such as job development techniques, job searching, interviewing skills, life skills and conflict resolution. Lunch is provided at every class session, motivating veterans to attend and turn in required job search logs. Understanding the needs of individual participants, Goodwill: Heartland allows for excused absences if there is an emergency, health appointment or job interview.

To help prepare homeless veteran participants for the job search and interview process, Goodwill: Heartland offers a variety of employment and job retention services. These services include employment placement; classroom training, including job searching/interviewing; conflict resolution; job retention;

computer skills building; and occupational skills training, including cash register and forklift operation certification. Additional services that help facilitate strong retention results include life skills training, money management, budgeting assistance, and counseling and vocational guidance. Additionally, Goodwill: Heartland provides tools, pays fees, and offers work clothing to participants. On-the-job coaching is provided as needed.

The employment specialist is a critical component of Goodwill: Heartland's success. The employment specialist assists veterans with resume and cover letter writing, job searches and interviewing skills. They stay informed about employment issues by reading articles and newspapers and participating in the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce networking events. By staying active in the community, the employment specialists discover new employers, job training programs and local job fairs.

Legal Services:

N/A

Housing:

Goodwill: Heartland partners with various agencies in the service area to provide the immediate housing, food, vision care and other health needs. These partners provide assistance with obtaining transitional and permanent housing

Supportive Services:

While the primary needs of participants are employment and housing, Goodwill: Heartland provides comprehensive supportive services to ensure employment success and sustained housing. Goodwill Industries of the Heartland has partnerships that allow for food vouchers, vision, health and wellness referrals, and transportation assistance.

A rehabilitation counselor at Goodwill: Heartland facilitates monthly group counseling sessions in which veterans discuss a variety of topics including addictions, criminal histories and general life stressors. This voluntary program allows many veterans a welcomed opportunity to open up to fellow veterans and discuss topics that are often difficult to discuss with others.

Mentor events are also popular activities at Goodwill: Heartland. These events, paid for by the Goodwill Basic Services Fund, include current and former homeless veteran participants and public citizens who act as mentors to other veterans. Past events have included attending a semi-professional baseball game, go-cart racing, fishing and movies.

Recently, Goodwill: Heartland started fitness classes that have helped many participants with losing weight and making changes to their lifestyles that have resulted in better health, including one veteran who credits the program staff with helping him lose 40 pounds. A partner agency, the YMCA of the QC, provides veteran participants with discounted memberships to the facilities in the service area. Expert speakers, such as Hy-Vee, give presentations on healthier living and eating right. These classes are held weekly.

Partnerships

Successful collaborations with partner agencies have been critical to Goodwill: Heartland's success, helping them reach all of their program goals. Originally struggling to find participants in the first operating year, the program now has too many participants and not enough staff to keep up. Goodwill: Heartland oversees their collaboration through attendance at regular community meetings and all veteran functions, COC memberships, and regular contact and communication between Goodwill staff and staff of partner agencies.

Goodwill: Heartland collaborates with a number of agencies to match the needs of veteran participants, including:

- Iowa Works
- VA Homeless Outreach Centers
- County VA Representatives
- YMCA of the QC
- Community Health Care
- Community homeless shelters

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	225	252	112%
Program Enrollments	144	145	101%
Employment Enrollments	101	100	99%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$8.93	\$9.37	105%
Placed in Permanent Housing	97	114	118%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	17	37	218%

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MARYLAND CENTER FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING, INC.

Service Area: Baltimore and central Maryland (Maryland)

“Education is such an important focus of the MCVET program that veterans in the program are referred to as “students,” and they work toward “graduation” to self-reliance, economic independence and community involvement.”

Overview

The Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET), located in Baltimore, Maryland, is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization founded in 1993. MCVET’s mission is to help homeless veterans return to their communities as productive citizens. MCVET’s staff consists of case managers; clinical psychologists; housing program managers; employment specialists; benefits counselors; and a facility manager who provides assistance and round-the-clock supervision for students in the program.

In April 1999, MCVET enhanced its employment services when it received a HVRP grant of \$70,000. The center’s HVRP program has grown every year. Since 2007, MCVET has been receiving \$300,000, the maximum amount awarded to urban programs. MCVET’s Fiscal Year 2011 annual budget is \$3.8 million with funding sources from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD); State of Maryland; Baltimore City; and private and public foundations and donations.

The current grant has been used to provide intensive education and employment services to more than 200 homeless veterans facing significant barriers to employment. Using a “military model program,” MCVET stresses the principles of individual accountability, self-discipline, organization and teamwork. Students are organized into platoons and squads, and are accountable to each other, their fellow platoon members, and the designated platoon leadership. All students are expected, by their peers, to be accountable for their actions. This order and structure replaces the chaos of homelessness and prepares the veterans for re-entry into their community.

Services

Employment and Training:

Education is such an important focus of the MCVET program that veterans in the program are referred to as “students,” and they work toward “graduation” to self-reliance, economic independence and community involvement. Using a military-style social and leadership structure and a college campus community atmosphere, MCVET offers an innovative program that offers homeless veterans supportive services ranging from emergency shelter to permanent housing; from employment readiness and job training to steady gainful employment in high paying jobs, trades and professions; and from substance abuse treatment and low self-esteem to behavior modification, recovery and self-improvement counseling, and self-empowerment courses.

All MCVET veteran participants are evaluated to determine an appropriate employment track. Once it is determined that a student is no longer employable in a particular track, he is placed in another. If a student is deemed employable but has barriers to a specific employment opportunity, he is placed on a different track until the barriers are addressed.

When there is a need to reclassify a student into a different career due to extenuating circumstances, such as seasonal employment, illness, injury or promotion, HVRP funds are instrumental in successfully accomplishing these reclassifications. Salaries are positively impacted through maintaining good employer relations and assuring, as much as possible, that students have the ability and skills needed to obtain and

keep the job. With the HVRP funds, MCVET can help students plan ahead and prepare for the next advancement.

To maintain success, MCVET prepares its students to address all barriers to sustained, gainful employment, such as criminal records, child support issues, medical and mental health issues, and educational or employment qualification deficiencies. With the current economic downturn, employment is largely determined by a client's ability to sustain employment. MCVET's aim is not only to get its students jobs, but also careers. Students must be able to remain marketable and the ability to update, reclassify and maintain certification is critical. The HVRP program has become an integral part of the continuum of services provided by MCVET.

Housing:

MCVET offers housing and case management to students while they are in the program by providing assistance through a continuum of incremental steps that enable students to rejoin their communities as productive citizens. For the first three months, homeless veterans are placed in the Emergency Program housing environment, where Case Managers help determine their needs and challenges, and connect them to stabilization services.

After they have completed the Emergency Program, veterans appear before a Transitional Board to answer questions about their progress and, if granted the permission to move forward, they advance to the Transitional Housing program for an additional two years. Here students work to establish and achieve their educational and employment goals. During the final phase of MCVET, Single Room Occupancy (SRO), the student is given a key to a single room. In order to move to this stage, the student must have some source of sustainable monthly income from work, retirement or disability compensation. During this phase the student prepares to return to independent living in the community.

Legal Services:

N/A

Supportive Services:

Because more than 98% of homeless veterans who enter the MCVET program have addiction problems, and more than 80% have mental disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), students who suffer from mental illness or substance abuse issues receive treatment.

The military issues a DD214 which characterizes the discharge of the veteran upon exiting from military. If given a "Honorable or General Under Honorable Conditions discharge," the student can be seen at a Veteran Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) for all treatment. If given an "Other than Honorable" discharge, MCVET establishes the same services with community agencies and partners.

A clear indicator of the value of the MCVET military structured model is the number of former students who now provide assistance to other homeless veterans struggling with the fears and challenges they once encountered. They serve as examples of what is possible, and are keenly aware of the obstacles students must overcome. MCVET sponsors an annual Alumni Day, where former students return and are honored. Also, alumni students present life skills and recovery lectures in a classroom setting.

Partnerships:

MCVET focuses on providing linkages to other mainstream services in the community to maximize the support available to students. Partnerships are established through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), through monthly or quarterly meetings to assess student progress, and through case management referrals.

MCVET benefits from the assistance of several community partners, including:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- University of Maryland Medical Center
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Maryland State Department of Rehabilitative Services
- Baltimore City Office of Human Services
- Weinberg Foundation: provides educational funding and assistance to the overall program and its female veteran clients.
- Betty Morris and Debbie Jackson Funds: Provide educational funding and assistance to MCVET's female veterans.
- Maryland Workforce Exchange
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP): Supplements and expands ongoing efforts to provide shelter, food and supportive services.
- Maryland Energy Assistance Program
- Maryland Combined Charity Campaign, United Way Campaign, Combined Federal Campaign: Provide donated funds and community response grants as available.
- Baltimore City Community College: Provides computer training to include computer application and internet usage onsite at MCVET.
- University of Maryland, Morgan State University, Coppin State University and Howard University: Provide bachelor and master's level social work interns who, during their course work requirements, provide case management, life skills training and group therapy at MCVET.

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	300	300	100%
Program Enrollments	200	200	100%
Employment Enrollments	160	134	83%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$10.50	\$11.06	105%
Placed in Permanent Housing	200	200	100%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	96	103	107%

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NEW DIRECTIONS, INC.

Service Area: Los Angeles (California)

“We are continually working to forge relationships with companies that are veteran-friendly.”

Overview

Since 1992, New Directions, Inc. (NDI) has been helping veterans address the challenges of life after military service. Originally founded as a drug and alcohol treatment center, NDI has evolved into a dynamic organization guided by a mission to “empower veterans and facilitate their successful return to families and society.” According to the 2011 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Report by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, veteran homelessness now accounts for 18% of the LA County homeless population, an increase of 3% from the previous year. Similarly startling are estimates from 2009 to 2011 that show female veteran homelessness increased 51%, male veteran homelessness increased 22%, and chronic homelessness among veterans increased from 19% to 31%. NDI helps homeless veterans and other veterans at risk of homelessness in the Los Angeles area transform their lives.

New Directions has received \$300,000 in funding from HVRP for each year since July 2009, and approximately \$230,000 since 2006. The current operating budget for NDI’s Vocational Program is \$553,069, with \$300,000 from HVRP and \$143,432 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Additional program funding and general operating funds are obtained through private foundation grants, events and individual donations.

NDI is nationally recognized as a best practice model by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and others for treating the co-occurring disorders of addiction and mental illness. NDI operates five separate facilities in Los Angeles County, where 600 veterans receive help to recover from habitual substance abuse, receive appropriate mental health care, improve vocational skills, find employment or obtain benefits income, reunite with their families, and find permanent housing. Current program expansions include permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans.

Services

Employment and Training:

NDI’s excellent record is a testament to the strength of the case management, supervision and employment services offered by the three-person vocational team. The Employment Team has been able to leverage funding from other sources to pay for clothing, legal services and training. This keeps the cost per placement relatively low. In addition, the Employment Team has focused on identifying more short-term, skill-specific trainings which are typically at a lower cost. Employment services include vocational training and job placement assistance. To help increase community connections and visibility, NDI has developed relationships with partners such as Preservation Arts, a historic preservation company specializing in historic masonry restoration and other media, and Operation Hounds for Heroes.

NDI utilizes specialized employment to contribute to the community and provide veterans in the HVRP program with useful skills and employment. A current example of specialized employment opportunities is a project, now underway, where a number of formerly homeless veterans in the HVRP program are working to restore Victorian homes at Heritage Square through their Preservation Through Practice project and in collaboration with the company Preservation Arts. The project began with a series of classroom lectures tied to the specific historical period and architectural design elements, and is in alignment with environmentally safe “green jobs.” The participants gain specialized credentials, such as the OSHA Lead Abatement Certificate and the Scaffold Safety Certification. Additionally, through the building trades and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) engineering department, plus great support from 7-Eleven Corporation which pays an average of \$10.25 per hour and allows for many hours of overtime, NDI has been able to leverage extremely competitive wages. Early engagement with the participants meant the

employment team was able to help them resolve any retention issues.

In Program Year 2010, NDI exceeded all but one goal. In spite of the poor economy and participants' multiple barriers to entering the job market, NDI continues to place participants in jobs with living wages and with an average hourly wage at placement that is well above the current state and federal minimum wage standard. In 2010, residents received computer training in NDI's updated in-house computer lab; 63% of residents had a comprehensive vocational assessment; 38% received vocational training; and 30% were placed into employment. These numbers represent significant achievement considering that 69% of participants were, using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition, chronically homeless, and 76% have a diagnosed mental illness.

Housing:

The services provided at NDI's transitional residential facilities include transition assistance and permanent housing placement. NDI has been at the forefront of obtaining permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans in Los Angeles County and has been able to leverage HUD-VASH vouchers more quickly and find apartment management partners far faster transitions into housing.

Already in the works is the New Directions Sepulveda project, which opens in mid-2013 and will provide 147 units to disabled men and women veterans with low or very low income who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. NDI is working with the City of Los Angeles to acquire foreclosed properties in the area that will provide shared community-based housing for veterans through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Veteran-owned businesses and the employment of veteran workers will be given priority during the bidding process as these properties are renovated.

Legal Services:

The services provided at NDI's transitional residential facilities include legal assistance. In 2009, NDI secured a \$1 million, three-year grant, in partnership with Public Counsel, to establish a special court for veterans as part of the Los Angeles County Court system and help to establish similar courts in California and elsewhere. This court provides an alternative to regular sentencing through structured intervention and integrated services for veterans who are struggling with combat-related mental illnesses and addictions so they receive treatment rather than the permanent stigma of incarceration. For many veterans, this is a critical component of a program that offers seamless reintegration into the workforce.

Supportive Services:

Because the primary service needs of the veterans in NDI's program are drug and alcohol addiction treatment, mental health treatment and housing, NDI focuses on addressing the immediate mental health needs of homeless veterans as an organizational priority. They operate the only 24/7 emergency residential detoxification center for veterans in all of Los Angeles County, and provide one-stop treatment for mental health and substance abuse treatment, striving to be at the forefront of developing and implementing programs and services to benefit veterans who are at risk of homelessness.

NDI provides a broad spectrum of mental health and substance abuse treatment and services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness. Through services guided by best practices, participants overcome their psychological and economic challenges and achieve long-term solutions. The services provided at NDI's transitional residential facilities include: detox and addiction recovery; mental health services, including individual and group counseling; case management; remedial education; money management; family reunification assistance; aftercare; and prevention of chronic homelessness.

Meeting the specialized needs of groups such as women veterans and returning veterans from the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are developing priority areas for NDI. NDI's Women's Program, serving the needs of female veterans, was the first of its kind in the nation. New Directions' Operation Welcome Home program is specifically designed for vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who are struggling with both substance addiction and mental health issues; there are no other treatment programs in the Los

Angeles area designed for this distinct population.

Partnerships

To best meet the needs of the homeless veterans, New Directions partners with dozens of different organizations. These include government agencies; corporations; foundations; employment providers; housing providers; healthcare providers; veterans' services providers and others. Partners are identified based on such criteria as the specific programs and services they provide, their track record, and their willingness to collaborate. These criteria can include such diverse services as employment training; housing development; general medical services; and funding opportunities. Some are based on simple referrals, while others involve formal contracts or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).

For example, NDI has recently developed a close relationship and received major funding for facility renovations from the Home Depot Foundation. Their national and local foundation staff have met with NDI and toured the main facility.

Some examples of major supporters and key partners include:

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development
- The Home Depot Foundation
- UniHealth Foundation
- Restoration Arts
- Department of Labor
- Preservation Arts
- Operation Hounds for Heroes
- The Ahmanson Foundation
- 7-Eleven Corporation
- Rose Hills Foundation
- L.A. County Department of Mental Health
- A Community of Friends
- Venice Family Clinic
- Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	125	127	102%
Program Enrollments	82	91	111%
Employment Enrollments	66	65	98%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.00	\$11.64	129%
Placed in Permanent Housing	34	46	135%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	9	13	144%

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INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Service Area: San Diego (California)

“Interfaith has become a national model for faith community involvement in addressing community needs.”

Overview

Interfaith Community Services (Interfaith), advocating a community approach to veteran services, was formed in 1979 by a small group of North County Faith Communities to address the growing problems of poverty and homelessness. Recognizing the multiple needs and stifled accessibility to community services, Interfaith began addressing those needs within its own service delivery system. Realizing a growing need for veteran services near Marine Base Camp Pendleton, Interfaith began replicating its service delivery model in the north coastal area in 2005. North County Interfaith Council, doing business as Interfaith Community Services, now has partnerships with over 450 diverse faith communities in San Diego County.

Interfaith began its HVRP program concurrently with its U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) transitional housing program in 1999, with a grant award of \$80,000. Interfaith has continued to receive funding since that time, with the current grant at \$300,000. Meeting the needs of homeless veterans in this service area carries high costs that have always exceeded the grant awards. To fill this funding gap, Interfaith has spent years developing partnerships with the San Diego community that have provided cash, resources and services with an aggregate value exceeding its HVRP grant award by 100%.

What began as a small food pantry staffed by volunteers is now a seamless continuum of care operated by over 120 paid staff; an all-volunteer Board of over 24 community activists; more than 6,000 volunteers in direct service; and a membership of hundreds of faith-based community organizations. Interfaith has become a national model for faith community involvement in addressing community needs.

Services

Employment and Training:

Interfaith provides or coordinates the delivery of a comprehensive array of employment services. Services include job training workshops, classroom training and placement assistance. Interfaith also offers job training for families and extended follow-up services after job placements, which are provided for an additional year after the HVRP mandatory 270-day follow-up. Interfaith has subcontracted and operated comprehensive vocational programs including: Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); SSA HOPE Benefits project; WIA 25% Dislocated Worker; WIA 15%; Title I Adult; Recently Separated Veterans Pilot Project; and VEAP PY 2005-12. All of these collaborations are maintained through on-going meetings, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and contracts.

Interfaith utilizes strong community partnerships to achieve employment objectives. As operator of both North County One-Stop Career Centers, the San Diego Workforce Partnership provides self-directed employment services, customized job search assistance workshops, and referrals to center partner agencies and the homeless veteran participants at Interfaith. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) are linked to the local One-Stop Career Center Network. The Employment Development Department (EDD) DVOPs and LVERs provide outreach, prescreening, Employment Development Plan (EDP) development; and intensive job search assistance, including assistance registering in Cal Jobs – a statewide database of job openings. They also assist Interfaith in case management and follow-up efforts.

Interfaith has recently applied to become an Employment Network (EN) provider under the Social Secu-

rity Administration's Ticket to Work program. If approved, Interfaith will assist beneficiaries in obtaining employment and working towards financial independence.

Housing:

Interfaith offers a continuum of housing services from emergency and transitional to permanent supportive and affordable housing. In addition to Interfaith's 72-bed Veterans Housing program and 10-bed Veterans Recuperative Care Housing program in Escondido, Interfaith has opened a 19-unit transitional housing program in Oceanside serving 72 homeless veterans each year, and a four-unit apartment building for homeless families with a disabled adult household member.

Interfaith utilizes strong connections with federal partners to provide housing resources for its participants. Interfaith receives Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds for homeless individuals. These funds include four McKinney grants to enhance transitional housing for homeless individuals and families. In addition, Interfaith holds another HUD grant that funds beds for a Sobering Services Program, which provides treatment and shelter to individuals with drug and alcohol addictions. As a result of the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, the VA is strongly linked to Interfaith through its collaboration with the Homeless Veterans Outreach Team. Interfaith also makes referrals to the VA for HUD-VASH vouchers, when appropriate.

Interfaith has an ongoing contract with the New Resolve Residential Program at Veterans Village of San Diego. It provides transitional housing, job training and placement, and support services to homeless veterans and other single homeless people. For the veterans in the 44 available beds, Interfaith provides staff personnel and supportive services. Interfaith also works with Fairweather Lodge, which provides shared permanent housing and employment to adults with mental illness.

Legal Services:

In partnership with San Diego County Superior Court, in 2010 Interfaith staff and volunteer advocates assisted 79 veterans who needed assistance or guidance with legal matters that were barriers to vocational goals. Interfaith is active in the Homeless Court Program (HCP), which gives homeless people an opportunity to resolve outstanding warrants. Local shelters host a special court session for misdemeanor cases and judges give court sentences for program activities in which participants are already involved.

Supportive Services:

Interfaith's services began at the most basic level with an emergency food program. A pantry was established using donated food distributed by volunteers. Understanding that hunger does not exist in isolation, staff members at Interfaith set out to address other major barriers to independent living: homelessness; under- or non-employment; inadequate parenting skills; physical; emotional and mental illness; illiteracy; lack of education and social skills; lack of awareness of available resources; and most of all, hopelessness, loss of human dignity and spiritual crises.

To meet the needs of participants, Interfaith has developed a unique, comprehensive system of services that propels those in need to their highest level of self-sufficiency. Through its continuum of care, Interfaith employs a multifaceted approach to participant services, including basic needs assistance such as food, clothing, emergency shelter, intensive therapy for participants with PTSD/TBI, transportation support, medical services, psychological counseling to deal with long-term therapeutic changes, and substance abuse counseling and recovery support. Interfaith also offers financial literacy education to help clients understand budgeting, saving and bank accounts.

Interfaith offers services to veteran families. The Safety Net for Veteran Families program provides services for spouses and children of recently separated veterans. They also provide childcare support for families.

Through a collaboration with the VA, the Homeless Veterans Outreach Team provides four licensed social workers that visit Interfaith once a week to conduct mental health assessments of participants as needed. As part of this partnership, 100% of participants are referred for VA services, which include medical, dental, Compensated Work Therapy (CWT), Alcohol Drug and Treatment Program (ADTP, permanent housing (HUD-VASH) and rehabilitation services. When participants are not eligible for these services through the VA, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and County Mental Health Services (CMS) provides medical care, counseling, support groups and therapy.

The largest contributing factor to the success of Interfaith's HVRP program model is the resources gained from the faith-based community of 450 diverse organizations throughout San Diego. Interfaith's veterans department has established relationships with faith centers that have an abiding concern for homeless veterans, frequently resulting in support matches exclusively reserved for veterans. The Faith-Based Community Development Corporation (FBCDC) provides financial literacy for participants using the "Money Smart" program developed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). These collaborations have enabled Interfaith to leverage countless resources, thereby increasing San Diego's capacity to provide comprehensive services to veterans.

Partnerships

Supportive and direct services are provided through many partner agencies, including:

- The San Diego Workforce Partnership
- Faith Centers
- Veterans Homeless Court Program
- Employment Development Department
- New Resolve Residential Program
- The Veterans Administration
- San Diego County Superior Court
- Department of Health and Human Services
- County Mental Health Services
- The Regional Continuum of Care Council: With Interfaith as a member since 1995, this Council undertakes planning and implementation strategies to prevent and alleviate homelessness throughout San Diego County, and coordinates efforts that are undertaken by more than 100 organizations.
- North County Task Force on the Homeless: In 1992, Interfaith was a founding member of the Task Force, a collaboration of 25 community-based organizations (CBOs), government agencies and elected officials who have developed a continuum of care for the homeless in north San Diego County.
- San Diego County Veteran Service Office
- The Faith-Based Community Development Corporation
- Veterans Village of San Diego
- Veterans Homelessness Prevention Demonstration Program (VHPD): Interfaith in partnership with Vietnam Veterans of San Diego (VVSD) and St. Vincent de Paul Village is providing housing placement and stability while preventing homelessness for at least 300 veteran households over a three-year period.
- Social Security Administration Ticket to Work
- New Resolve Residential Program

- SSA HOPE Benefits Project

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	100	117	117%
Program Enrollments	86	89	103%
Employment Enrollments	65	67	103%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$12.00	\$16.27	136%
Placed in Permanent Housing	60	72	120%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	56	60	107%

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OPERATION STAND DOWN NASHVILLE, INC.

Service Area: Nashville (Tennessee)

“Attending the [Stand Down] event is the first step in many veterans’ journey back to a successful and responsible life within the community.”

Overview

Operation Stand Down Nashville, Inc. (OSDN) has provided services to homeless veterans since 1993, when a coalition of Nashville organizations used the military term “stand down” – which describes the temporary movement of combat soldiers to a safe place to rest, relax and renew their spirit – to organize a three-day event for veterans who were homeless. The event continues to be held during the fall each year. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) granted OSDN 501(c)3 nonprofit status in 1996. In 1999, OSDN’s Board of Directors elected to expand services to homeless veterans by becoming a full-time service agency. OSDN operates under the principles that no veteran should feel hopeless; no veteran who can work should be jobless; and no veteran should ever be homeless. To meet these principles, OSDN prides itself on being an organization of veterans for veterans, with staff comprised of 90% veterans, and of strong community partnerships that are renewed at the annual Stand Down.

During 2001, OSDN received an HVRP grant for assisting homeless veterans with employment and job readiness training. Since 1997, OSDN has been an eligible recipient of funds through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded OSDN its “EPIC Award” (Exemplary Performance in the Community) for its work serving veterans through the Stand Down event. In 2006, DOL awarded OSDN its second “EPIC Award” in recognition of innovative workplace programs and initiatives that increased equal employment opportunity for homeless veterans. Also in 2006, DOL named OSDN as a “Best Practices” organization, a distinction staff members work tirelessly to maintain. The number of veterans and their families coming to OSDN seeking help continues to increase. In 2010, 2,049 individual veterans received assistance, a 23% increase from 2009. This rate of growth continued throughout 2011.

Services

Employment and Training:

At OSDN, service to veterans is a team effort beginning with their first visit to the Veteran Service Center, where a veteran service coordinator (VSC) reviews the intake documents and interviews each veteran to determine service needs and how best to meet them.

Veterans seeking employment are assisted by an employment counselor (EC) in developing and implementing an employment plan. The VSC/EC team provides comprehensive help supporting the veteran’s employment search. Bus passes are provided when the veteran has a job interview and when they become employed.

Once hired, the team assesses the remaining barriers that might make sustained employment difficult for the participant. Veterans are provided appropriate work clothing, support, and any necessary tools or equipment. The VSC/EC works with the participants as they progress through their individual plans for success, offering additional help as needed. While established goals for success have always been exceeded, true success is shown when a veteran returns to the community as a contributing citizen living a responsible life. Veterans incur no cost for receiving services in OSDN’s Veteran Service Center.

In 2010, OSDN’s Employment Department helped 254 veterans find full-time jobs, and 72% of those

stayed employed for at least nine months. DOL has recognized OSDN several times for success in helping veterans reenter and remain in the workforce. In 2010, the DOL awarded OSDN a Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) Grant. Through this grant, the Employment Department formally collaborates with Tennessee State University, Actus Community Fund, and Campbell Crossing LLC on a “Green Skills” training program.

Housing:

Since 2001, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided support through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program for OSDN’s seven home Transitional Housing Program (THP), which offers wrap-around services through which homeless male and female veterans, dealing with a variety of issues, work themselves back into responsible community living. Originally, a Veteran Service Center offering a wide range of assistance to honorably discharged veterans was opened and four homes were purchased for a Transitional Housing Program able to serve 30 veterans, with three beds for female veterans and 27 beds for male veterans. OSDN has since added three additional homes and is now able to serve 42 veterans, seven female and 35 male.

Legal Services:

Legal services are offered to homeless veterans annually through a multi-day Stand Down event.

Supportive Services:

OSDN is the primary Middle Tennessee nonprofit resource for veterans providing supportive services such as individual identification, employment readiness training, placement assistance, transitional housing, and coordination of a wide range of other community services.

In August 2009, after 10 years, OSDN moved from its original location to a much larger facility across the street, increasing facility capacity from less than 5,000 square feet to 16,500 square feet. The move facilitated an appreciable expansion of program services for veterans and their families. OSDN receives financial support from a variety of government and private sector sources and is able to coordinate a multitude of services for veterans and their families because of the tremendous community support for veterans in Nashville and Middle Tennessee. Most of those alliances are generated during and maintained after the annual Stand Down.

OSDN’s annual three-day “Stand Down” event for homeless veterans provides medical, dental/vision screenings, social service agency contacts, food, legal services, clothing, entertainment, a safe environment and much more. The 2010 event served 408 homeless veterans supported by over 125 organizations and almost 800 volunteers. Attending the event is the first step in many veterans’ journey back to a successful and responsible life within the community. Vision, dental and other medical needs are addressed either directly by OSDN or through community partners.

Partnerships

OSDN provides services directly and through many community partners. Most of OSDN’s community partnerships are informal, with partners providing services unavailable at OSDN such as family housing and medical care. In return, partners send veterans to OSDN for such items as employment training and placement that they do not provide. Several organizations and agencies provide help to veterans on-site at the Veterans Service Center. Overall, over 100 agencies and organizations support OSDN in various ways.

Partner agencies include:

- Department of Labor
- Food Stamps

- Internal Revenue Service
- Tennessee State Department of Employment and Workforce Development
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Prevent Blindness
- Tennessee State University
- Actus Community Fund
- Campbell Crossing LLC

Results

Measure (7/1/10-6/30/11)	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	240	277	115%
Program Enrollments	220	238	108%
Employment Enrollments	160	177	110%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$10.00	\$10.77	108%
Placed in Permanent Housing	80	90	112%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	73	79	108%

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PEOPLE ASSISTING THE HOMELESS (PATH)

Service Area: Los Angeles (California)

“By placing all of the services homeless and at-risk individuals need under one roof, participants are able to easily access multiple services and address multiple issues.”

Overview

The first PATHFinders Job Center was founded in 1993 at what is now its Westside Center. In 2002, the PATHFinders Job Center expanded to include a second location in PATH's Regional Homeless Center at the edge of the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, vastly increasing the capacity to provide employment assistance to homeless and at risk veterans. The CHALENG 2009 Survey shows 8,197 homeless veterans in greater Los Angeles, the largest population in the region. The 2009 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count indicated 40% of homeless veterans reside within Service Planning Areas (SPAs) 4 and 5, the area in which the PATHFinders Job Center is located. Within LA County, many veterans have minor dependents. PATHFinders' staff strives to meet these challenges by connecting their participants to highly coveted employment opportunities in the community.

Funding from HVRP was approved in April 2000. During the first year of HVRP funding, the program received \$103,441. During Fiscal Year 2011, PATHFinders received \$130,000 in HVRP funds. The Job Center's total budget for Fiscal Year 2011 is \$365,855. In addition to HVRP funding, the PATHFinders Job Center is supported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California, and the Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation.

Since the inception of the program, PATHFinders has worked to increase its participants' employability by shifting emphasis to training and job placement activities in highly sought professions, including security, forklift operation, building maintenance and property management.

Services

Employment and Training:

PATH's employment philosophy states that homeless veterans who are able to receive other services they need, while simultaneously receiving employment assistance, are far more likely to overcome their personal barriers and successfully re-enter society. The PATHFinders Job Center is located in the same facility as the innovative PATHMall collaborative, which brings together more than a dozen supportive services in a single location. By placing all of the services homeless and at risk individuals need under one roof, participants are able to easily access multiple services and address multiple barriers, including homelessness, poor health, mental illness, substance abuse issues and legal problems, while simultaneously addressing their unemployment.

In order to successfully develop new placement strategies to combat the ongoing recession, PATH first looked at ways to connect participants to employers without depending on more traditional employment strategies. The first step in achieving this was to identify all vendors, service providers and contractors currently providing services to PATH. Next, staff members invited all of these groups and companies to participate in an informational session focusing on promoting the Veterans Initiative. Potential employers were provided with a program overview, reasons veterans make good employees, participant resumes, statistics and personal testimonies from participants. Surprisingly, none of the companies knew about this particular program and the extent to which participants are trained and supported. Once they were fully informed, all were willing to use the program as a primary resource to find prospective employees. While none of these companies guaranteed employment, all promised to give participants a fair chance to compete. Because several veterans have already found successful employment with partner companies,

the eventual goal is to add a stipulation to contractual agreements with community service providers that would mandate consideration of veterans as potential employees.

The PATHFinders Job Center partners with other PATH programs and outside service providers to offer a wide range of employment services for homeless veterans. These services include job placement, office resources, job preparation workshops, training programs, professional clothing and transportation. A regularly updated job board provides a list of available positions. Employment Associates provide job placement assistance customized to each participant's unique skills and needs. PATHFinders provides the resources and equipment necessary to conduct an effective job search, including computers with internet access, telephones, fax machines, printers, copiers and individual voicemail. Workshops help prepare participants for attending interviews and succeeding in the workplace, and include topics such as resume preparation, email and internet use, interview techniques and workplace culture. Participants can increase their marketability by enrolling in classes such as adult literacy, Microsoft Office software, customer service, forklift certification and property management. To help participants make the best impression at interviews, PATH provides professional, interview-appropriate clothing. PATHFinders provides participants with bus tokens for travel to job fairs, vocational training and interviews. Participants may also receive coupons for discounted bus passes.

Housing:

With the assistance of partner institutions, PATH has brought homeless veterans off the streets into transitional housing, helped veterans find employment, and provided supportive services through PATHMall service center. Each of PATH's partner agencies either directly provides crucial services like substance abuse treatment and employment assistance to veteran participants, or partners with the program through participant referrals.

Legal Services:

Legal services are provided at the PATHMall through Public Counsel. Additionally, ex-offender services are provided by the Walden House.

Supportive Services:

The CHALENG 2009 Survey for Greater Los Angeles identified homeless veterans' major needs as permanent housing, assistance obtaining public benefits, emergency shelter, treatment for dual diagnoses and employment assistance. PATH staff members are increasingly seeing veterans who are also experiencing new and unexpected barriers to employment – being considered over qualified, having been absent from the traditional job market, and screening processes that include social media scans and credit checks.

Because PATHFinders is located within the PATHMall at the Regional Homeless Center, the homeless and at-risk veterans served by the program have easy access to additional supportive services provided by PATH and its many partners. Services available to HVRP participants through these partnerships within the PATHMall include: rapid re-housing assistance, linkages to emergency and transitional housing, health care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and public benefits assistance. Participants can receive daily lunches and have access to a full-service salon to build confidence prior to job interviews.

Partnerships

PATH manages these collaborations through formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and maintains constant communication between PATH staff and personnel of participating agencies to ensure partnership agreements are upheld.

Partner agencies include:

- U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- US Veterans Initiative
- The Salvation Army Haven
- California Department of Veteran Affairs
- PATH Ventures
- Business and Job First
- Wilshire and Hollywood Work Source Centers
- TOWN RIDE Inc.

Results

Measure	Goal (Year)	Actual (4th Quarter)	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	66	34	200%
Program Enrollments	125	25	113%
Employment Enrollments	55	20	153%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$10.00	\$11.28	113%
Placed in Permanent Housing	45	22	146%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	80	100	125%

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PHILADELPHIA VETERANS MULTI-SERVICE AND EDUCATION CENTER

Service Area: Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)

“The Center’s innovative focuses on specialized assistance for the aging, disabled and women veterans have earned the organization a national reputation for providing seamless services delivery across the full continuum of care.”

Overview

The Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service and Education Center (PVMSEC) has met or exceeded all of its HVRP program goals consistently since the inception of the project. Part of that success can be attributed to the outreach efforts of the organization to homeless veterans and to area service providers and employers. Success has also resulted from the comprehensive range of services veterans can access immediately at its day center, The Perimeter.

The PVMSEC was first awarded an HVRP grant in 1990 to fund its employment, training and job placement services. The success of the program resulted in a new grant of \$300,000 for Program Year 2010.

Administered by PVMSEC and borrowing its name from the tactical military boundary between danger and relative safety, The Perimeter is a homeless veteran day center providing a comprehensive range of on-site supportive services and referrals to federal, state and municipal assistance programs for low-income families and the homeless. Homeless veterans arrive at the Perimeter through referrals from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and community-based service providers, and through PVMSEC outreach initiatives.

Services

Employment and Training:

Veterans have immediate, on-site access funded by the U. S. Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) HVRP program. Services provided to the veteran participant begin with an assessment of personal needs, skills and training necessary for job placement. Results of the assessment are incorporated into an individual plan that includes housing, supportive services and job preparation and placement assistance.

Once participants are enrolled, Case Managers help them remain on track and facilitate referrals to whatever services are needed to ensure success. Through The Perimeter, residents have access to mailing addresses, computers, telephones and other services that help reduce the cost of daily living and employment searches. The program includes job placement, help with personal budgets and financial management, and follow-up services. Other educational and vocational program needs are addressed through participant plans and referrals to other area agencies.

Targeted training and education courses help participants achieve job readiness and skills to support self-sufficiency. Training courses on-site include computer repair, A+Certification, welding, C-Tech Training, and resume writing. Additionally, daily educational sessions are offered on developing life skills, relationships, personal care health issues, substance abuse programs, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and financial planning.

The program’s successful efforts to develop and maintain employment opportunities for its participants is accomplished through constant and determined communication with employers throughout Philadelphia; Delaware; and Chester, Bucks, and Montgomery counties in Pennsylvania.

Housing:

Placement in the Transitional Housing Program, LZII, is available to homeless veterans who qualify for PVMSEC programs at the Coatesville VA Medical Center. Qualification depends on verification of benefits eligibility from the VA and proving substance-free status for at least 90 days. Depending on individual plans and participant progress, veterans may stay in the transitional housing program for up to two years.

Legal Services:

A veteran Outreach Specialist from the VA Regional Office provides on-site benefits counseling and helps veterans file claims and applications for discharge upgrades. Legal assistance is also available through the Homeless Advocacy Project.

Supportive Services:

Once inside The Perimeter, the veteran has immediate access to showers, haircuts, other hygiene services, food, clothing, laundry and bathroom facilities, emergency shelter, counseling, referrals to services, and transportation assistance. The Perimeter accommodates both men and women veterans, regardless of their VA eligibility status. This support is provided by the PVMSEC staff, which includes an administrator; veteran intake counselor; assessment specialists; case managers; a veterans benefits and job development specialist; and a life skills instructor.

Medical and mental assessment, treatment and referrals are an integral part of the services offered daily on-site at The Perimeter. Veterans who are eligible for VA benefits receive medical services through the VA, while ineligible veterans receive treatment and follow-up services at network agencies. Because a large number of PVMSEC participants are elderly or in need of support as they address mental health and substance abuse issues, all participants are offered access to extensive support systems. The assistance network, in which PVMSEC operates, is one of the most extensive in the nation. Compliance with treatment plans can pose problems for homeless veteran participants, but The Perimeter staff prides itself on offering close supervision and support, providing scheduling and transportation assistance.

Partnerships

PVMSEC has sponsored the Philadelphia Stand Down for 20 years, and works closely with several agencies that help veterans facing significant barriers to employment and independent living through memorandums of understanding (MOUs).

A partial list of partners includes:

- VA Medical Centers in Philadelphia and Coatesville
- U.S. Department of Labor (VETS and ETA)
- Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
- Deputy Managing Director's City Outreach
- Homeless Advocacy Project
- Tenant's Advocacy Group
- Pierce College
- Goodwill Industries Inc.
- Maxwell Group
- Menz Fit
- United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania

- U.S. Small Business Administration
- University of Pennsylvania-Upward Bound
- PA Prison Society
- American Red Cross
- Project Connections
- Project HOME
- OESS Shelter Plus Care-Veterans Housing Program
- Pennsylvania CareerLink
- Consumer Credit Counseling Services
- American Legion
- Veterans Advisory Commission
- Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board
- Catholic Social Services
- Salvation Army Offices – Philadelphia-Scranton, PA-Wilmington DE- Buffalo NY

Results

Measure	Goal (Year)	Actual (4th Quarter)	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	230	237	104%
Program Enrollments	150	150	100%
Employment Enrollments	100	84	84%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$8.75	\$12.01	130%
Placed in Permanent Housing	55	53	98%
Employment Retention after 180 Days			

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SEARCH HOMELESS SERVICES

Service Area: Harris County, Houston (Texas)

“SEARCH maintains reciprocal relationships with staff at various One-Stop locations, particularly the DVOPs and LVERs. These relationships facilitate access to critical resources by homeless veterans.”

Overview

SEARCH Homeless Services has been providing employment services to homeless persons since 1992. After the first year of HVRP funding in 2008, SEARCH re-evaluated its staffing levels, which originally included a program director, three full-time case managers and one full-time outreach specialist. During the second year of funding, SEARCH eliminated the outreach position and added an additional case manager. This flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of participants allowed outreach to be done by all case managers, who would then develop their own community relationships to facilitate referrals to the program.

Initial funding for employment services came through Job Training Partnership Act funds. Additional funding came later with support from the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board, a Supportive Services Only grant through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) since 1996, and the Homeless Housing and Services Program from the State of Texas since 2010.

Since 2008, SEARCH has received \$300,000 annually in HVRP funding to provide intensive case management and employment assistance to homeless veterans. HUD funding also continues to support this program, resulting in an employment services program budget of \$678,802 for Fiscal Year 2011. This budget amount includes approximately \$52,000 from Workforce Solutions and State of Texas sources that expired within the first quarter of the fiscal year.

In the last program year, SEARCH was able to increase its assessments to increase enrollments and exceeded the average wage measure because of a small number of participants who had employable skills sets and no felonies, and who were able to enter employment at \$10.00 an hour. Additionally, the SEARCH Manager of Employment Services is a member of the Steering Committee of the local VA Five-Year Plan to End Homelessness among Veterans. The Executive Vice President of SEARCH has participated in a strategy work group charged with oversight and coordination of Houston’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Executive Vice President also co-chairs a statewide advocacy committee through the Texas Supportive Housing Coalition that was responsible for bringing an additional \$5.7 million into the Houston area for homeless supportive services. The President/CEO of SEARCH has provided leadership over the past several years to bring together CEOs and Board Chairs of the 13 largest homeless agencies in the Houston community to prepare for implementation of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.

Services

Employment and Training:

The experience of the SEARCH Employment Services program indicates four prevailing reasons that homeless veterans experience difficulty in securing employment: little or no education, little or no work history, multiple felonies, and a disabling condition such as a mental health diagnosis, alcoholism or drug addiction. In order to help homeless veterans overcome these barriers and obtain necessary services, SEARCH utilizes a strategy consisting of outreach; intake and assessment; intensive case management that utilizes Motivational Interviewing; job development and placement with an emphasis on training; and post placement follow-up and retention services.

There are several innovative approaches utilized by the SEARCH employment services program. Case managers receive intensive training and one-on-one coaching in Motivational Interviewing, which is an evidence-based practice used with persons seeking to change behaviors. Using this approach, case managers start where the participants are and help them identify their own goals for success. In order to provide veterans with greater opportunities for employment, SEARCH makes funds available for non-traditional training such as fork lift operator, warehouse manager, and “Over the Road” truck driving. Additional funding from the U.S. Department of Education through Houston Community College allows SEARCH to be one of 21 Literacy Consortium members in the community that receive funding for adult literacy classes. Adult literacy, adult basic education and GED preparation services are available on-site through the SEARCH Adult Education program.

Strong relationships with local partners have helped SEARCH staff members supplement necessary employment services for participants. Because SEARCH operated a demonstration Career Center for four years, and several staff are former Career Center employees, SEARCH maintains reciprocal relationships with staff at various One-Stop locations, particularly the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER). These relationships facilitate access to critical resources by homeless veterans. The partnership with Worklife Institute also provides job search and placement.

Since many of the veterans receiving services have had difficulties in the past retaining employment, SEARCH has developed a comprehensive follow-up program. Once a veteran becomes employed, they are introduced to the follow-Up specialist and invited to participate in nine months of weekly group mentoring that focuses on promoting job retention. Because many program participants do not have extensive work histories, they need to develop the interpersonal skills for employment success and be prepared to meet employer expectations. The mentoring groups allow participants to discuss issues such as how to respond to and work with supervisors, communication styles, and how to resolve problems with coworkers. To encourage full participation, incentives are offered such as a Metro bus passes for work, and Subway, McDonald’s or Kroger grocery vouchers. In return, the participant provides monthly wage verification.

Housing:

The barriers to employment are further exacerbated by the significant need for housing services by homeless veterans in the Houston area. Providing veterans with access to financial assistance for housing – which includes both emergency assistance and first month’s rent – has resulted in greater success helping veterans secure and retain employment.

Placement in housing is largely done through community partners and federal housing programs, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program and HUD-VASH. Male veterans who require per diem beds are referred to the Salvation Army. Female veterans who require per diem beds are referred to Santa Maria Hostel. The DeGeorge at Union Station provides case management and housing. Midtown Terrace Suites and New Hope Housing also provide housing. HUD-VASH has made a tremendous difference in the ability of low-income and disabled veterans to obtain housing. Additionally, Hurricane Ike funds were available for rapidly re-housing a number of veterans.

Legal Services:

Worklife Institute, in addition to providing job search and placement services, provides legal assistance to homeless veteran participants.

Supportive Services:

With funding through non-HVRP sources, SEARCH has been able to provide services to homeless veterans such as: food vouchers, training that is not high-demand as defined by Workforce Solutions, short-

term housing assistance, bus passes and participant work supplies.

According to the most recent needs assessment coordinated by the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, at least 70% of veterans surveyed indicated a need for transportation, clothing, employment services, housing vouchers, medical and dental care, internet access, food pantry/stamps and case management. At SEARCH, participants receive assistance with resume writing, internet access, food vouchers, transportation, work supplies, and referrals to housing and medical and dental care. Participants can access lunch, laundry facilities, showers, mail and telephones through the SEARCH Resource Center. Additionally, two SOAR-certified (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) benefits specialist are located in the SEARCH Resource Center to assist disabled veterans with SSI/SSDI applications.

Access to mental health services is another important supportive service initiative of SEARCH. These mental health services are provided by Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County. Healthcare for the Homeless: Houston provides onsite dental and primary medical care along with psychiatric care, vision fairs and trauma groups. Other services include mentoring through the Houston Chapter of The Military Order of the World Wars and assistance with food stamp applications through Change Happens.

Supportive service delivery is facilitated through relationships with entities that can provide more than one service. In addition to the two intensive case management programs available at SEARCH to assist chronically homeless veterans access mental health services, treatment and housing, the VA Medical Center Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program provides pre-screening for benefits, housing and substance abuse/mental health treatment. SEARCH serves as a one-stop location for a number of other social service agencies, including Healthcare for the Homeless: Houston; Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County; Change Happens; Harris County Hospital District and AIDS Foundation Houston. SEARCH coordinates delivery of important medical services in demand for this population. Harris County Hospital District assists with onsite indigent care applications, and AIDS Foundation Houston provides onsite HIV education and screening.

Partnerships

SEARCH participates in numerous community collaborations. These collaborations are intended to enhance the service capacity of SEARCH by increasing participant accessibility to services, reducing barriers and gaps in services, and strengthening existing community referral networks. Potential partners are identified through past relationships, participation in community networks such as the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County Coordinating Council, and personal networking by SEARCH staff and volunteers. Oversight of these collaborations is maintained through a variety of methods including Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), memberships, meeting minutes and meeting attendance records.

Through monthly meetings at the United Way of Greater Houston and the Coalition for the Homeless, SEARCH case managers build connections and remain current on community programs and eligibility requirements to assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment.

Additional SEARCH partners include:

- Salvation Army
- Midtown Terrace Suites
- SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery)
- Santa Maria Hostel

- Worklife Institute
- DVOPs and LVERs
- Houston Community College
- VA Medical Center Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program
- DeGeorge at Union Station
- Worklife Institute
- Harris County Hospital District
- Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County
- Houston Chapter of The Military Order of the World Wars
- Midtown Terrace Suites
- New Hope Housing
- Healthcare for the Homeless – Houston
- Change Happens
- AIDS Foundation Houston

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	375	464	123%
Program Enrollments	200	115	57%
Employment Enrollments	150	79	52%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$8.10	\$8.35	103%
Placed in Permanent Housing	150	103	68%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	120	56	46%

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SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

Service Area: San Francisco, East Bay (California)

“Swords has moved away from the traditional ‘job and career fair’ model and has developed targeted industry hiring events bringing together groups of industry-specific employers and groups of qualified veteran job seekers.”

Overview

Swords to Plowshares (Swords) is a community-based, nonprofit veterans organization founded in 1974 to advocate for veterans’ rights and to provide direct services to veterans. For more than 35 years, Swords has been the principle provider of employment services for homeless, low-income, at-risk, and re-entry veterans in the San Francisco area. Through the “Vets Helping Vets” model, Swords works to help rebuild the shattered lives of soldiers who were once put in harm’s way to serve and protect the nation. Swords’ goal is to help homeless and low-income veterans through direct services and advocacy for effective public policy.

Swords first received funding from the U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS) HVRP in 1990 through the local Private Industry Council of San Francisco. Since then, the program has successfully competed for funding. For Program Year 2010, Swords received four grants through DOL-VETS which include HVRP: San Francisco for \$300,000; HVRP: East Bay for \$300,000; Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) for \$100,000; and Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) for \$300,000. Swords also receives funding through the State of California Employment Development Department’s (EDD) Veterans Employment-related Assistance Program (VEAP). They currently operate two grants under this funding stream: VEAP 15% and 25% Dislocated Worker for \$1 million; and VEAP “Green” for \$1 million. Through these multi-faceted funding streams from DOL-VETS and EDD, Swords is able to serve more than 400 veterans annually with employment and training services.

The program is focused on helping homeless, at risk and re-entry veterans overcome barriers to employment. More than 50% of its veterans are impacted by mental health and substance abuse issues. More than 50% are between the ages of 48 and 66. Approximately 61% of the veterans are Vietnam and Post-Vietnam era; 21% served in Iraq and Afghanistan (OEF/OIF), a population that will continue to grow in the coming years. Over 60% identify as minorities, the largest of which is African-American. More than 90% of the veterans are male and over 55% have some type of disability.

Services

Employment and Training:

Swords is recognized and respected nationwide for its pioneering and effective work on behalf of veterans struggling with homelessness and poverty. Swords helps unemployed veterans make the transition into high-growth, high-wage employment opportunities by offering a full range of employment services that include job readiness assessments, vocational counseling, pre-employment services, class-room certification training, job placement services and job retention support.

The Employment & Training Services team works closely with other programs offered by Swords and community-based organizations in the area to help stabilize the veteran so they will be able to fully engage and participate in employment and training activities. The majority of employment-related services are administered internally.

In 2009, Swords expanded its Employment & Training Services into the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay area, establishing a footprint and on-site employment services. This expansion has enabled Swords to serve a broader geographic area. Because of its links to more than 75 service providers in the San Fran-

cisco Bay region, which includes seven surrounding counties, Swords is a “One-stop Center” providing a continuum of care with seamless service delivery, and is a certified “Access Point” in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act.

Swords is electronically linked to the EDD’s CalJobs online portal. This access point designation allows their veterans to register on-site at both Swords employment offices to access job opportunities available through EDD. The San Francisco Career Link offers veterans additional vocational counseling and job placement services. A Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) from the EDD offices in San Francisco and Alameda counties is out-stationed at Swords’ employment offices every week through collaborative formal agreements.

Housing:

Swords has a holistic approach to service delivery. In order to properly address each veterans’ specific needs, in-house wrap-around services are provided ranging from frontline drop-in support services, which address a veterans most acute needs, to permanent supportive housing. The residential program offers 90-day treatment stabilization beds, transitional and permanent housing.

For the last decade, Swords has been providing transitional and permanent housing services to veterans. The Treasure Island Transitional Housing Program offers housing to 75 veterans. The transitional program consists of a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-funded Chronically Homeless program in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program; a VA Chronically Mentally Ill (CMI) program; and a VA Special Needs Program that serves a geriatric population of veterans. The CMI program includes with an onsite VA staff support that includes a Psychiatric Nurse, an LCSW Case Manager, and a Licensed Mental Health Clinician;

The Veterans Academy, located at the Presidio in San Francisco, provides 102 beds of permanent housing with onsite supportive services through HUD/McKinney programs and HUD-VASH. As Swords continues to face an aging population of veterans needing housing and supportive services, a new housing program, The Veterans Commons, a 75-efficiency unit facility of permanent housing with onsite supportive services will open in spring 2012.

Swords is a member organization of the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CASVA), a statewide association of five community-based organizations providing employment and training services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, wrap-around supportive services, and policy advocacy for veterans rights and benefits on the state and federal level.

Swords has a long partnership in the San Francisco Training Partnership, a collaboration with Goodwill Industries and Northern California Service League, helping San Francisco homeless veterans out of homelessness and into employment. They are also members of a 10-agency employment collaborative, the Homeless Employment Collaborative (HEC), working with San Francisco’s homeless populations through employment services. Homeless and disadvantaged veterans receive short-term skills training for in-demand, high-growth and high-wage occupations using a training-to-industry modality in securing job placements.

Swords attributes its success in operating employment programs to its “job placement-centered” approach to case management. Swords has established relationships with over 100 employers in the greater San Francisco Bay area to act as a “job broker” to help area companies screen and hire veterans. This approach to employment services has enabled Swords to sustain relationships with employers to find quality job opportunities, while helping homeless, at-risk, unemployed and re-entry veterans obtain employment. Swords has moved away from the traditional “job and career fair” model and has developed targeted

industry hiring events, bringing together groups of industry-specific employers and groups of qualified veteran job seekers. This approach has created a more intimate and inviting exchange of dialogues between employers and veterans seeking employment, thus increasing the number of veterans gaining employment.

Legal Services:

The Legal Service unit offers legal counseling and representation in filing VA compensation claims and discharge upgrade requests.

Supportive Services:

There are more than 2,400 homeless veterans in San Francisco, and Swords to Plowshares has been the city's most prominent agency on addressing their needs. For those facing homelessness due to civilian readjustment issues, mental health issues, substance abuse, legal issues and unemployment, Swords is there providing supportive services every step of the way.

Through the years, the organization has been able to develop collaborations with other community-based homeless service providers. These collaborations have enhanced and expanded the support available for homeless veterans. Swords' supportive services include mental health and substance abuse counseling, and financial support services such as transportation, clothing, food, tools and dues assistance. The Health and Social Services unit provides mental health counseling, temporary housing placements, access to benefits, and a portal for linkages to the VA. Swords offers these services internally as well as through community partnerships.

The VA Comprehensive Homeless Center provides case management and counseling, and serves as a HUD-VASH access point for permanent supportive housing. The VA's Compensated Work Therapy Program (CWT) provides veterans who may not be able to enter mainstream employment with an opportunity to prepare for employment with a therapeutic approach. These veterans have multiple extensive barriers to employment due to chronic conditions, disabilities and large gaps in employment histories. Vet Centers in the seven surrounding counties provide ongoing, long-term individual and family counseling. These programs all have reciprocal referral relationships with Swords to Plowshares.

Partnerships

Through its interaction with federal, state and local government agencies, as well as community service organizations, a stronger voice and enhanced service network have emerged. The ability to provide comprehensive services in-house has permitted broader, stable support systems for veterans.

Swords' partners include:

- California State Employment Development Department
- Local Veterans Employment Representative
- Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Homeless Center
- VA's Compensated Work Therapy Program
- California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CASVA): A statewide association of five community-based organizations providing employment and training services to veterans with significant barriers to employment.
- San Francisco Training Partnership – partnered with Goodwill Industries and Northern California Service League: Helps San Francisco homeless veterans out of homelessness and into employment.
- Homeless Employment Collaborative (HEC): Works with San Francisco's homeless populations through employment services.

Results

Measure (PY 2009-10)	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	130	146	112%
Program Enrollments	100	100	100%
Employment Enrollments	70	63	90%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$10.00	\$12.81	128%
Placed in Permanent Housing	15	21	140%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	39	40	103%

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THE SALVATION ARMY HAVEN

Service Area: Los Angeles (California)

“The RTW office has an open door policy. All job development and counseling services are available to all enrolled veterans, both before and after placement. This consistent communication and service leads to a retention rate that exceeds the goal.”

Overview

The Salvation Army Haven (The Haven) started in 1994 at the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Healthcare Center (VAHC) as an emergency housing program for veterans. According to the 2011 Point-in-Time count, the VA estimates 8,631 homeless veterans in Greater Los Angeles' Catchment Area, and 8,131 in Los Angeles County. The Haven caters to the needs of veterans with a complex set of obstacles, including shortage of affordable housing, low employability, lack of social support networks, and chronic medical problems and mental illnesses such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and addiction.

The Return to Work Program at The Haven was first established in October 2009 when The Haven received an existing HVRP grant from another of the Salvation Army (TSA) programs terminating their services. The transferred grant, in its last year, had experienced program complications from its originator, and The Haven spent most of the first few months ensuring a soft hand-over between programs, and program compliance and services continued as delineated in the original grant. In July 2010, TSA Haven was awarded \$300,000 through HVRP as a first-year grantee. The total budget of the program is \$350,000 per year, with the remaining \$50,000 funded through other private, unrestricted sources. Funding for the second year was approved in July 2011.

In 2010, over 6,000 homeless veterans were served by the West Los Angeles VAHC, while The Haven served over 2,000 veterans. Over 70% of participants served by The Haven have both mental illness and substance abuse histories; over 40% have depression and/or PTSD; over 50% have been in jail; and over 80% have histories of being chronically homeless. By the end of the first grant year, TSA Haven had met or exceeded 90% of all program performance goals, with extremely high marks in wages at employment and job retention measures.

Services

Employment and Training:

The mission of the Return to Work Program (RTW) at The Haven is to assist veterans in stabilizing their income through meaningful and gainful employment. The success of RTW depends on a highly motivated, professional staff and strong collaboration with other community-based organizations, government agencies and employers.

On-site services include vocational counseling and pre-employment training, a Job Development Club, Advanced Interview Skills Workshop, the Work Resource Center and financial supportive services. Vocational counseling and pre-employment training are conducted one-on-one or in very small groups. This includes tailored resume development, mock interviews and job search training.

The Work Resource Center is fully equipped with up-to-date computer and office equipment. Dedicated staff members operate the Center, allowing it to be available for veterans' use seven days a week, with daytime and evening hours. A Job Development Club is held weekly in the computer resource center, allowing for an interactive training program in cover letter writing, resume preparation, use of email, on-line job searches and on-line job applications. Classes on advanced job development are also conducted by community experts as a part of Job Club.

A multi-week Advanced Interview Skills Workshop is available to those veterans desiring a more extensive and high level of preparation. The workshop is facilitated by experts in human resources, training and organizational development. The RTW staff conducts extensive follow-up on all placements with both the veteran and the employer.

Partners provide many employment services for program participants, including classroom training in a variety of job search skills provided by Chrysalis and the California Employment Development Department (EDD). TSA Haven has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Regional EDD office that allows RTW Program staff to access job postings in advance and to research employment information for veterans. The Haven's RTW Program works closely with Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) to provide specialized services to eligible veterans. The Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP) and PV Jobs provide occupational and on-the-job training and employment resources for construction industry employment. Partners offer training, certification and licensing in security, commercial driving, forklift and food service/Safeserve occupations through area adult education agencies, WIA/Worksource, and other community agencies.

Housing:

The Haven's programs include transitional housing through residential treatment and emergency shelter, as well as permanent supportive housing for very low-income male and female participants with complex mental health, employment and housing stability service needs.

Legal Services:

Legal Support for issues such as veterans benefits, child support, outstanding warrants and expungement are available through a partnership with Los Angeles County Public Counsel, which dedicates a staff attorney to the project who is on-site two days a week.

Supportive Services:

The staff focuses on relationship building and takes a team approach, organizing the work so that veterans have access to each team member's unique strengths and talents. The program is participant centered, carefully assessing each veteran to determine their strengths and barriers and helping them develop an individualized plan for service delivery.

With compassion and competency, The Haven serves homeless veterans by providing evidence-based interventions for mental illness and substance abuse issues. Its supportive services are designed to stabilize income, allow reintegration of veteran clients back into their communities, provide financial counseling, and incentivize progress in pursuit of employment stability and personal accountability.

Partnerships

Over the past two years, the program has developed and nurtured collaborations with other community-based service providers and government agencies. These collaborations have enhanced and expanded the support available for homeless veterans.

These partnerships include:

- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Labor
- DVOP
- LVERs

- California Employment Development Department
- Los Angeles County Public Counsel
- West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
- Chrysalis: A non-profit dedicated to employment services.
- Asian American Drug Abuse Program
- PV Jobs: Provides training and employment resources for construction industry employment.
- Veteran’s Employment Committee
- California Department of Rehabilitation

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	260	245	94%
Program Enrollments	195	175	90%
Employment Enrollments	130	117	90%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$8.50	\$12.09	142%
Placed in Permanent Housing			
Employment Retention after 180 Days	67	82.5	123%

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VETERANS INC.

Service Area: Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire

“Veterans Inc. has various departments that work closely together in staying focused on our mission: They were there when we needed them, we must be there now that they need us. Communication and Collaboration are the two most important words that our staff lives by to ensure that we follow this mission.”

Overview

The program started when leadership of the organization realized that an “alcohol and substance free” environment was not enough to keep veterans off the streets if sustained income was not included. The Employment and Training program was created to facilitate partnerships with employers that resulted in better jobs. Veterans Inc. (VI) leadership also realized that if mental health supports and physical rehabilitation assistance were not provided, disabled veterans would have difficulty maintaining employment and living independently.

As a result, Health and Wellness services were folded into the Veterans Inc. program. Additional housing programs, including transitional and permanent supportive housing units, were created so that veterans could access a full continuum of care. The Veterans Inc. Employment and Training Program started in 1998, and has featured an HVRP program since 2000. In 2009, the organization was re-named Veterans Inc. in recognition of its new programs in other New England states. The grassroots, all-volunteer operation of 1990 has grown into a professional, comprehensive, award-winning organization that provides care to thousands of veterans and their families every year. Veterans Inc. is now a New England-wide organization

With a budget of \$759,220 in HVRP funding, \$500,000 in supplemental funds from the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) funding (\$300,000), Microsoft (\$200,000), and support and funding from United Way of Central Massachusetts and others, Veterans Inc.’s holistic approach provides a full range of services. Grant experience includes HVRP Intermediary, Urban, Non-Urban, Women and Families, and VWIP grants. In 2011, Veterans Inc. was awarded a grant to replicate its successful employment and training program in Vermont and New Hampshire.

Veterans Inc. recognizes a triangle of needs of homeless veterans: health, employment and housing. The program has ties throughout the state with companies in an array of industries and has helped thousands of veterans obtain employment. Services range from legal advice to disability benefit applications, through a treatment plan developed in coordination with a case manager and tailored to each individual’s strengths and challenges.

Services

Employment and Training:

The program is innovative in its approach to the care and rehabilitation of homeless veterans because of its focus on employment as the means to end homelessness. The goals established within each employment plan are individualized and attainable because they are based on a comprehensive understanding of the needs and skills of each participant. The program also includes job retention efforts to ensure that those who find employment and housing have the resources they need to avoid returning to the street.

The Veterans Inc. employment program involves providing needed wrap-around services that maximize participant success in securing employment and achieving self-sufficiency. Employment specialists provide one-on-one case management, job counseling and assessment, interview training, application and resume

completion assistance, internet job search instruction, and job placement services. They also schedule interviews and ensure participants receive the transportation assistance they need to get to interviews and job sites.

The Employment and Training team relies heavily on the case management team to properly assess participants, putting those who are ready for work in the best possible position to gain employment, and looking down other avenues for those who either need additional services or are simply not able to enter the workforce again. Each participant is individually assessed for their specific needs in order to put together an individual treatment plan. Veterans Inc. participants have the opportunity to take classes like Microsoft Office Basics, resume writing, and money management and interview skills. Case managers and the Employment and Training team members meet regularly to discuss individual and general participant needs, leading to a healthy relationship among staff and participants. Participants are also encouraged to enroll in training courses at the VI Training Academy. Courses include basic computer literacy, computer building and repair, Microsoft, A+ and Network+ certification preparation classes. Training in culinary arts is also available. Through collaboration with other training vendors, additional training and certification in order to meet the demands of the labor market are provided in the green jobs, construction and health care sectors.

VI Training Programs are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE). Courses are also approved by the Massachusetts Department of Career Services (DCS), which allows for the collection of unemployment assistance, if eligible, while enrolled in VI's classes and access to additional resources at local career centers. Certified DOE instructors teach the training programs at VI's Training Academy and in the Mobile Education Center (MEC). The MEC is VI's classroom on wheels – fully equipped with 12 computer workstations, an instructor's station, and satellite access to the internet in real time. This handicapped-accessible vehicle represents a unique alternative to the traditional classroom, and maximizes the outreach potential in the non-urban service areas where veterans may have difficulty obtaining transportation to a stationary site for training purposes.

The team at Veterans Inc. makes every effort to reach out to veterans within or connected to partner providers to offer access to its resources. Continuous involvement with the regional career centers, Chambers of Commerce, Commonwealth Workforce Coalition, as well as a strong network of employers has enabled the Employment and Training team to find numerous opportunities for the veteran participants. Average hourly wage at placement has consistently been over the +/- 15% deviation due to the networking efforts of the Employment and Training team, which has resulted in client success securing higher paying jobs.

Housing:

Housing is a priority service for Veterans Inc. staff members working with homeless veterans, combined with supportive services that include case management, legal assistance, employment and training, medical and mental health treatment (including PTSD and TBI), and alcohol/substance abuse treatment and recovery programs.

Legal Services:

Veterans Inc. collaborates with several community partners to provide legal service to homeless veterans.

Supportive Services:

Wrap-around services that are an integral part of the program include transitional housing, clothing, medical and substance abuse treatment referrals and transportation assistance.

Case managers provide in-house recovery maintenance meetings and work closely with clients to refer them to the most effective services offered by Veterans Inc. and its partner providers. A nurse is on staff to provide medical assistance to participants and to better educate them about various health and nutrition

topics.

In addition, both the Food Services and Residential Advisor Departments play an integral part in the process, giving participants access to transportation, meals to take to work and general assistance when a case manager or Employment and Training team member is not available. Department heads meet once a week to discuss relevant information that is disseminated throughout their respective staffs, which ensures seamless coordination of effort to benefit each veteran client throughout the organization.

Partnerships

Communication and collaboration are two vital words for Veterans Inc. staff members. Veterans Inc. collaborates with local community-based organizations and government agencies to improve and expand services for its participants, including the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center in Gardner, MA; the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center in Haverhill, MA; the Veterans Transitional House in New Bedford, MA; the New England Center for Homeless Veterans in Boston; New Horizons in Manchester, NH; and Vet Centers and VA medical/outpatient centers across the region. By collaborating with these organizations and providers, Veterans Inc. is able to offer a wide variety of services that simplifies the process for program participants and enhances their ability to accomplish the goals they have established for themselves.

Collaborations are typically maintained through regular meetings, having a well-defined Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and keeping communications lines open on a regular basis.

Additional partners include:

- MA Department of Career Services
- Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center in Gardner, MA
- The Veterans Northeast Outreach Center in Haverhill, MA
- The Veterans Transitional House in New Bedford, MA
- The New England Center for Homeless Veterans in Boston
- New Horizons in Manchester, NH,
- Vet Centers and VA medical/outpatient centers
- Chambers of Commerce
- Commonwealth Workforce Coalition

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	382	355	93%
Program Enrollments	298	312	105%
Employment Enrollments	217	191	88%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.68	\$11.82	122%
Placed in Permanent Housing	131	134	102%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	75	48	107%

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VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA, INC.

Service Area: Southwestern Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania)

“What makes our program unique is the staff. This team puts Veterans and our Mission ahead of themselves.... They have found a way to leverage their strengths so that the sum is greater than each of its parts.”

Overview

In 1982, a group of Vietnam veterans joined together and formed Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania (VLP) to meet the growing needs of veterans previously working in the shrinking mill workplace and in the manufacturing sector. The original concept was to provide job placement and training for Vietnam veterans who were displaced in a changing economy. At that time, none of VLP's founders imagined the agency would still be meeting that need today. With over 300,000 veterans residing in southwestern Pennsylvania and the largest number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in the state, this region has one of the highest per capita concentrations of veterans in the United States. VLP's services, mission and efforts showcase a critical component of their mission: they are not interested in becoming a very large organization; they are interested in becoming a great organization. Their model is not based on program needs but rather on the needs of each veteran.

VLP first received funding through HVRP 20 years ago to provide a safety net and lifeline for many veterans who were most at risk of homelessness. In the most recent program year, VLP was awarded a maximum amount of \$300,000. The agency's 2011 annual budget is approximately \$2.8 million, with funding from government partners, foundations, the United Way and independent fundraising efforts.

The dedicated staff and Board of Directors of VLP continue to assist not only the unemployed, underemployed, and homeless veterans of this region, but all veterans, members of the Reserve and National Guard, and their families. The mission of VLP is to provide essential housing, employment and other vital supportive services to eligible veterans, service members and their families to improve their self-sufficiency and quality of life.

Services

Employment and Training:

The Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania operates a number of employment grants. HVRP is one of these grants and is a core program of the agency because it targets support to the most vulnerable veterans. The VLP employment and housing teams work very closely to wrap each veteran in the essential services needed to help them achieve their goals.

VLP's model is based on a thorough intake assessment of each person's needs; an Individual Service Plan that lays out tasks, goals, responsibilities and timelines; collaborative teamwork within VLP and many community partners; and intensive case management.

Housing:

VLP is the largest provider of subsidized housing to homeless veterans in the region, operating U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants that provide 98 scattered-site leased apartments that serve over 250 individuals each year. These transitional and permanent housing programs provide veterans with safe and affordable residences with close proximity to other community resources. Intensive case management services provided by VLP's housing team, internal VLP teamwork to provide additional services, and qualified referrals to partner agencies help ensure each individual veteran receives the necessary services to become independently housed and achieve the maximum level of self-reliance.

possible.

Legal Services:

See Partnerships

Supportive Services:

At VLP, services are tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual. VLP has provided housing, employment and supportive services to veterans for nearly 30 years. The main needs of homeless veterans served at VLP reflect Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: from food to shelter to safety and security.

The Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania also provides a wide variety of supportive services that are funded by foundations, corporations, government and donations. These services fill in the gaps not covered by VLP’s housing and employment grant-funded programs. These services result in a safety net around each participant.

Partnerships

Partnerships are an essential part of VLP’s strategy. Local organizations in the public, private and non-profit sectors offer services, such as legal services, child care and food assistance, which supplement the services that VLP provides to program participants. The combination of all services from partners helps strengthen the safety net that VLP builds around each participant.

VLP focuses on its core competencies: housing, employment, supportive services, intensive case management and participation in all community forums. VLP is actively engaged in the Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Community Homeless Assessment Local Education and Networking Group (CHALENG).

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	330	606	184%
Program Enrollments	230	231	100%
Employment Enrollments	150	155	103%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.72	\$10.57	109%
Placed in Permanent Housing			
Employment Retention after 180 Days	68	37	54%

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VETERANS MARCHING FORWARD

Service Area: Denver (Colorado)

“The focus of our outreach program is shifting dramatically as our clientele’s demographic profile shifts.”

Overview

Denver Human Services’ HVRP program, Veterans Marching Forward, has evolved from a room full of filing cabinets with all participant and program information in individual paper folders into a dynamic service agency where all participant and program information is entered into a comprehensive, secure electronic database. This system allows for real time information on enrollments, placements, and cost per placement. Although traditional participants have been almost exclusively Vietnam and Gulf War era veterans, Veterans Marching Forward realized that a new generation of veterans is entering a system that is largely unprepared for their signature disabilities and changing service needs. As a result, the focus of Veterans Marching Forward’s outreach program is shifting dramatically to match the changing participant demographic profiles.

Veterans Marching Forward first received an HVRP grant in 2003. The program has evolved significantly since the first year of funding. Although the program’s HVRP program budget is \$299,691, because of the close association between HVRP and the County Veteran Service Office (CVSO), the program has a safety net of approximately \$30,000 to support emergency services not funded by the grant. This collaboration results in continued housing services for homeless veterans in Veterans Marching Forward’s HVRP program.

Veterans Marching Forward engages in continuous probing into community meetings and resource fairs and developing regular interaction with potential collaborators to try to understand the tangled network of overlapping supportive services offered by area providers. Staff members work tirelessly with partners to put together a seamless delivery system that avoids the fragmentation that could result from less coordinated community solutions.

Services

Employment and Training:

Veterans Marching Forward provides critical employment services to homeless veterans, either directly or through partnerships with community providers, that help bring about independent living and gainful employment for veterans of all generations. The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the county workforce centers provide support with veteran-specific job notifications and more elaborate case management for veteran participants with advanced degrees or skilled trade licenses and a true desire to obtain career-oriented employment.

Veterans Marching Forward has recently focused outreach strategy on the large number of younger veterans who are utilizing veteran education benefits at area colleges. As observed by Veterans Marching Forward staff members, many returning veterans express an interest in a continued public service career and are finding their way into Social Work programs. Meaningful employment in the form of “career” jobs will become more available as the number of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan grows. Staff anticipates this population is eager to secure employment and will generally be more prepared to accept more demanding employment than traditional participants in the past.

The current program coordinator is an eight-year Navy veteran and a clinical social worker who was discharged in 2005. This outreach helps develop student veteran organizations on local campuses. Veterans

Marching Forward embraces the changes to their program, acknowledging that creating these changes will present obstacles, but they are not insurmountable as long as clear objectives are maintained.

HVRP has taken advantage of internship programs with the University of Denver and the University of Southern California (USC) that allow graduate student veterans to identify and reach out to this growing population. An affiliation between Denver Human Services (DHS) and USC, which grew from a call from the Graduate Clinical Social Work Program at USC, has led to a graduate track labeled “Military Social Work.” Currently, two interns work with program participants at the various shelters and local college campuses. In addition, DHS has an elaborate volunteer program which has provided two volunteers to staff a customer service operation, and partner with the county veteran service officer (CVSO) to find creative outcomes for participants of the HVRP program.

DOL has provided a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) to Veterans Marching Forward through the Colorado Division of Labor and Employment, subject to onsite functional supervision by the program manager, to assist veterans who are ready to engage in a career planning process. The DVOP ensures that HVRP participants are properly registered at the Work Force Center and on Job Link.

According to staff members, unmet goals result from a fragile local economy. Although some sectors of the economy are already rebounding, those sectors traditionally favorable to HVRP participants, particularly building and construction trades, remain flat. However, Veterans Marching Forward’s regular success at meeting or exceeding goals, combined with successful strategic planning in anticipation of the changing character of homeless veterans in the service area has contributed to continued success in the HVRP program. Tracking “placed in employment” veterans through seven quarters allowed Veterans Marching Forward to identify participants who were still working and paying their own rent at that benchmark. A consistent theme emerged from this research: all veterans placed in housing immediately secured employment.

Housing:

The close association between the CVSO and HVRP has made transitional and emergency housing options available to HVRP participants. Originally, Veterans Marching Forward received sporadic housing vouchers from General Assistance or the CVSO that could be used to temporarily house homeless veterans in motels. Currently, because of a partnership with the CVSO and the Veteran Trust Fund, the CVSO provides between 40 to 60 thousand dollars a year in master leases, allowing Veterans Marching Forward to house veterans who gain employment through the HVRP program for up to three months. The housing is provided at no cost to the veteran for those three months, allowing the participant to save for future housing expenses.

Denver Options recently received a Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). For many veterans with custody of minor children who are currently seeking help in the Denver area, the SSVF funds help facilitate rapid rehousing. This process is especially useful for single men with custody of minor children, who, until this program, have been nearly impossible to house in the community. Denver Options offers family housing and case management services to veteran families of any configuration.

The VA hospital offers access to transitional housing through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) programs and permanent housing through the HUD-VASH program. HUD-VASH vouchers are gradually increasing the availability of permanent housing for chronically homeless veterans.

Legal Services:

A partnership between HVRP, the CVSO, and the Colorado Division of Behavioral Health has yielded

participation in the development of a Veteran Trauma Court. Fully operational in Colorado Springs, the effort is gaining traction in Denver. Recently, Veterans Marching Forward convinced the Adult Drug Court to put all charged veterans on the same docket with the same judge and the same Parole Officer. Veterans Marching Forward's service partners are present at each court session to advise and assist veterans with any needs they may have outside the justice system, with the goal of diverting veterans from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with signature disabilities, such as traumatic brain injuries and PTSD, away from the Department of Corrections and into VA supported programs.

Supportive Services:

Veterans Marching Forward provides an array of basic supportive services, including transportation assistance in the form of bus tokens and, when a veteran finds employment, monthly bus passes; clothing needs, both basic and specialized for work; special tools and equipment necessary for the job; hygiene kits; and gift cards from King Soopers and Wal-Mart.

Last year, Veterans Marching Forward partnering with the CVSO for Denver County and received \$50,000 from a Community Service Block Grant to provide \$1,200 worth of dental care to homeless veterans. A partnership with the Colorado Gerontological Society (CGS) allows participants to access their 80/20 program for seniors. CGS made appointments, paid the dental bills and then billed the block grant. This service is provided by the VA to veterans with a 100% disability rating. The VA also provides mental health services and primary health care for eligible veterans in the HVRP program.

Funded by the Veteran Trust Fund, a variety of services are provided to veteran participants, including transportation to places of residence, gas money for veterans with automobiles, emergency utility payments, and money for storage services. In addition, access to clothing left behind at Denver International Airport has been made available to case workers, which is especially useful in the cold winter months. CVSO provides benefit claim and appeal assistance to participants. Veterans Marching Forward's location within a full-service county services facility and a close association with Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) members allows for the development of creative solutions for homeless veterans beyond that which can be funded through federal programs.

Partner organizations provide a wide range of supportive services to homeless veterans. Although many partners in the community are willing to help, three major drawbacks inhibit successful service delivery: all programs are partial solutions; veterans do not know who to ask; and the providers often do not know enough about each others' capacities to make reliable referrals.

Partnerships

Almost all supportive services in the Denver Metro area that are veteran oriented are delivered through some kind of understanding among service providers to complement each others' resources; there are no stand-alone programs or agencies that are able to adequately address all of a veteran's needs. Partners are divided between full service wrap-around case management organizations and those that focus on a specialized area of service. In general these include individual counseling; physical and mental health services; meals; transitional housing; employment mentoring; adult supervision; long-term care options; child protection and special project funding.

Leveraging complementary assets is successful due to regular, direct contact with partners through meetings and joint activities, sharing outreach venues at resource fairs, and making regular presentations to partner agencies and groups.

Key collaborative partners of Veterans Marching Forward include:

- Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

- Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs
- CVSO
- Colorado Division of Behavioral Health
- Denver Human Services General Assistance/Homeless Outreach Team
- VFW Post 1
- Bo Matthews Center for Excellence
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans
- Denver Options
- Denver International Airport
- Denver Road Home
- Colorado Division of Behavioral Health
- Volunteers of America/Women Veterans Shelter
- St. Francis Center
- Samaritan House
- University of Denver
- University of Southern California
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
- C3 Initiatives
- A.C.T.S. Resource Center
- Senior Support Center
- Colorado Gerontological Society
- Daniel's Fund
- Veteran Trust Fund
- Governors' Commission on Community Engagement
- Denver Cares

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	600	558	93%
Program Enrollments	380	306	81%
Employment Enrollments	280	224	80%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.50	\$10.16	107%
Placed in Permanent Housing			
Employment Retention after 180 Days	166	79	48%

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VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER, INC.

Service Area: Rochester (New York)

“One of the strongest links in the VOC chain of care is its carefully developed professional portfolio of on-site partner agencies, offering core and intensive services to homeless and at-risk veterans.”

Overview

In 1973, a small group of concerned Vietnam veterans opened the doors of the Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) in downtown Rochester, NY, to provide counseling and services to veterans in crisis. Thirty eight years later, VOC has become Upstate New York’s largest veterans one-stop center, dedicated to helping veterans transition from military service to a better civilian life with renewed self-esteem and hope for the future.

Since April 2000, the VOC has administered 12 successful HVRP grant program years. The VOC occupies six buildings on two campuses in the hub of Rochester’s historic commercial and residential Southwedge neighborhood. With a staff of 42 employees and over 100 contractors, interns and volunteers, VOC offers a host of agency programs and services to aid its HVRP program participants.

Over the past 38 years, the VOC has responded to the critical needs of over 40,000 veteran participants and their families. More than 2,400 homeless veterans have been served in the last 11 years, resulting in the successful placement of 1,776 veterans in housing and employment, with an average homeless job placement rate of 74%. VOC is currently engaged in the process of “blueprinting” details of its programs and services to serve as a model other organizations may replicate to further develop or enhance service delivery.

Services

Employment and Training:

Comprehensive employment services are provided in the VOC’s Resource Center on its north campus. Specialists in this area of VOC have over 20 years experience in developing jobs for the homeless. Services include vocational counseling, job search and placement assistance, resume and portfolio preparation; job readiness training; focus workshops; two weekly job networking groups; and a post-placement employee assistance process to promote job retention and prepare for advancement opportunities. These services include a Quartermasters Club, which offers clothing and tools for job searches and employment.

VOC funds and operates the Veterans Community Technology Center (VCTC), offering more than 40 free on-site occupational skills courses to help “re-tool” veterans in a state-of-the-art training facility. Classes include beginner to advanced computer skills, industrial math, blueprint reading, customer service, and OSHA safety. The center provides remedial and tutorial classes for veterans with special needs. Instructors from area college faculties and retired professionals provide training at the center. The VCTC trained more than 700 veterans in 2010, with another 7,000 visitors utilizing classes, one-on-one tutorials and “open lab” opportunities.

Additionally, the VOC’s Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) provides access to training and other employment services for unemployed and under-employed veterans in the upstate area. Paired with HVRP, the VOC operates the only successful VWIP program in New York State. A main contributing factor to this program’s success, and the object of recent national media focus, is VOC’s VWIP-funded Green Initiative for Veterans Employment (G.I.V.E.). A collaboration with the area’s State Vocational Center for Workforce Development, G.I.V.E. trains veterans in green sustainable energy and conservation-oriented occupational specialties. The programs include targeted 15-week courses in building maintenance technol-

ogy; heating; ventilation and air conditioning; and CNC machining. These programs include on-the-job training internships with participating companies prior to job placement.

VOC offers counseling and education support services to veterans while they plan for and attend classes at area colleges. To increase outreach to veterans, VOC's education resources specialist has a part-time, on-site presence at two local colleges with large veteran student populations.

Key to the success of VOC is the training and experience of its staff, each cross-trained and credentialed with a lengthy track record of implementing successful homeless programs; VOC's pro-active and resourceful portfolio of collaborative partners and community linkages; and an aggressive and resourceful outreach program that extends throughout the Greater Rochester/Monroe County area and four adjacent rural counties. Success can also be attributed to the active support from area public officials and news media and an effective cadre of trained volunteers who back up staff and add strong reinforcement to efforts making veterans feel welcome.

In September 2011, VOC's track record for "green" job placements, including 33% of its HVRP participants, attracted the attention of national media and White House staff, resulting in an on-site visit, tour and round table discussion with staff and participants by the President's White House Council on Environmental Quality. The success of the VOC's innovations in promoting sustainable technology and conservation has generated substantial community and employer interest in the VOC's vocational services and employment programs. The International Association of Workforce Professionals and National Human Resources Association have awarded recognition to the VOC for outstanding achievement in providing employment services to veterans.

The VOC's homeless initiatives include annual rural Stand Downs and partnerships with local community Project Homeless Connect and VA Stand Down events. Additionally, for 11 years the VOC has hosted the National Veterans Job Expo, the largest Upstate New York veterans employment event. Staged in Rochester's Convention Center, the Expo connects 105 employers with more than 1,000 unemployed and under-employed veterans and military personnel.

Housing:

Housing assistance – including VOC's own 28-unit residential program with emergency, transitional and supportive apartment units in the Richards and Otto Houses – is available on the VOC's south campus. VOC has a full-time staff person who focuses entirely on developing housing support for HVRP participants as well as assisting with other housing-related needs.

Legal Services:

Rochester Veterans Court, with the VOC as one of its founding partners, grew out of VOC's Veterans Alternatives to Incarceration Program (VATIP). Featured on CBS Evening News in March 2010, the program provides a comprehensive, highly successful alternative to incarceration for veterans who have committed minor offenses and appear to be on a path to more serious crime. Matching court supervised veterans, many of whom are enrolled in HVRP, with VOC services and other counseling and advocacy specialists, the program is under the administration of a State Supreme Court justice and includes close and structured supervision of each veteran participant during the stabilization process, resulting in skills training and job placement prior to graduation from the program.

Supportive Services:

VOC provides veterans and their families with dedicated case management services and readjustment counseling by licensed staff, credentialed therapists, and alcohol and substance abuse counselors. VOC staff, with the assistance of Nazareth College interns, functions under the supervision of faculty from Nazareth's Department of Human Services/Mental Health graduate program. Recently added to these

services is a unique Creative Arts Therapy program for veterans. Through the Warrior Salute Program, a collaborative partnership with Continuing Developmental Services, Inc., VOC provides case management, clinical support, rehabilitation services and occupational training to veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

VOC is a grantee under the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, a new homelessness prevention initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that allows VOC to provide housing support and case management services, including temporary financial assistance to veteran families in crisis.

Partnerships

One of the strongest links in the VOC chain of care is its carefully developed professional portfolio of on-site partner agencies, offering core and intensive services to homeless and at-risk veterans. Among these are:

- New York State Department of Veterans Affairs: With two full time benefits counselors and support staff, provides veterans benefits information, claims assistance and advocacy to vets and their families.
- DVOP
- Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training Service
- Center for Workforce Development (BOCES): Provides “green” technology training for veterans, the VWIP-funded G.I.V.E. project, and staffs the VOC with an on-site faculty admissions counselor to facilitate veteran student enrollments in area colleges.
- VOC’s VWIP-funded Green Initiative for Veterans Employment (G.I.V.E.): Trains veterans in green sustainable energy and conservation-oriented occupational specialties
- Monroe County Legal Assistance Center
- Nazareth’s Dept. of Human Services/Mental Health graduate program
- Continuing Developmental Services, Inc
- CompeerCORPS: Helps veterans combat the effects of war by matching them and family members with other vets in structured and supportive friendships.
- Empire Justice Center’s Creating Assets, Savings and Hope (CASH) program: Provides veterans with free income tax preparation, one-on-one financial counseling, and group financial literacy training.
- The Housing Council: Has a daily presence at the VOC, furnishing housing placement assistance and facilitates temporary financial assistance to veterans who are at strong risk of homelessness.
- Vietnam Veterans of America’s Chapter 20: Provides advocacy and support for veterans in need through their members and supporters, as well as their Veterans Thrift Store operation.

Results

Measure	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Program Assessments	300	316	105%
Program Enrollments	200	194	97%
Employment Enrollments	140	136	97%
Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$9.15	\$9.78	107%
Placed in Permanent Housing	140	188	134%
Employment Retention after 180 Days	96	83	86%

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