



**Application of Veterans
Homelessness Prevention
Demonstration Project (VHPD)
In A Rural Setting:
Community partnerships and filling the gaps**

Department of Veterans Affairs

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40%

of Veterans
live in rural areas



Session Overview

- ▶ Overview of VHPD
- ▶ Statistics
- ▶ Rural Characteristics
- ▶ Outreach strategies
- ▶ Strengths and successes
- ▶ Conclusions & recommendations



Overview of VHPD

▶ History of VHPD

- ▶ In July of 2010, HUD and the VA invested a combined \$15 million in five selected communities near military installations in an effort to prevent homelessness among Veterans.
- ▶ We are the only rural community selected.
- ▶ Primary focus is for Veterans returning from recent wars.



- ▶ Funding is intended to provide housing assistance and supportive services to Veterans who might otherwise be living in homeless shelters, on the streets or in unsuitable living conditions.

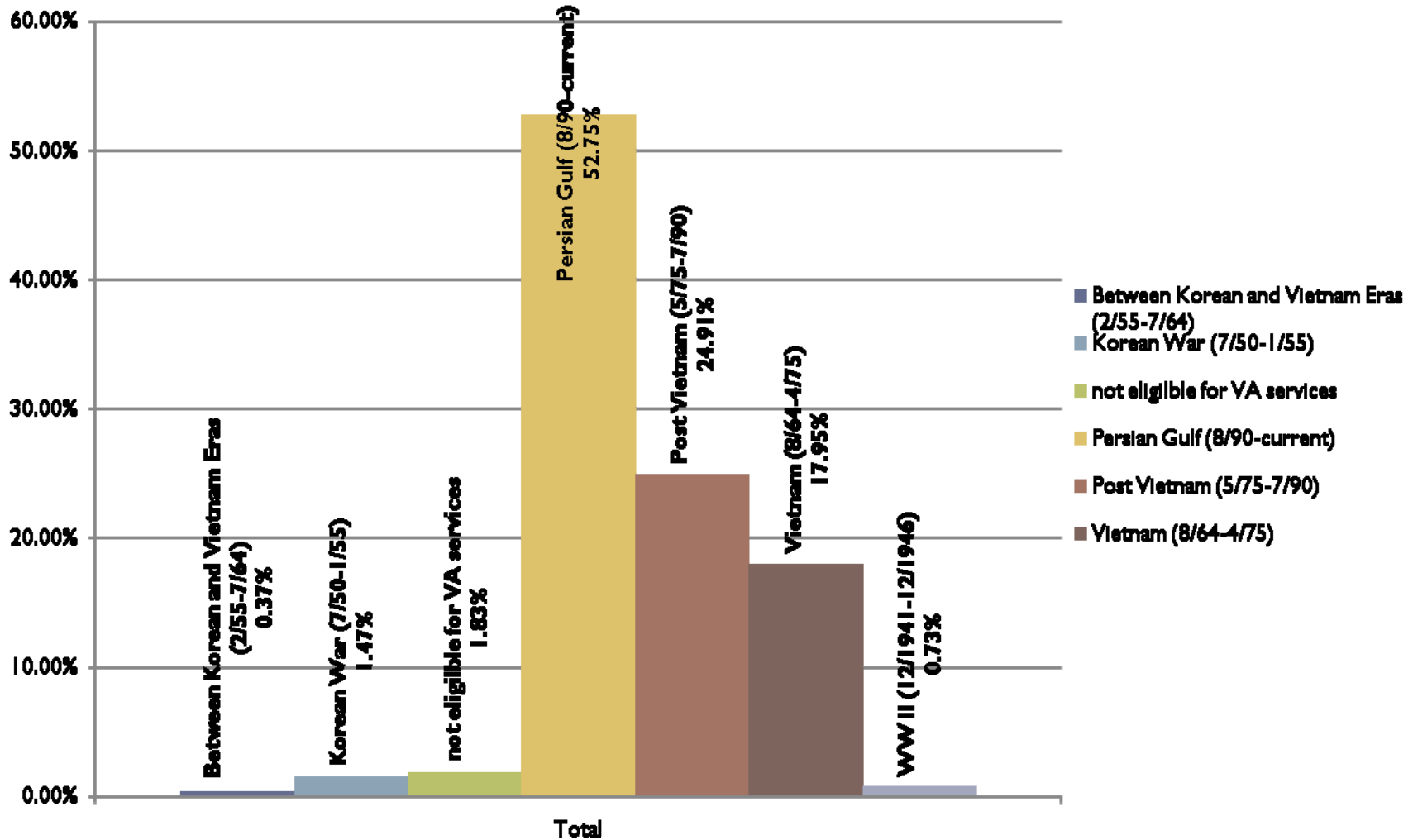


Overview of VHPD, II

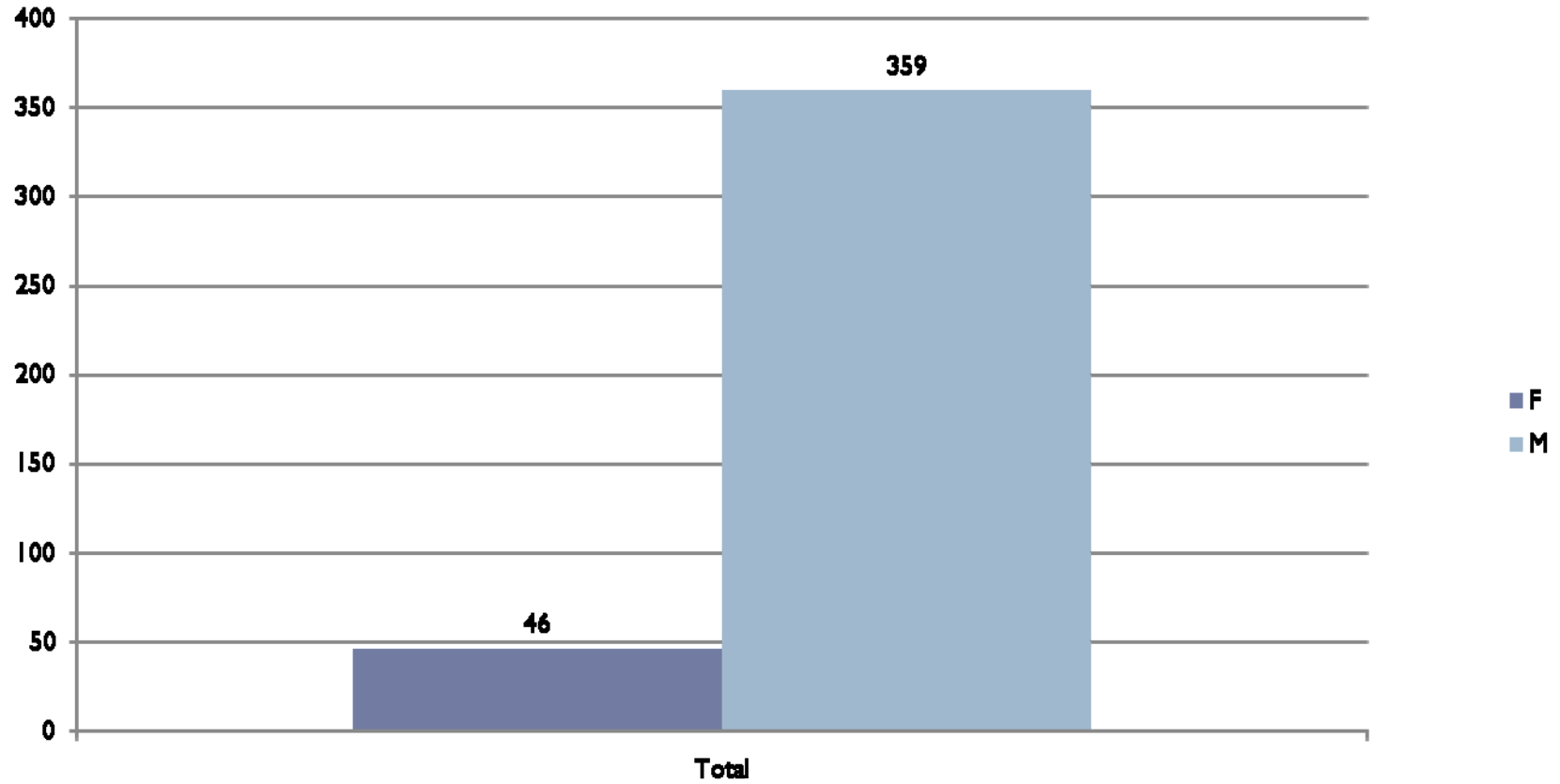
- ▶ **Desired Outcomes**
 - ▶ Housing self sufficiency
 - ▶ Connection with VA healthcare services
 - ▶ i.e. medical, mental health, substance abuse, vocational rehabilitation
 - ▶ Employment services through DOL
- ▶ **General Information**
 - ▶ 6 rural counties: Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Oneida, Herkimer, Madison
 - ▶ **Sum of Total Assistance to Veterans \$156,298.88 (to date)**
- ▶ **VHPD Process**
 - ▶ VA staff conducts screening for VA Healthcare eligibility as well as performs HCHV assessment
 - ▶ VHPD conducts grant eligibility (detailed process at end of slide show)



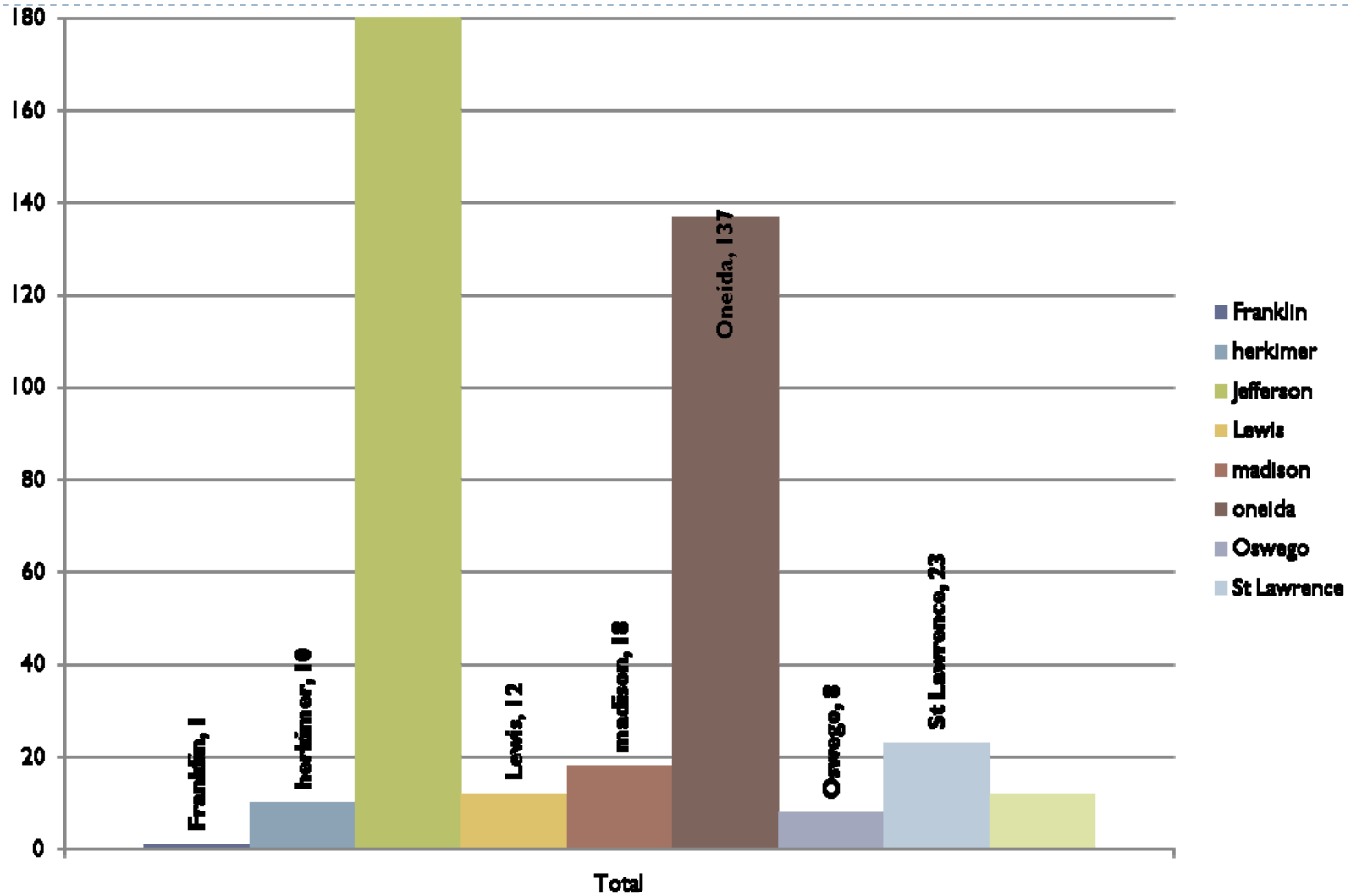
Who has VHPD Screened? By Service Era



Who has VHPD Screened? By Sex

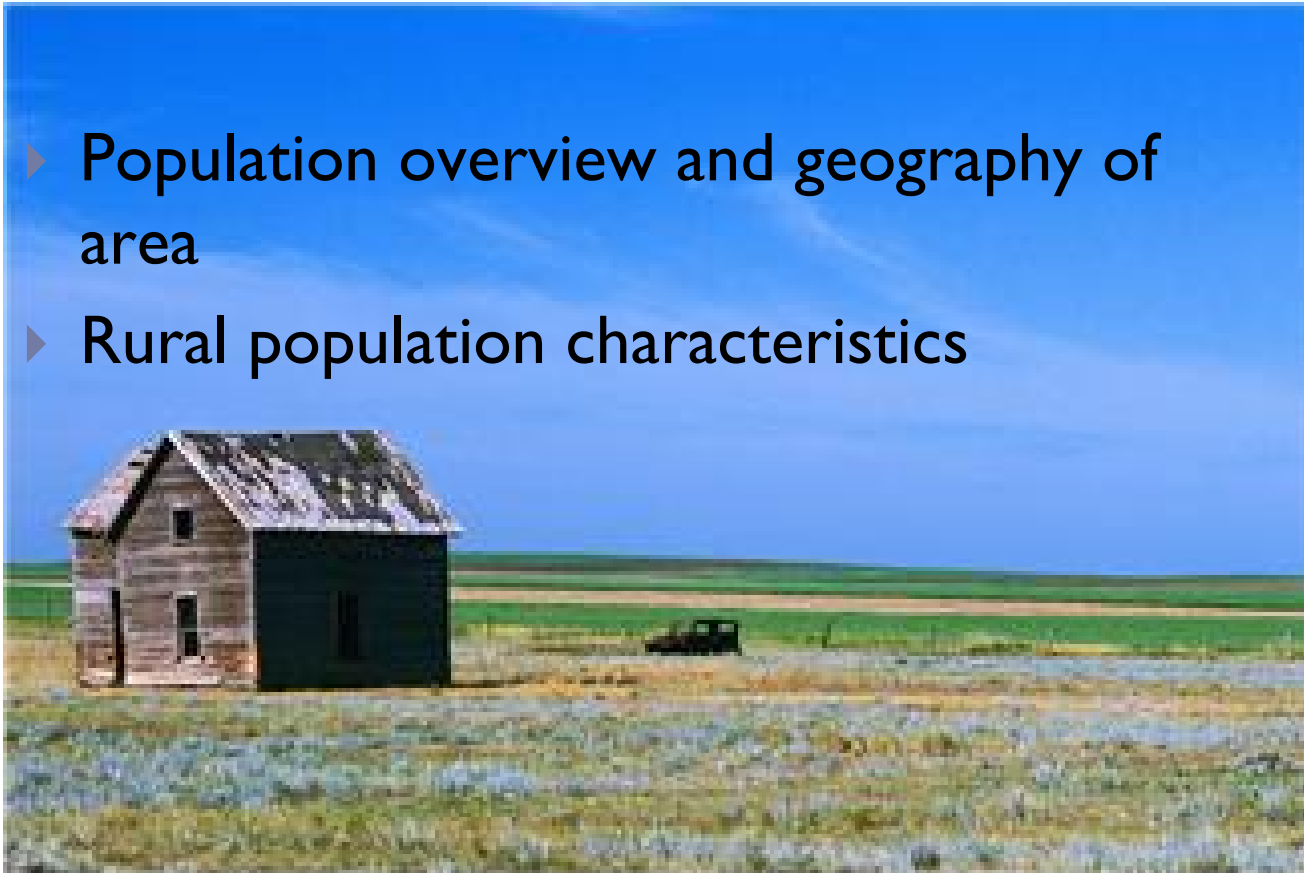


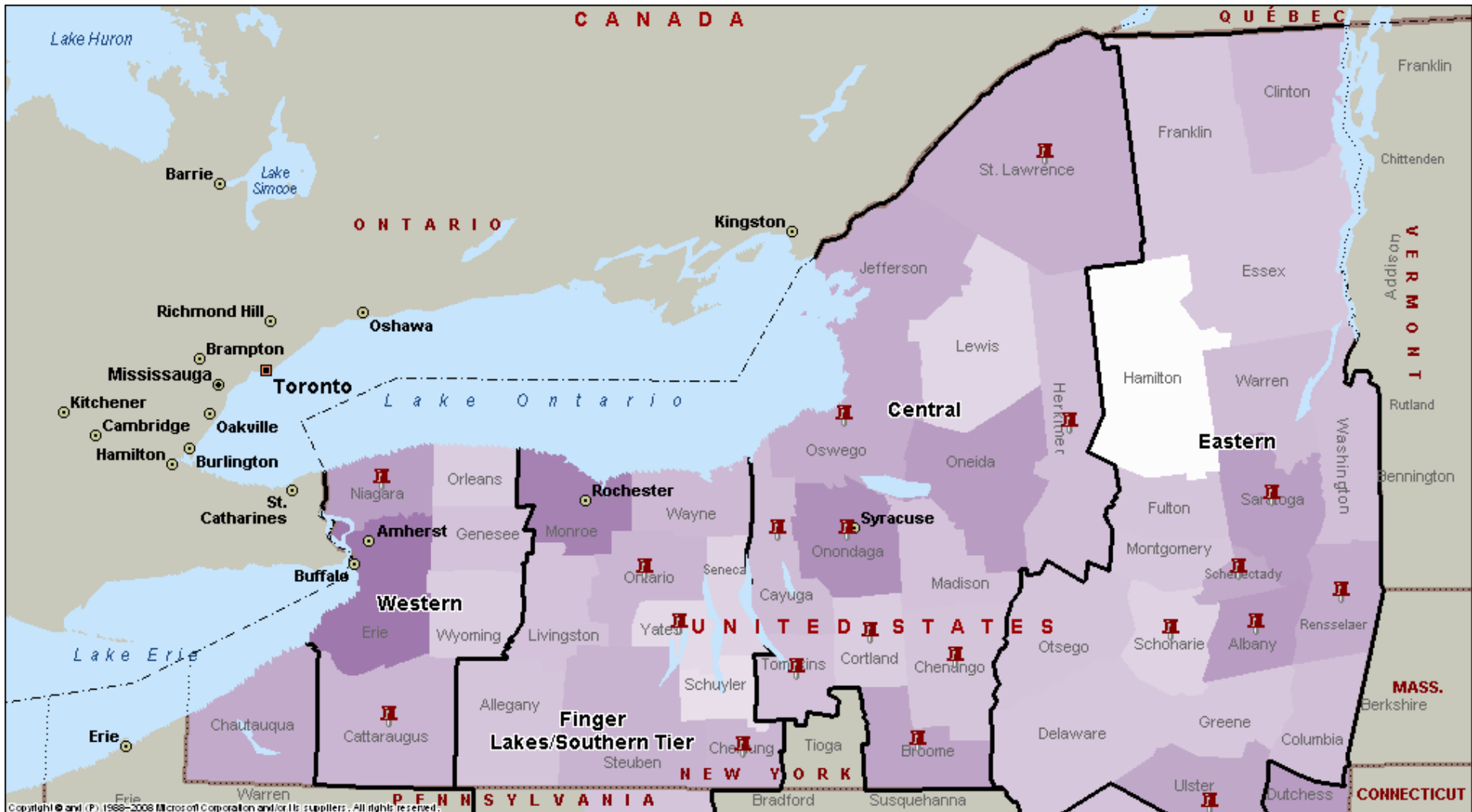
Who has VHPD Screened? By County



Statistics & Geography

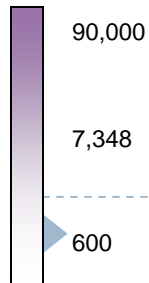
- ▶ Population overview and geography of area
- ▶ Rural population characteristics





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Veterans (9/30/2011) by County Saturation level



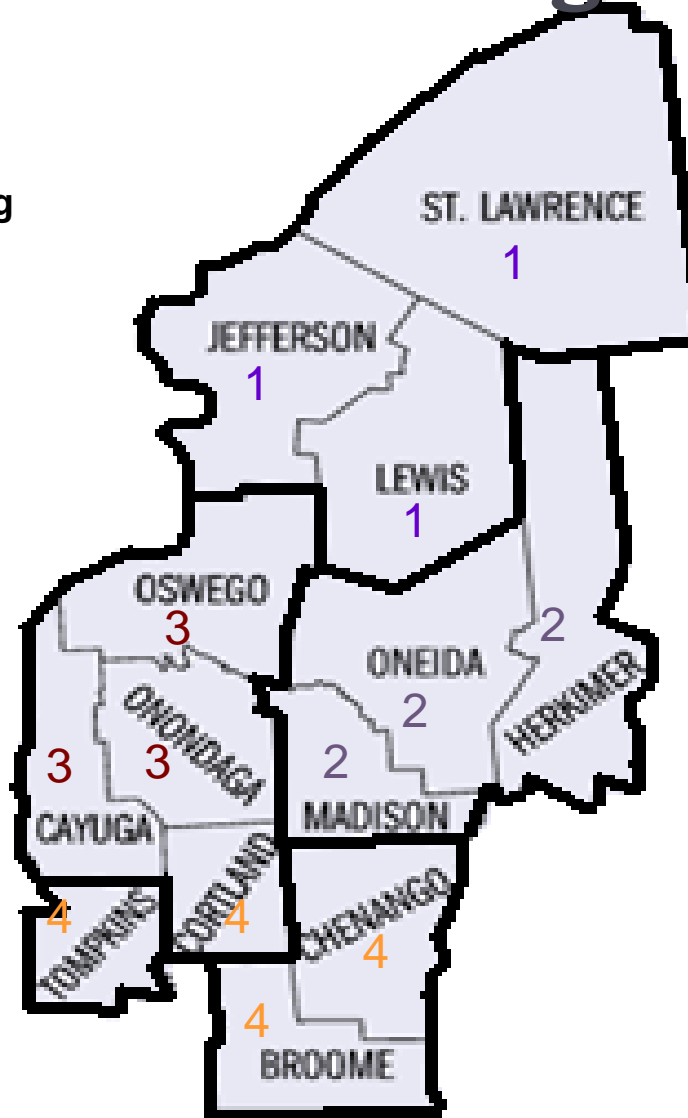
County	Veterans (9/30/2011)	County	Veterans (9/30/2010)
Broome, NY	14,230	Madison, NY	5,146
Cayuga, NY	6,327	Oneida, NY	18,156
Chenango, NY	4,442	Onondaga, NY	27,872
Cortland, NY	3,221	Oswego, NY	9,767
Herkimer, NY	5,568	St. Lawrence, NY	8,632
Jefferson, NY	10,297	Tompkins, NY	4,892
Lewis, NY	2,295		

Syracuse HCHV Service Area & Coverage

Region 1: North (VHPD Service Area)
Watertown CANI Building
 HCHV Outreach (1)
 HUD/VASH PSA (1)

Region 2: East (VHPD Service Area)
Rome CBOC
 HUD/VASH (2)
 HCHV Outreach (1)

Region 4: South
Freeville /Binghamton CBOC's
 HCHV Outreach (1)



Region 3: West
Syracuse BHOC
 HCHV Team Leader (1)
 VJO Coordinator (1)
 HCHV Outreach (1)
 Grant Per Diem (1)
 HCHV PSA (1)
 HUD/VASH Coordinator (1)
 HUD/VASH PSA (1)
 HUD/VASH & Housing First (6)
 HUD/VASH SUD (1)
 HVSE (2)

Oneida County

- ▶ **12.3% of this county is Veterans**
 - ▶ The 2nd most densely saturated area of Veterans in Syracuse VAMC catchment area
- ▶ **2010 Census = 234,878**
 - ▶ **-0.3% loss** since the 2000 Census
- ▶ **194** people per square mile
 - ▶ **85** housing units per square mile
- ▶ **90,496** Households county wide
- ▶ **59,184 (30.40%)** had families with children under age 18 living in the household
- ▶ **13.10%** were a household that included a person over age 65



Oneida County

Income

- ▶ **59.7%** of the population is between the ages of 18-64.
 - ▶ Median age is **38**
- ▶ Median income for a household was **\$35,909**
 - ▶ For a family **\$45,341**
- ▶ **13.00%** of the population is living below the poverty line
 - ▶ **18.90%** of those are children, **8.50%** of those aged 65+



Herkimer County

- ▶ **11.1% of this county is Veterans**

- ▶ The 8th most densely saturated area of Veterans in Syracuse VAMC catchment area

- ▶ **2010 Census = 64,519 people**

- ▶ **+0.1% growth** since the 2000 Census

- ▶ **46 people per square mile**

- ▶ **23 housing units per square mile**

- ▶ **25,734 Households county wide**

- ▶ **17,113 (30.60%)** had families with children under age 18 living in the household

- ▶ **13.70%** were a household that included a person over age 65



Herkimer County

Income

- ▶ **58.8%** of the population is between the ages of 18-64
 - ▶ Median age is **39**
- ▶ Median income for a household was **\$32,924**
 - ▶ for a family **\$40,570**
- ▶ **12.50%** of the population is living below the poverty line
 - ▶ **15.60%** of those are children, **10.40%** of those aged 65+



Madison County

- ▶ **13.8% of this county is Veterans**
 - ▶ The 9th most densely saturated area of Veterans in Syracuse VAMC catchment area
- ▶ **2010 Census = 73,442.**
 - ▶ +5.8% growth since the 2000 Census
- ▶ **106** people per square mile
 - ▶ **44** housing units per square mile
- ▶ **25,368** Households county wide
- ▶ **17,580 (33.60%)** had families with children under age 18 living in the household
 - ▶ **10.30%** were a household that included a person over age 65
 - ▶ Highest rate of **Married Couples** in catchment area



Madison County

Income

- ▶ **62.6%** of the population is between the ages of 18-64.
 - ▶ Median age is **36**
- ▶ Median income for a household was **\$40,184**
 - ▶ For a family **\$47,889**
- ▶ **9.80%** of the population is living below the poverty line
 - ▶ **10.50%** of those are children, **8.80%** of those aged 65+



Rural Characteristics



- ▶ 1/3 of OEF/OIF Veterans return to rural and frontier areas
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Availability of services
- ▶ Domestic Violence
- ▶ Nutrition & food resources



Rural Characteristics

▶ Cultural & Social

- ▶ Importance of family and immediate/local community
 - ▶ Self-reliance, independence and PRIDE
 - ▶ Ok to trade, borrow money, borrow cars, rely on others for childcare, etc.
 - ▶ NOT ok for able-bodied adults to rely on Social Services
 - Belief that government is bad, wasteful, does not understand rural populations
 - ▶ Distrust of “outsiders”

▶ Drugs & Alcohol

- ▶ Drinking & functional alcoholism is ok
 - ▶ Meth and marijuana are ok – not “city” drugs
-



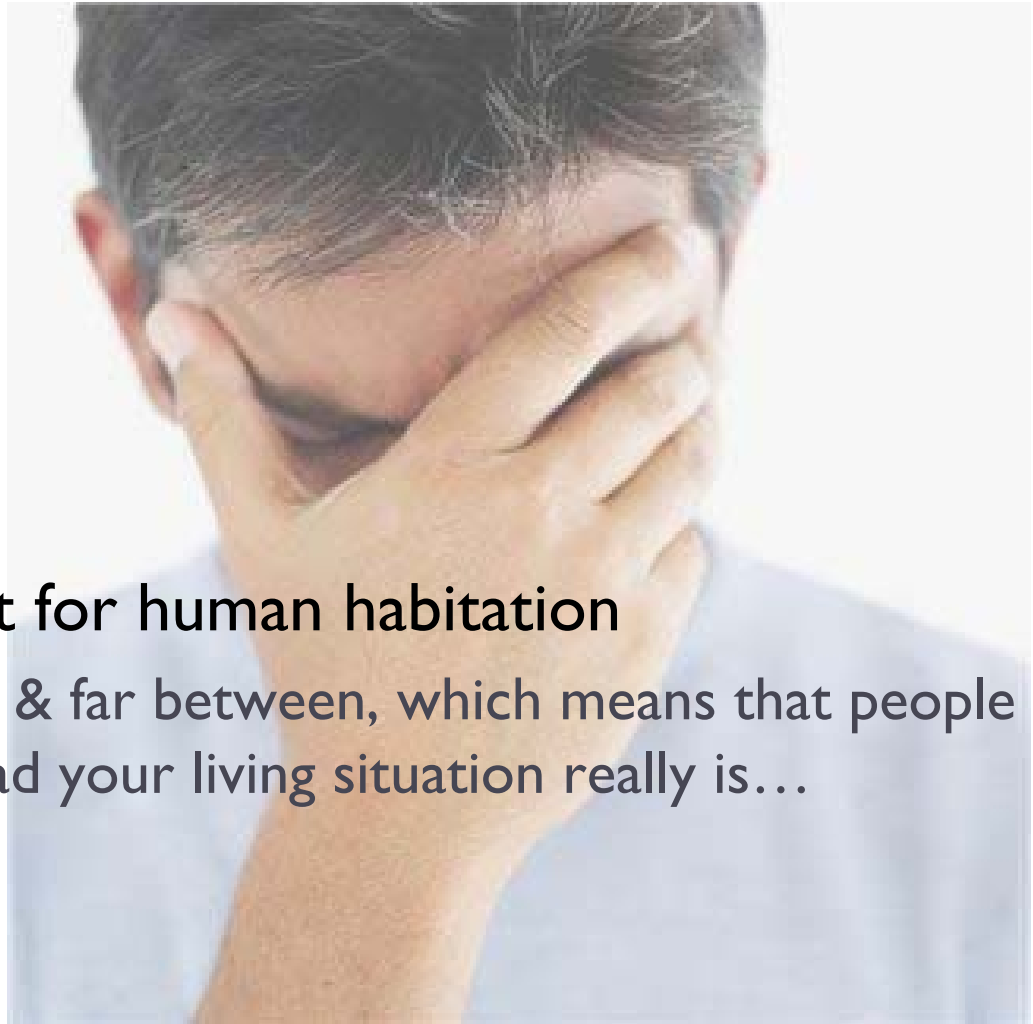
Rural Characteristics

- ▶ Importance of community stakeholders
 - ▶ Clergy, postsecondary educators, criminal justice personnel, etc.
- ▶ Rural individuals tend to be less educated and poorer and are less likely to have employer-based health insurance
- ▶ Child support issues (not rural specific)
- ▶ Debt loads (not rural specific)
- ▶ Services & Supports
 - ▶ Fewer resources
 - ▶ Transportation
 - ▶ Lack of emergency shelters/housing
- ▶ Population
- ▶ Lack of available housing



Rural Homelessness

- ▶ **Street homeless**
- ▶ **Couch surfing**
- ▶ **Overcrowding**
 - ▶ Family
 - ▶ Friends
- ▶ **Conditions not meant for human habitation**
 - ▶ Neighbors can be few & far between, which means that people may not know how bad your living situation really is...



Outreach & Marketing...

- ▶ Follow outreach strategies as presented in the National Veterans Outreach Guide
- ▶ Outreach follows many of the same principles as marketing
 - ▶ Identify your primary audience/target
 - ▶ What are THEIR needs and wants
 - ▶ As identified by the person
 - ▶ Know how to best reach each target audience
 - ▶ What methods will you use to reach your audience
 - ▶ Know your audience's barriers to service
 - ▶ What can YOU do to help them receive services that will overcome these barriers?



Outreach Strategies

▶ Relationships

- ▶ HUD, DOL, DSS, Vocational Rehabilitation, legal aid services
- ▶ Local military bases, National Guard and Reserves

▶ Collaboration with community partners

- ▶ National Grid (and other utility providers)
- ▶ VFWs & American Legions
- ▶ Hospitals
- ▶ Grassroots organizations
- ▶ Religious organizations
- ▶ Continuum of Care



Outreach Strategies, II

- ▶ Advertising
 - ▶ Libraries, schools, laundry mats, gas stations...
- ▶ Mobile Outreach
 - ▶ Transportation
 - ▶ Meeting people where they are
- ▶ Word of mouth
- ▶ DAV partnerships
- ▶ Connection to Indian/Tribal Nations



Communication & Technology

- ▶ Lap top (with wireless), iPad, cell phone, GPS, portable scanner, portable printer
- ▶ “No wrong door” philosophy



Strengths & Successes

- ▶ Reduction in homeless recidivism rate
- ▶ Increased nutrition
- ▶ Increase in \$\$\$ for Veterans
- ▶ Increase in safe & stable housing
- ▶ Information & Referral
 - ▶ Better connection to community resources
- ▶ Reconnect with family & friends
- ▶ Better access to healthcare



Things to Consider



- ▶ Are you mobile?
- ▶ Use of technology
- ▶ Response time
- ▶ Personal safety
- ▶ Partnerships
- ▶ How to advertise



Conclusions & Recommendations

- ▶ Importance of communication
- ▶ Specifically target newly discharged combat Veterans
- ▶ Include budget line for flexible spending
- ▶ Assistance for homeowners in regard to utilities and/or taxes
- ▶ Assistance with legal fees
 - ▶ Driver's license, court fees, etc.



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VHPD Detailed Process: Initial Determinations

- ▶ Verify that potential client is eligible for VA Healthcare
- ▶ Clarify the root of the Veteran's need and determine if the Veteran is eligible to be served through another service
 - ▶ i.e. DSS, TA, HEAP, Emergency HEAP, EAF, Food Stamps, etc.
- ▶ Is the Veteran at imminent risk of homelessness?
 - ▶ Is there documentation of the perceived imminent risk?
- ▶ Is the Veteran income eligible?
 - ▶ Veteran's income is \leq 50% of Area Median Income
 - ▶ Veteran has $<$ \$3000 in available resources
 - ▶ Does the Veteran have a Landlord's Statement for the proposed apartment?



VHPD Detailed Process: Initial Determinations, II

- ▶ **Is the Veteran literally homeless?**
 - ▶ Night prior to contacting CNY VOC one of the following occurred:
 - ▶ Veteran was sleeping in shelter
 - ▶ Veteran was sleeping in car/street park/places not meant for human habitation
 - ▶ Veteran was released from a hospital or institution after sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation
- ▶ **Is the Veteran at-risk for becoming homeless?**
 - ▶ Veteran has an eviction notice
 - ▶ Veteran is living in a motel as temporary shelter
 - ▶ Veteran is temporarily living with family or friends and must vacate
 - ▶ Veteran has utility shut off notice which would result in having to leave residence



VHPD Detailed Process: Initial Interview

- ▶ Ask Veteran and everyone over 18 to sign Release of Information forms
- ▶ Give Veteran a copy of CNYVOC Privacy Practices and ask Veteran to sign receipt form
- ▶ Conduct initial interview utilizing the Initial Intake Form



VHPD Detailed Process: Initial Interview, II

- ▶ Obtain the following documents:
 - ▶ Risk documentation
 - ▶ Birth Certificates for each household member
 - ▶ Social Security cards for each household member
 - ▶ Photo I.D for all household members ≥ 18
 - ▶ Proof of residency (last address)
 - ▶ Income documentation for last 4-weeks
 - Current wages, SSI, SSD, UIB, VA, etc.
 - ▶ Bank statements for the past 60 days
 - ▶ TA budget print out from DSS or verification of application
 - ▶ Food Stamp budget print out from DSS or verification of application



VHPD Detailed Process: Initial Interview, III

- ▶ Obtain the following documents:
 - ▶ Copies of all household expenses for the past 60 days
 - Utilities, cable, phone/cell, internet, vehicle, medical insurance, medical bills, credit card, etc.
 - ▶ Current landlord statement for rent or arrears
 - Copy of current valid lease
 - ▶ Landlord statement for proposed apartment
 - Security, 1st months rent, utility type/inclusion
 - ▶ Last 6 months of utilities billing and payment history

