



# Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00am – 11:00am

Multnomah Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Copper Room, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon 97214

## MEETING MINUTES: Focus – Criminal Justice

### Welcome and Introductions

Task Force meeting attended by: Michelle Plambeck, Judge Franz, Cathy Spofford, Chris Aiosa, Katie burgard, Jonathan Sanford, Ginger Martin, Martin Clark, Doug Kuhl, Don Weber, Jennifer Hibbs, Diane McKeel, Sean Files, Judy Shiprack, Lynn Schemmer-Valleau, Chuck Sparks, Seth Lyon, Linda Maddy

TOPIC / PRESENTER	NOTES	Action
<b>Veterans Docket</b>  Commissioner Shiprack, Judge Franz, Chuck Sparks, Linda Maddy, Ginger Martin, Martin Clark	<p>Commissioner Shiprack presented overview of the Veterans Docket's goals and how this model has developed since attending a workshop at the 2011 NACo conference.</p> <p>Judge Franz spoke about the strong partnership between the VA, Metropolitan Public Defender's Office, State Courts, Multnomah County Dept of Community Justice, District Attorney's Office, and Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. This partnership stretches across federal level (VA) to the state (courts) and county level.</p> <p>Mr. Sparks described the typical process of how the docket will work: the Veteran will be identified as early as possible in process - ask questions at intake, defense bar will ask questions. If the veteran wants to be a part of this docket, Mr. Crow with MPD will help access service history and what individual is eligible for. That information will be shared with all partners and a settlement conference will be scheduled on a shorter timeline. The PO and VA will be in courtroom in front of veteran-savvy judges, with veteran-savvy probation officers, and a veteran-savvy district attorney negotiating. At this point, plan is to have regular veterans docket about once per month. Rough estimate of up to 50 or so per year, but since it's a probation violation docket the hope is that a lot of veterans will enter the program but never re-offend so they need to come to the probation violation docket.</p> <p>Judge Franz added that anticipated outcomes include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Understanding the veteran's behavioral and mental health needs will enable the docket partners to assemble a supervision package for that individual that gives them the best chance to be successful.</li><li>2) Wraparound services provided by VA and Veteran Health Administration will reduce recidivism so the community benefits as well.</li></ol> <p>This is a felony program, and most veterans courts across the country are misdemeanor. Multnomah County already has Community Court for misdemeanors. Sex offenses and domestic violence offenses are not eligible.</p>	

	<p>Linda noted that having this specialized docket allows the VA to be in the courtroom and an active participant on the team. This will increase efficiency and guarantee a VJO can be in courtroom and part of settlement conference to assess what services and level of care are appropriate, and facilitate information and services (e.g. Housing, vocational rehabilitation, MH or substance abuse treatment.) Even when veterans go to prison they will know where they are going when they get out and have services set up, application for benefits or pension opened, or prevent interruption of benefits for dependents during incarceration.</p> <p>Marty and Ginger discussed a parallel process underway to support all veterans involved in DCJ services. Able to identify a little over 200 veterans under supervision so far, and assessed which units they were involved with. Identified probation and parole officers who were also veterans, and now have seven dedicated veterans specialists involved in each field office and specialty unit. First meeting is scheduled, which will be opportunity for training by Linda and Veterans Justice Outreach team and other resources.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u>  How get past the disclosure of information limitation faced by other counties?  All voluntary, and if the veteran and his/her defense attorney decide to opt into the veterans docket they share all information with the other partners.</p> <p>Is this giving veterans a break? What is the benefit to the DA's Office?  DA's office doesn't see this as "giving something up", rather it is an opportunity to get more information and everyone benefits from more informed settlement package with assessment of needs, and guaranteed services. Better informed sentencing will lead to better probations, which then lead to better outcomes.</p> <p>What does peer mentorship opportunity look like?  Marty described three combat veterans he has worked with: Two have moved forward and the third is still engaged in his prison sentence. They are interested and prepared to enter mentorship program when the call comes. Cathy mentioned that there are peer mentors being incorporated in multiple VA programs.</p>	
<p><b>Update from County Veterans Services Office</b></p> <p>Lynn Schemmer-Valleau</p>	<p>Lynn presented outreach strategies implemented by the County Veterans Services Office with support from ODVA's grant funding, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eleven TriMet buses currently have advertisements. Photos distributed to show what the ads look like.</li> <li>• Community paper inserts - two-sided flyers with one version directed to Vietnam-era vets and another targeted to more general veteran population. Hollywood, mid-county and east county were the primary targets for those. Have been getting a lot of referrals from these inserts, especially in the mid-county and east-county appointment days.</li> <li>• New branding and materials for the Veterans Services Office. Distributed new Mult Co CVSO business cards, with new logo.</li> <li>• New brochure with revised logo and language will be printed soon.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three post-cards will be sent out to veterans as a follow-up to the "welcome home" letter mailed from the County Commissioners.</li> <li>• Poster put up at libraries, bulletin boards, coffee shops, employment offices. Starting to get calls from those as well.</li> <li>• On Thursday last week the 1080 the Fan radio station had a "cooling for a cause" event with request to landlords to rent to veterans, cash or household item donation opportunities, and raising awareness about this issue. Created some good publicity and raised funds to support Operation 305.</li> <li>• Conducting four different engagement and outreach workshops: two targeted to professionals working in fields supporting veterans, and two focused on families and veterans. At recent workshop on May 20<sup>th</sup>, Gabe Court spoke about CVSO services and a VA crisis line rep spoke about her program. As the next three get scheduled they will be announced through this group. One will probably be targeted specifically to women veterans.</li> </ul> <p>Soon will be posting for 0.50 office assistant - screening phone calls, setting appointments, working with CVSOs to put together claim. Encouraged to include "how can community be involved", which would give direction for someone who isn't a veteran and doesn't know anyone.</p>	<p>If you want to speak at outreach workshop or know of someone who would be a good speaker, please contact Lynn.</p>
<p><b>General Updates</b> All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seth - Operation 305 VASH Voucher program is getting another allocation. Group is looking into what needs to happen to take on the VA's goal of ending homelessness by 2015. Also looking into the whole homeless services continuum to see how to best support veterans as they move through. Biggest challenge now is the housing market.</li> <li>• Commissioner McKeel - Budget adopted last Thursday. Two highlights for veterans are: flex funds for homeless veterans increased from \$30k to \$50k; added a new CVSO position, another half-time admin, and a new veterans services supervisor position.</li> <li>• Cathy - Comp and pen advisors coming to CRRC every other Tuesday. People don't always get flagged as homeless so their appointments get scheduled in Hillsboro or somewhere else that isn't convenient for them to make. This will improve access a lot.</li> <li>• Commissioner McKeel - the NACo veterans services committee has started an online network to share info and resources called COIN. We posted leg about instate tuition to vets in undergraduate and grad school (2014 session). What other models should we post? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Suggestion: employer preference for private employers</li> <li>* If you think of anything else, contact Sean to post</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Commissioner McKeel - AOC recently endorsed a letter to Sen. Wyden about concerns related to e-filing reforms. VA is working on an online form to apply for benefits, similar to turbo-tax. This letter promotes the role of CVSO advocates in the application process from the beginning through to any appeals. Sending this to federal delegation and will introduce a resolution at National Association of Counties annual conference. Goal is better access and a system where service officers aren't cut out of the process.</li> <li>• Commissioner McKeel - WWII memorial in Salem is opening this Friday afternoon.</li> </ul>	