



# Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00am – 11:00am

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

## **MEETING MINUTES: Focus – Women’s Services; Federal Legislation**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Task Force meeting attended by: Sean Files, Meghan Crane, Kim Repp, Doug Kuhl, Seth Lyon, Cathy Spofford, Erin Oremland, Scott Wilkening, Pete Pringle, Susan Boyl, Gabriel Court, Katie Pereault, Blake Lore, Britni Childs, Sam Deffler, Medina Kurney, Chris Aiosa, Don Weber, Steven Easterday, Pam Buckmaster, Jennifer Hibbs, Patricia McLean, Jonathan Sanford, Nimisha Gokaldas, Teri Beemer, Lon Getlin, Darrell Beck, Tim Merritt

TOPIC / PRESENTER	NOTES	Action
<b>Women’s Services</b>  Panel Discussion	<p>Panel discussed services for women veterans, including how they are identified, services available through veteran-specific program, and other services for general population that are referral resources.</p> <p>How are they identified as a veteran?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some are identified in the jail</li><li>• CRRC has two outreach workers</li><li>• Programs ask their clients if they have military service (including CRRC, Human Solutions, Transition Projects, and winter warming shelters)</li></ul> <p>What is typical referral process? What are barriers experienced during referral?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trauma and fear that others will find out that they need help. Especially concerned when they have kids – what the impacts will be on their family.</li><li>• Trauma they experienced may not be documented.</li><li>• Helpful for service providers and CVSOs to explain eligibility and find out about service history.</li><li>• VA facilities can feel male-dominated and either unwelcoming or triggering for a female veteran – especially if she has experienced MST. CRRC implementing strategies to make it more comfortable, such as family or women-only waiting area, toys and coloring books for kids, changing table.</li><li>• 211 info is a big referral agent for female veterans and their families.</li></ul> <p>Services available outside of the VA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teri Beemer and Dr. Gokaldas presented on services from Multnomah County Mental Health and Addictions Services.</li><li>• Pam Buckmaster presented on resources available to women and families at the East County Health Clinic and other health department locations.</li></ul>	

<p><b>Federal Legislative Update</b></p> <p>Jonathan Sanford</p>	<p>Jonathan provided an overview of HR 3547, the omnibus spending bill, which included 10% increase in VA funding. Group discussed where the most important touch points are for veterans so that Sen. Wyden can direct attention and resources to those services.</p> <p>Update on the 41st division deployment this summer, with approximately 1,000 anticipated to be deployed though there is still uncertainty about how many for how long.</p> <p>Reported on legislative priorities for Sen. Wyden, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted funding for veteran services in rural communities.</li> <li>• Funding the JTAP team.</li> <li>• Work study placement for veterans in congressional offices.</li> <li>• Civil War gravestone replacement.</li> <li>• Co-sponsored a bill for discharge status updates for veterans impacted by "don't ask-don't tell" policy.</li> <li>• Anticipate a drawdown of troops by 20% or more. How do we connect with these service members and help them reintegrate into school or employment, and access services as needed?</li> <li>• Looking for feedback about how federal funds can and do impact community, and Jonathan encouraged anyone with feedback or suggestions to contact his office.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>General Updates</b></p> <p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sean provided legislative update for bills in the State of Oregon. Specific bills highlighted included SB1506 which enacts the interstate compact on educational opportunity for military children; HB4057 that relates to translating military experience/training to licensing boards; HB4025 that relates to the ODVA home loan program; HB4021 that would charge nonresident veterans in-state tuition for grad school; HB4023 which renames US 26 through Warm Spring Reservation as Warm Springs Veterans Memorial Highway, and may include an amendment creating a lottery scratch-it game for veterans services. With questions or more information on any of these bills contact Commissioner McKeel's office at <a href="mailto:district4@multco.us">district4@multco.us</a></li> <li>• Commissioner McKeel presented budget proposal to expand veterans services office, which would add a fourth CVSO, a full-time supervisor, and second half-time administrative staff member. A budget survey is available online at <a href="http://web.multco.us">web.multco.us</a> to give feedback on county services and where community members would like to see investments made.</li> <li>• Two upcoming job fairs: In Columbia County on March 5th and a Salem Hiring our Heroes event on March 13th.</li> <li>• Oregon Women Veterans Conference is scheduled March 28-29 in Eugene. Conference is free, registration is required at <a href="http://www.oregon.gov/odva/pages/womenvet.aspx">www.oregon.gov/odva/pages/womenvet.aspx</a></li> </ul>	