



Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

November 2nd, 2015, 9:00am – 11:00am
Multnomah Building, Room 126, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon 97214

MEETING MINUTES Focus – Housing

Welcome and Introductions

Task Force meeting attended by: Diane McKeel, Sean Files, Crista De La Torre, Chris Aiosa, Cassandra Hernandez, Andrea Jusino, Pete Pringle, Don Weber, Napoleon Hodgers, Steven Easterday, Mary Carroll, Jamison Purry, Amie Oliver, Joy Schommer, Andy Smith, Rachel Livernois, Thomas Reed, Christine Lewis, Eric Ensley, Toeney Flowers, Ed howard, Doug Kuhl, Meloni Beauchamp, Nancy Bumpus, Patti Jay, Casey Curry, Raymond Baker, Marc Clift, Frank Ball, Faustina (Tina) McDowell, Catherine Todd, Alex Glover, Daphne Nesbitt`

| TOPIC / PRESENTER | NOTES |
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| <p>Discussion of Efforts to End Veteran Homelessness</p> <p>Mary Carroll <i>Multnomah County</i></p> | <p>Through Home for Everyone, there has been a community effort to end veteran homelessness by the end of the year. The goal is housing 690 veterans, based on the number of veterans identified in the point in time count. Throughout the year there have been regular meetings with Home Forward, the VA, and housing agencies to discuss clients who aren't being served. Also extensive outreach to landlords, as discussed in the August VTF meeting, and the development of the landlord outreach & response team. Handout distributed with monthly count of veterans being housed, which shows that we are on pace to meet the goal of effective zero. In addition to housing veterans, this group is working on building the system's capacity so that in the future when a veteran becomes homeless it is rare, brief, and they can access housing quickly.</p> <p>Discussion about data collection, and if the group is looking at where geographically veterans are being housed. HFE is tracking where people are being housed, as well as where they were before accessing services. There are a large number of homeless veterans in East Portland and East County. After a question about what the VA's role is, Mary responded that they are an important partner, with involvement on the housing committee, funding HUD-VASH vouchers, and staffing for case management.</p> <p>In discussion about trends the housing partners have observed leading to or keeping veterans homeless, common issues include untreated mental health needs, landlord debt, criminal records, addictions, substance abuse, and lack of available affordable units.</p> |

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| <p>Do Good Multnomah Veteran Shelter</p> <p>Chris Aiosa <i>Do Good Multnomah</i></p> | <p>Chris announced that Do Good Multnomah will be opening a shelter for homeless veterans on November 11th. The shelter is located at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, at 1126 SW Park in Portland. There will be room for 13 male veterans, as well as accompanying service animals. Check-in from 8-8:30pm and 6am checkout. The shelter is entirely referral-based, and any veteran is eligible (any discharge status, and Guard or Reserve veterans are able to use the shelter).</p> <p>To make a referral, email dogoodpdx@gmail.com</p> <p>To build relationships and help transfer people where they need to go, placements will be a minimum of a week. Any partner can refer, even a family member. Group discussion about resources for female veterans and the need for shelter space for this population. GPD beds are available through the Martha Washington, so please refer female veterans to Central City Concern. In addition, there is \$5 million in funding for 650 new shelter beds, hopefully sited this fiscal year, with priority for homeless women.</p> |
| <p>Homeless Veteran Outreach</p> <p>Daphne Nesbitt <i>Transition Projects</i></p> | <p>Daphne discussed the role of homeless outreach staff and efforts to meet veterans where they are and build relationships. Transition Projects day center adds veterans to the registry when they come in, and a SSVF screener goes to the CRRC on Mondays. 211 also screens veterans who call and refers them to Transition Projects for services. If you talk with a homeless veteran, have them call 855-425-5544 for the Transition Projects hotline, or refer them to the day center at 650 NW Irving.</p> <p>Raymond added that the VA's role is to fund staff positions, set up appointments, and do case management. The VA outreach workers also help coordinate stand down events, drive van to sites around the region, and outreach workers are at Transition Projects on Mondays, Thursdays at JOIN, and other times just out in the community meeting veterans where they are. There are eight community partners who come to the CRRC at least once per week, and veterans can either meet with them as a walk-in or set up an appointment ahead of time. Discussion about the value of this partnership and seamless referrals going back and forth between the CRRC, VA medical center, and community organizations for whatever the veteran needs.</p> <p>Question was posed about what happens for veterans who don't want to go to the VA, but have mental health issues or other needs that should be addressed. Other options discussed include Returning Veterans Project's partnership with Pacific University, peer-to-peer referrals to encourage people to use the VA, going to the CRRC because it can be less overwhelming than the VA on the hill, and contact the county veterans service officer for referral to county health department.</p> |

Landlord Outreach & Landlord Response Team

Toeney Flowers
JOIN

Toeney presented on the landlord outreach & response program, which works as part of the Home for Everyone initiative to maintain and expand the relationships between housing programs and local landlords or property managers. His team has backgrounds in property management, mental health case management, and real estate. This team provides ongoing case management, office visits, home visits, a 24-hour phone line, eviction prevention for financial difficulties, up to a year of renter's insurance if needed, and mitigation for damage to units. Toeney also discussed landlords providing more flexibility because of this relationship, such as limiting security deposits to the same or 1.5 times first month's rent. Outreach underway to multi-cultural landlords, and with focus on smaller- to mid-size property managers. Also going back to keep them engaged.

Discussion about what barriers the landlord team is seeing. The team is new and still developing relationships, but working on a questionnaire that will help identify issues. Initial trends they have observed include payments not coming in on time and then there is a problem after hours and the landlord can't reach anyone. This is an area where the 24-hour helpline will be really valuable. Additional discussion about the struggle when a renter gets their portion of rent in on time but, because of a glitch at the housing authority, the rest of the rent get sent in late. This is an especially difficult issue with smaller properties or landlords who don't have the financial cushion for a tenant's rent to come in late. Toeney also described efforts to work with landlords to keep rent stable or even small decreases for veterans with housing vouchers.

Updates

All

- The East County Veterans Stand Down was October 17th and there were 187 veterans in attendance. Transition Projects added all homeless veterans to the homeless registry, and agencies with tables included TPI, Lines for Life, Easter Seals, and county programs through the library, Community Justice, and the County Veterans Service Office.
- Andy provided an overview of the Association of Oregon Counties meeting at the annual conference later this month in Eugene. This committee is working on federal agenda, so send suggestions to Andy or Commissioner McKeel's office for consideration.
- Hank Bauer from Oregon National Guard presented at the August meeting and recently followed up with two updates. He and a colleague were consulted by the school district about their dress code after a recent incident where a student was sent home depiction of a weapon on his fallen soldier t-shirt, and his team is also working with multiple east county school districts to help identify students who are from military families and assist in connecting them to supports when needed. These partnerships are made possible because of the Task Force.
- Veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system can get a free flu shot at any VA health care facility or at any local Walgreens. Just tell the pharmacist you receive care at a VA medical facility and show your VA ID card.
- Multnomah County Animal Services is launching the "Be a Hero: Adopt a Pet, Help a Vet!" campaign. From November 10-14, the agency is asking the public to bring care packages during business hours to the Troutdale or North Lombard locations. Anyone who brings a care package for troops or shows military or veteran ID will receive 50% off adoption fees of shelter pets. More information at multcopets.org
- Don reported that Victory on the Homefront had an event last night that went very well. Returning Veterans Project and Lines for Life both received awards.
- Upcoming stand downs: Tillamook has one on Friday, and Saturday there will be a stand down in The Dalles.
- Hiring our Heroes Job Fair November 19th from 10am-1pm at the Memorial Coliseum. Pete will send out a flyer after the meeting.