



# MULTNOMAH COUNTY VETERANS TASK FORCE

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 9:00am – 11:00am

Multnomah Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Room 126, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon 97214

## Meeting Focus: Education and Employment

Welcome and Introductions	
Task Force meeting attended by: Diane McKeel, Sean Files, Casey Curry, Nathaniel Boehme, Jessica Chapman, Andrea Jusino, Douglas Kuhl, Steve Gordon, Katie Burgard, Kai Batalona, Chris Aiosa, Alex Glover, Deanna Dalton, Pete Pringle, Don Weber, Ryan McNabb, Kim Douthit, Felita Singleton, Alexandra Birmingham, Mary Jaeger, Shelah Johnson, Mighelle Aguilar, Steven Easterday, Greg Flores, Molly Finnegan, Emily Hutchison, Christian Rilling, Stu Walker	
TOPIC / PRESENTER	NOTES
<p><b>Panel Discussion: College Support Programs for Veterans</b></p> <p>Kim Douthit, <i>Portland Community College</i></p> <p>Don Weber &amp; Ryan McNabb, <i>Concordia University</i></p> <p>Felita Singleton, <i>Portland State University</i></p>	<p>Commissioner McKeel introduced the panel as a discussion about what resources are available for students at these local colleges, and barriers that veterans experience when they're in school. Don noted that a lot of students have college prep programs to help them transition, but veterans coming out of active service do not so it can be a big adjustment. Additionally, veterans come back to school with a lot of life experience but also a lot of family challenges. One example is if child care plans fall through when a student has evening class, in which case it's valuable to have teachers who are understanding and accommodating. These are challenges usually not experienced by students coming right out of high school.</p> <p>Veteran student centers at schools are helpful to let veterans mingle and build eachother's confidence. The formal and fluid unstructured learning environment can be difficult to adjust to after military environment, especially the ability or expectation to speak freely. Discussed common triggers in the classroom, such as backpacks left everywhere, students sneaking out their cell phones during class to text people, and curriculum topics that could be hard for veterans to discuss. Important to talk with professors to help the veteran's learning environment and be informational for other students and faculty as well. However, always educating others about military culture can be exhausting for a student who is there to learn and has a full course load, so the burden needs to be shared by other students, faculty and administrators also.</p> <p>Kim described veterans' cultural in-service training at PCC, which is intended to foster a supportive learning environment. One of the challenges is the number of faculty who are adjunct and may not teach every term or be accessible. Other options discussed by group included trainings in classroom and a great 11-hour webinar training by the VA that can be broken up into smaller parts. Nathaniel suggested green zone training as well.</p>

	<p>PCC has three student resource centers for veterans among the four main campuses. The physical space is an area for veterans to come use computers and printers, build relationships with each other, talk about different classes and professors, and work with resource center staff to assist with campus resources and navigating the system. Also have a partnership with County Veteran Service Officers to come a few times per month, including at the annual resource fair. Certify about 1,000-1,200 veterans each term at PCC between the campuses. Concordia has about 300 veterans, with many of them taking homeland security program. Portland State had approximately 1,500 veterans enrolled last year. Starting this term, PCC is providing priority registration for all veterans so they can get into classes they need.</p> <p>Discussion about priority registration for veterans from recent legislation. PCC and Portland State are expanding on the legislation's minimum requirement. For example, the bill only requires priority for the first term but PCC offers priority registration each term the student is enrolled, and if a veteran takes a term off they still get priority when they come back.</p> <p>Portland State has done some restructuring of the office since Felita recently joined it, with efforts currently focusing on strengthening the partnership with the college women's resource center to connect with female veterans as well as the ODVA women veterans coordinator. Working with external service providers through the VA to have a presence on campus, and better integrating veterans service center with internal PSU programs such as career services, new student orientation, and the child care center. Student orientation is October 19-21. Felita echoed other presenters that secure housing is very important for success in the classroom.</p> <p>During discussion, college representatives noted that they get referrals from the County, worksource, and ODVA for students who are going to school or thinking about applying. Conversation is often about how education benefits work, the school environment, and a range of other questions that students have. Discussion about the importance of advocacy at other institutions who don't have veteran student service centers. Also discussed the difficulty of transferring credits from military experience to academic transcripts; instead of that experience being an asset students usually can't transfer credits and sometimes actually need to take more classes because of their time off since high school.</p>
<p><b>Portland Veterans Stand Down Update</b></p> <p>Alex Glover <i>Transition Projects</i></p>	<p>The Portland Veterans Stand Down is scheduled September 9<sup>th</sup> from 9-2pm at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum. Will include a legal clinic, pet care, housing resources, and a variety of services and employers. If you want to table or volunteer, go to <a href="http://www.pdxstanddown.com">www.pdxstanddown.com</a> to register. Biggest hurdles right now are fundraising and accessing surplus. The warehouse in NJ that stored all the surplus gear burnt down so Pete is doing an amazing job of ordering surplus but there won't be as much as in years past. If you want to donate, contact Alex. Greatest needs are winter clothing, boots, and financial donations.</p> <p>On Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> at the coliseum there will be a veterans benefit expo. Last year it was in Salem and there were 90 vendors and 500 people.</p> <p>East County Stand Down is October 22<sup>nd</sup> in Troutdale at the Chapel. Still room for a few more vendors – Contact Pete to sign up. Next planning meeting is August 16<sup>th</sup>.</p>

<p><b>VA Community Employment Position &amp; Update on Housing Program Expectations</b></p> <p>Christian Rilling <i>Portland VA Health Care System / Vancouver Division</i></p>	<p>Christian presented an overview of his role and the VA programs to help veterans get jobs. As FY17 approaches, focusing on employment in housing programs more than in the past. HUD-VASH currently has an employment rate of about 32% and the goal is now 35%. Highlighted the CWP program for veterans with barriers to employment, such as a disability, legal history, or a negative or limited work history. In the past, these positions were at the VA hospital but are now looking to partner with employers in the community to expand the number and type of positions available for veterans. It is supportive employment – veterans are referred by a therapist or counselor and work with a case manager to maintain employment. In this program the VA assumes all liability for client. Employer pays hourly wage plus \$1, the VA pays everything else. Contact Christian to find out more.</p> <p>The Easter Seals HRVP program had 140 veterans engaged last year. Buld of the referrals are from Christian, the CRRC, and Transition Projects. Most veterans in this program get enrolled within 7.5 weeks.</p> <p>Discussion about housing retention and with employment. Some local counties are increasing income level to 300% of rent so tenants don't lose eligibility for support when they get a job. Also work with veterans on career planning through case management so they find a job and understand what resources are available to maintain employment and housing.</p>
<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner McKeel announced the federal policy platform adoption at the National Association of Counties conference last week. Veterans language was adopted into six committee platforms to give stronger voice for this issue and raise profile of the veterans committee and service providers.</li> <li>• September 15<sup>th</sup> veteran job fair at Lloyd Center Doubletree</li> <li>• Alexandra announced that she can help veterans apply for federal benefits through the VBA. There are 94 offices in the country and two in Oregon. She is based at PSU in Smith 301.</li> <li>• Casey shared a couple updates from the Returning Veterans Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Horses Healing Humans: combining Farm Day with the open house for returning veterans between 10am-4pm on August 7<sup>th</sup>. See handout on VTF website.</li> <li>○ Tell your story by joining Write Around Portland and RVP's military family writing group: Eight weeks from Feb-Apr 2017. Registration required at 503-954-2259.</li> <li>○ Trauma Training Series Part III: Case Based Approaches to Treating Complex PTSD. September 23<sup>rd</sup>, all day at Concordia. Register at: <a href="http://returningveterans.org/continuing-education-trainings">returningveterans.org/continuing-education-trainings</a>.</li> <li>○ Museum-based art group for individual Post 9/11 war zone veterans and all MST survivors, coordinated by RVP and the Portland Art Museum. Tuesday afternoons at the Portland Art Museum. Register by contacting Sarah at 909-645-9328 or <a href="mailto:sadinolf@gmail.com">sadinolf@gmail.com</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>