

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

### Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

August 16, 2010 (Monday), 9:00 am – 11:00am  
Conference Room 635, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon 97204

### MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Commissioner Diane McKeel	Tina Edge, Multco System Reform & Comm Placement Coord
Andrew Olsen, Policy Analyst	Greg Clark, Medford Transitional Housing
Lee Girard, DCHS A&D Services	Greg Lamb, Veteran Services Officer
Paul Irrobino, DCHS	Kathleen McHarg, DCHS
Seth Lyon, DCHS Housing	Fred Lentzer, District Attorney
Mary J. Reinhardt, Juvenile Custody Service Specialist - Intake/Control	Brian Vincent DCS

AGENDA TOPIC / PRESENTER	NOTES
<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b> Commissioner Diane McKeel Multnomah County District 4	Diane welcomed everyone and members introduced themselves. She then went over the agenda and asked Mr. Clark to begin.
<b>Incarcerated Vet Issues &amp; Challenges</b> Greg Clark, Medford Transitional Housing	<p>Greg told his story of being a veteran, recovering alcoholic and drug addict who has been clean 23 years. When he got back to the states there were no available services for vets. There was the VA, but it was very difficult to deal with.</p> <p>He has been an Alcohol/Drug counselor for 20+ years. First working for NARA for 8 years (where he worked with Vets), then Yakima Lawyers association. For the last 10 years he has worked for Medford.</p> <p>The facility holds 60 beds for High-Risk vets (and non-vets) straight out of prison for 9 months. They are largely rapists and murderers. They help the recently released find long term housing and employment</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> floor is for long term rental and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is where residents stay up re-entry.</p> <p>He tries to get as many vets as possible into White City Program In Roseburg. Run by the VA, it has a domiciliary, residents can go to college, the VA pays for all of it, and it can hold several hundred patients indefinitely. There is short/long term and permanent housing, with all food and board covered. It is part of the VA medical system referral. Most referrals come via veterans outreach workers. To be eligible, the only qualification is to have honorable discharge and some sort of disability. There are mostly older vets at this facility, with fewer OIF/OEF vets and some Grenada/Desert Storm. There is also a facility in Twin Lakes-Seattle which is 3 times the size of White City (and clients don't need to be from WA).</p> <p>Unfortunately, at Medford, many vets who they deal with don't have honorable discharges. They return from deployment and have no options</p>

Medford is prison release only and works only with the very high risk. Many residents are almost impossible to place, and only roughly 10% of his clients are veterans. Age range is a mix. Some old, some young. Serves seniors and some kids from OYA. Does some "reach-ins" in the prisons when he can. VA sometimes has a booth, but veterans are mostly self-identified, and they are not being tracked. Medford is right above TPI on NW 5<sup>th</sup> on Glisan.

He remarked that It is great that there are these opportunities, but they can also be a death warrant. Some vets get full disability and when they get these benefits retroactively, it often comes in a lump sum. For vets who are addicts, this is a death warrant.

He is able can get some residents social security in one phone call. He has two residents he has worked with who have 50% disability, which gets them \$1500 a month. Within a couple days of getting it they are without anything. One recent client he worked with for 2 years had 100% disability totaling \$3300 a month. His payment was retroactive and he got \$30,000 all at once. Because he was a recovering heroine addict, they put him on methadone. He was found dead in his room 3 months later.

The biggest need and challenge is finding and maintaining housing. Only once they get housed can you begin to deal with their drug alcohol addictions.

There is a new annex is being built, which is based on a Seattle program where alcoholism and drinking are allowed in the facility. It will replace TPI downtown and house 120 beds. There will be a screening process for those who have a medical vulnerability. Multco HS and Health departments will be able to refer clients to it. The Seattle system is a "wet" system where alcohol is allowed in building, though rules are very strict. "Housing first" is the emphasis.

One of the major difficulties is that VA offers great services, but getting access to those services is incredibly hard, especially for those with mental health issues.

The discussion then turned to the current status of services in Multnomah County. Currently, there are 350,000 vets in Oregon and 40-50,000 in Multnomah County and a poor effort is done to keep track of the mall. The system is not very good at prepping them for discharge. They get exit briefings when they arrive back in the states, but their eyes are glazed over and they just want to go home.

The two biggest difficulties are that 1) we're not getting to vets who haven't signed up. 2) Among them, they don't realize that they have to initialize that on their own.

The discussion then focused on housing. It was brought up that there has been a recent push for veterans housing resources into VASH vouchers. The problem with that is that to get vouchers, a veteran needs to be tied into system and recognized as needing housing.

The question then came up as to whether there it would be helpful to have a list that shows all the places where vets are housed. It was agreed that such a list would be helpful, and Seth Lyon agreed to take on the task of establishing that list.

<p><b>Multco Veteran Services Social Networking Tools</b></p> <p>Lee Girard, Paul Iarrobino, Kathleen McHarg, Greg Lamb, Tina Edge</p>	<p>Lee, Paul and Kathleen met with Dave Austin and some of the head of A&amp;D on messaging for a new facebook page, because social networking has been shown to be the new preferred way for access, especially for younger vets.</p> <p>One of the challenges to this is that county attorneys have laid out serious ways of use. While the program is still waiting for a final sign on the county attorneys, it will really help us because veterans services will be first step into social networking for the A&amp;D division. We are treating vets office as pilot project for rest of A&amp;D and DCHS.</p> <p>Fortunately, there is an outside site that can be linked to, where there are other moderators and liability is with the OR National Guard. This can be especially effective if they are a veteran abroad.</p> <p>We can't monitor it constantly, but we're excited to link to an external site.</p>
<p><b>New Multco Veterans Service Website Draft</b></p> <p>Tina Edge, Greg Lamb</p>	<p>Tina began by showing the current veterans website, which leaves much to be asked for. She then distributed a possible "front page" for a new site, which included clickable links to different areas of service, a search feature, Language features, varying text size, and a text only option. For veterans abroad with slower bandwidth, those with seeing difficulties, or those who speak other languages, these are great improvements.</p> <p>On the top left will be a video of Chair Cogen or Commissioner McKeel. On the top right will be rotating pictures of military events in upper right corner, which will be sourced from an associate flkr account.</p> <p>A new program called "Drooble" will show how many people and who visits websites. There will be a link to ODVA facebook page, which is very good. An ODVA team frequently updates their facebook and website, so this can be a great referral tool. We wouldn't have to do anything; we would just take them to the ODVA sites.</p> <p>It was also pointed out that A&amp;D has a database of resources with categories on its site. Veterans are one of the points, with links to Multnomah County and Oregon services. That said, it is current somewhat buried in the site, though they changing vendors on Sept. 1, at which point they will be able to link directly to that.</p> <p>It was also noted that many veterans might have disability that qualifies them for Medicaid, so there should be a link back to A&amp;D homepage. There was also talk of a permanent link to the annual "Veterans Stand Down" event. In the month or two prior to the event there could be a push on facebook and the rest of the web to encourage attendance.</p>
<p><b>Veterans Service Unit Volunteer /PSU &amp; Veteran Work Study Interns Update</b></p> <p>Greg Lamb</p>	<p>Greg mentioned that he has received two applicants for the Work-study position. He is also planning on visiting with the PSU veteran's student's assoc. to look for further candidates. The work study needs to be while they're in school, so it likely wouldn't be a long-term position. They are also looking for some continuity in office work, so that consistent re-training is not required.</p> <p>Lee also mentioned that if this doesn't work, there is also the "Older Worker Program" which is subsidized employment that gets older people working. This could help with continuity issues.</p>

	<p>Tina then talked about the programs at Clackamas Community College. It has a whole floor dedicated to vets services. [Note: A tour of this facility in Oregon City has been planned for September 16 at 3pm]</p> <p>Commissioner McKeel also mentioned that she has heard that Mt. Hood CC is lagging on allowing Campus Veterans Service Officers on their campus. She has volunteered to give the MHCC president a call.</p> <p>Greg mentioned that MHCC is one of only two colleges in state that haven't allowed campus VSOs to be there.</p> <p>Volunteer Suzzane Darden just started working there on Mondays and Fridays.</p> <p>The services available to PCC students are unknown. Mary mentioned that her brother went there, and tried to connect with their veteran's services but got frustrated and gave up. <b>Drew and Greg will volunteer to look into PCC Vets services.</b></p>
<p><b>Veterans Court Review</b></p> <p>Andrew Olsen</p>	<p>Andrew gave an update on veteran's courts. He and Fred plan to head up to Pierce and Thurston Counties in Washington sometime in September to visit their courts. Also, a veteran's court is starting in Klamath County on September 1, and they will be in contact.</p> <p>It was brought up that there is a homeless court at resource action center and also the drug court. Utilizing these services might cut down on the cost of a veteran's court. Because there is such a high incidence of domestic violence for Veterans in court, Chiquita Rollins might want to be involved in that conversation. Andrew will contact her.</p>
<p><b>Open Discussion</b></p> <p>Commissioner Diane McKeel</p>	<p>Lee discussed the the PARIS program. She mentioned that the AAA director in Washington County (Jeff Hill) has been very interested in this project. He might be interested in coming over to speak to us. He has been to Washington state to look at this program. We have talked about it. We need more advocacy at the state level. She will invite him to come to one of our future meetings.</p> <p>Tina also mentioned the idea of meeting with Clark, Washington, Clack, and Multnomah County VSOs. We would do it over at the juvenile that could seat 60. We want people that make decisions. We were thinking about some time in October. Greg mentioned that research could be done to find out if the other counties have a task force.</p> <p>Commissioner McKeel mentioned that if anyone has ideas of people who are involved with veterans and can contribute to the group, to please forward them on to Drew and we can have them present at future meetings.</p> <p>We are also in contact with the incoming NACo president, who is working on a veteran's task force. We'll contact him and get more information. And time commitment and written. He will be here in October.</p>



**Action Items:**

- **Seth Lyon agreed to take on the task of establishing a list of housing options and locations for veterans in our area.**
- **Commissioner McKeel's Office will work on filming a piece featuring her and Chair Cogen welcoming veterans (and visitors) to the new website.**
- **There will be a tour of the CCC Veterans Services Office on September 16 at 3pm. All are welcome.**
- **Commissioner McKeel will call MHCC to ask about the status of their Campus Veterans Services Officer.**
- **Drew and Greg will look into PCC Veterans Services.**
- **Drew will contact Chiquita Rollins about DV issues surrounding Veterans Courts.**
- **Lee will talk to Jeff Hill from Washington County regarding his attendance at a future meeting.**
- **Andrew will research how to post the minutes and agenda publicly so all stakeholders can become aware of issues being worked on by the taskforce.**
- **Greg Lamb & Tina Edge will work with IT on the development of the new Multco Veterans Services website and report back on progress.**
- **Greg Lamb & Tina Edge will compile an invitation list for a full day multi-county Veteran Service Meeting taking place November 22nd or 29th - they will provide it for taskforce review and edit. The counties involved will be Clark, Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas.**

Next meeting ...

**September 27, 2010 (Monday)**

9:00am - 11:0am

Multnomah Building - Conference room #635  
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd Portland, OR 97204

"The taskforce is comprised of members from various departments throughout Multnomah County who are committed and focused on responding to the needs of veterans while assuring the equitable and effective delivery of services to them and their families."

