



# Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, 9:00am – 11:00am  
Multnomah Building, Room 126, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon

## MEETING MINUTES

### Welcome and Introductions

Task Force meeting attended by: Diane McKeel, Sean Files, Andrea Jusino, Darrell Beck, Pete Pringle, Don Weber, Diane Labant, Doug Kuhl, Tito Mendoza, Nancy Bumpus, Javelin Hardy, Rachel Livernois, Aaron Proctor, Eric Ensley, Katie Burgard

TOPIC / PRESENTER	NOTES
<p><b>County Veterans Services Update</b></p> <p>Eric Ensley <i>Multnomah County</i></p>	<p>Eric presented an overview of the Veteran Services Office’s efforts to strengthen partnerships and develop new ones in order to increase awareness about what is done at the local level. The new position, which has just been posted, is a veteran guide that will focus on enhancing these efforts. Outreach this past year has been especially targeted to east county and strengthening partnerships with organizations such as workforce and nonprofits working with housing the homeless. About 15% of veterans aren’t eligible for benefits and this position will help them connect with agencies who can assist them. Along with the justice involved county veteran service officer position, the resource guide will integrate into the community and connect with many more veterans.</p> <p>Eric also provided a veterans docket update as a follow-up to last month’s meeting. The docket partners met recently and reviewed data from this past year. There is strong interest in increasing the number of veterans engaged in the docket, and will work to raise awareness about it, encourage more veteran to self-identify (especially using relationships with CVSOs, Sheriff Office staff, and DCJ), and an expansion of eligible offenses is also under consideration. In a related justice-involved update, a lot of older veterans (50s-60s) are coming out of jail and Dept. of Community Justice staff are working with them to get services and benefits ready for a seamless transition into the community upon their release. This will be another effort the veteran guide CVSO will support.</p> <p><u>Action Step:</u> Pete noted that the resource guide CVSO position is similar to the JTAP role, and he will follow up with Eric to share feedback and recommendations from his experience with JTAP.</p>

**2015 Oregon  
Legislative  
Overview –  
Veterans-  
related bills**

Sean Files  
*Multnomah County*

Sean presented a tracking sheet with status updates on the bills introduced this legislative session that had potential impact on veterans and military service members. Specific bills highlighted included:

- HB 2230: One that has been presented to this committee earlier in the session, which directs Oregon Health Authority to notify ODVA monthly with a list of veterans who have signed a release of information after applying for health care coverage. This is similar to past bills where veterans could agree to have their information shared when applying for benefits through DHS or a license at the DMV, with the goal of identifying and connecting as many veterans as possible with benefits they have earned.
- HB 2539: just passed the senate last week, and directs ODVA to conduct a statewide study on health care for women veterans. Report is to be released by November of 2016, and any recommendations or local actions will be presented to the VTF.
- HB 2645: Directs community colleges to provide priority enrollment for veterans, active military, or dependants receiving veteran education benefits, such that they can sign up for classes early before they fill up.
- HB 2838: Similar to HB 2539, creates a task force to study and provide recommendations on outreach and assistance for incarcerated veterans, as well as statewide information sharing network between systems. Passed the Senate on Thursday.
- HB 3303: Includes service disabled veterans in the DMWESB contracting goals. Also directs policy advisor in the Governor's Office to identify activities and initiatives to promote opportunities for these businesses and prepare an annual report.
- HB 3479: Creates position of Oregon Women Veterans Coordinator in ODVA.
- SB 87: Set framework for applying veteran preference for public agencies during hiring process. Did not move forward, and will likely be reviewed next session.
- SB 89: Enables counties and ODVA to appoint one or more volunteer veterans guides and sets some parameters around duties and oversight. In Multnomah County, the Board of Commissioners used this model to create the CVSO Veteran Guide full-time, paid position, which Eric presented on earlier in the meeting.
- SB 92: Have previously given updates to the committee on this bill, which would have directed the Oregon Department of Education to develop data collection standards for school districts to track which kids are from military families. During public hearing testimony, one presenter indicated that schools can already do this and don't need statutory authority through this legislation. The committee chair told them to do it and report back next session. The task force has helped launch a pilot partnership locally between a school district and the Oregon National Guard that we hope will accomplish and exceed many of the goals sought in this particular bill.
- SB 946A: Creates the position of LGBT Coordinator within ODVA to provide outreach and assistance to veterans, their spouses, and dependants. Same framework as HB 3479 for women veterans. Directs the agency to submit a report by September, 2018. Passed the Senate last week by a 24-5 vote and is referred to Ways and Means because of the \$182,000 funding attached. Carried to the floor by Sen. Monroe from Multnomah County.
- SB 5539: The agency funding bill for ODVA. Signed into law on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and the amended version increases the pass-through funding to county veterans service offices by \$500,000 to \$4.7m, but ends the \$1m veteran extended outreach grant program. Sean gave a brief summary of this innovative outreach program, which provided a base amount of \$10,000 for outreach to the 34 Oregon counties with CVSOs and the remaining \$600,000 was distributed on a competitive basis. Handout passed around to the VTF with summary of what each county used the outreach funds for.

<p><b>Overview of Veterans Extended Outreach Grant Program in Multnomah County</b></p> <p>Eric Ensley <i>Multnomah County</i></p>	<p>Eric reported that the outreach grant funding in Multnomah County has had a great impact. Funds were used for branding and promotional materials, an advertising campaign, and greater outreach to meet with veterans at different sites around the county. In the past year there has been a nearly 30% increase in cases with over 500 power of attorney documents signed. Phone call volume has tripled, and the outreach funding paid for a half-time administrative position that has dropped the response time to the calls to only 4 hours (it had been as long as multiple weeks in previous years).</p> <p>CVSOs have increased office hours at the CRRC, going to the VA hospital on the hill to meet with veterans, in East County 5 days per week rather than 1-2 days per month, and in Mid-County weekly rather than once a month. Have begin collecting demographic information on the over 670 calls per month (especially age and housing information) and will use that data to inform future programmatic decisions. At Pride celebration in June they saw 116 people at the CVSO table, with 23 potential claimants, and at the recent Good in the Hood event they had over 50 people at the table to talk with a service officer with 12 potential claimants.</p> <p>Eric distributed folders with promotional material for task force attendees.</p>
<p><b>LGBT Senior Veteran Outreach</b></p> <p>Aaron Proctor <i>Multnomah County</i></p>	<p>Aaron is completing his degree in occupational therapy and for the past three months has been working with Multnomah County doing LGBTQ senior outreach. The limited available data suggests an increase in social isolation and depression among this population. Aaron has conducted outreach and administered a questionnaire to get more data, and set up activities and groups for these veterans. Themes that he has identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities centered around food and meals are the most successful and well-attended.</li> <li>• Transportation is an issue – five of the seven people he met with didn't drive, took TriMet to get around, and didn't want to commute anywhere that took over an hour.</li> <li>• Housing is a great need for this group.</li> <li>• Generational difference in the coming out process for older veterans.</li> <li>• Impacts of being discriminated against and harassed during service are correlated with what services they seek out later and the severity of how that trauma is manifested in their day-to-day life now.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations are to provide trauma-informed care training for those working with this population; provide activities and social engagement; opportunities to be a positive role model; develop a model of care from here that can be replicated in rural communities.</p> <p>Event is scheduled on August 1<sup>st</sup> at Friendly House in NW Portland. Flyer attached under the meeting materials page on task force website.</p>
<p><b>Veteran Writing Project</b></p> <p>Sean Files <i>Multnomah County</i></p>	<p>Multnomah County is co-hosting a Veterans Writing Project workshop with Columbia County on August 8-9<sup>th</sup>. This free workshop is designed for beginning and intermediate-level writers who are also veterans. We are seeking veterans who may be interested in participating, and space is limited to 15 individuals so please encourage anyone to contact Andy Smith at 971-322-8512 or <a href="mailto:asmith@acoweb.org">asmith@acoweb.org</a> to register.</p> <p>The Veterans Writing Project seeks to accomplish three goals: help veterans tell their stories, put as many veterans' stories in front of readers as possible, and do so in an environment of mutual trust and respect so it is therapeutic. The flyer for this workshop is linked on the VTF webpage to share with people who may want to participate.</p>

## Updates

All

- New job posting for County Veteran Service Officer veteran guide position. Hard copies of the job description shared and you can get more information or apply at [multco.us/jobs](http://multco.us/jobs)
- Home for Everyone is a collaborative that is working to end homelessness, with the subgroup named Operation 424 specifically focused on serving homeless veterans. Marc Jolin presented at the March meeting, and Sean distributed flyers for their landlord recruitment that were recently sent out to the VTF listserve. We have already received at least one referral from task force members.
- Blue Star Mothers of Oregon are helping put on the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Run for the Fallen event. Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup> at Camp Withycombe. Flyers distributed and you can get more information or register at [bluestarmothersoforegon.com](http://bluestarmothersoforegon.com)
- Commissioner McKeel reported that next week she will be representing the county at the National Association of Counties (NACo) annual conference in Charlotte, NC. She is vice-chair of the Veterans and Military Service Committee and they will meet July 10<sup>th</sup>. The agenda includes: a presentation on the Veterans Writing Project (which was already presented at today's meeting); a resolution for increased funding for county veteran service officers; a resolution for research into the health impacts on a veteran's children following their exposure to agent orange, burn pits, and/or depleted uranium; discussion about different models for structuring County Veteran Service Offices; discussion on different models and materials for local policy committees such as this task force; and a presentation from Army OneSource on military-to-civilian transition. We will get an update at next month's task force meeting about how it went.
- Oregon Historical Society has a World War II exhibit from June 26<sup>th</sup> through December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Multnomah County residents get free admission.
- Brief discussion about the recent one-year celebration at the USO at the Portland Airport. Good event that include Bill Schonely as the keynote speaker.
- This Friday Project Homeless Connect will have an event at Sunrise Church in Hillsboro from 9am-3pm.
- On July 16<sup>th</sup> there will be a job fair at the Moda Center from 11am-3pm.
- July 24-26<sup>th</sup> the travelling Vietnam Wall will be at Milwaukie High School.
- August 1<sup>st</sup> Veteran Stand Down event in St. Helens from 9am-3pm at 474 S 7<sup>th</sup> St.
- August 12<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Reserve Center in Vancouver will host a Stand Down.
- August 19<sup>th</sup> Salem will have a Stand Down event. More details as they become available.
- Eric announced a new temporary Multnomah County CVSO position to fill. Likely up to 6 months, and would be an opportunity to get the 1 week training and some experience for future opportunities. Contact Eric directly if you are interested at [eric.ensley@multco.us](mailto:eric.ensley@multco.us)