



**Metro Council
Special Committee on Veterans**

Assessment and Recommendations

18 October 2021

Objective

The committee was convened to assess and report on public and private Veteran engagement in Davidson County including services currently provided, service gaps and service delivery recommendations.

Methodology

Chartered by Vice Mayor Shulman in March of 2021 and facilitated by Eden Murrie, CEO of Operation Stand Down Tennessee, the Metro Special Committee (SC) on Veterans began deliberations on April 8th, 2021. The 15-member committee (Appendix A) included representatives from non-profits, the Metro Council Veterans Caucus, Metro Government, Davidson County Veterans Court, the Nashville Bar Association, state agencies, the local philanthropic funding community, and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce.

The SC invited subject matter experts (list at Appendix B) to provide information on:

- Urgent Intervention
 - Veteran Homelessness and Housing
 - Veteran Wellness—Healthcare
 - Veteran Wellness—Mental Health
 - Veteran Legal Issues/Concerns
 - COVID Impact on Veterans
- Transition and Capacity Building
 - Veteran State and Federal Benefits
 - Veteran Transition Challenges and Opportunities
 - Veteran Education Challenges and Opportunities
 - Veteran Employment and Employers
 - Veteran Economic and Community Impact

Additionally, the committee reviewed Veteran service models from similar cities. (Appendix F) A glossary of terms is at Appendix C.

History of Metro Veteran Services

Historically, there were many entities serving Veterans in Metro Nashville area. Currently, national or state support is from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Tennessee Department of Veteran Services, and various Veteran service organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Veterans (AMVETS). Many of these groups also participate in the Davidson County Veteran Coordinating Council which has been recognizing and honoring Veterans for several decades through their running of the Metro Veterans Day parade and Memorial Day activities. Also, Metro employs three Veteran Service

Officers dedicated to assisting Davidson County Veterans access VA benefits. One position was reinstated in 2014 after a 27-year gap. Additional positions were added in 2016 and 2020.

Over time various nonprofit organizations established programs specifically targeting Veterans in crisis, such as those experiencing homelessness and/or mental health issues. Operation Stand Down Tennessee (OSDTN) was such an agency, beginning services in 1993 and eventually expanding its service offerings to address the needs of all Veterans, not just those in crisis. The Tennessee National Guard (TNG) played a critical role with OSDTN in 1993 and beyond by providing logistical and medical services to Veterans. Today the TNG continues to play a critical role through its Military and Family Readiness Operations directorate assisting TNG Veterans with mental health and employment needs among other services.

In 2016, at the encouragement of the VA, a collective community effort was undertaken to address Veteran services at the strategic level. This effort was called Nashville Serving Veterans (NSV) and culminated with a two-day retreat of over 50 participants at the Center for Nonprofit Management. A final report and recommendations were presented to NSV leaders, but without resources or clear ownership of next steps the effort lost traction and recommendations were never implemented. (Appendix H)

Metro Veterans By the Numbers

The national average would estimate Davidson County's Veteran population to be approximately 49,000 (7% of 694,900 residents). The VA has 31,548 Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare. The 2019 U.S. census identified 29,022 self-identified Veterans in Davidson County. *[Note: The committee's research indicates a consistent challenge with veteran statistics locally and nationally. Only a percentage of Veterans self-identify or enroll in VA services. Therefore, our statistics, based on VA enrollment numbers, under-represent the actual statistics.]*

- Per Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, approximately 80 - 100 Veterans move to Metro Nashville each month.
- 150 transitioning Ft. Campbell soldiers per month stay in the middle Tennessee area
- 8,349 Veterans receive VA disability compensation and/or pension.
- 1,445 Veterans are currently enrolled in local colleges and universities.
- As of 9/23/21, 184 homeless Veterans with 63 in a transitional housing program, 31 in shelters and 63 unsheltered.
- The Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (aka "VA hospital") is one of the top ten fastest growing systems in the VA healthcare system.
- TN National Guard, headquartered in Davidson County, employs over 800 full-time guardsmen.

- Veterans have significant economic impact for the Davidson County. For instance, Veteran residents generate tax revenue upwards of \$600K per month (\$7.2M annually). Beyond tax revenue, they generate \$425M annually. (www.va.gov/vetdata/expenditures.asp) This would only increase if we examined the non-resident Veterans employed in Davidson County.

Committee Assessment:

Finding 1— Existing Veteran support ecosystem focuses on Veterans in crisis, overlooking the power and potential of Veterans and their families.

Davidson County is *Veteran-friendly* but not necessarily *Veteran-ready*. Metro and the Veteran service community in Nashville have well designed pathways for Veterans in crisis. However, no such pathways exist for a Veteran not in crisis. This has led to a silent majority of high-performing Veterans whose resources and talents are not being leveraged.

There are several successful initiatives within our community of organizations, colleges, corporations, and philanthropic organizations that maximize the capacity of Veterans to engage in and add value to our community. For example, Belmont and Lipscomb universities have student Veteran centers that increase enrollment and retention. HCA and Tractor Supply Company have affinity groups that recruit and retain Veteran employees. Hands on Nashville and OSDTN recruit and utilize volunteers. However, these programs are isolated and lack the potential to collaborate and replicate among themselves without an oversight and coordination entity in place.

There is a general lack of awareness of the positive impact Veterans have in the community including Veterans' significant economic, employment and volunteer impact. Consequently, Veteran talent is under-recruited, under-retained and under-utilized.

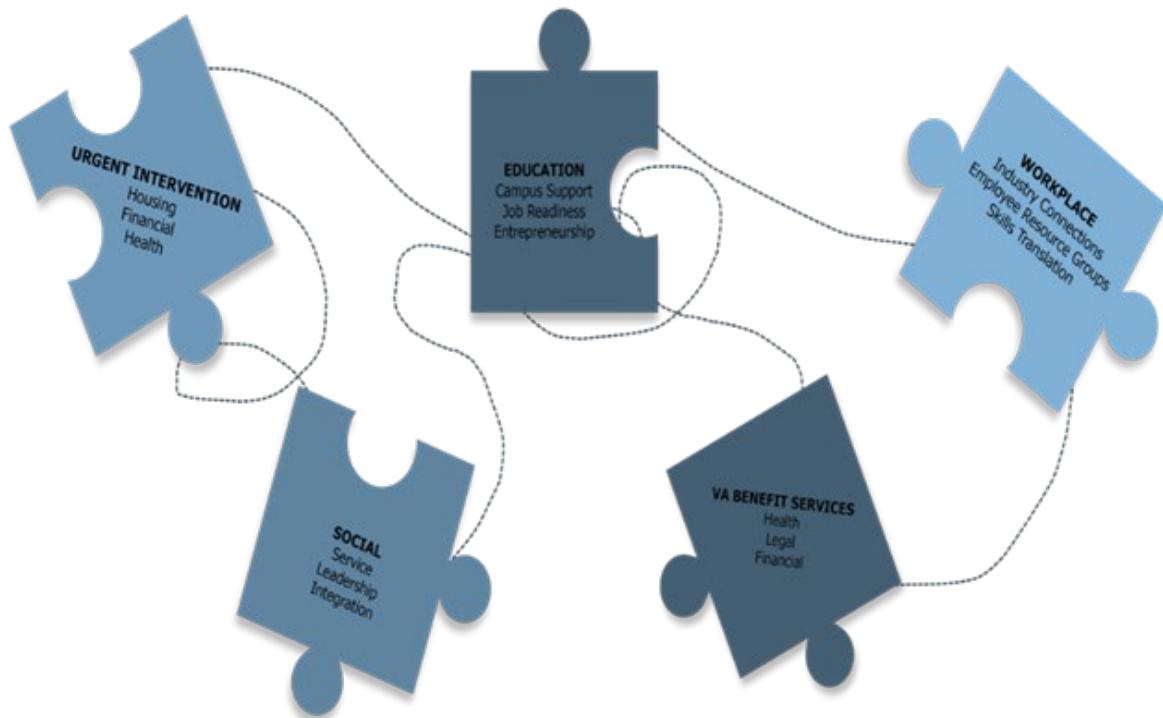
Awareness of the value of Veterans includes recognizing factors such as:

- Veterans have leadership roles in all facets of the community—government, business, education, religion, and philanthropy.
- Veterans are reported as highly efficient and adaptable employees possessing a wide range of skills and experience working in diverse communities.
- Veteran Resource Groups of various employers are collaborative entities that greatly contribute to the community both financially and as volunteers.
- Veterans are very civic minded, i.e., they vote.
- Women and minorities are the fastest growing demographics in the Veteran population.
- Veterans contribute greatly to Metro's economy. However, all eligible Veterans are not accessing their VA benefits reducing their potential economic impact.

Committee Assessment:

Finding 2—Lacking central coordinating entity, there are deficiencies in services for Veterans in crisis.

The committee found that as a community, Metro Nashville has a robust network of non-profit organizations and agencies serving Veterans who are at-risk. However, while collaborative, the current Veteran ecosystem's efforts are not well coordinated thereby resulting in gaps and duplications. There is a lack of coordination toward attaining common goals and disseminating consistent information among the various public and private entities serving Veterans.



Despite coordination challenges, there is a well-executed and collaborative effort to address Veteran homelessness. Homeless Veteran providers set a goal to meet “functional zero,” which describes a system capable of housing Veterans within 30 days. Yet, while our community has reduced Veteran homelessness, progress has been stagnant, hovering between 180 and 190 homeless Veterans each month.

Coordination works among frontline staff, but the remaining barrier seems to be a lack of leadership focus at all participating agencies to prioritize resources toward housing and support services for some of the most vulnerable veterans experiencing homelessness.

Specifically, there is a lack of commitment from top city leadership to meet federal criteria and benchmarks to effectively end Veteran homelessness and reach “functional zero” as defined by the national Built for Zero campaign. Both Chattanooga and Jackson Tennessee have reached and sustained “functional zero” for their Veterans largely because of their respective city mayors and community leaders embracing the Built for Zero campaign. The federal government in 2014 created The Mayor’s Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, which is a call to action for all mayors and other state and local leaders to publicly commit to making sure that every Veteran who served America has a home by meeting specific federal criteria and benchmarks to effectively end Veteran homelessness.

Panel discussions also revealed other service deficiencies:

- Close to 40% of resident Veterans are not enrolled in VA benefits and/or healthcare services, leading to reporting gaps and lack of proactive outreach opportunities.
- Current housing capacity does not meet the number of HUD-VASH Veteran vouchers issued.
- Lack of transitional housing for Veterans participating in the local Veterans Treatment Court.
- Many Veterans transition into trades, law enforcement, social work, etc. and Nashville lacks adequate affordable workforce housing.
- Fewer agencies providing non-crisis services.

The Opportunity: Build a Veteran-ready Community

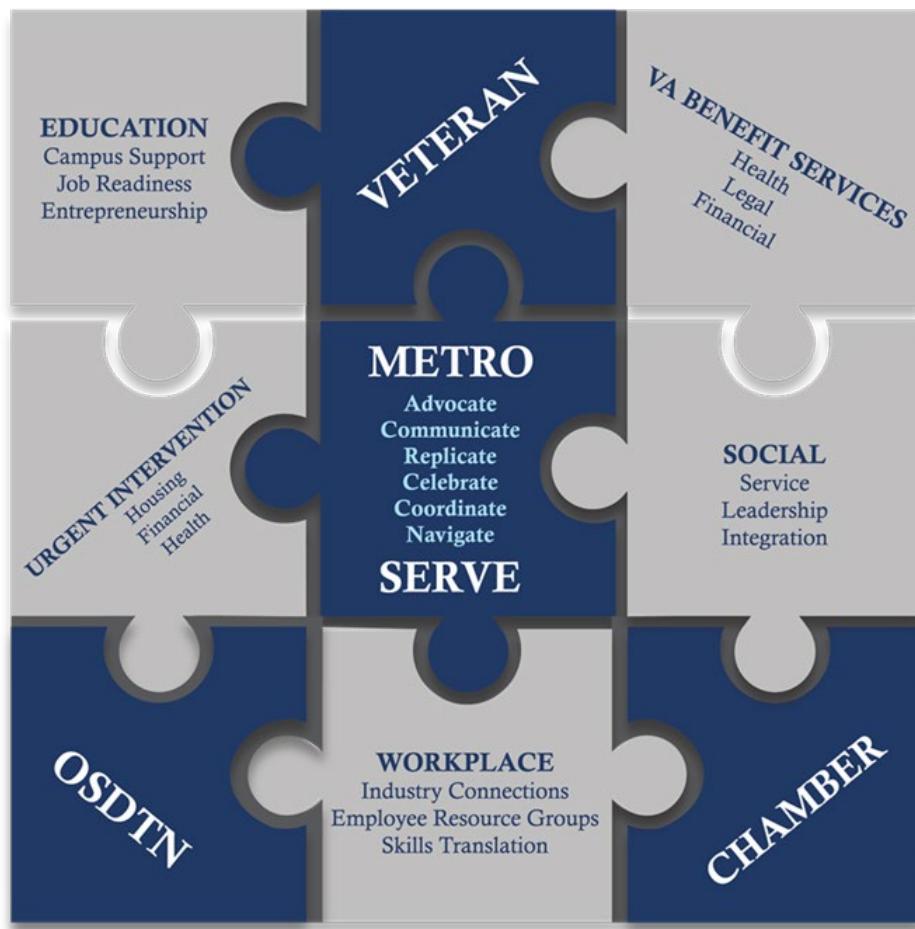
The city of Nashville is *Veteran-friendly* as it honors citizens who have served in the armed forces. The untapped opportunity is to make the city *Veteran-ready* and to create a system for Veterans to thrive. A discussion of Veteran-friendly versus Veteran-ready is at Appendix G.

Nashville does have entities that are examples of Veteran-ready. Universities such as Belmont and Lipscomb support their student Veteran population through robust Veteran student centers. Employers such as Tractor Supply and Bridgestone have dedicated HR policies to hire and retain Veterans including vibrant Veteran Resource Groups. However, these efforts are disparate and therefore hard to replicate and grow.

Nashville’s appeal to Veterans will only increase as the city continues its growth and diversity in business, entertainment, and quality of life. However, there is not a coordinated approach to engage Veterans, which lessens the opportunity to capitalize on Veteran value or to recruit and retain more Veteran talent. Metro Nashville can provide the leadership to fill that gap. A more intentional and coordinated effort around Veteran resource navigation, outreach, and

recruitment will show Veterans and their families that Nashville is Veteran-ready, adding to the city's allure for Veterans.

To become Veteran-ready, Metro needs to be the HUB centering, supporting, innovating, and growing Veteran support efforts. Metro government can be the “anchor puzzle piece” that effectively binds the Veteran engagement community, assisted by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and OSDTN.



Within this puzzle, each piece interconnects with the other pieces to create one cohesive community. Metro – as the centerpiece - has the standing to advocate, celebrate, coordinate, communicate and serve on behalf of Veterans. Operation Stand Down Tennessee has Veteran expertise, VA contracts, established resources, partner relationships, and a state-of-the-art facility to assist with crisis, careers, collaboration, and communication. The Chamber has business leadership and relationships to recruit, retain and leverage Veteran impact. Through this collaborative nucleus, our community can better serve and benefit from Veterans.

Also, Metro Nashville is strongly positioned to be a national leader in the Veteran space. While cementing itself as the hub of the Veteran engagement ecosystem would be a new venture, the city government could build on the foundation of the Nashville Serving Veterans initiative and look to other areas for lessons learned. Within Tennessee, Chattanooga has done an excellent job of strategically addressing Veteran homelessness and can provide a blueprint for Metro. Additionally, several cities have Veteran government offices including New York, San Antonio, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Houston. (Appendix F)

Next Steps

After much deliberation, the committee recommends creating a clear leadership structure focused on Veterans by implementing the following:

1. **Elevate** the current Office of Veteran Services to its own department with a **director**, like other Metro offices such as Human Relations or Metro Arts, to:
 - a. Interface with strategic community partners to deliver and coordinate services for Veterans and their families to recruit, retain, and leverage Veteran talent and impact.
 - b. Fold the existing three Veteran support positions under the leadership of the director to continue current services, support coordination and expand impact.
 - c. Increase the visibility and accessibility of the Office of Veterans Affairs' digital presence.
 - d. Establish/utilize available tracking systems for digital metrics to evaluate asset use.
 - e. Re-commit Metro's efforts toward achieving functional zero for Veteran homelessness and participate in the Mayor's Challenge to end Veteran homelessness with the U.S. Interdepartmental Council on Homelessness.

Draft job description and cost discussion at Appendix D.

2. **Establish** a Veteran Commission within Metro Government such as the Human Relations Commission or Arts Commission: (Draft Veteran Commission charter at Appendix E.)
 - a. Recruit and recognize high-profile Veterans and supporters of Veterans. Raise the visibility of Veterans and their families as a diverse and valuable community asset, dispelling the misinformation of Veteran cliches as homeless or "troubled."
 - b. Engage Veterans and family members with lived experience in the Veteran's support ecosystem.

3. **Create** a more robust bridge between Metro efforts and those of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, creating a unified, Veteran-welcoming business infrastructure.
 - a. Following Knoxville's model of the East Tennessee Military Affairs Committee (ETMAC), enfold the current Middle Tennessee Military Affairs Committee (MTMAC) in the Chamber, focusing on Veteran value to the workforce, as entrepreneurs, and community leaders.
 - b. Encourage more businesses with Veteran Resource Groups to participate in MTMAC and the Chamber.

Conclusion

Nashville has two significant factors in its favor to successfully serve and engage Veterans. First, we have a strong foundation of entities and resources for serving Veterans. Outside of affordable housing, there is no need for a massive outlay of funds to fill gaps in resources available for Veterans. Second, Nashville is already an attractive destination for Veterans. Its diverse community and culture can be marketed to transitioning Veterans and their families who want to join and contribute to a vibrant community.

Metro government stands alone as the entity which has the authority, prominence, and voice to bring the existing network of those serving Veterans together. Metro can serve as an information hub, a force for Veteran recruitment, a policy advocate, a connector and convener of resources, and a champion for Veterans. The opportunity before us is to take our Veteran community to the next level for the benefit of our entire community.

Appendix A

Committee Members

Name	Affiliation
Ylonda Banister	HR, State of TN
John Rutherford	Metro Council
Tonya Hancock	Metro Council
Thom Druffel	Metro Council
Judge Melissa Blackburn	Davidson County Veterans Court
Judith Tackett	Homeless Impact Division of Metro Social Services
Lisa Kiss	Metro HR/Office of Veteran Services
Victoria Payne	Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce
Paul Tennison	Nashville Bar Association
Quiana Jimerson	Room in the Inn
Carlton Denson	TN National Guard
John Furgess	Veteran Service Organizations
Kim Carpenter Drake	Philanthropic Community
Eden Murrie	Operation Stand Down Tennessee
John Krenson	Colonel, Tennessee Army National Guard, (retired)

Appendix B

Panelists

Name	Affiliation
Jackie Hall-Williams	VA, HUD VASH Supervisor
Jennifer Vedral-Baron	VA, Health System Director
Travis Murphy	TNVS, Assistant Commissioner
Anna Goeltz	Centerstone, Clinical Services Manager
Dr. John Jackson	VA, Asst Chief of Staff of Mental Health
Program Managers	Operation Stand Down Tennessee
Eric Horton	TN Labor and Workforce, Director of Veteran Services
Dean Wegner	CEO, Authentically American
Jimmie Handley	Lipscomb University, Outreach Coordinator, Veterans
Dr. Mimi Barnard	Belmont University, Associate Provost, Interdisciplinary Studies and Global Education
Craig Kuphall	Former Veteran Student and now Innovation Chief, Civil-Military Innovation Institute Inc.
Will Wilberscheid	Philips, Operation Excellence and PMO Lead Lead, Veteran Resource Group
PJ Williamson	Amazon, Senior Program Manager Vice Chair of TN Amazon Warrior Group
Roc Hodges	Tractor Supply Company, Director of Outbound Transportation Veterans Group Co-founder

Committee members Judith Tackett, Judge Melissa Blackburn and Paul Tennison participated in panels in accordance with their expertise.

Appendix C

Metro SC Report Glossary

Built for Zero: A methodology, a movement, and proof of what is possible. The Collaborative is made up of more than 80 cities and counties that have committed to measurable ending homelessness, one population at a time. It is led by a national nonprofit organization called Community Solutions that provides technical assistance and support to local communities. Nashville's focus through Built for Zero is on meeting functional zero for Veterans

Functional Zero: A milestone that indicates a community has measurable ended homelessness for a population – and that they are sustaining that end. It does not mean that no Veteran will ever lose their housing again, but it means that a community has a system in place that is capable to house more Veterans (or an equal amount) than have lost their housing within a 30-day timeframe. It also depends that a Veteran is willing to actively work on housing goals.

By Name List (BNL): A comprehensive list of every person in a community experiencing homelessness. BNLS are updated monthly, population specific and used by the community to better match housing solutions with individuals. Nashville currently meets high quality data standards for its Veteran BNL.

HUD-VASH Vouchers: The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Mayor's Challenge: The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness is a call to action for all mayors and other state and local leaders to publicly commit to making sure that every Veteran who served America has a home in America. This is an initiative of HUD, VA, and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

Veteran: A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

Veteran-Friendly: Honoring citizens with military service.

Veteran-Ready: Assisting in deliberate ways to help Veterans transition from military service to civilian life.

Veteran Service Officer (VSO): A certified individual who helps Veterans write and submit benefits claims to the VA. Their services are free. They help gather the information that supports their claim. Once the claim is filed, they help track the claim through the system. They can also help file appeals for denied claims.

Appendix D

Set Up for Office of Veteran Services (OVS)

Draft Position Description, Director:

Summary: On behalf of the mayor, interfaces with strategic community partners to deliver and coordinate services for Veterans and their families to recruit, retain and leverage Veteran talent and impact. Performs related duties as required.

Job Responsibilities:

- Advises the mayor on opportunities and challenges for Veterans and their families.
- Collaborates with the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and Operation Stand Down Tennessee on efforts to recruit and retain Veteran talent.
- Liaises with the Veteran touch points in industry, music, education, and the non-profit community to coordinate Veteran service efforts.
- Serves as the Executive Secretary for the Commission on Veteran Affairs.
- Plans, organizes, and directs department operations
- Develops implements and evaluates department goals, policies, and procedures.
- Prepares and manages department budget
- Prepares grant applications for securing funds from governmental agencies in coordination with other city departments and non-profit agencies, where warranted.
- Coordinates with Metro Homelessness Planning Council on Veteran homelessness.
- Supervises Davidson County Veteran Service Officers and ensures resources and training required to administer VA Benefits counseling are identified and sourced.

Draft Office Budget:

Approximate Cost = \$550K

- Approximately 65% of this cost is already in the Metro HR budget as it includes the 3 Veteran Service Officers billets and associated salary, benefits, and IT costs. Currently these 3 staff members reside rent-free at Operation Stand Down Tennessee, 1125 12th Avenue S. per MOU dated 15 October 2016.
- A Directors salary would range from \$100K- 160K plus benefits. This 4th staff member could reside at OSDTN, but there would be a rental fee to accommodate 4 individuals as this is significant space utilization. This fee would be \$400 per office per month for an annual total of \$14,400. This rate includes one additional cubicle space, parking, a phone per space, access to all conference rooms, utilities, and internet.

Appendix E

Draft Instruction for Commission on Veterans Affairs

Description

10 Appointed Volunteer Members
Operation Stand Down Tennessee Representative
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Representative
Department of Veteran Affairs Representative
Metro Council Veteran Caucus Representative

Term – 2 years. Each commission member may serve a maximum of three two-year terms.

Function

The Veterans Commission of 10 volunteer members and 3 designated members shall serve the mayor and city council in an advisory capacity on issues affecting the city's veteran and retired military population. It serves as the community's liaison and advocate for veteran's affairs; advises the city council on issues affecting Nashville veterans and their families; and works with agency and Veteran non-profits to improve Veteran services and engagement as well as leverage Nashville's standing as Veteran Ready city to recruit Veterans and businesses to our community.

In partnership with the Davidson County Office of Veteran Services (OVS), the commission will elevate awareness of Veteran challenges and opportunities in areas such as education, employment, transition, housing, and others. The OVS will provide administrative support and include any financial requirements in its budget.

The commission shall:

- Act as an advisory capacity only and have no power to bind the city by contract or other means.
- Perform duties and function as directed by the mayor or city council.
- Meet annually with the Metro Council's Veteran Caucus and Metro's staff to develop goals and objectives for the following year.
- In conjunction with OVS, monitor federal, state, and local legislative initiatives that may affect Veterans.
- Collaborate with entities that have existing Veteran service offices in the county such as the Department of Veteran Affairs, Centerstone Military Services, and non-profit agencies.
- Meet no less than quarterly with an agenda designed by the Commission Chair and Director of the Office of Veteran Services.
- Follow established by-laws.

Appendix F

Houston, Office of Veterans and Military Affairs

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Mayor's Office of Veterans and Military Affairs (MOVMA) on the City of Houston website. The header features the City of Houston seal and navigation links for Residents, Business, Visitors, Government, Services, and Contact/Search. A banner at the top displays the MOVMA logo over a background image of the Houston skyline. Below the banner, there are sections for Veterans and Military Affairs, including an announcement about continued service during the COVID-19 pandemic, contact information for Robert Dembo III, and helpful links. On the right, there is a sidebar with social media icons and a Twitter feed from the MOVMA account.

VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Announcement

During this time, the Mayor's Office of Veterans & Military Affairs (MOVMA) will continue to provide service to Active Duty, Veterans and the larger Military-Affiliated community.

Following guidance from Federal, State and/or local public health officials to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and to encourage social distancing, MOVMA will continue to provide services to veterans and their families via telephone and electronic mail.

For general questions, or to request support, please contact:
Phone: 832.393.0992 or
Email: MOVMA@houstontx.gov

Mission

Since its inception in 2007, the Mayor's Office of Veterans & Military Affairs has steadfastly continued its mission to advocate on behalf of Active Duty, Guard/Reserves, Veterans and the larger Military-Affiliated Community (Spouse/Caregiver and dependent children) and to coordinate/facilitate access to resources through Federal, State and local initiatives and programs.

Overview

MOVMA coordinates with Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), as well as non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations and other community service providers to ensure comprehensive support throughout the community and beyond.

Responsible for development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy, involving partnerships with other government agencies and non-profit organizations, to enhance access, coordination and delivery of health and human services to veterans, military personnel and their families throughout the City and the Metropolitan Service Area.

Provides advice and guidance to stakeholders on events, projects and issues of interest to the serving military, veterans, and their families.

Provides on-going interaction and peer-reviewed research to inform planning groups and/or interested stakeholders on issues important to the military and military-affiliated community.

Serves as the City of Houston liaison - Providing a forum for members of the military and military-affiliated community to express their respective views and interests directly to local government officials.

Acts to raise awareness and to inform the Mayor's Office, City of Houston Departments and City Council and to advise on matters impacting the military and military-affiliated community.

Provides Peer-to-Peer counseling to the Military and Military-Affiliated community.

CONTACT VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Robert Dembo III

Office of Veterans and Military Affairs
901 Bagby, Legacy Room Offices
Houston, TX 77002
PHONE: 832.393.0992 or 832.393.8147
Email: movma@houstontx.gov

HELPFUL LINKS

[Veterans and Military Affairs Home Page](#)

[MOVMA Director](#)

[Mission](#)

[Resource Links](#)

movma@houstontx.gov

Tweets by @COHOVA

City of Houston As we go into the #HolidaySeason Mayor Turner reminds us to keep our #Military men & women and their families in our thoughts. #freedomisNotFree #HappyHolidays! @COHOVA

Houston Mayor's Office

San Antonio, Office of Military and Veteran Affairs

The screenshot shows the official website of the City of San Antonio, specifically the Department of Government and Public Affairs. The top navigation bar includes links for 'GET CONNECTED', 'RESIDENTS', 'VISITORS', 'BUSINESS', 'YOUR GOVERNMENT', and 'ESPAÑOL'. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a large banner about COVID-19 and sections for various city departments like the Military Transformation Task Force and the Veterans Affairs Commission. On the right side, there's a sidebar for 'FEATURED' content, including links to the 2020 Army Birthday video and the Bexar County Economic Development Department.

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

sa.Gov Home > Office of Military & Veteran Affairs

OFFICE OF MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS

OMVA HOME

ABOUT >

COMMISSION ON VETERAN AFFAIRS

MILITARY TRANSFORMATION TASK FORCE

MISSION READINESS INITIATIVES

SAN ANTONIO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

VETERAN RESOURCES

SA.GOV RELATED SITES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VETERANS MEMORIAL PLAZA

OFFICE

Physical Address:
115 Plaza De Armas
San Antonio, TX 78205

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, TX 78283-3966

Phone/TTY:
210.207.7234

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MAJ. GEN. JUAN G. AYALA USMC (RETIRED)
Director

Director

TIM WOLIVER (LT COL USAF RETIRED)
Assistant to the Director

DEBE CLARK
Senior Management Analyst

ANNETTE CARRILLO
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210.207.7234

MILITARY TRANSFORMATION TASK FORCE

MILITARY PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

VETERAN ASSISTANCE

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

COMPATIBLE LAND USE STUDIES

Connect with the
OFFICE OF MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS

Office of Military & Veteran Affairs

2020 ARMY BIRTHDAY

BEXAR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Where people, ideas, and business succeed.

Appendix G

Forging a Veteran-Ready TN

by Eden Murrie, Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force (Retired)

Chair of Metro's Special Committee on Veterans
and CEO of Operation Stand Down Tennessee
Appeared in Tennessean on Sunday, 9/12/21

This September, the world marks 20 years since 9/11 and many are wondering where we go from here. In Tennessee, we have a clear answer to that question—honor the more than 435,000 veterans living in our state who have sacrificed for the cause of freedom in recent and other conflicts. We can join with numerous communities, universities, and businesses already in the trenches to make Tennessee more than just veteran friendly, but veteran ready.

Tennessee needs the talents and resources veterans bring. Research by the Bob Woodruff Foundation's Got Your 6 Local Partner Network indicates that veterans are more likely to volunteer, vote and take active roles in their communities. Yet according to Pew Research, post-9/11 combat veterans find transition to civilian life more difficult than pre-9/11 veterans. So, what is the difference between veteran friendly and veteran ready? Veteran-friendly communities honor citizens with military service. Veteran-ready communities come alongside those veterans to help them as they transition from service.

Veteran ready communities invest in all aspects of civilian life: government, professional, nonprofit, and private sector. For example, Nashville Metro Council is taking extra steps to support veterans by commissioning a 15-member committee to examine both gaps and opportunities in veteran services in Nashville. Montgomery County recently held a community engagement fair specifically designed to connect veterans with volunteer opportunities like Big Brother Big Sisters and the Humane Society. The Knoxville Chamber houses the East Tennessee Military Affairs Council to support and advocate for military, civilian, and veteran interests. At Operation Stand Down TN, we are connecting veterans to each other and their community through veteran meetups, volunteer projects and events.

Veteran-ready universities create spaces and places for veteran students to integrate into the diversity of people and ideas found on campus. Belmont, MTSU, Austin Peay, Lipscomb and UT each have robust veteran centers offering spaces for those with military backgrounds to connect with each other and with resources to support their success in academia and beyond. Vanderbilt has made significant investment in the veteran community through its Bass Military Scholars Program, which awards up to 40 \$25,000 scholarships for select military veterans pursuing graduate or professional degrees at the university.

Veteran-ready companies create systems in which military veterans will thrive. Data suggests that 84% of 25 to 34-year-old employees feel that employee resource groups have a positive impact on their engagement at work. Companies like Amazon, Tractor Supply, Phillips, Bridgestone, Altria, and AllianceBernstein, are working hard to create community for veteran employees through vibrant veteran resource groups. Operation Stand Down TN has launched

programs connecting veterans and military spouses to professional experiences and networks. The Veteran Fellowship Program launches this month with SmileDirect Club, Ingram Barge, Stansell Electric and the Nashville Predators providing industry experience during a paid fellowship. The program combines experiential learning with academics and fellows will earn a Certificate of Business Acumen from Belmont University's Jack C. Massey School of Business.

Tennessee has proven that it is veteran friendly and at the 20-year anniversary of 9/11, we can, and should, re-double our efforts to become veteran ready. Across the spectrum of community, academia, business and government, great things are happening in this state. Let's never forget that we can all do more together.



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Appendix H

Nashville Serving Veterans Collective Impact Planning



NSVCB Collective
impact planning.pdf



UNDERSTANDING OUR VETERANS



TRIBE HIGHLIGHTS

- Search for a new MISSION and identity
- Desire for BELONGING and being part of a “Tribe”
- PURPOSE and confidence through employment and successful transfer/ additions to skills
- Issues of affordable housing and RELOCATION
- FAMILY support and services for spouse and children
- Support for HEALING - physical, mental and spiritual
- FINANCIAL assistance and literacy, legal assistance

COORDINATED POINT OF ENTRY MODEL



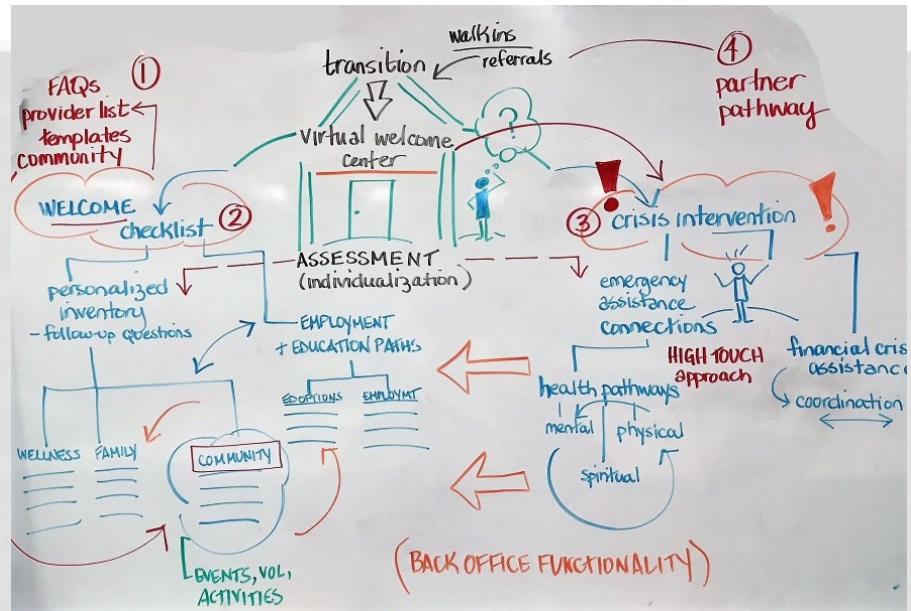
SHARED VALUE OF COORDINATION

- Addresses market saturation and confusion
- Vets service providers and identifies potential predators
- Evaluation of needs and information
- Addresses lack of awareness of service options
- Improves coordination among options
- Provides posting venue for opportunities
- Expands and supports community education and engagement
- Provides a platform for needs ASSESSMENT and redirection to high-touch intervention where needed

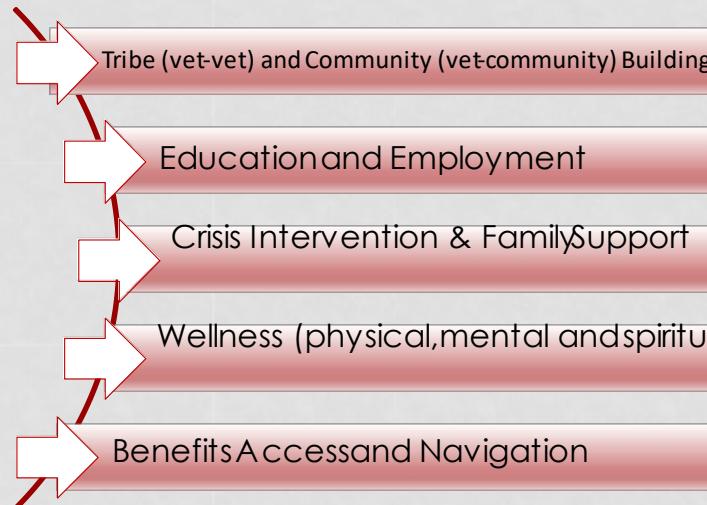
SHARED VALUE OF PROBLEM SOLVING

- Our primary goal, as a group and individually is to provide options for problem solving for veterans and families in transition. These can be intervention in potential crisis situations or productive, positive new opportunities for growth and engagement.
- We acknowledge the importance of the human touch and the role that navigation assistance can have in optimizing success.
- We agree that the "best" path is different for everyone and needs to be EFFICIENT, REDUCE CONFUSION, and offer the MOST COMPLETE SOLUTION.

MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES



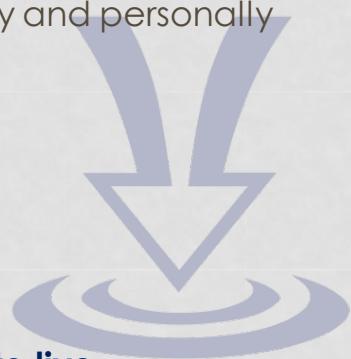
WORK GROUPS



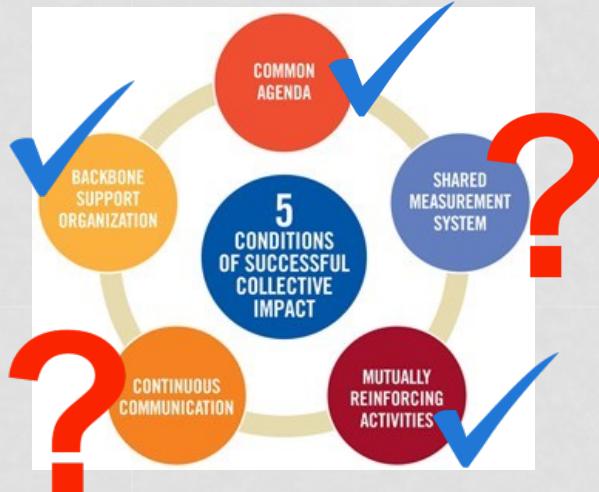
DESIRED IMPACTS

Veterans and Families we serve will be...

- Stable – financially, professionally and personally
- Able to give back
- Connected
- Proud of themselves
- Invested in his/her community
- Productively employed
- Confident
- **Living the life that he/she wants to live**



COLLECTIVE IMPACT CHECK-IN...



NEXT STEPS

- Establish and implement MOU
- Define work group membership and agenda for next steps
- Loop-in non-attendees with attendees and work progress
- Develop a funding case statement based on impact and model
- Establish a timeline for future benchmarks
- Create a communications plan (internal and external)