

Best Practices

1) Expand collaboration and information sharing with Web Portals in a public-private partnership to reduce costs, competition, and duplication of efforts. To this end, increasing access to the myriad Federal, State, Regional, and local support organizations / agencies - governmental, non-governmental, faith-based, community, business, and higher education in a collaborative effort to increase services to members and their families.

- **Warrior Gateway integration:** Warrior Gateway is a portal which has been established for service members, their families, and any person who has been deployed or in the service to find resources both nationally and specific to their location. Every organization that we meet with we connect them to warrior gateway. Warrior Gateway is what service members like to use because it's simple and it allows them a chance to input comments and feedback for organizations/services that they either feel were beneficial to them or not beneficial. www.warriorgateway.org is the URL to find the portal.
- **National Resource Directory:** The National Resource Directory (NRD) provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. It is a website for connecting wounded warriors, Service Members, Veterans, their families with those who support them. It provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. Visitors can find information on a variety of topics including benefits & compensation, education & training, employment, family & caregiver support, health, homeless assistance, housing, transportation & travel and other services & resources. The NRD is a partnership among the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs. The information contained within the NRD is from federal, state and local government agencies; Veterans service and benefit organizations; non-profit and community-based organizations; academic institutions and professional associations that provide assistance to wounded warriors and their families. www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov is the URL to find the site.
- **Military One Source:** A 24-hour call center staffed with master's-level consultants familiar with the military lifestyle. They answer questions and provide resources and referrals on everyday issues such as finding child care, dealing with stress, helping children deal with a parent's deployment, reunion and reintegration after combat duty, making a PCS move, creating a budget, caring for older relatives, making large-scale consumer purchases, and finding services in the local and military communities. Examples include concerns related to parenting, relationships, stress, deployment, and reunion and reintegration after deployment. Counseling sessions are also available online or by phone. Military OneSource services supplement existing service-branch and installation resources. Language-interpretation services are available. Service members and their families can access the program at www.MilitaryOneSource.com.

2) Veterans Court from Buffalo in every county: The Veterans Treatment Court in Buffalo, NY, is the model that every state should employ. Our veterans and service members experience life changing events that may cause them to react in some situations which could get them into trouble with the law. Key factors to a successful Veterans Treatment Court are: a judge who is understanding and passionate about the issues that veterans and service members face and understands that specialized treatment may be needed. A mentor system that is passionate and filled with mentors who understand because they have been there and been in the same situation. Buffalo has several mentors who are Vietnam War Veterans who are extremely valuable to the people coming through the Buffalo Court System. We need to work with every state to establish Veterans Treatment Courts throughout the country.

3) Community Action Teams – Augusta: The Central Savannah River Area Wounded Warrior Care Project is focused on utilizing Augusta’s unique warrior care assets, increasing information flow and coordination among agencies, communities, and individuals, and bringing troops all the way home after combat. They have created an Augusta model of public-private partnerships that can serve other communities as they look for ways to tap into that “Sea of Goodwill” noted by Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are thousands of resources available to wounded warriors, returning service members, veterans and their families. What the Augusta model offers is a community-based structure for coordinating those resources.

4) Troops to College linking university, colleges, and trade schools: Program which is a partnership between the Governor’s office, California Community Colleges, California State University, University of California, the CA Department of Education, the CA Department of VA, the CA Dept of Labor, CA Workforce Development Agency and all branches of the Armed Forces. The program provides increased opportunities for Veterans to receive a quality education from the institution of higher learning of their choice.

5) SBA loan and incentive: The U.S. Small Business Administration has an office within its organization called the Office of Veterans Business Development. The mission of the Office of Veterans Business Development is to maximize the availability, applicability and usability of all administration small business programs for Veterans, Service-Disabled Veterans, Reserve Component Members, and their Dependents or Survivors. They have established programs specifically for veterans/service members such as: 1) Entrepreneurship Boot Camp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) which is designed to leverage the skills, resources and infrastructure of higher education to offer experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management to veterans; 2) Women Veterans Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) which focuses on training, networking and mentorship for women veterans; and 3) Operation Endure & Grow which targets National Guard and Reserve members, their families and business partners.

6) Drivers License Declaration to link Vets to VA: California has developed a program where new residents applying for a drivers license in the state of CA, declare whether or not they were a

member of the Armed Forces. This information is then provided to the State Dept of VA where they are linked with other members of the VA and provided information on current programs and benefits.

7) Buddy to Buddy Program for Families and SM: The University of Michigan has established a partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard with a program called "Buddy to Buddy". Here, University of Michigan and MI ANG have programs for the Service Member pre-deployment and post deployment. For the Family, they have programs during the deployment when the service member is deployed. For Service Members who have enrolled as a student at UofM, the "peer-to-peer" program is critical to connecting with the service member and making them part of an overall community that has welcomed them into the Student community at the University.

8) Pathway Home Support and Certification by State: The Pathway Home, (TPH) is a residential state licensed program recognized by the state of California as a community care treatment center and certified by the Department of Mental Health for the treatment of PTS and TBI. TPH is a no charge program that serves all branches of active military, non-active, and the National Guard. They are ideally positioned to play a larger roll in caring for America's wounded warriors because they can provide specialty services with their collaborative partners that include: Martinez VMAC, San Francisco VMAC, Palo Alto VMAC, Travis Air force Base and the St. Helena Hospital for addiction-a TriCare West provider. However, the program is underutilized because of their inability to be reimbursed from TriCare West as a PTS program. The state of California has recently recognized the value of TPH and the care that it provides for our young warriors and has awarded the program a onetime \$1.3 million non-competitive grant to keep their doors open through July 2011.

9) Scotland Landing in Chambersburg, PA: Located on the site of the former Scotland School for Veterans Children. Excellent facilities for Veterans and their families can come and receive OT/PT/Education and connect with programs in the community and with other veterans, families, and organizations in a safe and warm environment where they can get the necessary treatment/education they would need to successfully reintegrate back into Society.

10) Sea of Goodwill of NYC and Jobs / Services Event: Columbia University in New York has taken the lead in establishing the Sea of Goodwill of New York City. Every month they get together and host a meeting with other veterans organizations, NGOs, and Mayor Bloomberg's office where they discuss community involvement and events where they can get veterans in the NYC area to come and be made aware of programs/services/benefits that are available. Their first event will be in 2011 where they host a programs/services event for all veterans.

11) Veterans Village of San Diego: VVSD has five locations throughout San Diego County and VVSD is the only program of its kind in the United States. Each year VVSD provides services to more than 2,000 military veterans, men and women, who have served and sacrificed for our country. VVSD provides a Continuum of Care with a full range of comprehensive and innovative

services for military veterans for: Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, Aftercare. The VA supports VVSD and their efforts in transitional veteran housing. VVSD extends assistance to needy and homeless veterans and their families by providing: Substance Abuse Recovery, Mental Health Counseling, Job Training and Job Search Assistance, Housing, Food, Clothing, Legal Services. In the past 6 months, VVSD received their first grant from the VA.

12) New Directions Co-use of land- California has more homeless veterans than any other state, and the number of displaced vets will only increase as troops return from service in Iraq and Afghanistan. New Directions, Inc., a nonprofit which has provided comprehensive services for veterans for 17 years is partnering with A Community of Friends (ACOF), another nonprofit that has over two decades of experience in developing permanent supportive housing. The plan (House for Veterans Project) by New Directions, Inc. and (ACOF) to transform two unused buildings into 147 studio apartments for disabled low-income veterans will provide 147 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless and disabled veterans. Buildings 4 and 5 on the Sepulveda VA grounds in North Hills will be rehabilitated to accommodate studio apartment units and community rooms, as well as dining, recreation and classroom space. The Department of Veteran Affairs owns the property and has granted 75-year leases to New Directions and ACOF for Buildings 4 and 5 on the Sepulveda VA campus. The VA will not sell the property to New Directions, ACOF or any other entity.

13) Veterans Homestead on the grounds of Community College: The Northeast Veteran Training Rehabilitation Center (NVTRC) focuses on education, physical, occupational, and emotional therapy with an emphasis on family counseling along with the life and recreational skills that are so often taken for granted. The NVTRC addresses rehabilitation and community reintegration, restoring the whole person to a life in which he or she can live and interact with friends and family in a healthier and more functional manner. The NVTRC is located on ten acres donated by Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) in Gardner, Massachusetts.

14) There is an indoor swimming pool, jogging track, weight/exercise room, gymnasium, trout pond, and a variety of other amenities designed to prepare the residents for a life in which his or her disability will be less of a burden. These services would be both difficult and expensive to provide if not for our partnership with the College. All of these facilities are in place at MWCC and their departments of physical therapy and human services will be invaluable in providing the therapists necessary for the project. The onsite Therapy Center has a therapy pool and spa, a Wii/exercise room, a PT/Massage therapy room, a common area and a small business office. The clients are housed in separate units located on the NVTRC grounds. These housing units are approximately 1200 sq ft with two bedrooms, one bathroom, a kitchen, and living/dining room and are fully handicapped accessible. This arrangement will allow the clients to practice their daily living skills and provide privacy for both the Veteran and his or her family. Benefits to having NVTRC co-located with the Mount Wachusett Community College are: Tuition & fees at Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) at no cost to the veteran or their spouse. (VA benefits and scholarships will be used if available); Physical, occupational, and massage therapy; Fitness center, and other MWCC facilities available to the Veteran and their family at no cost; Assistance with Child Care services; Focus on individual capabilities to maximize

potential and aid in successful community reintegration; Recreational skill development through various sports, activities, and projects; Strengthen family bonds through individual & family therapy.

15) University of Pittsburgh's Veterans Coordinator: From academic and financial aid assistance to career counseling and networking, University of Pittsburgh offers a range of services and programs specifically designed to provide guidance to student veterans or active military personnel. In addition, the University offers student programs, services, and activities for adult or nontraditional students, which veteran students may find useful and supportive. If student veterans have any questions at all, the Director of the Office of Veterans Services is there to assist you. If students prefer to speak directly with a person in a particular office within the University, Pitt has identified administrators throughout the campus who are prepared to help veteran students with their most frequently asked questions.

16) Property Tax and State Tax exemption for WWs, and Families of the Fallen: Several states have introduced state legislation to exempt from taxation of real property that is the principal residence of a veteran (or widow or widower of a veteran) if the veteran has been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its successor agency pursuant to federal law to have a certain percentage service-connected, permanent, and total disability. Additionally, in some states disabled veterans are prevented from participating in the Real Estate Tax Exemption Program due to lump-sum payments from entities such as the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) and the Social Security Administration.