

Central Texas Veteran Services Coalition Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2016

Goodwill Building, 1015 Norwood Park Blvd, Austin, TX 78753, Room 3338

2:00-4:00 pm

- I. Welcome and Brief Introductions of VSOs
- II. VSO Partner Spotlights
 - a. Jennifer Cerretti, Program Manager with Goodwill told us about Operation Good Jobs which starts with a centralized intake through phone or email where clients are screened for eligibility. One on One case management services are provided. They want to see the client from start to finish with finish being employment. Contact is made with a case manager monthly for 12 months for retention and to keep them employed.
Support services include help with utilities, car repair and transportation.
Technical Academy training includes CDL and other programs based on eligibility including income requirements (less than 200% poverty) and residency (Austin or Travis County). **These requirements are for employment programs that funding is leveraged from. The vet program has no income requirement.
The veteran requirements are NO dishonorable discharge and at least one day service. The funder for the program has a focus on OEF/OIF/OND but all vets accepted.
 - b. Preston Petty, ECHO Coordinated Assessment Program Director. They are the lead agency for the Travis County Continuum of Care, a HUD designation. They cover Travis, Bastrop and some Williamson County. Overview of Coordinated Assessment – when a veteran experiences homelessness he or she can go to ONE place – either call the intake line or go to Salvation Army or Front Steps. Our responsibility as a community is to share info and identify services. ECHO workers will go physically into the woods. Their biggest partners are the SSVF programs at Front Steps, Caritas, and the VA Housing Program. They can get a vet housed within 90 days from point of contact. The PIT Count in 2015 was 234.
Q: Does a voucher just pay for rent or does it include utilities?
A: If the unit is not All Bills Paid then there is a supplement for utilities.
Preston gave 2 examples of rehousing.
 - c. Ryan Burke, Front Steps SSVF
Who is eligible? Vets experiencing literal homelessness. If you have somewhere to stay you are not qualified.
Vet qualifications are to have served at least 1 day of active service and NO dishonorable discharge.

Income qualifications – If earn less than 50% of area median income then qualify for 6 months of assistance. If 30% below then 9 months assistance.

Case managers will walk a client through the process.

Q: How fast is the process?

A: The Continuum of Care meeting is Monday. They take the referrals and make phone calls to contact the vets the next day. Intake is scheduled for that week. Then a plan is created with their case manager. If the veteran is engaged in the process it can happen within days.

Q: How does it work for a vet without a phone?

A: They will go out and find them in their regular hangout spots.

The group ran through some scenarios with different veteran profiles.

III. Action Items

Old Business

a. Austin Furniture Bank Update

They are officially a 501(c)3

Board meetings are being held once a week at this point to get the non-profit established.

Q: Are board meetings open to the public?

A: Not sure.

A new policy is in place- \$70 delivery fee. So far they have delivered to over 100 homes at no cost. They have gotten truck and crew donations from local moving companies. But they want to be self sustaining. And the warehouse will start charging rent soon. Will start having fundraisers soon to generate revenue. They would like to employ Bo since he has been working so hard for free.

They have been in communication with furniture banks all over the country.

Opened a bank account a week ago.

It is going really well and developing quickly.

Contact austinfurniturebank@gmail.com to schedule pick ups.

Feedback given that this email is not being answered.

Volunteer email address is afb2volunteer@gmail.com

b. Bikes for Vets Initiative

Paul has built some bikes and they are ready to go to veterans with no dishonorable discharge. The bikes are being stored at Yellow Bike Project. Paul can meet vets there to hand out bikes.

c. CTVSC Outreach Committee

Try to get the word out about the coalition. Invite people to the meetings.

New Business

Meeting are being held consistently now at the Goodwill Norwood on the 3rd Thursday of the month to give people an opportunity to put them on their calendars.

VSO Spotlight suggestions?

Carolyn Colley – Lone Star Legal Aid
Cynthia Flores – Round Rock Area Serving Center
Beth Ann – ACC – Tentative for the College Credit for Heroes Grant revamped.
Sabrina – Veterans Treatment Court

Suggestion to use Eventbrite for RSVP to meetings.

Success Stories

VSA Texas – 3 local veterans have gone on to the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival from the Austin local competition.

A woman who is blind and recently finished a training course in Austin was given transportation to her hometown to surprise her husband.

Ryan who spoke today first attended a CTVSC meeting a year ago as an unemployed veteran just moving to Austin and now he is employed at Front Steps.

Announcements

Pia – There is a Vehicle Repair Financial Assistance program from employed veterans.

Pia- Centerpoint is hiring a PT case manager – prefer a veteran - \$16/hr

April – The VSA Texas veterans call for art is out. We are looking for entries.

The Military Social Work Conference is coming up at UT.

Chair for August Meeting

April Sullivan, VSA Texas

August 18, 2016 2-4 pm Goodwill Norwood