



**Meeting Minutes for January 19, 2016
Featured Spotlight Organizations:**

The Salvation Army

The Veteran Spouse Network

Caritas

TexVet.org

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Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2016 • 2 PM to 4 PM
Salvation Army Social Service Center
501 East 8th Street, 78701 Austin , TX

Summary

- **The Salvation Army Social Service Center** provides people in need with case management, food, and a safe place to live.
- **The Veteran Spouse Network** will be a statewide network of Veteran (and active duty) spouses to help them develop language and skills to get access to local spouse-focused resources. elisa.Borah@austin.utexas.edu
- **Caritas has an SSVF program** for “literally homeless” veterans at 30% or less of median area income in Travis, Williamson, and Bastrop counties. mpodowski@caritasofaustin.org
- **TexVet is a vetted index of organizations, services, and events** for Texas veterans. texvet.org / 512-341-4924 / contactus@texvet.org
- **The CTVSC’s website is texvet.org/ctvsc**
- **The CTVSC Veteran Career & Resource ROM will be on March 30th from 2 to 8** at the Goodwill Resource Center on Burleson Road, Austin, TX. If you can offer services on-site (or know a group that can), contact Pia Villalon @ pwillalon@cpinc.org
- **The CTVSC Furnishings Committee is (mostly) up and running.** If you would like an account to request furnishings, contact Jonathan L at jonathan@texvet.org

- Two CTVSC co-chairs (Pia Villalon and Jason Stewart) retired. **Two new co-chairs were voted in. Welcome April Sullivan and Jacqueline Powers!**
- **Tycin Thompson** (tycin.thompson@tvc.texas.gov) is a great contact for state government jobs for veterans.
- **Megan Ballard** (megan.kunkle-ballard@traviscounty.tx.gov) is a great contact for putting information about your program(s) in front of incarcerated veterans.
- **Meals On Wheels is expanding;** they do more than serve food. For example, they have home repair funds! Contact Adrenne Mendoza (amendoza@mealsonwheels.org) for more info.
- **Operation Goodjobs’ waitlist is being addressed.** Contact Erika Bitar (erika.bitar@goodwillcentraltexas.org) if you have someone on the waitlist with urgent need.
- **ECHO has a family reunification program.** Contact Casey Cork (caseycork@austinecho.org) for more info.

Opening

Paul called the meeting to order at 2:05.

Introductions

24 people introduced themselves. Once everyone had arrived, about 30 people were present.

Partner Spotlights Salvation Army

David Ray, LCSW - Case Manager - Vet family support

- * We have dorms for singles, families, and worker dorms (full time workers - \$7 per day, no curfew).
- * Three meals a day. Community meal each day 4 PM: ~200 people come in.

- * Curfews; security staff
- * Passages - A program for Vet housing via housing authority
- * We also have a resident VA Case Manager: Kimberly Weinberg. She used to work for the VA, so she's really familiar with the ins and outs of their system.

Questions

Bo: Can you help me understand the disconnect between this Salvation Army facility and the one on Congress Avenue?
 A: David discussed the history of Salvation Army's founding. Things are broken into regional commands - shelter entities and store entities are largely separate. This is the shelter entity, and it's largely self-contained.

Q: How do we make referrals to your substance abuse program?
 A: Just call and ask for the referral process. It can be limited in space (Bo suggested contacting Claylan Miller).

Q: Do you offer transportation services?
 A: We do not.
 Follow-up: The other location has a van or two and transports clients.
 A: We don't have access to them. They're their own entity. We do have vans for people who are being case-managed to transport them for case reasons. We also offer our case-managed clients bus passes.

Case Managers

Tera Davis on loan from Goodwill

Nikki Kozak: case manager
 John {Did not hear}: Manager/director at Front Steps.

The Veteran Spouse Network

Elisa Borah, Ph.D. & Jenny Arenson
elisa.Borah@austin.utexas.edu
 512-639-8989

Dr. Borah talked about their funding sources , then shared the question that inspired her to form the Veteran Spouse Network: "Why isn't there research that focuses on Veterans' spouses and children?"
 Her goal: Create a network of Veteran spouses across Texas to help them develop language and skills to get access to local spouse-focused resources. She also wants to build a base for future research. "What should we be studying?"
 The VSN will have a website on TexVet.org and regional recruitment meetings to build membership; will schedule them soon.

4th annual Military Social Work Conference

Dr. Borah is also co-charing the Military Social Work Conference at UT Austin (<https://socialwork.utexas.edu/ceu/military-social-work-conference/>). The conference's goal: Bring all involved programs and people and researched together to talk in one place. Higher Ed and research • Sept 26 to 28.

Questions

Q: Do VSN participants have to be legal spouses?
 A: Common law ok.
 Q: English-speakers only?

A: So far, but not meant to exclude. The network is also open to active duty spouses (not just veterans).

Q: What was that conference again?
A: Military Social Work Conference at UT Austin • <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/ceu/military-social-work-conference/>

Q: Will this be a national network?
A: Only TX for now. We're focusing on face-to-face connections + webinars via Adobe Connect.

Caritas Program

SSVS program; Exclusively for Vets. Also other branches with Vet Preference

- * 30% area median income.
 - * Over 50%, we have an alternate program
- * Covers Travis, Williamson, Bastrop counties.
- Qualifications:
 - * Veteran
 - * Discharge : Other than dishonorable
 - * 1+ days active duty (training counts)
- * Side comment: (Front Steps can do Travis County.)
- * This program only serves literal homeless (no self-paid hotels or couch-surfing) until functional zero. Homelessness Prevention services will likely start again in Spring.
- * We only take referrals via coordinated assessment
- * Prioritize via vulnerability rating.
- * We are a rapid rehousing program. Closely aligned with VASH. VASH eligibility is very different from ours.
- * We have 4 case managers managing 15 to 18 individuals.
- * Full time landlord outreach specialist to work with landlords.
- * Abby T. is move-in aid.

* Our Goal: House 15 vets per month.

Questions

Q: Disabled vets?
A: Disability would be accounted for in the vulnerability index.

Comment: Bo - When I started working with Vets I learned that incarceration does not count as literally homeless
Reply: Incarcerated for 90 days or fewer = homeless.

Q: Bo: Please explain the difference between "bridge" and "reverse bridge?"
A: Our program is a very short-term program. We have 30-to-90 days to rehouse a veteran. We must re-qualify people after 90 days. If we have to refer them to CVASH after 90 days, that's a "bridge."
A "reverse bridge" is when VASH refers someone to us. It's not really case management, but we can \$\$\$ help when needed.

Q: Paul J – {I didn't capture the question.}
A: We rehoused over 233 veterans last year. That's a huge increase! We were previously focused on homelessness prevention. Now we're working to meet the three benchmarks for *functional zero*. We've met two of three benchmarks. The third is having enough housing stock to rehouse all vets you're likely to see in that month.
We identified 40 vets in December, but only rehoused 32, so we missed it by 8. Those 8 veterans were not connected with a program. Had they been in a program, we would have met that

mark. It's not literal housing; it's having a plan to get them in housing.

Q: You mentioned that you have someone who works with landlords?

A: Abby Tatkov (atatkov@caritasofaustin.org).

TexVet

Jonathan Leistiko, Webmaster @ TexVet.org

jonathan@texvet.org

512-341-4924

Use TexVet.org to quickly find the resources your veterans need. TexVet is a vetted index of Organizations, Services, and Events for Texas' veterans. Contact us via web, phone, or email: **TexVet.org** • 512-341-4924 • contactus@texvet.org

Resources

TexVet has sortable lists of:

- **Veteran Service Officers** at: texvet.org/cvso
- **MVPN Coordinators and Field Clinicians** at: texvet.org/peernetwork
 - Coordinators: Look for the "Coord. List" tab at the bottom.
 - Field Clinicians: Look for the "Field Clinicians" tab at the bottom.
- Events at: texvet.org/events
- Everything else at: <http://www.texvet.org/help>

Need to be an expert? Fake it with our helpful **Statewide Veterans Resources** flowchart at: <http://goo.gl/pmuiR5>

Quick Searches for specific "top needs" topics: Look for the "Quick Searches" menu on the right sidebar for quick access to: Housing, Education, Emergency Funds, Careers, Food, Mental / Physical Health, Transportation, and Claims Assistance.

Applied Research Symposium

Free symposium: "Where The Research Meets The Road" • February 18, 2016 - Free! Lunch provided! Register at: texvet.org/symposium

Central Texas Veteran Services Coalition info

Everything you need to know about the CTVSC is at: texvet.org/ctvsc

- List of members
 - Downloadable up-to-date spreadsheet at: http://etxvet.org/ctvsc_roster
- Calendar of past and future meetings, agendas, and minutes
 - Look for the corresponding tabs at the top of the roster.

Partnerships

We love to share data and partner with groups! If you need a specialized data sidebar for your website, contact us (contactus@texvet.org or 512-341-4924) and we'll figure something out!

CTVSC Veteran Career & Resource ROM

In March we will run a fair with an emphasis on right-there-on-the-spot help – like a Stand-Down, but with careers as well as resources. It's called the Name: CTVSC Veteran Career and Resource ROM (Refuel on the Move). If you want to be involved, please contact jonathan@texvet.org.

When & Where

March 30 from 2 to 8 at the Goodwill Resource Center on Burleson Road, Austin, TX

Participants / Participation

Pia: All employers have said "Yes." All VSOS have said "Yes." Contact Pia if you want to be involved, but you need to be ready to enroll or intake attendees.

Note: We will have private rooms for intake, etc.

Pia: HEB will provide food for employers and VSOs.

Paul: Do we have a clothing provider?

Pia: Hope Chest will provide clothes. If anyone has contact with Dress For Success, can you get them to bring in clothes for interviews?

{Person I didn't know}: All the clothes we have... The contact person - my connection... I can email my contact and if you have a place to house it... If we can find a place in Austin to actually keep it... If it's in March, you need to do it this week.

Etc.

Paul: Can we get access to some of the TWC's rooms on Goodwill's campus for interviews?

Casey {& other person}: We'll see.

Q: What about veterans with less-than-perfect records?

A: Pia: Easter Seals and at least one or two others are justice-involved friendly.

A: Paul: We're conscious of it, and working to ensure that some employers are willing to take justice-involved veterans.

We need volunteers! Contact jonathan@texvet.org

CTVSC Furnishings Committee

Bo: This started at our September meeting as "a wild hair." Now...

- * We have a warehouse and an inventory control system,
- * We have donated furniture, and we're getting diverted furniture from Goodwill.

- * We will spin it off as an incorporated entity outside the CTVSC so it can provide donation receipts, etc.

- * We've made several deliveries already. We delivered some just last weekend.

We'll accept requests for furnishings from any vetted case worker. If you – or a case worker you know – works with recently-housed (or imminently housed) veterans, contact Jonathan (jonathan@texvet.org) for an account.

Co-Chairs - New & Retiring

- Pia V. is stepping down. "I've been here since the start. I'll be stepping down after the Career & Resource ROM."
- Jason S. is also stepping down. He needs to tend to new responsibilities at his workplace.
- New nominee: April Sullivan from VSA Texas (An arts org for people with disabilities. Vet program since 2009.).
- New nominee: Jacqueline Powers from Amreicorps VISTA / Caritas.

Pia: I'm really enthusiastic that we're getting more women on the CTVSC Co-Chair panel!

April and Jacqueline were voted in unanimously as new CTVSC co-chairs. Yay!

Paul: Please remember: We welcome new ideas. It doesn't matter if you're a co-chair or not. We want everyone to participate; we want everyone's ideas!

New News - Your Programs

Who are you and what are you doing? Let us know!

Tycin Thompson (TVC)

tycin.thompson@tvc.texas.gov

What he does and how he's connecting vets with government employment.

I'm a liaison for open state positions. I go to a lot of veteran government hiring job fairs. There's one in Houston next week. Another in College Station on Feb 10. A big one in Austin in April.

As of September 1st, state agencies must have 20% veteran preference for hiring. They currently only have 4%. (TVC is at 83%.)

I'm also working on a train-the-trainer program to help people who help veterans apply for jobs show veterans how to completely fill out their applications (We get a lot of incomplete applications from veterans, and that prevents their applications from being processed. Not processed = no job offer.).

Q: Are there alternative screening criteria (re - background checks / criminal history) for veterans?

A: Most agencies only look back 7 years. We're working to get into the City of Austin; they have background leniency. Federal gov. is hard to get into.

Jan 28 I'll be holding a state application workshop at Fort Hood.

Paul: Tyson's busy. He works for the whole state of Texas. He's a great contact for information about state agency jobs.

Megan Ballard (TCSO-TCCC)

megan.kunkle-ballard@traviscounty.tx.gov • 512-854-5329

DelValley - Jail work with incarcerated veterans.

- I work on resources and re-entry. If you're working with an incarcerated veteran, I'm happy to help you; especially with vets in need.
- I also develop and create programs for currently incarcerated veterans (Money and anger management.). If you want to get a program to incarcerated vets, please contact me. Counseling services, classes and training...

Adrenne Mendoza (Meals on Wheels)

amendoza@mealsonwheels.org • 512-476-6325 xt 155

Sonjia and I are with Meals on Wheels veteran services. We work with elderly and disabled veterans and assist them with food service. As a client, they get breakfast. We work with Vets and families. We also have financial assistance. Funded via the TVC, and can provide additional one-time funding aid for housing repairs, etc. We're doing a lot of internal change/transformation. We have a home repair program via the TVC and city/county funding.

Q: I have a veteran in rehab who can't get home until a ramp is built in Pflugerville.

A: Contact me and I'll go out and do an assessment.

Q: How long?

A: It'll take about a month or so. I have to get the documentation.

Q: Age limit?

A; No.

Q: How's your funding?

A: We're doing fine via the TVC.

Erika Bitar (Operation Goodjobs)

erika.bitar@goodwillcentraltexas.org

- * We've had a waitlist since mid-November. We're addressing that now.
- * Contact me by email or phone if you have a waitlisted client with special circumstances and/or crisis.

Bo Buell (Vet Furnishings Warehouse)

michael.buell@anewentry.org

- * If you're not on the furnishings warehouse interest list, send me or Jonathan an email to be included.

Casey Cork (ECHO)

caseycork@austinecho.org

We have a diversion program - if you have a client who is experiencing the "high definition" of homelessness, we do family reunification for them – We help them find family where they can stay for 30 days or more.

Veteran Success Stories & 2015

Recap

- * Paul: Comfort level in the meetings where anyone can voice a concern or ask a question. It's a super positive environment where anyone can speak up.
- * Bo: We operate a transitional home for homeless, incarceration, substance abuse, etc.. A man came in 4 to 5 months ago with just the clothes on his back – via all these different entities, he got a job in building maintenance. He's about to get promoted to manager, he's moving into an apartment with assistance from agencies. I'm just... Wow! He also participated in equine therapy and that contributed to his success... Truly broken people are getting helped.

- * Paul: At the beginning of the year, people used the CTVSC's email list to send a mass email and getting responses with knowledgeable resources and/or actors who can help. Two months ago there was a veteran in a domestic abuse situation and with these connections, Tu at Caritas was able to muster volunteers and get people organized to help.

Etc.

Transportation Resources

If you know transportation resources, let us know.

- * United For The People will start in March - they got funded
- * MVPN can do one-off transportation.

Service Gaps

{Did not see questioner}: Employment services for veterans who are of advanced age. Anyone know of some?

Paul: TVC career advisors - we've been able to place them.

Casey: Reach out to the Workforce Commission and the Veterans Commission.

Paul: If you have vets that need employment, connect with me and I can help connect you to the right person anywhere in Texas. "Sometimes veterans think their age is a barrier, but once they're trained up and have confidence, they find they can get jobs.

Caritas person: Helmets to Hardhats - IL program. Anyone heard of it?

Happy Comment

Becky Strossner: I'm just really glad we have this {The CTVSC}. I'm a grant-based program, and it's so valuable to know what everyone else is doing and to get our word out there.

Next Meeting

Place and time to be determined.