

Clackamas County Veterans Advisory Council

Annual Report to the Community

For Fiscal Year 2017/2018

Since 2012, Clackamas County has supported a Veterans Advisory Council. The Council serves as an advisory body to the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners (BCC) and the Department of Health Housing and Human Services (H3S). The Council advises the BCC and H3S on all matters relating to the provision of services to veterans, their families and dependents; how to ensure that the needs of veterans, their families and dependents are recognized and addressed in a timely manner; and current issues affecting veterans, their families and dependents.

In furtherance of the Council's goals, a Veterans Dashboard has been developed that will provide information on key benchmarks for areas that are critical to the success of veterans, including education, family support, employment, housing and mental health. Based on this data, the Council will identify strategies to address areas needing improvement in partnership with community partners, elected officials, and, most importantly, veterans and their families.

Education Goals

Veterans are successful and stay in college or trade school until completion of their program.

Result: The retention rate for veterans at Clackamas Community College is 55%, slightly higher than the overall student retention rate of 53%. When compared with data from the previous year, the veteran retention rate has increased 11%.

The number of veterans accessing education benefits increases each year.

Result: In 2017 345 veteran students utilized federal education benefits, a small increase of the previous year when 337 students accessed these benefits.

Employment Goals

More employers access the Work Opportunity Tax Credit when hiring veterans.

Result: 177 veteran applications approved for the period of Oct 2017 through March of 2018.

Veteran's unemployment rate

Result: The rate in 2016 was 3.6% for veterans and 3.8% for the general public. Updated rates will be available in the fall.

Average wage for veterans accessing the Community Solutions Veterans Workforce Program

Result: In 2017 the average wage was \$15.93 per hour, an increase of \$1.89 per hour from the previous year.

Housing Goals

Clackamas County functionally ends veterans' homelessness.

Results: As of the end of June 2018, 141 veterans were listed on the Veterans By-Name Registry.

61 veterans housed in veterans-specific housing operated by Clackamas County Social Services

36 veteran families were assisted before they became homeless

TBD – Number of veterans housed in all homeless programs operating in the county.

Behavioral Health Goals

No veteran suicides in Clackamas County.

Result: Medical Examiner data for 2017 indicates that there were no veteran suicides in Clackamas County.*

Looking forward to the next 12 months, the VAC will focus on the following critical issues:

- Communicate with Clackamas County's Legislative members to ensure that the needs of veterans are heard. This will include involvement in the October Candidate's Forum sponsored by Clackamas County Health, Housing and Human Services.
- Fully engage with the County's Zero Suicide Initiative. This will include a "listening session" where veterans will have an opportunity to share their thoughts on how to accomplish the goal of no veteran suicides in Clackamas County.
- Help to ensure that the County's Agent Orange outreach efforts reach the intended audience, and that more medical practitioners understand the link between Agent Orange, certain diseases, and access to Veterans Administration Benefits.
- Continue to provide feedback on the efforts of the county to end veterans homelessness, including monitoring the progress of the Veterans Village, the Please Avenue project serving low income veterans households, participating in the January 2019 Point in Time Count and a Stand Down scheduled for the fall of 2019.
- Identify measures and interventions to ensure that veteran families are supported.

Want to learn more?

VAC meetings occur 6 times a year and are open to the public. If you'd like more information on the Clackamas County Veterans Advisory Council, please contact Valerie Skinner at 503-650-5643 or valerieski@clackamas.us.

* From the County's Suicide Prevention Coordinator - Although we believe that this data from the Medical Examiner's office is one of the most credible sources that we have access to, it still has significant limitations. Some of the 63 deaths by suicide reported in 2017 may have been veterans. We are working with the Medical Examiner's office to get a more standardized approach for collecting this information.