

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
JACK C. MONTGOMERY VA MEDICAL CENTER (JCMVAMC)

## **FY 2012 ANNUAL REPORT**

---

HOMELESS AND COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY  
PROGRAMS

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

Fiscal Year 2012 marked another year of tremendous growth and change in the Homeless and Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) programs. Diligent work by staff in both programs has helped the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center get closer to reaching Secretary Shinseki's plan of eradicating Veteran homelessness by 2015. The six pillars identified in the plan are outreach/education, treatment services, prevention services, housing/supportive services, income/employment/benefits and community partnerships. The following annual report is a snapshot and a review of services being provided.

In April of 2011, VA Central Office mandated that all homeless program staff transition input of data into the online Northeast Program Evaluation Center (NEPEC) monitoring system to the Homeless Operational Management System (HOMES) system. HOMES was created as a result of the five-year plan to end Veteran homelessness and to more efficiently track outcomes related to VA Homeless Program service delivery. National programmers continue to improve the new system's efficiency and communicate modifications to the field. The CWT program continues to utilize the NEPEC system and receives outcome reports 3-4 months after quarter conclusion.

Programs are broken out into four program areas: Outreach, Transition Services, Permanent Housing and Work Therapy. Over 788 unique Veterans were treated by Homeless Program staff in FY12, an increase from 650 served in FY 11 and 525 served in FY10. In the Compensated Work Therapy program in FY12, 214 unique Veterans were treated which is also a slight increase from 200 in FY 11 and 168 in FY10.

---

## OUTREACH

---

- ***Introduction:***

Homeless outreach services at the JCMVAMC expanded during FY 2012, as part of the VA's 5-year plan to end Veteran homelessness. The core of the VA Homeless Program is to reach homeless Veterans in shelters, on the streets or other locations not meant for human habitation to assist with obtaining benefits and linkage with services to end homelessness.

Outreach Services are broken into the following programs:

### HOMELESS OUTREACH

- ***Current Services:***

1. *Outreach*-During FY 2012, outreach was conducted on a weekly basis at various shelters, soup kitchens, camps and other locations as identified by community referrals. For safety purposes, street outreach is limited due to only one staff member conducting outreach.

Community outreach groups contact VA homeless staff when they identify a Veteran and if the Veteran desires contact with a VA staff member, they will accompany the community outreach team to the designated outreach location. Each fall the annual Stand Down for Homeless Veterans is held at the American Legion Post in Sapulpa and serves as an efficient outreach method to reach Veterans in the community. FY 12 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> year for this event serving 152 Veterans, an increase from 133 in FY11.

2. *Prevention*- Homeless staff also provided homeless prevention services to Veterans calling into the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, Veterans walking into the hospital or outpatient clinic, and referrals from VA providers or community partners. National Call Center referrals increased from 92 referrals in FY11 to 210 in FY12. Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) staff provided outreach and identified legally involved Veterans through collaboration with local courts and jails. VJO staff assist with transition from incarceration to community reintegration through education, advocacy and referrals.

3. *MHICM RANGE*- The Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement (RANGE) began at the JCMVAMC in May 2010 providing services to Veterans diagnosed with a severe mental illness. This program also provides homeless outreach services in rural communities and partners with Homeless Program staff to ensure coordination of care and proper referrals.

4. *Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF, locally known as BRRX)*- In FY2011 the Community Service Council of Tulsa was awarded the SSVF grant offering homeless prevention services, including case management and financial assistance, to Veterans and their families. Program services were made available effective 11/1/11. To date, VA staff meet with BRRX staff monthly and with appropriate releases, staff mutual Veteran cases.

5. *Stand Down*- The JCMVAMC Homeless and CWT program co-hosted a second Stand Down in FY2012 with a church and numerous other community partners in Tulsa. This 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event served 175 homeless Veterans and 124 non-Veterans. Over 40 community agencies/partners participated in the event with over 150 volunteers.

6. *Education*- The JCMVAMC Public Affairs office created an educational video of Homeless and CWT programs in FY11. This video is used during community presentations as well as on the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) buses to educate the public about programming. The VTS program often transports Veterans from rural communities, therefore assisting the Homeless and CWT program with outreach to Veterans in rural areas.

- ***New Initiatives:***

1. *Rural Outreach*- An additional outreach staff person was added in August 2011, but was vacated in February 2012. The position was backfilled in August 2012 and a notable increase in rural outreach efforts is underway. The JCMVAMC provides services to 25 counties in Oklahoma, most of which are rural.

2. *Encampment Outreach*- In FY 12, the VA was invited to attend a newly structured group focusing on outreach to homeless living in encampments. The group consists of at least 10 community agencies and intends to work with city leaders to identify and assist those living in encampments.

3. *Wildfire outreach*- In August 2012, several counties within the JCMVAMC were impacted by devastating wildfires. VA Homeless Program staff conducted and coordinated VA outreach at Red Cross shelters and disaster relief sites to identify Veterans impacted. Numerous VA programs assisted Veterans in need of assistance.

- ***Performance Analysis of Outreach:***

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>FY 2012 Benchmark</b>	<b>FY 2011 Results</b>	<b>FY 2012 Results</b>	<b>Measure of concern</b>
Increase number of National Homeless Call Center referrals	Increase by 20%	92 calls	210 calls (128% increase)	None

---

## **TRANSITION SERVICES**

---

- ***Introduction:***

The purpose of transitional housing services is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination.

Transitional Housing Services are broken into the following programs:

- ***Current Services:***

1. ***Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) contracts- 41 admissions & 35 discharges (including designated emergency beds):***

- a. *12 & 12, Inc.*- This contract offers 4 beds per month to homeless female Veterans for up to 6 months who have a substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder. If beds are not occupied by female Veterans, male Veterans can be considered for admission. Veterans participate in individual and group counseling, receive case management services and either work, volunteer or attend school. The JCMVAMC spent \$56,800 on this contract in FY12.
- b. *Walker Hall*- This contract offers 3 beds per month to homeless female and male Veterans for up to 6 months who have a mental health or co-occurring disorder.

Veterans participate in case management and either work, volunteer or attend school. The JCMVAMC spent \$40,779.14 on this contract in FY12.

- c. *Yale Apartments*- This contract offers a total of 10 beds per month to homeless female and male veterans for up to 6 months who have a mental health or co-occurring disorder. Three of these 10 beds are designated as emergency beds with a goal of providing interim residence while awaiting admission to another housing program. Veterans participate in case management and either work, volunteer or attend school. VA Central Office awarded funds for this contract and \$119,052 was expended in FY12 for this contract.

**2. Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD)- 34 admissions and 34 discharges:**

- a. *Bryce House*- This GPD program offers 31 beds for up to 24 months to homeless male Veterans in recovery from a substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder. Veterans participate in individual and group counseling, receive case management services and either work, volunteer or attend school. During a Veteran’s first year of residency at Bryce House, they will be charged 10% of their income and 20% during their second year. With these modifications, Veterans will be better able to pay off outstanding debts/fines and build savings faster to ensure successful transition to independent housing. In FY 12, \$428, 211.20 was expended on this grant project.
- b. *National Performance Measure*- The GPD performance measure monitored the percentage of Veterans discharged to independent housing from a GPD program. The performance measure goal was set at 60%. The JCMVAMC exceeded this goal at 80%.

- ***New Initiatives:***

- 1. *New GPD Program*- In 2011, the Restoring Lives Program was awarded a GPD capital and per diem grant to offer an additional 25 beds to homeless males. This program’s target population is homeless Veterans released from incarceration and those recovering from substance use disorders. The agency has experienced some construction delays, but is eager to open in FY13.

***Performance Analysis of Transition Services:***

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>FY 2012 Benchmark</b>	<b>FY 2011 Results</b>	<b>FY 2012 Results</b>	<b>Measure of concern</b>
% of Veterans discharged to independent housing from GPD program	60%	69% (this data only through 3rd quarter-measure suspended by VACO in 4th quarter)	80%	None

---

## PERMANENT HOUSING

---

- **Introduction:** The Housing and Urban Development-VA Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) Program is a joint venture between Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and VA. This program began at the JCMVAMC in 2008. It involves intensive case management related to resolving issues that have the potential to destabilize the Veteran and/or Veteran's family stability in the community and/or reinforcing supports or access to services that can help offer additional stability. Veterans who participate in the program receive a housing voucher that subsidizes their rent.
  
- **Current Services:**
  1. *HUD-VASH* -The HUD-VASH program experienced tremendous growth in FY12 with receipt of 50 additional vouchers and 3 additional FTE to provide intensive case management and support services to Veterans. This brought the total number of vouchers allocated to the JCMVAMC catchment area to 160. The program continues to focus on the most vulnerable populations, including Veterans who are chronically homeless, served during OEF/OIF, have families, women, and those with disabilities.
  
  2. *Substance Use Disorder Specialist (SUD Specialist)*- In November 2010, the JCMVAMC hired a HUD-VASH SUD Specialist with VA Central Office initiative funds. Although funded under the HUD-VASH initiative, the specialist is able to assist Veterans in other homeless programs as well (i.e. GPD, HCHV, etc.). The SUD specialist provides case management and supportive therapy to homeless Veterans in the community. This worker provides Social Work interventions for individuals, families and groups. The specialist acts as a liaison with community agencies and coordinates community-based services including referrals to or from VA programs, government programs, and community agency programs. Currently, the SUD specialist provides a SUD group at one of the HCHV contract sites. With the opening of the new GPD site, the SUD specialist will look into providing an additional group at the new location.
  
- **New Initiatives:**
  1. The HUD-VASH program developed an informal agreement with a DAV chapter who has agreed to provide household items (i.e. furniture) to Veterans participating in a VA Homeless Program. A voucher system was developed by VA staff enabling Veterans who are moving into a new home to receive essential items to furnish their homes.

- **Performance Analysis of Permanent Housing:**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>FY 2012 Benchmark</b>	<b>FY 2011 Results</b>	<b>FY 2012 Results</b>	<b>Measure of concern</b>
% vouchers issued that resulted in a homeless Veteran achieving resident status in Public Housing Authority (point in time)	88%	130% (cumulative, not point in time)	92%	None

---

### **WORK THERAPY**

---

- **Introduction:** The Compensated Work Therapy programs are based on a recovery-oriented model and offer a continuum of work restoration services. Veterans are financially compensated for their work and in turn, improve their economic and social well-being as they prepare for community re-entry.

- **Current Services:**

1. **Transitional Work (TW)-** Contracts are negotiated with participating industries (including the VA and other agencies) for therapeutic work assignments. Veterans provide labor as part of their overall treatment program and vocational plan. The purpose is to develop skills to facilitate their transition into the competitive work environment. TW reflects the realities of the competitive workplace. Work is performed under the supervision of a VA employee and indirectly under the supervision of the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist. On average, a Veteran participates in the TW program for 6 months, but if clinically indicated, can remain in the TW program longer. The TW program served 94 Veterans in FY12.

2. **Supported Employment (SE)-** SE is designed to expand vocational opportunities for Veterans with severe mental illness by emphasizing job accommodation, community-based employment, support and long-term follow-up. Employment specialists seek and locate real jobs in the community that match veterans’ interests, skills and ability to work, even if only for a few hours a week. The SE program served 35 Veterans in FY12.

3. **Homeless Veteran Supported Employment (HVSEP)-** The HVSEP program provides assistance in locating and maintaining competitive community professions for homeless Veterans who require assistance in career seeking and job stability, and have a desire for meaningful work. It is a partnership among the Veteran and Employment Specialist in determining the goals and abilities of the Veteran, and designing and implementing a plan of action to make those ambitions and passions a reality. The JCMVAMC HVSEP program began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY11 and in FY 12 served 39 homeless Veterans with a total caseload employment rate of 40%. The Employment Specialist in this program is a previously homeless Veteran.

- ***New Initiatives:***

1. The HVSEP program noted a need to provide general information and education regarding job-related preparedness, including essential computer skills. The HVSEP employment specialist developed an educational group to allow those Veterans enrolled in the program who are unemployed to network about job opportunities.

- ***Performance Analysis of Work Therapy:***

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>FY 2012 Benchmark</b>	<b>FY 2011 Results</b>	<b>FY 2012 Results (total caseload)</b>	<b>Measure of concern</b>
Ensure employment, schooling or volunteer opportunities for Veterans discharging from CWT programs (TW &SE)	40%	44%	55%	None
Percentage of Veterans enrolled in HVSEP program employed	35%	25%	40%	None

---

**COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK ABOUT HOMELESS AND CWT SERVICES**

---

An analysis of complaints and feedback from Veterans and Stakeholders resulted in the following actions:

- A Veteran at the GPD site expressed concern about privacy. The GPD Liaison investigated an incident and consulted with Information Security Officer, Privacy Officer, VISN Network staff and GPD VACO. As a result, all GPD site staff participated in privacy training provided by VA staff, including Privacy Officer.
- Stakeholder surveys from various VA Services and community partners convey an overwhelming appreciation for the collaborative and supportive services provided by both the Homeless and CWT Programs.
- CWT, specifically TWE, stakeholder surveys indicate a need for additional Veteran participation. An analysis of this indicates that VA services are short-staffed; therefore

Veterans participating in the TWE program are valuable additions to their service. Supervisors often seek to hire TWE's assigned to their service due to the quality work the Veterans provide.

---

## OPPORTUNITIES

---

- *Ending Homelessness* – With continued growth in the HUD-VASH program and the addition of another GPD project, the JCMVAMC is closer to meeting the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. Although development of the Five-Year Plan to End Veteran Homelessness appears to target only the Homeless Program, there is a large impact on the CWT program due to homeless Veterans often seeking work therapy and employment opportunities. Quarterly monitoring and necessary updates to the strategic and five-year plan will be made to assist with reaching the goal to eradicate Veteran homelessness.
- *Community Homelessness Assessment Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG)*- Legal assistance and housing for registered sex offenders continues to be two of the top unmet needs identified during completion of the annual CHALENG survey. Due to collaborative efforts between the Tulsa County Bar Association, University of Tulsa Law School, and Community Service Council of Tulsa, the Legal Help for Vets pilot project began in FY12. The goal of the project is to match a Veteran's legal need with an attorney through the Bar Association and also identify a law student available to assist. Numerous Veterans have benefited from these efforts, but due to no designated staff (all volunteers) to coordinate the project, referrals have stalled. All participating agencies will continue to seek opportunities, including funding, to develop a successful legal assistance program for homeless Veterans. VA Homeless Program staff will continue collaborative efforts with local communities to identify essential housing resources for Veterans required to register as sex offenders.
- *Clinical Pastoral Education*- The Homeless and CWT Programs continue to partner with the Clinical Pastoral Education Program (CPE) through Chaplain Service to help educate clergy and subsequently their parishioners about program availability. Due to the rural nature of the JCMVAMC catchment area, reliance on referrals from community clergy is key, especially because it's likely they are the first and most trusted individuals a homeless or unemployed Veteran might go to for assistance.
- *Networking*- All Homeless and CWT staff attend at least one community meeting per month to ensure ongoing communication with community partners about program

availability. It further enables VA staff to learn about essential resources available for Veterans outside of the VA.

- *Community Transitional Work agreements-* To better assist Veterans in the TW program secure competitive employment in the community upon discharge from the program, the TW Coordinator plans to seek a community-based agreement in FY13.

*\*\*\*Attached is FY12 outcome tracking report which includes Veteran and stakeholder satisfaction data*

---

Melanie Goldman  
Homeless/CWT Program Manager

---

Steffanie Ward  
Chief, Social Work

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_