

# **WELCOME**

**November 3, 2021**

**Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services**  
**Arrowheads Community Club**  
**Bldg. 9-65, Fort Indiantown Gap**  
**Annville, PA 17003**

- ✓ This session is being recorded for administrative purposes.
- ✓ Please keep your phones on mute, as we are using a teleconference line, not a virtual platform.
- ✓ In compliance with current COVID-19 guidelines, please remember to wear your mask, covering your nose and mouth.



# INTRODUCTIONS

# OPENING COMMENTS

# OLD BUSINESS

# AWARD PRESENTATION

# AGING

**Ms. Margo Coleman, Co-Chair**



# AGING



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Margo Coleman	DMVA	Jonathan Bowman	DHS (OLTL)
Brian Natali	DMVA	Christopher Kemmerer	PA State Parks
Nick Haller	VA (VISN 4)	James Fearn	DHS (OLTL)
Jamie Buchenauer	DHS (OLTL)	Tim Cleveland	Tioga Co. Veterans Affairs
Sierra Bilous	OMHSAS	Jamie Dunlap	Pa Council on the Arts
Erin Walters	PDA	Susan Meighen	DMVA

## **Mission/Vision:**

Expand awareness of and access to services, supports, benefits, and opportunities for Pennsylvania's aging veterans and their families and caregivers so that they may live and thrive in their communities.

## **Goals:**

- 1) Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.
- 2) Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.
- 3) Safeguard Pennsylvania's aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

**Goal 1:** Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.

“Expanding Long Term Care Services to Pennsylvania Veterans”

Consider using public and nonpublic nursing facility bed capacity for Veterans in need of long-term care if the DMVA beds are unavailable and Improve Veterans' access to existing Home and Community Based services and programs through education and navigation services”

**How?**, *collaborating with PPL office to gather information on how to make this change happen*

**Who?**, *Margo and Jonathan, PPL staff*

**What?**, *information gathering with focus on how to improve reporting and policy change for use of public and non-public nursing facilities*

**When?** *March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

**Outcome:** The role of the aging committee would be better served by generating an awareness campaign providing communications to local nursing homes on how to identify veterans and getting them assessed or reassessed through the federal VA so they could access benefits through that route.

**Goal 2:** Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.

**How?** Educational videos jointly presented by aging and veteran system stakeholders to explain important programming and resources for aging veterans and caregivers to establish

**Who?** *TBD*

**What?** *TBD*

**When?** *TBD*

**Goal 3:** Safeguard Pennsylvania’s aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

“Expanding Long Term Care Services to Pennsylvania Veterans”

Identify barriers in Long Term Care when reporting potential financial exploitation and Collaborate with agency stakeholders to identify areas for judiciary or policy change to improve reporting and outcomes

**How?** *Partner with financial exploitation study to glean information on recommendations and policy changes*

**Who?** *Margo and Jonathan in conjunction with PDA and the IDT task force state agencies*

**What?** *Interagency collaboration to prevent financial exploitation*

**When?** *Monthly through April*

*Outcome: Aging committee was able to provide 2 recommendations to the FETF and the FETF has adopted those changes as part of their Task Force Strategy*

**1. Create a feedback loop between law enforcement and long-term care facility staff to help identify possibly missed opportunities/evidence during an investigation. It may help improve investigations in long-term care facilities to have the assistance of a trained detective to identify any areas missed during the investigation.**

**2. If a Report of Need is made from an agency, rather than a private party, the outcome of the investigation should be shared between agencies.**

**Next steps:** Reaching out to local law enforcement agencies and BVH staff to invite to a handful of meeting to discuss best practices, challenges, and opportunities when reporting possible financial exploitation.

Hoping to host 5 meetings and be ready for reporting in September when the full FETF being led by Sec. Torres reconvenes.

**August 19: PS, BVH, Aging Committee, and LLE met to discuss reporting of possible financial abuse.**

- Counties and municipalities completing an investigation may be small and not have needed resources.
- Report of possible FE is a police patrol function classified as petty theft.
- Often, police are not sure how to conclude the FE investigation or have unsatisfactory means to discover the alleged perpetrator without camera evidence, due to large numbers of people with access to the resident, (i.e., visitors, staff, vendors, other residents).
- In one case police suggested to place video cameras in the nursing home but nursing home declined due to privacy reasons.
- Police Chief typically works with the SVH Commandant and security officers when receiving a possible FE report. The nurses or social workers typically obtain witness statements.
- In a case of possible FE, a police officer will take a report, but the issue classified more as a civil matter than criminal matter.
- Most reports received are for assumed theft of money rather than exploitation. If resident didn't lock up money it falls back on themselves for not securing property.

## Recommendations:

The resident/home/law enforcement official should contact the local DA's office for assistance with a more detailed investigation.

If exploitation is identified or suspected, have the advocate assist the resident in contacting Social Security/other income sources and have the money directly deposited into the resident fund at the SVH. SVH/advocate can also contact local Social Security office for guidance/educational materials on what rep payees can/cannot do with a resident's money, to better understand what may be considered financial exploitation.

## Next Steps:

Meet with local law enforcement agencies and BVH staff to discuss best practices, challenges, and opportunities when reporting possible financial exploitation.

## Recommendation 1

- Hold a cross-system conference for aging, long-term service and support system and veteran system stakeholders and advocates

Committee will begin to brainstorm options for achieving this recommendation

What is one thing we want to do to achieve this? Aging committee to collaborate with the protecting aging veterans sub committee to identify area to target for distributing information to stakeholders

## Recommendation 2

- Educational videos jointly presented by aging and veteran system stakeholders to explain important programming and resources for aging veterans and caregivers. Post to social media, YouTube, stakeholder websites.

Committee will begin to brainstorm options for achieving this recommendation

What is one thing we want to do to achieve this? Meet with DMVA communications department to identify if there are any archived programs that we could use that could be shared with local PBS stations and/or news stations that would donate free airtime to broadcast our message. Identify what form of media might reach the broadest audience as older Pennsylvania's may not be as familiar with or as comfortable with using social media platforms.



## Recommendation 3

- Initiate the veteran pension poaching postcard effort
  - Protecting Aging Veteran's Sub Committee continues to spear head this initiative.

## Recommendation 4

- Host regional or local town halls or listening forums for aging veterans, their families and caregivers to attend – time to learn about resources, voice concerns, identify service gaps, brainstorm innovative solutions

Committee will begin to brainstorm options for achieving this recommendation

What is one thing we want to do to achieve this? Possibly utilize local PBS stations who may want to do a specific piece on Aging Veterans and their interests, needs, experiences etc.

# HOMELESS

**Mrs. Samantha Cossman, Co-Chair**

# HOMELESS



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Samantha Cossman (Co-chair) & PA VETConnect RPOCs and VSSs	DMVA	Bill Cress Alexis Kelly Beth Farabaugh & Jesse Gutshall Airika Pollard Kamie Mazza Rob Greco	VISN 4 Homeless Programs Office Wilkes-Barre VA Homeless Team Altoona VA Homeless Team Lebanon VA Homeless Team Erie VA Homeless Team Philadelphia VA Homeless Team
Tom Applebach Brian Querry Danny Osten Lisa Kaye John Cyprian Dennis Miller	Lehigh CDVA Centre CDVA Cumberland CDVA Monroe CDVA Butler CDVA Montgomery CDVA	Bill Reed Vandy Rider / various staff Hayley Miller Kim Kennedy LaShon Fryer Don Cave Various staff	YWCA of Greater Harrisburg VMC Central PA / VMC – HQ Veterans Leadership Program Volunteers of America PA Community Action Agency Delaware Co. Utility Emergency Services Fund Catholic Charities of Diocese Allentown
Lauren Whitleigh Dina Ciabattone David Weathington Chuck Keenan	Eastern PA CoC Beaver CoC Philadelphia CoC Allegheny CoC	Brendan Auman (Co-chair) & Angela Susten Danielle Rudy Jeff Geibel Kim Wentzel Jim Fearn Vacant	DCED  PHFA DDAP PDA OLTL DHS
Micah Snead	GAC-VS MAL	Donna Hess	OMHSAS

## **Vision:**

Be the premier forum for seamless communication and collaboration in effectively understanding and responding to Veteran homelessness within Pennsylvania.

## **Mission:**

Build collaborative intergovernmental and community-based relationships to identify and promote awareness of the resources that could help veterans experiencing or at risk for housing instability.

# HOMELESS



**Recommendation 1:** Consider action on issues deemed most pressing by stakeholders: lack of warming shelters, lack of emergency shelter beds, lack of affordable housing, impacts of COVID-19

**Recommendation 2:** Advocate for Coordinated Entry Access Sites at more VA Medical Centers and SSVF providers

**Recommendation 3:** Seek to uncover more resources for National Guard or Reservists who do not qualify for SSVF or traditional veteran homeless programs and advocate for a streamlined and standard referral flow for these individuals (**new discussion group will convene**)

**Recommendation 4:** Have PA VETConnect RPOCs routinely engage in CoC scrub calls and homeless veteran list reviews (**completed**)

**Recommendation 5** – Collaborate with Women Veterans committee to seek more solutions for women veterans experiencing homelessness (**2021 workgroup established; recurring meetings led by Erica Moore**)

**Recommendation 6** – Partner with Aging Committee to discuss potential solutions for aging veterans who experience housing instability and discuss ways to promote better communication with long-term care industry

**Recommendation 7** – Partner with Judiciary Committee to discuss potential solutions for veterans exiting incarceration who have been historically hard-to-place (**2021 workgroup established; recurring meetings led by Jen Spitler**)

**Recommendation 8:** Obtain data from all CoCs, all SSVFs, and all VA Medical Centers/VISN on a routine basis to better understand veteran homelessness across PA

**Recommendation 9** – Provide DCED, PHFA and PHAs with insight on veteran advocates who can speak to the need for veteran-specific housing and help developers plan wisely regarding location and tenancy plans for new or revitalized housing (**2021 – document provided**)

**Recommendation 10** – Annually promote and support VA’s Project CHALENG; use report outcomes to inform Committee of unmet needs of homeless veterans in PA and seek resources to address

**Workgroups focus on issues leading to or resulting from veteran homelessness or housing insecurity, and/or issues that are barriers to ending PA veteran homelessness.**

- **Hard-to-Place workgroup** (Jen Spitler and Mike Carrington): focuses on establishing networks of support to reduce the occurrence of veteran homelessness following re-entry from incarceration and those who are hard-to-place due to having a criminal record
- **Affordable Veteran Housing workgroup** (Micah Snead): brand new
  - Incorporating National Guard resources into Coordinated Entry (Eastern CoC) – upcoming discussion group to address a referral flow for those who wore the uniform but cannot access VA homeless programs
  - Legal assistance resources to help address unmet legal needs identified on the 2020 VA CHALENG survey – upcoming discussion group

**More veteran-specific Coordinated Entry access sites began.**

- Lebanon VA Medical Center Homeless Office – 2020
- Veterans Multi-Service Center Central PA for all 33 counties in Eastern CoC – 2021
- Veterans Leadership Program (for 7 counties in central/southcentral PA) – 2021

**2021 spotlights raised awareness of various programs and services that can support homeless or at-risk veteran households or support providers in the work they do to house veterans.**

- 2/2021 – Fair Housing Laws and Accommodations (FHLC)
- 3/2021 – Eviction Process and Legal Assistance (RHLS and MPLS)
- 4/2021 – Neighborhood Assistance Program (DCED)
- 5/2021 – VHA’s Homeless Programs Office Strategic Plan 2021-2025 overview (VHA HPO)
- 6/2021 – Single Family Housing Programs (USDA)
- 9/2021 – PA National Guard Soldier and Family Readiness Specialists

**Committee will continue educational presentations in 2022.**

- Open to membership of sister committees
- A survey will gauge areas of greatest need among members and a schedule will be created and shared with GAC-VS Coordinator
- Potential 2022 presentation topics include: Area Agencies on Aging and other aging services; Community Health Choices; Legal assistance resources; DCED programming; State Veterans Homes and other state veterans’ benefits; various VHA’s programming including LGBTQ+ Veteran Care, Veterans Justice Outreach, Mental Health, Geriatric and Extended Care services; and more!

## Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)

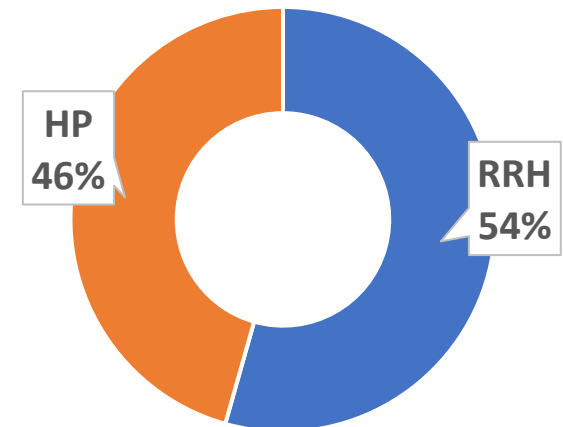
Enrollments from 10/1/20 to 9/30/21 (Data source: PA SSVF grantees)

**Total for 12 SSVF providers: 2,578 veteran households**

(Over 3,800 individuals were assisted by SSVF across these households)

- **Rapid Rehousing enrollments: 1,402 veteran households** Literally homeless; lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (e.g.: a place not meant for human habitation, a shelter, exiting institution after 90 days or less and homeless prior to entering, or fleeing/trying to flee domestic violence)
- **Homeless Prevention enrollments: 1,176 veteran households** Imminently at risk for becoming homeless and SSVF enrollment is preventing it (e.g.: needed assistance to retain current permanent housing or help in finding more suitable housing)

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) vs.  
Homeless Prevention (HP) Enrollments  
for SSVF: 10/1/20 to 9/30/21





## HUD-VASH Vouchers at VISN 4 VA Medical Centers in PA (10/1/20 to 9/30/21)

- This total does not reflect the additional vouchers allocated to some VAMCs in mid-FY 21.
- Facilities over 100% utilization received additional vouchers which can be used upon receipt but are not included in totals until the FY 22 data refresh.
- 87% of veterans with vouchers in VISN 4 were housed (3<sup>rd</sup> in nation)
- *Data source: VA HOMES Report information for FY 21 provided by W. Cress/M. Siegel on 10/7/21*

Facility	# of Vouchers	# Housed	Vouchers Issued, But Not Yet Housed Or Awaiting PHA Validation	Total Vouchers in Use	Available Vouchers
Altoona	87	80	9	89	0
Butler	142	121	7	128	14
Coatesville	466	393	3	396	70
Erie	130	107	6	113	17
Lebanon	345	337	25	362	0
Philadelphia	1,070	921	72	993	77
Pittsburgh	439	371	24	395	44
Wilkes Barre	236	213	14	227	9
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,915</b>	<b>2,543</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>231</b>

## **VISN 4 VA Medical Centers in PA – Permanent Housing Placements Using One or More VA Homeless Programs (10/1/2020 – 9/30/2021)**

Programs include: HUD VASH, SSVF,  
GPD, Contracted Emergency  
Residential Services (CERS),  
and Homeless Dom/CWT Programs

*(Data source: VA HOMES Report  
information for FY 21 provided by  
W. Cress/M. Siegel on 10/7/21)*

Facility	# Permanent Housing Placements
Altoona	47
Butler	71
Coatesville	177
Erie	35
Lebanon	160
Philadelphia	274
Pittsburgh	184
Wilkes Barre	91
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,039</b>

## VA Homeless Programs:

- **VA's Project CHALENG (Community Housing Assessment, Local Education, and Networking Groups)**
- **Expanded eligibility criteria for HUD-VASH.** VAMCs are accepting HUD-VASH referrals under the new expanded criteria (1 day active-duty service, no dishonorable, no court martial). This is the same criteria for the VA's SSVF and Grant and Per Diem programs.
- **Homeless smartphone initiative.** If receiving VA homeless services under the expanded criteria, veteran could have access to a free smartphone to help them remain engaged with homeless program providers to monitor safety and wellbeing, participate in preventative healthcare, attend virtual groups and recovery programs, and conduct virtual housing and job searches in accordance with their treatment goals.
- **RideShare.** VA is utilizing Ridesharing services (ie.UBER/Lyft) under a new national contract, to improve access to VA healthcare services for veterans engaged in the VA's Homeless Programs by providing them with easier access to transportation.

## VA Homeless Programs:

- **VA's Project CHALENG (Community Housing Assessment, Local Education, and Networking Groups)**
  - ✓ Survey link was shared at Committee meetings, via PA VETConnect resource/information emails and in the DMVA Digest.
  - ✓ Once results are available, Committee will work with the VISN to obtain survey results pertinent to the VAMCs serving PA counties and analyze reports for unmet needs, resource gaps, and area of potential collaboration with our government and community partners.
  - ✓ Committee will offer to assist VAMCs with their future CHALENG meetings and surveys.
  - ✓ Committee will convene a discussion on legal assistance between key stakeholders to pursue resources and solutions to some of the legal issues noted as unmet needs in the 2020 CHALENG survey.

## VA Homeless Programs:

- **Expanded eligibility criteria for HUD-VASH.** VAMCs are accepting HUD-VASH referrals under the new expanded criteria (1 day active-duty service, no dishonorable, no court martial). This is the same criteria for the VA's SSVF and Grant and Per Diem programs.
  - ✓ As of 10/13/21, VISN 4 reports that approximately 20 veterans who would not have previously been eligible for HUD-VASH have been housed or are currently navigating the voucher process.
- **Homeless smartphone initiative.** If receiving VA homeless services under the expanded criteria, veteran could have access to a free smartphone to help them remain engaged with homeless program providers to monitor safety and wellbeing, participate in preventative healthcare, attend virtual groups and recovery programs, and conduct virtual housing and job searches in accordance with their treatment goals.
  - ✓ The VHA Homeless Program Office utilized CARES Act funding to procure the devices in response to the COVID-19 National Emergency.
  - ✓ Prioritized for veterans engaged with VA Homeless Programs, including SSVF, GPD, HCHV CRS/LDSH/CM, HUD-VASH, Veterans Justice Program, CES and/or other homeless services.
  - ✓ Once the phone is given to a veteran, it is the veteran's property and does not need to be returned to VA.
  - ✓ Phones are activated, with a 1-yr data plan, at time of distribution to the Veteran.
  - ✓ So far, VISN 4 has distributed 1000+ phones. Contact local VAMC about eligibility and availability.

## VA Homeless Programs:

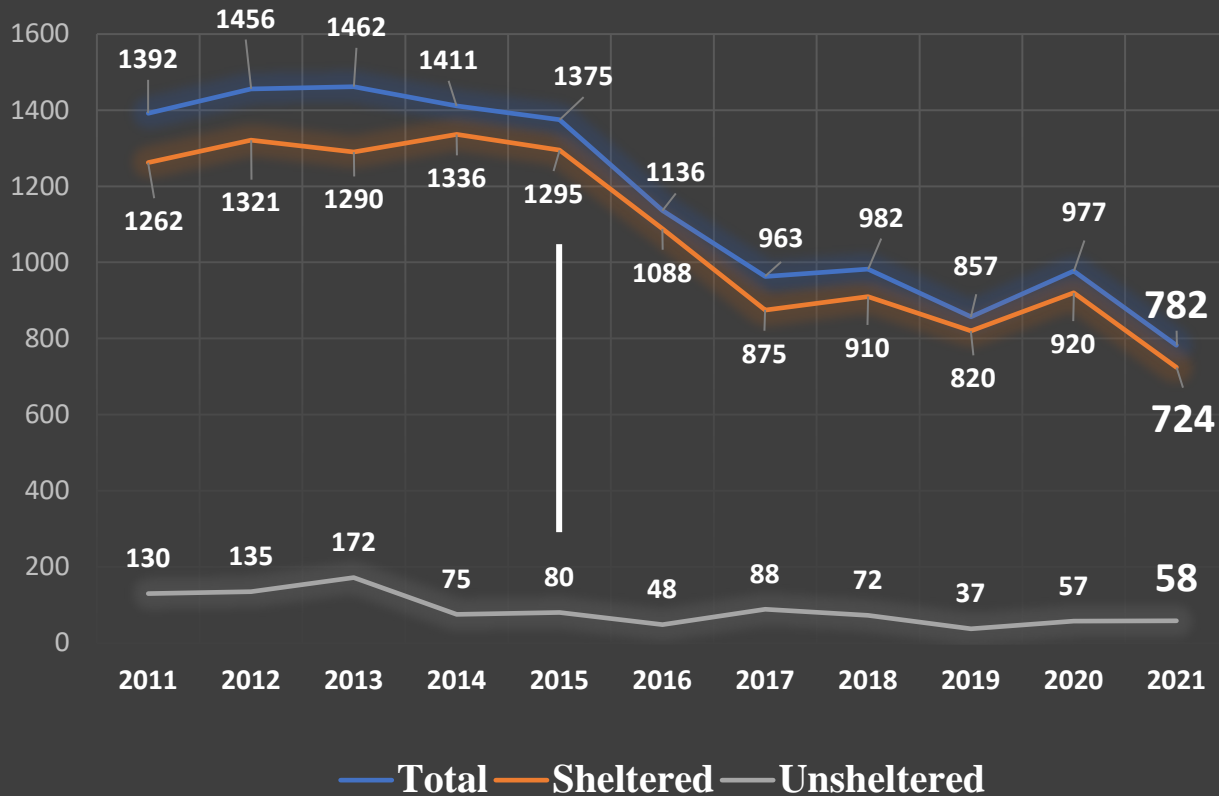
- **RideShare.** VA is utilizing Ridesharing services (ie.UBER/Lyft) under a new national contract, to improve access to VA healthcare services for veterans engaged in the VA's Homeless Programs by providing them with easier access to transportation.
  - ✓ Providing access to healthcare for lower income veterans who have the highest risk for missed appointments as they lack the means to obtain adequate transportation.
  - ✓ RideShare is also impacting the HCHV programs by providing veterans access to transportation for expanded employment opportunities.
  - ✓ To date, results have shown an increase in wages and better employment outcomes by allowing the veteran and employment specialist to expand the job search outside of the normal commuting area.
  - ✓ Rideshare offers the opportunity for the veterans to address their needs holistically, such as education, employment opportunities, and volunteer work.
  - ✓ VAMCs are working with VA Central Office to develop contracts with local companies in rural areas where Uber/Lyft do not exist.
  - ✓ Note: RideShare cannot be used in replacement of VA travel benefits.

# HOMELESS



## Continuum of Care Point-In-Time Counts: 2011 -2021

(Data Source: HUD Data Exchange PIT Reports from PA CoCs)



### Notes:

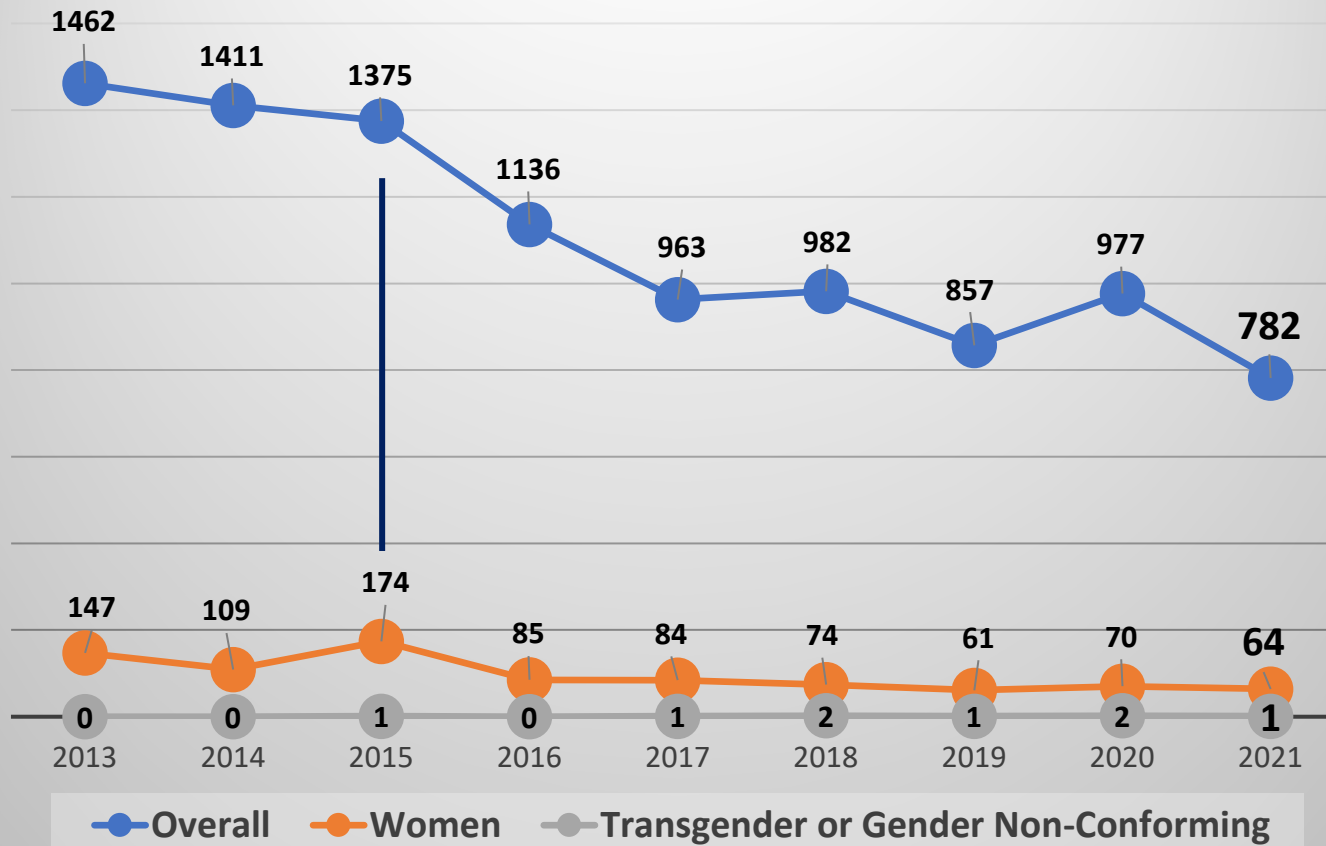
1) 2015 - Gov. Wolf joined the Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.

2) 2021 PIT Count should be viewed considering the restrictions the pandemic caused CoCs in performing their counts, especially their unsheltered counts. Some could not conduct unsheltered counts at all (including Balance of State), therefore there may have been unsheltered homeless veterans who were not identified in the 2021 PIT Count.

# HOMELESS

## Veteran Homelessness by Gender: 2013 to 2021

(Source: HUD Data Exchange PIT Reports from PA CoCs)



Notes:

- 1) 2015 - Gov. Wolf joined the Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.
- 2) 2013 - HUD began tracking gender during PIT counts. 2015 - HUD began tracking categories for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming during PIT counts.
- 3) 8% of the overall number of homeless veterans identified during the 2021 PIT Count were women veterans. Percentage has been 7-8% for the last five years.



# EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Crystal Houser, Chair**

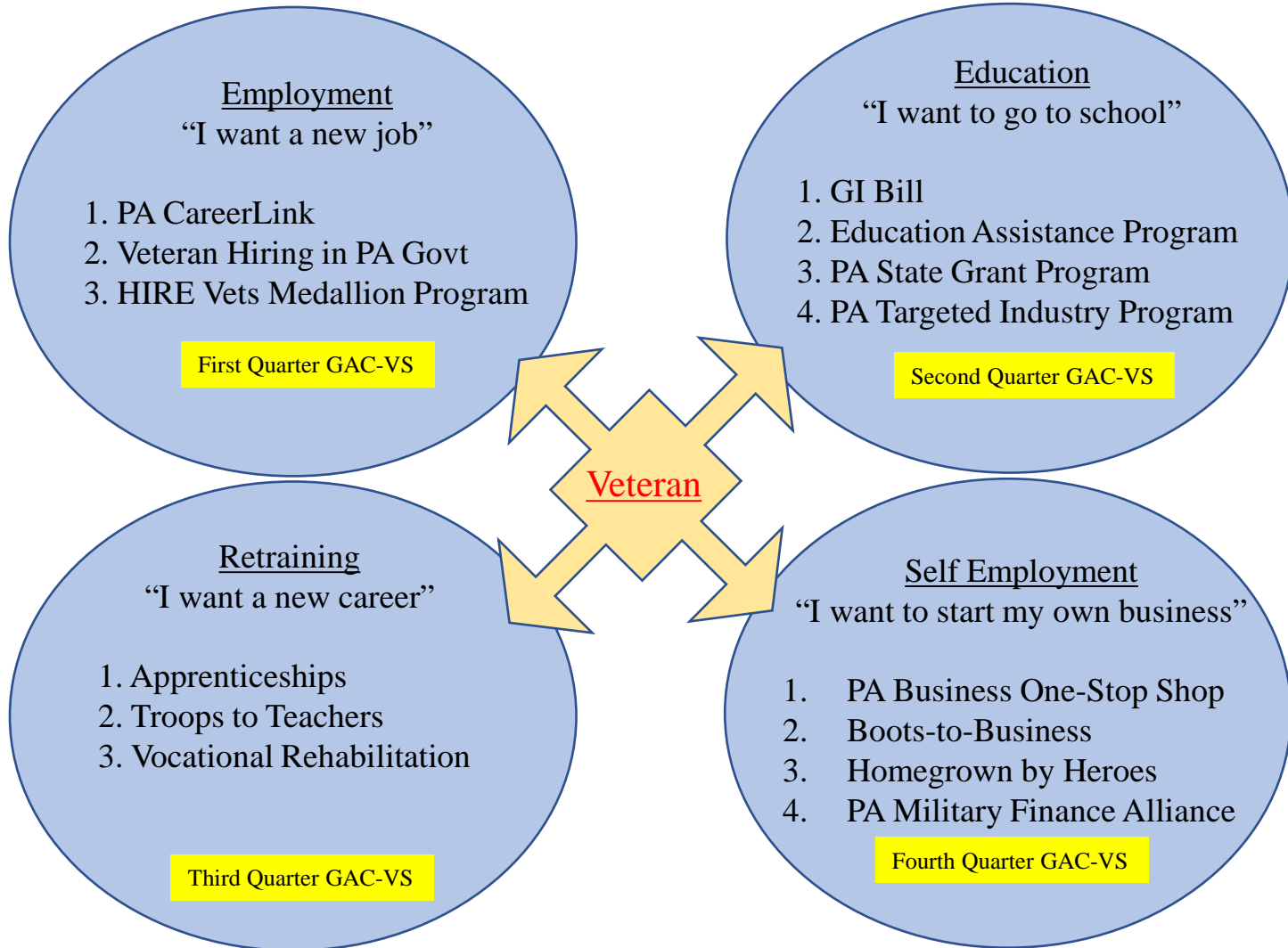
Name	Affiliation
Thomas Applebach	Country Director
Kory Auch	Office of Administration
Chelsea Ellsworth	Military & Veterans Affairs
Thomas Burrell	Fish & Boat Commission
Crystal Houser	Labor & Industry
Christina Kotsalos	Banking & Securities
Billy Lanham	US Dept of Labor/ VETS
Terrell Martin	Community & Economic Development
Joshua Scheinberg	Department of Agriculture
Denise Verchimak	Department of Education

## VISION

To create greater awareness and synergy among government entities that serve veterans at the point they are asking themselves ‘what do I want to do next’ as it relates to employment, self-employment, education or retraining.

## GOALS

1. Establish a recurring rhythm to present program information, magnitude, results and initiatives to the GAC-VS
2. Use program understanding to better connect the information to the entities that need it most ... those that engage veterans daily
3. Fully synergize agency programs into the PA VETConnect model





Employment  
“I want a new job”

*PA CareerLink (L&I)*

*58 offices statewide / priority of service to all veteran / 28,992 served*

*Veteran Hiring in Government (OA)*

*1,041 veterans hired for full-time commonwealth positions*

*HIRE Vets Medallion Program (US DoL)*

*Data to be updated in November 2021.*

[www.employment.pa.gov](http://www.employment.pa.gov)





## Education

### “I want to go to school”

*GI Bill (PDE)*

*20,890 beneficiaries receiving \$249.3M*

*2021-124 active On the Job Training or Apprenticeship Employers for the GI Bill®*

*Education Assistance Program (PHEAA / PA National Guard)*

*1,894 recipients receiving \$11.3M*

*PA State Grant Program (PHEAA)*

*1,494 veterans awarded \$4.2M*

*PA Targeted Industry Program (PHEAA)*

*45 veterans awarded \$145K*



## Retraining

“I want a new career”

*Registered Apprenticeships (L&I)  
Veterans are 8.5% of all active apprentices*

*Troops to Teachers (PDE)  
58 veterans hired / 425 veterans registered for the program in PA*

*Vocational Rehabilitation (L&I)  
836 veterans served / 120 achieved employment outcomes*



## Self Employment

“I want to start my own business”

*PA Business One-Stop Shop (DCED)*

*150 veteran-owned businesses served since launch*

*Boots-to-Business/Re-Boot (US SBA)*

*642 participants @ 49 events across PA since 2014*

*Homegrown by Heroes (Ag)*

*54 farms in 30 counties; 7 Apprenticeships*

*PA Military Finance Alliance (DoBS)*

*1,030 participants @ 12 events across PA since 2014*





## **“I WANT TO START MY OWN BUSINESS”**

1. PA Business One-Stop Shop
2. Small Business Administration
3. PA Military Financial Alliance
4. Home Grown by Heroes

# PA Business One-Stop Shop

## Concept

- One-Stop Shop to Start or Grow a Business
  1. [business.pa.gov](http://business.pa.gov)
  2. 1-833-722-6778
  3. Dedicated Office Housed in DCED;  
Hours M-F 8 am – 4:30pm
- PLAN, REGISTER, OPERATE & GROW

## State Participation

- Agriculture
- Community & Economic Development
- Labor & Industry
- Revenue
- State

## PA Key Data/Trends

- 290,000+ Website Users
- 150,000+ Business Checklist Users
- 3,747 Self-Identified Veterans
- 1,158 Self-Identified Service-Disabled Veterans

## Key Changes/Initiatives

- **Phase III**
  - Business Checklist Enhancements
    - Added Closing a Business and Amending-March 2021
  - Business Hub Application
    - My Documents-August 2021
    - NAICS Code Mapping for Department of Agriculture-November 2021
    - Accessibility Upgrades-November 2021
    - Manage My PA Apps-November 2021
    - Grants & Funding-November 2021

# Small Business Administration

## Concept

- Boots to Business/Reboot entrepreneurial training for vets  
<https://sbavets.force.com>
- Local 1- or 2-day workshops
  - B2B quarterly @ Carlisle Barracks
  - Reboot offered geographically
  - Classes currently offered online

## Participants

- SBA Resource Partner Network
  - Small Business Development Center
  - SCORE
  - Vet. Business Outreach Center
  - Women's Business Centers
- Local lenders, lawyers, ED orgs

## PA Key Data/Trends

- 616 Veterans attended the course in PA since inception (over 109,000 nationwide)
- FY21 133 attendees; 26% increase from FY20
- All classes still virtual in PA
- Program continues to grow and will continue to be offered

## Key Changes/Initiatives

- Surplus Personal Property for VOSB Program
- SBA to take over CVE certification from VA in early 2023
- Follow On Courses added through Mississippi State University: Revenue Readiness
- National Veterans Small Business Week 11/1-11/5

# Department of Agriculture – Veterans in Agriculture

## Concept

- Supports veterans interested, entering or already involved in agriculture.
  - PDA Veterans in Ag Initiative.
  - PA Preferred Homegrown by Heroes (HBH) Program.
  - Support workforce development in Ag sector for veterans.

## Participation

- Engage with organizations focused on veterans in agriculture.
- Provide marketing development and support through HBH Program.
- Promote workforce initiatives for veterans in Ag, through existing department/state programs, grants, etc.

## PA Key Data/Trends

- PA Preferred Homegrown by Heroes:
  - 54 participants in 30 counties.
- 7 Agriculture Related Apprenticeships:
  - Vegetable and Dairy Grazing – PASA
  - Agricultural Equipment Technician – NEDA
  - Landscape Management – NALP
  - Penn State Extension Butcher School
  - Golf Course Groundskeeping – Elmhurst & Overbrook Golf Courses

## Key Changes/Initiatives

- PDA Veterans in Ag Initiative and PA Preferred HBH website updates.
- PA Preferred HBH Virtual Workshop Series.
- Collaboration with National Young Farmers Coalition FRSAN-NE Veterans Cohort.

# PA Military Finance Alliance – Live Events & Webinars

## Concept

- Webinars that provide financial education to service members, veterans and their families
  - Why? Financial problems are most common reason for security clearance denials and revocations

## State Participation

- PA Military Finance Alliance members:
  - DMVA, PHFA, BBB, Clarifi, PHFA
  - PA National Guard, PA Dept of Banking and Securities, Attorney General's Office, Army Community Service, Advantage Credit Counseling
  - Army OneSource

## PA Key Data/Trends

- 12 in person Making \$ense of Finance events since 2014
  - Total of 1,030 members attended
- 16 webinars during May 2021 in honor of Military Appreciation Month
  - Total of 345 military participants

## Key Changes/Initiatives

- Looking forward to getting back in person
- Continue to focus on buy-in from leadership
- More veteran focused events
  - Identify opportunities to expand

## Military Appreciation Month May 2021

Who's Who in  
Veteran Services

Basics for Saving  
and Investing

Frauds and Scams  
– targeting  
veterans

Getting Your  
Financial House  
in Order

How Much Do  
You Need to  
Retire

Investing 201:  
Where do you go  
from the basics

Making Your  
Retirement Last

Credit: Know the  
Score

Understanding  
TSP and Blended  
Retirement

5 Steps to Take if  
You Become a  
Victim

Let's Play  
Financial Fraud  
BINGO!!

There were a total of 345 participants who learned about financial education and protection during 16 webinars.



The PA Military Finance Alliance took its sessions virtual for the first time in May.

# HEALTH PROMOTIONS

**Mr. Parker Beene, Chair**

# HEALTH PROMOTIONS



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Parker Beene	DOH	AJ Byerly, Jolene Richardson, Lori Murphy	PAANG & PAARNG Psychological Health
Angela Keen	VISN 4	Jennifer Hagaman	VSO, Clinton Cty.
Leslie Neal & Lana Venur	VSO, Elk Cty.	Danny A. Osten	VSO, Cumberland Cty.
Frederick Nardei	Pittsburgh VA	Matthew Zamosky	VSO, West Moreland County
Jose Lopez	Resilience & Risk Reduction Prog. Coordinator, PAARNG	Ginny Mastrine	DHS, OMHSAS
Mark Todero	Suicide Prevention Program Contractor, PAARNG	Donna Tilley Hess	DHS, OMHSAS
Joann P Tresco	Alcohol & Drug Control Officer, Contractor, PAARNG	Jennifer Spitler	DMVA - RPOC
LTC Gerard M Wrazien	SMFS Director, PAARNG	Roy Remone	Compeer/Vet2Vet
Rick Hamp	DMVA	Govan Martin	Chair/Executive Director - Suicide Prevention Alliance
Joel Mutschler	DMVA	Michael Volz	VBA
Jeff Geibel	DDAP	Laura Cunningham	Acadia Healthcare
William A Charpentier	Eastern Lead Military & Family Readiness Specialist, PAARNG	Perri Rosen & Lori Mentzer	OMHSAS SUICIDE PREVENTION
Dr. Noretta Kime	PAANG	Dorothy Watkins	Resilience and Risk Reduction Program Coordinator, PAARNG



## **Mission**

Using a holistic approach, the Health Promotions Committee will identify physical, behavioral health and other wellness service providers to foster relationships and build resource awareness among service members, veterans and their families across the commonwealth.

## Vision

Our overarching vision is to see thriving service members, veterans, and their families across the commonwealth with zero suicides among those who have served our nation.

## Goals:

- 1) Continued provision of trainings.
- 2) Create 2 Fairweather Lodges annually.
- 3) Hold evidenced-based training summits in PA.

- The Health Promotion Branch of **Service Member Family Support** has collaborated with community resources.
- This work ensures our service members can recognize risk and warning signs to get the next level of care as needed.

## Accomplishments/pending events FY 2021:

- **Trainings completed within 2021**
  - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (**ASIST**)
  - Ask Care Escort-Suicide Intervention (**ACE-SI**)
  - Master Resilience Trainers
  - Suicide Prevention/Resource

For more information on health-related trainings please email [pbeene@pa.gov](mailto:pbeene@pa.gov)

## Pennsylvania National Guard Psychological Health Programs

- PNG offers many psychological health programs in collaboration with:
  - ARMY
    - 6 Regional Social Workers
  - AIRFORCE

For more information or contact information regarding the PNG Psychological Health programs please reach out to [pbeene@pa.gov](mailto:pbeene@pa.gov)

## Star Behavioral Health Providers Program (SBHP – PAARNG joined Dec. 2019)

- SBHP provides three levels of training (Tiers) for civilian behavioral health providers in your state and local communities.
- Offers free CE to providers.
- Workshops significantly increase BH providers confidence to treat service members and veterans.
- Trainings continue throughout 2021.

## Partnerships & Collaborative Efforts:

- VISN 4 continues to provide video-based MH treatment and is expanding face to face care options to meet veteran preference.
- Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) continue to serve as a unifying model for all community-based efforts, throughout all national and community levels, in support of VA's Mission to end veteran suicide.
- VISN 4 continues to be an active and ongoing participant in the PA Governor's Challenge work groups and the NW PA veteran Suicide Prevention/CDC Advisory group.



## Partnerships & Collaborative Efforts:

- [VHA TRAIN](#)
- Pennsylvania Americans showing Compassion, Assistance, and Reaching out with Empathy for Service Members (PA CARES)
- December 9<sup>th</sup>: Veteran Fairweather Lodge

**--- Short Break ---**

# WOMEN VETERANS

**Col Christine Munch, Chair**

# WOMEN VETERANS



Members	Affiliation
Christine Munch	Commander, 111th Mission Support Group, PAANG
Lisa Kaye	County Director for Veterans' Affairs, U.S. Army Veteran
JoAnn Tresco	Service Members & Family Support Branch, PA ARNG, Veteran Retired
Rhonda Smith	Air Force Veteran, Veteran small business owner
Althea Cirillo	Mentor, Veterans' Court of Dauphin County, USAR Retired
Audrey Bergstresser	Former VFW Service Officer, Vietnam Vets of America
Sierra Bilous	DHS, Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, PAANG
Marilyn Kelly-Cavotta	Director of Veteran & Military Affairs, Moravian College, Retired PAARNG
Dwaneen Hicks	Office of the Budget
Elizabeth Cooper	DVOP Specialist, PA CareerLink – Adams & Franklin Counties, U.S. Army Veteran (active duty and PA ARNG)
Erica Moore	PA DMVA, Bureau of Veterans' Programs, Initiatives, Reintegration, and Outreach, Regional Program Outreach Coordinator (SE)
Ivy Lloyd	Veteran Service Officer, Philadelphia, PAARNG Veteran
Laura Mergen	PA Department of Corrections (SCI Phoenix)
Amanda Olaviany	VA Medical Center (Wilkes Barre)
Celeste Brucklacher	PA Department of Corrections (SCI Muncy)

## Actions since last meeting:

- Celeste Brucklacher is the VSU Coordinator at SCI Muncy. In her words “With participation in our VSU’s and continuity of veteran resources into the community, we can greatly reduce the risk for recidivism entirely. Vets are also more likely to accept help from those who know their specific issues and reluctancies.”
- Connecting to a local DVOP at a PA CareerLink location can assist all veteran re-entrants. If a veteran is screened and meets the federal guidelines for DVOP services, an Individualized Employment Plan can be developed and a veteran can receive career counseling, connections to community assistance programs, referrals for training/certifications/and schools, housing assistance, and local re-entry programs depending on the community. (Franklin County has a re-entry coalition and staff who are specialized in Re-Entry services through the WIOA program).
- If the service member qualifies in the special veteran target population, they can automatically obtain DVOP services due to being justice involved.
- Coordination with EEWD and Judiciary Committees may be forthcoming.

- **Trauma Workgroup**

- Outreach to the County Directors of Veteran's Affairs in PA VETConnect Region 5 for women veterans willing to serve as an advocate to assist other women veterans in need through a Peer-to-Peer support program.
- A goal would be for every county in the commonwealth to have a women veteran's advocate trained in Peer-to-Peer support services and available to assist women veterans in small communities.
- Names of county women veteran's advocates will be posted on the DMVA website once compiled.

- **Partnerships**

- Committee reps attended/presented at **PA VFW Women Veterans Retreat** in mid-Oct; plans to partner with the VFW again for their March 2022 retreat
- Transition Assistance Office at FTIG – working to ensure our info is being communicated effectively
- Added several new members from additional partners (VA Medical Center – Wilkes Barre; Military Women’s Memorial, SCI Muncy, Lebanon VAMC, and SCI Phoenix) to aid in identifying issues and providing resources to women veterans

- **Ongoing / Future Efforts**

- Identify and recognize women veterans throughout the DMVA and in Veteran Homes
- Identify and celebrate the contributions of women veterans of color
- Identify women-centric holidays and create outreach around those
  - Women's History Month (Mar)
  - Women's Equality Day (Aug 26)
  - National Business-Women's Week (3<sup>rd</sup> week of Oct)
  - Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Nov 25)
- Pending: **Town Halls** (virtual/in-person) to expand our reach to women veterans



# JUDICIARY

**Mr. Michael Carrington, Chair**

# JUDICIARY



Name	Affiliation
Tammy Ferguson	Department of Corrections (DOC)
Michael Carrington (Chair)	Department of Corrections (DOC)
Richard Podguski	Department of Corrections (DOC)
Nicholas “Chip” Gilliland	Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA)
Lisa Grayson, Esq.	Cumberland Co. Courthouse, PA Bar Ass., Military and Veteran Affairs
Norman Marden	Office of the Attorney General
Jessica Penn-Shires	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)
Ward Adams	Member at Large
Chief Joseph Daly	Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association (PCPA)
Lt. Dan Lynch	Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association (PCPA)

## COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2021

- Early Identification of Justice-Involved Veterans – Members worked with the AOPC to develop a veteran awareness poster, targeting justice-involved veterans. The committee’s goal was to disseminate the poster electronically to every courthouse and public defender’s office as a regular reminder to justice-involved veterans and criminal justice professionals that veteran-related services and programs exist, and diversionary services should be sought out early in the sentencing process.
- Veteran Identification During State Prison Classification - The Department of Corrections (DOC) is building a new classification tool that will allow the agency to identify specific needs of inmates during the intake process. This will allow the reentry process to start at “the door” by providing specialized care and programming based upon individual responses to veteran-related questions, which will allow the DOC to identify and flag inmates with prior military service. This will allow Veteran Coordinators to screen the inmates for possible placement in Veteran Service Units (VSUs).

## COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2021

- Five New Veteran Coordinator Positions within the DOC – Effective committee communication and collaboration, assistance from OA, and information collected via the State Employee Military Service Recognition Campaign, justified hiring these five positions. As the DOC identified more than 2,600 veteran inmates and 7,000 veteran staff members, leadership wanted to expand the agency’s veteran services to staff and inmates alike. The first Statewide Veteran Team’s Meeting took place on 10/28 and 10/29 at SCI Houtzdale. In addition to the DOC Statewide Veteran’s Coordinator and the five new positions, twelve professionals from the DMVA also attended to review and discuss effective reentry programs and techniques that will improve continuity of care for veteran reentrants leaving state incarceration.
- Compensation and Pension (C&P) Assessments within SCIs – Although a formal departmental memo has not been finalized, the DOC has worked with approved VA Contractors to complete C&P assessments/evaluations within the SCIs, despite pandemic challenges.

## COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2021

- PA VETConnect – The DMVA has partnered with the DOC to provide various supports. DMVA Regional Program Outreach Coordinators (RPOCs) have been in regular contact with DOC Veteran Coordinators to provide reentry information, assistance, and services. This partnership has led to individual inmate assistance, staff assistance, and enhanced knowledge of services for members of the DMVA and DOC alike.
- A Committee Success, A Team Success, A Commonwealth Success – How this team provided immediate and direct care, assistance, and information for an Adams County woman who recently lost her husband (prior service in Naval Reserves) and lacked the ability to pay for burial costs.

- **Recommendation 1**

- Improve/increase veteran-related information sharing and specialized trainings within our agencies.

- **Recommendation 2**

- Develop/expand innovative solutions to conduct workshops, programs, assessments, evaluations and meetings virtually for staff and justice-related veterans.

- **Recommendation 3**

- Work with county courts and prisons in order to expand/enhance Veteran Court/Diversions Services along with Veteran Service Units.

# VETERANS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Kory Auch**

In November 2017, how many of our employees had military service?



Journey:

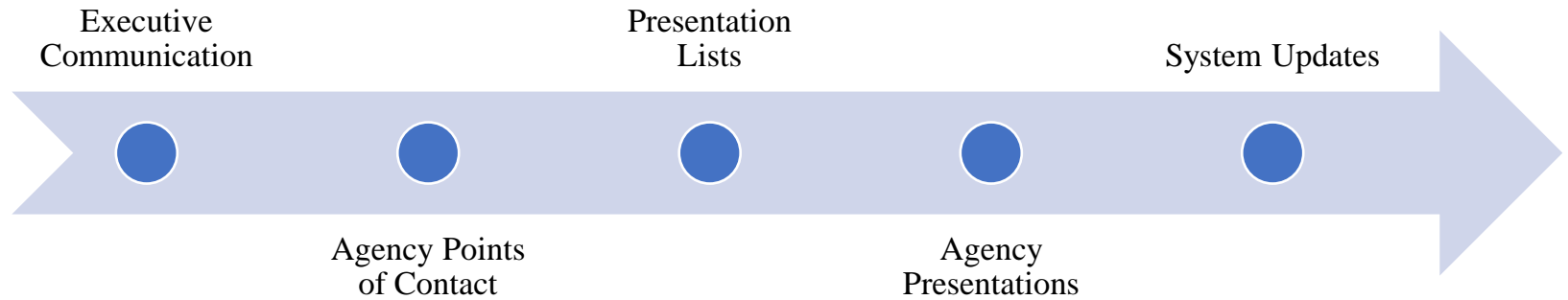
- What data exists inside our state systems?
- Are we asking the question, when?
- 3K -> 5K -> 9K -> 12K
- First formalized tally in 2019
- Led to the birth of the recognition campaign and establishing the committee

In November 2021:



15K Employees  
1K Still Serving







## History:

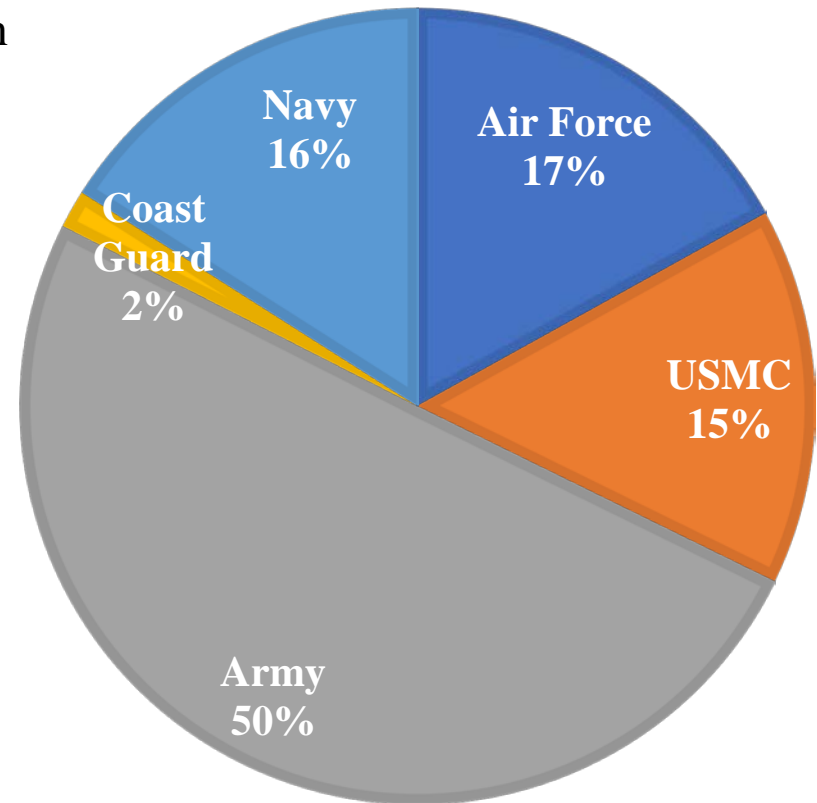
2019 Campaign: 14000 employees

2020 Campaign: 1100 employees

2021 Campaign: 800 (estimate)

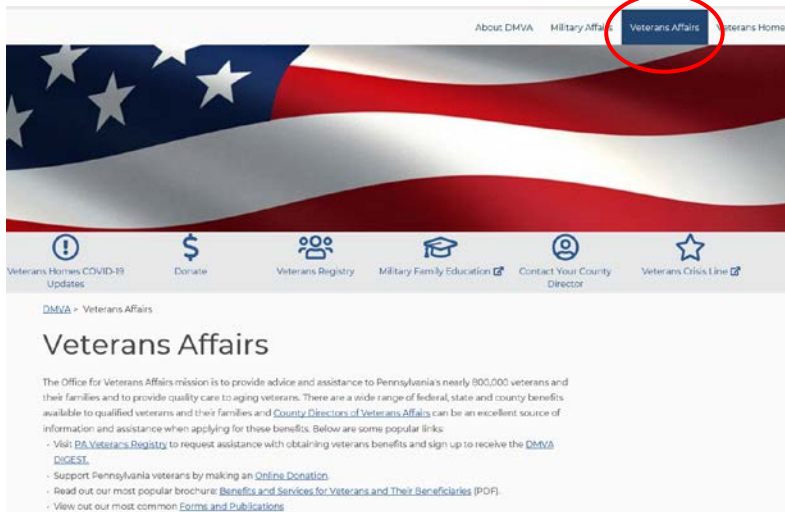
- One in five employees served in the military
- 2/3 have answered the voluntary question
- 81,024 years of military service

## MILITARY BRANCH



# **NEW BUSINESS/ GOOD OF THE ORDER**

www.dmva.pa.gov



About DMVA | Military Affairs | **Veterans Affairs** | Veterans Homes

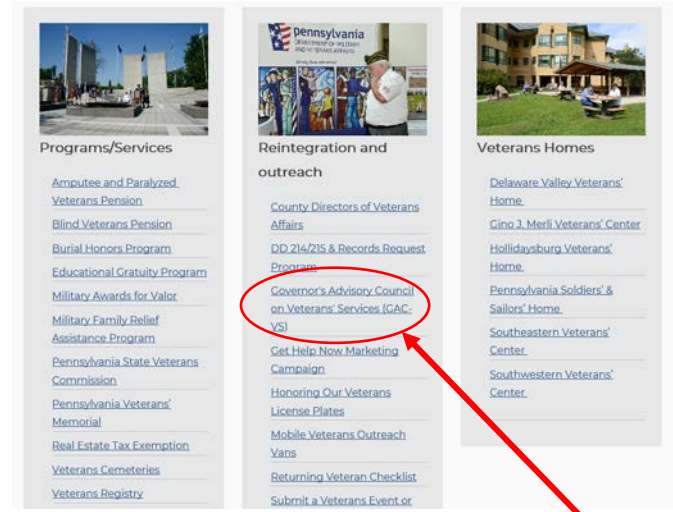
Veterans Homes COVID-19 Updates | Donate | Veterans Registry | Military Family Education | Contact Your County Director | Veterans Crisis Line

DMVA > Veterans Affairs

## Veterans Affairs

The Office for Veterans Affairs mission is to provide advice and assistance to Pennsylvania's nearly 805,000 veterans and their families and to provide quality care to aging veterans. There are a wide range of federal, state and county benefits available to qualified veterans and their families and [County Directors of Veterans Affairs](#) can be an excellent source of information and assistance when applying for those benefits. Below are some popular links:

- Visit [PA Veterans Registry](#) to request assistance with obtaining veterans benefits and sign up to receive the [DMVA DIGEST](#).
- Support Pennsylvania veterans by making an [Online Donation](#).
- Read out our most popular brochure: [Benefits and Services for Veterans and Their Beneficiaries](#) (PDF).
- View out our most common [Forms and Publications](#).



**Programs/Services**

- [Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans Pension](#)
- [Blind Veterans Pension](#)
- [Burial Honors Program](#)
- [Educational Gratuity Program](#)
- [Military Awards for Valor](#)
- [Military Family Relief Assistance Program](#)
- [Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission](#)
- [Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial](#)
- [Real Estate Tax Exemption](#)
- [Veterans Cemeteries](#)
- [Veterans Registry](#)

**Reintegration and outreach**

- [County Directors of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [DD 216/215 & Records Request Program](#)
- [Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services \(GAC-VS\)](#)
- [Get Help Now Marketing Campaign](#)
- [Honoring Our Veterans License Plates](#)
- [Mobile Veterans Outreach Vans](#)
- [Returning Veteran Checklist](#)
- [Submit a Veterans Event or](#)

**Veterans Homes**

- [Delaware Valley Veterans' Home](#)
- [Cino J. Merli Veterans' Center](#)
- [Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home](#)
- [Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home](#)
- [Southeastern Veterans' Center](#)
- [Southwestern Veterans' Center](#)

## Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services

On Veterans Day 2013, the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services was established as Pennsylvania's first interagency cooperative approach to Veterans services. The council reviews, evaluates and assesses state Veterans programs in collaboration with senior staff from state agencies and commissions. It increases information sharing, ensures program fidelity, coordinates complementary programs and facilitates meaningful enhancements in service accessibility to Veterans benefits and services within Pennsylvania.

- [Updated Executive Order establishing the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services](#) (PDF)

# Sign up for the Veterans Registry and DMVA Digest!

**[www.register.dmva.pa.gov](http://www.register.dmva.pa.gov)**

## **2022 MEETING DATES:**

**2 FEB 2022 – 1:00pm**

**11 MAY 2022 – 1:00pm**

**10 AUG 2022 – 1:00pm**

**2 NOV 2022 – 1:00pm**

# **NEXT MEETING:**

**February 2 at 1:00PM**  
**Arrowheads Community Club\***  
**Bldg. 9-65, Fort Indiantown Gap**  
**Annville, PA 17003**

**\*Unless otherwise communicated**