

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Monday, April 4, 2016
Verkuilen Building Training and Conference Center
21885 Dunham Clinton Twp, MI 48036

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Co-Chair, Laura Rios at 9:00 A.M.

Attendees:

Gabriella Barstow	AFSC/CFPB	Kurt Klasmeier	SANG
Jeremy Bonka	TTI	Althea Kyles	VOA
Marcie Burt	Michigan Works!	Joe McClellan	Buddy-to-Buddy
Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards	Veterans Services	Mark Meadows	VAMC
L.V. Ervin	Shepard's Gate	Frederick Moore	VCCF
Kara Fields	MCC	Katie Page	Vet Center
Chris Franklin	AIVSEM	Julie Patterson	Veterans Services
Mark Garland	VCCF	Kyle Pollet	Staff/Sandy Levin
Tony Gerheiser	Red Cross	Laura Rios	Veterans Services
A.C. Giles	TTI	Mary Beth Ryan	VCCF
Marie Goral	Veterans Services	Yolanda Spencer-Dandridge	VAMC
Madeline Habib	MCCMH/HSCB	Joanne Sterne	Macomb Action
Sama Harp	Macomb Action	Dave Thomas	MVAA
Mike Johnson	AFGE Vets Affairs	Diane Ursu	WDA/Veterans
Mark Kilgore	CARE of SEM	Sian Washington	DNOM
Crystal Kinsman	WDA/Veterans	Heather Whited	Macomb Action

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mary Beth Ryan made a motion, supported by Mark Kilgore, to approve the March 7, 2016 minutes. The motion carried.

III. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was addressed.

IV. SPECIAL SPEAKER: MARY BETH RYAN-VCCF HOME CARE

Mary Beth Ryan handed out a packet containing a referral, a pamphlet, and an explanation of services that are provided by VCCF Home Care. This agency assists veterans and their spouses/and or widows in applying for Aid and Attendance benefits through the VA and also by providing direct care. She introduced Mark Garland and Fred Moore who run this organization. VCCF Home Care's goal is to hire veterans to take care of veterans. 07:03

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Services Committee: Madeline Habib

HOMELESS FLOW CHARTS

These flow charts have been updated and will be re-posted on the MVAC website when the new website is available.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES FLOW CHARTS

The Health Insurance and Health Services for Veterans and Their Families Flow Charts were presented for final ratification.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has amended its enrollment regulations to allow Veterans to complete applications for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a signed paper application. Since the change is effective immediately for Combat Veterans and will not be effective until July 5, 2016, for all Veterans, this information will be added to the Health Insurance/Services flow charts after July 5th when it is available for all veterans.

“BEFORE AND AFTER A VETERAN DIES” FLOW CHARTS

The Vital Information form of the “Before and After A Veteran Dies” flow charts has been expanded to include a page on why the form was developed and critical information for the service provider.

On March 24, 2016, Laura Rios and I met with Mark Knight (Macomb Homeless Coalition) (MVAC) to discuss getting on their agenda to present the “What to Do Before and After a Veteran Dies” flow charts and fingerprinting capability and to provide a Networking training for Coalition members. Mark stated that he will get with Tim Joy, the Chair of their CoC and will get back to us.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FLOW CHARTS

There will be a meeting of the Services Committee after today’s MVAC meeting to review the draft flow charts on Education, Training and Employment Services.

TRANSPORTATION FLOW CHARTS

The Transportation Flow Charts are the next set of flow charts to be developed.

Benefits/Communication Committee: Laura Rios/Mary Beth Ryan

Laura Rios is going to Beaumont Hospital in April to educate their social workers.

Jobs Committee: Crystal Kinsman/Mark Meadows

Crystal Kinsman reported that they're recruiting again for the 12 week Vets to Agriculture program. She passed out flyers giving contact information of how vets need to call to apply. There is no pay, but transportation and meals are included. She hopes to have at least 13 veterans in the program.

Membership Committee: Shaun Taft

Shaun Taft explained what people need to do to be added to the roster and get a nameplate. Shaun asked that only new people sign the sign-in sheet and that everyone on the roster check in on the roster. She also has the names of people who are not receiving emails and will add them to the email list.

Shaun reported that Laura Rios is in the process of getting all of the MVAC documents onto the Veterans Services website.

Shaun will be absent next meeting and Julie Patterson will fill in for her.

V. NEW BUSINESS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Haven Place is a new place that opened in New Haven for veterans to spend time with other veterans. It is located on Main Street. Laura Rios suggested that the MVAC meeting be held there in May to look at their accommodations.

Podio Lunch Webinars are still being conducted a couple times a month for training. It's suggested that anyone interested should take the training ASAP before July when the contract with the company that does support is scheduled to end.

Fraser is the latest city to be a "Purple Heart Town". The Purple Heart funds this program and seven cities and towns in our area have become "Purple Heart Towns". Laura will be sending a letter to Fraser, on behalf of MVAV, commending them for becoming a Purple Heart Community and offering the services of the Department of Veteran Services and MVAC as they provide support to veterans in their city.

Chery Allen from Piquette Square invited everyone to visit the facility. They permanently house veterans and have several activities during the year to recognize veterans.

Gabriella Barstow attending the hiring event at the VA Hospital and said it was an excellent event.

Gabriella also reported that her financial classes grant has been approved for the next several years and requested that everyone keep sending her referrals.

Tony Gerheiser from the American Red Cross came to the meeting for the first time to see how our grassroots program is working.

Freedom Christian Church in Sterling Heights will be having "Love Week" in August. They hope to help veterans in their city with home projects, baseball games, taking them out to eat, etc...

Chery Allen from Piquette Square requested items for their residents such as dishes, pans, and toilet paper. Shaun Taft suggested she check out the <http://www.freecycle.com/>.

Doug Chalmers from Catholic Charities of SEM is a first-time attender who would like to offer their services to veterans in the area. It is not a requirement that clients be Catholic. They do offer PTSD counseling.

Kurt Klasmeier from the Detroit Arsenal came to network. He assists transitioning military personnel moving into civilian life in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Paulus Obey announced that in 2017, Selfridge ANG will be celebrating their 100 year anniversary. The Air Show will be part of this celebration.

Dave Thomas attended the job fair at the VAMC and also was very impressed with the workshops offered. He also mentioned an organization called "Military Moms United" who meet quarterly to put together care packages for troops that have been deployed.

Operation Purple is a free summer camp held from July 3-9 for kids aged 8-14. Priority is given to children of families who served post 911 and have a service connected disability.

Dave also mentioned House Bill 5169 that has been presented to Michigan's Legislative Congress. This proposition would take away the property tax exemption from qualifying veterans and instead give them a \$1200.00 State of Michigan tax credit. He is requesting that everyone get the word out to their networks to work to stop this Bill from being passed in order to help make Michigan a "Veteran-friendly State".

Althea Kyles from Volunteers of America in Warren spoke about the renovations going on in their apartment style shelter. They currently have 3 beds available.

Shaun Taft is working on a book project that describes how to create a non-profit starting from writing the grant proposal to what people need to be hired.

Kara Fields told us about the Michigan Apprenticeship Program Plus. It's a pilot program started by the President and leads directly to employment.

Kara is looking for places for student veterans to obtain work-study positions.

Kara announced that another Bill is being presented regarding GI Bill transfer eligibility. If the Bill is passed, if the transfer isn't made within 180 days of the passing of the Bill, the housing allowance will drop to half of the normal amount.

Chris Franklin of AIVOM received a grant from the State of Michigan for a smoking cessation program. He would appreciate everyone taking flyers and surveys to assist them in their mission to stop cigarette smoking.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, May 2, 2016 starting at 9:00 A.M. at Haven Place, 58575 Main Street, New Haven, MI 48048.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Patterson, Secretary