

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Monday, June 6, 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 9:05 A.M.

Attendees:

Gabriella Barthlow	AFSC/CFPB	Joe McClellan	Buddy-to-Buddy
Stephen Boegehold	DHHS	Mark Meadows	VAMC
Robert Callahan	Cort Furniture	Frederick Moore Jr	VCCF Home Care SANG Family Support
Mark Diaz	VCCF	Paulus Obey	
Lisa Marie Duncan- Edwards	Veterans Services	Katie Page	Vet Center
Kara Fields	MCCC-Veterans	Julie Patterson	Veterans Services
Gerald Fisher-Curley	VAMC	Kyle Pollet	Staff/Sandy Levin
Michael Flaker	Crickett Insurance	Laura Rios	Veterans Services
Mark Garland	VCCF Home Care	Mary Beth Ryan Yolanda Spencer- Dandridge	VCCF VAMC
Marie Goral	Veterans Services	Joann Sterne	Macomb Action
Madeline Habib	MCCMH/HSCB	Shaun Taft	United Way SEM
Sama Harp	Macomb Action	David Thomas	MVAA
Beth Hoeldtke	Humana	Diana Ursu	WDA/Veterans Candidate for Congress
Mike Johnson	AFGE Vets Affairs		
Mark Kilgore	CARE of SEM	Davie Vanassche	
Crystal Kinsman	WDA/Veterans	Sian Washington	DNOM
Kathy Koths	Macomb Action	Heather Whited	Macomb Action Vanassche for Congress
		Francesca Zeller	

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Michael Flaker made a motion, supported by Mary Beth Ryan, to approve the May 2, 2016 minutes. The motion carried.

III. INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees of the meeting introduced themselves and stated what agency or business they work for.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Laura Rios reminded everyone that the MVAC website is now up and running and that all of the flow charts, membership forms and the roster will be posted on the website, which can be found at <http://mvac.macombgov.org/>. Laura also requested that everyone provide a link to their websites, email, or a pdf of the flyer for their program for the website.

V. SPECIAL SPEAKER: GERALD FISHER-CURLEY, VAMC HOMELESS PROGRAM

Gerald Fisher-Curley has been at the VAMC since 2012 and works in the Homeless Program. The Detroit VA offers a Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV) at the hospital. It also offers the Veteran Community Resource and Resource Referral Center (VCRRC) which is located at 301 Piquette, Detroit, Michigan. Veterans initially get assessed and placed into the appropriate programs.

The Contract Residential Program (CR) such as the Domiciliary, has recently been integrated with the Mental Health Program. The CR Program also provides for veterans to be placed in a Safe Haven Program. Both of these grants last for 6 months.

The Grant Per Diem Program (GPD) is a 2 year grant that provides transitional housing and supportive services to homeless veterans. Client needs are reassessed every 90 days. There are 5 GPD residences in this area

The Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) was implemented in 1992. This is a housing choice voucher program specifically designed for veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

There about 600 vouchers available for use in the four county area which consists of St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne County. Veterans who receive a voucher must remain in this four county area to keep their voucher.

In order to be eligible for HUD-VASH, the veteran must be eligible for VA Healthcare and must not be a Lifetime CSC (Criminal Sexual Conduct) Registrant.

OIF and OEF veterans and women with children are given preference for HUD-VASH.

Gerald also briefly touched on Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) funds. There are 5 agencies serving Macomb County that receive funds in the community to assist veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Gerald answered several questions from the MVAC members.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits/Communication Committee: Laura Rios/Mary Beth Ryan

Mary Beth Ryan is scheduling a presentation at Beaumont Hospital in Grosse Pointe. She also had someone assisting her with contacting the correct people to schedule a presentation at the hospitals downtown.

Jobs Committee: Crystal Kinsman/Mark Meadows

Mark Meadows is sending out flyers with information about upcoming hiring events. The VA will be providing transportation from the VAMC to and from the Tiger Stadium hiring event.

Mark also requested that if anyone knows of anyone hiring vets to please notify him so he can sent it out in the newsletter.

Services Committee: Madeline Habib

These flow charts have been updated and have been posted on the MVAC website, which is now available. She requested that if anyone knows of any updates to let her know as these charts are a work in progress.

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 Opportunities for Macomb County Veterans and their Families.

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

Membership Committee: Shaun Taft

Shaun Taft explained what people need to do to be added to the MVAC roster and get a nameplate. She asked that only new people sign the sign-in sheet and that everyone on the roster check in on the roster.

Shaun will be emailing the people on the roster who haven't been to the meetings for a while to see if they would like to remain in the Collaborative or be removed.

Membership forms and the roster will be posted on the website <http://mvac.macombgov.org/>.

VII. NEW BUSINESS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Laura Rios gave a brief explanation of the gas card policy in the Veteran's Services Office. She requested that if someone refers a client for a gas card that they give a call to the office ahead of time to let them know that the veteran is coming and so staff can make sure they qualify for the Relief Fund, which purchases the gas cards and bus passes.

MVAC will not be meeting in July.

Podio will continue to have lunch webinars twice a month to educate members on how to navigate and best utilize the program. This training will end in July.

Laura Rios asked for a volunteer to Chair a Church Committee which will basically do the same thing with churches that Laura, Madeline Habib, and Mary Beth Ryan do at the hospitals. Paulus Obey volunteered to be the Church Committee Chair.

VIII. ROUND ROBIN

Attendees of the meeting introduced themselves, stated what agency they work for, and gave a brief description of what they do.

Paulus Obey is working on an initiative with Haven Place to assist veterans in obtaining federal employment. He also know a General at SANG Base that he thinks would be a good speaker for the Collaborative in the future.

Mark Meadows of the VAMC encouraged everyone to have their veterans register online for both eBenefits and My HealtheVet. Veterans can get their service information the same day if they request it on eBenefits.

Katie Page announced that there is no need for referrals to the Vet Center. All the veteran has to do is call them and anyone that answers the phone can assist them.

Kara Fields announced that MCCC still has funding available for veterans seeking education in the field of manufacturing. Interested veterans can contact Veterans Services at the school.

Mark Kilgore from CARE of SEM brought a couple of flyers for events for people in recovery. He is also seeking either an AA or NA meeting for veterans that is not affiliated with the VA,

Gabriella Barthlow thanked everyone for all of the referrals that have made her program a success.

Sian Washington from DNOM stated she still has housing funds available.

Gerald Fisher-Curley stated the Salvation Army Moore House has 10 available beds for veterans in the prison re-entry program.

Kyle Pollet of Congressman Levin's Office said that their office has Vietnam lapel pins available. He also suggested we have a speaker from the RTA in the next couple months.

Stephen Boegehold of DHHS reminded everyone that his agency is the first stop for veterans and their families facing homelessness. He also mentioned that there has been a Medicaid addendum for people affected by the Flint Water Crisis that raises the income level for eligibility.

Michael Flaker suggested we have a speaker from Tote Bags of Love from Romeo, Michigan. He will email Laura Rios her contact information.

David Vanassche is running for the 10th Congressional District. He is a veteran who served 27 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring as an officer assigned to Air Force One. He handed out literature about his campaign objectives.

Dave Thomas announced that the next meeting of the Region 10 VCAT is June 23, 2016 at the Southfield Pavilion from 10 AM to 12 PM. The new leadership will be introduced at this meeting.

Dave Thomas has been working with several companies to help them become "Veteran Friendly". He is planning an event for employers who are excited about this concept and would

like any input from the MVAC members as far as helping to plan this event and referring prospective companies to attend the event.

Robert Callahan of Cort Furniture in Warren, Michigan explained his company's service which is to provide good quality furniture at an affordable price. Their company leases furniture and when it comes back, they sanitize, heat treat and clean it and sell it at a greatly reduced price through their clearance center. He has worked with Southwest Housing Solutions and Macomb Community Action. He has pricing on a single bed or a studio apartment or 1 bedroom apartment room package. He invited anyone interested to their factory to take a tour to see their process.

Sama Harp of Macomb Community Action attended the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans in Washington D.C. last week and the main these was ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2016. She announced that Macomb County Veterans Service will be hosting the Master List for homeless veterans in Macomb County. The National Coalition is making a major push to resolve homeless referrals within 30 days. Sama stated she will be sending out a synopsis of the conference.

Shaun Taft of United Way of SEM is attending an event on June 14th at Warren Consolidated Schools to bring people together at the Chaldean Community Foundation in Sterling Heights. It'll focus on how to get people better connected.

On June 17th, Shaun will be attending a meeting of Michigan Communications Roundtable at the Cass Community Center. It will feature Rev. Faith Fowler as the Special Speaker. She has received a grant from Art Van to build 25 Tiny Houses on land owned by the Cass Community Center. The houses will be no mortgage, no interest, rent-to-own Tiny Houses for formerly homeless and other low income people.

Shaun recommends everyone join the Michigan League for Public Policy which is a non-partisan policy institute dedicated to economic opportunity for all. It examines state revenues and expenditures and their impact on low-income people.

Beth Hoeldtke of Humana Insurance works with a lot of veterans and informs veterans who are not using their veteran benefits where to go and who to contact in order to utilize them.

Joann Sterne of Macomb Community Action spoke about a friend of her who is a real estate agent. This person buys and collects furniture, televisions, and household goods for veterans and delivers it. She is in need of a local space to store this furniture so that the people she's helping can go pick out their own furniture. If anyone knows of any free space, please contact Joann.

Mike Johnson of AFGE Vets Affairs suggested members tour the Focus Hope facility. He also mentioned that there are free services to file income tax refunds such as the Accounting Aid Society.

IX. NEXT MEETING

The July MVAC meeting is canceled.

The next meeting will be Monday, August 1, 2016 starting at 9:00 A.M. in the Verkuilen Building Training and Conference Center, 21885 Dunham Clinton Township, MI 48036

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:39 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Patterson, Secretary