Clark County

Veterans Advisory Board

2015 Strategic Plan

Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Strategic Plan

Table of Contents

Introduction

Starting in 2014, board members of the Clark County Veterans Advisory Board (CCVAB) conducted a process to identify and adopt strategic community and organizational directions for veteran-related priorities for 2015 and beyond.

In August 2015, the CCVAB met to review the 2012 Strategic Plan and discuss the changing veteran demographics and prioritization of services with limited funding availability.

The committee gathered data from several sources to get a sense of the most needed services in the community. Data from the census as well as the Veterans Administration survey was reviewed. The committee also analyzed the number of veterans and types of services provided through the Veterans Assistance Fund over the past year.

They also collected data for veterans served by other programs in 2014 as indicated by the Clark County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This database is used by 30+ different homeless program providers and collects demographics on clients including age and veteran status. It also tracks the types of services accessed within the county. However, HMIS is not used by all service providers in the County that serve veterans. It is only used by homeless service providers.

The Committee also carefully considered the effect of the drawdown of war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and looked at how current programs were serving various generations of veterans. This information was compared to available census information regarding veteran population characteristics of Clark County.

Clark County Veteran Demographics

The table below is from the Census American Community Survey (ACS) 3-Year Estimates. Supporting documentation on code lists, subject definitions, data accuracy, and statistical testing can be found on the ACS website in the Data and Documentation section.

Sample size and data quality measures (including coverage rates, allocation rates, and response rates) can be found on the ACS website in the Methodology section.

Category	Total Population	2013 Veterans	2010 Veterans
Civilian population 18 years and over	324,377	36,826	36,370
PERIOD OF SERVICE			
Gulf War (9/2001 or later) veterans	(X)	12.50%	8.20%
Gulf War (8/1990 to 8/2001) veterans	(X)	22.40%	17.20%
Vietnam era veterans	(X)	36.20%	36.80%
Korean War veterans	(X)	8.10%	9.40%
World War II veterans	(X)	5.40%	9.80%
SEX			
Male	48.80%	92.10%	92.90%
Female	51.20%	7.90%	7.10%
AGE			
18 to 34 years	28.40%	7.30%	7.40%
35 to 54 years	37.50%	31.20%	28.10%
55 to 64 years	17.10%	23.00%	27.80%
65 to 74 years	10.20%	22.00%	19.90%
75 years and over	6.70%	16.40%	16.80%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN			
White	87.10%	93.30%	94.00%
Black or African American	1.90%	2.30%	2.40%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.80%	0.80%	0.60%
Asian	4.40%	1.30%	0.80%
Two or more races	2.60%	1.50%	1.40%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6.30%	3.20%	3.30%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	83.90%	91.20%	91.30%

*The categories under period of service are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Veterans may have served in more than one period.

Clark County Veteran Demographics (continued)

Category	Total Population	2013 Veterans	2010 Veterans
MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS			
Population 18 years+ with income	29,361	**40,660**	40,140
Male	(X)	**41,495**	40,760
Female	(X)	**28,173**	32,571
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Civilian population 25 years and over	287,833	**36,533**	36,084
Less than high school graduate	8.5%	**3.9%**	4.7%
High school graduate (or equivalency)	25.7%	**23.6%**	23.7%
Some college or associate's degree	39.2%	**45.8%**	46.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	26.6%	**26.6%**	24.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Below poverty in the past 12 months	11.1%	**5.8%**	4.9%
With any disability	15.6%	**27.0%**	23.9%

The numbers indicate that veterans generally have a higher educational attainment and greater median income, they also have an increased percentage of the population with a disability.

Clark County Veteran Needs

Each year the Veterans Administration publishes a CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) report summarizing the results of annual surveys of local veterans, VA staff and community participants such as local government, service providers, formerly and currently homeless veterans. The following table is compiled from the 2014 VA CHALENG report for the Portland VA Medical Center campus, which includes the Vancouver VA hospital. Data was collected in the summer/fall of 2014. A total of 161 homeless or formerly homeless veterans completed the survey.

Unmet Needs Identified by Homeless Veterans

Type of Need	Number of Veterans
Housing Services	
Long-Term Permanent Housing	56
Affordable Housing	55
Emergency Shelter	44
Goods for Apartment (furniture & housewares)	41
Treatment Services	
Dental	63
Eyecare	30
Case Management	30
Income and Benefits	
Move-in Assistance	55
Utility Assistance	51
SSI and SSDI	45
Financial Eviction Prevention	45
Legal Assistance	
Legal Eviction Prevention	40
Restore a Driver's License	39
Education and Job Services	
Job Training	41
Finding Employment	39
Life Skills Training	35
Vocational Rehabilitation	34

Clark County Veteran Needs (continued)

The table below is not veteran specific. Clark County Department of Community Services Community Action Program conducts a Survey of Needs every three years to better understand and adapt to changing client needs, community conditions, financial support and public expectations while maintaining a steady focus on eliminating poverty through programs funded as a result of this planning. The current survey was distributed in 2013 to a number of local nonprofits and at various community events. The County sent out over 2,000 surveys and received 816 responses. Of the responders, 171 self-identified as a veteran.

Top Needs Identified by Clark County Residents
(Scale of 1 – 5: The higher the number, the higher the degree of need)

Food Assistance	3.63
Dental Care	3.41
Health Care	3.10
Prescription Medication	2.92
Clothing	2.90
Utility/Heating Assistance	2.73
Employment Services	2.72
Rental Assistance	2.58
Transportation	2.42

Veterans Resources had an overall average of 1.69. The category "Veteran Resources" was identified as "Extremely Needed" by 73 people surveyed, "Very Needed" by 37 people and "Moderately Needed" by 45 who completed the survey.

Clark County Veteran Needs (continued)

Services Provided to Veterans in Clark County
As indicated by the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in 2014

The numbers presented below are duplicated service counts. The total number of unduplicated veterans served in Clark County in 2014 was 550. (This is down from 2011 when 827 veterans were identified in HMIS.) The HMIS database tracks over 75 different service categories and these were collapsed into the eight different categories shown below. For example, transitional housing, rent assistance, motel vouchers and emergency shelter are all categorized under "Housing assistance and homeless support."

This table most specifically represents the services that Clark County veterans are accessing.

Service	#
Housing assistance and homeless support	435
Food/Meals	368
Counseling/Case management	249
Clothing assistance	152
Employment assistance and support	118
Information or education	62
Benefits assistance	40
Utility assistance	36

Clark County Veteran Needs (continued)

Additional Information Collected

DSHS Veteran Outreach

In August 2015, the local Department of Social and Health Services office in Vancouver conducted a survey and report of veterans accessing public benefits. Because of the nationwide reduction in active duty uniformed personnel over the next two years, Washington State has looked at how newly discharged veterans might impact social services. The report indicated the following:

> "Some employees noted that those with military experience have a reluctance to seek public assistance benefits given a strong desire to be self-reliant. The lack of attendance at focus groups adds some support to this. The veterans we spoke with indicated that knowledge of public assistance programs was fairly common in the community, and that it is likely not an issue with veterans not knowing about benefits. Some suggested that the best way to get veterans connected would be to provide them a specific appointment to speak with a financial worker.
>
> The current plan of integrating ESA information with the existing discharge process combined with mobile Economic Services Administration (ESA) seems appropriate in light of this limited survey. It is noted that the information is limited given the tight timeframes, which did not allow a more exhaustive outreach effort. Additionally, a report on the service needs of veterans involving a data cross-match is expected from Research and Data Analysis in September and this should provide additional insight for this effort."

Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Purpose

Taken from current Board Bylaws

1. To develop programs or procedures consistent with the welfare of indigent and suffering veterans and eligible family members of those veterans.

2. To serve as an Advisory Board on Veterans needs in accordance with guidelines, Clark County Codes, and RCWs relating to Veterans Relief to the Clark County Legislature.

3. To provide a venue by which each nationally recognized Veterans organization and Veterans from the community at large, may request representation on the Clark County Veterans Advisory Board.

4. To promote awareness of the CCVAB and its purpose throughout Clark County.

5. To provide policy guidance and advice to Clark County regarding all services funded by the Veterans Assistance Fund.

Values and Guiding Principles

As developed through the 2009 Strategic Plan process

1. Maximize existing resources and funding;

2. Ensure that public funds are spent wisely and with positive impacts;

3. Promote actions that are a "hand up, not a hand out" to advance veterans recovery, stability, self-reliance and dignity;

4. Advance demonstrated best practices and promising approaches; and

5. Increase the committee's formal communications, influence and collaborations with community leaders and providers as well as other funders.

Goals for Veterans Advisory Board

As developed through the 2009 Strategic Plan process

1. *Advance* the development and implementation of practices that have been demonstrated to increase veteran's access to services, benefits and providers;

2. *Identify* potential community partners and promote collaborations to maximize or secure new resources benefiting Clark County's veterans; and

3. *Increase* the CCVAB and community's knowledge of returning veteran's issues as well as the supporting services, benefits and programs.

Critical Success Factors

Based on priorities from 2009 Strategic Plan

VAB Member Priorities	Critical Success Factor
Maximize existing resources and funding.	Programs that show a high benefit for cost per veteran served.
Ensure that public funds are spent wisely and with positive impacts.	Increase referrals to services/treatment at VA and other community providers.
Promote actions that are a "hand up, not a hand out" to advance veterans recovery, stability, self-reliance and dignity.	Increase benefit and/or treatment access to improve veteran self-sufficiency. Increase case management services to provide stability.
Advance demonstrated best practices and promising approaches.	Remain open to new ideas and research other community's veteran program successes.
Increase the committee's formal communications, influence and collaborations with community leaders and providers as well as other funders.	Enhance board and community knowledge of veterans' issues and resources through presentations.

Priorities for the Veterans Community

State law and local code regulate how the Veterans Assistance Fund can be used. The priorities for the Veterans Assistance Fund are based on needs currently being met in the community as identified by 2014 HMIS veterans report.

Priority	Category	Strategy	Action Steps	Goal
1	Safety Net	Emergency Assistance	Fund a program to meet the needs of indigent veterans as allowed by the VAF Policies and Procedures	Reduce impact of immediate financial strain on households by providing funds to meet basic needs and overcome financial crisis
			Continue annual veterans stand down event	Annual event provides resources, basic needs and meals to veterans
2	Housing	Housing and Homeless Support Programs	Support housing stability for veterans in Clark County	Improve veteran stability by providing housing
			Coordinate housing for individuals participating in employment, training or treatment programs	Ensure veterans can complete programs they are participating in by maintaining stable housing
3	Empowerment, Income and Outreach	Case Management	Provide case management in conjunction with other services	Improve outcomes for veterans through assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy
		Benefits Outreach and Eligibility Determination	Identify veterans who are not receiving SSI or VA benefits	Assess all veterans served by safety net services for eligibility for benefits
			Require SOAR certification for veteran service providers to assist with SSI/SSDI benefits and expedite VA benefits	Notify providers when training is available, create contract deliverables to ensure certification
			Support Service Officer to assist veterans with VA benefit claims	
		Education and Employment Support Programs	Include employment and educational resources at the Stand Down	All veterans receive employment information at stand down
			Ensure those who are eligible for employment or education services are enrolled	75% enrolled in employment program find work
		Resources and Referrals	Continue one-stop center for veteran resources and information	Veterans and community know where to turn for veteran resources

Priorities for the Veterans Community continued

Priority	Category	Strategy	Action Steps	Goal
4	Interventions	Substance Abuse Treatment	Refer veterans seeking treatment to VA SATP	
		Legal/Criminal Justice Services	Support Veterans Therapeutic Court	Help veterans in justice system rehabilitate and stabilize in community
5	Communication and Outreach	Community Education and Outreach	Advise key leaders on recommendations and funding requirements	Share information and build relationships
			Create annual report of services provided with VAF support	Distribute report to VAB members, posts, community and leaders
			Update VAB and website with relevant veteran information and articles as available	Increase community knowledge of veteran issues
			Hear updates from current providers and presentations from new programs at monthly VAB meetings	Presentations provided at 8 monthly VAB meetings per year