

Lions Club Multiple District 22 – DC, DE & MD – Annual Convention Seminar
May 12 – 15, 2014

Over 60M Veterans and Their Dependents Live Among Us Today

It Is Timely and Appropriate For Us To Ask

“Do WE SERVE Those Who Served?”



President Barack Obama shakes the prosthetic hand of U.S. Army Sgt. First Class Leroy Arthur Petry of Santa Fe, N.M., who received the Medal of Honor for his valor in Afghanistan. Petry lost his right hand as he tossed aside a live grenade during a 2008 firefight in Afghanistan, sparing the lives of his fellow Army Rangers. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak) (Charles Dharapak - AP)

A Seminar Presented By: Bill Gay & Mike Murphy
Retired Vietnam & Cold War Veterans & Businessmen
Active Volunteers With Informal & Formal Veteran Service Projects

Introduction

This Resource Guide for Serving Veterans is the companion reference to the Briefing presented at the 2014 Lions Multiple District 22 Annual Convention Seminar “Do WE SERVE Those Who Served?” This Guide and Briefing can be downloaded from the Fenwick Island, DE Lions Club website <http://www.filc22d.org/>

Over 50 web resources – distilled from over a 100 websites, studies and interviews – are summarized in this Guide to make it easier for Lions Clubs to achieve two goals. The first is for each Lions Club to develop an understanding of Veteran’s needs and how Veterans are helped today. The second is for each Lions Club to decide if their Club is adequately helping Veterans, or if their Club should take act to help Veterans more.

Lions Clubs are encouraged to add more content to this Guide, hopefully resulting in this Guide becoming an “Award Winning” reference for helping Veterans that is used Lions Clubs and their partners everywhere.

Lions Clubs are also encouraged to give copies of this Guide and Briefing to other groups to enable them to also evaluate themselves to determine if they are adequately helping Vets or if they also should do more.

Seminar Overview

The following images are extracts from the seminar Briefing: <http://www.filc22d.org/> Many of these slides contain more text than most briefings to help you understand them when you review them later with friends and neighbors. If we only one minute in an elevator ride to summarize the Briefing, we would say:

Our Elevator Speech

**There Are Many Categories of People In The US That Need Help
Veterans Earned A Special Priority For Help By Voluntarily Interrupting Their Lives To Serve Us
We Now Have A Moral Obligation To Help Them Reestablish Civilian Lives**

Most Veterans Reintegrate To Civilian Life Relatively Easily.
They May Become Community Leaders. Many Will Be Helping Other Vets
But Even This Group May Need Short Term Help Finding A Good Job & Settling Families

Some Veterans Have More Difficulty Reintegrating.
They May Need Help For Longer Periods or Forever
To Overcome Injuries, Establish Civilian Careers, Or Recover From Stress

Some Are Surviving Dependents Of Veterans Killed While Serving or Deceased From Other Causes.
They May Need Help Living As Single Parents or Surviving On Only Low Incomes Left By The Deceased

**We Believe We Adequately Serve Those Who Served
Only When Every Veteran and Dependent Is Able To Live A Civilian Life With Dignity**

*"To be killed in war is not the worst that can happen. To be lost is not the worst that can happen
... to be forgotten is the worst."*

-Pierre Claeysens, An Immigrant Who Served Veterans For Years To Express Thanks To US Soldiers For Saving His Life in WW II

1. Who are our Veterans?

(They Are Citizen Soldiers, Career Military & Their Families)



"Bands of Brothers" who fought together as units around the world for years till the end of WW II



Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines Landing at Inchon Korea, fighting as units for years until the War ended

"These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." - Thomas Paine



Individuals served in Vietnam for 13 months, coming home alone to a public that often did not understand the challenges they faced during this 10 year war



All gave some. Some gave all.



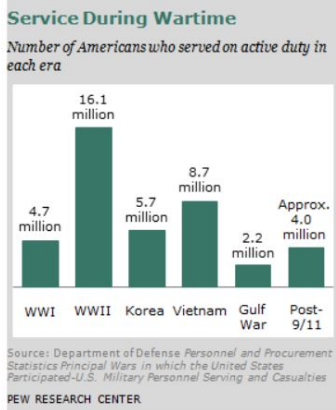
Post 9/11, a 100% Volunteer Force, has served magnificently over 10 years during repeated deployments across half the globe

How Many Veterans Served & Still Live With Us?

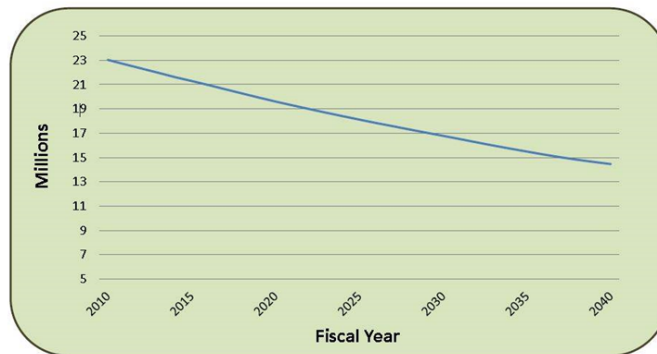
(Over 60M Veterans & Family Members Live Among Us Today)

Adding those serving in peacetime & their dependents, about 100M have served!

- Since Vietnam, populations serving by race mirror our entire nation
- Women now represent about 14% of the Veteran population
- Our Veteran population dropped 16% in the last two years & will continue to do so as WWII, Korean War, & soon Vietnam War Vets pass on
- Graph does not include 33M living dependents & 5M caregivers who serve



Projected Veteran Population 2010 to 2040



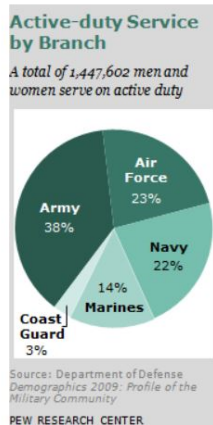
About 90% of all Warriors serving since the start of our All Volunteer Force in 1973, state that serving their country is the main reason they joined ...& that they would serve again!

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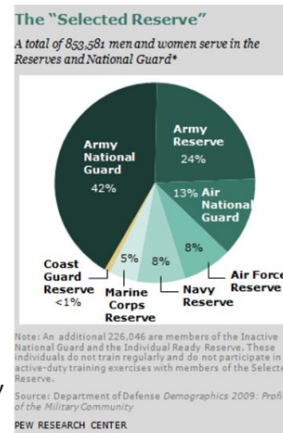
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How Many Active Military Serve Us Today?

(About 300,000 A Year Return to Civilian Life As Veterans)



- Our Military is an "All Volunteer Force"
- 2.3M Warriors & an estimated 3M family members voluntarily serve today
- Only about 25% of the US population can meet the mental, physical & background standards to qualify to serve.
- 90% completed High School or more; 70% are below age 35; 55% are married; 45% have children under age 18 at home
- Salaries for many junior enlisted men are at or below the official poverty line
- 35% have to be deployed overseas at any time to meet over 100 US commitments
- Over 40% deployed more than one time on missions... all deploy many times annually to train or respond to natural disasters
- 50% of Active Duty Warriors do not return to their home towns after serving

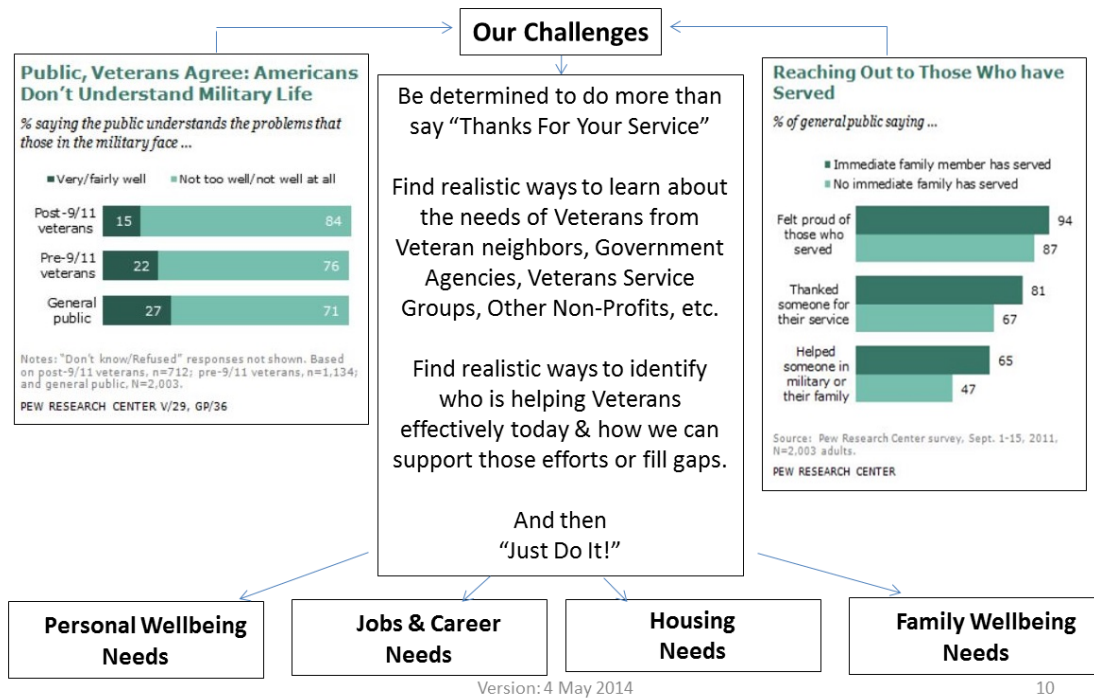


Since 9/11 ...Over 4M served ... over 7,000 were killed (800 were Guard/Reserve)
... about 1M were injured ... including 52,000 wounded in action

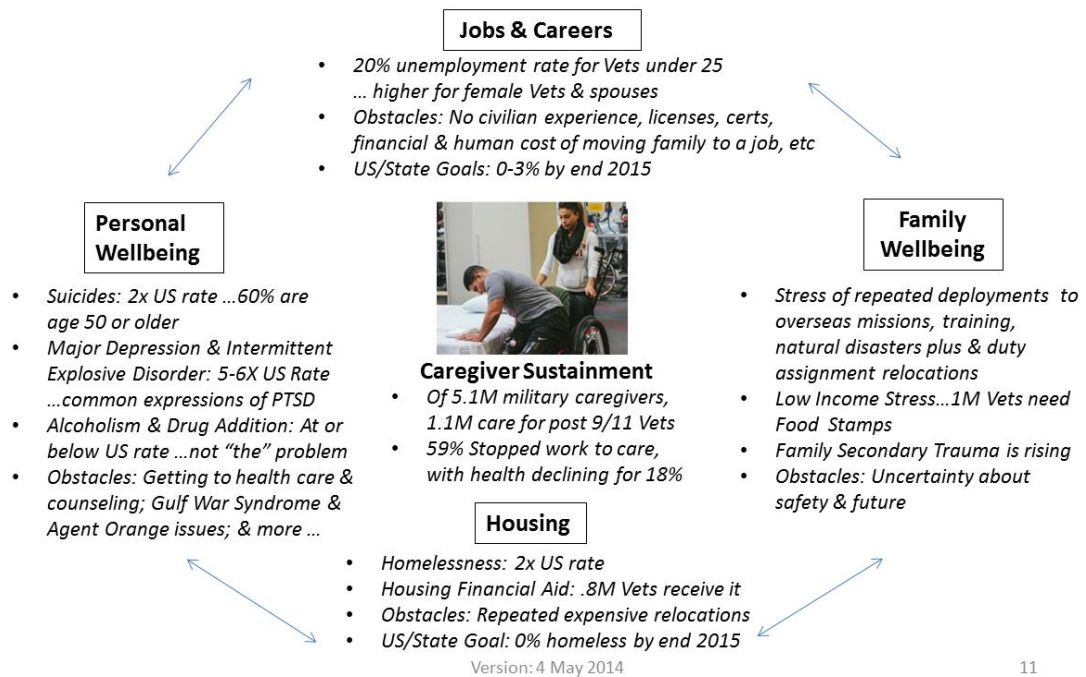
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Veterans Need The Same Things We All Do



Veteran Challenges & Needs Are Inter-Related (Study Reports Differ But Always Have Similar Conclusions)



Help Is Coming From A “Sea of Goodwill”

(The “Sea” Formed Around 2007 Enabled By the Web & Social Media)

- **Scores of Feds** (DoD, VA, DoL, HUD, etc.) set policies & deliver a wide range of services directly or through States or grants to non-profits
- **Every State** delivers core services – emergency aid, jobs, housing, family support, long term care – directly or via grants to non-profits
- **Over 41,000** IRS non-profits, including 140 DoD registered Veterans Service Organizations (e.g., VFW, DAV, Gold Star Mothers, etc.)
 - Many Veteran Service Organizations can apply for benefits and services on behalf of a Vet
 - Research/Policy Groups mostly provide helpful info & ideas to Veterans & smaller non-profits
 - Special Topic Groups mostly leverage technology to link Veterans to services from anywhere
 - Local Groups are most personally involved in delivering services to Veterans & extended families
- **Many Local** faith based groups, civic clubs & volunteers also help Warriors to help themselves to reestablish the lives they interrupted

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4. Why Isn’t All That Help Enough?

(Because All National Social Challenges Need Personal Local Solutions)

- Big Vet populations don’t mean you can easily find “Real People” to help locally

Estimated Total Veteran Populations (Without Dependents)				
District of Columbia		Delaware		Maryland
40,000		78,000		443,000

Estimated Total Vets Populations In Lions Multiple District 22 (Without Dependents)				
22-A Baltimore & Nearby	22-B MD Eastern Shore	22-C DC & Southern MD	22-D (Delaware)	22-W (Western MD)
208,000	47,000	172,000	78,000	56,000

- Government agencies & non-profits are not uniformly efficient or consistent
- Complex institutions and are not always easily navigated by Veterans or Mentors
- PC/Social media/fast web access skills needed to get help aren’t known by all Vets
- Veteran needs change steadily, while organizations tend to change slowly
- Coordinating help locally for Vets is tough & coordinating national help is harder

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The following Sections I - IV describe the value of on-line resources cited in the seminar briefing. Section V lists ideas that some resource we read, or person we interviewed, is already doing or planning to do to help Veterans and their families. We encourage you to leverage the wonderful work underway by others to find the best ways your community can help Veterans and their Families living in your town, State or region.


Section I: A Sample of Federal Government Resources For Helping Veterans


Scores of Federal Departments and Agencies – The Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, etc. – set policies, develop programs and provide funding for a wide range of helpful services delivered directly to Veterans or through funding to States or grants to national and local non-profit organizations. Most of Federal websites tend to be organized as Gateways to access helpful services or Directories to first guide Veterans, Family members and Volunteers to helpful information about complex issues such as how a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) affects individual behavior and then to guide readers to Gateways through which a Veteran or family member access services.


Lions Clubs and their local Partners are encouraged to scan the following websites to better understand the help available to Veterans and funding available for local efforts. Individual Lions electing to be Navigator-Mentors to help Veterans or their Families pursue more benefits or find helpful information are encouraged to review the content of these websites in more detail, making special note of the many “hotlines” and spider web links to other websites. However, also note that only Veterans, certain Family members, and DOD registered Veteran Services Organizations can apply for benefits on behalf of Veterans. Navigator-Mentors should invest their energy in Navigation and Mentoring while the VSOs do their job.


<p>A Gateway to Services</p>	<p>U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website</p>
	<p><i>Provides Veterans info about all benefits & services including formal programs for health-care, education, home loans, life and injury insurance & informal programs such as connecting Vets to share experiences & create peer-to-peer self-help networks. A Veteran, family member, or volunteer mentor can now easily learn about benefits, how & where to apply & if they need more help, how to get assistance from the VA or Veterans Service Organizations such as the VFW, American Legion or legal counsel. Includes a Caregiver Support Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) Hotline & a program to transfer Veteran Education Benefits to family members. Greatly improved during the Post 9/11 era the VA still seeks suggestions for improvement. http://www.va.gov/</i></p>

<p>Gateway to Services</p>	<p>Military One Source for Active Duty, Guard & Reserves</p>
	<p><i>Provides comprehensive info on every aspect of military life to Active Duty, Guard & Reserve Component members & their families. It offers confidential non-medical counseling services online, by telephone, or face to face. Eligible individuals receive counseling addressing issues requiring short-term attention, including everyday stressors, deployment and reintegration concerns, parenting, grief & loss, & marital problems as well as assistance with financial management, taxes, career services, health & wellness, and more. Support is available 24/7 no matter where you live or serve. http://www.militaryonesource.mil/</i></p>


<p>Full Services Directory</p> 	<p>Make the Connection: A Multimedia View</p> <p>Connects Active Duty, Guard, Reserve & Veterans, & their friends, family members, & community organizations to helpful information, resources, & solutions to issues affecting their lives. Information is in easily understood multimedia formats that, using simple pull down menus can be tailored for a Veteran of a specific era, gender or location. Categorized by life events & experiences or signs & symptoms of health issues to assist a Veteran (or their Mentor) to perform self-assessments of their situation to better select a resource for assistance or set up a self-help program. A totally different info display than the official VA.gov website or the military OneSource website. http://maketheconnection.net/</p>
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<p>Full Services Directory</p> 	<p>National Resources Directory: A Multi - Agency View</p> <p>Departments of Defense, Labor & Veterans Affairs partnership consolidating offers from federal, state & local governments; veteran & military service & non-profit & community-based organizations; academic institutions & professional associations to connect Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans, their families, caregivers & mentors to services supporting rehabilitation & community reintegration. Website visitors search by topic, geographic area & more. A “Delaware” search returned about 100 helpful resources ranging from employment, to homeless assistance, to transportation & travel to family & caregiver support, to housing. Each link tells a Veteran how to get help and tells organizations or individuals how to volunteer to help Vets. https://www.nrd.gov/</p>
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<p>Deployment Services Directory</p> 	<p>Deployment Stress Relief Assistance</p> <p>Provides resources & exercises to Veterans, families, friends, caregivers & mentors to address over 20 post-deployment challenges: PTSD & triggers; conflict at work; re-connecting with family & friends; depression; anger; sleep problems; substance abuse; stress management; kids & deployment; spiritual guidance; living with physical injuries; health & wellness; & much more. The website developers built a media-rich, fully interactive site. There are self-assessments, videos, libraries, testimonials, peer-to-peer forums, blogs, and links to scores of other websites providing information & direct links to assistance services. http://afterdeployment.t2.health.mil/</p>
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<h3>Mental Health, PTSD & TBI Directory</h3> 	<h3>Defense Centers of Excellence: Psychological Health</h3> <p>DCoE was created in November 2007 to be the "front door" to Warriors, family members, & healthcare providers needing help & information about psychological health & traumatic brain injury. DCoE oversees three centers – The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, The Deployment Health Clinical Center & The National Center for Telehealth and Technology – each contributing unique insights, standards, clinical tools and research products to improve the integration of behavior health & TBI screening with routine visits to health providers, pre-deployment training & screening, & treating personnel at remote locations via telemedicine/ http://www.dcoe.mil/</p>
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<h3>Homelessness Services Directory</h3> 	<h3>Ending Veteran Homeless by the End of 2015</h3> <p>HUD's Office of Community Planning & Development (OCPD) provides needs assessments, tech tools, & education to groups implementing over 25 federal housing & community development programs including the joint VA, DoL & HUD Vets Homelessness Prevention Program. https://www.onecpd.info/about-onecpd/ OCPD also supports the US Interagency Council on Homelessness to end Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 with the Homelessness "Opening Doors" Program providing Affordable Housing & Permanent Supportive Housing; Increasing Opportunities for Meaningful & Sustainable Employment; Reducing Financial Vulnerability; & Improving Homeless Crisis Response Systems. HUD & VA volunteers can now even report data quickly with the iPhone & iPad "Point-in-Time" survey app http://usich.gov/population/veterans</p>
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<h3>Military Children Services Directory</h3> 	<h3>Military Child Education Coalition</h3> <p>Resources for educators, parents, caregivers, friends, community groups, volunteer mentors to understand the culture of military life, especially burdens on military kids as they endure repeated deployments, long absences & homecomings of parents. Resources are provided to help military kids cope with tough issues related to PTSD, TBI, severe injuries & other high stress situations. These resources include links to over 50 more sources of information & assistance, a library of school lesson plans, a network of educators who have experience with military kids & another network of military kids who can talk about problems they faced, struggled with & in most cases solved, sometimes after many tries. http://militarykidsconnect.2.health.mil/educators</p>
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<p>Federal-State Coordination Directory</p>	<p>Status of Key Issues from Residency to Licensure</p>
 <p>The screenshot shows the USA4MilitaryFamilies website. At the top, it says 'USA4MilitaryFamilies Department of Defense and State, Partnering to Support Military Families'. Below that are navigation links: HOME, KEY ISSUES, NEWSROOM, SUPPORT. A main heading reads 'USA4 Military Families Initiative, working to engage and educate state policymakers, not-for-profit associations, concerned business interests and other state leaders about the needs of military members and their families.' Below this is a 'STATE STATUS: Delaware' section with a list of five key issues: 1. Facilitate service members receiving licensure and academic credit for military education, training and experience; 2. Facilitate military spouse transition through licensure portability and eligibility for unemployment compensation; 3. Support development of veterans treatment courts open to eligible veterans and service members throughout the state; 4. Increase access to quality, affordable childcare for military families; 5. Promote consumer protections and enforcement of the predatory lending regulation; 6. Allow service members to retain their earned priority for receiving Medicaid. To the right of the list is a map of the United States with Delaware highlighted in red.</p>	<p>An official DoD website to engage & educate leading State policymakers, non-profits & concerned business interests about needs of military members & families by tracking progress each State is making to resolve 10 key issues that determine how successfully our military can reintegrate into local communities. Issues range from facilitating service members receiving licensure and academic credit for military education, training & experience, to military spouse transitions through licensure portability and eligibility for unemployment compensation, to waiving waiting times for separating service members to obtain in-state tuition rate, to allowing service members to retain their earned priority for receiving Medicaid home and community care waivers. Vets & their Mentors can click on their State link to see local progress. http://www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil</p>


Section II: A Sample of Large Public-Private Resources For Helping Veterans


These websites tend to leverage technology to link Veterans to services from anywhere! The sample of websites displayed below was selected to show the wealth of information and the range of services available to Veterans and their families from the Public and Private sector. These websites, in addition to describing information and services, also have many helpful links back up to Federal and down to State information resources and service programs. Reviewing this information will give a Lions Club new perspectives and a better understandings of methods and options other organizations are using to help Veterans and their dependents and families.


There are a many effective non-profit organizations. Find one in your community and work with them!

<p>Mental Health Services Gateway</p>	<p>Give an Hour Volunteer Counselors: Metro DC- MD</p>
 <p>The screenshot shows the Give an Hour website. At the top, it says 'Give an Hour' with a logo. Below that is a navigation menu with links: Home, About, Contact Us, Volunteer, Provider, Training, and Resources. The main content area features a large image of a man and a woman in military uniforms. Below the image is a 'Welcome to Give an Hour' message: 'You and I provide an important service to our country by providing mental health services to our military personnel and families affected by the current conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan.' To the right of the image are buttons for 'Search for a Provider', 'Register as a Provider', and 'Participate in Training'. At the bottom of the page are two buttons: 'For Providers' and 'For Visitors'.</p>	<p>A Metro DC/MD based 501.3(c) offers Veterans, their extended family & friend caregivers anywhere in the US access to free counseling from health care professionals and alternative mental health support services to help these patients endure & recover from the stresses of being at war since 2001. Volunteers are actively sought & trained & educated to assist those needing counseling & those giving counseling. Give An Hour also provides support to other Veteran service organizations at the local level that have identified Veterans needing assistance in managing mental health challenges. Wounded Warrior Project will support projects by local groups by recruiting Vets to attend, off-setting costs, sending an on –site coordinator and more. http://www.giveanhour.org/</p>

<p>Recovery Services Gateway</p> 	<p>Wounded Warrior Project</p> <p>About 47,000 Veterans & Service Members who incurred a physical or mental injury, illness, or wound, from their military service after 9/11 have joined the WWP. WWP takes a holistic approach serving Warriors & their families to nurture the mind & body & encourage economic empowerment & engagement, hoping to foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation's history by: Raising public awareness; Helping Vets help Vets; & unique, direct programs such as: Combat Stress Recovery Program; Family Support & Retreats; & Peer Mentoring</p> <p>http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/</p>
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<p>Reintegration Services Gateway</p> 	<p>The Mission Continues: Engaging Vets in Non-Profits</p> <p>Mission Continues Veteran members reintegrate into society using the technical & leadership skills learned on active service to serve a Community. Qualified Veterans are designated as Fellows and are paid for a 20 hour work week to assess how to help local and regional non-profits be more effective and prepare an action plan for management. If the supported community approves the Fellows recommendations & so desires the Fellow forms & returns with a "Platoon" of Veteran Volunteers to serve the Community. Many Fellows are hired permanently by the community they help. Lions can consider engaging these Fellows in performing the Lions Club Excellence evaluations. https://www.missioncontinues.org/about/</p>
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<p>Health & Job Services Gateway</p> 	<p>Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)</p> <p>Since 2004, this is the largest organization for new veterans & their families. With nearly 300,000 members dedicated to standing with Veterans from their first day home through the rest of their lives. IAVA builds an empowered generation of Veterans to provide sustainable leadership for our country & communities. They work through programs in four key areas: health, education, employment & building a lasting community for Vets and their families. They impact those areas through assistance to Veterans & families, raising awareness of Veterans' issues & advocating for supportive policies at all levels http://iava.org/</p>
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<p>Job Search Services Gateway</p> 	<p>U.S. Technical Vets: Tech Industry Job Sources</p> <p>An online community to connect Veterans to jobs in the U.S. technology sector. Through a partnership of over a dozen major technology associations, Monster.com & Military.com. (Monster subsidiary specifically for Veterans). TechVets facilitates Veterans' transition to the civilian workforce by offering a Military Skills Translator to convert military experience into civilian speak, tools for Veterans to use to define career paths & salary scales, and then to search nationwide job listings. Over 10 million Veterans and family members have registered with TechVets. A search for jobs available in Delaware & Metro D.C. returned 952 & 5000 job offers respectively. http://www.ustechvets.org/</p>
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Other interesting examples of public-private partnerships helping Veterans to find rewarding jobs with promising career paths in military friendly towns and States include:

- *Hire Heroes.* Hire Heroes team members, at no cost, assist Veterans revise resumes to effectively convey their previous military experience & value proposition to potential employers; develop post-military strategic plans & financial requirements; secure veteran benefits; teach job search, job application & job interviewing techniques. There are monthly Workshops targeted to active duty personnel & the spouses or wounded, ill & injured service members, spouses, & caregivers. Also hosts Career Days where invited companies attend with hiring staff ready to deal seriously with pre-identified Veteran job seekers. <https://www.hireheroesusa.org>
- *Wall Street Warfighters* provides Veterans that qualify everything they need at no cost to secure jobs in the financial industry including training, lodging, a living stipend, and even a new suit for their job interview. <http://www.wallstreetwarfighters.org/web/>


<p>Learning Tutoring Service Gateway</p> 	<p>Free On-Line Tutoring for Veterans, Spouses & Kids</p> <p>The Tutor.com service project for U.S. Military Families is funded by the Department of Defense MWR Library Program, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and Army and Navy General Library Program. Tutor.com gives students in eligible military family's access to free 24/7 online tutoring and free help with homework, studying, projects & papers from live, expert tutors in more than 40 subjects. Students in military families who are moving frequently or dealing with a deployed parent can rely on our tutors for expert help staying on top of tonight's homework or catching up on missed concepts and lessons—at no cost. Contact them directly to find out if the veteran or family member you know is eligible. http://www.tutor.com/military</p>
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<p>Academic Services Gateway</p> 	<p>Student Veterans of America</p> <p>Since 2008, over one million veterans have returned home to pursue a postsecondary degree or certificate using VA education benefits. To assist these Veterans, SVA's presence at local and national levels has grown to over 950 student chapter affiliates, numerous private & nonprofit partners providing scholarships & job internships, & most importantly, an expanding list of impactful programs for veterans & their families to assist them adjust to academic life, secure financial aid, find employment, & develop personal & community networks. SVA is a primary source of performance statistics for government programs enabling SVA to advocate for more effective educational benefits for Veterans from local to State to Federal levels. http://www.studentveterans.org/</p>
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<p>Hospice Services Gateway</p> 	<p>The "We Honor Veterans" Project</p> <p>Since 2008 the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) collaborating with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs has invited state Hospices to join in Hospice-Veteran Partnerships with VA facilities & individual Veteran Volunteers to guide Vets toward more peaceful & dignified endings. Here Veterans educate Hospice professionals about military cultures & histories, work along-side Hospice professional engaging the dying Veteran or spouse in respectful inquiry, compassionate listening & grateful acknowledgment of their military service & their families role in that service. Educational resources for both Hospice professionals and Veteran volunteers are provided. http://www.wehonorveterans.org/</p>
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<p>Honoring Services Gateway</p> 	<p>Veterans History Project</p> <p>The American Folklife Center collect & make accessible personal accounts of Veterans so future generations may hear directly from them & better understand the realities of war. Over 68,000 histories are stored as audio & videotapes, personal memoirs, visual materials & correspondence from Veterans dating back to World War I. Success of this program depends on volunteers reaching Veterans where they live. Volunteers may be Veterans & their families or novice interviewers working independently or through civic organizations. Students in the 10th grade & above, & younger students with supervision, may participate. All training & collection resources to conduct interviews are provided on line, http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-home.html</p>
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<p>Honoring Special Events Gateway</p>	<p>Wreaths Across America</p>
 <p>The screenshot shows the homepage of Wreaths Across America. It features a navigation menu with links for ABOUT, MISSION, ACT NOW, MERCHANDISE, EVENTS, and CONTACT. The main heading is 'NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY' for Saturday, December 13, 2014. Below this is a large image of a cemetery with rows of red wreaths laid on the graves. A 'Get Our Newsletter' sign-up form is visible on the right. There are also sections for 'Our Locations' with a map of the US, 'Stay Connected' with social media icons, and 'Latest News from Wreaths Across America' with a 'STORIES BLOG VIDEOS' menu.</p>	<p><i>This organizations mission – Remember, Honor, and Teach – is carried out by wreath laying ceremonies on one specified Saturday each December at Arlington, as well as Veterans’ cemeteries & other locations in 50 states. There is another week of events including international veteran’s tributes, ceremonies at State Houses & a week-long “Veteran’s Parade” between Maine & Virginia with stops along the way to spread messages about the importance of remembering fallen heroes & honoring those who served & their families. Veteran services & recognition through a variety of programs, & teaching aides for projects are provided throughout the year.</i></p> <p>http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/</p>

<p>Research Information Directory</p>	<p>Institute for Veterans & Military Families</p>
 <p>The screenshot shows the homepage of the Institute for Veterans & Military Families. The header includes 'EMPLOYMENT', 'PROGRAMS', 'RESEARCH & POLICY', and 'COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT'. The main heading is 'IN SERVICE TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED'. Below this is a 'THIS JUST IN' section with a list of recent news items. A paragraph of text describes the institute's mission: 'As the first institute of its kind in the nation, the IVMF leverages the intellectual, programmatic and human capital resources of higher education in support of the post-service life course of the nation's veterans and military families. The IVMF focuses on delivering powerful programming, conducting actionable research, conducting policy analysis and providing technical assistance positioned to address the social, economic and public policy challenges facing the veterans' community. The IVMF hosts researchers who respond in a collaborative, bridging manner with government, private industry, institutions of higher education, philanthropic organizations and stakeholders committed to supporting transitioning service members, veterans and their families.'</p> <p><i>This action oriented service by Syracuse University & founding partner J.P. Morgan Chase helps organizations & communities apply for gov't & private grants to help Vets.</i></p>	<p><i>The IVMF leverages higher education to deliver education projects for Veterans, their families & community stakeholders to teach skills for success in education, work & life. Typical products are: Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities; Caregivers & family members (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans’ Families); Transitioning service members (Operation Boots to Business: From Service to Startup) & Veteran women and female family members (Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship); Practical info displays include interactive maps depicting job openings in counties across the US; actions you can take for rapid homeless resolution, etc. http://vets.syr.edu/education/</i></p>


An especially difficult challenge you should understand is how you can help the 5.1M Military Caregivers, 1.1M of which are caring for those injured in the Post 9/11 era.

Fortunately, The Elizabeth Dole Foundation, assisted generously by a large group of businesses and non-profits has just completed a Rand Study that is already resulting in major and inspiring public-private initiatives to help Military Caregivers. See the following links for more information:

- <http://www.blogger.com/joining-forces-and-elizabeth-dole-foundation-focus-military-caregivers-2014>
- http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR244/RAND_RR244.pdf
- <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/04/01/elizabeth-dole-michael-rich-military-caregivers/7128129/>

<p>TBI & PTSD Information Directory</p> 	<p>Brainline Military: A WETA Public Radio Service</p> <p>Over 350,000 soldiers sustained a TBI in the Post 9/11 Era. This WETA public radio service educates patients, families, friends & professionals on what to expect when dealing with TBI victims. Topics presented in easily understood multimedia formats include basic descriptions of TBI, rehabilitation, symptoms, diagnosis & treatment, living with TBI, returning to school & work, etc. A resource directory is available including access to new research and experts & peer groups to create a sense of community availability 24 hours a day for information, support, & ideas. This resource is also helpful for the 1.4M civilians – victims and families – affected by TBIs.</p> <p>http://www.brainlinemilitary.org/</p>
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The value of this wonderful WETA resource about the brain can be illustrated by highlighting a conversation we had with a dedicated outreach coordinated from the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. She told us about the heart breaking calls she receives from family members asking for help in understanding why their loved one returned from a deployment with apparent personality changes or signs of dementia. This WETA asset provides such distraught and worried family members and close friends with confidential channels to acquire enough knowledge on issues related to “the brain” to enable them to pursue more formal medical help for their loved ones to determine what may be causing the beloved person, that left them to go to war, to come home a different person.

<p>Homelessness Information Directory</p> 	<p>A Coordinator of Solutions & A Home Builder</p> <p>The National Coalition of Homeless Veterans is the tech assist center for a national network of community-based service providers & local, state & federal agencies providing emergency & supportive housing, food, health services, job training & placement assistance, legal aid & case management support for homeless veterans. Under a grant awarded by the Dept of Labor-Veterans' Employment & Training Service (DOL-VETS), NCHV provides guidance about program development, governance & funding to homeless service providers through conferences, consulting, publications, an assistance hotline & lists of homeless shelters by state.</p> <p>http://nchv.org/index.php/about/</p>
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There are also several big businesses offering solutions to prevent or recover from homelessness. For example:

- Home Depot is providing \$80M in community grants that are expected to fund 500 home building and renovation projects for disabled Veterans, and
- The Pentagon Credit Union Foundation provides emergency financial aid, special home loans and no interest loans to help Veterans escape predatory lenders


<p>Military Friendly Contacts Directory</p> 	<p>“Military Friendly” Firms, Schools, Cities, Banks, etc.</p> <p>http://victorymedia.com/our-brands/ is a business connecting Veterans & their spouses at no cost to hundreds of “Military Friendly” employers, franchises, schools, financial institutions, & cities. This includes connecting about 50,000 members of the National Association of Veteran Owned Business Association (NaVOBA) with buyers via www.BuyVeteran.com & connecting Veterans to high value STEM job opportunities (i.e., Science, Technology, Engineering & Math).</p>
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Section III: A Sample of Delaware, Maryland & District of Columbia Government Resources for Helping Veterans

Many successful State, County and local programs exist to serve Veterans. More programs are emerging.

State Veteran Affairs Outreach Offices can help Volunteers find reliable local partners and also steer them to federally funded programs for Veterans that are executed by grants to local organizations. Additionally, State Veteran Affairs Offices often fund long term care facilities for Veterans (i.e., “Old Soldiers Homes”), maintain Veteran’s Cemeteries, host Job Fairs, provide emergency financial aid, and in some cases chair committees to facilitate cost-effective coordination among non-profits in the State dedicated to helping Vets. Some State Veteran Affairs Offices also serve as Veterans advocates to expedite passage of State legislation serving the special needs Veterans and active duty military, guard and reserves (e.g., conversion of military experience to commercial licenses, transfer of professional licenses from other States)

State programs tend to be clearly defined and designed to produce immediate results. Reviewing programs from other States may stimulate you to seek to have similar programs authorized in your State.


<p>Full Services Directory</p> 	<p>Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs</p> <p>Serving 78,000 Veterans, the Commission connects Veterans & their families, via its award winning services directory, of public-private partnerships providing assistance related to: behavioral health & family services, employment & job training, housing, homeless shelters, medical & disability benefits, transportation, emergency financial aid via the DE Veterans Trust Fund supported by public funds & private donations & small business loans. The Commission also manages DE military cemeteries & the 150 unit Veterans Home in Milford, a long term care facility. (78,000 Veterans in Delaware including their families). http://veteransaffairs.delaware.gov/</p>
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<p>Full Services Directory</p> 	<p>Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs</p> <p><i>Serving 443,000 Veterans, the MD DVA connects Veterans and families with an array of job & training opportunities including a goal to achieve full employment of MD Veterans by the end of 2015. Also offered are services related to health & wellness, home & living, financial and honor and dignity The DVA also: Represents MD Veterans to the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Provide referrals to other federal, Maryland State and local government agencies for available; Manage/operate authorized Maryland Veteran Cemeteries & a Civil War Cemetery; Maintain memorials for the Maryland World War II, Vietnam, & Korean War Veterans; Manage the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. (443,000 Veterans in Maryland including their families). http://veterans.maryland.gov/about-mdva/</i></p>
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<p>Full Services Directory</p> 	<p>DC Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs</p> <p><i>Serving 40,000 Veterans, the OVA provides information primarily to help Veterans connect with US Dept of Veterans Affairs resources & benefits. Some City links are provided to assistance for jobs, homeless shelters, free food & free excess government furniture. Ongoing successful program to eliminate homeless Vets by 2015 as well as to provide free furniture for their temporary and permanent homes. Other initiatives include Dental Clinic support, discount programs for Veterans and Financial literacy support. http://ova.dc.gov/</i></p>
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<p>Public-Private Services Directory</p> 	<p>Military Community Partners (MCP): Delaware</p> <p><i>The MCP committee links volunteer experts from about 60 organizations interested in supporting active military members, Veterans & their families with: government, non-government agencies, Veteran service organizations, community and faith based organizations, and private and non-profit organizations. These collaborative working relationships create the environment for helping Active Military/Guard/Reserve members & Veterans & their families, & the Volunteers helping them, to quickly access emergency services, long term financial assistance, employment training, family support & more. http://www.militarycommunitypartners.com/mcpblog/</i></p>
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<h3>Behavior Support Services</h3>  <p>A national wide program with over 100 participating courts: MD does not currently participate. DC participation is pending http://www.justiceforvets.org/</p>	<h3>Veterans Court Mentors: Delaware</h3> <p>Assists justice-involved veterans with mental health and substance abuse issues to obtain necessary support services and reduce recidivism. A Mental Health Court subdivision, veterans charged with felony or misdemeanor non-violent criminal offense(s) and eligible veteran-defendants with substance dependency and/or mental health issues are diverted from traditional court processing to a treatment-based problem-solving model court. Identified through specialized screening, Veterans voluntarily participate in this judicially supervised treatment plan developed by a team court staff, veteran health care professionals, veteran peer mentors and other health and mental health care professionals. 75% complete the program. Over 80% are not arrested again in the next two years. http://courts.delaware.gov/Superior/veterans_court.stm</p>
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<h3>Deployment Recovery Services</h3> 	<h3>Operation Military Kids: DE – MD – DC</h3> <p>The U.S. Army's collaborative effort with over 43 national, state and local organizations across 49 States to support children & youth experiencing parent deployments and family relocations for the first time or another in a series of deployments. Military Youth meet other youth who are also experiencing deployment; Participate in recreational, social & educational programs; Gain leadership, organizational, and technical skills by participating in the Speak Out for Military Kids program or Mobile Technology Lab programs; Receive assistance with school issues by connecting with Army Child, Youth & School Services School Liaisons; & Attend single day, weekend or even longer events or residential camps. http://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/home.aspx</p>
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<h3>Education Career Services</h3> 	<h3>Troops to Teachers Project: DE – MD – DC</h3> <p>The Troops to Teachers program assists separating or retiring military personnel in pursuing a rewarding second career in public education (elementary, secondary or vocational) while also facilitating employment in public schools. Funded by the U.S. DOD through DANTES, the long term goal of the program is to help improve American education by providing mature, self-disciplined, experienced and dedicated personnel for the nation's classrooms. The Troops to Teachers office has counseled hundreds of military personnel, advising them on routes and programs to achieve full teacher certification and referring them to school districts for employment. http://www.nj.gov/education/ttnj/de/</p>
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<p>Reintegration Services</p>  <p>THE 6TH BRANCH</p> <p>Home About Operation Oliver Campaigns Scabbout Donate</p> <p>About</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&A DAY 2014 • About Us • Board of Directors • Call Download • Contact & Team Member • History Us • Mission • Partners <p>Latest Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Veterans Welcome Home (the video - #18-2202) 11/16/13 • 17% of the area moved our living buildings quit. Simple today! • Homeless from 128 service projects on Facebook • Six #188 volunteers awarded President's Volunteer Service Award • Homeless from #P&ADay on Facebook <p>Latest News Coverage</p> <p>Operation Oliver</p> 	<p>The 6th Branch: Baltimore Vets for Community Service</p> <p>A Baltimore based 501.3(c) utilizing Veterans' leadership & organizational skills to execute community service initiatives at the local level. They are veterans taking the lead in downtrodden Baltimore areas :75 tons of garbage & debris were removed from streets & alleyways; Children were given service learning & other special opportunities; Three green lots were adopted from Baltimore City & more than 100 trees & shrubs planted; Residents were enrolled in job retraining or certification programs; Residents' homes were cleared of dangerous debris: New homeowners & renters have taken up residency; Nearly 2,500 volunteers from nearly every Baltimore area university along with other Veteran groups were mobilized, etc. http://www.the6thbranch.org/</p>
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<p>Homeless Shelter Services</p>  <p>DELAWARE CENTER FOR HOMELESS VETERANS, INC. Providing Housing and Supportive Services for Homeless Veterans</p> <p>Home About Us Contact Us Donate Events</p> <p>Providing Safe Affordable Housing and Supportive Services for Homeless Veterans</p> <p>Arnie Coleman, 2nd from left, and Arnie Krivos, far right, from the Richard C. Doherty American Legion Auxiliary Unit 18 from Claymont, DE, present Buddy Baskets to the Delaware Center for Homeless Veterans housing unit on Main St. The Buddy Baskets were assembled and donated by Mrs. Goodnow's class from Forward Elementary School as part of the 4th Grade class' Martin Luther King Day of Service. We are very appreciative to all involved in these gifts of kindness: the women of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 18, Mrs. Goodnow, the Fourth Graders of Forward Elementary and their parents who participated in the project. Our goal is to assist Veterans and their families achieve economic self-sufficiency, safe and affordable housing and the best quality of life possible.</p> <p>Donate</p>	<p>Delaware Center for Homeless Veterans</p> <p>The Center reaches out to prevent at-risk Veterans from losing their homes & to end organizational and bureaucratic barriers imposed upon Veterans in desperate need of help. Offers Veterans and their family members outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits and assistance in getting other public benefits. Also coordinates with community-based groups offering temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs. Typical of donations received by the Center, the Selbyville, DE Community Associated collected & donated about 130 winter coats to this shelter in 2013. This is a 10 bed facility that survives on donations and small grants from businesses. They have a long waiting list! http://paulshouse.vpweb.com/default.html</p>
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<p>Homes for Disabled Vets Services</p>  <p>HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS</p> <p>HOME WHO WE ARE OUR WORK TAKE ACTION VETERANS CENTER DONATE</p> <p>Home Request Assistance Contact Us Donate Sign Up Login</p> <p>SPC Adrian Garcia Learn more about this veteran</p> 	<p>Homes for Troops: 7 Built in MD; 1 Built in DE</p> <p>Organizations similar to Homes for Our Troops operate in several states providing no cost, specially adapted homes designed to help Vets live independently. These homes go beyond ADA compliance; featuring single-level, open floor plans, roll-in showers, roll-under countertops, cook tops, sinks, etc. Depending on the Vets injuries homes may include lift systems, keyless door entry, & voice-activation controls. As of 3/2014, the 166 homes built included 7 in MD & 1 in DE; 39 are underway & 100 are in planning. Vets anywhere can request help from HFOT to have a home built. Community volunteers can also obtain HFOT help. Major building material suppliers assist with grants & free supplies. https://www.hfotusa.org/home</p>
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Section IV: A Sample of Local Non-Profit Resources to Help Veterans

It is at the local level where Volunteers often help Veterans the most. The true value of Federal and State government policies and benefits and the efforts and donations of larger public-private partnership can be fully realized locally.


Here, local Volunteers can help a Vet who does not need much help to re-integrate, to fully settle into civilian life in a community where his or her Family can flourish. Without such help, the Veteran may end up in situations where the family has to face the costs of another relocation which may destabilize them financially and/or emotionally. We have repeatedly encountered Veterans in this category during our own Volunteer experiences. Once settled, we find they become Volunteers themselves, giving back much value to the Communities that helped them.


Here also, Veterans that need more help re-integrating into civilian life – because they went directly from high school into the service and thus have no civilian job experience, or because they were injured physically or emotionally, or because their employer did not truly give them their job back after several deployments – are either helped by a Volunteer to be successful or sadly enter the downward spiral to homelessness and despair from coming home from war feeling betrayed by those that stayed safely behind.


From our own Volunteer experiences, we have found that most Veterans that have difficulties re-integrating can be helped even though it may take several tries to help them find enough in common with civilians to make them want to bond with other than “non-combat” Veterans. Some, just as in our overall US population, may have problems forever. But since we know Veterans were disciplined enough to survive in military units where their comrades had to depend on them to do their jobs, we hope you will try a few extra times to help them transition to independent living.


A statistic that supports the notion that there is a greater likelihood that a Veteran can be helped with a little extra effort comes from the national Veterans Court Mentor Program. In this program, Veterans that find themselves before the court – mostly for non-violent crimes – are offered the opportunity to complete a rehabilitation program within the Veterans Court System, assisted by a Mentor, or go to Criminal Court. Most opt for Veterans Court where over 80% complete their rehabilitation program which means they leave without a criminal record. Less than 10% find themselves in the Court System again within 2 years. No other social services assistance program for men and woman who find themselves in trouble in the Courts is anywhere near this successful.


That said, be aware that you, as a Volunteer may face much hard work before you and the Veteran you are helping share the joy of initial or long term success. That is why we always recommend that you form local Teams of non-profits that are specialists in some type of assistance, along with local Veterans groups – the VFW, American Legion, Marine Corps League and Military Officers of America Association – that can help all parties better understand each other.


Specific Industry Job Services	Dog Tag Bakery – Entry to Baking Industry: Metro DC
	<p><i>Based in DC, this non-profit helps Veterans & spouses reintegrate into civilian life with job & educational opportunities. A cohort of 20 Wounded Veterans & spouses will be hired each year (i.e. paid as they learn) to complete a program providing work experience & a tailor made curriculum at the School of Continuing Studies at Georgetown University. During the day, veterans operate a bakery: learning skills from baking to sales to business management. At the same time, they pursue a course of study in entrepreneurship & other skills needed for the successful pursuit of a job or a small business venture of their own. http://www.dogtagbakery.org</i></p>


<h3>Job Search Mentoring Services</h3> 	<h3>Leveraging DE Library Resources to Help Veterans</h3> <p><i>This free service of the DE library system enables Vets with & without volunteer help to explore over 1000 occupations & match them with your interests & abilities; search over 5M job postings; create professional resumes & cover letters tools; master interviewing skills; get tips & advice on how to improve your searches; organize & track your progress. South Coastal Library in Bethany & the Selbyville Library, among others offer monthly one-on-one assistance sessions http://lib.de.us/jobcenter/. Vets & local Volunteers assisting Vets and family members in job searches, while using this local resource can also leverage the thousands of public & private jobs found at https://www.usajobs.gov/ & non-profit http://us.jobs/national-labor-exchange.asp</i></p>
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<h3>Male & Female Shelter Services</h3> 	<h3>Home of the Brave: Milford DE</h3> <p><i>Current a 15 bed shelter for male Vets, & an 8 bed shelter for women Vets with children providing food & security at first & then assistance with employment, counseling services, access to healthcare, transportation & locating affordable housing with a goal to transition Vets into permanent housing & personal independence. Volunteers are always sought to help Vets directly. Donations are needed to fund items not covered by VA grants (e.g., clothes, towels, blankets, etc. for Vet to take when able to move out) & to maintain facilities by “adopting a room” (e.g., bedrooms, study hall, kitchen & dining room). An example of recent community support efforts is a food drive by the Indian River High School in Jan 2014 www.homeofthebravefdn.org</i></p>
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<h3>Shelter & Recovery Services</h3> 	<h3>Camp Royal Oak: Quantico, MD</h3> <p><i>The only Vet homeless shelter on the lower Delmarva. Founders invested their personal inheritance to open this 20 bed shelter. It now includes programs to re-establish personal health, a sense of responsibility & finding jobs. Recreational & emotional stability programs for residents & other area Vets not in the shelter include organized hunting, fishing & sailing events. A joint on-site service dog training project starts in 2014 with America's Vet Dogs http://www.vetdogs.org/ As 2014, over 200 Vets have been transitioned out of homelessness & scores more with families have been helped to find better jobs & more stable living & family conditions. http://vscoa.org/</i></p>
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<h3>Warrior Family Support Services</h3>  <p>The screenshot shows the 'Veterans Outreach' section of the Peoples Place website. It lists various services such as career counseling, guidance to access state and federal VA benefits, mental health counseling, and door-to-door transportation to medical facilities. It also provides contact information for the Veterans Outreach program, including a phone number (302-422-8033, ext. 173) and a website link (http://peoplesplace2.com/).</p>	<h3>Peoples Place DE Family Support Extended To Vets</h3> <p>People’s Place identifies social/mental health needs of DE residents & facilitates the provision of services to address those needs. High-quality services are provided promoting: Dignity, Empowerment, Independence, Safety, & Self-sufficiency. The Veterans Outreach serves within People’s Place range from career counseling; guidance to access state & federal VA benefits such as medical care and treatment; psychotherapy referrals; mental health counseling; & door-to-door transportation to regional medical facilities. The DE Veterans Commission funds this group to run the DE Support Service for Veterans Families (SSVF) project in all DE counties. SSVF is nationwide project sponsored by the US Dept of Veterans Affairs. http://peoplesplace2.com/</p>
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<h3>Aging Veterans Assistance Services</h3>  <p>The screenshot shows the Delaware Veterans Home website. It features a large image of the facility and text describing its services, including skilled nursing and assisted living for 150 beds. It also mentions significant facility additions and volunteers to support daily living activities. The website is supported by the State of MD. http://www.charhall.org/</p>	<h3>Veterans Home</h3> <p>Founded & funded by DE, this Home opened in 2007 as a long-term care facility on 24 acres in Milford, DE. It offers skilled nursing & assisted living for 150 beds, providing the best in nursing care & family wellness, for Veterans over age 60 (http://vethome.delaware.gov/) Significant facility additions & volunteers to support daily living activities are also donated by the Friends of the Delaware Veterans Home. A similar home with about 450 residents, also offering assisted living, is supported by the State of MD http://www.charhall.org/</p>
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<h3>Individual/Family Support Services</h3>  <p>The screenshot shows the Paddle Second Chance website. It features a large image of a paddleboarder and text describing the organization's mission to raise funds for veterans through a Stand-Up Paddle Challenge. It lists various services provided, such as Airline Arrangements, Mortgage payments, Utility payments, Groceries and essentials, Lodging, Event tickets, Week Long Retreats, Hosted trips, picnics, hunting outings, and more. It also mentions that plans are bigger for 2014 & beyond. http://paddlesecondchance.com/</p>	<h3>Paddle Second Chance: Bethany-Fenwick-Dewey</h3> <p>In 2013, Paddle Second Chance, proceeds from their first annual Stand-Up Paddle Challenge weekend at Holt’s Landing State Park and other fund raising initiatives, aided Wounded Veterans and Families with (number of families in parenthesis): Airline Arrangements (98); Mortgage payments (20); Utility payments (20); Groceries and essentials (200); Lodging (25); Event tickets (250); Week Long Retreats (> 15); Hosted trips, picnics, hunting outings (>100); & also repaired for GPS tracking units, iPads, housing modifications & repaired homes, arranged for dinners, day-care & relaxing day trips for Veterans & their care givers. Plans are bigger for 2014 & beyond http://paddlesecondchance.com/</p>
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<p>Individual/Family Support Services</p>	<p>OPERATION SEAs THE DAY: Bethany-Fenwick</p> <p>Started in 2013 with a mission “to organize a beach week for wounded soldiers & their families to show appreciation for their service & sacrifice, hoping this community-based gesture of support – involving beach house donors & scores of businesses donating generously – will be comforting & help ease their transition back to civilian life”. About 30 Warrior families stay free in donated homes & condos. They are helped by local hosts & financial & material resources to have a stress-free vacation. Each VIF (Very Important Family) received a welcome basket with goodies & discount offerings from local retailers, water sports centers, entertainment venues, spas, restaurants, fitness centers, etc.</p> <p>http://www.operationseastheday.org/</p>
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<p>Service & Therapy Dog Services</p>	<p>Veterans Moving Forward: DC Metro - VA</p> <p>This Virginia based project raises, trains and provides Comfort Dogs, Therapy Dogs, Facility Dogs and Service Dogs at no cost to Vets. VMF hires Vets to be employees in all phases of their dog raising and training programs, and, of course, is always seeking donations & volunteers to raise puppies, train a dog, be part of the team introducing the dog to the Veteran in need, be a foster parent or sponsor to a dog, provide grooming, veterinarian or provides transportation services. There are many similar organizations across the US. This one is near the Lions District 22 local area.</p> <p>http://www.vetsfwd.org/site/index.php</p>
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<p>Book Donation Services</p>	<p>Operation Paperback: A National Project Run Locally</p> <p>A local Bethany book club member asked her friends to give their gently used books to send to her son in the Navy. The Bethany Book store offered to be a collection point & shipper. Within 3 weeks over 500 were sent, resulting in Bethany Books becoming a collection point partner for Operation Paperback, that has, since 1999, sent over 2M books to Troops in almost 40 countries. It expanded in 2011 to support Vet hospitals & in 2012 to include certain individual military and their families, both past & present. Operation Paperback provides current address lists for units & individuals; shipping instructions including customs requirements, & prepares special purchases & shipments in response to specific donations.</p> <p>http://www.operationpaperback.org/</p>
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Part V: Ideas for Taking Local Action to Help Veterans

The following idea list was developed from reviewing web sites, reading studies and news articles, interviewing local Volunteers, Veterans, and their Families and Friends, and of course, our own Volunteer experiences.

Every idea listed below – as a scatter list in no particular priority order to encourage you to add your own ideas without worrying where to categorize the idea – represents an action someone has taken or is planning to help Veterans.

Every one of the action ideas listed below comes with its own inspiring story that should spur each of us to act now.

Gina, the WWII War Bride retired in Bethany Beach, whose husband, children and grandchildren are all Veterans, has since 2004, collected bags of toiletries and treats to give to military personnel transiting in and out of Dover Air Force Base.

An informal Team of prominent wives, along with a DC Fire Department Company and a Hell's Angels Club, for almost ten years, has been making monthly trips to Walter Reed Hospital to distribute civilian clothing to Wounded Warriors and their Families, including tailoring the clothes to fit amputees. One Warrior's Wife cried when she was given a formal gown because she never dreamed she would ever have an evening gown, much less one from a top designer.

A group of several hundred West Point graduates in DC formed a Mentor organization that has helped scores of Veterans and spouses find good jobs. Although the Veterans may have found jobs without the help of these Mentors, we believe the jobs found with the help of these Mentors are better fits for the Veterans talents and will last longer.

And churches in Bethany Beach, DE donated thousands of bottles water for years – because federal regulations did not allow the military to buy the water – to give to the Families of the Fallen as they waited in hot hangers at Dover Air Force Base for the plane to land that was carrying the remains of their loved ones.

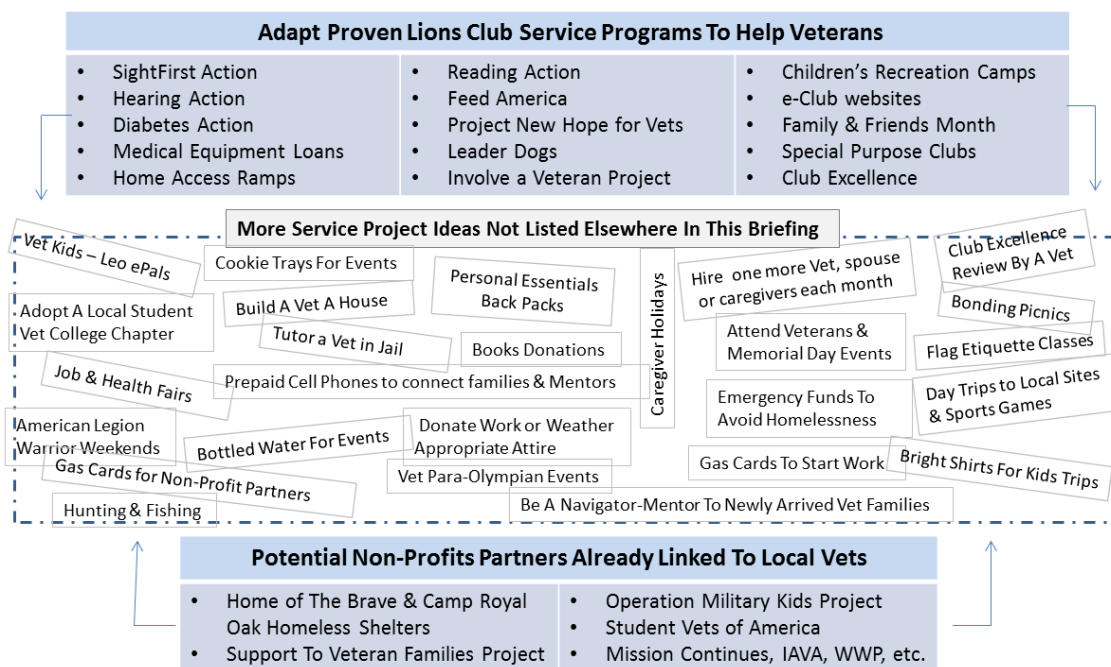
Although we hope you are moved emotionally by these stories, we are just as interested in helping you find practical, cost-effective ways to invest your Lions Club resources in helping Veterans while you are also executing the very full Community Service Programs your Lions Club undertakes yearly.

To that end, we again suggest, based on our research and observations, that Lions Clubs can add tremendous value to local efforts to help Veterans simply by adapting some on-going Lions Club Service Projects by collaborating with:

- 1) Local VFW, American Legion, Marine Corps League, Military Officers of America Association which are in touch with local Veterans as well as being Veterans Service Organizations authorized to help Veterans obtain services and benefits from Government agencies;
- 2) Any of the many fine local non-profits already helping Veterans;
- 3) Your States Veterans Affairs Outreach Office, and
- 4) Certain national non-profits that are in contact with Veterans in your local area – and can save you time by assembling or identifying local Veterans that are ready to perform service projects for your town or may need of help from you – such as The Mission Continues, Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans Association, Wounded Warrior Project, etc. One broadcast email from these organizations can reach thousands of Veterans in your area.

We depicted the benefit of our suggestion to “maximize collaboration” in our briefing using the following slide:

Collaborate To Maximize Results At Minimal Cost (Leverage Lions Strengths To Team With Local Groups Linked To Vets)



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Someone, somewhere has taken action to help Veterans with the following services!

Organize deployment and welcome home rallies for your local Guard or Reserve units

Organize appreciation events for your local Guard or Reserve units

Identify local Lions Club members and other businesses that are willing to hire Vets

Support ocean shore related events for Veterans and families (e.g. Operation Seas the Day)

Organize Veterans to help others in need in your community as a means to introduce the Vets to your town

Show a "stressed out" Veteran Family Member or Friend how to find the helpful information about TBIs, PTSD, deployment stress, etc. on the sample websites shown above

Provide volunteers to your local Veterans Homes

Donate to a local non-profit already serving Veterans

Organize activities for widows, children, and parents of deceased veterans in your community.

Provide financial counseling to Veterans, dependents, widows, etc

Mentor a homeless Vet back to independent living

Organize events where Veterans speak to school children

Establish Veteran Kids – Leo e-Pals social media relationships via a Lions e-Club

Encourage Veteran Lions to participate in the Hospice “We Honor Veterans” project

Adopt a local Student Veteran College Chapter

Donate Gas Cards for non-profit partners daily operations

Sponsor Hunting and Fishing bonding events at Camp Royal Oak and elsewhere

Mentor incarcerated Veterans

Create a way to help with dental service costs not provided by the VA

Donate to your State’s Veterans Trust Fund for emergency aid to Veterans

Donate bottled water, T-Shirts, Hero Packs, etc. to Operation Military Kids

Support the ALL your local Veterans Homeless Shelters

Welcome events for Veteran Families moving to your town

Know how to take Vets to non-profits and Government agencies that can help them avoid homelessness

Support the DC Furniture for temporary and permanent homes for Veterans program

Support Veteran Para-Olympian events such as Operations Military Kids and the local YMCA are sharing.

Donate work or weather appropriate attire for Veterans and their Families

Explore coordinating action opportunities with the DE Military Community Partners Organization

Be a Veterans Court Mentor

Prepaid cell phones to connect families and mentors

Personal essentials back packs for homeless shelters or support services for Veterans offices

Assist a Veteran Family use Tutor.com

Clean up/maintain war and Veteran memorials

Wreaths across America

Build or repair a Veteran's home

Provide cookie trays, etc. for events

Donate books

Provide Caregivers with a holiday

Hire a Vet, Spouse, or Caregiver

Attend Veterans & Memorial Day events

Provide rides to medical appointments

Bonding picnics

Facilitate recording Veteran history (Veterans History Project)

Have Leos attend American Legion flag etiquette classes

Host day trips to local sites and sports games

Meals on Wheels

Offer training for jobs that disabled Veterans and Spouses can perform from home such as software testing or programming, forms processing etc.

And don't forget to go to - <https://www.google.com/#q=lions+club+helping+veterans&start=10> - to view almost 500 Lions Club projects to help Veterans. Click on each picture to read about the project depicted in the photo and discover which Lion Club to call to get advice on how you can adapt their project to your town

We encourage you to keep adding your ideas to this list and then share the ideas with others!

Conclusion

This Seminar was designed to challenge each and every Lions Club in Multiple District 22 to evaluate for itself if it is adequately serving the needs of the 60M Veterans and their dependents living among us today.

We hope the information provided in this Seminar increased your understanding of the needs of Veterans and their dependents and caregivers. We also hope that if you decided you should and can do more to help Veterans, that the information from this Seminar will make it easier for you to do so.

Your Club has to answer for itself

“Do WE SERVE Those Who Served?”