



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

We Honor Your Service

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mary M. Kolar, Secretary





Bureau of Health Services

Jenny Fahey- Director of Bureau of Health Services

Veteran Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP)

Program Supervisors:
Chandler Miller (Team West)
Cal Stammer (Team East)

Veteran Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP)

Contract Specialist:
Vacant



The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is to work on behalf of Wisconsin's veterans' community — veterans, their families and their survivors — in recognition of their service and sacrifice to our state and nation.

VORP Mission: Serving those who served, where they are, to inspire change at the individual and community level.

VHRP Goal: To help veterans achieve stability, increase skill level and/or income, and obtain greater self determination that will enable them to reintegrate back to the community.



WDVA Locations/Number of Employees

Wisconsin Veterans Homes

Wisconsin Veterans Home
at Chippewa Falls

Wisconsin Veterans Home
at King

Wisconsin Veterans Home
at Union Grove

WDVA Central Office

Veterans Memorial Cemeteries and Military Funeral Honors

Milwaukee Claims Office

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Veteran Housing and Recovery Program





Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

We Honor Your Service

Veterans Housing & Recovery Program





What is VHRP?

VHRP provides temporary housing, treatment, training, and supportive services to Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in order to help them obtain permanent housing.



Veterans may stay at VHRP for up to 24 months however the #1 goal of the program is to exit into permanent housing as quickly as possible, average length of stay for FY22 is 6 to 10 months.

Grant and Per Diem

The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes per diem funds available through a competitive grant process to eligible entities to provide transitional housing beds for Veterans who are homeless or at risk for becoming homeless



Housing Models for GPD

- Bridge Housing
- Low Demand
- Hospital-to-Housing
- Clinical Treatment
- Service-Intensive



VHRP Housing Models

Service Intensive Transitional Housing: 54 beds (2 female/52 male)

- Provides transitional housing and a milieu of services that facilitate individual stabilization and movement to permanent housing.
- Services should incorporate tactics to increase the Veteran's income through employment and/or benefits and obtaining permanent housing.
- Services provided and strategies utilized by the applicant will vary based on the individualized needs of the veteran and resources available in the community.
- Participates with the CoC and Coordinated Entry System in their community.



VHRP Housing Models

Clinical Treatment: 51 Beds (2 Female/49 Male)

- Targeted Population -Homeless Veterans with a specific diagnosis related to a substance use disorder and/or mental health diagnosis; Veteran actively chooses to engage in clinical services.
- Clinically focused treatment provided in conjunction with supportive housing and services
- This is not a phase of another program the intent is admission, treatment, exit to permanent housing from the CT program.



VHRP Locations and Models

Chippewa Falls

Minneapolis VAMC

20 CT

28 SITH

Union Grove

Green Bay

Milwaukee VAMC

16 CT

10 CT

24 SITH

7 SITH

(4 female beds)



Veteran Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) Sites



What Services are Provided?

- Permanent Housing
- Employment Assistance
- Education & Job Training
- Healthcare & Behavioral Health Services
- Support Claims & Benefits Assistance
- Establish Community Supports



On Site Collaboration Weekly

- WDVA VORP Outreach and Recovery Regional Coordinator (ORRC)
- DWD/Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Representative (DVOP)
- WDVA Certified Claims Representative
- WDVA Certified SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Representative
- VA Medical Center (VAMC) Substance Use Counselor



On Site Collaboration As Needed

- HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
- Spiritual or Legal Support
- County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO)

Off Site Collaborations

- Continuum of Care (CoC) Program
- Institute for Community Alliances (ICA)
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Veteran Service Organizations (Adopt a Suite and Transportation)





VHRP Metrics for Success

Federal Guidelines:

- >65% Exit to Permanent Housing
- >50% Employed at Exit
- <23% Negative Exit Rate

Three (3) Year Average for VHRP

Exit to Permanent Housing	Employed at Exit	Negative Exit Rate
68%	64%	23%



VHRP Successes

- Veteran painted mural on wall in CF VHRP to give back, “This place gave me my life back.”; resulting in a “Painting” job offer for a city out East.
- Veteran contact stating “on vacation from work” getting ready to go on a fishing trip with a friend. “I never thought I’d be able to say that, thank you!”
- Veteran contacted WDVA to say he completed his training as a Substance Abuse Counselor because of the change we made in his life, he wants to do that for others.



VHRP SFY22 Data

Number of Veterans Served	Total:
Chippewa Falls	70
Green Bay	44
Union Grove	74



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

We Honor Your Service

Veteran Outreach and Recovery Program



What is VORP?

Pillars of Excellence Award Winner



The Veterans Outreach & Recovery Program is a comprehensive, coordinated outreach program serving Veterans who would benefit from connection with community services and who may need support in navigating those service systems with a special focus on treatment and recovery support.

History

- Grant Collaboration with DHS
 - 2014 – 2017
 - 49 Counties
 - Strict eligibility
- State Pilot
 - 2018 – 2019
 - 72 Counties
 - Referral & Recovery Tracks
- Permanent Funding
 - July 2019
 - Recovery Track



VORP Today

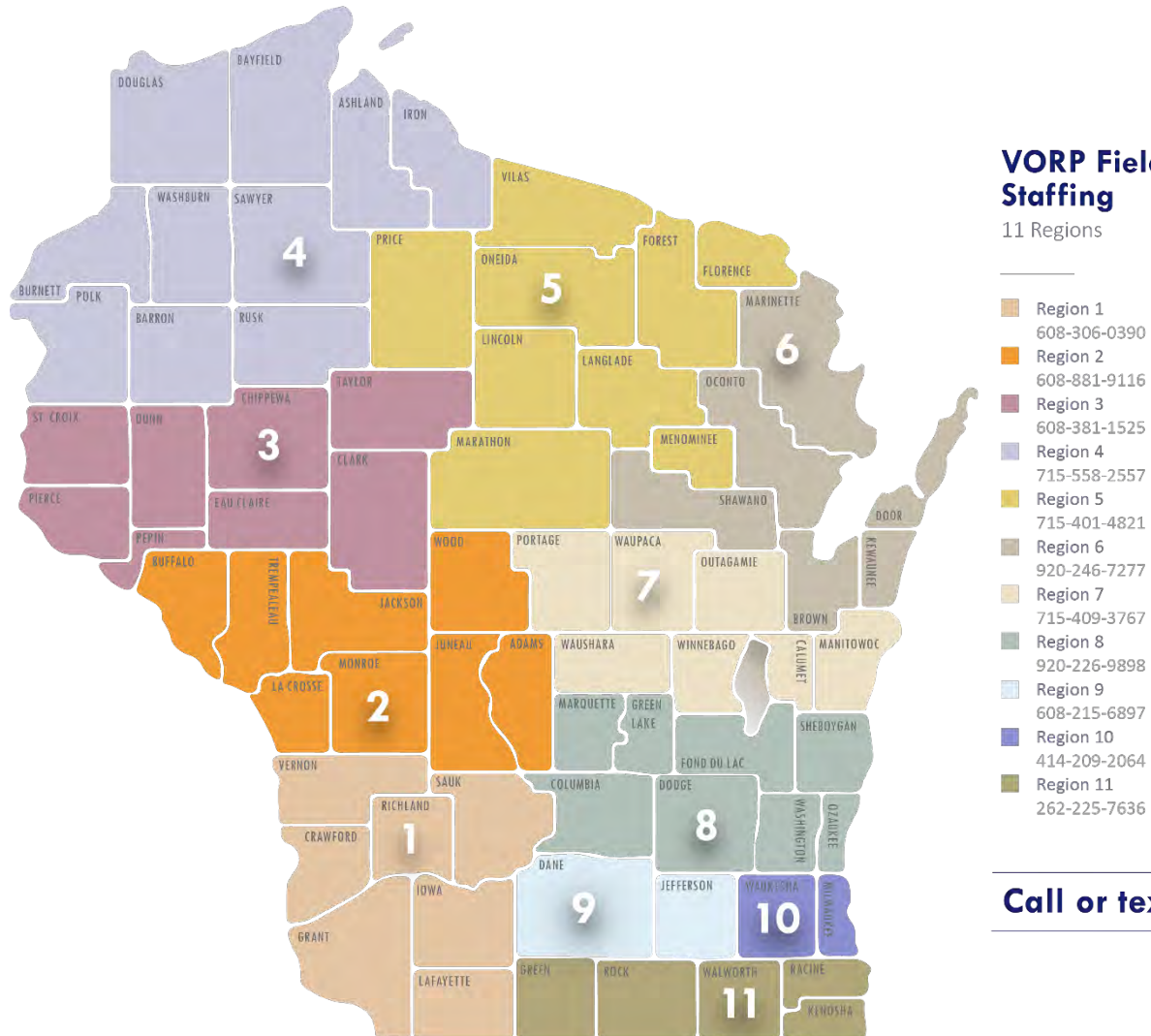
- Permanent funding through State of Wisconsin
- No requirement of homelessness or diagnosis
- Provide case management
- Serve veterans who are in crisis
- Serve all 72 counties, in 11 Regions, with 11 outreach staff and 2 clinical coordinators





Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program Locations

72 Counties - 11 Regions





Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

We Honor Your Service

Outreach and Recovery Regional Coordinators (ORRC) & Clinician





Criteria for Enrollment in VORP

Verification of the following:

- Are serving in the national guard of WI or a reserve component of the U.S. armed forces
- Served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces, forces incorporated as part of the U.S. armed forces, a reserve component of the U.S. armed forces, or the national guard of any state and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable



Where We Serve Veterans

Taking our programs and services to the Veteran. Into the family home, on the street, in the jails, in the parks, treatment facilities, homeless shelters, and even in a disabled or roadside parked car.



Services

- Home – Assistance in having a stable, safe place to live
- Motivation – Assistance finding the internal motivation needed to change behavior
- Recovery – Assistance with mental health and/or substance use issues
 - Payment of treatment for mental health and/or substance use disorders



Services

- Health – Assistance in managing conditions and making choices that support well-being
- Purpose – Assistance in conducting meaningful daily activities for the independence, income, and resources to participate in society
- Community – Assistance in building relationships and social networks





VORP Network

- Work with local shelters and others to find temporary, transitional, and permanent housing
- Establish a network that makes treatment options more accessible to Veterans
- Connection to benefits, employment, and education specialists
- Educate service providers on military culture and Veterans benefits



Community Partnership Examples

- County/Tribal Veterans Service Officers (CVSO/TVSO)
- HUD – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Balance of State CoC, homeless shelters and other housing programs
- USDVA Medical Centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, and Vet Centers
- Veteran Service Organizations
- Private, community, and non-profit clinics/organizations
- County behavioral health services
- American Red Cross
- Office of Veteran Employment Services(OVES)



VORP FY22 Data

Contacts (Contacts and Enrolled)	1084
Number of Enrolled Program Participants (07/01/21-06/30/22)	160
Services	4617
Referrals	831



VORP Successes

- Veteran's mother contacted WDVA to thank VORP for "saving her son's life", thanks to the treatment and support from VORP. "
- "Just wanted you to know that you are a huge reason I'm alive today and made it to **where** I'm at."
- He said his friend is, "So happy, upbeat, and overall pleased. In the past, when we've talked, he sounded very depressed and despondent. Now he sounds like a different guy."



Program Connection

VORP to VHRP	VHRP to VORP
Conduct outreach for each others' programs	
Make referrals to one another	
Resource sharing	
Transportation into/out of program (only if enrolled in VORP prior to program entry)	Involve in discharge planning
On site support and connection	Staffing cases
Location assistance if AWOL	



Homelessness and Suicide

- Shared risk factors increase risk for suicide: substance use, mental illness, adverse childhood experiences, social isolation, and unemployment
- Twice as likely as non-Veterans who have experienced homelessness to report lifetime suicide attempts
- Nearly four times as likely as other Veterans to have ever attempted suicide
- Veterans with past-year housing instability six times as likely as those who did not experience housing instability to report suicidal ideation
- Veterans who experienced homelessness more likely than male counterparts to have suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide, although male veterans more likely to complete suicide



Unmet Community Needs and Barriers Experienced by Veterans

- Transportation
- Accessible and equitable community resources (i.e. rural vs. urban Wisconsin services)
- Affordable housing (i.e. eviction history/credit scores, limited low-income housing (waitlists), criminal backgrounds)
- Landlord participation in housing programs
- Female/Family transitional housing options throughout the state
- Program discharge planning and program release planning (i.e. treatment facilities, prisons, hospitals)
- Wait times/lists for SUD and MH programs (i.e 3+wk wait times)



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

We Honor Your Service



Suicide is preventable. Let's work together to end veteran suicide. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is a leader in providing benefits to the veterans of Wisconsin. WDVA is now combating mental health issues for veterans because of the unsettling upward trend of veteran suicide.



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

We Honor Your Service



Ask the Question



Questions are the path to learning

Questions?

Veteran Homelessness in Wisconsin

Presentation for Blue Ribbon Commission on
Veteran Opportunity
July 2022



Michael Basford

Director

State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

101 East Wilson Street, 9th Floor
Madison, WI 53703
<https://homelessness.wi.gov>

Phone: 608-266-3633
mike.basford@wisconsin.gov

Veterans are far more likely to experience homelessness than other Americans, in part because of their high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder, physical injuries and disabilities, and other factors that make reintegrating into civilian life and employment difficult.

Tackling Veteran Homelessness with HUDStat – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012

Brief History of Veteran Homelessness in the United States

- “Homelessness in the United States dates back to the colonial era, and rising numbers of “vagabonds” were noted in urban areas in the wake of the Revolutionary War” (*War and Homelessness: How American Wars Create Homelessness Among United States Armed Forces Veterans* – Patrick Markee, Coalition for the Homeless)
- **Civil War:** The post-Civil War era witnessed a much more significant growth in homelessness nationwide. Indeed, as Kusmer notes, “even the words ‘tramp’ and ‘bum,’ as applied to the homeless, can be traced to the Civil War era. One reason was the enormous economic dislocation generated by the war and the succeeding economic recession, and by the 1870s “vagrancy” was recognized as a national issue. Many of the new nomads riding the rails and congregating in cities were Civil War veterans, and many had suffered physical injuries and trauma during the war. (*ibid*)

Brief History of Veteran Homelessness in the United States

- In 1887, the Sawtelle Veterans Home was constructed to care for disabled veterans and housed more than a thousand homeless veterans. Other such old soldiers' homes were built throughout the United States, such as the one in New York. These homes became the predecessors of the Veteran Affairs' medical facilities.
- These facilities were the result of creation of National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers facilities by Congress and President Lincoln in 1865. One of those facilities created by this legislation is what is now Milwaukee Soldiers' Home.

Brief History
of Veteran
Homelessness
in the United
States

The Bonus Army, 1932



Brief History
of Veteran
Homelessness
in the United
States

The Bonus Army, 1932



Brief History of Veteran Homelessness in the United States

- **World War II:** With the end of World War II, however, homelessness re-emerged as a significant problem in many cities. In New York City, demand for emergency shelter rose in the late 1940s, with as many as 900 men bedding down in the Lodging House Annex (later the Municipal Shelter) on East 3rd Street in the 1948-49 winter. Homelessness would have continued to affect many thousands of World War II veterans were it not for the national economic upturn and the benefits provided by the G.I. Bill. (*War and Homelessness: How American Wars Create Homelessness Among United States Armed Forces Veterans* – Patrick Markee, Coalition for the Homeless)

Brief History of Veteran Homelessness in the United States

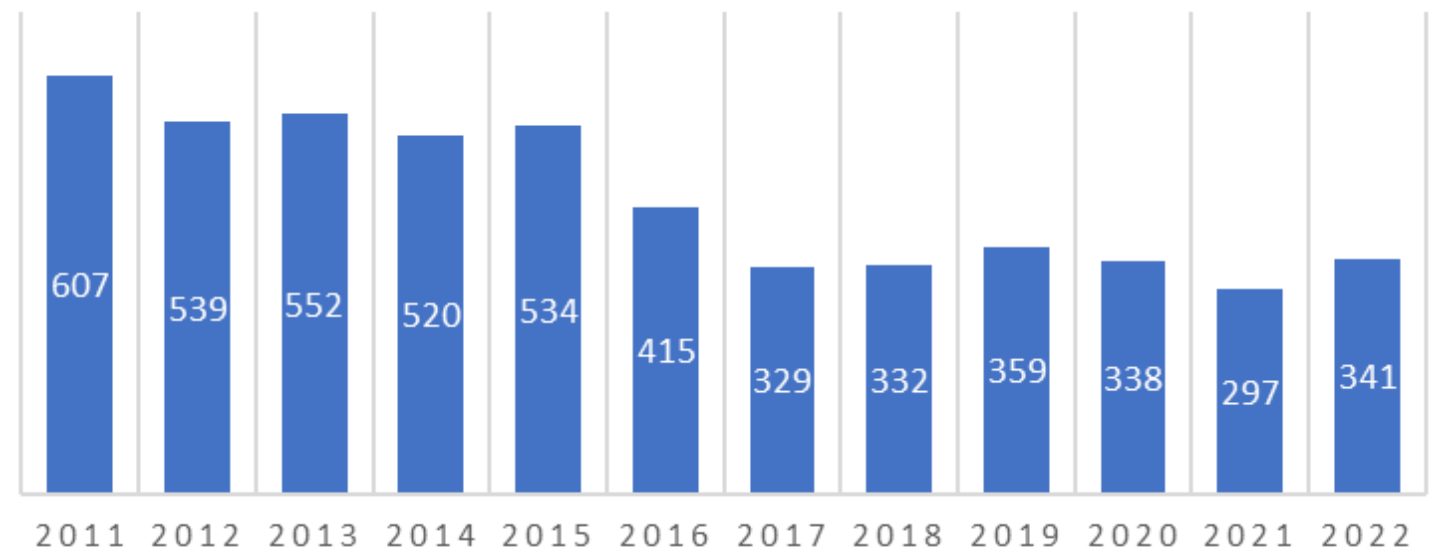
- **Vietnam War:** “Instead, he and hundreds of thousands of other veterans have got a life of drifting from one shelter to another, sleeping in doorways or under bridges. From a quarter to a third of the homeless people in most parts of this country are veterans, according to studies by researchers in nine regions. In a few cities, including Phoenix and Baltimore, the number is closer to half...Estimates of homeless veterans range from 230,000 to more than 750,000, about two-thirds of whom served since the beginning of the Vietnam era.” (*Nation's Homeless Veterans Battle a New Foe: Defeatism* – Tamar Lewin, New York Times, December 30, 1987)

Brief History of Veteran Homelessness in the United States

- **Post 9/11:** “Fewer veterans were found in both sheltered and unsheltered locations in 2020 than in 2009. Between 2009 and 2020, both sheltered and unsheltered veteran homelessness dropped by almost half (49%) a reduction of 21,361 sheltered veterans and 14,754 unsheltered veterans.” (*2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, January 2021*)
- “In the absence an official estimate of the homeless, post-9/11 veteran population, the most widely disseminated unofficial estimate is that 12,700 OEF/OIF/OND veterans experienced homelessness sometime in 2010.
(<https://stephenmetraux.com/blog/2017/12/17/how-many-post-911-veterans-are-homeless>)

Veteran Homelessness in Wisconsin

VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESS IN WISCONSIN 2011-2022



Source, Annual Point-in-Time Counts 2011-2020

Wisconsin
Interagency
Council on
Homelessness'
response to
Veteran
Homelessness

Strategy 2.2 – Create “Wisconsin Housing for Heroes” Veteran Rental Assistance Program

From 2011 to 2020, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in Wisconsin was nearly halved. This happened, in large part, due to the investment by the federal government in housing veterans – mostly through the partnership by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide housing vouchers and supportive services to veterans experiencing homelessness (HUD-VASH).

Despite the success of HUD-VASH, many veterans who have served our country in the armed forces, including those who served in combat, are not eligible for VA health benefits and as a result, do not qualify for the HUD-VASH program. This leaves around 300-350 veterans left experiencing homelessness in Wisconsin on any given night. A permanent housing rental assistance program, combined with a growing number of projects for veterans, can end veteran homelessness as we know it in Wisconsin.

Recommendations:

- Create Permanent Housing Rental Assistance Program for veterans experiencing homelessness with \$1,000,000 annually, as proposed in Gov. Evers’ most recent executive budget.

(from *Welcoming Wisconsin Home – A Statewide Action Plan for Homelessness, 2022*)



Michael Basford

Director

State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

101 East Wilson Street, 9th Floor
Madison, WI 53703
<https://homelessness.wi.gov>

Phone: 608-266-3633
mike.basford@wisconsin.gov