



King County
Department of
Community and Human Services

Jackie MacLean, Director

401 5th Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104

(206) 263-9100 Fax (206) 296-5260
TTY Relay 711

PROGRAM DESIGN

Veterans and Human Services Levy: 1.1 & 1.2

1.1: Expand the geographic range of King County Veterans' Program

1.2: Increase the capacity of King County Veterans' Program

1. Goal

Enhancing Access to services for veterans, military members, and their families (page 16 of the Service Improvement Plan "SIP").

2. Objective

To increase access to information about services, increase geographic access to services throughout the county, and to link veterans, military members, and their families/dependents to services that will help them to attain and sustain a stable and more successful life.

3. Population Focus

The King County Veterans' Program (KCVP) is mandated by RCW 73.08.080 to serve indigent US military veterans and their families. With the passage of the levy, the target population for KCVP services is expanded to also include military personnel and their families struggling with mental illness substance abuse, domestic violence, unstable housing or homelessness, under-employment and other issues. These include families of men and women who are currently deployed and who, for one reason or another may not be eligible for federal Veterans Affairs (VA) services, soldiers who have recently returned and are having difficulty resuming with normal daily life, as well as older veterans and their spouses (page 10 of SIP).

4. Need or Risk Information

Washington State has 7,711 National Guard members, 70 percent of whom are currently activated—the highest number since World War II. These military personnel have unique factors to face as they respond to Federal and State activation orders, which are very unlike those of other military branches. For example, Army members generally live on base or in base-housing and work for the Army five days a week as a soldier. When activated, they will continue working for the Army and earn an increase in pay. In contrast, National Guard members generally live 30 to 50 miles from base—where they report twice a month, and work in civilian jobs that do not require the duties and responsibilities as a soldier. When activated, National Guard members must either take a leave-of-absence from work or quit

their jobs; these jobs are not always guaranteed to be there when they return from 12 to 22 months of deployment.

The nation's Reserve components (referring to the total of all National Guard members and Reserve forces from all branches of the military) comprise approximately 46 percent of the total available military manpower. Reserve forces will spend more time away from the workplace defending the nation, supporting a demanding operations tempo, and training to maintain their mission readiness. In Washington State, 45 percent of the National Guard members experience a decrease in income when activated. Private sector and civilian jobs often pay better than military, which means that as a soldier responds to activation orders he or she will be experiencing a financial hardship. Moreover, upon return from activation and deployment, some National Guard members and Reserve members may experience difficulty returning to previously held jobs.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton on October 13, 1994, states that “any person whose absence from a position of employment is necessitated by reason of service in the uniformed services shall be entitled to the reemployment rights and benefits and other employment benefits; a person entitled to reemployment, upon completion of a period of service in the uniformed services, shall be promptly reemployed in a position of employment.” New legislation in Washington State also protects people with veterans or military status from discrimination in employment, among other situations.

The enactment of the USERRA law, however, has not protected the jobs of returning National Guard and Reserve members in all cases. Most frequently, Reserve members return to learn that they have been passed over for raises and promotions based on length-of-service; medical benefits have lapsed due to employer error; the position he or she held has been filled and there are no other job opportunities with the employer. In addition, the company has gone out of business or downsized and there are no jobs available after downsizing. Also, if a veteran returns with a disability, the employer may not have positions to accommodate for the disability, e.g. some positions in the construction industry.

Currently, National Guard and Reserve members are not included in the RCW 73.08.080 definitions. With levy funds, however, they are now eligible for services from KCVP.

5. Total Dollars Available

Veterans' Expansion Budget	2007 Amount
Contracts (PTSD, VIP)	\$580,000
Financial Assistance (Food, Rent, Utilities, Other)	\$500,000
Employment Outreach (Employment Services staff, Social Workers, Customer Service, other)	\$920,000
TOTAL	\$2,100,000

6. Geographical Coverage

Levy funds will increase veterans' access to services by expanding the geographic range of KCVP. While KCVP's existing Seattle office serves veterans countywide, the levy funds will provide KCVP with the means and resources necessary to deliver services to residents countywide more effectively. KCVP will open a site in south King County, hire additional social workers to provide case management services, identify and partner with community-based providers to coordinate client services, and collaborate with veterans' organizations to increase education and awareness of KCVP services.

The south King County site, co-located with WorkSource Renton, will house four new social workers whose initial work will focus on outreach in the community. This consists of presentations on veterans issues and KCVP services to community-based providers including youth and family serving agencies, mental health/drug and alcohol treatment providers, ethnic-specific agencies, State Community Services Offices (CSOs), and other related service providers. Additional KCVP tasks will include participating in and obtaining membership in local provider and advocacy networks, such as King County Alliance for Human Services, South King County Council on Human Services, and Eastside Human Services Forum.

In its existing Seattle office, KCVP has developed new partnerships with Seattle human service providers whose clients consist of a significant number of veterans. KCVP has agreements with providers that will prioritize serving those clients referred by KCVP. For example, through outreach efforts KCVP is now providing benefits counseling to clients housed in the 1811 Eastlake Building, and in the downtown housing options operated by Plymouth Housing Group. KCVP plans to enhance its outreach and recruitment of new clients by working with the City of Seattle Human Services Department to increase awareness of KCVP services with their contractors, and by increasing its presence in downtown shelters, emergency food and clothing providers, hospitals, and other downtown services. In order to serve additional clients generated by these partnerships, KCVP will hire two additional social workers in its existing Seattle office.

KCVP is increasing its visibility and education efforts with groups that may not have historically worked with KCVP or other veterans-focused groups and services (e.g., National Association of Black Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and others). In addition, KCVP

plans to strengthen its collaboration with County Veterans' Coalition (CVC) from the tri-county area to educate and promote the program to Guard or Reserve members who are stationed in other counties but returning to homes or moving to King County. Finally, KCVP is working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase their awareness of KCVP's enhanced services.

7. Evidence-based or Best Practice Information

KCVP is improving its services to meet best practice standards by thoroughly assessing the client, addressing client risk factors that can be changed, building services on the clients' assets and strengths, developing a plan for providing effective services, and implementing the services with quality.

KCVP is improving its processes towards best practices. There is a lack of research on best practices for working with veterans, however, KCVP will model its service approaches after those best practices that work with other populations that may be similarly difficult to serve and engage into services. KCVP will continue to seek research and best practices information regarding assessment tools, case management practices, PTSD, etc. that have been normalized and validated for the needs of veterans. For instance, KCVP staff will be trained in Motivational Interviewing, which is a best practice for engaging clients into services.

8. Program Strategy Description

When a veteran walks into KCVP, the front desk staff will help the veteran determine his or her eligibility for services. Eligibility is based on military service, household income (for financial assistance), and King County residency. The front desk staff makes the initial assessment of needs and sets an appointment to meet with a social worker in order to engage the client in case management. If the client is not eligible for KCVP services, front desk staff refers the veteran to appropriate services in the community.

KCVP provides Basic Services to clients who are unable or unwilling to engage in case management at that time or who request and are assessed as needing services to meet a one-time, emergent, financial need. Need for services are based on the results of an intake and assessment.

Basic Services

Basic Services include the following:

- Employment services (see Employment Services below)
- Interim housing services limited to overnight shelter and motel placement
- Financial assistance services with maximum amounts of up to \$800 for an individual and \$1,500 for a client with one or more dependents in a 12-month period
- Referrals and advocacy to access local mental health, drug and alcohol, addictions services, and other needed services
- Assistance in obtaining benefits from State and Federal agencies (e.g. VA, Social Security, Department of Social and Health Services)

- Bus tickets to enable clients to obtain documents to verify eligibility, or to provide transportation to the VA Medical Center or other transportation related to obtaining or maintaining employment
- Assistance with personal care and hygiene

KCVP provides case management services to clients who are able and willing to engage in services with their social worker. Clients, with the support of their social worker, will complete a comprehensive needs assessment that focuses on the individual's service needs, barriers to success, motivation, and services to meet performance outcomes. Clients will work with their social worker to develop case plans that detail their short and long term goals and the steps they need to take to achieve those goals, including removing potential barriers to their success. The case plan may include obtaining housing, employment, services for mental health and/or drug and alcohol. The case plan is a tool that clients can use to track progress towards their personal goals. Clients receive benefits counseling and the social workers advocate on behalf of clients to obtain disability and other benefits from Social Security Administration and State and Federal Veteran's Administration offices. Social workers have access and knowledge of resources and partnerships with community providers to which they can refer clients. Most importantly, the social worker is available to the client to listen, motivate, encourage, advocate for, counsel, and support. Clients participate in case management services for up to 18 months, which is consistent with industry standards and best practices. The case management model is attached to this program design.

Case management services

In addition comprehensive intake and assessment and case plan development, the case management model includes the following services:

- *Employment Services:* Currently, KCVP employment services are limited to providing clients with Community Voice Mail accounts, resume assistance, job counseling and placement, career testing and skills assessment. The levy dollars allow KCVP to greatly expand those services in both the Seattle office and through its WorkSource Renton site.

Enhanced employment services focus on increasing the client's employability, particularly for returning National Guard and Reserve members. The social worker and the client complete a comprehensive needs assessment to identify strengths and barriers to obtaining/maintaining employment. Using the assessment, staff and the client develop an Employment/Training Plan. Some veterans may need assistance with removing initial barriers to employment, such as unstable or no housing, or mental health/drug and alcohol issues; others may need post-secondary training and/or short-term training; and others may need assistance with job search activities. Moreover, once the client has obtained a job, he or she may need or request support from employment services staff for assistance with employment retention or wage progression for up to one year after job placement.

The WorkSource Renton office has an established infrastructure and a myriad of free services that link veterans to additional employment services, including over 350 workshops delivered annually on employment-related topics, basic computer skills, and

basic skills development. Services include: job listings from local employers, online job search and resume posting, labor market and local wage information, career planning software, computer software and Internet connection, workshops on topics related to job search and career planning, access to training resources, complimentary local telephone, fax and TTY calls, use of copiers and printers for job search activity, access to information about unemployment insurance and community resource information, such as public transportation, childcare assistance, food banks, etc. Eligible veterans will have access to all the resources available at WorkSource to assist in obtaining and maintaining jobs.

- *Housing services:* KCVP provides access to shelters designed to provide clients with housing for a single night up to 30 days. KCVP contracts with the Salvation Army's William Booth Center (WBC) to provide 35 shelter beds for male veterans without stable housing. The WBC provides a clean, safe, and substance-free living environment that supports clients as they work towards completing their case plan goals and securing permanent housing. Priority placement in the WBC is given to employed and work-ready veterans.

Transitional housing services, as defined by KCVP, is housing for 30 days up to one year. KCVP contracts with the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program (VVLP) for six beds for men and with the Compass Center for 21 beds for men and four beds for women. The Compass Center services include case management, recovery counseling, job counseling, computer training, and additional support services through the KCVP and the VA Medical Center. The contract with the VVLP provides case management services and referrals to other support services. Priority placement is given to clients with a source of income, and who are work-ready, in a job-training program, or in school. The KCVP social worker coordinates services and housing for the veterans in these programs.

Finally, KCVP assists eligible veterans in obtaining Section 8 housing vouchers. Section 8 is the federal government's major program for assisting low-income families, the elderly, and disabled persons to afford decent, safe, and affordable housing. A Section 8 voucher allows a person to pay 30 percent of his or her income towards rent and utilities. KCVP partners with the King County Housing Authority to acquire up to four vouchers per month.

The Section 8 voucher process can be lengthy, requiring background and credit checks, several applications, an interview, and numerous follow-ups. Social workers work closely with the veteran to answer questions, provide advocacy, and guide him or her in finding low-income permanent housing. In 2006, KCVP assisted 24 clients through the application and interview process, of which 19 received vouchers—an 80 percent success rate.

- *Financial Assistance:* Financial assistance includes financial aid in the form of vouchers to help stabilize veterans, military personnel, and their families who are in crisis. Levy funding has enabled KCVP to increase the annual maximum level of financial assistance for clients receiving Basic Services from \$600 to \$800 for a single adult and \$1,440 to

\$1,500 for a family of two or more. For clients engaged in case management services, the annual maximum level of financial assistance is \$1,500 for a single adult and \$3,000 for a family of two or more.

KCVP's financial assistance includes the following expenses:

- Food
 - Utilities – water, sewage, electricity, natural gas, fuel oil, firewood, kerosene, propane, etc
 - Housing – mortgage payment, rent payment, campground fee, moorage fee, mobile home park fee, rent deposit, first month rent, storage unit fee, transitional housing, shelter placement, motel expenses
 - Medical – emergency medical care, medical procedures and treatments, alternative medicine, dental care
 - Transportation – gasoline, automotive repairs, insurance policies, impounded automobiles or campers
 - Employment – clothing and tools, union dues, tuition for trainings and education, educational supplies, professional licensing and certification;
 - Clothing
 - Childcare
 - Burial and Cremation Expenses
- *Clinical Services:* KCVP does not provide direct mental health clinical services to clients. KCVP contracts with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) to provide treatment to veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and trauma counseling to spouses, domestic partners, and children who have grown up with a parent or partner who is suffering from PTSD. The WDVA offers readjustment counseling to veterans and their family members directed at social, psychological, or behavioral problems that are related to the process of readjustment from wartime military service. The WDVA also provides community education, which is designed to increase the awareness of the need for PTSD treatment for veterans. WDVA staff identifies and recruits clients and receives referrals from KCVP for these services.

Levy funds allow for the expansion of PTSD treatment and trauma counseling with WDVA. For instance, the contracted hours for individual and group readjustment counseling has increased from 2,600 hours to 5,050 hours and community education has increased from 24 hours to 139 hours.

- *Veterans' Incarcerated Project (VIP):* In this joint project between KCVP and the WDVA, project staff identifies incarcerated veterans, and if eligible, enrolls them in the VIP. Program staff initiates communication with the courts to negotiate an early release for the client. Often veterans are incarcerated because of chronic addictions. Judges have come to understand that treatment is less expensive than incarceration, and more appropriate in some cases. Frequently judges release veterans to VIP staff pending entry into treatment and connection to services. VIP project staff coordinates with KCVP to access services offered by KCVP for the client. Services include, but are not limited to housing, financial assistance, employment and others.

Currently the VIP is only available to veterans incarcerated in the King County Correctional Facility and the Kent Regional Justice Center. Approximately three to five percent of the individuals incarcerated in the facilities are veterans, and KCVP estimates that a proportionate number of veterans are confined in municipal and district jails. With Levy funds, KCVP and WDVA will expand the VIP into the following district and municipal jails: Issaquah, Kent, Renton, Auburn, Enumclaw, and Kirkland.

In addition, there is a current shortage of housing available for the VIP participants. KCVP and the WDVA are working on identifying housing options for clients to be successful in their early release from jail.

9. Disproportionality Reduction Strategy

There is much national research that cites that a disproportionate number of veterans of color have negative life and health outcomes. In King County, 14 percent of the veteran population is comprised of veterans of color. On the other hand, 48 percent of KCVP clients are veterans of color.

KCVP believes that there are other factors of military service that result in the disproportionate number of veterans of color in need of services upon discharge. However, more research is needed to understand what those factors are. Therefore, KCVP is committed to continue serving veterans of color at this level and emphasizes the need for culturally appropriate and relevant services. KCVP is committed to the following strategies to assist in solving the disproportionate number of veterans of color who have longer-term negative life experiences and life options as a result of their military service:

- Providing services that are culturally appropriate to engage clients of color by creating choices, whenever possible, to utilize KCVP staff familiar with their cultural background and soliciting feedback and recommendations regarding services
- Increasing the cultural competency and skill set of KCVP staff to match the needs of the client population
- Soliciting feedback and recommendations from front line staff regarding services
- Working with the Veterans' Program Advisory Board to reach and recruit individuals of color that represent veteran service organizations in the community, including but not limited to National Association of Black Veterans (NABVETS), African American Veterans Group of Washington State (AAVGOWS), and the Veteran Community Network
- Obtaining guidance from the Veterans' Program Advisory Board on how KCVP can be more culturally accessible and competent
- Engaging an education and advocacy with partners across systems to bring attention to the issue of "disproportionality"

10. Coordination/Partnerships and Alignment Within and Across Systems

KCVP has on-going relationships with local veteran providers including the Veterans Administration Office, Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC), the VAMC addictions and PTSD treatment center, WDVA, and the VVLP. Many of these relationships are contractual and have been on-going for over ten years. Services associated with these relationships take the form of trauma counseling, services to incarcerated veterans,

connection for treatment of PTSD and chemical dependency and relief from homelessness (housing).

Veterans' issues are generally new to the human services system and the recent conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere have brought greater attention to veterans. With the hiring of additional social workers, KCVP is mounting an educational campaign to increase awareness of the needs of veterans and collaborating across the human services system to address those needs. For example, KCVP is working closely with the Committee to End Homelessness to identify unique housing options and services for homeless veterans. KCVP is also collaborating with the divisions and programs within the Department of Community and Human Services, such as Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division and Community Services Division – Women's Program (e.g. domestic violence).

KCVP is also pursuing relationships with NABVETS, VCN, and the AAVGOWS to build capacity to provide PTSD and community-based services to veterans of color by providers of color.

In addition KCVP has developed, over the last seven years, partnerships with many of Washington's 39 county veterans programs. This partnership of counties is called the County Veterans Coalition (CVC). KCVP has developed a website (CVCWashington.org) that links and hosts all 39 county veterans programs. King County maintains and updates the site including adding links to services across the state. The CVC site is becoming a well used resource for veterans and service providers. Annual conferences are held to discuss service needs and strategies to meet the evolving needs of veterans and their families.

11. Timeline

January – June 2007: Completion of KCVP policies and procedures, program design and modifications

June 2007: Implementation of policies and procedures, program design and modifications

June 2007: Hiring of additional program staff, including social workers and staff for Renton Office

June 2007: Opening of Renton office

December 2007: Refining of computer systems to track clients and outcomes

12. Funding/Resource Leverage

KCVP defines resource leverage as creating systems linkages that align resources and build mutually beneficial relationships for improved client outcomes. KCVP hopes to improve communication across systems, sustain meaningful relationships, and build the capacity of resources across systems.

Examples of systems that are aligning resources to benefit clients include the WDVA that provides benefits counseling to enable KCVP clients to become eligible for VA benefits that they were not previously eligible for; housing partners support clients through the housing continuum—shelter, transitional, Section 8 and other permanent housing; as a “payer of last of resort” KCVP coordinates with the Washington State DSHS and other emergency

assistance providers in order to use KCVP funds appropriately. Other sections of the Veterans' Levy will complement these resources-aligning activities.

KCVP is also leveraging resources to improve communications across systems. For instance, the VA, City of Seattle, the Housing and Community Development staff at King County, and KCVP are in discussions about ways to assist chronic, homeless veterans in obtaining and maintaining permanent, supportive housing (housing units with drug/alcohol services, mental health, and case management).

13. Outcomes

There are multiple outcomes that KCVP hopes to attain associated with the program's fundamental goal of clients' achievement of economic and personal self-sufficiency. KCVP uses intake and assessment tools to establish a baseline or starting point for clients; clients and their case managers record progress on personal goals and outcomes using case plans. KCVP will use the following milestones to measure its success toward the program goal and assisting veterans in achieving personal goals.

- Increase veterans' access to appropriate, culturally relevant services
- Decrease immediate financial crisis
- Decrease numbers of homeless veterans and military personnel
- Reduce housing crisis and prevent evictions
- Increase number of veterans, military personnel, and their families with stable housing
- Increase number of veterans, military personnel, and families that access appropriate clinical services
- Increase number of clients that meet or make progress on case management or treatment goals
- Improve employability of clients by obtaining job training and/or obtaining appropriate tools, licensing, or transportation
- Increase numbers of veterans and military personnel obtaining and maintaining employment
- Reduce recidivism among veterans with criminal justice involvement
- Increase number of incarcerated veterans that are eligible for early release from incarceration

Disproportionality reduction outcomes

- Increase the number of clients that are matched to culturally appropriate services
- Staff and program will demonstrate an increase in cultural competency and skills that match the needs of the client population
- Improved program services as a result of feedback and recommendations from clients, front-line staff, Veterans' Program Advisory Board, and veterans community
- Increase number of contacts and relationships established with community providers that specialize in serving communities of color

14. Dismantling Systemic/Structural Racism Strategy

KCVP acknowledges that racism exists and military policies and practices disproportionately affect active duty military personnel and veterans of color. KCVP hopes to obtain research and information that will inform the program on improvements and adjustments to make.

For its part, KCVP hopes to dismantle systemic/structural racism by doing the following:

- KCVP will review issues of racism and the resulting disproportionate number of veterans of color that are in need of services
- KCVP will review its operational policies and procedures to ensure that clients, staff, and community partners understand the effects of racism and disproportionality
- KCVP will develop a procedure to include client and staff input in policies, procedures, and program development to address gaps, barriers, or inappropriate services relative to the cultural needs of KCVP clients
- Ensure that the services of the network of KCVP community partners/providers reflects the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of the veterans being served
- Establish contacts and relationships with community providers that specialize in serving communities of color

15. Cultural Competency

Providing culturally competent and appropriate services to clients is important to KCVP.

The program serves a disproportionate number of clients of color and feels that it is necessary for the program to be culturally competent. Improving cultural competence is a significant element in KCVP's disproportionality reduction strategy and dismantling systemic/structural racism strategy as cited above.

Cultural competence requires that KCVP and staff are able to value diversity, conduct self-assessment, manage differences, obtain and institutionalize cultural knowledge and adapt to the diverse cultural contexts of the clients that the program serves.¹ In May 2007, the program and its staff began cultural competence assessment and training. KCVP will also conduct outreach and referral to agencies that have experience providing services to communities of color, such as Atlantic Street Center, Urban League, Native American tribal organizations, Minority Executive Directors Coalition, etc. KCVP and these agencies can also cross-train their respective staff on veterans' and cultural issues. KCVP will invite NABVETS to a KCVP staff meeting to educate KCVP staff of the challenges and cultural issues for African American veterans; conversely, KCVP will attend NABVETS meetings to inform them about KCVP services. In 2007, KCVP will ask the Veterans' Program Advisory Board to identify African American, Native American, Latino, and other veterans of color to lead education and recruitment of clients from their communities. These individuals can convene a focus group of community partners/providers of color to provide recommendations on improving accessibility of culturally competent KCVP services.

¹ Goode, Tawara, D.; Jones, Wendy; and Mason, James. *A Guide to Planning and Implementing Cultural Competence Organizational Self-Assessment*. Washington DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Winter 2002, p. 1. www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/nccc

16. Process and Outcome Evaluations

KCVP has laid the foundation for both process and outcome evaluations by developing logic models for the different services it provides to clients. The logic model clearly specifies the program's process, i.e., the resources, activities, and outputs required to execute the program. The logic model shows how the process leads to outcomes which, in turn, help the program contribute to the overarching goal² of the Veterans and Human Services Levy and KCVP. The logic models are pending completion with the work that the evaluators will be hired to do. Draft logic models for Basic Services, Case Management, Employment, and Housing are attached to this program design.

The Department of Community and Humans Services (DCHS) has several components in process regarding these evaluations. DCHS is working with Public Health on an evaluation framework that has been presented to the levy oversight boards' evaluation committee. DCHS has also reviewed the Levy Service Improvement Plan and the Levy Ordinance to identify the evaluation expectations in those documents. Moreover, DCHS is in the hiring process for the evaluators. For its part, KCVP is improving its veterans' information systems to provide reliable demographic, service, and outcome data for the evaluations.

² Organizational Research Services, Inc. and Clegg and Associates, Inc. *Outcomes for Success!* Seattle, Washington. The Evaluation Forum. 1999.