



## King County

### Community Services Division

#### Department of Community and Human Services

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## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 2012 – 2017 Veterans and Human Services Levy

#### Activity 1.1: King County Veterans Program (KCVP)

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#### 1. Goal

Increase self-sufficiency of veterans and vulnerable populations

#### 2. Strategy

The Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) set a goal of enhancing services and access for veterans, military personnel and their families.

#### 3. Activity 1.1 King County Veterans Program

Activity 1.1 King County Veterans Program is the only activity funded under this activity.

#### 4. Service Needs, Populations to be Served, and Promotion of Equity and Social Justice

##### a) *Service Needs*

King County is home to at least 127,000 men and women who are current and former active duty members of the U.S. military, Reserves and the National Guard. Since the 1950's, King County has funded and provided services to indigent disabled, and/or homeless veterans with funds provided by Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 73.08.010 which authorized a dedicated property tax. With the passage of the Veterans and Human Services Levy in 2005 and its renewal in 2011 for another six years, additional resources have been able to address the needs of military personnel and their families which may includes such things as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), mental illness, substance abuse, unstable housing or homelessness, unemployment and a variety of 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.

The 2013 report "Status of Veterans and Veterans in King County" developed by the King County Department of Community and Human Services, Performance

Measurement and Evaluation Unit provided important information on the current service needs of veterans and their families. Some of the data presented in the report includes the following:

- There are more than 17,000 low-income veterans living below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, of which more than 5,900 are below 100 percent of the poverty level.
- There are likely more than 20,000 veterans in King County who have experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Based on national trends, there may be as many as 12,000 King County veterans with PTSD reluctant to seek treatment or support.
- While there are many veterans with disabilities, there are also many thousands who are not disabled yet are experiencing homelessness, poverty and/or unemployment.
- As many as one in three women veterans experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST) during service. Potentially over 5,000 King County veterans have been affected by MST.
- Homeless veterans are disproportionately persons of color, and homeless women veterans are significantly younger than their male counterparts.

A broad array of services have been developed to respond to the varied needs of current military personnel, veterans and their families to help them stabilize their lives and more toward self sufficiency. A description of services provided by the KCVP is included below.

*b) Populations to be Served*

The KCVP was mandated by RCW 73.08.080 to serve indigent US military veterans and their families. With the passage of the Veterans and Human Services Levy the target population for KCVP services was expanded to include veterans, including those who served in any branch of the military including the National Guard and Reservists for any branch of the military, current military personnel including National Guard and Reservists, and family members. The Levy voter initiative defined “Family” as a veteran’s or military personnel’s spouse, domestic partner or child or the child of the spouse or domestic partner of other dependent relatives if living in the household of a veteran or military personnel.

*c) Promotion of Equity and Social Justice*

The Equity and Social Justice Ordinance requires King County to consider the impacts of its policies and activities on its efforts to achieve fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color and low-income communities.

*i) Will your activity have an impact on equity?*

The KCVP has always had a positive impact on equity. Originally funded by RCW, the authorized Veterans Relief Fund required the program to target services to low income and indigent veterans. It has historically served veterans of color in numbers higher than the numbers represented in the community.

- ii) What population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal? How will communities of color or low-income communities be impacted?

As mentioned above, KCVP has historically served low income and indigent veterans. With the addition of Levy funding, the KCVP continues to serve high numbers of veterans from many communities of color and low-income veterans. For example, the KCVP has been successful at increasing service utilization by low-income black veterans though fewer white and Asian veterans are being served compared to their proportion of King County's low-income veterans.

- iii) What actions will be taken to enhance likely positive impacts on these communities and mitigate possible negative impacts?

The KCVP has moved from reliance on the Veterans Relief Fund for services to implementing a case management approach which is described in detail below. The case management model provides an indepth assessment of a veteran's needs across a number of domains such as housing, employment and a more sustainable path toward self-sufficiency than in the past.

## 5. Activity Description

The KCVP program includes several components that are described below.

### Case Management

As indicated above, with the influx of Veterans Levy dollars, the KCVP program moved to a case management model. Instead of each year providing a veteran assistance for housing or utilities, a case management model to support more lasting change in a veteran's life was implemented.

A sophisticated electronic client records system was created to support the case management program that allows tracking of assessments and monitoring of client progress on identified goals. At intake and every six months, an assessment is conducted to evaluate the veterans needs along a number of domains such as housing, employment, income, life skills, mental health, and substance abuse to name a few. The client is encouraged to select the domains on which to focus their efforts and is supported by their case manager in step by step tasks that will help them achieve their personal goals and achieve self-sufficiency.

Three primary focus areas were designed to help move a veteran toward a more self sufficient life style, each emphasizing a different set of services designed to move a client to a state of increased independence. These include the following:

- **Housing:** assists homeless veterans or those at risk of homelessness with housing supports and emergency financial services.
- **Stabilization:** assists those Veterans who have housing but are at risk of losing their living stability and are in need of support to stay housed and stable. Services include mental health referrals, financial asset building support, referrals to Veteran benefit assistance, and other life stability counseling and guidance.
- **Employment / Education:** Assists veterans in exploring educational opportunities, and in obtaining employment, including vocational assessment, setting vocational goals,

assistance with work supports and tuition. Assistance with finding a job and job retention services are also provided as part of a case plan.

### **Satellite / Outreach Services**

Under the 2006 through 2011 levy, the KCVP expanded its geographic service area. In addition to its downtown Seattle office, it created a new office co-located with WorkSource in Renton. Additional satellite sites were established including those located in Auburn, Maple Valley, Federal Way, Enumclaw, Kirkland, Redmond, Shoreline and Lake City. Several of the core program services are available at these sites.

In addition, an outreach worker has been visiting senior centers in King County including the Carnation, North Bend, Maple Valley, Auburn, Kent, Issaquah, North Shore and Shoreline programs. While initially a surprising number of veterans, widows and family members were assisted in obtaining Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and services through these efforts, the numbers served by the outreach and satellite services has fallen off. As a result, the satellite and outreach service program is currently under review.

Finally, our King County Business Coordinator provides outreach to employers to connect Veterans with employment opportunities. As part of this role, job fairs and hiring events are held throughout King County, including an annual employment event in collaboration with the National Guard in South King County. This event provides an additional outreach opportunity to reach the National Guard service members and their family members.

### **Shelter / Housing**

KCVP contracts with the Salvation Army's William Booth Center (WBC) to provide 40 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 workready, 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 two 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.

Each week at the KCVP WorkSource Renton a “Veterans Housing Options” workshop is held to assist veterans in understanding the array of housing options available to them. Service options range from emergency shelter, transitional housing, HUD VASH Section 8 opportunities and other housing resources. Partners from federal, state and local entities join together to hold this weekly workshop. The model has been replicated as a best practice in Pierce County.

### **Financial Assistance**

Prior to the voters approval of the Veterans and Human Services Levy, the RCW authorized Veterans Relief Fund was the sole source of funding for KCVP and the primary focus of the program was providing financial assistance to needy veterans. With the passage of the Levy, the emphasis of the KCVP is to provide holistic case management services described above to the veteran as they achieve personal goals, including obtaining housing, increasing income, engaging in substance abuse treatment, or obtaining employment to move them toward a life of increasing self sufficiency. Financial assistance continues to be a tool used to help support veterans on that path. Some of the ways this short term assistance is used to assist veterans are listed in the table below.

Housing – rent, mortgage, safety deposit
Utilities – heat, electricity, gas
Food vouchers
Work – license fees, work clothes
Medical – dental or medical bills
Employment Services

### **Employment Services**

In 2012, KCVP utilized Levy funds to implement Activity 2.6 C: Aerospace and Veterans Employment Training Initiative. This pilot project assisted veterans and their family members and other in obtaining skills, training and employment in the local manufacturing industries. The pilot was highly successful and allowed the KCVP to develop best practices and employment strategies to integrate the employment pilot into the regular KCVP programmatic offerings at the pilot’s conclusion. Thus, Levy dollars currently allow KCVP employment services to be offered out of both KCVP primary service hubs: WorkSource Renton and Downtown Seattle KCVP office. Services include resume assistance, job counseling and placement, career testing and skills assessment. The social worker and the client complete a comprehensive needs assessment to identify strengths and barriers to obtaining and 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 site in particular 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. The KCVP Renton team is integrated into these WorkSource services and eligible veterans have access to all the resources to assist in obtaining and maintaining jobs.

## 6. Funds Available

The 2012 - 2017 Service Improvement Plan allocated \$2,485,000 annually to implement Activity 1.1, King County Veterans Program as described in the table below. All funds are to be spent in the year in which they are allocated. Any funds unspent at the end of the contract period will be reallocated.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Veterans Levy</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>
<b>Human Services Levy</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>	<b>\$2,485,000</b>

## 7. Evidence-based or Promising Practices

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 works closely with community partners and other federal, state and local veterans groups to collaborate and integrate services.

KCVP is improving its processes towards best practices, notably in the employment and education focus areas. There is a lack of research on best practices for working with veterans in general, 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 has received training in Motivational Interviewing, which is a best practice for engaging clients into services.

## 8. Service Partnerships

KCVP has ongoing 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 services for those who are homeless.

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 to build capacity to provide PTSD and community-based services to veterans of color by providers of color.

KCVP has developed strong relationships within the Seattle King County WorkSource System and is now integrated in the WorkSource sites. This integration allows for a broad connection to other training and employment resources funded through the Department of Labor. Through these partnerships, veterans and their families have greater access to resources that can assist the family in finding quality employment and in raising their income levels and moving towards self-sufficiency. 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.

## 9. Performance Measures

The following performance measures were identified by the Levy's Performance Measurement and Evaluation Unit for the King County Veterans Program.

Objectives	Service Outputs/ Measures	2014 Target(s)
Engagement/ Assessment	• Number of persons contacted by KCVP	2,400
	• Number of persons completing assessment	1,200

Objectives	Service Outputs/ Measures	2014 Target(s)
<b>Stabilization/ Crisis Resolution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of financial assistance</li> <li>• Number of clients receiving financial assistance</li> <li>• Number of shelter bed nights</li> <li>• Number of veterans served at shelters</li> <li>• Percent of shelter clients moving to more stable housing</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">\$ 550,000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1,800</p> <p style="text-align: center;">13,505</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TBD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">50%</p>
<b>Treatment/ Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of service contacts</li> <li>• Number of case plans created</li> <li>• Percent clients who complete one or more case plan goals</li> <li>• Percent of clients who increase self-sufficiency</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">22,200</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1,000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">80%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">88%</p>
<b>System Resources/ Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and types of improvements made to VIBE</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">IT Programmer's log</p>

These performance targets may be adjusted on an annual basis. Current targets can be found in the Levy Evaluation Plan Implementation Plan and Activity Levy Evaluation Templates on the Levy website:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy.aspx>.