

MILITARY AFFAIRS AND VETERANS DEPARTMENT



**COJ COMMITMENT TO
ENDING VETERAN
HOMELESSNESS**

WHAT WE DO



- **1. Veterans Services**
 - **2. Social Services**
 - **3. Outreach/Advocacy**
-
- **Goal: “Most Military and Veteran-Friendly City in the World”**

SPECIAL EVENTS



**Purple Heart
Observance**



**Homeless Veteran
Stand Down**



**Military Spouse
Night Out**

SPECIAL EVENTS



**Memorial Day
Observance**



**Celebration of Valor
(previously Week of
Valor)**



**Veterans Day
Parade**

SPECIAL EVENTS



Homeless Veteran Stand Down

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Eligible candidates to HVRP include

- Veterans who “at risk” of being homeless within 60 days.
- Veterans who identify as “at risk” include but not limited to:
 - Low income, facing eviction, referred from a shelter, welfare or public assistance recipients as well as those who are “recently housed” veterans within the past 14 days.
- Veterans cannot have a bad conduct discharge.
- Recently incarcerated.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

- **COJ awarded new HVRP Grant JULY 1, 2017. Successfully maintained Grant in PY17, PY18, PY19, and PY21. In 2020 COJ maintained the program with local funding. We are currently in PY 22 with the new grant.**
- **During performance period July 1, 2017 – present COJ HVRP enrolled over 437 Veterans. All were referred to and co-enrolled with Career Source NE Florida and registered on Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM). Also, all were referred for placement to Changing Homelessness and Community Resource and Referral Center.**

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

- **Support Services** align with our local housing assistance strategy to ensure rapid connection to housing for eligible Veterans through participation in our local Coordinated Entry System. HVRP staff attends weekly and monthly meetings with Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Ability Housing, Inc., Clara White Veteran staff, Changing Homelessness and many other organizations who are members of our local CoC agency including Sulzbacher Center Veteran staff. As a subcontractor for the HVRP program, the Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless provides Case management and training services.. Through Sulzbacher, eligible Veterans have access to employment assistance, career training,shelter, meals, life skill classes, and other applicable services.
- **NEFL Women Veterans** is a valued partner that COJ HVRP works with frequently. Founder and CEO Dee Quaranta is a longtime partner of COJ Military Affairs and supports our mission by participating in important events such as the Homeless Veteran Stand Down. Female veterans are generally more difficult to locate and therefore more difficult to serve. Maintaining a strong partnership with NEFL Women Veterans allows us to serve and offer HVRP services to this important and underserved demographic. Collaboration with Sulzbacher Villages is important to supporting homeless women Veterans.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

- **The Duval County Veterans Treatment Court** is a program designed to provide essential substance abuse treatment services, mental health services, or both, to current and former military service members who have been arrested for a criminal offense and in which a nexus between the offense or diagnoses and the veteran's military service exists. COJ HVRP works closely with the Senior Mentors of the program to ensure that HVRP employment services and access to other Veteran benefits are offered as part of the overall recovery strategy of Veterans facing these barriers. Most of these veterans are truly relieved to find they reside in a city where programs like ours exist that can help them get back on the path to independence by working with them and lessening the anxiety that may be associated with rejoining the workforce.
- **Three Rivers Legal Services** in partnership with COJ Military Affairs offers a free legal clinic for Veterans concerning housing, income, disability, some family matters, and Veterans benefits. Veterans can sign up for this service while at our offices. Services are provided monthly.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

- Enrolled Veterans received Job search assistance and Life Skills & Money management training. We purchased work tools, interview/work clothes, and assisted with fees for attaining FL Drivers Licenses or special licensing for employment where needed.
- Since July 1, 2017, **333** Veterans were successfully placed into employment. Including 28 that we placed while not funded in 2020.
- In Q1 of PY21 we have achieved an Average Hourly Wage (AHW) of **\$15.92** overall. Employed Veterans are followed for a period of 1 year after initial placement. This allows COJ HVRP to assist in maintaining or placing Veterans in new jobs should better opportunities present themselves or employment is lost.
- Using the IRS Formula for wage calculation, a work year of 2,080 hours @ \$15.92/hr. results in a yearly income of over \$33,000 earned by HVRP clients.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM SERVICES OFFERED

- During performance period July 1 2017 – present, COJ HVRP enrolled over 437 Veterans. All were referred to and co-enrolled with Career Source NE Florida and registered on Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM).
- Over 95% of enrolled Veterans completed Vocational or Technical Training programs which we developed with Training partners based on current job market data for our area which allowed us to target local employers that offered benefits and a higher wage at entry.
- 437 Veterans were referred for placement in Transitional or Permanent Housing. This was accomplished by working with partners in local Continuum of Care (CoC) that operate VA Housing programs. Assisting Veterans in finding and maintaining employment has also allowed many Veterans Experiencing Homelessness the ability to “self-resolve” by attaining housing using the income from employment should they not enroll in a VA housing program.
- 100 % of enrolled Veterans were referred to the VA directly or referred to Veteran Service Officers (VSO) within COJ Military Affairs for benefits (Medical, Educational, etc.) related to their military service. By having COJ VSO’s onsite and available to assist this resulted in a large % of those enrolled in HVRP to order service/medical records and then apply for Service-Connected Disability (SCD) or other VA benefits while visiting HVRP offices.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

- 333 Veterans were successfully placed into employment. So far in PY 21 we have achieved an Average Hourly Wage (AHW) of \$15.92 overall. Employed Veterans will be followed for a period of 1 year after initial placement. This allows COJ HVRP to assist in maintaining or placing Veterans in new jobs should better opportunities present themselves or employment is lost.
- In PY 21-22 HVRP has 100% Placement Rate for “Episodically (chronically) Homeless”. From July 2017 to present performance period, we have averaged over 91% for this critical sub-category of Veterans.
- Over 95% of enrolled Veterans completed Vocational or Technical Training programs which we developed with Training partners based on current job market data for our area which allowed us to target local employers that offered benefits and a higher wage at entry.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

- All enrolled Veterans received job search assistance and Life Skills & Money management training. We purchased work tools, interview/work clothes, and assisted with fees for attaining FL Drivers Licenses or special licensing for employment where needed.
- Career Source satellite offices are in our office Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays to help with resumes, job search, and interview skills.

COJ HOMELESS VETERANS' REINTEGRATION PROGRAM SERVICES OFFERED

- Employment services
- Referrals to partnered agencies (SSVF, VA..)
- Case management
- Tax/legal services
- Resume and interviewing assistance
- Assist with transportation during work search and actual employment
- Provide clothing/ tools not provided by the employer
- Training: forklift, security, and other training available based on client preference.

The City of Jacksonville Military Affairs and Veterans Department has run a successful HVRP grant longer than any current grantee in the state of Florida by providing employment outcomes that result in long term retention, thus reducing the cycle of homelessness that some veterans experience. They are third in the region for the number of active years they have served as a DOL/VETS HVRP grantee. City of Jacksonville is unique in being the only non - non-profit or profit HVRP in the Atlanta Region, a distinction they've not always held, but are the only success.

Based on the amount of funding awarded, the City of Jacksonville has one of the most successful HVRP programs in this region. They maintained a high level of successful enrollments and placements throughout the pandemic and are beginning to see pre-pandemic outcomes during the last PY.

The City of Jacksonville Military Affairs and Veterans Department had the most successful HVRP grant in the state FL both during COVID and post COVID. Many of our grantees are still struggling to find and enroll Veterans in the program. Regionally, City of Jacksonville's outcomes indicate their success rate is higher than most HVRP grantees based on enrollment, placement, episodic homeless, and retention percentages when compared to the funding received for this program. The City of Jacksonville has a long, established history of placing Veterans in the Jacksonville area, thereby reducing the number of homeless and the recurrence of homelessness.

- Bernadette Walsh, Florida State Director - DOL VETS at U.S. Department of Labor



Harrison Conyers

hconyers@coj.net

Supervisor, Military Affairs & Veterans

Dept.

City of Jacksonville, Florida