



Detailed Lean Improvement Project Report

For the June 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014, reporting period

Agency name: Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

Improvement project title: Incarcerated Veteran Work Release Reentry (Pilot in Pierce and Cowlitz Counties)

Date improvement project initiated: In April 2014, a team consisting of WDVA and Department of Corrections (DOC) administrator's travelled to Baltimore, MD, to represent Washington State at a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) sponsored Technical Grant conference to discuss issues surrounding Justice Served Veterans and how best the justice system can address this population.

Summary: A committee was formed and a multi-agency process map was developed prior to implementing a work release pilot in two counties, Pierce and Cowlitz, as of October, 2014. WDVA sponsored the creation of a process map detailing an offender's progression through the prison system in an effort to understand the complexities of incarceration prior to release.

The first WA Justice Served Veterans Symposium was held September 23, 2014, in Olympia to meet the requirements of the SAMHSA Technical grant. Presenters at the symposium included Henry J. "Hank" Steadman, Ph.D., President of Policy Research Associates (PRA), who is internationally known for his research in the areas of interfacing behavioral health and criminal justice systems and violence among people with mental disorders, Judge Brett Buckley who is currently the Presiding Judge at Thurston County District Court and also serves as Presiding Judge for Thurston County Mental Health Court and Thurston County Veterans Court, and Judge Vance Peterson, Presiding Judge at the Spokane County Veteran's Enhanced Treatment Court. In attendance were DOC, WDVA, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Mason County Court, Clark County Court, WSU researchers, law enforcement, and veteran nonprofit organizations.

Details:

Description of the problem: Transition from prison to community is proven through research to be a struggle for many offenders. Work release is the target location for the pilot as the federal VA considers work release to be in the community and the individual is no longer an offender, thus, eligible to apply for all of their earned veteran's benefits and entitlements.

The aim of this pilot is to demonstrate through purposeful attention to those veterans releasing to work release in the target counties, that there can be an impact on successful reintegration to the community. A hurdle for DOC is convincing an offender to consider work release since it is not free to the offender (a daily rate of \$13.50 a day is required per DOC Policy). The aim is to activate as much of the offenders federal benefits while in work release so that the \$13.50 won't be a burden on the offender. Secondly, educating veteran offenders to the advantage of working with a Navigator while in work release who is knowledgeable



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WA State Department of Veterans Affairs: Assistant Director, Program Managers, Incarcerated Veterans Program Coordinator

Federal Partners: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System (VHA)

Community Partners: Goodwill, Centers for Excellence, and WorkSource

Other State Agencies: Employment Security Department, and Health Care Authority Office of Program Integrity (Veterans Benefit Enhancement/PARIS Projects)

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