

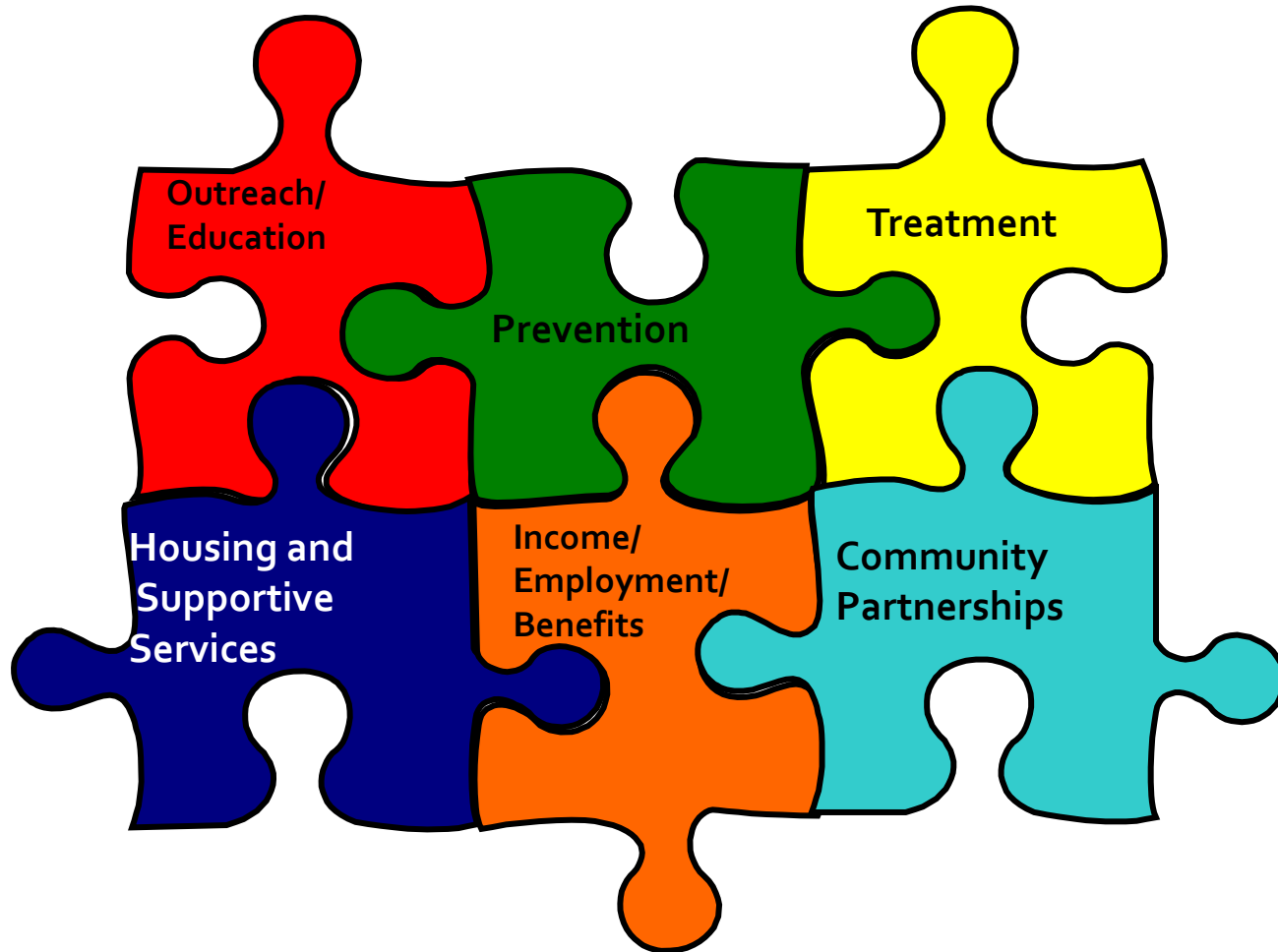


**“Jailed Rural Pennsylvania Veterans
in the Criminal Justice System”**

**Veterans Justice Outreach Program
Butler, PA**



Strategy to End Homelessness Among Veterans





Overview of Justice Programming

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

(county jails, probation, pre-trial & diversion)

<http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

(state/federal prisons)

<http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/Reentry.asp>

Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC)

<http://www.nadcp.org/learn/veterans-treatment-court>





VJO: Law Enforcement, Jail, Court Outreach

VA Medical Centers now provide outreach to justice-involved Veterans in the communities they serve.

A justice-involved Veteran is:

- A Veteran in contact with local law enforcement who can be appropriately diverted from arrest into mental health, substance abuse or other VA treatment service.
- A Veteran involved in adjudication or monitoring by a court.
- A Veteran who commits a non-violent crime and who may be better served receiving VA treatment instead of incarceration.





VJO – Goals

- Promote successful community integration of reentry Veterans
- Conduct outreach while incarcerated
- Engage in treatment and rehabilitation to:
 - Prevent homelessness
 - Readjust to community life
 - Desist from commission of new crimes or parole or probation violations





VJO – Services

- Outreach to Veterans in jails, probation, pre-trial, etc.
- Pre-release assessment
- Case management
- Referral, diversion, linkage and advocacy to:
 - Medical, mental health, substance abuse, DUI, domestic violence, housing, employment, NSC/SC/SSD benefits, etc.





VJO Specialists

Each VA Medical Center has a VJO Specialist who is a licensed, independent practitioner. These individuals liaison with:

- Police (VA, Local, College/University, etc.)
- Courts (VTC/drug/DUI/mental health courts)
- Jails (County, Lock-ups)

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Sequential Intercept Model

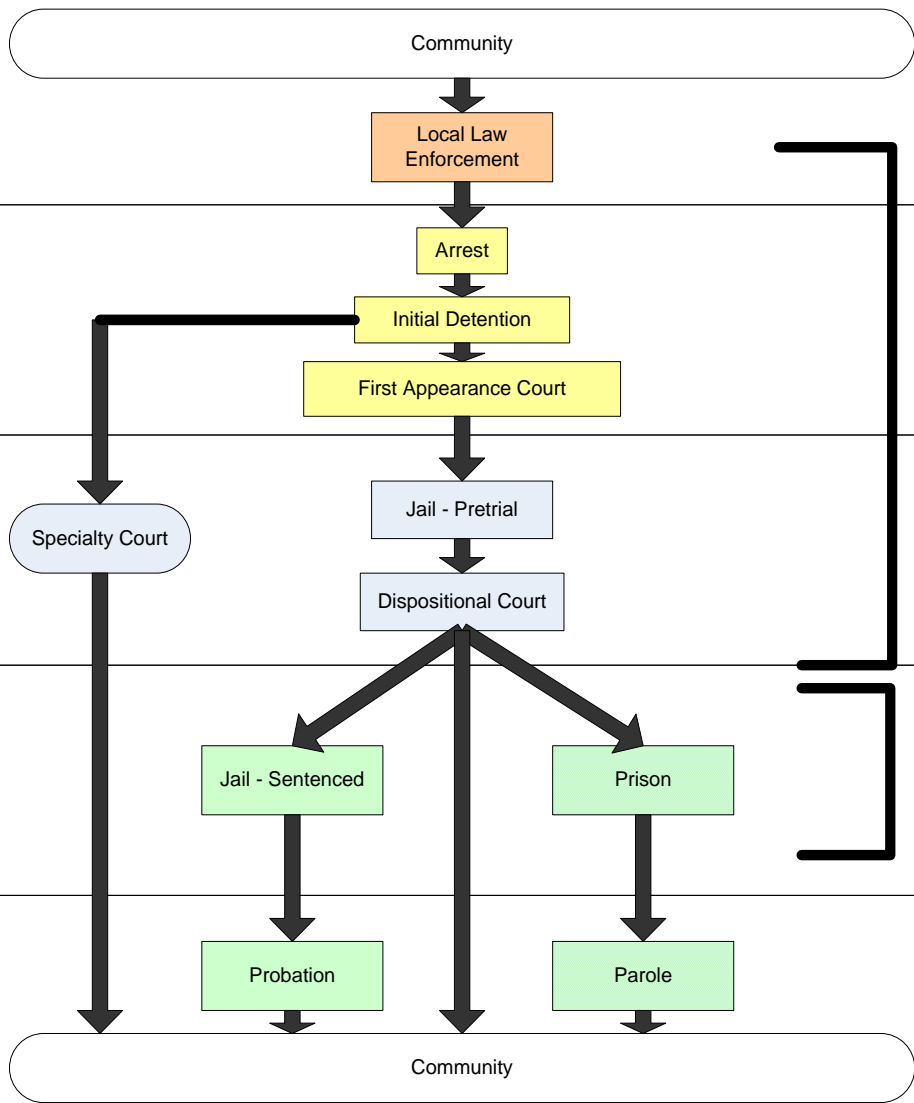
Intercept 1
Law enforcement/
Emergency Services

Intercept 2
Initial detention/
Initial court hearings

Intercept 3
Jails/Courts

Intercept 4
Reentry

Intercept 5
Community corrections/
Community support



**LAW ENFORCEMENT-COURTS-JAILS:
VA Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)**

**PRISONS:
Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)**



Veterans In the News

Lots of media attention.

Stories tend to reflect the negative:

- In theatre, combat fatalities and misconduct
- At home, deaths
 - Veterans committing homicides
 - Veterans committing suicides
 - Veterans jailed for DUIs, Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence, Assaults, Child Support





News (Cont'd)

- Army Veteran pleaded no contest to motor vehicle homicide; had 2 prior arrests DUIs.
- Marine Veteran of Iraq shot a man whom he thought had sexually abused his stepson.
- Air Force Veteran convicted of sexual assault.
- Marine had a conviction for misdemeanor spousal abuse prior to his deployment to Iraq.
- Navy Veteran gets 2 years probation for arson.
- Coast Guard Veteran jailed for 3rd DUI and Theft.
- Army Veteran charged with drug possession, theft and prostitution.






Historical

- The VA has been addressing the needs of the homeless veteran population since the advent of Public Law 100-6 in 1987, which authorized appropriations to support clinical teams to conduct outreach to homeless veterans and with community providers.
- As an outgrowth, the VA has launched a reentry initiatives, engaged in the Criminal Justice System to address the needs of incarcerated veterans via a homeless prevention measure.
- Like veteran homeless and substance abusers; some incarcerated veterans link their criminality and incarceration to their military service.





Context

- Veterans under charges, incarceration or on parole do not forfeit their eligibility for VA medical care, but VA does not, and never has, operated health care facilities which are equipped to care for individuals who require criminal incarceration. Under 38 U.S.C. 1710(g).
- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is not required to furnish care to a veteran to whom another agency of Federal, State, or local government has a duty under law to provide care in an institution of such government.
- VA may provide (through a contract or enhanced sharing agreement) medical services while the veteran is institutionalized. References: IL 2009-005 for Local Jails.





Trauma-related Symptoms/Behaviors

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability
- Anger
- Substance Use
- Alcohol
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Hypervigilance
- Explosive Personality
- Excessive speeding - erratic driving
- Bar fights, disorderly conduct
- Firearms violations
- DUI
- Possession of Illegal Substances
- Domestic violence





Invisible Wounds

- Combat can cause invisible wounds to the brain, mind, and soul
 - Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
 - Mental health conditions
- Both types of injuries can lead to
 - Poor judgment
 - Impulsivity
 - Difficulty in matching behavior to the context
- Behaviors attributable to these injuries
 - Can look like criminal behavior
 - Can be criminal





Categories of Offenses

- 1=Violent Offense (example: murder, manslaughter, assault, sexual assault, including rape or child molestation, robbery or other violent offense)
- 2=Property Offense (example: burglary, breaking & entering, larceny, motor vehicle threat, fraud, stole property, arson, shoplifting, vandalism, other property offense)
- 3=Drug Offense (example: possession, trafficking, other drug offense)





Categories of Offenses (Cont'd)

4=Public Order Offense (example: weapons offense, prostitution, public intoxication, disorderly conduct, DWI, other public order offense, child support)

5= Probation/parole violation

6=Other/unspecified

Avg. Cumulative: 3.3

Clusters: Child Support: 18%, Domestic Violence 17%,
DUI's 28%





Categories of Offenses (Cont'd)

Offenses	Frequency	Percent (%)
Violent Offenses	30	12.9
Property Offenses	45	19.3
Drug Offenses	41	17.6
Public Order Offenses	77	33.1
Probation Violations	23	9.9
Other	16	6.8





VJO – Butler VAMC

- Rural County Jails: Armstrong, *Beaver, *Butler, Clarion, Lawrence and *Mercer.

Note: Actively Pursuing VTC.

- Rural County Probation: 66% are on probation.
- # of Referrals: 363 Visited: 232 (63.9%)
- Problems Identified: Disorderly Conduct, Substance Abuse, DUIs, Simple Assault, Aggravated Assaults, Thefts, Property Offenses, Probation Violations, etc.
- Sex Offenders, Arson, Homicides
- # of Veterans Enrolled at VA: 63%





VJO – Butler VAMC

- Avg. Age: 44.3
- Gender: Males 222 (95.6%), Females 10 (4.4%)
- Race: White 166 (71.5%), Black 64 (27.5%)
- Education: Mostly High School
- Marital Status: Div. 96 (41.3%), Nvr Married 72 (31%)
- NSC/SC: Mainly NSC (194/38)
- Discharge: Mostly Honorable; UHC: 15.9% (Article 34's), OTH/BCD (9.4%) (Court Martial)
- Branch: Mostly Army; USMC, Navy, USAF, USCG
- Eras: Post-Vietnam, Vietnam, PGW and OEF/OIF





VJO – Butler VAMC

- Arrest Age Range: 10 – 65
- Avg. Arrest Age: 27.7
- Juvenile Arrests Prior to Service: 16%
- Lifetime Number of Arrests: 1 – 75
- Most Situational vs. Career Offenders
- Avg. Arrest Lifetime: 5.3
- Criminality Related to Service?
 - No 183 (78.8%), Yes 21 (9%), DK 28 (12%)





VJO – Butler VAMC

- Minority of Combat Veterans: 12.5%
- PTSD: 16% (Mainly from Combat)
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST): 4%
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 2%
- State/County Probation: 66%
- Homeless Episodes Prior to Jail : 59%
- Homeless Post-Jail: Yes 46 (19.8%), DK 34 (14.6%)
- Avg. # of times Homeless: 1.6
- Medical Problems: 52%
- Alcohol Problems: 62% & Drugs: 46%
- Domestic Violence (Abuser): 17%





VJO – Butler VAMC

- Current Psychiatric: 59%
- Depression: 48%
- Anxiety: 34%
- Violent: 16%
- Psychiatric Medications: 20%
- Suicidal Ideations: 13%
- Suicide Attempts: 6%
- Unemployed: 50.3%
- SC Psychiatric: 8%
- SC Other: 12%
- NSC Pension: 6%
- SSD/SSI: 16%





VJO – Butler VAMC

- Challenges: Transportation, Communication, Time, Competing Priorities, Housing and Job options, Budget, etc.
- Growing Themes: Child Support, Domestic Violence, Drugs, DUIs
- Sex Offenders & Arson cases; difficult challenges!
- Discussion & Future





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