

**ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE  
VETERANS COMMITTEE**

Thursday, September 21, 2023  
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Location:**  
**Tierney Center for Veteran Services**  
**1231 Warner Ave,**  
**Tustin, CA 92780**

**Committee Chair:** Eric Richardson, Volunteers of America

**Committee Members:**

Audel Gonzalez, Individual  
Becks Heyhoe, Orange County's United Way  
Melanie Martins, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Sarah Nance, CalOptima Health  
Jeffery Pagano, Orange County Veterans and Military Families Collaborative  
Michael Ruiz, Volunteers of America  
Jade Smith, Tierney Center for Veteran Services

**MINUTES**

**Welcome and Introductions** – Eric Richardson, Chair

**Public Comments** – Members of the public may address the Veterans Committee on items listed within this agenda or matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Veterans Committee. Members of the public may address the Veterans Committee with public comments on agenda items after the Veterans Committee member discussion. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes. In order to address the Veterans Committee, members of the public are to complete a Speaker Request Form prior to the beginning of each agenda item. Staff will call your name in the order received.

**BUSINESS CALENDAR**

**1. Veterans Registry Data Review** – Eric Richardson, Chair

**a. Update on the Coordinated Entry System (CES) Veteran Registry data**

Eric Richardson presented the CES data. There are currently 271 veterans on the Veteran Registry, of which 160 are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Of the veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness, two veterans have remained on the Veteran Registry since 2021 and 21 veterans have remained on the Veteran Registry since 2022.

### Committee Discussion:

- Becks Heyhoe shared background on the Orange County's United Way acquisition of 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC) and stated that partnership with CES can improve the system.
- Audel Gonzalez suggested that highway callboxes should have the option to dial 2-1-1 and have the 211OC Virtual Front Door update location information in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

### Public Comments:

- Ed Gonzalez noted that many referrals from CES have HMIS profiles that are not up to date.
- Michelle Mai explained HMIS features and stated that there is a public location feature, but not many people use the feature.
- Amanda Brear stated that in Los Angeles County, many outreach team members use the location feature and has not noticed the location feature being used in Orange County.

## **2. Targeted Outreach for Veterans – Eric Richardson, Chair**

### **a. Overview of targeted street outreach efforts towards three Veteran subpopulations**

The current total for the three veteran subpopulations are:

- 45 total Older Adult veterans (ages 62 and older).
- 16 total veterans whose reported length of homelessness is longer than ten (10) years.
- 16 total veteran Families (households with at least one minor child and one adult).

### **b. Update on progress thus far on the Veterans Affairs (VA), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Regional Care Coordination Services teams**

There have been collaborative efforts between the VA, SSVF, Regional Care Coordination Services, and Outreach teams with case conference meetings occurring every two weeks focused on the three veteran subpopulations. The July 2023 data is being analyzed, however, there are plans to conduct targeted outreach for 58 new veterans. During targeted outreach, that the following services have been provided are shelter or hotel, extra support while in temporary accommodation, extra support towards finding housing, and ongoing support if temporary accommodation is not accepted.

### Public Comments:

- Richard Owens inquired on the length of time of motel assistance. Richard Owens also inquired if there was a plan to conduct targeted outreach for cold weather shelters.
- Ed Gonzalez clarified that for SSVF, motel assistance is offered when unit identification has taken place.

**3. Orange County Veterans and Military Connected Families Collaborative (OCVMFC) Ask the Questions Training Update** – Eric Richardson, Chair and Jeffrey Pagano, Convener Program Manager, OCVMFC

**a. Presentation on previous work completed by OCVMFC on the Ask the Questions campaign in Orange County**

Chair Eric Richardson provided a brief overview of the on previous work completed by OCVMFC on the Ask the Questions campaign in Orange County.

**4. Veterans Affairs (VA) National Housing Conference** – Eric Richardson, Chair

Chair Eric Richardson shared that he will be presenting on behalf of the Orange County CoC's Veterans Committee at the 2023 VA Permanent Housing Conference in Dallas, Texas. Chair Eric Richardson will be presenting on the participation of veteran leadership on the CoC Board in the Orange County CoC and the targeted outreach across veteran and non-veteran providers in Orange County.

Public Comments:

- Amanda Brear, Co-Chair of the One Team stated that there is an approach called “One Team” that is coordinates the VA, SSVF, and all veteran services providers and ensures the data quality of the By Name List (BNL) for veterans.
- Ed Gonzalez stated that Los Angeles County, the landscape is different as there are over 2,000 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. Ed Gonzalez shared the VASH program does not have sufficient case workers which is why SSVF is receiving training from Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) on how to complete PHA applications.

**5. Provider Feedback** – Eric Richardson, Chair

**a. Providers and members of the public are invited to share announcements, feedback and public comments related to Veteran homelessness.**

Chair Eric Richardson provided background on the Built for Zero movement that other cities and counties have committed to measure ending homelessness.

Amanda Brear stated through the Welcome Home OC program, there has been a total of 70 people housed since December 2022.

Becks Heyhoe shared information on the interest forms for the CoC Nominating Committee and CoC Board.

Michael Ruiz stated that there will be a new position for the Orange County (OC) Office on Aging and the OC Office on Aging will be utilized more for presentations.

Jade Smith provided an update on the Veteran Stand Down and Resource Event and shared that there were 181 registrants and 260 meals served at lunch. Jade Smith shared that the Veteran Stand Down and Resource Event had great turn out and participation which likely can be attributed to the transportation and marketing for the event this year. Jade Smith

noted that if anyone is interested in being in the housing group, she can be contacted via email to be placed onto the housing group.

Richard Owens stated that 99 units for veterans are under development, including 10 VASH units at the Riviera Motel in Stanton and 89 units at Estrella Springs in Santa Ana, CA. Richard Owens explained that Estrella Springs includes 38 units that are veterans specific and 51 units that have a veteran preference. Richard Owens shared information for the OCVMFC General Meeting taking place on September 28, 2023.

Mitzi Huff with Strong Families, Strong Children stated that the 2023 Health and Wellness Summit will take place on October 31, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at University of California, Irvine (UCI). If agencies are interested in registering as a table for the resource fair, Mitzi Huff can be contacted.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Chair Eric Richardson noted that next meeting will be rescheduled.