

## ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

### VETERANS COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 16, 2024

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.



**Committee Chair:** Becks Heyhoe, Orange County United Way

#### **Committee Members:**

Audel Gonzalez, Individual

Melanie Martins, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Jeffery Pagano, Orange County Veterans and Military Families Collaborative

Eric Richardson, Volunteers of America Los Angeles

Jade Smith, Acera Health

### **MINUTES**

**Welcome and Introductions** – Becks Heyhoe, 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 agenda item presentation. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes.

To address the Veterans Committee during the Public Comment period, 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.

Members of the public may also submit public comment by emailing [CareCoordination@ocgov.com](mailto:CareCoordination@ocgov.com). All comments submitted via email or at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting will be distributed to the Veterans Committee members and all comments will be added to the administrative records of the meeting. Please include “Veterans Committee Meeting Comment” in the email subject line.

### **BUSINESS CALENDAR**

1. **2024 Orange County Point In Time Count** – Sarah Jones, CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination
  - a. Overview of Veteran data presented in the Orange County 2024 Point In Time Data Summary.

Sarah Jones presented on the data from the 2024 Orange County Point In Time Count. During the unsheltered PIT Count, those surveyed who identified as having served in the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves (Veterans) were asked for additional identifying information to ensure follow up and further connection to services. For further coordination of targeting and outreaching to unsheltered Veterans, Volunteers of America, Los Angeles (VOALA) staff were provided survey data collected during the 2024 PIT Count of all those surveyed who stated being a Veteran. VOALA staff then made efforts to engage and provide connections to services. Data Summary: The 2024 PIT Count Data Summary can be found at the Care Coordination – Additional Documents webpage at the following link:

<https://ceo.ocgov.com/sites/ceo/files/202405/2024%20Point%20In%20Time%20Count%20Summary%20FINAL.pdf>

#### Public Comments:

- Michael Ruiz shared that it would be helpful for future PIT Count efforts to be aware of known encampments of individuals experiencing homelessness.

#### Committee Discussion:

- Eric Richardson shared that the funding around COVID-19 relief played a large part in the decrease of numbers in the 2022 PIT Count. Eric Richardson recommended that at the next PIT Count volunteers receive improved training to collect more accurate data and record the specific location of each individual.
- Melanie Martins noted that there are differences between the PIT Count data and the By Names List (BNL) regarding Veterans. Melanie Martins suggested capturing specific data to be able to identify subpopulations within veterans.
- Chair Becks Heyhoe asked if City Net can provide a geolocation to VOALA to outreach to identified veterans. Chair Becks Heyhoe announced that OCUW will be hosting a virtual community chat on June 6, 2024 regarding the Orange County 2024 Point In Time Count.

## **2. Targeted Outreach for Veterans Update – Eric Richardson, Director for Housing, and Amanda Brear, Regional Program Manager, Volunteers of America Los Angeles**

Eric Richardson presented the following data from the BNL:

- 183 veterans experiencing homelessness, including
  - 22 unsheltered
  - 61 sheltered or at-risk of homelessness
- 125 Veterans with a Disability
- 119 enrolled in Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
- 122 enrolled in Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

Eric Richardson noted there have been collaborative efforts between the VA, SSVF, County contracted Regional Care Coordination Services, and street outreach teams, inclusive of case conferencing meetings occurring every two weeks focused on the three veteran subpopulations. 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.

Eric Richardson presented updates on the subpopulations for Veterans:

- 20 total veterans whose length of homelessness has been longer than ten (10) years
- 94 total Older Adult veterans (ages 62 and older)
- 23 total veteran Families with minor children (households with at least one minor child and one adult)

Public Comment:

- Marisol Johnson inquired about details relating to the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP).

Committee Discussion:

- Melanie Martins shared that the BNL helps the VA to connect to other agencies and build relationships. Melanie Martins shared the importance of working together with different agencies to access different resources.

**3. Orange County Outreach Services Mapping Update – Becks Heyhoe, Chair**

- a. Update on Orange County United Way’s United to End Homelessness efforts to map available outreach services in Orange County

Chair Becks Heyhoe presented on OCUW’s research on available outreach services in Orange County, detailing known outreach providers for each city and region.

Committee Discussion:

- Melanie Martins inquired about the services provided by the HOPE Center.
- Eric Richardson announced the opening of the Central Cities Navigation Center.
- Larry Smith inquired if cities with no assigned outreach team have access to Coordinated Entry System (CES) through street outreach services.

**4. Veterans Committee and Orange County Veterans and Military Families Collaborative (OCVMFC) Housing Working Group Collaboration and Alignment Discussion – Becks Heyhoe, Chair, and Eric Richardson, Director for Housing, Volunteers of America Los Angeles and OCVMFC Housing Working Group Chair**

- a. Discuss ideas for further collaboration and alignment between the Veterans Committee and the OCVMFC Housing Working Group

Chair Becks Heyhoe and Eric Richardson led a discussion around future collaboration between the Veterans Committee and the OCVMFC’s Housing Working Group to discuss potential collaboration and alignment of efforts.

Committee Discussion:

- Melanie Martins shared on the importance of having all stakeholders present for meetings.
- Larry Smith emphasized the importance of different groups being presented in order to collaborate well toward a common goal.

**5. HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Voucher Update** – Sarah Jones, CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination

Sarah Jones presented on the current metrics for the HUD-VASH vouchers available in Orange County.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Becks Heyhoe stressed the significance of regularly bringing data related to the status of HUD-VASH vouchers in Orange County to the Veterans Committee.
- Larry Smith shared that it would be beneficial for the Public Housing Authorities to have a document specialist that can assist veterans to prepare documentation needed for the process of applying for a HUD-VASH voucher.

**6. Continuum of Care (CoC) Update** – Sarah Jones, CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination

a. Veteran Registry Data

Sarah Jones presented the following CoC updates:

- **Veteran Registry Data** – Currently, there are 183 veterans experiencing homelessness on the Veteran Registry. In the previous 12 months, 207 veterans have been housed in permanent, stable housing. Over 30 agencies, including the VA Community Resource and Referral Center, outreach providers, and shelter providers, continue to meet weekly to coordinate housing and services for veterans experiencing homelessness in Orange County. In the past 12 months, there has been a 24% decrease in the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in Orange County.
- **Coordinator for Coordinated Entry System (CES) for Survivors Request for Proposals (RFP)** - The County of Orange's Office of Care Coordination is requesting proposals from qualified organizations to act as the Coordinator for the CES for Survivors in Orange County's North, Central, and South Service Planning Areas (SPA). The selected organization will facilitate regional service coordination, ensure compliance with CES requirements, and implement strategic efforts to enhance access to housing resources. Additionally, the selected organization will support the implementation of diversion and solution-focused strategies to reduce homelessness and optimize housing resource utilization. Programs should be quickly operationalized and able to leverage additional funds to expand their impact.
- **2024 VAWA and Survivor Housing Community Conversations** – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is hosting a series of community conversations focused on successfully implementing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and survivor-centered housing at the system, project, and human levels. Each conversation will feature a diverse panel of system leaders, project staff, and people

with lived experiences from both the homelessness response and victim services worlds.

**7. Provider Announcements and Feedback** – Becks Heyhoe, Chair

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

Committee Discussion:

- Melanie Martins announced that there will be an Open House at Heroes Landing for 15-18 voucher-based units at Estrella Springs in Santa Ana, CA.
- Robert “Santa Bob” Morse shared that Life on the Streets Ministries will be hosting a breakfast at the Crossing Church.

**Next Meeting:** Special Meeting on Thursday, July 11, 2024, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Orange County United Way located at 18012 Mitchell South, Irvine, CA 92614