



Veterans Coalition of North Central Texas

Joint County Meeting

Veteran Service Organization County Forum: Dallas, Denton, Collin, & Tarrant

After Action Report

Thursday, July 31, 2013

11:00-2:00pm

The Veterans Coalition of North Central Texas (VCNCT) hosted its 2nd annual “Joint County Meeting: Veteran Service Organization County Forum” in Collin County this year. The Coalition called leaders and Veteran Service Organizations from Tarrant, Denton, Collin, and Dallas County; however, other counties were present. There are approximately 330,000 Military men and women in the DFW area. Given this, it is critical that all VSO’s are informed, organized, and working together to better serve our Military families. We believe working together will benefit each organization, County, and Military family. Our objective is to bring local leaders together and set the model for collaboration and networking. Our supporting organizations serve as the boots on the ground support, informing leaders on their needs as individuals and organizations. The meeting is growing into a regional strategic planning meeting that encompasses exhibitor’s booths to educate attendees of all the resources available to them.

The meeting was hosted by the North Texas Military Association (NTXMA), sponsored by TJ Thompson the Real Estate Cowboy and Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union. The meeting took place at Cottonwood Creek Baptist Church in Allen, TX. A total of 121 attendees were in attendance. Registered Coalition Members and County partners set up exhibitor’s booths to share information regarding county resources. The following organizations set up exhibitors booths:

1. People Services Staffing
2. Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star
3. South West Airlines
4. Department of Veterans Affairs, VISN 17 Network Office
5. Momentum Texas Inc
6. Starlite Recovery Center
7. Texas lawyers for Texas Veterans
8. Texas Veterans Commission
9. Equest Therapeutic Riding
10. Texas Dep. Of Public Safety
11. TTG Transformations
12. US Army
13. Construction Education Foundation
14. Greater Texas Capital Corp.
15. Recovery Resource Center
16. Kilroy's Legacy
17. Mentors-in-Arms

This year we included a panel discussion with leaders representing lead service organizations from each county. Tracy Little is a twenty year Air Force Veteran, a founding board member for VCNCT, and board member for the North Texas Dallas VA. Cliff Sosamon a United States Marine and the founder of NTXMA, Chris Martin served twenty-eight years in the US Army and is the President of the Denton County Veterans Coalition. Ryan Kelly served in the US Army for four years and is now a board member of the Veterans Coalition of Tarrant County (VETCO). He is also the College Credit For Heroes Program Coordinator at Tarrant County College. Juli McNeil has been employed with the VA for over 21 years as a Master’s Social Worker. She is currently the VISN 17-Clinical Administrative Officer to CMO

VISN 17/Lead Women Veterans Program Mgr. Ali Samana, board member of NTXMA, served as the host for the meeting. He Ali is a 5 year veteran of the United States Navy. Chaplain Jones opened the meeting with greeting attendees to the meeting, followed by a prayer and blessing the lunch. Nekima Booker, Chair of the VCNCT gave a brief welcome and introduction on behalf of the VCNCT and introduced the board members. Ali Samana then introduced NTXMA and recognized their board.

The panel was asked a series of questions, in which each panelist answered according to their organization, county, and personal experience. In conclusion of the panel discussion, the attendees were given note cards and asked to conduct small group discussions. During these discussion, attendees were asked to note their top three to five concerns regarding Veteran needs and services. On the back side they were asked to give their solutions to the identified needs and gaps in services. Below you will find a compilation of suggested gaps in services and solutions:

Housing Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not knowing nor understanding resources nor rights regarding housing discrimination. 2. Outreach and education regarding housing discrimination. 3. High number of homeless Veterans in Dallas County. 4. Assistance with house hold items 5. How to transition Vets into permanent housing 6. Long term program/commitment for Veterans that struggle with transitioning 7. Affordable housing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the level of VSO participation in Dallas County. 2. Become more aware of Veterans services. 3. Increase outreach 4.
Employment Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. 2. How to gain employment at the VA 3. Compile pertinent info needed for exiting personnel 4. Finding gainful employment 5. Finding highly qualified veterans 6. Finding rewarding jobs for veterans 7. How do employers connect to unemployed Veterans 8. Employers not hiring vets when they claim to have a veteran hiring initiative 9. Too many job fairs and not enough job offers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A website of dept & their needs. 2. Develop a website that list or main VA contacts. 3. Establish relationships with hiring agencies 4. Support Veteran mentoring programs 5. Centralize Veteran services and connect with other agencies 6. Expand partnerships 7. Focus on one program and stop duplication of services and programs 8. Educate and train HR departments on how to translate military jobs to civilian jobs 9. Design and disseminate an SOP for success after military services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Funding and equipment to secure IT jobs for Veterans 11. HR departments not understanding Veterans skill set 12. Resume building, interview skills, and training, 	
Education Gaps	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need established networking for community referrals. 2. Need mentors for our students(DCCCD) 3. Financial education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VCNCT present on campuses and at activities. 2. Offer trainings 3. Assist Veterans in pursuing higher education and find careers according to the limitations of their physical health 4. Produce a better study guide or program to help Jr. College students prepare for ASVAB
Mental Health Gaps	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of direction and uncertainty 2. Motivational support 3. The education of PTSD 4. Counseling services for Veterans and their families at no charge 5. Veterans being responsible for their lives and not looking for others to fix their problems. 6. Suicide prevention and awareness 7. Improvement of overall wellness of Veterans 8. Accessibility to services and awareness 9. Chemical dependency services for veterans dependent on (opioid) medications 10. Lack of tri-care providers in Collin County 11. Lack of discussion and understanding of substance abuse issues 12. Lack of support for MH issues beyond PTSD 13. Referrals to civilian providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a process that helps vets find who they are at their core, their purpose and vision in life 2. Military support groups 3. Public education classes on PTSD 4. Motivational support 5. Connect them with mentors and hold them accountable as they learn to properly manage their lives after service 6. Master directory for service providers 7. Network to private and corporate entities 8. Education campaigns to encourage veterans and bring awareness 9. Education on rights to benefits 10. County supported psycho education groups for family members and military members to increase understanding 11. Educate providers on military culture 12. Develop holistic case management services 13. Funding for program evaluation
Emergency Assistance Gaps	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial assistance 2. Extracurricular activities/Entertainment 3. Lack of direct referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate and train small non-profits on how to effectively network with other

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Funding for organizations 5. Proper screenings for assistance 6. Financial education 	<p>organizations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Build a good database for all to see and understand the missions. 3. Help smaller non-profits raise funds. 4. Train organizations on how to properly screen a veteran for services.
Marketing/Networking Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More networking in the community. 2. Services more welcoming to our Veterans by avoiding lengthy processes. 3. Service regulations regarding qualifying for resources and assistance. 4. Lack of community/societal education 5. Continued updated info for VSO services 6. Veterans already out of the service don't know about available resources 7. Advertising 8. Getting information on resources to Veterans 9. One stop shop for Veterans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More marketing in the community 2. Making our voices heard 3. More community education 4. Go to media to address Veterans awareness about NTXMA 5. More PSA's on TV, radio, and social media 6. Engage veterans to share the information 7. Develop more coalitions to become a one stop shop for Veterans, their families, and VSO's
Legal Issues Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Veterans not aware of legal assistance or resources. 2. Lack of proper or required documents(DD214) 3. Legal issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host a Veterans fair and invite social services to participate. 2. Invest in a coordinated intake system to track and match veterans to services. 3. VCNCT be lead org. to secure funding for such a database. VSO's to pay a membership fee to participate and have access to the database. 4. Seek government funding. 5. Educating law enforcement/vet courts
Networking/Collaboration Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to get a VA rep to sit on your orgs. board 2. Programs for families and children 3. Obtaining the names of departing service members that will arrive in the DFW area 4. Networking from local, state, and federal agencies 5. Staying connected to VSO's 6. Contacting families for support 7. Linking resources 8. Identifying organizations that are actually doing the work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help 4-H to set up more youth programs. 2. Link into the base/station transition assistance offices 3. Request list of Veterans exiting service 4. Establish contracts with City of Dallas 5. Contract with Government agencies 6. Attend meetings and support VCNCT 7. Get info to families prior to transitioning out of service 8. Coalitions established with agencies for employees 9. More money for evidence based programs

Transitioning Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Transitioning from the military 2. Transportation for older vets 3. Lack of grants for local organizations 4. Getting resources to the transitioning veterans 5. Getting Veterans to take advantage of resources sooner rather than later to assist them in transitioning 6. Program that enables soldiers(recruiters) who are not close to an installation to have a transition brief 7. Veterans staying connected once out of the service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Military requiring an orientation to discuss community orgs, resources, and programs. 2. 2. Partnering with organizations for funding 3. Mandatory transitional seminar 4. Engage veterans more 5. More coalitions centralizing resources 6. Offer better services upon transitioning out 7. Proper VA training for navigation and benefits
Other Gaps	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Computerized tracking and referral system 2. Spanish speaking coalition and services 3. Advocacy for special needs and seniors 4. Less interest in entering the military 5. Students are unaware of the benefits of joining the military 6. Educate parents on all the resources of the military 7. Assistance for students struggling with the ASVAB 8. Lack of transportation for veterans or access to public transportation 9. Achieving systematic change to US "barbaids" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a system with the option to direct veterans directly to services and a person 2. Become a partner with the PAYS program 3. Present Veteran and college programs to high schools and colleges 4.

In conclusion to the meeting, attendees were allowed to make announcements according to their upcoming programs and needs.