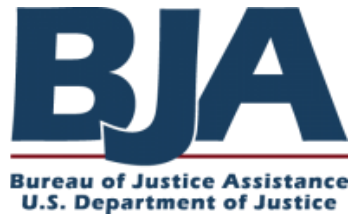


Innovative Programming for Veterans in the Criminal Justice System



Justice Center
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS



VA
HEALTH CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Agenda

- **Introductions**
- Veterans Affairs Justice Programs
- Middlesex County, Massachusetts
- San Diego County, California
- Questions and Answers

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Mission: The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs and helps to make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system.

Its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting edge tools and best practices they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization.



The Council of State Governments

Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments is our nation's only organization serving all three branches of state government. CSG is a region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy. This offers unparalleled regional, national and international opportunities to network, develop leaders, collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center

Mission

We develop research-driven strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities.



**Justice
Center**

Who We Are

We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, representing state officials in all three branches of government, with the expertise of a policy and research team focused on assisting others to attain measurable results.

How We Work

- We bring people together
- We drive the criminal justice field forward with original research
- We build momentum for policy change
- We provide expert assistance

Our Projects

FACE  FACE

Connecting Policymakers to People
Involved with the Correctional System

THE
STEPPINGUP
I N I T I A T I V E



the NATIONAL REENTRY
RESOURCE CENTER

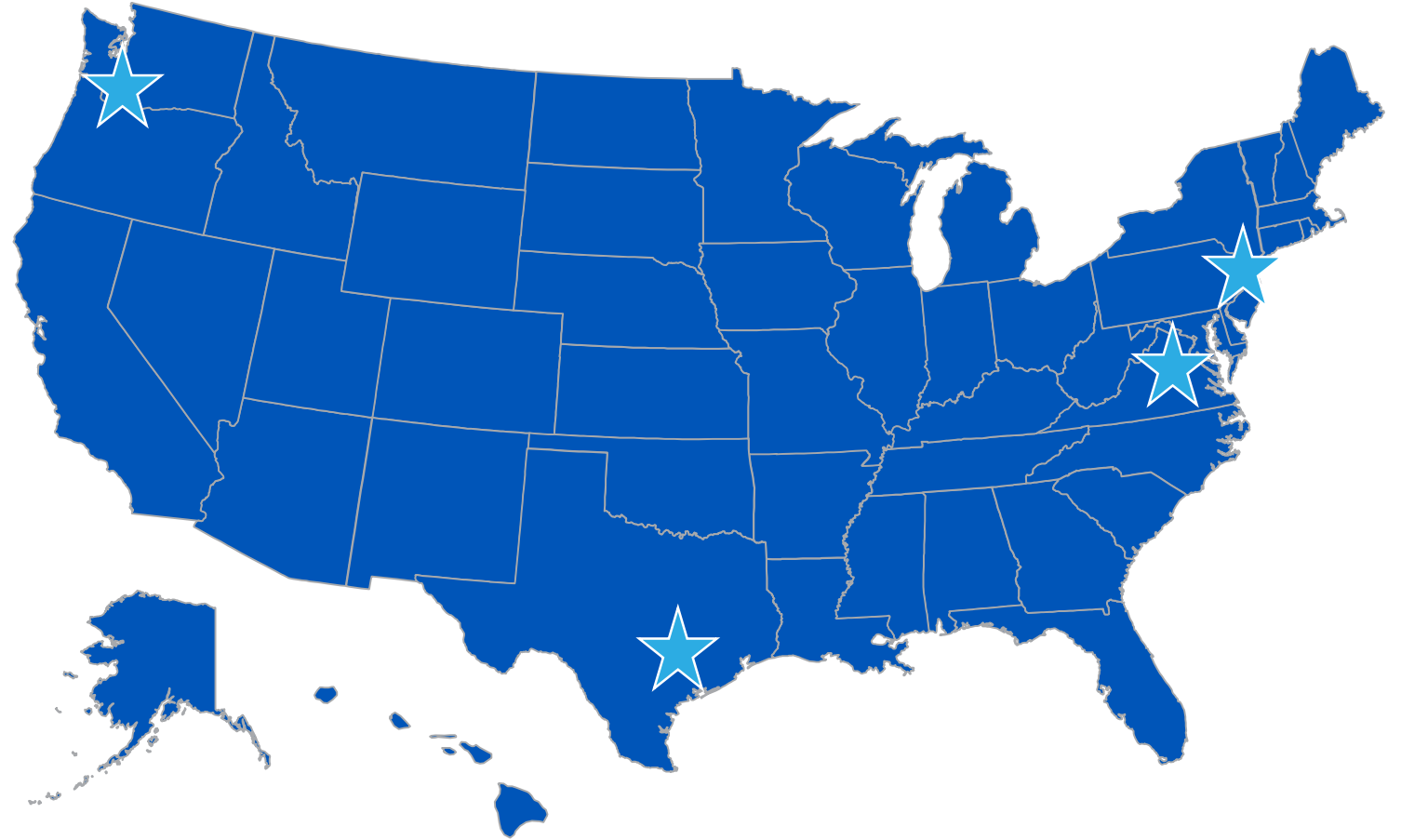
Clean Slate

CLEARINGHOUSE

**NATIONAL INVENTORY OF
COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES
OF CONVICTION**

Where We Work

The CSG Justice Center has more than 130 staff across the country, including our offices in New York City, Washington DC, Austin, and Seattle.



Speakers

- **Jessica Blue-Howells**, *Deputy Director, Veterans Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- **Christine Brown-Taylor**, *San Diego County Sheriff's Department Reentry Services Manager, California*
- **Sean Clark**, *National Director, Veterans Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- **Maria Fryer**, *Justice System and Corrections Policy Advisor for Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice*

Speakers (cont.)

- **Sheriff Peter Koutoujian**, *Middlesex County Sheriff's Department, Massachusetts*
- **Katherine Nicholas Malvey**, *Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist, Bedford, Massachusetts*
- **Angela Simoneau**, *Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist, Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System*
- **Mark Stovell**, *Senior Policy Analyst, The Council of State Governments Justice Center*

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What is Federal VA?

- United States Department of Veterans Affairs: <https://www.va.gov/>
 - Veterans Health Administration (VHA): <https://www.va.gov/health/>
 - 170 hospitals, 830 outpatient clinics, 370 vet Centers
 - Veterans Benefits Administration: <https://benefits.va.gov/>
 - 57 regional offices
 - Life insurance, home loan, disability compensation, pension, education, vocational rehabilitation
 - National Cemetery Administration: <https://www.cem.va.gov/>
 - 131 National Cemeteries
 - Burial, headstone, marker, medallion, burial flag, presidential memorial certificate, burial allowances

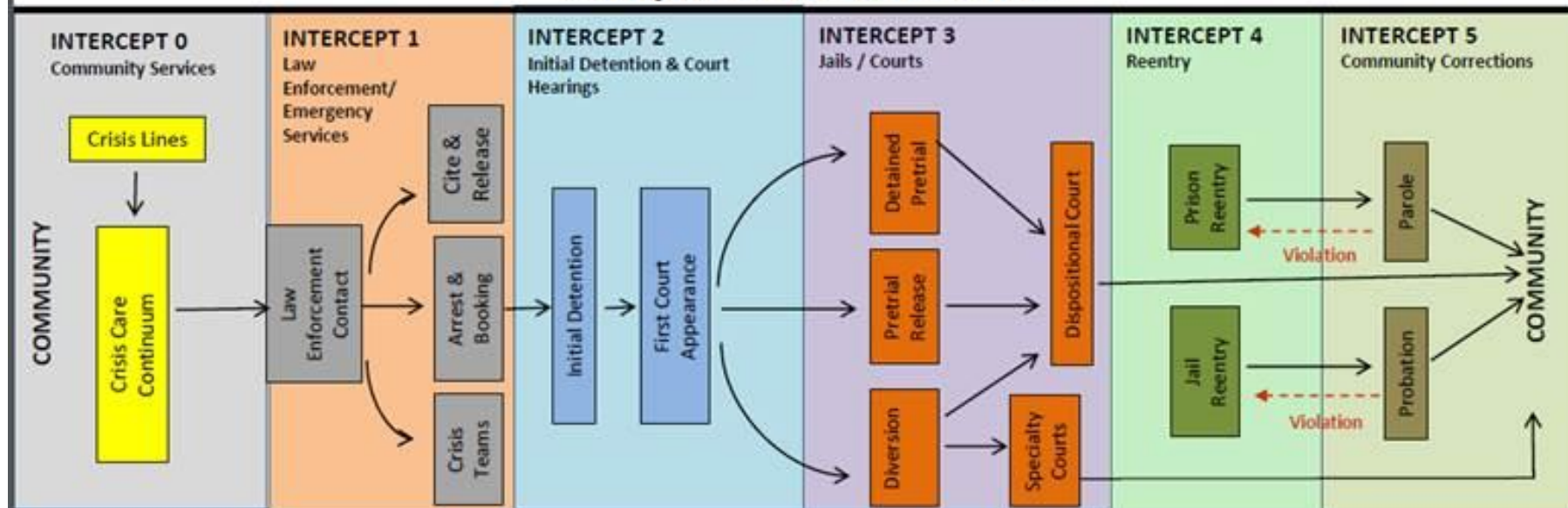
VHA Justice Programs: Mission

Mission: To identify justice-involved Veterans and contact them through outreach, in order to facilitate access to VA services at the earliest possible point. Veterans Justice Programs accomplish this by building and maintaining partnerships between VA and key elements of the criminal justice system.

Vision: Every justice-involved Veteran will have access to the care, services and other benefits to help him or her maximize their potential for success and stability in the community, including by avoiding homelessness and ending their involvement in the justice system.

Veteran Intercepts in the Criminal Justice System

Sample Decision Points



Opportunities for Diversion and Intervention at the lowest level possible

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis teams enroll or refer for enrollment in community mental health and or VA health services Hospital enrolls (VA or Community) Divert from CJ system make referral Transitional housing or residential treatment Assist with outpatient treatment/services, suicide prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis teams enroll or refer for enrollment Hospital enrolls Local booking determines veteran status Bail entity determines eligibility/enrolls Divert from CJ system make referral | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Defender or Prosecutor refers for assessment and VTC eligibility Correctional Officer determines Veteran status; referral to mission specific housing if appropriate; and referral to VJO/VA for benefits/appointment upon release VJO and HCRV outreach to identify Veterans Deferred Prosecution Agreements/Diversion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VJO and HCRV outreach to identify Veterans Public Defender or Prosecutor refers for VTC evaluation VTC clinician/probation assesses/refers to VTC/VA VJO specialist Jail intake determines eligibility for veteran/mission specific housing while awaiting release or referral to VTC program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOC/Jail intake determines eligibility/engages VA HCRV/VJO specialists VJO/HCRV outreach to identify Veterans DOC/Jail discharge planners determine eligibility/enrolls VA HCRV/VJO specialists Parole/probation determines eligibility/enrolls prior to discharge Transitional Community Services (not on supervision) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional/halfway houses enroll in healthcare Parole/probation enroll in healthcare prior to discharge VA HCRV/VJO specialist enrolls in VA healthcare benefits/community treatment |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|

VHA Justice Outreach Services

- **VHA Justice Outreach**
 - Gain access to the jail
 - Identify veterans and determine eligibility
 - Conduct outreach, assessment, and case management for veterans in local courts and jails
 - Provide/coordinate training for law enforcement personnel
 - Linkage to VA and community services/Resources
- Number of VJO Specialists funded: 364
- Number of 3,365 local jail facilities serviced: 1,700
- Number of Veterans receiving VJO services FY 2018: 48,670

VHA Justice Outreach Services

Healthcare for Reentry Veterans

- Gain access to the prison
 - Educate veterans' groups about VA and VA services
 - Identify veterans and determine eligibility
 - Reentry planning
 - Linkage to VA and community services
-
- Number of HCRV Specialists funded: 44
 - Number of 1,295 state and federal prisons serviced: 947
 - Number of incarcerated Veterans receiving reentry services, FY 2018: 9,766

Contact

National staff:

- Sean Clark, National Director VJP, sean.clark2@va.gov
- Jessica Blue-Howells, National Coordinator, HCRV, jessica.blue-howells@va.gov

Local staff:

- VJO: <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>
- HCRV: <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/reentry.asp>

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Middlesex Sheriff's Office Housing Unit for Military Veterans (HUMV)



Bill A. – Vietnam Veteran

“It’s kind of a relief, because at 70 years of age, becoming incarcerated, I didn’t know what to expect...It’s barracks style as opposed to being in a cell, and you got a certain amount of camaraderie because everyone in here has served in the military. So it just seems as though you form a little closer relationship than you would just being with one person like 20 hours out of the day or whatever the case might be.

Here it just seems like no matter what’s going on, whatever may be ailing you or whatever, there is always someone willing to give you a hand. And we notice whereas there are no walls here. We notice if someone is different than yesterday, and we approach them and ask, ‘Is there something wrong; is there anything we can do, or I can do?’”

Welcome to HUMV

- The Housing Unit for Military Veterans (HUMV) was created to instill a sense of community amongst former military servicemen through shared experience and common goals.
- Programs are delivered by individuals specially trained to meet the needs of the veteran population.
- The guiding principles of HUMV are a direct reflection of those military values that these veterans learned during their time in the service: Respect, Honor, Duty and Integrity.
- Many of the men accepted to this treatment program come to HUMV feeling broken and disheartened with fractured support systems.

HUMV By The Numbers

- 158 men spent at least 30 days in HUMV since its opening
- Individuals released from HUMV have lower recidivism rate than general population inmates
- 82.74% of HUMV participants have not recidivated since the program launched in 2016



HUMV Key Dates

July 2013 MSO, VA New England Health Care & Mass. DVS sign agreement to better ID veterans in custody to provide targeted outreach. MSO becomes one of the first agencies in the country to sign onto to the Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS).

January 2016 The Housing Unit for Military Veterans (HUMV) opens with 12 men. The unit—named by inmates—is a result of a collaboration between inmates, administrators and staff.

March 2016 Governor Charlie Baker visits the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction for a formal ceremony marking the opening of HUMV.

May 2018 HUMV is one of four jail units nationwide cited in the National Institute of Corrections' (NIC) *Barracks Behind Bars*. Document is released during convening of the NIC's Justice-Involved Veterans Network (JIVN) at the Library of Congress.

Participation in HUMV

- Voluntary program
- VRSS/Self identify as a veteran
- Transfer from another jurisdiction
- Interview with staff
- Desire to adopt unit mission



HUMV Partners and Programs

Partners

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- MA Department of Veterans Services
- MA Veterans Treatment Court
- Vet Centers
- Home Base (MGH & Boston Red Sox)

Programs

- Seeking Safety
- Resilient Warrior
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
- BATTLEMINDS
- Spirituality and Mental Health
- Phoenix

Veterans Justice Programs & MSO

- **Healthcare for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)** - clinician providing reentry services for all VA eligible veterans
 - Facilitates WRAP group to prepare them for transition upon release
 - Establishes a connection with veterans prior to release to help ease transition and provide support following release
 - VRSS allows for accurate identification of all sentenced VA eligible veterans to establish release plans for all identified needs
 - Assists with parole
 - Offers post release support group

Veterans Justice Programs & MSO

- **Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)**
 - VRSS (and VIS) – ran twice/month to allow for accurate identification of all pretrial VA eligible veterans to facilitate connection to VA services
 - VJO completes assessments and establishes treatment plans to provide to court to inform disposition/alternative to sentencing
 - Engagement in HUMV programming = benefit at time of disposition
 - Helps facilitate transfer of detained veterans to MSO/HUMV
 - Enhances access to Veterans Treatment Court

Veteran Treatment Courts

- **HUMV/VTC/VA**
 - Established agreement to take directly from all MA VTCs on a detention retainer if appropriate
 - Allows for the veteran to maximize their detention with access to related treatment and immediate support
 - Provides veteran with more positive influences with peers who can relate
 - VTCs receive more specific feedback about veteran progress and engagement
 - Can send sentenced veterans to HUMV, regardless of county

MA Brave Act

- **Brave Act:** Massachusetts statute allowing for veterans to be diverted, depending on charge
 - First time offenders with no previous convictions and no history of diversion
 - OUI first offense requires:
 - substance abuse, mental health, or traumatic brain injury diagnosis
 - **In addition to :**
 - Nexus
 - Probation to use best efforts to identify/confirm defendant's military service
 - Data collection to inform legislature and MA Trial Court about veteran profile/needs
 - Data collection informs VA about justice involved veteran profile and treatment needs (i.e., domestics/intimate partner violence, OUI)

Veterans Justice Programs

- **Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS):** database designed to identify every veteran in correctional institutions, defendants with open cases, and on community supervision
 - Used in every correctional facility in MA
 - Improves efficiency of VJP personnel
 - Improves effectiveness of VJP personnel to more adequately meet the needs of all justice involved veterans in a timely manner
 - Can be used at various intercept points along the continuum
 - Informs the development of veteran-specific programming in CJ system
 - Collaboration with MSO/HUMV to recommend the transfer of a incarcerated/detained veteran to HUMV if appropriate

VRSS and Outreach

- **Informs outreach**
 - Highlights people/agencies to partner with
 - Highlights people/agencies to provide education to
 - Facilitates creative dispositions
- **Enhances outreach**
 - How to work with justice involved veterans
 - Build support in community to best meet all needs
 - Use of telehealth technology
- **Outreach**
 - CIT with police
 - Education provided at bench bars, judiciary, webinars for attorneys with CLE opportunity
 - Biannual probation trainings

Considerations for Starting a Veterans Unit

- **VRSS:** Determine if enough veterans exist (within the geographic area and the facility itself) to support a program
- Partner with veterans affairs agencies from all levels of government
- Conduct an inventory of potential community partners, and seek buy-in from key stakeholders
 - Staff
 - Inmates
 - Veteran organizations
 - Specialty courts

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San Diego County

- Large jail system
- Geographic area
- Military bases
- Community support for veterans
- Government support



Veterans Moving Forward



- Veterans in custody
- Purpose
- Creation
- Partners
- Opened November 2013
- Evaluation

San Diego County: By the Numbers

- 300 veterans in custody
- 64 veterans in Veterans Moving Forward
- All branches and types of discharge
- Daily classes and activities
- Positive learning environment
- Dedicated deputies and professional staff

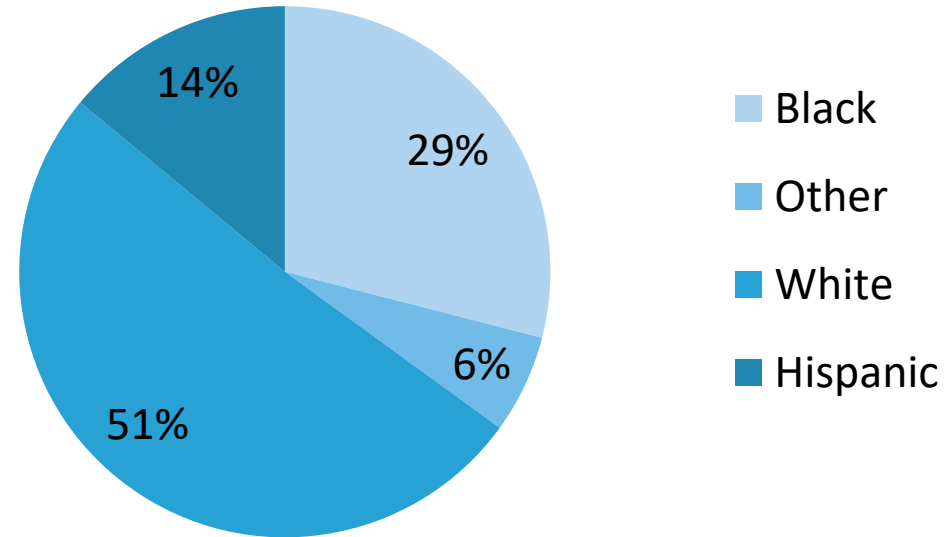


Community Partners

- District Attorney's Office
- Public Defenders Office
- Superior Court
- Probation Department
- Health and Human Services
- Veterans Administration
- Veterans Village of San Diego
- Interfaith Community Services
- American Combat Veterans of War

Demographics

Average age: 45
Age range: 19-73
Male 95%
Female 5%



National Institute of Corrections

- Justice Involved Veterans Network is a cross divisional effort at NIC in partnership with the VA working to improve outcomes for justice involved veterans
 - Law Enforcement Training
 - Barracks Behind Bars
 - Veterans Treatment Courts
- <https://info.nicic.gov/jiv/>

SANDAG evaluation study

- **Outcome results**

- 89% said VMF prepared them for reentry
- 43% comparison group vs 1% for rule violation
- **Conviction for new offense
16% compared to 27 %**

- **Recommendations**

- Increase the support for transition into the community
- Cross training of volunteers to understand military culture
- Strengthen partnership with VA

Links

- Veterans Moving Forward: Process and Impact Evaluation Results of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department VMF Program:
https://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_4548_24833.pdf
- Video from San Diego County - Sheriff's Veterans Moving Forward – 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em5hSi-EA9s>

Veterans Moving Forward: VJO In-Reach

- Orient veterans to VA benefits and services, as well as community resources
- Aid veterans in identifying individual eligibility and applying for benefits and services
- Assist with reentry planning and preparation for VJO Aftercare

Reentry Planning

Within 60-days of release:

- Linkages are made for housing and treatment programs in collaboration with VMF counseling staff.
- Appointments are scheduled for mental health, substance abuse, medical care, and other collateral needs.
- VJO Aftercare needs are identified.

VJO Aftercare

- **Transportation:** Provided from jail to placement by VJO Specialist when possible
- **Case management:** Ongoing reentry support is offered to Veterans leaving the VMF program.
- **Group:** A monthly drop-in group is held at the VJO office for graduates of the VMF program.

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Questions & Answers

Resources

- Addressing the Needs of Veterans in the Criminal Justice System:
 - <https://csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health/webinars/addressing-the-needs-of-veterans-in-the-criminal-justice-system/>.
- Health Care for Reentry Veterans Services and Resources:
 - <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/reentry.asp>.
- Veterans Justice Outreach Program:
 - <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>.

Contact Information

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- Sean Clark, *National Director, Veterans Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs* Sean.Clark2@va.gov
- Maria Fryer, *Justice System and Corrections Policy Advisor for Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice* Maria.Fryer@usdoj.gov

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Thank You!

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