

ORH

VHA Office of Rural Health

National Overview: Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP)

Sept.
2014

What are ORH Investments?

- Starting September 2014, ORH will administer \$10 million in grants to assist Veterans and their families who reside in rural and/or underserved areas of the country. This new grant program, known as the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP), will provide \$2 million dollars over a two-year period to five grantees for activities specifically geared towards rural Veterans and their families who are transitioning from military to civilian life.

What is the Impact of ORH Investments?

- 25,000 rural Veterans, plus their families, are expected to obtain increased assistance with the transition to civilian life.
- At the end of the two-year pilot, ORH will compile a report to Congress on the impact of RVCP. It will also identify best practices in delivery of Veteran transition services coordinated by community based organizations and/or local, state and tribal government entities.

Through collaborations with other VA program offices, Federal partners, state partners and rural communities, the VHA Office of Rural Health works to optimize the use of available and emerging technologies, establish new access points to care and employ strategies to increase health care options for all rural Veterans.

Background: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) created the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP) grant program to support Veterans and their families who reside in rural and/or underserved areas of the country. Grantees are expected to use the funds to aid Veterans with the transition to civilian life in one or more of the following areas: (1) Increase coordination of health care and benefits for Veterans; (2) Increase availability of high quality medical and mental health services; (3) Provide assistance to families of transitioning Veterans and (4) Outreach to Veterans and their families.



More than 25,000 rural Veterans, plus their families, will be supported through five new ORH grants.

The RVCP was created in accordance with Section 506, Public Law 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. Eligible grant recipients are either community based organizations and/or local, state or tribal government entities.

This pilot enables each grant recipient to support local Veterans in unique ways that will be suitable for the challenges faced by these locations. Additionally, it will seek to determine if there is an effective model in which state and local entities are able to successfully coordinate multi-sector benefits for Veterans and their families who reside in rural or underserved communities.

VA's Office of Rural Health (ORH) is responsible for providing oversight, guidance and evaluation of RVCP. Grantees are responsible for day-to-day management and reporting on the types of services provided and numbers of Veterans served.

What Will the Grant Recipients Do for Rural Veterans?

Maine Department of Labor (Augusta, Maine) will employ five strategies to increase coordination of healthcare and benefits such as peer support workers, regional workgroups, care managers and job developers. Learn more at <http://www.maine.gov/labor/bes/index.shtml>.

Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (Keamey, Nebraska) will increase military cultural competence among community based organizations, provide outreach through multi-disciplinary outreach teams and support families. Learn more at <http://nalhd.org/>.

New Mexico Department of Veteran Services (Santa Fe, New Mexico) will establish a Veteran and Family Transition Center in four different regions of the state to help returning families gain access to health care, education, job placement and housing. Learn more at <http://www.dvs.state.nm.us/>.

Volunteers of America of North Louisiana (Shreveport, Louisiana) will connect rural Veterans in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, and their families, to quality primary care and behavioral health services as well as critical resources such as benefit programs, housing, employment assistance and transportation. Learn more at <http://www.voanorthla.org/>.

WestCare Washington, Inc. (Orting, Washington) will develop "Home Base" in Oregon and Washington to provide person-to-person contact through county-based navigators, access to telephonic 24/7 counseling, and coordinate with federal, state and local benefit and service providers. Learn more at <https://westcare.com/>.

We are on the Web! Visit us at
www.ruralhealth.va.gov





The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health has awarded WestCare a 2-year grant for the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP) program. WestCare is uniquely qualified to design and implement comprehensive, results-oriented programs for Veterans due to its 40 years of experience delivering community-based, responsive human services and behavioral health care programs to vulnerable populations. WestCare's President and Chief Executive Officer, Richard Steinberg, is a Veteran of the Vietnam War and established a vision at the agency to provide a comprehensive continuum of care for Veterans.

HOME BASE

Called "Home Base," the program will take place in five Pacific Northwest rural counties — three in Washington State (Benton, Franklin and Lewis) and two in Oregon (Tillamook and Umatilla). Benton/Franklin Counties will be served as one geographic area.

HOME BASE NAVIGATORS ("Boots on the Ground")

The *Home Base Navigators* will assist Service Members transitioning to civilian life, Veterans of all eras/ages, and Family Members to connect with services and benefits. The Navigators are Veterans and live in their designated rural counties:

Benton/Franklin Counties, WA
Lewis County, WA
Tillamook County, OR
Umatilla County, OR

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MILITARY/VETERANS HELPLINE 877-515-7848 (24/7 Phone and Web Assistance)

The 24/7 Military/Veterans Helpline is staffed by Veterans and/or Military Family Members who understand military culture, issues facing current service members who are transitioning to civilian life, returning veterans from combat zones, Military Sexual Trauma, self-medication of alcohol and drugs, difficulty of deployments on families, and other issues related to military service.

HOME BASE OBJECTIVES

- Assist with issues regarding health care, secure housing, food, clothing, VA benefits, employment, education, counseling and/or human services in coordination with other case managers
- Manage support services, including referrals
- Comprehensive needs assessments
- Support to families post deployment, through phone calls, emails and in-person visits
- Assisting with location and accessing timely intervention during crisis periods
- Warm handoff from military service to community life for Veterans and their families
- 24/7 counseling and referral with access via telephone and web chat staffed by Vets and Military Family Members at 877-515-7848

HIGH TOUCH/HIGH TECH

Home Base is a high touch/high tech model that includes on-the-ground Navigators, 24.7 Military/Veterans Helpline and web-based support. It includes outreach services; personal contact; needs assessments; coordination of health care and other benefits; post-referral and post-appointment communication with veterans, families and providers; increased coordination among organizations; and increased availability and access to services and benefits by collaborating with providers. The comprehensive outreach plan includes connecting with veterans where they socialize, attend school, work, worship, recreate and shop.

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