

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Macomb Community Action Training Room
21885 Dunham Clinton Township, MI 48038
Monday, March 04, 2019

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Laura Rios at 9:08 am.

Attendees:

Gabriella Barthlow, AFSC/CFPB

Katie Page, Vet Ctr

Madeline Habib, MCCMH/HSCB

Colton Darrow, TTI

Jonathan Drake, Simply Blessed Catering

Chris Reilly, Michigan Works!

Darryle Johnson, Vet Services

Stephen Boegehold, DHHS

Chris Franklin, AIVOMI

Kara Fields, MCC

Deanne Honeycutt, MHC

Broderick Johnson, US CG

Dawn Revyn, VOA

Adrienne Gasperoni, CARE

Liz Sergent, MCA

Katie Carroll, Veteran Services

Keila Williams, MRS

Karen Boice, FRT

Emily M, VAMC

Ali Thompson, Homefront

Mike Johnson, AFGE

Mark Meadows, VAMC

Kyle Pollett, Congr Sander Levin

A. C. Giles, TTI

Mark Kilgore, CARE

Joshua Puraven, Free Star Financial

Laura Rios (Co-Chair), Veteran Services

Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards, Veteran Services

Shelly Rood, Missilia

Charlene Myers, NCOA/DAV

Joseph Rodgers, VOA

Alexandra Zacks, DHHS

Dean Shunk, Vet Services

Sian Washington, DNofO&M

Nicole Gauthier (Co-Chair), Veteran Navigator

David Manfield, MCIPC

Brian Walker, NHLS

Shang Rule, FRT

Chaka McDonald, OCHN

Eric Jackson, Buddy to Buddy

II. **INTRODUCTIONS**

The committee members went around the table and introduced themselves and the service organization to which they worked.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

~~The February 04, 2018 minutes were approved as a matter of record.~~

IV. **NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

No new/old business at this time.

V. **SPECIAL SPEAKER**: Karen Boice, Freedom Road Transportation (nonprofit)

Freedom Road Transportation exists to “fill a transportation gap giving individuals the freedom to avoid social isolation, attain employment, access medical services, shopping and other activities.”

The service is free for riders and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No advance scheduling is required and travel is possible between cities. Volunteer drivers assist their riders as needed/required. Riders receive mileage reimbursement which they pay to their drivers. There are 5 progressive "models/assumptions." (see pamphlet or website) The eligibility of the applicant is determined through a series of questions on the application: county of residency, income level, transportation options and "other qualifications." Approved riders must find their own volunteer driver; funds are paid to rider for a predetermined amount of miles; request for reimbursements are submitted at the end of a month; mileage checks are issued and mailed each month. "Freedom Road Transportation is funded by grants from public agencies and foundations, service contracts and the contributions of private individual and businesses." For more information please contact their website at: www.freedomROADtransportation.org, or email: Karen at boicefrt@gmail.com.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Benefits/Communication: Laura mentioned the Appeals Management System changed February 19th. Rapid Appeals Management Process (RAMP). This new change will help to expedite claim appeals within 1 year. If the veteran or dependent has a new appeal (after February 19th), he/she will automatically be put into the RAMP system. Any appeals before 2/19 will continue under the old system and could take up to five years to complete the appeals process. A veteran or dependent can opt into the RAMP system if they want to. Katie Carroll mentioned the Step Forward program will be eliminated by next year. She also mentioned MSU Extension has a Foreclosure Prevention and Financial Education program. Please contact Katie or MSU Extension for more details on this program.

B. Employment: Chris Reilly stated the 41B and Treatment Court job fair that was held 2 weeks ago was successful. He stated that most job seekers walked out of the job fair with 4 or 5 interviews already scheduled post job fair. There will be a job fair on April 12th for GM employees or tiers who have lost their jobs due to the shutdown of GM plants. More information regarding this job fair to come. MCC is also hosting a job fair on April 24th, South Campus Expo Center. Please contact Chris for additional information on this and other events. Or go to their website: Macomb-StClairworks.org. The website also has a list of "Featured Jobs" these are jobs Michigan Works! are actively seeking to fill. Mark Meadows reminded the collaborative of the Hire Our Heros (HOH) event this Saturday at the VAMC; doors open for registration at 9:00. Mark is still looking for volunteers to help out for this event. This annual event typically hosts 400 – 500 veterans seeking employment.

C. Services: Madeline stated the updated Utilities flowchart were available on the MVAC website (some hard copies were available at the meeting). She also stated she would updated the Transportation flowchart and add the Freedom Road Transportation program.

D. Membership: Shaun Taft was absent. Laura briefly mentioned how to sign in when coming to the meeting. She also mentioned how to get on the MVAC roster and get a name plate made.

E. Faith Based: Rodney Tolbert absent.

F. Higher Education: Kara stated as of March 11th, the Post 911, Chapter 31 and Voc Rehab will pay instate tuition at their institution or less. Because of the delays in VA education payment, as of August 1st, schools cannot penalize students who are using the Post 911 GI Bill money. Students are urged to get their Joint Services Transcript (JST), it is free for them. But the veteran should not just submit it to their school, they need to talk to school faculty about it. Please contact Kara for more information.

VII. ROUND ROBIN

Laura Rios reminded the collaborative of the VFW Tax day next Wednesday from 10 - 3 March 13th, there were flyers for this event for the collaborative to take.

Nicole Gauthier stated she has been busy advocating for veterans around Macomb County in regards to mental health and transportation.

Sian Washington stated SSVF for Oakland and Macomb County have prevention and Rapid Rehousing dollars available. Please contact Sian for more information.

Mark Meadows reminded the collaborative to guide veterans seeking employment to the Boot Camp.

Shelly Rood stated there is a Female Vet Peer Support Group starting. They are looking for 10 female veterans applicants to participate in this program. These women get gifts and adventures. There are only 6 weeks left to find these women. Please contact Shelly for more information.

Brian Walker stated that his co-worker Chad passed away unexpectedly. If you have working with Chad, please get with Brian after the meeting. He also stated their I.T. training programs can use the Post 911 GI Bill.

David Mansfield, Macomb County Suicide Prevention Coalition, they have a 60 - 90 minute class that is a gatekeeper program to train the public what to watch for, how to ask somebody about suicide and who/where to refer them to. They will take this program out to most any group. Please contact David for more information.

John Drake also stated to be observant to veterans who are either struggling or at risk with suffering from mental health issues.

Stephen Boegehold stated the March food benefits will be early this week. The April food benefits will come the 2nd week in April and then the May benefits should be back on schedule.

Charlene Myers: The DAV 129 chili cook off is March 30th from 11 - 3.

Katie Page mentioned the free Yoga classes at the MCC. The Vet Center is offering free battlefield acupuncture (ears only) to help reduce chronic pain. Veterans who are registered for health care at the VA hospital will be able to use this acupuncture. Please show up on time because when classes start, she locks the door due to the trauma sensitive nature of the class.

Broderick Johnson offered thanks to those who helped out the Coast Guard during the government shut down.

Kara Fields March 21st the Motor City Veteran Community Action Team is hosting an event at Bunker Labs, in Detroit, which will be employment focused. The event will be from 3 - 5.

Mike Johnson brought copies of magazines for the collaborative to take back to their office. He said the January issue of the VFW magazine had some great articles.

Chris Franklin mentioned their organization on March 29th is hosting a Vietnam Veteran Day free dinner where they show movies.

Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards stated the Chapter 154 is also sponsoring an Open House event on March 29th in honor of Vietnam Veteran's Day.

Kyle Pollet recently transferred over from Congressman Sandy Leven's office to Congressman Amy Leven's office. This office is located in Warren. He is currently still working an all veterans casework but they are looking to hire full time caseworker to work with veterans, immigration and "other things." If you have any VA cases that needs to be handled through a Congressional office please contact Kyle.

A.C. Giles states his organization provides a HUDVASH marriage for supportive services for veterans and families as well as stable housing for veterans.

Gabriella Barthlow reminded the collaborative that the sponsorship for her program ends March 31st. She is working diligently to work with as many veterans as she can before the 31st.

Joseph Rodgers stated the VOA gives \$100 to homeless veterans who recently found work. This money is given on a prepaid debit card to spend however they need to as long as they provide a receipt and it is not alcohol, tobacco or firearms.

Ali Thompson stated Homefront is a resiliency program for spouses and romantic partners of Post 911 military and veterans. Please contact her for more information.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, April 01, 2019 starting at 9:00 A.M. at:
Macomb Community Action Training Room, 21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township

Special Speaker: Pat Wolschon, homelessness

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 A.M.