Chair Robert Dettmer

Mr. Chairman and fellow Committee members, my name is Neal Loidolt, I am the President and CEO for Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. I have been with the organization since the 6th of February and am just starting my 6th week on the job.

* First, thank you for inviting us to give an update on the programs and services that MACV continues to provide for MN veterans and their families.
* We have been serving Minnesota veterans who are homeless or in crisis and at risk of homelessness for over 25 years, and look forward to continuing to provide outstanding services to the state.
* In front of you, each of you has a blue MACV folder providing documents about each of the programs MACV provides. If you will allow me a few moments I will provide a summary. But first let me say thank you to the committee for the funding you have provided to MACV. This funding has allowed us to fill the gaps and provides for key services in outreach and direct financial assistance to veterans and their families for housing, utility disconnection prevention, transportation, food, and other essential needs, and allows us the flexibility to move swiftly to resolve or prevent a veteran’s episode of homelessness.
* MACV provides services to homeless and in-crisis veterans throughout all of Minnesota in the areas of housing, employment, and legal services. Our outreach includes 9 StandDown veteran services events throughout the state. We do not duplicate services, rather we partner with agencies, government and nonprofit, to make sure that all areas of need for our veterans to move from crisis to stability are being met, and we fill the gaps in these areas, housing employment and legal. We partner closely with each CVSO, TVSO, MDVA, and the VA to ensure that all eligible supports and programs are being accessed by the men, women, and families who need them. We also have formal partnership Memorandums of Understanding with SSHS, CC, Salvation Army, CAPSH, VOA/Amicus, People Inc, Red Lake Homeless Shelter for tribal outreach, HousingLink, and several LSCs. We are proud of our creative and impactful partnerships. We maximize funding from federal sources, bringing grants to the state through the DOL (3 HVRP), HUD (4 CoC), and VA (2 SSVF, GPD), as well as corporate and foundation funds, to carry on our mission.
* We are certified by the Minnesota Charities Review Council, and are audited annually and throughout the year by specific funders.
* Our regional offices are in MPLS, Duluth, and Mankato, and from there we carry services to all 87 MN counties.
* Key to success in all our programs is the intensive case management each veteran receives along with direct assistance. We assess each veteran served for housing status, health and mental health needs, employment and income, appropriate housing, living skills, optical and dental care needs, and legal issues to develop the strongest stability plan possible.
* We own and operate 77 beds of transitional and permanent supportive housing, including housing in Duluth, Mankato, MPLS, St. Paul (womens), St. Cloud, Richfield, and Maplewood. We partner with Sand Companies to be the service provider for the 37-unit Linden Grove veterans’ apartments that opened this past fall in St. Cloud. We are proud that all units are occupied by veterans who needed that housing option and support.
* MACV provides rental, security deposit, mortgage, utility, transportation assistance through a variety of funding sources, including critical funding through the state, to rapidly rehouse homeless veterans and prevent episodes of homelessness for Minnesota veterans and their families. Over 90% of veterans housed were still stably housed six months after completing MACV programs.
* Through our statewide employment grants, we work to stabilize veteran’s income through employment. Through our most recently completed DOL grant alone, in 2016 we placed 199 homeless veterans into employment at an average hourly wage of $13.22, representing annual gross wages of $5,393,377. 85% of veterans who got jobs through this program kept their position for at least six months.
* Our 9 StandDowns in 2016 served over 2,200 veterans, giving onsite same day access to housing, employment, healthcare, veteran benefits, community benefits, and legal services providers, including StandDown court.
* In 2016 we hosted 38 legal clinics in 18 communities across Minnesota serving 1,613 veterans, as well as providing full representation services to veterans whose civil legal issues presented a direct barrier to housing or employment stability. This is key to long term stability for our clients because oftentimes legal matters can be a serious and seemingly insurmountable barrier to stability. Whether it is a child support modification, housing or employment law, or any number of destabilizing legal situations, our Vetlaw staff and partners are there to provide outstanding and nationally recognized services.
* In 2016, MACV provided direct services to over 1,725 veterans, 49% of whom were homeless. 73% had a disability, 33% are veterans of recent conflicts, 11% were women veterans, and 26% had dependent children.
* In partnership with the MNDVA, MACV and our partner agencies we contract with for veteran specific services, have been deeply involved and engaged in the functioning of the homeless veteran registry, a by-name list of veterans statewide experiencing homelessness. The list allows for regular case meeting on each individual veteran to develop tailored outreach and housing plans for each individual on that list.
* This past summer the US Government announced that homelessness among veterans dropped nationally by 47% since 2010. In Minnesota that number is 57%. We are proud of that success, but there is much, much work to be done. The veterans who remain homeless are now the most difficult to reach and engage, with the most barriers. Housing these veterans, each and every one, and having the strong systems in place to both prevent new episodes of homelessness with early interventions, and the ability to rapidly re-housing a veteran who does become homeless, is our mission.
* Going forward into the year we are excited to be adding additional staff in Rochester and St. Cloud as we continue to look at expanded outreach and housing opportunities for rural veterans, women veterans, and veterans with children. These are some of our communities of greatest need and the focus of MACV’s future growth efforts.
* To summarize, we fill the gaps. Some programs have very strict income guidelines that, even though a veteran has become recently unemployed, their income from the past 3 months would disqualify them. Other have restrictions based on disability, or have a long lag time between program application and assistance received. Our programs are rapid, holistic, and veteran-centric.
* We are statewide, non-duplicated services that leverage sources of funding, partner and collaborate closely and bridge the gap for veterans in crisis.
* Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today, and I would be happy to take any questions.