

VA Programs for Justice-Involved Veterans



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Justice-Involved Veterans

- A justice-involved Veteran is:
 - A Veteran in contact with local law enforcement who can be appropriately diverted from arrest into mental health or substance abuse treatment;
 - A Veteran in a local jail, either pre-trial or serving a sentence; or,
 - A Veteran involved in adjudication or monitoring by a court
- Related issue:
 - Reentry for Veterans being discharged from State and Federal Prisons
- Most (82%) justice-involved Veterans are likely eligible for VA health care (BJS)



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Justice-Involved Veterans: Estimates

- Estimated number of military Veterans, 2007:
 - Probation supervision: 399,300
 - Parole or supervised release: 75,000
 - Local jail custody: 72,600
 - State prison custody: 136,800
 - Federal prison custody: 19,300
 - Total, correctional supervision: 703,000
 - Arrests: **1,159,500**

*Source: U.S. Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice
Statistics*



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Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

- Since 2007, outreach/assessment while incarcerated
 - Promote successful community integration of reentry Veterans
- Seeing Veterans in 1,008 of 1,295 U.S. State and Federal Prisons (78%) FY11
- Over 34,000 Veterans contacted since September 2007
 - Number of Veterans released from prison each year: 29-56,000 (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) estimate)
 - **Average number of previous arrests: 8**



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Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program

- Operational since 2009
- Outreach to Veterans in contact with law enforcement, jails, and courts
- Goal is to provide timely access to VA services for eligible justice-involved Veterans to avoid unnecessary criminalization and incarceration of Veteran defendants and offenders with mental illness and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI).
 - In communities where justice programs relevant for Veterans exist, VA will take the initiative in building working relationships to see that eligible justice-involved Veterans get needed care
 - In communities where no such programs exist, VA will reach out to potential justice system partners to connect eligible justice-involved Veterans with VA services



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Turning a Veteran's Crisis into Opportunity

- “Coming Together to Fight for a Troubled Veteran”
 - *New York Times*, July 17, 2011
 - Okemos, MI: Veteran with PTSD attempts suicide by cop
 - Charged with assault with intent to kill (five counts); possible life term
 - Veterans Treatment Court judge sees local news story; process involves prosecutor, defense attorney, Army JAG, police officers who had been on scene
 - Officer: “I don’t think any of us would not want him to get treatment.”
 - Veteran connected to VA health care
 - http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/18/us/18vets.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&ref=todayspaper&adxnnlx=1310997660-jeKTi4mrJuw3G+3ETLUPGg



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Additional Resources

- Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists (listed by VA medical center)
 - <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>
- Veterans Treatment Courts
 - <http://www.justiceforvets.org>
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