

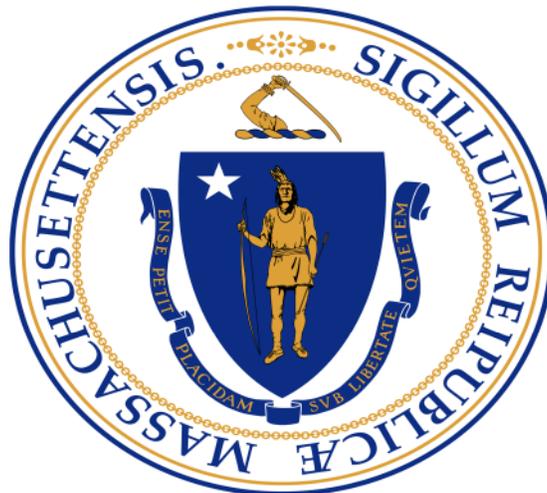
# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



## Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) Program

*A Guidebook for Incarcerated  
Veterans in the Commonwealth of*

## **Massachusetts**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Veteran:

The VA Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) Program is designed to address the community re-entry needs of identified incarcerated Veterans at County, State, and Federal correctional facilities who are either within six months of their parole eligibility date or within six months of release from custody. HCRV Specialists assist incarcerated Veterans by providing outreach, assessment, referral, and linkage to services as they transition from incarceration to the community. Short-term case management services may also be provided for up to four months post-release from custody if needed.

The HCRV Program is an essential and critical part of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and is vital for providing a gateway to VA and community supportive services for eligible Veterans who are in process of release from state and Federal prisons. HCRV is a VHA homelessness prevention effort, working to ensure that Veterans released from incarceration transition into productive and safe activity.

This guidebook will be an important tool for you as you begin to think about and plan for your release from custody. Please review all of the enclosed information thoroughly in order to better understand the opportunities available to you. When these resources are used properly, they may help you meet and successfully overcome challenges and other outside pressures that you may be confronted with upon your release from custody. These may include economic or financial issues, homelessness, relationship difficulties, family stress, other unresolved legal matters, gaining social acceptance, and any temptations that may lead you into negative thinking and resulting behaviors that may, in turn, lead you to a return to prison.

This guidebook is a tool for Veterans incarcerated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as well as their families. Each state has an equivalent HCRV guidebook for incarcerated Veterans residing in or returning to their home state. These guidebooks may be accessed by your HCRV Specialist and provided to you if needed.

It is also important to note that laws may vary greatly from state to state. Therefore, please check your own state's laws and regulations for the most accurate and appropriate information for you.

Thank you for your dedication and for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

***Thom Baker, LICSW***

Health Care for Re-entry Veterans Specialist – Massachusetts

***Last Guidebook Revision Date: Friday, January 23, 2015***

It is important to note that agency information, physical addresses, phone numbers, and website addresses may change for various reasons. Sometimes, resources such as shelters or programs may close due to budget cuts or other reasons and it is not always possible to know if or when this has occurred for a particular resource.

Therefore, should you attempt to contact one of the resources in this guidebook and find that the information is not current or accurate, please do your best to obtain the current information through telephone information or via research on the Internet. In order to perpetuate the value of this document, we respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this guidebook, please send any corrections to:

***Thom Baker, LICSW  
Health Care for Re-entry Veterans Specialist  
Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital  
200 Springs Road, Building 16  
Bedford, MA 01730***

***Phone: 781-687-3421***

***E-Mail: [thom.baker@va.gov](mailto:thom.baker@va.gov)***

We would like to recognize and thank:

- 1) The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans which provided basic concepts and core information for this guide through its "Planning for Your Release" guide funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- 2) The Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup of Walla Walla, Washington, for the concept of state-specific information in its "Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans" and for allowing the use of its guide as a template for this publication.
- 3) Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. for developing the first Incarcerated Veterans Guidebook, which has inspired and informed subsequent effort.
- 4) All public domain and agency resources included in this guidebook.

## **SECTION I: USING THIS GUIDE AND SEEKING HELP**

This guidebook was developed in order to assist you with planning for your release from custody and to keep as a reference after your release. It includes addresses, telephone numbers, and web site information that you can use to find out about programs and other resources after your release.

Please keep in mind that this guidebook does not include all of the resources or services available. Please also keep in mind that resources available in one area may be different than those available in another, so be sure to check with local resources to learn about services in your area.

While you are incarcerated, find out which unit in your facility can help you plan for your release. Many correctional facilities have re-entry or reintegration staff on site that may be of assistance as you approach your release date. Correctional facilities may also offer classes that can help you improve your skills and prepare for life after release from custody. Please take advantage of any of the opportunities afforded to you before and after your release from custody.

It may be helpful to begin thinking about what specifically you will need upon release. Ask yourself these kinds of questions: Will I need housing? Will I need medical, substance abuse, or mental health care? Do I need to learn a job skill? Do I have any other legal issues, such as child support, probation, or parole requirements? How do I restart my VA disability checks, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)?

Make a list of your needs. Remember that this is just a tool to help you get organized.

A sample list might look like this:

- I need a place to live.
- I need a job.
- I need clothing.
- I need to find out what benefits I am eligible for as a Veteran.
- I want to continue to receive substance abuse and/or mental health treatment.
- I need to engage in primary care treatment.
- I owe child support and/or have other unresolved legal issues.
- I need to have my VA disability or Social Security payments reinstated.

Think about this list as you read through this guide. Who do you think can help you with each of your needs? Is there one organization that may be able to work with you on many different things, or do you need to contact several agencies? Keep track of the steps you take, including the dates and names of people you contact for information or assistance. Although this guide provides national and state addresses for many organizations, we recommend that you check your phone book or the Internet for local, county, and state agencies that may have more

information about what kind of help is available in your specific area.

A blank sample list to get you started is included within the next couple of pages of this guidebook. Please feel free to use it or create your own list as needed.

When contacting an agency for help by mail, e-mail, or phone, be clear, persistent, and polite. Write legibly and keep your communication short and to the point. Ask questions if information is not clear to you. Please remember that organizations may be staffed by volunteers who are eager to help you, but may not have the answers you are looking for. If someone cannot help you, ask if they know someone who can. In this way, you will be more likely to obtain positive results.

The Internet is another useful tool through which to find information about VA benefits and community resources in your area. This guidebook includes web addresses when available. If computer access is not available at your correctional facility, you may visit the local public library in your community after your release. To find information pertaining to Massachusetts public libraries, and for a state-wide list including contact information, please visit [www.publiclibraries.com/massachusetts.htm](http://www.publiclibraries.com/massachusetts.htm).

Computer access may also be available at community-based Labor and Workforce Development One-Stop Career Centers [www.mass.gov/lwd/](http://www.mass.gov/lwd/) located throughout Massachusetts. Go to their website to find a state-wide listing of Career Center locations as well as additional information pertaining to job training and job seeker services.

The VA publishes a yearly booklet titled ***Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors***, which is a great resource for VA eligibility and benefits. Please visit [www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits\\_book.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp) for additional information. The most recent guidebook is available online.

For Veterans who will be returning to the Western Massachusetts area upon release from custody, the guidebook titled ***The Blue Book: A Western Massachusetts Guidebook for Veterans and Their Families*** contains a lot of great resource information specific to the Western Massachusetts region. Please visit <http://www.baypath.edu/undergraduate-experience/admissions/~media/Files/PDF/Admissions%20Undergraduate/Veteran27sGuidebookforWesternMass851428229%201.ashx> for additional information.

Another very useful guidebook is titled ***Veterans' Laws and Benefits***, which is published through a collaboration by the Secretary of State's Citizen Information Service and the Department of Veterans' Services. The guidebook may be downloaded on a computer or it may be requested by calling 617-727-7030 or 1-800-392-6090 (toll-free in MA only). Please visit <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/about-veterans-services/publications/guide-to-veterans-laws-and-benefits.html> for additional information.

For Veterans who reside, or are returning to more rural areas, there is a very helpful guidebook that is published by the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) in Washington, D.C. titled **Resources for Rural Veterans**. This guidebook may be downloaded at [http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/publications/rreports/Veterans\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/publications/rreports/Veterans_Resource_Guide.pdf) or requested by calling HAC at 202-842-8600. You may also view their website at <http://www.ruralhome.org> for additional information.

For Veterans returning to the Boston area, there is an online directory called the **Coming Home Directory** and may be viewed at <http://www.cominghomedirectory.org/>. The directory is a compilation of services available to ex-offenders returning to or living in communities in the Greater Boston area. The purpose of the directory is to assist ex-offenders, their families, service providers, and local agencies in helping ex-offenders improve their chances of success in the community by connecting them to resources and services.

A printed directory/hard-copy version is done annually and is available on a first-come, first-served limited bases from the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI). To request a printed version, please go to the "Documents" tab on the home page and mail or fax the request form as directed.



<b>Need</b>	<b>Plan Identified and Provider(s)</b>
<b>Housing</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Own Place <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter/Transitional	
<b>Physical Health</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Care <input type="checkbox"/> Dental <input type="checkbox"/> Vision <input type="checkbox"/> Other/Specialty	
<b>Mental Health</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Group Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Medication Management <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Probation/Parole Required	
<b>Substance Abuse</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Group Treatment/AA/NA <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Probation/Parole Required	
<b>Benefits/Entitlements</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security (SSI/SSDI) <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid/Medicare <input type="checkbox"/> VA Disability or Pension <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 115 <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Assistance	
<b>Legal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Probation/Parole Status <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support <input type="checkbox"/> Open/Unresolved Cases <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers' License <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Card <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Needs <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing/Basic Needs	

## **SECTION II: WHERE TO START**

Your post-release success depends greatly upon steps you take while incarcerated. Working in partnership with your county, state, or federal correctional facility re-entry and discharge planning staff, or institutional parole officer if you are parole-eligible, is crucial in order to develop an appropriate re-entry plan. Having a re-entry plan developed prior to your release can help to reduce some of the anxiety you may experience as your release date approaches as well as any challenges you may face upon your release from custody. This guidebook, although it contains important and beneficial resource information, can be more useful if it is used in partnership with programming and resources that may be offered by your correctional facility.

### **A. Basic Eligibility Requirements**

To be considered a “Veteran” eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care benefits, a former service-member must have been discharged “under conditions other than dishonorable.” Under VA regulations, administrative discharges characterized by the armed services as “Honorable” or “General Under Honorable Conditions” are qualifying, and punitive discharges (“Dishonorable” or “Bad Conduct”) issued by general courts-martial are disqualifying.

In general, individuals who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who received **Honorable** or **General** discharge may qualify for VA healthcare benefits. **Other Than Honorable, Bad Conduct, or Dishonorable** discharges may bar access to VA benefits. Reservists and National Guard members may also qualify for VA healthcare benefits **if they were called to active duty (other than for training only) by a Federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty.**

Active service, or active duty, means full-time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. **Active Duty for Training (ADT) does not qualify a service member for VA healthcare benefits or programming unless the service member has applied for, and has been granted, a service-connected disability rating for an injury or illness incurred during training.**

**Minimum Duty Requirements:** Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after October 16, 1981, **must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible.** This minimum duty requirement may not apply to Veterans discharged for hardship, early out, or a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

**Women Veterans are eligible for the same VA benefits as male Veterans and the eligibility determination process is the same.**

Eligibility requirements are determined by laws set forth by Congress. Each VA medical center has eligibility and admissions specialists who will review your submitted documentation in order to determine your eligibility status as well as what Priority Group you will be placed in for

healthcare services and programming. Another resource for you is the VA Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV) Specialist who works with your specific correctional facility.

### ***B. Other Than Honorable (OTH) Discharges***

If you were given a Bad Conduct Discharge issued by Special Court Martial, an Other Than Honorable Discharge, or an Undesirable Discharge, the VA will determine on a case-by-case basis whether you are entitled to benefits. The Veterans Administration (VA) will consider all the facts surrounding your service and decide if the quality of your service qualifies you for disability compensation and VA health care. This is called a "character of service" determination.

An individual with an "Other than Honorable" discharge that VA has determined to be disqualifying under application of title 38 C.F.R. §3.12 still retains eligibility for VA health care benefits for service-incurred or service-aggravated disabilities unless he or she is subject to one of the statutory bars to benefits set forth in Title 38 United States Code §5303(a). Authority: Section 2 of Public Law 95-126 (Oct. 8, 1977).

**VA Health Care Benefits:** If an individual presents or makes an application for VA health care benefits and has an "Other Than Honorable" or "Bad Conduct" discharge, eligibility staff may register the individual and place in a Pending Verification Status. A request for an administrative decision regarding the character of service for VA health care purposes must be made to the local VA Regional Office (VARO). This request may be submitted using a VA Form 7131, Exchange of Beneficiary Information and Request for Administrative and Adjudicative Action. In making determinations of health care eligibility the same criteria will be used as are now applicable to determinations of service connection when there is no character of discharge bar.

It is important to note that a discharge found by VA to have been issued under dishonorable conditions does not, in and of itself, bar an individual from receiving VA benefits based on a separate period of service which terminated under honorable conditions. In addition, the law provides for basic eligibility for benefits based on completion of the full term of an enlistment even if no discharge was issued at the completion of that period of service due to enlistment or reenlistment.

For example, if an individual enlisted for three years, completed the three years and reenlisted for two more years, then received a discharge under Other Than Honorable Conditions during the second enlistment, VA benefits may be provided based on the first period of service, even if it is determined that the character of discharge of the second period of service is a bar to benefits. However, disability compensation would be payable only for disabilities incurred during the first period of service, not for disabilities that were incurred during the second period of service

### **C. Enrollment**

For most Veterans, entry into the VA healthcare system begins by applying for enrollment. This includes completion of the VA Form 10-10EZ (Application for Health Benefits) and submission of your **DD214** (and your DD215 if you have received a formal change or amendment to your DD214), which documents your service dates and type of discharge. For National Guard or Reserve members, a form NGB-22 or DD214 with notated Title 10 Executive Order activation periods is required to determine eligibility for enrollment in VA healthcare services.

Often, incarcerated Veterans may not have a copy of their DD214. If you do not have a copy of your DD214, you may request a certified copy by completing a VA Form SF-180 (Request Pertaining to Military Records). You may request a copy by contacting the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO ([www.archives.gov.st-louis/](http://www.archives.gov.st-louis/)).

The SF-180 provides instructions for completing the form and also provides the mailing addresses to which to send your completed form. The Health Care for Re-entry Veterans Specialist who provides release planning services at your correctional facility is another good resource and is able to assist you with completion of the form if needed. It is very important that you complete this form properly and completely. If you do not, your request may be delayed or rejected outright. Please double check your form to make sure that you have completed all sections, signed, and dated it prior to mailing.

VA Form 10-10EZ may be obtained from any VA healthcare facility or VA regional benefits office. It may also be obtained by contacting the VA Health Resource Center at 877-222-8387 or on the Internet at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/). As with the SF-180, please make sure that you complete the form properly and completely. If it is not, VA will not be able to complete the processing of your enrollment. Please note that income information is for the previous calendar year. If you received no income or entitlements during the past year, please write "0" in the spaces provided.

Should you decide to decline enrollment in VA services prior to your release but decide to do so at a later time, you may enroll at any VA site. Please bring a copy of your DD214 and be prepared to complete a form 10-10EZ in order to complete your enrollment.

### **D. VA Benefits While Incarcerated**

There is a 60-day "grace period" following a conviction when you may still receive full benefits. To avoid an overpayment, it is important that you notify the VA Regional Office (VARO) immediately when you go to prison if you are receiving payments. If you do not notify the VA and receive overpayment, you and your family will lose all financial payments until the debt is paid. The VA considers it to be the Veteran's responsibility and fault if this occurs because the Veteran failed to notify the VA of his or her incarceration. Attempts to obtain a waiver in these situations of overpayment are often unsuccessful.

**For Example:** Don is a Veteran who receives a VA pension. He commits a crime, is convicted,

and is incarcerated. He does not notify the VA of this right away and continues to receive his full pension for six months. After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released from custody and applies to the VA to have his pension reinstated. He will have an overpayment that must be recovered from the reinstated benefits. Until the overpayment is recovered, Don will likely have to go without that income.

After the 61<sup>st</sup> day of incarceration, Veterans receiving 20% service-connected benefit or higher prior to incarceration will begin to receive 10% of their service-connected benefit monthly. Veterans receiving 10% service-connected benefit prior to incarceration will begin to receive 5% of their service-connected benefit monthly. This will continue until the completion of the period for which they are incarcerated

### ***Apportionment***

Legally, a Veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating while incarcerated. However, the remaining balance may be “apportioned to the individual’s dependent family.” This means that your dependent family members (spouse, children, or dependent parents) may be able to receive a part of your benefits while you are incarcerated. VA regulations clearly specify an apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can demonstrate financial need.

To apply for an apportionment, you must send a letter to the VA Regional Office (VARO) below that identifies you as the Veteran and your spouse, children and/or parent as dependents. You must clearly state that you are requesting an apportionment of your VA benefits.

In deciding whether any apportionment is appropriate, the amount of the apportionment, and to whom it will go to, the following factors are considered:

- The family member’s income and living expenses;
- The amount of compensation available to be apportioned;
- The needs and living expenses of other family members;
- Special needs of any of the family members.

***For Example:*** Jim is rated as 70% service-connected. While incarcerated, he can only receive 10% of his service-connected benefit. However, his family may be apportioned up to 60%, the difference of the 70% rating. Jim would still receive 10% service-connected benefit, and his family would receive 60%.

There is a 60-day “grace period” following a conviction when the Veteran or his/her dependent family may still receive full benefits. If you continue to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an overpayment. The VA considers it to be your responsibility and fault if this occurs because you failed to notify the VA of your incarceration. As a rule, the Veteran loses most, if not all, financial benefits until the VA recovers the entire overpayment. It has also been a standard procedure that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the

debt is recovered completely.

It is important to remember that most VA decisions, including those on apportionment, can be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals and to the Court of Appeal for Veterans Affairs.

VA Regional Offices (VARO's) may assist with clarifying the eligibility of prisoners, parolees, and individuals with multiple discharge statuses under differing conditions. Contact information for the Massachusetts VARO is:

***Boston VA Regional Office  
JFK Federal Building  
15 New Sudbury Street  
Boston, MA 02203-9928  
Phone: 1-800-827-1000***

Please note that the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, as well as Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket, Bristol, and part of Plymouth counties are served by the Providence, Rhode Island Regional Office (380 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903).

It is important to note that VA medical care cannot be provided to Veterans while they are in prison. Current regulations restrict VA from providing hospital and outpatient care to an incarcerated Veteran who is an inmate in an institution of another government agency when that agency has a duty to provide the care or services for that Veteran.

#### ***E. Reinstatement of Benefits Upon Release***

The VA Regional Office (VARO) requires formal notification from the correctional facility pertaining to your release in order to reinstate benefits. This means that you will need to bring your release papers to the VARO in person. The sooner that documentation is provided to VARO, the sooner VARO is able to begin to process your request for benefit reinstatement. Your award for compensation or pension benefits should resume from the date you are released, as long as the VA receives notice of your release within one year.

Alternatively, you may complete VA Form 21-4193 (Notice to Department of Veterans Affairs of Veteran or Beneficiary Incarcerated in Penal Institution) before your release, have it signed by a prison official, and submit it to the VA Regional Office. Should you decide to pursue this means of reinstating your benefits, please make sure that you make a photocopy of the form prior to mailing. This will ensure that you still have a copy for your own records or in the event that the mailed form is lost.

#### ***Fugitive Felons***

The Department of Veterans Affairs is prohibited from providing or continuing to provide health care and services, including medications and any care provided in the community, at VA expense to Veterans and beneficiaries identified as fugitive felons. A Fugitive Felon is defined

as a person who is:

1. Fleeing to avoid custody or confinement after conviction for an offense which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the person is fleeing, or for an attempt to commit such an offense; and/or
2. Fleeing to avoid prosecution for an offense which is a felony; and/or
3. Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed for committing a felony under Federal or State law.

VA will mail a letter to the Veteran or beneficiary identified as a fugitive felon to inform them of their status and termination of all VA health care benefits. VA staff will take appropriate steps to transition the fugitive felon's health care from VA programs to alternative care outside the VA health care system. VA cannot pay for any of this alternative care. In addition, VA will bill the Veteran and/or beneficiaries for all VA provided care received while in this fugitive felon status.

Persons identified as a fugitive felon must contact the Originating Agency that issued a felony warrant, **not the VA Police**, if it is believed:

1. An error was made, such as mistaken identity.
2. The warrant should be cancelled.
3. The warrant has been satisfied by your arrest or surrender.
4. There are other reasons, which would resolve the warrant.

Evidence that the warrant has been satisfied should be provided to your local VA. For additional information concerning the Fugitive Felon Program, please contact the Fugitive Felon Coordinator or Enrollment Coordinator at your local VA medical care facility or contact VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

#### ***F. Discharge Upgrades***

If you are not eligible for VA benefits or services because of the character of your military discharge (such as Other Than Honorable, Bad Conduct, or Dishonorable), you may consider applying for a discharge upgrade from the Military Discharge Review Board.

Each of the military services maintains a discharge review board with authority to change, correct or modify discharges or dismissals that are not issued by a sentence of a general court-martial. The board has no authority to address medical discharges. The veteran or, if the veteran is deceased or incompetent, the surviving spouse, next of kin or legal representative may apply for a review of discharge by writing to the military department concerned, using [DoD Form 293](#). This form may also be obtained at a VA regional office, from veterans organizations. However, if the discharge was more than 15 years ago, a veteran must petition the appropriate service Board for Correction of Military Records using [DoD Form 149](#), which is discussed in the "Correction of Military Records" above. A discharge review is conducted by a review of an applicant's record and, if requested, by a hearing before the board.

Discharges awarded as a result of a continuous period of unauthorized absence in excess of 180 days make persons ineligible for VA benefits regardless of action taken by discharge review boards, unless VA determines there were compelling circumstances for the absence. Boards for the correction of military records also may consider such cases.

Veterans with disabilities incurred or aggravated during active military service may qualify for medical or related benefits regardless of separation and characterization of service. Veterans separated administratively under other than honorable conditions may request that their discharge be reviewed for possible re-characterization, provided they file their appeal within 15 years of the date of separation. Questions regarding the review of a discharge should be addressed to the appropriate discharge review board at the address listed on [DoD Form 293](#).

Although this process may be complicated and time consuming, it may be worth pursuing. Here are a few important points:

1. Because of the time consuming nature of the discharge upgrade process and the need to collect documentation that will support your request, we strongly suggest that you wait until after your release from incarceration before applying for a discharge upgrade.
2. If and when you do undertake this process, we strongly urge you to obtain assistance. Many of the Veterans Services Organizations listed in this guidebook offer experienced guidance at no cost to you. Please review the information enclosed in this guidebook for contact information.
3. The American Legion has developed a *Guide to Filing Military Discharge Review Board and Board for Correction of Military Records Applications* that provides a very comprehensive overview of the application process, suggestions, and information about what to expect. This guide is available online at: [www.wearevirginiaveterans.org/images/About-Us--Exec-Leadership/Resources--clinicians/dodguide.aspx](http://www.wearevirginiaveterans.org/images/About-Us--Exec-Leadership/Resources--clinicians/dodguide.aspx)

**Contacting Military Service Review Boards:**

Mailing addresses for each Service Review Board are also listed on the individual forms.

**G. Seeking Help After Release**

If you would like to pursue application for service-connected disability benefits or if you think that you may have a pending claim before the VA, it is likely best to obtain professional help to assist you in this process.

Many Veteran Service Organizations have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim and can legally represent your claim before the VA. Some also help homeless and at-risk Veterans find the support services they may need. The following are some Veteran Service Organizations in Massachusetts that you may contact for assistance:

**Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Boston National Service Office:** 617-303-5675 or go to [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)

**Address:**

VA Regional Office, Room 1575B  
JFK Federal Building  
Boston, MA 02203

**Information:** DAV staff are highly trained, professional experts who have undergone comprehensive training program in Veterans' affairs. NSOs function as attorneys-in-fact, assisting veterans and their families in filing claims for VA disability compensation and pension; vocational rehabilitation and employment; education; home loan guaranty; life insurance; death benefits; health care and much more. DAV NSOs represent more clients than all other Veterans' groups at the highest level of appeal within the Department of Veterans Affairs. What's more, all services provided by DAV NSOs are free of charge.

**American Legion:** 617-727-2966 or go to [www.masslegion.org/](http://www.masslegion.org/)

**Address:**

The American Legion Department of Massachusetts, Inc.  
Room 546-2, State House  
Boston, MA 02133

**Information:** The American Legion is a social and mutual-aid Veterans' organization including members of the United States Armed Forces. The organization was founded in 1919 by Veterans returning from Europe after World War I, and was later chartered as an official American patriotic society under Title 36 of the United States Code. The organization is headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, and also has offices in Washington, DC. In addition to organizing commemorative events and volunteer Veteran support activities, the American Legion is active in issue-oriented U.S. politics. Its primary political activity is lobbying on behalf of the interests of Veterans and service members, including support for Veterans benefits such as pensions and the Veterans Affairs hospital system.

**AMVETS:** 617-727-2972 or State Commander Jim Peacey at 413-250-6278 or go to [www.amvets-ma.org/](http://www.amvets-ma.org/)

**Address:**

State House, Room 546-3,  
Boston, MA 02133-1048

**Information:** As one of America's foremost Veterans service organizations, AMVETS (or American Veterans) has a proud history of assisting veterans and sponsoring numerous programs that serve our country and its citizens. The helping hand that AMVETS extends to Veterans and their families takes many forms. One of the most visible is their network of trained national service officers (NSOs) accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Funded by the AMVETS National Service Foundation, these dedicated men and women can be found in close to 40 states, providing sound advice on compensation claims at no charge to the Veteran.

**Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW):** 617-727-2613 or go to [www.vfwma.org/](http://www.vfwma.org/)

**Address:**

Department of Massachusetts  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
24 Beacon Street Room 546-1  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

**Christian Kulikoski, State Service Officer**  
Massachusetts VFW Service Office  
JFK Federal Building, Suite 1500C  
Boston, MA 02203  
Telephone: 617-303-5689  
E-Mail: [Christian.kulikowski@va.gov](mailto:Christian.kulikowski@va.gov)

**Information:** As the largest organization of combat veterans, VFW understands the frustrations that can arise with making a VA claim. Their skilled VFW Veterans Service Officers help you through this process, offering you a better opportunity to get the disability claim you deserve. You do not need to be a VFW member to take advantage of this free service.

**Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services:** 617-210-5480 or go to [www.mass.gov/veterans/](http://www.mass.gov/veterans/)

**Address:**

600 Washington Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02111

**Information:** The Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services is a state-level Veteran Service Organization that provides assistance with Veterans benefits & entitlements information, VA claims process, representation and advocacy, Trauma (PTS) counseling, Veterans Homes for those in need of nursing care, and employment assistance through Federally-funded reintegration projects. Chapter 115 emergency cash assistance is also afforded to eligible Veterans through the Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) in the Veteran's respective city or town.

**Role of the VSO**

The Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) works out of City or Town Hall and is knowledgeable about an array of federal, state, and local benefits to which Veterans and dependents may be entitled. His or her job is to help veterans in the community learn about, apply for, and in some cases, receive benefits. Every VSO is a Veteran. For an alphabetical listing of Massachusetts statewide VSO's by city or town, please go to <http://www.mass.gov/veterans/utility/local-veterans-service-officers-3.html> or contact your community's city or town hall directly to obtain information specific to your area VSO.

**Chapter 115 Public Assistance**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers a need-based program of financial and medical assistance for Veterans and their dependents known as M.G.L. Chapter 115 (Chapter 115). Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into

account the number of dependents and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased Veterans are provided with the same benefits as if the veteran were still living.

Every city and town has a VSO who administers this program for those with a discharge under honorable conditions. Applications are available from the VSO in the community where the veteran resides. The VSO can help Veterans complete their application for Chapter 115 benefits.

### **Other Benefits Programs**

The VSO helps veterans and dependents apply for a range of other programs including VA, Social Security, and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program , the new name for food stamps) benefits.

### **Mass Vets Advisor ([www.massvetsadvisor.org/](http://www.massvetsadvisor.org/))**

This is a website that is a collaboration between the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services, the Red Sox Foundation, and the Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program. The site is easy to use and provides helpful information to anyone searching for benefits and programs for Veterans and their family members.

### ***H. Seeking Benefits On Your Own***

Although we encourage you to seek the aid of a Veterans' service representative, you may choose to apply for VA benefits on your own. Write to your local VA Regional Office (VARO) or online at [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov). You may also apply for certain benefits online at [www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm](http://www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm).





## **I. Massachusetts VA Medical Centers and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics**

### **1. VA Boston Healthcare System**

#### **Medical Centers:**

##### **Jamaica Plain Division**

150 South Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA 02130  
617-232-9500 or 1-800-865-3384

##### **Brockton Division**

940 Belmont Street  
Brockton, MA 02301  
508-583-4500 or 1-800-865-3384

##### **West Roxbury Division**

1400 VFW Parkway  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
617-323-7700 or 1-800-865-3384

#### **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's):**

##### **Causeway Street Outpatient Clinic**

251 Causeway Street  
Boston, MA 02114  
617-248-1000 or 617-248-1470

##### **Framingham CBOC**

61 Lincoln Street  
Framingham, MA 01702  
508-628-0205

##### **Lowell CBOC**

130 Marshall Road  
Lowell, MA 01852  
978-671-9000

##### **Plymouth CBOC**

116 Long Pond Road  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
1-800-865-3384

##### **Quincy CBOC**

Quincy Medical Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
114 Whitwell Street  
Quincy, MA 02169  
617-376-2010



## **2. Bedford VA Medical Center**

### ***Medical Center:***

Edith Nourse-Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital  
200 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730  
781-687-2000 or 1-800-838-6331

### ***Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's):***

#### **Gloucester CBOC**

Addison Gilbert Hospital  
298 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
1-800-838-6331

#### **Haverhill CBOC**

108 Merrimack Street  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
1-800-838-6331

#### **Lynn CBOC**

225 Boston Street, Suite 107  
Lynn, MA 01904  
1-800-838-6331

## **3. Providence VA Medical Center**

### ***Medical Center:***

Providence VA Medical Center  
830 Chalkstone Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-273-7100 or 866-363-4486

### ***Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC'S):***

#### **Hyannis CBOC**

233 Stevens Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
508-771-3190

#### **New Bedford CBOC**

175 Elm Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
508-994-0217



#### 4. VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System

##### ***Medical Center:***

VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System  
421 North Main Street  
Leeds, MA 01053  
413-584-4040

##### ***Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's):***

##### **Fitchburg CBOC/Burbank Hospital**

275 Nichols Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
1-800-838-6331

##### **Greenfield CBOC**

143 Munson Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
413-773-8428

##### **Pittsfield CBOC**

73 Eagle Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
413-499-2672

##### **Springfield CBOC**

25 Bond Street  
Springfield, MA 01104  
513-731-6000

##### **Worcester CBOC**

605 Lincoln Street  
Worcester, MA 01605  
508-856-0104



### ***J. Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) Program***

The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) Program provides outreach and re-entry planning via VA HCRV Specialists to eligible Veterans who are within six months of release from incarceration. The goals of this program are to educate incarcerated Veterans about VA services and benefits, to conduct assessments pertaining to Veterans' needs, to optimize a Veteran's chances for success in the community through comprehensive release planning, and to provide linkage to VA services.

HCRV Specialists work in partnership with correctional facilities to identify incarcerated Veterans and to coordinate visits to the facilities in order to meet with identified eligible Veterans prior to their release. HCRV Specialists work closely with correctional facility re-entry and discharge planning staff in order to develop release plans based upon the Veteran's identified needs, goals, and available services. Services typically include assistance with shelter/transitional housing as well as treatment services for primary care, mental health, or substance abuse services.

The lead HCRV Specialist for Massachusetts is:

***Thom Baker, LICSW***  
***Health Care for Re-entry Veterans Specialist***  
***Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital***  
***200 Springs Road, Building 16***  
***Bedford, MA 01730***

***Office Phone: 781-687-3421***

***Office Fax: 781-687-3300***

If you are within six months of release from custody, please speak with your facility case manager, re-entry staff, or discharge planner. Many correctional facilities ask newly incarcerated individuals whether they have served in the military or are Veteran status. This question assists correctional staff with communicating with HCRV program staff when a Veteran is within six months of release. Many facilities also offer Veteran-focused activities and groups on-site. However, some Veterans may not choose to divulge their Veteran status for various reasons.

In order for the HCRV program to assist you, it is important to let correctional facility staff know of your Veteran status. The HCRV Specialist can provide you with information and linkage to important services that can assist you upon your release from custody.



***K. Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program:***

The purpose of the Veterans Justice Outreach initiative is to prevent homelessness among justice-involved Veterans. The VJO program works with Veterans in effort to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans have timely access to VHA services as clinically indicated. Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists are responsible for direct outreach, assessment, and case management for justice-involved Veterans in local courts and jails and liaison with local justice system partners. The VJO program targets Veterans with known or suspected service-related mental health conditions that demonstrate some correlation to their legal issue. VJO staff work with Veterans who are pre-trial or on probation and also attend court sessions in effort to dialogue with court staff (judges, attorneys, etc.) to propose treatment options that may be considered in lieu of incarceration of the Veteran.

For Massachusetts, the current VJO Specialists are as follows:

***Bedford VA/ENRM Veterans Hospital:*** *Katherine Nicholas-Malvey*

***Boston/VA Boston Healthcare System:*** *Jason McCall and Thomas Palladino*

***VA Central Western Healthcare System:*** *Marie Demarey and Regina Grant*

***L. Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program***

Initially serving as a mechanism to contract with providers for community-based residential treatment for homeless Veterans, many HCHV programs now serve as the hub for a myriad of housing and other services which provide VA a way to outreach and assist homeless Veterans by offering them entry to VA care.

Outreach is the core of the HCHV program. The central goal is to reduce homelessness among Veterans by conducting outreach to those who are the most vulnerable and are not currently receiving services and engaging them in treatment and rehabilitative programs.

Contract Residential Treatment Program ensures that Veterans with serious mental health diagnoses can be placed in community-based programs which provide quality housing and services.

Every VA Medical Center has a Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Coordinator who is responsible for helping homeless Veterans access VA and community-based care to end homelessness among Veterans. The HCHV program provides outreach, clinical assessments, as well as referrals for medical and mental health care, long-term transitional residential assistance, case management, and employment assistance with linkage to permanent housing.

To locate your nearest HCHV Coordinator, call 1-877-222-8387 or go to [www.va.gov/HOMELESS/HCHV.asp](http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/HCHV.asp).

For Massachusetts, the current HCHV Coordinators are as follows:

**Bedford VA/ENRM Veterans Hospital:** *Timothy Driscoll, LICSW 781-687-2733*

**Boston/VA Boston Healthcare System:** *Christopher Dollard, LICSW 857-364-5454*

**VA Central Western Healthcare System:** *James Seney, LICSW 413-584-4040 x2133*

**Providence VA Medical Center:** *Bill Carr, Ph.D. 401-273-7100 x1673*

**Please Note:** Providence VA Medical Center oversees programming and services over much of southeastern Massachusetts, including Cape Cod and the Islands.



### **SECTION III: HELP FOR VETERANS**

This section includes Veteran-specific as well as community-based resources that may help you get back on your feet upon your release from custody. Please remember to check the phone book yellow pages or Internet for local, county, and state agencies that know what specific services are available in your area to assist you. You may start by looking under “Homelessness” or “Social Services Organizations” for a listing of local organizations that offer various services, including clothing, public transportation tokens or vouchers, emergency shelter, and more. If using a phone book, government agencies are typically listed in the blue pages found near the front of the book. If using the Internet, please visit [www.yellowpages.com/state-ma](http://www.yellowpages.com/state-ma) to start your search or use web-based search engines such as Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) or Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)). As information found on the Internet may be outdated or inaccurate, please make sure to contact the program or resource directly to ensure that the information located is indeed current.

It is important to be aware that some organizations and programs may have wait lists, require an interview, or have specific rules or criteria regarding the population they serve. It may be a good idea to begin inquiring about services and their specific requirements now so that you will be better prepared when you are released. Some programs may allow you to be placed on their wait list as you get closer to your release date. Your designated correctional facility re-entry or reintegration staff at county correctional facilities or Housing Support Specialist (HSS) at MA Department of Corrections facilities is a good point of contact for resources and guidance.

Another important consideration to take is regarding whether or not you want to enroll in VA healthcare or programming. Although many incarcerated Veterans have received VA services or programming previously, many have not. Sometimes this is because they may have not realized that they were eligible for care, have not felt that they wanted or needed these services in the past, or felt that they would prefer to let other Veterans who may be in perceived greater need of these services have access to them. The VA may be a positive starting point for you upon your release from custody and has a wide array of services and programming to assist you.

Please remember that as a Veteran who has dedicated himself or herself to service of this country, and who has honorably served, you may be eligible for services through the VA healthcare system. There may be a sense of security in knowing that you have access to healthcare and services upon your release that is specifically focused on Veterans and their needs. It is a system of care that is there for you, is dedicated to serving Veterans, and is proud and honored to serve you.

Some guidance is included below, but your local service organizations are your best resource. Remember, it never hurts to ask!

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND WEB SITES**

If you are using a phone book, crisis and toll-free numbers are typically listed in the front cover or first few pages. You may also want to check under “Social Services” in the blue or yellow pages for hotlines and local numbers. This information is also readily available online.

***REMEMBER TO ALWAYS CALL 911 FOR MEDICAL OR PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCIES!***

### **1. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ([www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov))**

**Veterans Health Administration:** 1-877-222-8387 or go to [www.newengland.va.gov/](http://www.newengland.va.gov/)

The VA New England Healthcare System is one of 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Services are provided through primary care supported by eight Joint Commission accredited medical centers. We are located throughout the six New England states - Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. VISN 1 has over 35 Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), six nursing homes, and two Domiciliaries.

A listing of Massachusetts VA medical centers and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's) is listed later in this guidebook as well.

**Veterans Benefits Administration:** 1-800-827-1000 or go to [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/)

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides a variety of benefits and services to Service members, Veterans, and their families. VBA has been undergoing a major transformation that is people-centric, results-oriented, and a forward-looking integration of solutions that will ensure total lifelong engagement with Service members, Veterans, and their families. This telephone number is for the VA national helpline for information pertaining to a full range of VA benefits, including Disability Compensation and Pension, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Education, Burial Benefits, Death Pension, Home Loan Guarantee, and GI Bill.

Please note that call wait times may be long, depending upon the time of day you are calling. There is an option to request a return call from helpline staff and you will not lose your place in line if you elect to receive a return call. It is important, however, that you remain near the telephone should you elect this option.

The VA regional office (VARO) for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) in Massachusetts is located at the JFK Building in Boston, MA. The address is 15 New Sudbury Street, Boston, MA 02203-9928 and telephone number is 1-800-827-1000. You may call or go there directly to schedule an appointment.

**National Cemetery Administration:** 1-800-535-1117 or go to [www.cem.va.gov/](http://www.cem.va.gov/)

The mission of the National Cemetery Association (NCA) is to honor Veterans and their families with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their

service and sacrifice to our Nation. NCA provides burial space for Veterans and their eligible family members, maintains national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of those interred or memorialized there, marks Veterans' graves with a Government-furnished headstone, marker, or medallion, provides Presidential Memorial Certificates in recognition of their service to a grateful nation, and administers grants for establishing or expanding state and tribal government Veterans cemeteries.

If you would like to pursue the process of applying for service-connected disability benefits or if you think that you have a pending claim before the VA, it is likely best to obtain professional help to assist you in this process.

Many Veteran Service Organizations (VSO)'s have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim and can legally represent your claim before the VA. Some also help homeless and at-risk Veterans find the support services they need. The following are some VSO's in Massachusetts that you may contact for assistance:

**2. Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services:** 617-210-5480 or go to [www.mass.gov/veterans/](http://www.mass.gov/veterans/)

**Address:**

600 Washington Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02111

**Chapter 115 Public Assistance**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers a need-based program of financial and medical assistance for Veterans and their dependents known as M.G.L. Chapter 115 (Chapter 115). Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased Veterans are provided with the same benefits as if the veteran were still living.

Every city and town has a VSO who administers this program for those with a discharge under honorable conditions. Applications are available from the VSO in the community where the veteran resides. The VSO can help Veterans complete their application for Chapter 115 benefits.

**Other Benefits Programs**

The VSO helps veterans and dependents apply for a range of other programs including VA, Social Security, and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program , the new name for food stamps) benefits.

**Mass Vets Advisor** ([www.massvetsadvisor.org/](http://www.massvetsadvisor.org/))

This is a website that is a collaboration between the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, the

Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services, the Red Sox Foundation, and the Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program. The site is easy to use and provides helpful information to anyone searching for benefits and programs for Veterans and their family members.

### **3. National and State Help Lines**

**Veterans Crisis Line:** The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available. This line also provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.



**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:** The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) has founded a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans hotline to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. To be connected with a trained VA staff member call **1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838)**

**Vet Center Combat Call Center:** 1-877-WAR-VETS (877-927-8387)

This is an around the clock confidential call center where combat Veterans and their families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life. The staff is comprised of combat Veterans from several service eras as well as family members of combat Veterans.

**24/7 Outreach Center for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury:**

1-866-966-1020 or e-mail [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org)

**Military OneSource:** 1-800-342-9647 (24/7 for counseling and resources)

**Persian Gulf War Helpline:** 1-800-749-8387

**National Coalition for Homeless Veterans:** 1-800-838-4357 or go to [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org)

**SAMHSA's National Drug & Alcohol Treatment Hotline:** 1-800-662-HELP (800-662-4357)

**AIDS Action Committee HIV/AIDS Hotline:** The HIV/AIDS Hotline is a free Massachusetts hotline for AIDS and HIV-related questions. Hotline counselors answer questions about health care, treatment options, drug use, prevention, caring for someone with AIDS, STDs, and other concerns. Counselors also give referrals for HIV testing, support groups, social services, HIV assistance programs, legal services, housing assistance, physical and mental health care, and other services.

HIV/AIDS Hotline numbers: Toll-free: 800-235-2331; TTY: 617-437-1672  
Web site: [AAC Hotlines](#)

Description: The AIDS Action Committee also operates a statewide Hepatitis-C Hotline: Hepatitis Hotline numbers: Toll-free: 888-443-4372; TTY: 617-437-1672

**National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty:** 202-638-2535 or go to [www.nlchp.org/](http://www.nlchp.org/)

**National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness:**  
[www.homeless.samhsa.gov/default.aspx](http://www.homeless.samhsa.gov/default.aspx)

**National Alliance to End Homelessness:** [www.endhomelessness.org/](http://www.endhomelessness.org/)

**National Health Care for the Homeless Council:** [www.nhchc.org/](http://www.nhchc.org/)

**National Center for Homeless Education:** Supporting the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. 1-800-308-2145 (Toll Free) or go to [www.center.serve.org/nche/](http://www.center.serve.org/nche/)

**National Coalition for the Homeless:** [www.nationalhomeless.org/](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/)

**GLBT National Hotline:** 1-888-THE-GLNH (1-888-843-4564) – The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) National Hotline provides telephone, online private one-to-one chat, and e-mail peer support, as well as factual information and local resources for cities and towns across the United States. Hours are M-F 4 PM to Midnight (eastern time), Saturday Noon to 5 PM (eastern time).

**Transgender American Veterans Association:** <http://tavausa.org/about-us/>

**American Veterans for Equal Rights:** 718-849-5665 ; E-mail: [info@aver.us](mailto:info@aver.us)

## **SECTION IV: SHELTER AND HOUSING**

It is important to know that you have a place to go upon release. One of the first and most important steps in returning to the community is finding a place to stay. This section includes both VA and community-based resources that can assist you with locating emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and permanent housing assistance. Transitional or temporary housing can serve as a step toward full independence upon your release. However, there are often waiting lists for housing assistance programs, so you may want to ask about applying to programs as soon as possible.

As you approach your release date, it is important to work with correctional facility re-entry and discharge planning staff. It is also important to take advantage of any re-entry planning classes or workshops offered by the correctional facility. Facility staff have access to valuable information regarding shelters and other community resources to assist you with your housing needs. If you are released and do find yourself homeless, emergency assistance is available.

### **A. Emergency Housing and Shelter**

If using a phone book, look in the yellow pages of your phone book under “Social Service Organizations” for local shelters or other organizations that may be able to help you. You may also look in the blue pages of your phone book under local, city, or county government Department of Social Services or “Human Services” for additional resources and information.

Here are some national resources that may be able to help you with resources and information:

The **National Coalition for the Homeless** is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission, which is to prevent and end homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights protected. The National Coalition for the Homeless has a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online at [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org) or do not hesitate to call them at **202-462-4822**.

The **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers and local, state and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless veterans each year. To find out if there are homeless Veteran service providers in your area, contact the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) at **1-800-VET-HELP**, write to **NCHV, 333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20003-1148**, or go to [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org).

The **Department of Veterans Affairs** ([www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)) has founded a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans hotline to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for

homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state, and local partners, community agencies, services providers, and others in the community. To be connected with a trained VA staff member, call **1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838)**.

- Call for yourself or someone else.
- Free and confidential.
- Trained VA counselors available to assist.
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Information about VA homeless programs and mental health services in your area that can help you.

### **What will happen when I call?**

- You will be connected to a trained VA staff member.
- Hotline staff will conduct a brief screening in order to assess your needs.
- Homeless Veterans will be connected with the Homeless Point of Contact at the nearest VA facility.
- Family members and non-VA providers calling on behalf of a homeless Veteran will be provided with information regarding the homeless programs and services available.
- Contact information will be requested, so staff may follow up.

The **Homeless Shelter Directory** ([www.homelessshelterdirectory.org](http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org)) was started as a list of homeless shelters. It provides listings for homeless shelters, homeless service organizations, monetary assistance, transitional housing, free clinics (dental and medical), low cost and free treatment centers, outreach centers, day shelters, relief organizations, women's shelters, and battered women's services, food pantries, soup kitchens, and food banks. Click on your state on the map located at the top of the page and you will be taken to a page with state-specific resources and information.

### **1. Massachusetts Shelter Resource, Referral, and Advocacy Organizations**

As it is not possible to list every shelter or housing resource within Massachusetts, here is a brief listing of some resources and contact information to at least get you started. Please contact these resources directly in order to obtain additional information. Also, please note that these resources serve both Veterans and non-Veterans:

#### **Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless**

Phone: 781-595-7570

Website: [www.mahomeless.org](http://www.mahomeless.org)

Information: The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless is a leader in developing innovative advocacy and programming on homelessness prevention, affordable housing, and meeting basic needs.

**Community Resources Information, Inc.**

Website: [www.massresources.org/homelessness.html](http://www.massresources.org/homelessness.html)

Information: MassResources.org is an information web site that is run by a small non-profit organization, Community Resources Information, Inc. that provides information and resources.

**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)**

Phone: 617-348-8500 (Central Office)

Address: 600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111

Website: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta)

Information: Contact the Central Office number to be connected to the DTA location in your area or use their website to find your local DTA office.

**Salvation Army Divisional Headquarters**

Phone: 617-542-5420

Address: 25 Shawmut Road, Canton, MA 02021

Website: [www.use.salvationarmy.org/mas](http://www.use.salvationarmy.org/mas)

Information: The Salvation Army runs homeless shelters for adults in communities throughout Massachusetts.

**Catholic Worker Movement**

Website: [www.catholicworker.org/communities/commlistall.cfm](http://www.catholicworker.org/communities/commlistall.cfm)

Information: There are several Catholic Worker houses throughout Massachusetts for homeless men and women. You will need to check their website to find local shelters and contact information, as there is no direct contact telephone number available.

**MASSCAP**

Phone: 617-357-6086

**Address: 105 Chauncy Street, Suite 301, Boston, MA 02111**

Website: [www.masscap.org](http://www.masscap.org)

Information: Many non-profit organizations run homeless shelters in communities throughout Massachusetts. Community Action Agencies have information about the shelters in your area.

**Coming Home Directory**

Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice

Mailing Address: 355 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116-3313

Website: [www.cominghomedirectory.org](http://www.cominghomedirectory.org)

Information: This online directory is a compilation of services available to ex-offenders returning to or living in communities in Greater Boston. The directory presents important information for

ex-offenders, corrections practitioners and policymakers, as well as those with an interest in accessing services for ex-offenders, including their families and friends.

**Statewide Housing Advocacy for Reintegration & Prevention (S.H.A.R.P.)**

Department of Veterans Affairs

Mailing Address: 600 Washington Street, Suite 1100, Boston, MA 02111

Phone: 617-210-5743

Information: S.H.A.R.P.'s mission is to end homelessness among Veterans within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It involves a team of peer specialists, VASH Social Workers, substance abuse counselors, and a psychiatrist who bring the services to the Veteran. The team will identify and assist homeless Veterans gain access to housing as well as all wrap-around services needed to foster a healthy, sober, and stable living environment.

**2. Community Shelters (Not Specifically Veteran Identified)**

This section will list some, but certainly not all, emergency shelters in different regions throughout Massachusetts:

**Greater Worcester Housing Connection**

Phone: 508-757-0103

Website: [www.smoc.org](http://www.smoc.org)

Information: Operated through the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC). the Greater Worcester Housing Connection provides housing and supportive services to homeless and formerly homeless individuals in the Worcester region.

**Dismas House**

Address: 30 Richards Street, Worcester, MA 01603

Phone: 508-799-9389

Website: [www.dismashouse.org](http://www.dismashouse.org)

Information: Since 1988, Dismas House has been welcoming former prisoners back to greater Worcester. In their homes (Dismas House, Dismas Family Farm, and the Father John Brooks House) and their other apartments, former prisoners are engaged in the hard work of rebuilding lives, and rekindling hope for themselves and their families. Program staff members provide key educational, recovery, and re-entry tools to their residents.

**Jeremiah's Inn**

Address: 1059 Main Street, P.O. Box 30035, Worcester, MA 01603

Phone: 508-755-6403

Website: [www.jeremiahsinn.com](http://www.jeremiahsinn.com)

Information: Jeremiah's Inn is a social model residential recovery program for men. They also operate an Emergency Food Pantry. Jeremiah's Inn has 28 transitional beds, the majority of which are used for their social model recovery program. This is a four-phase program of experiential learning that is peer oriented. Everyone gives and receives help. Residents in this program work with their case manager to develop individual service plans that give focus to their efforts. The residents share rooms, receive meals, have access to clothing, and participate in

programs and services that move them closer to their goals. Participants contribute \$10 per day towards the cost of the program.

**Pine Street Inn**

Phone: 617-892-9100

Address: 444 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Website: [www.pinestreetinn.org](http://www.pinestreetinn.org)

Information: Founded in 1969, Pine Street Inn serves more than 1,600 homeless individuals daily and 11,000 annually, providing the full spectrum of services to help men and women reach their highest level of independence and get back to a place they can call home.

**Woods-Mullen Shelter**

Address: 794 Rear Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Phone: 617-534-7100

Web Site: [www.bphc.org/programs/homeless/emergencyshester/Pages/](http://www.bphc.org/programs/homeless/emergencyshester/Pages/)

Information: Woods-Mullen Shelter is an emergency shelter that is open 24 hours a day year-round. It has 190 beds available, 66 for women. Beds are given out on a first-come, first-serve basis. During the winter months, overflow beds are available for 40 men and 12 women.

**St. Francis House**

Address: 39 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 617-452-4211

Web Site: [www.stfranchishouse.org](http://www.stfranchishouse.org)

Information: St. Francis House is the largest day shelter in New England. Located in the heart of downtown Boston, they serve more than 800 poor and homeless men and women a day, 365 days a year. They provide nutritious meals, clothing, access to medical care, counseling, vocational rehabilitation, and housing.

**Father Bill's Place**

Address: 38 Broad Street, Quincy, MA 02169

Phone: 617-770-3314

Website: [www.helpfbms.org](http://www.helpfbms.org)

Information: Father Bill's & Main Spring (FBMS), is dedicated to ending, not simply managing, homelessness in Southeastern Massachusetts. Their primary areas of focus are housing, prevention, emergency shelter and workforce development. With support from individuals, local businesses, and community partners, they deliver a range of programs and services to meet the needs of every individual facing homelessness.

**Volunteers of America** [www.voamass.org](http://www.voamass.org)

**Hello House for Men**

686 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Referral Coordinator: Michael Herron [mherron@voamass.org](mailto:mherron@voamass.org)

Phone: 617-262-7142

Information: Hello House Residential Recovery Program for Men is a 24-bed comprehensive treatment experience for men attempting to cope with drug and alcohol addiction. The program is designed to take from three to six months to complete with an average length of stay of 95 days. The goal – to reintegrate it's residents back into the community and their families as sober, fully functioning men who are employed and committed to an ongoing recovery process.

**Bristol Lodge Shelter** [www.mhsainc.org/index.htm](http://www.mhsainc.org/index.htm)

Men's Shelter (Staffed 24/7)

Address: 27 Lexington Street, Waltham, MA 02452

Program Director: Julie Sharp

Phone: 781-893-0108

Information: Both the men's and women's shelters provide emergency shelter to a combined total of fifty seven homeless area residents each night. Staff at each location are trained to provide a variety of specialized and essential services. Support staff are trained to provide all guests with a safe and supportive environment. Case managers help guests locate permanent housing, provide supportive counseling, refer guests to other agencies as needed, organize in-house AA meetings, offer employment counseling groups, and assist clients with entitlement benefits such as SSI or SSDI. Each and every guest has an individualized goal plan.

**Main Spring House**

Address: 54 North Main Street, Brockton, MA 02301

Phone: 508-587-5441

Website: [www.helpfbms.org](http://www.helpfbms.org)

Information: Father Bill's & Main Spring (FBMS), is dedicated to ending, not simply managing, homelessness in Southeastern Massachusetts. Their primary areas of focus are housing, prevention, emergency shelter and workforce development. With support from individuals, local businesses, and community partners, they deliver a range of programs and services to meet the needs of every individual facing homelessness.

**Wellspring House**

Address: 302 Essex Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930

Phone: 978-281-3221

Website: [www.wellspringhouse.org](http://www.wellspringhouse.org)

Information: Since 1981, Wellspring House has been helping families and individuals on Cape Ann and the North Shore move out of poverty and live more fulfilling lives through transformative adult education and job training, the provision of affordable housing, homeless prevention and advocacy services, and its emergency shelter for homeless families.

**Action, Inc.**

Address: 370 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930

Phone: 978-283-4125

Website: [www.actioninc.org/shelter.html](http://www.actioninc.org/shelter.html)

Information: Action Inc.'s Emergency Homeless Shelter provides a limited number of beds and hot meals to homeless adults (ages 18 and older) on a nightly basis. Prior to leaving the Shelter in the morning, guests are also provided with bag lunches. The Shelter offers a safe, supportive environment in a clean, comfortable, recently renovated building in Gloucester. Space at the Shelter is limited and individuals are encouraged to call before visiting. Those arriving by 4:30pm are more likely to obtain a bed for the night; however, a bed cannot be guaranteed. If possible, please call before going there.

### **Friends of the Homeless**

Address: Men's Shelter - 769 Worthington Street, Springfield, MA 01105

Phone: 413-732-3069

Website: [www.fohspringfield.org](http://www.fohspringfield.org)

Information: Formerly referred to as the Worthington Street Shelter, FOH provides separate men's and women's overnight shelters, serving individuals 18 years of age and older every evening on its Worthington Street campus. No responsible individuals are turned away. FOH is recognized as the shelter of last resort for those individuals needing temporary overnight lodging as FOH facilitates the process to secure permanent housing.

Both men's and women's shelters open for the evening at 5:30 PM. Beds are assigned as they become available. There is usually a waiting list for beds and floor space is limited. All check-ins must be completed by 8 PM. unless special arrangements have been made (employer's letter, medical emergency, etc.). If you do not check in on time, your bed may be given to the next person on the list. Individuals new to shelter should attempt to have a phone interview in advance of their arrival.

### **Springfield Rescue Mission**

Address: 19 Bliss Street, P.O. Box 9045, Springfield, MA 01102-9045

Phone: 413-732-0808

Website: [www.springfieldrescuemission.org](http://www.springfieldrescuemission.org)

Information: The facility at 148 Taylor Street (formerly a city fire house) accommodates up to 40 men each night in the Emergency Shelter Program on the first floor and an additional 17 men in the Transitional Living Program on the second floor. The purpose of the Emergency Shelter Program is to meet basic physical needs of the homeless while offering emotional support, encouragement and an opportunity to change their circumstances.

### **NOAH Shelter**

Address: 77 Winter Street, Hyannis, MA 02601-5553

Phone: 508-778-5255

Website: [www.haconcapecod.org](http://www.haconcapecod.org)

Information: The NOAH Shelter is the only emergency-access shelter for men and women who become homeless on Cape Cod. The 60-bed shelter serves an average of 500 people each year. In addition to providing a safe place to sleep, the NOAH Shelter provides job-search and housing-search assistance, case management, legal clinics, and substance-abuse and mental-health counseling. Adult individuals may go directly to NOAH. The shelter is open from 4:30 PM until 8:00 AM.

## **B. Veteran-Specific Community Transitional Housing and Shelters**

This section will list some shelter and transitional housing resources specifically serving Veterans in different regions throughout Massachusetts. Please be aware that there are often restrictions on Veterans who have been convicted of arson or sexual offenses in regard to admission to these programs, and CORI information will likely be requested by these programs as part of the admissions application process. Your VA HCRV Specialist can also assist you with information regarding these programs as well as application assistance.

The VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem grants are offered annually (as funding permits) and the funds are awarded to community agencies providing services to homeless Veterans. The purpose of these programs is to promote the development and provision of supportive transitional housing and/or supportive services (i.e. case management, education, crisis intervention, counseling, etc.) with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination.

### **1. Programming Offered Through VA Boston:**

#### **Father Bill's & Main Spring** [www.helpfbms.org](http://www.helpfbms.org)

Work Express Housing

26 Spring Street, Brockton, MA 02301

Referral Coordinator: Alan McCall [amccall@helpfbms.org](mailto:amccall@helpfbms.org)

Phone: 508-894-8520 x205

Information: Offering 15 units of supportive housing for both **male and female** Veterans. Work Express is an intensive 6 month to year-long program offering work experience, support services, and transitional housing. Work Express is open to homeless individuals who are serious about stabilization and are committed to sobriety and recovery. The goal is to prepare participants for future employment and housing by emphasizing stability, life skills, reliability, and work discipline.

#### **Pine Street Inn** [www.pinestreetinn.org](http://www.pinestreetinn.org)

##### **Hartford Street Project**

6 Hartford Street, Dorchester, MA 02125

Referral Coordinator: Kathy Conley [kathy.conley@pinestreetinn.org](mailto:kathy.conley@pinestreetinn.org)

Phone: 617-892-9281

Information: Hartford Street House in Dorchester is transitional housing for homeless veterans, many of whom have been unable to succeed in other settings. Tenants have individual rooms with shared kitchens, bathrooms, and living areas. Case managers help tenants connect with community services, maintain stability, and avoid a return to homelessness. Staff advocate on behalf of the tenants for access to maximum available Veterans' benefits, all geared to the needs of the individual tenant.

#### **Volunteers of America/Mass Bay Veterans Center** [www.voamass.org/](http://www.voamass.org/)

2 North Street

Somerville, MA 02144

Referral Coordinator: James Taggart  
Phone: 617-627-9712 x181  
E-Mail: [jtaggart@voamass.org](mailto:jtaggart@voamass.org)

Information: After years of planning, the 15,000 square foot, three-story brick building, formerly a nursing facility and a group home, provides 22 transitional and 7 permanent units of housing that serves as an anchor for social services and support for homeless veterans. More than 1,180 homeless veterans are in need of housing in Massachusetts, with the vast majority of them around the Greater Boston area. Housing is a key determinant to a person's overall health, well-being, and stability, and Volunteers of America is committed to ensuring that the MBVC provides quality and affordable housing which include a full array of wrap around services for residents.

Services include: Transitional and Permanent Housing Options, Case Management Services, Housing Assistance, Employment Assistance, Mental Health Services, Community Reintegration, Individual and Group Counseling, Life Skills Training, and Linkage to VA Resources.

**New England Center for Homeless Veterans** [www.nechv.org](http://www.nechv.org)  
17 Court Street, Boston, MA 02108

Referral Coordinators:

Post-Detox Program: Amos Marshall (617-371-1728)

Chronic Mental Illness/Project Bridges: Shelana Simon (617-371-1724)

Frail Elders Program: Mimi Yasgur (617-371-1790)

Phone: 617-371-1800 (Main Shelter Number)

Information: The New England Center for Homeless Veterans (NECHV) is a multi-dimension service and care provider dedicated to assisting Veterans who are facing or at-risk of homelessness. The Center offers a broad array of programs and services that enable success, reintegration, meaningful employment and independent living. In addition to the general shelter, there are specialized programs available for specific populations. The Senior Services Program provides specialized services for Veterans age 65 and older. The Bridges Program provides clinical case management and two years of intensive follow up services to Veterans with chronic and persistent mental illness. These teams consist of case managers, social workers, nurses, a rehabilitation specialist, and housing specialists.

## ***2. Programming Offered Through Bedford VA/ENRM Veterans Hospital:***

**Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, Inc.** [www.northeastveterans.org](http://www.northeastveterans.org)  
10 Reed Street, Haverhill, MA 01832  
Phone: 978-372-3626

Information: The Veterans Northeast Outreach Center (VNOC) was founded in 1985 to address the needs of Veterans and their families throughout the Merrimack Valley. The Center offers information, referral, advocacy and support to the Veterans who live in the valley. VNOC provides 25 homeless Veterans with transitional housing for up to two years, and also runs a service center which provides counseling, outreach, benefits assistance, peer support,

education support, legal assistance and case management to Veterans on a walk-in basis.

**Crescent House** [www.bedford.va.gov/bedford/Mentalhealth/cresc.asp](http://www.bedford.va.gov/bedford/Mentalhealth/cresc.asp)

15 Veterans Way, Lowell, MA 01852  
Program Manager: Amos Worth, LICSW  
Phone: 781-687-4922

Information: The Crescent House is a program for homeless Veterans located in Lowell, MA that provides a sober environment and relapse prevention program. It is a unique rehabilitation program which is designed to intervene in the cycle of homelessness and institutionalization by providing an environment in which Veterans can acquire skills and supports needed to function productively and independently in competitive employment and community based housing.

**Bedford Veterans Quarters** [www.caritascommunities.org/bvq.html](http://www.caritascommunities.org/bvq.html)

200 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 01730  
Contact: Caritas Communities  
Phone: 781-275-6296

Information: Caritas Communities has over 20 years of experience creating and managing single room occupancy (SRO) housing. In 2006 Caritas Communities created Bedford Veterans quarters (BVQ) and began renovating a vacant building on the Bedford Veterans Hospital campus. Completed in the summer of 2007, 60 homeless veterans now call BVQ their home. With on-site access to supportive services, BVQ is a major step towards self-sufficiency. Each resident has his/her own room and shares communal areas: 3 kitchens and baths, lounges, laundry rooms, patio and full use of the attractive Bedford campus.

Please note that this program is not operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs. You must contact Caritas Communities directly.

**Safe Haven**

200 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 01730  
Referral Coordinator: James Chaplin, LICSW  
Phone: 781-983-9207

Information: The Safe Haven program provides housing for hard to reach homeless Veterans with severe mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders who are on the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in more traditional supportive services. Safe Haven is a VA pilot program that serves both male and female chronically homeless Veterans who are actively experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse issues. It provides short term housing to create a safe and healthy environment to support the Veterans making better decisions about their lives. Veterans are able to stay for up to 6 months with the goal to obtain housing upon discharge.

### **3. Programming Offered Through VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System:**

**Soldier On** [www.wesoldieron.org](http://www.wesoldieron.org)

421 North Main Street, Building 6, Leeds, MA 01053

Intake Coordinator: Dan Hawkins

Phone: 413-584-4040 x2287

Information: Soldier On is a private nonprofit organization committed to ending veteran homelessness. Since 1994, the organization has been providing homeless veterans with transitional housing and supportive services. In 2010, Soldier On opened the first Gordon H. Mansfield Veterans Community, a permanent housing cooperative that provides formerly homeless veterans with safe, sustainable, affordable housing – transitioning them from homelessness to homeownership. This housing model will be replicated nationally as Soldier On continues to change the end of the story for homeless veterans throughout the country.

**Veterans Inc.** [www.veteransinc.org](http://www.veteransinc.org)

69 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605

Admissions Coordinator: Edward Hack

Phone: (800) 482-2565 x127

Information: Headquartered in Massachusetts, Veterans Inc. is the largest provider of services to veterans and their families in New England. Since 1991, they have helped more than 50,000 veterans and their families. Operations are expanding further into New England and beyond in their goal of eradicating homelessness among veterans. Veterans Inc. operates several sites in Worcester and Shrewsbury, MA. They offer a wide variety of transitional housing settings, including a program for single female Veterans and female Veterans with children.

**Veterans Homestead, Inc.** [www.veteranhomestead.org](http://www.veteranhomestead.org)

Corporate Office

69 High Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Referral Coordinator: Brenda Brousseau [Brenda@veteranhomestead.org](mailto:Brenda@veteranhomestead.org)

Phone: 978-353-0234

Information: The focus of Veteran Homestead is on reclamation and regeneration. Created by a Veteran and staffed with experts who share the compassion and commitment to treat and accommodate wounded warriors in their transition to civilian life. With six unique locations, Veteran Homestead is an independent non-profit solution for the medical, psychological and spiritual care veterans require. Veteran Homestead facilities are designed to provide a safe haven for wounded warriors to regain dignity and restore quality of life.

**Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, Inc.** [www.veterans-outreach.org](http://www.veterans-outreach.org)

268 Central Street, Suite A, Gardner, MA 01440

Phone: 978-632-9601

Information: Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center (MVOC) provides support to military Veterans and their families in need of services to develop a resilient, self-sufficient lifestyle essential to succeed. MVOC offers low income housing alternatives, counseling, case

management, job training, personal development, Veteran's benefits resource assistance, medical transportation, and food assistance. MVOC is home to 12 transitional Veteran, SRO units and 7 low income housing units. MVOC also operates two additional housing facilities for qualified Veterans.

#### **4. Programming Offered Through Providence VA Medical Center:**

##### **Veteran's Transition House** [www.vetshouse.org/](http://www.vetshouse.org/)

20 Willis Street, New Bedford, MA 02740  
Program Director: Susan Fontenaeu-Nicolan  
Phone: 508-992-5313

Information: VTH was founded by a group of local Vietnam-Era Veterans and community leaders. They recognized a need to develop and provide affordable, sober and secure housing to homeless, at risk veterans of the Armed Forces. Today the VTH program consists of fifty (50) beds for Veterans. It also includes a non-veteran program, the "Network House". This is a ten (10) bed holding program for non-veterans who need to go to a structured half-way house. The VTH has expanded its services since its inception in 1990. The VTH offers hope and opportunity through individual and group counseling, case management, employment training, job placement, referrals, and transportation.

#### **C. Soldiers' Homes**

##### **Chelsea Solders' Home** [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/che/](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/che/)

91 Crest Avenue  
Chelsea, MA 02150  
Admissions Coordinator: Linda Sullivan  
Phone: 617-887-7146

Information: Established in 1882, the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea is a multifaceted health care facility available to eligible Veterans of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Soldiers' Home is inspected annually by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Public Health. Their mission is to provide the best health care possible to eligible Veterans who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

##### **Holyoke Soldiers' Home** [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/hly/](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/hly/)

110 Cherry Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Admissions Coordinator: John Beaton [John.Beaton@state.ma.us](mailto:John.Beaton@state.ma.us)  
Phone: 413-532-9475

Information: Established in 1952, The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is a multifaceted health care facility available to eligible veterans of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1971, a major addition was completed providing limited hospital services and additional long-term care beds. The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees comprised of Western Massachusetts residents who are appointed by the Governor to oversee management of the organization. The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), and inspected annually by the Veterans

Administration. Their mission is to provide the best health care possible with their available resources to eligible veterans who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

#### **D. Permanent Housing**

Finding permanent housing may be challenging to find immediately upon your release. However, it is still worthwhile to begin to have a sense of available resources when the time comes for you to take this very important step. Please bear in mind that these programs have eligibility guidelines and program requirements, so be sure to contact these programs directly in order to learn more upon your release from custody.

#### **1. HUD-VASH Program**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program is a joint effort between HUD and VA to move Veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing. HUD provides housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) that allows homeless Veterans to rent privately owned housing. VA offers eligible homeless Veterans clinical and supportive services through its health care system across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

#### **Who May Be Eligible?**

Veterans who are homeless, as defined by the McKinney Act:

An individual (or family group) who lacks a fixed regular and adequate night time residence and who has a primary night time residence that is –

- a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for mentally ill;
- an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Homeless Veterans who are eligible for a full range of VA services.

Homeless Veterans who are in need of intensive case management and are willing to accept this as a part of their rehabilitation process.

Homeless Veterans or family members who are NOT subject to a lifetime registration under a state sex offender registration program.

Highest priority for this program is for chronically homeless disabled Veterans and families (defined as consistently homeless for one year or 4 episodes of homelessness in past 3 years).

For specific information, please contact one of the HCHV Coordinators identified on Page 14 of this guidebook.

## **2. Supported Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program**

Under the SSVF program, VA awards grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives who can provide supportive services to very low-income Veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees provide eligible Veteran families with outreach, case management, and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, which may include: health care services; daily living services; personal financial planning services; transportation services; fiduciary and payee services; legal services; child care services; housing counseling services. In addition, grantees may also provide time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis.

SSVF focuses on homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing. Homelessness prevention assistance is intended for eligible Veteran families who are imminently at-risk of becoming literally homeless but for SSVF assistance. SSVF rapid re-housing assistance is intended for eligible Veteran families who are literally homeless and may remain literally homeless but for SSVF assistance. Targeting SSVF assistance in this manner helps ensure limited SSVF resources are directed to Veteran families most in need of assistance to prevent or end their homelessness.

### **Who May Be Eligible?**

Tenants: Veterans may be single or part of a family in which the head of the household or spouse is a Veteran and the discharge status must be under conditions other than dishonorable. Participants must be very low-income, meaning they earn less than 50 percent of the area median income (AMI).

Eligible Veterans living in permanent housing must be at-risk of becoming homeless if not for SSVF assistance, or Veterans must be currently homeless but scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days pending the location of permanent housing, or Veterans must have exited permanent housing within the previous 90 days in order to seek housing that better fits with their needs.

## **3. Community-Based Programs**

### **A. Department of Housing and Community Development**

[www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/dhcd/](http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/dhcd/)

DHCD's mission is to strengthen cities, towns and neighborhoods to enhance the quality of life of Massachusetts residents. We provide leadership, professional assistance and financial resources to promote safe, decent affordable housing opportunities, economic vitality of communities and sound municipal management. Eligibility guidelines and application materials are available on the website.

## **B. Mass Housing**

[www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/217/home](http://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/217/home)

Mass Housing, the state's affordable housing bank, supports the creation, preservation and long-term viability of affordable homeownership and rental housing opportunities for Massachusetts residents with modest incomes. Mass Housing is a self-sustaining agency and does not use taxpayer dollars in its programs.

## **C. Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development**

[www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/dhcd/contacts/local-housing-authority-listing.html](http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/dhcd/contacts/local-housing-authority-listing.html)

Provides an alphabetical listing of state housing authorities by city/town throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **D. Community Teamwork, Inc., Lowell, MA**

[www.comteam.org](http://www.comteam.org)

Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) is the Community Action Agency for the Greater Lowell area serving the city of Lowell and the seven surrounding towns including Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford.

## **E. Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)**

[www.bostonabcd.org](http://www.bostonabcd.org)

Action for Boston Community Development is Boston's antipoverty agency, serving more than 85,000 low-income Greater Boston residents in 2011 through its city-wide network of neighborhood-based organizations. ABCD provides innovative, timely programs that promote upward mobility and a higher quality of life for people and communities.

## **F. Community Action Agencies**

[www.masscap.org/agencies.html](http://www.masscap.org/agencies.html)

Community Action Agencies (CAAs, also known as Community Action Programs or CAPs) are private, non-profit human service and advocacy organizations that were established by Congress and the President over 30 years ago to fight poverty by opening the doors to self-sufficiency.

CAAs provide emergency assistance to people in crisis; address the causes of poverty through programs that fight unemployment, inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and lack of educational opportunity; and provide training in advocacy skills.

CAAs provide basic support and training services. If you need any of the services that CAAs provide, please call the CAA closest to you. (For a complete listing of all Massachusetts CAAs, their addresses and phone numbers, Web sites, communities served, and programs/services they offer, see the [Agencies & Services](#) section of their Web site.)

Each CAA operates an average of 12 to 15 programs, and these typically include several of the following:

- GED and ESL Education
- Job Training
- Head Start and Day Care
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (Fuel Assistance)
- Homelessness Prevention Programs
- Health Services
- Senior Services
- Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Programs

#### **G. Mass Legal Help**

[www.masslegalhelp.org/housing](http://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing)

The housing section of the Mass Legal Help site has a lot of information about tenants' rights in Massachusetts. You will find self-help forms, sample letters, booklets, handbooks, and frequently asked questions.



## **SECTION V: MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

Although your upcoming release from custody may be exciting to think about, it may also be a source of a large amount of anxiety for you. You may be excited about how your life will be different “this time,” but there may be challenges that you may be confronted with. You may have to reestablish ties with family, return to high-risk places or communities, look for work, and secure some sort of viable and legitimate income. Sometimes incarcerated individuals have inconsistent or even poor work histories and now have a criminal record to contend with that may make securing any type of employment even more difficult.

For incarcerated Veterans who have a history of mental health and/or substance abuse, facing these and other stressors without the sometimes needed structure and support, especially as they return to the community after what may have been a long period of incarceration, may become overwhelming and increase your risk of relapse. Programs are available to eligible Veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs to help them transition from incarceration to the community by providing continued structure, support, and services so that they may obtain assistance during a very important and stressful time.

Should you be eligible for parole, it may be stipulated by the parole board that you enter some sort of long-term residential program. Please be aware that this is not an extensive listing of available resources. However, this list should provide you with at least some resources and programs that may be of benefit to you. Please also refer to the resources previously listed in this guidebook for other programming. Many of these resources are available to both men and women.

### **A. VA Programming**

#### **1. Domiciliary (DOM) – Bedford VAMC**

The DOM is a 3-4 month residential program that offers individual therapy, group treatment, case management, psychopharmacology (medication management), Aftercare substance abuse treatment, and Compensated Work Therapy (CWT). Veterans are required to attend all treatment while at the program and to remain clean and sober. Random drug/alcohol screening is completed as determined by the program providers.

#### **2. REACH – Brockton VAMC**

The REACH program is a clinical residential program that consists of substance abuse treatment, case management, Compensated Work Therapy (CWT). It is similar to the DOM and also provides support with transition from the program to a step-down community living program if needed. Veterans are required to attend all treatment while at the program and to remain clean and sober. Random drug/alcohol screening is completed as indicated.

#### **3. Community Stabilization Program (CSP) – Bedford VAMC**

CSP is a three-week, or longer, program that meets daily and provides group therapy,

psychopharmacology (medication management), and individual case management. The program has an optional residential component where the Veterans may reside at the Rogers House lodging program while enrolled in CSP. Random drug/alcohol screening is completed as indicated.

#### **4. Center for Integrative Recovery Care (CIRCA) – Brockton VAMC**

CIRCA is a 45-day dual-diagnosis residential program that offers group treatment focusing both on mental health and substance abuse. Veterans are required to remain clean and sober. Alcohol and drug screening is completed on both a routine and random basis.

#### **5. Crescent House – Bedford VAMC**

Crescent House is a year-long transitional housing program. Veterans, if accepted, reside at the program. They are required to engage in available programming and to adhere by the program rules. Full-time employment, education, or enrollment in Aftercare and Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) is the goal of Veterans in the program. Crescent House is also a sober living community and Veterans are expected to remain clean and sober. Random drug and alcohol screening is completed as determined by the program providers.

#### **6. Intensive Day Treatment Program (IDTP) – Bedford VAMC**

IDTP is a two-week program that offers intensive substance abuse treatment to include therapeutic groups, individual case management, psychiatric services, and medication management. The program offers extended treatment for Veterans determined as needing additional programming.

#### **7. Safe Haven – Bedford VAMC**

Safe Haven program provides housing for hard to reach homeless Veterans with severe mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders who are on the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in more traditional supportive services. Safe Haven is a VA pilot program that serves both male and female chronically homeless Veterans who are actively experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse issues. It provides short term housing to create a safe and healthy environment to support the Veterans making better decisions about their lives. Veterans are able to stay for up to 6 months with the goal to obtain housing upon discharge.

#### **8. Substance Abuse Recovery Rehabilitation Program (SARRTP)**

SARRTP is a six-week program that offers intensive substance abuse treatment, including therapeutic groups, individual case management, and psychiatric services. There is a residential component located on the grounds of the Jamaica Plain VA site, which is recommended for Veterans accepted to the program.

#### **9. Vet Centers** [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov)

Vet Centers provide individual, group and family counseling to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available for their family members. Vet Centers understand and appreciate Veterans' war experiences while assisting them and their family members toward a

successful post-war adjustment in or near their community.

## ***B. Community Programming***

**Volunteers of America** [www.voamass.org](http://www.voamass.org)

### **Hello House for Men**

686 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Referral Coordinator: Michael Herron [mherron@voamass.org](mailto:mherron@voamass.org)

Phone: 617-262-7142

Hello House Residential Recovery Program for Men is a 24-bed comprehensive treatment experience for men attempting to cope with drug and alcohol addiction. The program is designed to take from three to six months to complete with an average length of stay of 95 days. The goal – to reintegrate it's residents back into the community and their families as sober, fully functioning men who are employed and committed to an ongoing recovery process.

**Volunteers of America** [www.voamass.org](http://www.voamass.org)

### **Hello House for Women**

P.O. Box 220648, Boston, MA 02122

Referral Coordinator: Joanne Coleman [jcoleman@voamass.org](mailto:jcoleman@voamass.org)

Phone: 617-471-6616

The Hello House Residential Treatment Program for Women serves over 300 women per year with the mission of returning these women to the community sober, employed and committed to an ongoing recovery process. The program is designed to take from three to six months to complete with an average length of stay of 95 days. The goal is to reintegrate its residents back into the community and to their families.

### **Jeremiah's Inn**

Address: 1059 Main Street, P.O. Box 30035, Worcester, MA 01603

Phone: 508-755-6403

Website: [www.jeremiahsinn.com](http://www.jeremiahsinn.com)

Jeremiah's Inn is a social model residential recovery program for men. They also operate an Emergency Food Pantry. Jeremiah's Inn has 28 transitional beds, the majority of which are used for their social model recovery program. This is a four-phase program of experiential learning that is peer oriented. Everyone gives and receives help. Residents in this program work with their case manager to develop individual service plans that give focus to their efforts. The residents share rooms, receive meals, have access to clothing, and participate in programs and services that move them closer to their goals. Participants contribute \$10 per day towards the cost of the program.

**Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)** [www.masspartnership.com/](http://www.masspartnership.com/)

MBHP manages mental health and substance use disorder services for more than 400,000 Mass Health Members across the Commonwealth. MBHP has created a community-based system of care that integrates mental health and primary care for Members.

## **SECTION VI: WOMEN VETERANS**

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. Of the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total Veteran population and 6 percent of all Veterans who use VA healthcare services.

### ***A. Women's Programs Available Through the Department of Veterans Affairs.***

The Women Veterans Health Care Program is an integral part of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration. The program goals are to present diverse and innovative programs that care for, educate, and support women Veterans during all phases of their lives. The program focus is on the unique needs and issues facing women Veterans, including health promotion, disease prevention and management, and emotional well-being. In addition, support and therapy groups for women who have suffered military sexual trauma (MST) are offered. There is a Women Veterans Program Manager at each VA medical center who coordinates services for women Veterans. Do not hesitate to ask to meet with them so that they may provide you with specific information regarding the services provided at their VA medical Center.

### **1. VA Boston Healthcare System**

The number of female Veterans coming through the doors of VA Boston has greatly increased over the past few years. In response to this increase the Women's Veteran Program (WVP) at VA Boston Healthcare System continually reviews, designs and implements programs to make sure that women Veterans receive the very best physical and mental care possible.

The WVP is forever evolving to enhance the Women's Health Program by recognizing the differences between men and women and by providing Primary Care and gender specific care to them. The WVP is also strengthening Mental Health Services for women by including:

- The Women's Stress Disorder Treatment Team
  
- The Women's Integrated Treatment and Recovery Program (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and substance abuse residential treatment program)
  
- The Women's Acute Psychiatry Unit in Brockton
  
- The Women's Homelessness Program (one of two in the nation)
  
- The TRUST house

Research also plays a significant role in women Veterans' care. VA BHS's Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD in Jamaica Plain:

[www.ptsd.va.gov/about/divisions/womens-health-sciences-division.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/about/divisions/womens-health-sciences-division.asp) has a variety of research efforts underway including studies related to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the effects of combat on women, physical and psychological health, and interpersonal violence including Military Sexual Trauma. VA BHS is currently researching and conducting studies on pain syndromes and HIV testing initiatives.

In addition to the initiatives inside of VA BHS, the WVP actively engages in outreach in the community and has partnered with community providers to offer a wide range of services, and connect newly returning women Veterans to VA care. VA BHS has joined the Massachusetts Women Veterans Network ([www.mass.gov/veterans/women-veterans/](http://www.mass.gov/veterans/women-veterans/)) to direct women to all the benefits available to them.

Benefits to women Veterans have become available as needs are presented to the healthcare industry. In a historically male dominated population, VA Boston Healthcare has grown and has tended to the specific needs of our female service members since they started coming through our doors and will continue to do so. To see what's new in the way of healthcare service to women, visit the Women Veterans Program of VA Boston.

The **Women's Stress Disorder Treatment Team (WSDTT)** of the Women's Health Sciences Division at VA Boston's Jamaica Plain VA complex provides specialized and comprehensive stress and trauma-related outpatient mental health services to women Veterans and eligible dependents of Veterans. Their programs consist of group psychotherapy, short-term individual psychotherapy, psychiatry, social work services, and consultation. Their treatment team consists of licensed clinical psychologists, social workers, a psychiatrist, and professionals in training (i.e. psychology interns, postdoctoral fellows).

WSDTT is located on the C wing of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the main medical center building and is open Monday – Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Contact **857-364-4012** for additional information.

The **Women Veterans' Homelessness Program** provides help and services to homeless women Veterans, their children, and women Veterans at risk for becoming homeless in Boston and the surrounding areas.

Available services include:

- Specialized treatment for women with a variety of mental health and substance abuse problems.
- Work on behalf of women Veterans within the VA system and community agencies.
- Homeless prevention through collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services, Women Veterans' Network, and the Governor's Council.
- Assistance in navigating systems such as courts, housing agencies, Social Security Administration, and the Veterans Benefits Administration.

- Help in securing safe and affordable housing.
- Referral to the women's program at the New England Center for Homeless Veterans.

In order to be eligible for these services, women Veterans are required to meet eligibility criteria for VA services with an Honorable, General, or medical discharge from service and be at risk for becoming homeless.

For additional information regarding this program, please contact:

**Katherine Paquin, LICSW**

**Tel: 1-800-865-3384 ext. 45841 (or direct 857-364-5841)**

**Fax: 1.800-865-3384 ext. 45841 (or direct 857-364-5841)**

**E-Mail: [Katherine.paquin@va.gov](mailto:Katherine.paquin@va.gov)**

The VA Boston Healthcare System is committed to providing timely access to state-of the-art health care services for **Military Sexual Trauma (MST)** survivors. MST includes sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred while a Veteran was in the military. Experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual attention, touching or grabbing, threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body, sexual activities, forces sex, and/or threatening and unwelcome sexual advances.

Both women and men can experience MST during their service. Did you know that about 1 in 5 women and 1 in 100 men have told their VA healthcare provider that they experienced MST?

Despite higher rates among women, there are actually comparable numbers of men and women seen in VA who experienced MST, due to the greater numbers of men in the military. MST also occurs any time the survivor isn't able to give consent, such as while intoxicated or drugged, or when they are pressured into giving consent in exchange for promises of favorable duties or promotion, or threats of harm to their career. The perpetrator need not be in the military for it to be considered MST.

For questions related to care for Military Sexual Trauma (MST), you can contact the facility's MST Coordinator: **Kristin Angell, LICSW, at 857-364-2951.**

## **2. VA Central Western Healthcare System**

VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System is committed to meeting the unique needs of women Veterans by delivering the highest quality health care to each woman, while offering her the privacy, dignity, and sensitivity to gender-specific needs that she deserves.

Our full time Women Veterans Program Manager, Kim Adams, RN, is ready to assist women Veterans in getting timely access to the health care women Veterans need. She can be reached at (413) 584-4040, extension 2240.

VA services offered include:

**General Health:** Primary Care, Birth Control, Eye Exams, Maternity Care, Infertility Evaluation and Treatment, Menopause Evaluation and Treatment, Osteoporosis Screening and Treatment, Gynecological Care, Cancer Screenings, Mammograms, Wellness and Healthy Living, Nutrition

and Weight Management, Stop Smoking Program.

**Mental Health:** Management of Depression, Anxiety and Stress, Adjustment from Deployment, Counseling and Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma, Violence and Abuse, Alcohol and Drug Dependence.

**Supportive Services:** Chronic Pain Management, Home Based Primary Care, Homeless Program, Nursing Home Care, Physical Therapy, Transitional Housing and Work Program.

### **3. Bedford VA Medical Center**

A new Women's Health Clinic is designed to provide female Veterans with privacy, dignity and sensitivity to their gender-specific needs.

The clinic includes a private waiting room and seating area as well as exam rooms specifically designed for female patients. Services at the clinic include primary care (including gender-specific primary care such as cervical cancer and breast cancer screens), mental health (including post-deployment adjustment or post-traumatic stress disorder and military sexual trauma support) and specialty care (including the management and screening of chronic conditions, reproductive health care, rehabilitation and long-term care.)

The number of women Veterans is growing rapidly, with increasing demands for health care as well as an influx of younger Veterans. VA is equally committed to and equipped to serve the health care needs of older women Veterans—the largest subpopulation of female VA health care users. Today, women comprise approximately 14.5 percent of all active duty military, 18 percent of all National Guard and Reserves and 6 percent of VA health care users.

Since 2000, the number of female Veterans using VA health care has more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 (FY00) to more than 337,000 (FY11). This growth has outpaced that of the male Veteran population. 55.5 percent of female Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn Veterans have received VA health care. VA is stepping up to meet the needs of a growing women Veteran population and enhancing primary care to meet their needs. This is a major undertaking for VA.

### **4. Providence VA Medical Center**

The Providence VA Medical Center is committed to meeting the unique needs of women Veterans by delivering the highest quality health care to each woman, while offering her the privacy, dignity, and sensitivity to gender-specific needs that she deserves. Our full time Women Veterans Program Manager is ready to assist you in getting timely access to the health care you need.

#### **Women Veterans Program Manager**

Your Women Veterans Program Manager at the Providence VA is ***Tonya Maselli McConnell, LICSW, BCD.*** You can reach Tonya at ***(401) 273-7100, extension 6191*** and she can answer

your questions about the program and assist you with enrollment.

**The following services are available for women Veterans:**

**General Health:** Primary Care, Gynecological Care, Maternity Care, Birth Control, Infertility Evaluation and Treatment, Menopause Evaluation/Treatment, Osteoporosis Screening/Treatment, Cancer Screenings, Mammograms, Wellness and Healthy Living, Nutrition and Weight Management, Stop Smoking Program.

**Mental Health:** Management of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress, Adjustment from Deployment, Counseling and Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma, Parenting and Caregiver Issues, Violence and Abuse, Alcohol and Drug Dependence.

**Special Programs:** Vocational Rehabilitation, Educational Opportunities, Links to Job and Career Counseling, Services for Homeless Veterans, MOVE! – Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere.

***B. Women's Programs Through the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services***

The Women Veteran's Network of the Department of Veterans' Services was established in 1997 with the vision of being the central resource for women Veterans in Massachusetts. It has a database of 15,000 women Veterans who receive a biannual newsletter with information on benefits, programs, and events for women Veterans. To receive the newsletter, please use the contact below.

**Mission Statement**

- Provide women Veterans with information on federal, state and local benefits.
- Expand awareness of the needs of women Veterans and identify available health and human resources to meet those needs.

**Events**

The Network hosts the Women Are Veterans Too! event each year to honor women Veterans at the State House in Boston the week of Veterans' Day. The Conference for Women Veterans is another statewide event sponsored by the Network.

**Service Area**

The Women Veterans' Network primarily serves women living in Massachusetts, but welcomes questions and feedback from women everywhere. The Network's coordinator is a member of the National Association of State Women Veterans' Coordinators (NASWVC). The NASWVC compiles a listing of state women veterans' coordinators across the country. If you are from another state, you can contact your state's coordinator to learn about veterans' programs and benefits in your state.

## Contact

Women Veterans' Network  
600 Washington St., 7th Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
Phone: 617-210-5958  
Fax: 617-210-5755  
E-Mail: [DVSWomen@vet.state.ma.us](mailto:DVSWomen@vet.state.ma.us)

## C. Shelter/Transitional Housing Resources for Women

**Father Bill's & Main Spring** [www.helpfbms.org](http://www.helpfbms.org)  
Work Express Housing  
26 Spring Street, Brockton, MA 02301  
Referral Coordinator: Alan McCall [amccall@helpfbms.org](mailto:amccall@helpfbms.org)  
Phone: 508-894-0292 x202

Information: Offering 15 units of supportive housing for both **male and female** Veterans. Work Express is an intensive 6 month to year-long program offering work experience, support services, and transitional housing. Work Express is open to homeless individuals who are serious about stabilization and are committed to sobriety and recovery. The goal is to prepare participants for future employment and housing by emphasizing stability, life skills, reliability, and work discipline.

**Volunteers of America** [www.voamass.org](http://www.voamass.org)  
**Hello House for Women**  
P.O. Box 220648, Boston, MA 02122  
Director: Annette Geldzahler [ageldzahler@voamass.org](mailto:ageldzahler@voamass.org)  
Phone: 617-471-6616

Information: The Hello House Residential Treatment Program for Women serves over 300 women per year with the mission of returning these women to the community sober, employed and committed to an ongoing recovery process. The program is designed to take from three to six months to complete with an average length of stay of 95 days. The goal is to reintegrate its residents back into the community and to their families.

**Veterans Inc.** [www.veteransinc.org](http://www.veteransinc.org)  
69 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605  
Admissions Coordinator: Edward Hack  
Phone: (800) 482-2565 x127

Information: Headquartered in Massachusetts, Veterans Inc. is the largest provider of services to veterans and their families in New England. Since 1991, they have helped more than 50,000 veterans and their families. Operations are expanding further into New England and beyond in their goal of eradicating homelessness among veterans. Veterans Inc. operates several sites in Worcester and Shrewsbury, MA. They offer a wide variety of transitional housing settings, **including a program for single female Veterans and female Veterans with children.**

**Pine Street Inn  
Women's Inn**

Address: 444 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Phone: 617-892-9100

Website: [www.pinestreetinn.org](http://www.pinestreetinn.org)

Information: Founded in 1969, Pine Street Inn serves more than 1,600 homeless individuals daily and 11,000 annually, providing the full spectrum of services to help men and women reach their highest level of independence and get back to a place they can call home.

**Soldier On** [www.wesoldieron.org](http://www.wesoldieron.org)

421 North Main Street, Building 6, Leeds, MA 01053

Intake Coordinator: Dan Hawkins

Phone: 413-584-4040 x2287

Women's Program Director: Cindy Nolan-Liston [cnolan@wesoldieron.org](mailto:cnolan@wesoldieron.org)

Phone: 413-992-7212

Information: The Soldier On Women's Transitional Housing and Peer Led Wellness Program has been providing services for women veterans since 2005. The program provides women with a safe, structured environment that allows them to regain stability as they access services. The transitional housing units are located on our Leeds, MA campus and hold up to 12 women in a duplex cottage with two double bedrooms and eight single bedrooms. Aligned with Soldier On's peer to peer support system, the cottages are maintained and managed by the women who live there. The women make up the committee and sub-committees who coordinate the management of the household, transportation, supplies, maintenance requests, donations, special events and grocery shopping. The Soldier On women's program is a program for women by women. Soldier On's ultimate goal is to provide formerly homeless veterans with permanent, supportive, sustainable housing-assisting them in their transition from homelessness to homeownership.

The women's program provides a safe, homelike environment for women veterans in a period of transition. Each, with assistance from a case manager, develops an individual treatment plan addressing the issues of: homelessness, addiction, mental health issues; medical issues, dental care and substance abuse issues. While staying at our residence, women receive care from our staff, the community and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the Soldier On Wellness Center team.

The Wellness Center focuses on helping women veterans realize their full potential by providing them with activities and opportunities that embrace "mind, body and spirit."

**Long Island Shelter**

Address: P.O. Box 220648, Boston, MA 02122

Phone: 617-534-6100

Website: [www.bphc.org/programs/homeless/emergencysHELTER/Pages/](http://www.bphc.org/programs/homeless/emergencysHELTER/Pages/)

Information: Long Island Shelter has over 400 beds available, 68 are for women. Beds are given out on a first-come, first-serve basis. Transportation goes from their intake site at 794 Massachusetts Avenue (Woods-Mullen Shelter) to Long Island every day between 3:00 PM and 10:00 PM. The shelter is open 24 hours a day during the colder months of the year.

#### **Woods-Mullen Shelter**

Address: 794 Rear Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Phone: 617-534-7100

Web Site: [www.bphc.org/programs/homeless/emergencysHELTER/Pages/](http://www.bphc.org/programs/homeless/emergencysHELTER/Pages/)

Information: Woods-Mullen Shelter is an emergency shelter that is open 24 hours a day year-round. It has 190 beds available, 66 for women. Beds are given out on a first-come, first-serve basis. During the winter months, overflow beds are available for 40 men and 12 women.

#### **St. Francis House/Carolyn Connors Women's Center**

Address: 39 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 617-452-4211

Web Site: [www.stfrancishouse.org](http://www.stfrancishouse.org)

Information: St. Francis House recognizes the unique needs of our female guests, and our Carolyn Connors Women's Center, wholly dedicated to meeting those needs, is a comfortable, cozy lounge where female guests can support one another as they begin to rebuild their lives. Through the Carolyn Connors Women's Center, located on their second floor, guests can access basic services such as food, showers, clothing, and medical care, as well as mental health and substance abuse counseling, housing and legal assistance, and more. They also provide special programs just for women, including "Coming Together to Get It Together," a weekly prayer group, and the annual Women's Day of Renewal.

#### **Sylvia's Haven**

Mailing Address: 474 Revere Beach Blvd., Suite 1004, Revere, MA 02151

Office Address: 7 Foster Street, Suite 29, Revere, MA 02151

Phone: 781-629-4327 (Office)

Hours: 9 AM – 12 PM and 2 PM – 5:30 PM

Website: [www.sylviashaven.org/news.html](http://www.sylviashaven.org/news.html)

Information: Sylvia's Haven is a nonprofit housing facility that provides sanctuary, job training, and emotional and financial support for homeless women and their children. Women who qualify for the program at Sylvia's Haven receive a fully furnished room, connections to professionals for training and jobs, transportation, and the time and emotional support of residents to help care for their children. Women may remain for up to two years. At the end of this time, or sooner, a woman who is successfully employed and has an apartment or home may leave Sylvia's Haven, along with the furniture in her room, to begin an independent life.

#### **Friends of the Homeless**

Address: Women's Shelter - 755 Worthington Street, Springfield, MA 01105

Phone: 413-732-3069

Website: [www.fohspringfield.org](http://www.fohspringfield.org)

Information: Formerly referred to as the Worthington Street Shelter, FOH provides separate men's and women's overnight shelters, serving individuals 18 years of age and older every evening on its Worthington Street campus. No responsible individuals are turned away. FOH is recognized as the shelter of last resort for those individuals needing temporary overnight lodging as FOH facilitates the process to secure permanent housing.

Both men's and women's shelters open for the evening at 5:30 PM. Beds are assigned as they become available. There is usually a waiting list for beds and floor space is limited. All check-ins must be completed by 8 PM. unless special arrangements have been made (employer's letter, medical emergency, etc.). If you do not check in on time, your bed may be given to the next person on the list. Individuals new to shelter should attempt to have a phone interview in advance of their arrival.

**New England Center for Homeless Veterans** [www.nechv.org](http://www.nechv.org)

Address: 17 Court Street, Boston, MA 02108

Phone: 617-371-1800 (Main Number)

Information: The New England Center for Homeless Veterans (NECHV) is a multi-dimension service and care provider dedicated to assisting Veterans who are facing or at-risk of homelessness. The Center offers a broad array of programs and services that enable success, reintegration, meaningful employment and independent living. In 1996, the Shelter established the Lt. Pamela D. Donovan Women's Residence, a ten unit women's dormitory subsequently expanded to accommodate 16 women. The dormitory provides a sleeping area complete with lockers, computer room, lounge and bathroom facilities for homeless female veterans.

**Bristol Lodge Shelter** [www.mhsainc.org/index.htm](http://www.mhsainc.org/index.htm)

Women's Shelter (Staffed Evenings Only)

205 Bacon Street, Waltham, MA 02451

Program Director: Julie Sharp

Phone: 781-894-1225 (Evenings Only)

Information: Both the men's and women's shelters provide emergency shelter to a combined total of fifty seven homeless area residents each night. Staff at each location are trained to provide a variety of specialized and essential services. Support staff are trained to provide all guests with a safe and supportive environment. Case managers help guests locate permanent housing, provide supportive counseling, refer guests to other agencies as needed, organize in-house AA meetings, offer employment counseling groups, and assist clients with entitlement benefits such as SSI or SSDI. Each and every guest has an individualized goal plan.

**Faith House** [www.communityhealthlink.org/ch/](http://www.communityhealthlink.org/ch/)

142 Burncoat Street

Worcester, MA, 01606

Phone: 508-852-6610

Information: Faith House is a 25-bed six-month residential Recovery Home. The mission of Faith House is to provide a safe, supportive recovery community that will promote a sense of

empowerment, personal accountability and the life skills essential for women and their families to stabilize and lead substance free, productive lives. Faith House provides a variety of rehabilitative services in a supportive residential environment including substance use disorder treatment, mental health counseling, group therapy, domestic violence counseling, health education, personal development, self-esteem building, parenting skills development, vocational training, life skills training, and comprehensive case management. The goals of Faith House include helping women to attain long term sobriety, ensuring that homeless women are appropriately housed, strengthening families through the provision of parenting skills and supports, connecting able-bodied women with full time employment, and increasing residents' quality of life, health, well-being, and commitment to self-care.

**Queen of Peace Shelter**

401 Quincy Street  
Dorchester, MA 02125  
Phone: 617-288-4182

Information: The Queen of Peace is a 11 bed family shelter. They provide dinner and breakfast. Clothing provided when available. Three week stay maximum but if miss a night, will lose the bed. They accept women & children (boys under 5). Must be at shelter at 4 PM and out by 9 AM. Call for further details.

**The Women's Lunch Place** [www.womenslunchplace.org](http://www.womenslunchplace.org)

67 Newbury Street  
Boston, MA 02116  
Phone: 617-267-0200 (Shelter Direct Line) ; 617-267-1722 (Administrative Office)

Information: The Women's Lunch Place is a safe, welcoming day community for all self-identified women who are experiencing homelessness or poverty. The Women's Lunch Place strives to meet guests' most basic and immediate needs while coordinating and delivering critical support services designed to help women achieve greater stability and self-sufficiency whenever possible. Sensitive to the many life traumas our guests have suffered, we strive to minimize further trauma by providing our guests with choices which lead to autonomy and self-determination. We respectfully encourage our guests to make positive changes in their circumstances, beginning with their health; however, we do not make demands, and accept each woman for where she is on her life's journey. Our work is made possible by the kindness of private donations and dedicated volunteers.

**Current Hours of Operation:**

Monday through Saturday from 7 AM to 2 PM  
Breakfast: Continental style from 8 AM to 10 AM  
Lunch: Signature lunch served restaurant style at 12 PM

**Alternative House** [www.alternative-house.org/#](http://www.alternative-house.org/#)

P.O. Box 2100Lowell, MA 01853  
Phone: 978-937-5777 (Outreach Office) ; 978-454-1436 (Local Line) ; 888-291-6228 (Toll Free)

Information: The mission of Alternative House is to facilitate the creation of a society in which violence against women will no longer exist. As a means to this end, we offer shelter, support,

options, counseling and legal advocacy for all battered women (and their children) who seek our help. We are committed to the empowerment of women toward self-sufficiency. We do not discriminate against any race, class, culture, age group or sexual orientation. In addition, we provide community education to reform societal attitudes that allow violence against women.

Alternative House offers emergency, confidential shelter for survivors of domestic violence, regardless of race, religion, and gender. Advocates are present 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The shelter program is able to accommodate survivors with disabilities as well. Advocates work with all guests to meet immediate needs, providing support, and referrals to community based programs. Services such as Domestic Violence Education, Parenting Support Classes and Expressive Art Therapy are provided on-site. All services are free and confidential.

Alternative House's confidential crisis hotline is available 24-7/365. You may call at any time to speak with an advocate or to inquire about emergency shelter.

**Abby's House**    [www.abbyshouse.org/abbyshouse/](http://www.abbyshouse.org/abbyshouse/)  
52 High Street  
Worcester, MA 01609  
Phone: 508-756-5486  
E-mail: [info@abbyshouse.org](mailto:info@abbyshouse.org)

Information: Abby's House is committed to ending homelessness. In this spirit, we have not expanded shelter services, but rather, have expanded the number of service-enriched, affordable housing units. We have converted two abandoned houses into beautiful homes and more than doubled the number of units we operated when we took on the building at 52 High Street -- all without increasing the number of staff! Abby's House now manages 78 units of housing in three buildings near downtown Worcester, MA.

**NELCWIT (New England Learning Center for Women in Transition)**

479 Main Street  
P.O. Box 520  
Greenfield, MA 01302  
Phone: 413-772-0806 ; 888-249-0806 (Toll Free)

Information: NELCWIT's mission is to work within the community to build safety, justice, and dignity for all. We offer counseling, education, advocacy, and community organizing to women and children who have survived domestic violence or sexual abuse. As an antiracist, multicultural organization, serving Franklin County and the North Quabbin region of western Massachusetts, NELCWIT offers safety planning, advocacy, education, and support for anyone who has survived domestic or sexual abuse, and prevention education for our community, especially area youth. All of these services are free and confidential. NELCWIT's services are available for adults and children; for able-bodied and disabled individuals; for straight, lesbian, gay, bi, and trans people; and for speakers of other languages.

### **Betty's Place/Project Place**

40 Berkeley Street

Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 617-482-1126

E-Mail: [info@projectplace.org](mailto:info@projectplace.org)

Information: Housed in the YWCA's Berkeley Street residence, Betty's Place is a program that can accommodate up to 10 women at one time. Residents are provided with Project Place programming and supports while making the transition from the emergency shelter system to independent living. Betty's provides each resident with a room of her own in a safe, clean environment and two meals a day. Residents also receive our wraparound support services to address barriers in finding and obtaining employment and housing. The average length of stay is six months.

In order to qualify for Betty's applicants must be homeless and have six months of sobriety. Interested individuals must be able to provide a verification of current homelessness signed by a service provider as well as verification of some sort of income, primarily from employment. Applicants also provide a psycho/social evaluation from their referring agency. Units are of no cost to residents but participants are expected to save 50% of their income while at Betty's to support their transition to permanent housing upon program completion.

If you are interested in learning more about this housing opportunity, please stop by Betty's Place at 40 Berkeley Street in the South End to pick up an application. Completed applications will be placed on a waiting list in the order that they were received. For further questions, please contact Carol Reid or Robert Stinson at 617-482-1126.

### **St. Patrick's Shelter/Catholic Charities** [www.ccab.org/?q=shelter-services](http://www.ccab.org/?q=shelter-services)

270 Washington Street

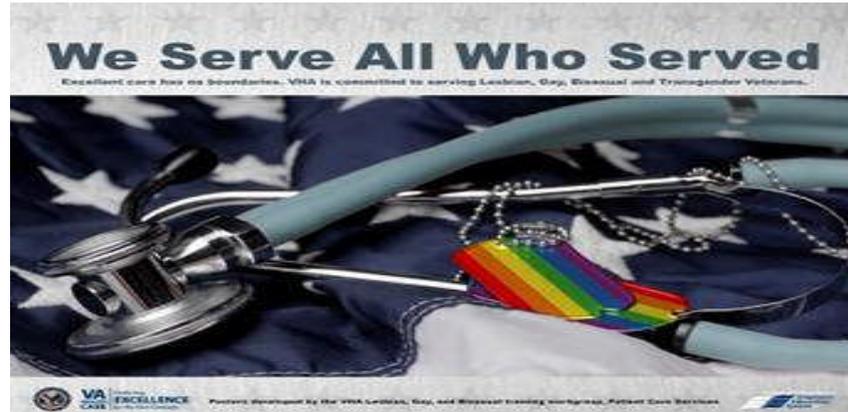
Somerville, MA 02143

Phone: 617-628-3015 ; 617-482-5440 (Catholic Charities Administrative Offices)

Information: An emergency shelter for homeless women. Guests receive referrals for health care, mental health services, educational services and housing. They have a transitional program which helps guests move towards a better future.



## **SECTION VII – LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDERED VETERANS**



The Department of Veterans Affairs/Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is committed to addressing the special health needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Veterans and reducing health disparities for them and members of other vulnerable communities. VHA's commitment to LGBT Veterans includes:

- Providing information, guidance and education to VHA providers about LGBT health issues.
- Promoting a welcoming health and work environment that is inclusive of LGBT Veterans and employees.

Like many other populations identified as at-risk or disadvantaged, research has demonstrated that LGBT individuals experience disparities not only in the prevalence of certain physical and mental health concerns, but also in care due to a variety of factors, including experiences of stigma, lack of awareness, and insensitivity to their unique needs.

In addition, LGBT patients face other barriers to equitable care, such as refusals of care, delayed or substandard care, mistreatment, inequitable policies and practices, little or no inclusion in health outreach or education, and inappropriate restrictions or limits on visitation. These inequalities may be even more pronounced for LGBT people from racial/ethnic minorities or due to other characteristics such as education level, income, geographic location, language, immigration status and cultural beliefs. Experiences of discrimination and mistreatment have, in many cases, contributed to a long-standing distrust of the health care system by many in the LGBT community and have affected their health in profound ways.

VHA developed the role of LGBT Program Coordinator at the headquarters level to advise on LGBT-related national policy and procedures and to coordinate national initiatives across various clinical program offices. In addition, the LGBT Program Coordinators develop and deliver training to clinical staff on LGBT health care, and maintain the LGBT employee resource websites.

120 VA health care facilities throughout the Nation are participating in the Human Rights Campaign's 2013 Healthcare Equality Index (HEI). Participation in the HEI consists of reporting health care systems' policies and trainings related to LGBT patients and families; it is known as

an indicator of an LGBT-positive health care environment. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation skillfully designed the HEI to allow U.S. health care organizations to assess the degree to which they provide LGBT patient-centered care, to identify and remedy any gaps and to make public their commitment to LGBT patients and their families.

Many VA medical centers now have a LGBT Special Emphasis Group and a designated LGBT Special Emphasis Program Manager to assist in increasing LGBT awareness, cultural competency, community outreach, and recruitment and retention efforts. Ensuring that LGBT veterans and employees feel welcomed, respected, and connected is essential to achieving VA's goals of providing patient centric care, and fostering a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment.

#### **A. VA Boston Healthcare System**

VA Boston has a number of policies to ensure competent care for LGBT Veterans. These include both national and local policies that guarantee access for LGBT Veterans in the Boston area. These policies (and more) are available to download from the VA Boston homepage at [www.boston.va.gov/services/Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Veterans.asp](http://www.boston.va.gov/services/Lesbian_Gay_Bisexual_and_Transgender_Veterans.asp) and LGBT Veterans and their families are encouraged to be aware of these rights as you seek care in the VA Boston Healthcare System.

#### **Affirmative Psychotherapy Services:**

VA Boston welcomes a new Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow specializing in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Health Care! Our fellow is located on our Brockton campus and is committed to providing individual therapy for Veterans identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning. Therapy might be good for Veterans who not sure about his/her sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Therapy might also be helpful if you are upset about being treated badly because of your sexual orientation or gender identity. Some Veterans just want to learn more about what gender transition services and supports are available.

You have the right NOT to be "outed" as LGBTQ in your medical record by any provider. We know that gender expression, identity, and sexuality can be personal issues, especially for our Veterans. Each Veteran has the right to decide what works best.

#### **Vet-to-Vet Group:**

The Transgender Veterans Group is a place for any Veteran with gender identity or gender expression concerns or questions. It is a safe place to discuss personal issues, how the VA is treating you, and what the VA offers in transgender medicine. We do not put notes in your medical chart. The group is facilitated by a transgender Vet- to-Vet Certified Peer Specialist. Meetings are held every Thursday from noon-1:00pm, alternating locations between the JP and Brockton campuses. The group meets in JP room 4c-12 and Brockton building 7, room A 007. You do not need a referral from VA staff to come to the group. All LGBT Veterans are welcomed!

Contact Rebecca Jeen [Rebeccajeen@aol.com](mailto:Rebeccajeen@aol.com) or Rebecca Lynn at [Hearn197489@gmail.com](mailto:Hearn197489@gmail.com) for more information.

**Interdisciplinary Transgender Treatment Team:**

VA Boston has an Interdisciplinary Transgender Treatment Team that is committed to providing comprehensive care for transgender Veterans. The team spans medicine, psychology, psychiatry, social work, nursing, and endocrinology. If interested, you can ask any of your VA providers to place a consult within the medical record system, notifying the Interdisciplinary Transgender Treatment Team to work alongside your providers on your treatment plan. For questions about what transgender-related services are provided, please see the VA Boston Healthcare System and national VA policies.

**Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality**

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation awarded the staff of VA Boston, the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) 2013 Equality Leader Status!

**Relevant Policies and Services:**

**Non-discrimination:** Our non-discrimination policy has specific language that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (actual and perceived). View a copy of the VA Boston Policy on Lesbian and Gay Patients or the Patient Care Memorandum on Transgender Care. To request VA Boston's Nondiscrimination Policies, please let your health care provider know so they can obtain a copy for you.

**Visitation:** VA Boston allows for a same-sex partner, family member, friend, or other individual to be present with the patient for emotional support during the course of their stay. Same-sex partners are recognized as the patient's family, even if the partners are not legally married.

**Advanced Directives:** Patients may designate any person as a decision-maker for care should you become unable to make these decisions yourself. This includes designating a same-sex partner as a surrogate decision maker. Advanced Directive agents are chosen by the Veteran and do not need to be biologically related.

**Documentation in Medical Records:** VA Boston maintains the confidentiality of information about sexual orientation and sexual behavior, as it does with all other private health information.

**Changing Your Name and/or Sex in Your Medical Record:** Your name in the medical record will reflect your legal name. The sex in your medical record should reflect your self-identified gender. You have the right to request that name and sex are updated as appropriate. There are established procedures for changing your name and sex with the VA Privacy Officer. If you would like a copy of the fact sheet on how to change your name and/or sex in CPRS, please let your health care provider know so they can obtain a copy for you.

**Concerns and/or Complaints:** If you feel you are not being provided with compassionate care at VA Boston, we encourage you to make your concerns known. Concerns regarding a specific service (e.g., Mental Health, Primary Care) should be directed to the corresponding contact person for that service. This information can be easily found on this website through the Services page. In addition, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the Patient Advocate. If you would like a copy of the Memo on processing EEO complaints based on Sexual Orientation, please let your health care provider know so they can obtain a copy for you.

If you have any questions or concerns that are not about a specific Service Line, please contact Dr. Heather Walton, Chairperson of the VA Boston Diversity Committee, at (774) 826-1009.

### ***B. Bedford VA/ENRM Veterans Hospital***

The Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital (Bedford VAMC) offers a variety of mental and physical health services to our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ) Veterans. Mental health services include, but are not limited to, individual and group psychotherapy, medication management, case management, services for survivors of Military Sexual Trauma, substance abuse recovery, suicide prevention, as well as employment and housing assistance. The groups offered that specifically address the social, emotional, and psychological needs of our LGBTQ veterans are as follows:

LGBTQQ Well-Being Group: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQQ) individuals encounter a multitude of stressors that impact our health. These include homophobia, transphobia, barriers to receiving healthcare, as well as messages about “who” we should be and what we should have access to. Often, we internalize these messages as truth. This group values both individuality and community, and believes that the process of transcending these struggles and reaffirming strength lies in developing a supportive network of individuals with whom to explore personal stories of struggle and triumph. This group is open to all individuals who self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and/or Questioning. Weekly topics will be determined by the group and address areas of self-acceptance, coming out, building relationships, sexual health, and resilience.

Contact: **Stephen Gresham 781-687-6030**

In addition to our mental health services, the Bedford VAMC offers a variety of physical health services that are available to our LGBTQ Veterans. These services include, but are not limited to primary care/behavioral health, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, pre-surgical assessments and post-operative care for gender transition, as well as speech pathology/voice feminization. Highlighted programs include:

- **Speech Pathology/Voice Feminization:** This service is provided by a trained speech pathologist that helps our transgender Veterans modify their voice and improve voice quality to align with their gender identity and gender expression. Contact: Erika Krauss (781-687-2141)
- **Hepatitis C & HIV Programs:** These programs offer screening and testing for individuals at risk for HIV infection and/or Hepatitis C, preventative and wellness education for Veterans and their families, and provides Veterans with varied treatment options to maintain their health if screened positive for HIV and/or Hepatitis C. Contact: Primary Care (800-838-6331)

In addition to forming an inter-professional workgroup tasked with identifying and implementing “best practices” for LGBTQ Veterans who receive services throughout the medical center, the Bedford VA has also developed and participated in social events aimed at demonstrating the VA’s continued support for LGBTQ Veterans.

**Safe Zone Ally Trainings:** Beginning in May 2014, Bedford VAMC adopted a Safe Zone Ally training program. Staff are being offered the opportunity to be trained as allies to the LGBTQ community of Veterans. This Safe Zone Ally symbol, displayed on stickers, pins, and badge holders, identifies that staff member as an ally to the LGBTQ community. This means that staff member has received a two-hour Ally training and is ready to provide affirmative support to LGBTQ Veterans. As this training is rolled out, there are also likely staff who currently function as allies but are not yet trained and therefore do not have access to use this symbol yet, so you should not assume that someone not wearing this symbol is not an ally. The Safe Zone Ally program is another way Bedford VAMC expresses the VA principle that “We serve all who served” and welcomes LGBTQ Veterans.



### **C. Providence VA Medical Center**

The Providence VA Medical Center is committed to providing top quality care to all eligible Veterans including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Veterans. We recognize that diverse populations have distinctive needs, and we train our staff in culturally and clinically-competent care for LGBT Veterans.

The Providence VAMC is focused on providing the most respectful health care environment possible. A new policy has just been put in place; some relevant policies and services are discussed briefly below:

**Non-discrimination:** Our non-discrimination policy has specific language that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Visitation:** We allow for a same-sex partner, family member, friend, or other individual to be present with the patient for emotional support during the course of their stay. Same-sex partners are recognized as the patient’s family, even if the partners are not legally married.

**Advanced Directives:** Patients may designate any person as a decision-maker for care should you become unable to make these decisions yourself. This includes designating a same-sex partner as a surrogate decision maker. Advanced Directive agents are chosen by the Veteran and do not need to be biologically related.

**Documentation in Medical Records:** The Providence VAMC maintains the confidentiality of information about sexual orientation and sexual behavior, as it does with all other private health information.

**Interdisciplinary Transgender Treatment Team:** The Providence VAMC has a designated provider who have been trained on the healthcare needs of transgender Veterans.

**Concerns and/or Complaints:** If you feel you are not being provided with compassionate care at the Providence VAMC, we encourage you to make your concerns known. Concerns regarding a specific service (e.g., Mental Health, Primary Care) should be directed to the corresponding contact person for that service. This information can be easily found on this website through the Services page. In addition, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the Patient Advocate.

**D. Community-Based Services and Resources** (Certainly not a complete listing, but a start)

**MassEquality** – MassEquality is the leading statewide grassroots advocacy organization working to ensure that everyone across Massachusetts can thrive without discrimination and oppression based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. MassEquality partners across issues, identities, and communities to build a broad, inclusive, and politically powerful movement that changes hearts and minds and achieves policy and electoral victories.

**Contact Information:**

MassEquality  
5 Broad Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109  
Phone number: 617-878-2300  
E-Mail: [info@massequality.org](mailto:info@massequality.org).

You may also visit their website at [www.massequality.org/](http://www.massequality.org/) for further information.

**OutServe-SLDN** – OutServe-SLDN is the association for actively serving LGBT military personnel and veterans. We are a non-partisan, non-profit, legal services, watchdog and policy organization dedicated to bringing about full LGBT equality to America's military and ending all forms of discrimination and harassment of military personnel on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. OS-SLDN provides free and direct legal assistance to service members and veterans affected by the repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law and the prior regulatory ban on open service, as well as those currently serving who may experience harassment or discrimination. They also provide assistance with transgender services in regard to the military as well as upgrading and changing discharge paperwork for those who were discharged for "Homosexual Acts" or "Homosexual Conduct."

**Contact Information:**

OutServe-SLDN  
P.O. Box 65301  
Washington, DC 20035-5301  
Phone: 202-328-3244  
E-Mail: [admin@outserve-sldn.org](mailto:admin@outserve-sldn.org)

You may also visit their homepage at [www.sldn.org/](http://www.sldn.org/) for further information.

**OUTVETS** – OUTVETS is a social and fraternal organization celebrating and honoring the contributions of America’s LGBTQ Veterans. It was created to recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices of LGBTQ Veterans through social interaction and community service and engagement. The organization has no political agenda or affiliation.

**Contact Information:**

OUTVETS  
26 West Eagle Street  
Boston, MA 02128  
Phone: 978-502-5551  
E-Mail: [outvets@gmail.com](mailto:outvets@gmail.com)

You may also visit their homepage at [www.outvetsamerica.org/](http://www.outvetsamerica.org/) for further information.

**GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project** [www.glbtqdv.org](http://www.glbtqdv.org)

**1-800-832-1901** 24-hour hotline

GLBTQ-DVP specializes in services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are located in Southern New England, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. It offers support to all victims and survivors regardless of gender identity/expression and/or sexual orientation. All services are free and confidential.

GLBTQ-DVP operates a 24-hour hotline to support victims and survivors of domestic violence and their friends and families. Contact the hotline for immediate crisis counseling, help planning for safety, and for more information about services, including court/medical accompaniment and help navigating social service systems.

**American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER)** – AVER is a non-profit, non-partisan, chapter-based Veterans Service Organization of active, reserve, and veteran service members dedicated to full and equal rights and equitable treatment for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, especially the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender current and prior military personnel who have been historically disenfranchised by armed forces policy and discriminatory laws governing military service and benefits.

**Contact Information:**

AVER, Inc.  
P.O. Box 94376  
Atlanta, GA 30377-0376  
Phone: 718-849-5665  
E-Mail: [info@aver.us](mailto:info@aver.us)

You may also visit their homepage at [www.aver.us/](http://www.aver.us/) for further information.

**Tiffany Club of New England** – TCNE, Tiffany Club of New England, is a social and support organization for the transgender community.

Offering transgender social activities and support since the 1970's, TCNE is one of the oldest transgender groups in the world and one of very few with their own permanent **clubhouse**. They also run the **First Event** transgender conference each January. Newcomers are encouraged to drop in any Tuesday evening, 7:00 – 9:00 pm, or the first and third Saturday evening of the month. Come dressed or not. Dress there if you like. They are a very safe and friendly place to come out and/or establish connections in the community.

**Contact Information:**

TCNE, Inc.  
P.O. Box 540071  
Waltham, MA 02454-0071  
Info Line: 781-891-9325

\*\*\* Phone is answered live Tuesday evenings 7 PM – 9 PM and the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of the month from 7 PM – 11 PM.

E-Mail: [info@tcne.org](mailto:info@tcne.org)

You may also visit their homepage at [www.tcne.org/](http://www.tcne.org/) for further information.

**Dignity Boston** - Dignity/Boston is a progressive, inclusive community of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Catholics and friends. They are a member chapter of DignityUSA, a national organization with dozens of chapters and thousands of members.

They invite you to join us for liturgy and social hour every Sunday at 5:30 PM, St. John the Evangelist Church, 35 Bowdoin Street, Boston, Massachusetts (on Beacon Hill between the State House and Cambridge Street).

Formed in the first waves of the Gay Liberation movement that followed the Stonewall Riots, Dignity/Boston has been providing a home for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) Catholics, their friends and supporters since 1972. Dignity/Boston was formed to unite these people and provide an instrument through which the voices of GLBT Catholics may be heard by the Church and by society.

**Contact Information:**

Dignity/Boston  
P.O. Box 170428  
Boston, MA 02117-0408  
Phone: 617-421-1915  
E-Mail (General Information): [info@dignityboston.com](mailto:info@dignityboston.com)

You may also visit their homepage at [www.dignityboston.org/db/](http://www.dignityboston.org/db/) for further information.

## **SECTION VIII: EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

Often, individuals who are released from incarceration feel as though they are completely starting over, even if they had good jobs and worked steadily in the past. Having a stable income is important for many aspects of daily life, from maintaining your housing, paying bills, buying food, toiletries, and clothing, as well as other necessities that can smooth your transition back into the community.

If available, take advantage of any training or education programming that is afforded to you at the correctional facilities. Your facility case manager or reintegration staff is a good resource for you in regard to locating resources in your area upon release.

In addition, the following resources may be of assistance to you as you transition from incarceration to living in the community:

### **Employment-Resources.com**

[www.employment-resources.com/states/massachusetts-jobs.html](http://www.employment-resources.com/states/massachusetts-jobs.html)

Find a Job in Massachusetts. Search local job boards and categorized job listings. Additional employment resources include colleges and career training schools, Resumes, Cover letters, employer resources, and links to official state labor sites.

### **Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance**

[www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/hrd/](http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/hrd/)

Human Resources Division: 617-878-9700

Information about employment opportunities, diversity programs, training and development, workers' compensation, civil service examinations, workforce policies and employee and labor relations.

### **Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)**

[www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/career-services/career-center-services/](http://www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/career-services/career-center-services/)

Massachusetts One Stop Career Centers serve as a vital link, connecting workers and employers to bring about economic opportunity. They offer a wide variety of job finding resources in one place, including Internet access, computerized job matching and direct referral to job opportunities, career counseling and job search workshops, assistance with resume writing, and assistance accessing training and/or retraining resources. Career Centers are helping put Massachusetts' citizens back on the payroll, one person and one job at a time.

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC) Tax Credit For Hiring Program**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit incentive that employers may receive for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. The main objective of this program is to enable the targeted employees to gradually move from economic dependency into self-sufficiency as they earn a steady income and become contributing taxpayers, while participating employers are compensated by being

able to reduce their federal income tax liability.

Employers make the hiring decision, and there is no limit to the number of new hires who can qualify the employer for the tax savings, but individuals must be identified as members of one of these targeted groups before a job offer is made. For a list of the targeted groups, go to [www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/eligible.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/eligible.cfm).

### **Amount of the Credit**

The amount of the tax credit is based on a percentage of qualified wages paid to the new employee for the first year of employment only. Both the percentage and the cap on qualifying wages vary based on which target group the new employee falls into. For more details on WOTC benefit amounts, go to [www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/benefits.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/benefits.cfm).

### **Labor Ready** [www.laborready.com/](http://www.laborready.com/)

Each year, Labor Ready dispatches approximately 400,000 Temporary Associates to jobs in construction, manufacturing, hospitality, events, restoration, auto services, logistics and warehousing, retail support, waste and recycling and more. More than 225,000 businesses of all sizes throughout the United States and Canada use Labor Ready when they need a dependable source of labor. The website allows you to search for MA Labor Ready locations.

### **VetSuccess** [www.vetsuccess.gov/](http://www.vetsuccess.gov/)

VetSuccess.gov is a comprehensive one-stop site for Veteran and service member employment needs. Veterans can browse job listings, post resumes, and apply for positions directly on the site. Employers can post jobs, view Veteran's resumes, and receive job applications. VetSuccess is a part of the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E), whose primary function is to help Veterans who have service-connected disabilities (10% or greater) become suitably employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living.

For additional information, please contact:

Ellen Shaw-Peterson [ellenshaw-peterson@va.gov](mailto:ellenshaw-peterson@va.gov)  
Phone: 617-303-5533

### **Veterans Employment & Training Services (VETS) Program**

[www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/specialized-job-seeker-services/veterans-programs-and-services/](http://www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/specialized-job-seeker-services/veterans-programs-and-services/)

The Veterans Employment & Training Services (VETS) program is provided with grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The grant allows the Department of Career Services (DCS) to provide Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs) at One-Stop Career Centers across the state.

The purpose of the VETS grant is to ensure the provision of a full range of employment and training services to veterans. Since veterans are given priority of service status under the law, it is particularly important for LVERs and DVOPs to be connected with all Veterans coming into the Career Centers. In addition, LVERs and DVOPs maintain up-to-date information about all the programs and services available to assist Veterans at the federal, state, and local level.

For additional information, please contact:

Brian Ottlinger [bottlinger@detma.org](mailto:bottlinger@detma.org)  
Job for Veterans Program Coordinator  
Massachusetts Department of Career Services  
Phone: 508-977-1407

**Federal Bonding Program** [www.bonds4jobs.com/index.html](http://www.bonds4jobs.com/index.html)

In 1966, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) created the Federal Bonding Program (FBP) as an employer job-hire incentive that guaranteed the job honesty of at-risk job seekers. Federal financing of Fidelity Bond insurance, issued free-of-charge to employers, enabled the delivery of bonding services as a unique job placement tool to assist ex-offenders, and other at-risk/hard-to-place job applicants (e.g., recovering substance abusers, welfare recipients, poor credits, etc.). Ex-offenders, including anyone with a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment, and anyone who has ever been on probation or parole, are at-risk job applicants. Failure to become employed after release is a major factor contributing to the high rate of recidivism. Having a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment functions as a significant barrier to employment since employers generally view ex-offenders as potentially untrustworthy workers and insurance companies usually designate ex-offenders as being “not bondable” for job honesty.

**Massachusetts JobQuest** (online job search engine site) [www.mass-veterans.jobs/](http://www.mass-veterans.jobs/)



## SECTION IX – LEGAL ASSISTANCE

In seeking legal assistance or legal advice, it is important to remember that most state law is state-specific, and the law in the state in which you live or where the legal issue occurred governs most common legal problems. When looking for legal help, make sure that the information you find applies to your state and that the lawyer or other service provider is qualified to practice in your state. Below are some resources to get you started.

### **Shelter Legal Services**

885 Centre Street  
Newton, MA 02459  
Phone: 617-552-0623

Homepage: [www.shelterlegalservices.org](http://www.shelterlegalservices.org)

Shelter Legal Services' mission is to promote self-sufficiency, stability, and financial security of homeless and low-income Veterans through free and accessible legal services. Through restricted grant funding, they also provide legal services to homeless individuals in Cambridge. Shelter Legal Services holds legal clinics at the New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Chelsea Soldier's Home, and the Cambridge Multi-Service Center. Check the Clinics/Services section of the website for specific information.

### **Senior Partners for Justice**

c/o McGrath & Kane  
1 Longfellow Place, Suite 3610  
Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: 617-523-56 or 617-645-9262 (Judge Edward m. Ginsburg)  
E-Mail: [SeniorLawyers@aol.com](mailto:SeniorLawyers@aol.com)

Homepage: [www.seniorpartnersforjustice.org/](http://www.seniorpartnersforjustice.org/)

Established in 2002 by Hon. Edward M. Ginsburg, a retired Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Probate and Family Court. During his many years on the bench, Judge Ginsburg observed the struggles of pro se litigants as they tried to represent themselves in divorce, paternity, child support, custody, and other family law matters. Senior Partners for Justice asks lawyers of all ages and backgrounds to use their talents to serve those who would otherwise go unrepresented in court.



**Veterans Legal Services**

885 Centre Street  
Newton, MA 02459  
Phone: 617-552-0623  
E-Mail: [info@shelterlegalservices.org](mailto:info@shelterlegalservices.org)

Homepage: [www.veteranslegalservices.org/index.php](http://www.veteranslegalservices.org/index.php)

Veterans Legal Services promotes self-sufficiency, stability, and financial security for Veterans and the homeless through comprehensive and accessible legal services. By locating legal clinics at homeless shelters and service centers, Veterans Legal Services reaches underserved and neglected members of our society who are often reluctant to seek legal help. Veterans Legal Services serves over 400 clients per year at its legal clinics.

**Veteran Legal Services**

Lisa LaFera, Esq.  
10 Reed Street  
Haverhill, MA 01832  
Phone: 978-846-2781

**American Bar Association**

Homepage: [www.apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/Iris/directory/main.cfm?id=MA](http://www.apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/Iris/directory/main.cfm?id=MA)

Provides information for attorneys and the public including a Lawyer Referral and Information Service.

**Massachusetts Bar Association**

Homepage: [www.masslawhelp.com](http://www.masslawhelp.com)

Massachusetts Bar Association  
20 West Street  
Boston, MA 02111-1204  
Phone: 617-338-0500

Massachusetts Bar Association  
73 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Phone: 413-731-5134

Provides information on how the Massachusetts Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service can help you. Office locations are in Boston and Springfield, MA.

**Boston Bar Association – Volunteer Lawyers Project**

Homepage: [www.bostonbar.org/](http://www.bostonbar.org/)

16 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: 617-742-0615

**Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation**

Homepage: [www.mlac.org/contact.html](http://www.mlac.org/contact.html)

7 Winthrop Square, 2nd floor

Boston, MA 02110-1245

Email: [info@mlac.org](mailto:info@mlac.org)

Phone: 617-367-8544

**Board of Bar Overseers**

Homepage: [www.mass.gov/obcbbo/board.htm](http://www.mass.gov/obcbbo/board.htm)

99 High Street

Boston, MA 02110

Phone: 617-728-8700

**Mass Legal Help**

Homepage: [www.masslegalhelp.org/](http://www.masslegalhelp.org/)

You may be eligible for legal aid. Mass Legal Help can help you find legal aid in your area. This is an internet resource.

**Community Legal Aid**

Homepage: [www.communitylegal.org/](http://www.communitylegal.org/)

Formerly Legal Assistance Corporation of Central MA and Western MA Legal Services

Worcester: 1-800-649-3718 or 508-752-3718

Springfield: 1-800-639-1109 or 413-781-7814

Northampton: 1-800-639-1309 or 413-584-4034

Pittsfield: 1-800-639-1509 or 413-499-1950

**Greater Boston Legal Services**

Homepage: [www.gbls.org/](http://www.gbls.org/)

Main Office

197 Friend Street

Boston, MA 02114

Phone: 617-371-1234 or 1-800-323-3205 (toll-free)

Cambridge/Somerville Office

60 Gore Street, Suite 203

Cambridge, MA 02141

Phone: 617-603-2700 ; 617-494-1757 (TDD)

## **Massachusetts Justice Project**

Homepage: [www.majp.org/](http://www.majp.org/)

Massachusetts Justice Project (MJP) is the federally funded Legal Services Corporation provider of free intake and hotline services for eligible clients in the central and western Massachusetts counties of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire & Worcester.

Holyoke: Toll-Free 1-800-639-1209 Local: 413-533-2660

Worcester: Toll-Free 1-888-427-8989 Local: 508-831-9888

South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.

[www.sccls.org/contact.asp](http://www.sccls.org/contact.asp)

Towns served in Massachusetts: Abington, Acushnet, Aquinnah, Attleboro, Avon, Berkley, Barnstable, Brewster, Bridgewater, Brockton, Bourne, Carver, Chatham, Chilmark, Dartmouth, Dennis, Dighton, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Eastham, Easton, Edgartown, Fairhaven, Fall River, Falmouth, Freetown, Gay Head, Gosnold, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Harwich, Kingston, Lakeville, Mansfield, Marion, Marshfield, Mashpee, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Nantucket, New Bedford, North Attleboro, Norton, Oak Bluffs, Orleans, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Provincetown, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Rockland, Sandwich, Seekonk, Somerset, Stoughton, Swansea, Taunton, Tisbury, Truro, Wareham, Wellfleet, West Bridgewater, Westport, West Tisbury, Whitman, Yarmouth.

### **Locations:**

Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts, LLC  
231 Main Street, Suite 201  
Brockton, MA 02301  
1-800-244-8393

Fall River Law Office  
22 Bedford Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Fall River, MA 02720  
1-800-287-3777

Hyannis Office  
460 West Main Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
1-800-742-4107

### **Nantucket Outreach Schedule**

By Appointment Only: Please call 1-800-742-4107 to complete an application and schedule an appointment.

### **Martha's Vineyard Elder Outreach Schedule**

By Appointment Only: Please call 1-800-742-4107 to complete an application and schedule an appointment.

## CHECKLIST

### USING THIS GUIDE:

- [ ] Make a list of your needs.
- [ ] Ask about classes or resources to help plan for release.
- [ ] Learn about available housing options in your local area.
- [ ] Learn about job resources and create a plan to find a job.
- [ ] Learn about health care programs and what services are available to you.
- [ ] Learn about the resources available for substance abuse and mental health treatment in your area.
- [ ] Learn about your options to get financial assistance and to take care of other legal issues.
- [ ] Make a list of who may be able to help you.
- [ ] Contact organizations about what services they have to offer.
- [ ] Write down the steps you take so that you do not repeat them.
- [ ] Learn about resources for women Veterans.

### VETERANS BENEFITS:

- [ ] If you are not currently receiving benefits, find out if you can or should be.
- [ ] Contact a Veterans Service Organization to represent you and help you file a claim.
- [ ] If you are receiving benefits, notify the VA when you go to prison to avoid an overpayment.
- [ ] Apply for an apportionment so that some of your benefits may be given to eligible family members.
- [ ] Notify the VA immediately when released to reinstate your receipt of benefits.

## FORMS

Below are brief descriptions of forms needed to file for certain VA benefits. Be sure that you use a return address where mail will get to you as quickly as possible. Make photocopies of all forms for your records before sending your packet to the VA Regional Office (VARO) nearest you. Your HCRV Specialist will also be able to obtain these forms for you as needed and will be able to assist you with completion of them when you are preparing for your release from custody.

- **VA Form 21-536 – Veterans Application for Compensation and/or Pension:** Must be filed to apply for compensation or pension benefits. Mail your DD-214 and the following forms to the VARO nearest your release destination 30-45 days before release.
- **VA Form 21-4142 – Authorization and Consent to Release Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs:** If you have received medical or mental health care that may be relevant to your claim from anyone other than a VA Medical Center, you need to fill out this form for each care provider you have received treatment at giving permission for release of medical records to the VA.
- **VA Form 10-10EZ – Application for Health Benefits:** This is the form that you need to submit, along with a copy of your DD214, in order to initially enroll in VA healthcare. Complete the form and bring it with you to your nearest VA medical center where you wish to receive treatment.
- **VA Form 10-10EZR – Health Benefits Renewal Form:** This is the form that you need to update your personal, insurance, or financial information after you are enrolled in VA healthcare. The information provided will be used by VA to determine your continued eligibility for medical benefits. This form should be completed on a yearly basis.
- **DD Form 293 – Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States:** This is the form that you will need if you are requesting review of your military service for possible upgrade in discharge status. This form is used if you separated from service **within the last 15 years**.
- **DD Form 149 – Application for Correction of Military Record Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552 –** This is the form that you will need if you are requesting review of your military service for possible upgrade in discharge status if you separated from service **over 15 years ago**.
- **SF-180 – Application for Request of Military Records:** This form will need to be completed if you need to request a certified copy of your DD214 from your branch of service or from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri.