OPERATION CONNECT

Building pathways and partnerships with veteran providers to offer holistic methods to help veterans successfully transition home.

SITUATION

Veterans are forever changed by their military service to the United States of America. While service members receive best-in-class training, the transitioning from active duty to veteran is a cultural shift and deeply challenging for some.

As Oklahomans, we need to ensure our veterans and their families return home to greater opportunity to re-engage civilian life successfully. As our veterans answered the call to serve, Oklahoma Veteran Alliance has answered the call to serve our returning veterans.

296,891
Veterans in Oklahoma in 2021.

30,540
Female veterans in Oklahoma in 2021.

7.5%
of Oklahoma residents are veterans in 2021.

303
Homeless veterans in Oklahoma in 2019.

95,261
Oklahoma veterans with a disability in 2019.

800+
Veterans incarcerated in Oklahoma in 2021.

22,432
Oklahoma veterans earning below the poverty level in 2019.

4.8%
Oklahoma veteran unemployment rate in April 2020.

17.5
National average of veterans who died by suicide each day in 2018.

10X
Homeless veterans have a 10x higher rate of having an opioid disorder.

Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Oklahoma Department of Veteran Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

MISSION

Oklahoma Veteran Alliance is a statewide advocacy network committed to building stronger communities in support of veterans through Operation Connect.

- Operation Connect serves to interface with existing veteran service organizations, Tribal Nations and veteran nonprofits to focus on key areas to eliminate barriers to veterans' success, such as housing, healthcare, education, employment and legal. We utilize Unite Oklahoma, a closed loop referral system currently expanding across Oklahoma, to efficiently connect veterans to resources statewide.
- We are focused on expanding into more rural areas based on input from our local partners who know best how to tackle these hurdles and provide a positive environment for the veterans in their communities.
- Oklahoma Veteran Alliance network is strengthened by our partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Veteran Affairs, particularly through our work supporting the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Veteran Suicide, establishing local Mayor's Challenges to Prevent Veteran Suicide, and creating OK VALOR, a new online tool built to help veterans easily find services and resources in their home towns.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Establish Operation Connect Community Groups in rural Oklahoma** by building partnerships with existing veteran service organizations to offer holistic methods to welcome veterans home and provide healthy social connections as well as linkage to needed resources.
- **Operation Connect Community Groups will connect veterans to resources** such as employment, education, benefits, healthcare, legal and housing. Often, veterans are unaware of the many services and resources available to them. For this reason, Operation Connect will act as a bridge to help veterans by utilizing Unite Oklahoma, a coordinated care network of health and social care providers.
- **Build a team of Operation Connect Community Leaders** to serve as general or resource specific mentors (i.e. housing, employment, etc.) to assist transitioning or struggling veterans.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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COMMUNITY SERVICE COUNCIL

The Community Service Council serves as the backbone organization providing operational oversight for OKVA.