



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

PROGRAM STATEMENT

OPI: RSD/WSP

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Management of Inmate Veterans

/s/

Approved: M.D. Carvajal
Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To ensure the Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) properly identifies, tracks, and provides services to inmates who are United States Veterans.

a. Program Objectives. Expected results of this program are:

- Institutions will ensure inmate Veterans have access to specialty Veteran services and programs.
- Reentry planning will address available Veteran benefits.
- Staff will be provided training to better understand and meet the needs of inmate Veterans.

b. Institution Supplement. None required. Should local facilities make any changes outside changes required in national policy or establish any additional local procedures to implement national policy, the local Union may invoke to negotiate procedures or appropriate arrangements.

2. DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION

In the Bureau, **inmate Veterans** are defined as any incarcerated persons who served in the United States Military or Uniformed Services. Veterans' benefits apply not only to Veterans themselves, but to immediate family members. While inmates who did not serve are not classified as Veterans, they may seek and be provided with related information or services. As a result, Veteran programming and service information must be accessible to all inmates in a common area, even those who are not known to have been in the military or uniformed services.

3. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The following Bureau components are responsible for ensuring consistent establishment of the programs, services, and resource allocations necessary for inmate Veterans.

a. Central Office

(1) The Reentry Services Division, Women and Special Populations Branch (WASPB) oversees the inmate Veteran population, including review and approval of all programs and services for these individuals. WASPB is responsible for the following specific functions as they relate to inmate Veterans:

- Engaging stakeholders and serving as the agency's primary point of contact on issues affecting inmate Veterans, to include developing any partnership arrangements with Veteran services agencies.
- Developing and/or approving inmate Veteran programs for implementation at Bureau facilities.
- Providing guidance and direction to agency leadership and regional/institution staff on inmate Veteran issues.
- Developing and implementing staff training related to inmate Veterans.
- Developing and monitoring reports on the inmate Veterans.
- Providing national oversight of all pilot programs and initiatives serving inmate Veterans, including reviewing programs.

b. Regional Offices

- Providing oversight to institutions regarding services and other relevant trends related to managing inmate Veterans.
- Selecting a qualified candidate to the Collateral Duty as Regional Inmate Veterans Program Manager. This individual meets quarterly with the WASPB to discuss staffing, programming, and assess needs.

c. Institutions

- Offering programs and services as described in this Program Statement and the First Step Act (FSA) Approved Programs Guide located on the Bureau's intranet.
- Document Training participation in programs by updating SENTRY and other databases (e.g., Insight) as appropriate.
- Providing appropriate reentry resources for Veterans.

4. STAFF TRAINING

All institution staff must complete the training “Inmate Veterans” within one year of policy issuance or a staff member’s Entry on Duty (date) (EOD), whichever is later. This training educates staff on topics including military culture, staff responsibilities, meeting Veteran specific needs and the Bureau’s strategies for managing inmate Veterans. Staff will be provided adequate time to complete this training during duty hours.

WASPB is responsible for developing resource materials and current information for inmate Veteran populations. This information is made available to staff on the WASPB intranet page.

5. TRACKING OF INMATE VETERANS

The Bureau obtains data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), noting an inmate’s Veteran status (regardless of discharge type), which is placed in the Bureau’s Veterans Database. The Veterans Database is an independent system that is managed and tracked by WASPB staff to monitor trends in the number of Veterans at the institution, regional and national levels. The Regional Inmate Veterans Program Manager may request this information to assist in the management of the inmate Veterans.

The Bureau utilizes a screening process to identify Veteran inmates in its custody. The process begins at the initial program review when unit team staff ask the inmate if they are a Veteran or have a spouse or parent who is a Veteran. An inmate with a parent or spouse who is a Veteran may be eligible to receive some Veteran benefits. Unit team staff then utilize available documentation, such as the Presentence Report (PSR), to verify this information, if possible. Once this information is obtained, the unit team staff enter it into Insight. This information is then automatically migrated from Insight into SENTRY, which populates several CMA codes for tracking purposes.

The CMA codes generated in SENTRY include the following:

VETERAN Y - This code is generated when an inmate indicates they are a Veteran

VETERAN N – This code is generated when an inmate indicates they are not a Veteran

VET P/S Y – This code is generated when an inmate indicates a parent or spouse is a Veteran

VET P/S N – This code is generated when an inmate indicates they do not have a parent or spouse who is a Veteran or do not know the information.

6. SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Services for Veterans will be implemented via a three-tiered model. Tier requirements, including which facilities offer them, are described below.

a. Tier One Services primarily focus on self-help resources for inmates and are required at all Bureau facilities. Staff adhere to best practices guidance as follows:

Military culture includes core values such as honor, courage, and respect. When communicating with inmate Veterans relying on these concepts can assist in rapport building.

VA officials are important partners and can provide a great deal of information to staff and inmates. These individuals do not provide treatment to inmates in Bureau custody. They assist inmates who are eligible to receive benefits in navigating Veterans Administration processes and procedures, to include requesting records or completing forms. Institutions host at least biannual visits from VA officials that are informational only. The Warden will assign the Special Populations Coordinator to oversee and track this process. If there is no Special Populations Coordinator, the Warden assigns the responsibility to the Executive Assistant and Reentry Affairs Coordinator.

All staff are encouraged to assist inmate Veterans. Staff who themselves are Veterans may have specific insight into Veteran culture and needs; however, being a Veteran is not a requirement for providing Veteran programming for inmates.

Unit team staff shall update Veteran status in the appropriate databases (i.e. SENTRY and Insight) when this information is confirmed during regularly scheduled program reviews.

Institutions allow inmates to take Compensation and Pension exams. See Section 8 of this Program Statement for guidance.

A reentry resource database is available at all facilities and includes community-based resources specifically for Veterans, such as housing or service providers. All inmates must have access to this material in the Reentry Resource Center or equivalent. Institution Wardens should designate the Reentry Affairs Coordinator as the point of contact for questions related to this service and post the staff member's name and title in housing units.

The following self-help resources are available to inmates in the institution Reentry Resource Center or equivalent: Assistance Requesting Records (SF-180) to obtain a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD214), Health Care Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ), Notice to Department of Veterans Affairs of Veteran or Beneficiary Incarcerated in Penal Institution (VA Form 21-4193), and Application for the Review of Discharge from Armed Forces of the US (DD Form 293).

b. Tier Two Services are available at many facilities and include programs meeting on an outpatient basis such as weekly groups or workshops with a limited number of sessions. Any facility with sentenced inmates housing more than 50 Veterans is required to offer at least one of these programs per quarter. A list of Tier Two programs and curricula are available on the WASPB intranet page. More detail about the programs that meet First Step Act (FSA) requirements is available in FSA Approved Programs Guide located on the public website and internal intranet.

Education staff may elect, if time and staffing allows, to offer specialized Adult Continuing Education for Veterans. These programs must be approved in writing by the Central Office Administrators of Education and Recreation Services Branch and WASPB.

Psychology Services staff at institutions with more than 50 Veterans offer the Trauma in Life or Seeking Safety workshops (females) and the Traumatic Stress and Resilience or Seeking Strength workshops (males) at least annually. The workshops are not required to be made up of only inmate Veterans but can include all inmates. Any inmate Veteran who reports mental health symptoms related to uniformed service experiences (such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury) should be referred to the Chief Psychologist.

c. Tier Three Services are the most intensive programs and function as unit-based residential programs for Veterans. The Tier Three Program is called the Veterans Education Transitional Services (VETS) Unit and operates as a national program on a community-based model. The community-based model includes daily meetings for programming, activities, educational groups and skill practice for inmate Veterans participating in the VETS Unit program. The VETS Unit utilizes specific curricula and inclusion/exclusion criteria and program structure provided by the Reentry Services Division. Locations for this program are determined by Central Office, Reentry Services Division and discussed with the Capacity Planning Committee. Inmates interested in this program will complete form BP-A01150 Veterans Education Transitional Services (VETS) Unit.

The program is coordinated by a Veteran Unit Specialist (Special Population Coordinator) working in the unit with additional support from a unit team. The Veteran Unit Specialist is a subject matter expert in Veteran's issues, topics and needs. Only Veterans who consent to participate in the program are housed on the unit and participate in this residential program. The unit environment reflects the program's mission which is to ensure participants support one another not only during sessions but also while engaging in daily interactions on the unit and in the institution. Each participant takes part in core activities of the community focused on Veteran specific needs including: addressing service related issues and learning coping skills (i.e. mental health, medical and adjustment problems) on the VETS Unit or through referral to other institutional departments as appropriate; educating participants about the Veteran specific

services to which they are entitled; healthy living and wellness; and successful integration and reentry.

Participants are required to serve on a committee that assists in the operations of the community. (i.e., core group, mentors, community service, service, and unit pride/Esprit de Corps). The inclusion of banners and military décor with the goal of building on the esprit de corps concept is required. It should be noted that inmates in the program do not wear uniforms that are altered from the institution's standard uniform and are not addressed by rank in any way by staff or other inmates. Volunteer inmates living on the unit must have served in any of the uniformed services and may be placed on the unit regardless of their discharge status. Upon completion of the VETS Unit program an inmate may be considered for transfer to an institution closer to their release residence. A full outline of the program can be found at the WASPB intranet site.

7. PROGRAMMING

As noted, many of the programs designed specifically for inmate Veterans are contained in the FSA Approved Programs Guide. When these programs are recommended based on the needs assessment, the inmate may be eligible for FSA incentives as detailed in the Program Statements **First Step Act Needs Assessment** and **First Step Act Program Incentives**.

Development of specialty programs requires examination of a number of factors, including evolving best practices, resource availability, and other national-level initiatives. As a result, institutions do not add programs or units for Veterans without prior written approval from the Reentry Services Division. If a staff member wishes to submit a program or service for use with Veterans, the procedures for consideration found on the Reentry Services Division intranet site for FSA program submission will be followed.

8. COMPENSATION AND PENSION EXAMS

Compensation and Pension Exams are part of the claim review process and help the VA determine if a disability is service connected, the level of disability, or if a condition should receive an increased rating due to it worsening. These exams also assist in determining the benefits for which a Veteran is eligible.

Institutions must allow these exams to be offered, on or off site, at least once per quarter. The Reentry Affairs Coordinator, Special Population Coordinator, Veteran Unit Specialist or the Unit Manager is responsible for coordinating the scheduling, tracking and supervising the exam through local VA offices. If no inmates are eligible for these examinations or VA staff are unable to provide exams during a particular quarter, this should be documented in a file kept by the staff member designated by the Warden simply stating no inmates were eligible.

9. REENTRY NEEDS

The Special Population Coordinator or Veteran Unit Specialist is responsible for assisting inmate Veterans with release plans involving the VA, such as setting up appointments or benefit access. The Warden will assign this duty to the Reentry Affairs Coordinator if an institution does not have a Special Population Coordinator or Veteran Unit Specialist.

Resources specific to Veterans and their families will be available in the Reentry Resource Center or equivalent.

The unit team assists inmate Veterans in meeting Veteran specific reentry needs during program reviews through the completion of the release plan.

REFERENCES

Program Statements

P5100.08	Security Designation and Custody Classification Manual (9/4/19)
P5220.01	First Step Act Program Incentives (7/14/21)
P5290.15	Intake Screening (3/30/09)
P5310.17	Psychology Services Manual (8/25/16)
P5310.16	Treatment and Care of Inmates with Mental Illness (5/1/14)
P5322.13	Inmate Classification and Program Review (5/16/14)
P5325.07	Release Preparation Program (8/15/19)
P5353.01	Occupational Education Programs (12/17/03)
P5400.01	First Step Act Needs Assessment (6/25/21)
P5800.15	Correctional Systems Manual (9/23/16)

ACA Standards

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th Edition: 5-ACI-5B-06, 5-ACI-5B-07, 5-ACI-5F-01, 5-ACI-6A-28M, 5-ACI-6A-31M, 5-ACI-6A-32M, 5-ACI-6C-06, 5-ACI-5E-09.

Performance-Based Standards for Local Adult Detention Facilities, 4th Edition: 4-ALDF-5A-01, 4-ALDF-4F-02, 4-ALDF-5B-13, 4-ALDF-5B-14, 4-ALDF-5B-15, 4-ALDF-5B-16, 4-ALDF-4C-22, 4-ALDF-4C-27, 4-ALDF-4C-29, 4-ALDF-4C-30, 4-ALDF-4C-31, 4-ALDF-4C-32, 4-ALDF-5A-03, 4-ALDF-5A-08, 4-ALDF-6B-02, 4-ALDF-6B-03, 4-ALDF-5A-09.

Standards for Administration of Correctional Agencies, 2nd Edition: 2-CO-4A-01, 2-CO-4B-01, 2-CO-4G-01.

Records Retention

Requirements and retention guidance for records and information applicable to this program are available in the Records and Information Disposition Schedule (RIDS) on Sallyport.