How many veterans have dependent children?

- DoD demographics
  - Approx. 30% of the 23 million veterans have dependent children
  - Percentage is much higher for OIF/OEF veterans
How many veterans are in the child support caseload?

• OCSE National Data Match (Dec. 2010)
  ▪ Approx. 5% of 10.7 million noncustodial parents in IV-D caseload are veterans
  ▪ 50% of states have > 10,000 veterans in their caseload

What are the characteristics of veteran child support cases?

• According to OCSE National Data Match
  ▪ About 50% of veterans in caseload are >50 years old
  ▪ Many cases are arrears only; no current support is owed
  ▪ Average arrearage amount owed by veterans is about $24,500
Challenge to Eliminate Homelessness among Veterans

• In 2009, more than 75,000 homeless veterans
• President Obama and VA Secretary Shinseki issued challenge to end homelessness of veterans by 2015
• CHALENG report
  ▪ Homeless veterans consistently identify child support among top 5 unmet legal needs

Impact of Child Support Issues on Homeless Veteran

• Child support arrearages and unaffordable monthly payments act as barrier to financial stability
• Loss of drivers license can affect ability to obtain employment
• Warrants for failure to appear and arrests for nonsupport affect background checks that affect employment, housing, and credit
• Felony warrants for child support can place a veteran into Fugitive Felon Program status, affecting receipt of VA health care benefits
How can child support agencies help veterans?

• Establish arrears management plan
  ▪ Arrearage forgiveness programs
  ▪ Realistic payment plans to reduce arrears
• Reinstate drivers license
• Review order for modification
• Review case for closure

Collaboration to Help Homeless Veterans

• In 2010, HHS-VA-ABA collaborated to address child support issues of homeless veterans
• Nine pilot sites

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atlanta</th>
<th>Baltimore</th>
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<td>Boston</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
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<td>District of Columbia</td>
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<td>Minneapolis</td>
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Pilot Sites

- Each pilot site followed slightly different model
- All initially served homeless veterans in VA residential facilities
- Some sites eventually expanded the audience served
- There was no federal funding

Partners

- At each site the child support agency played major role
- Each site had a legal partner
- Most sites had a VA or veteran service provider partner
- Selection of partners was based on who in that community was already serving the homeless or veterans
### Examples of Legal Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>GA Law Center for the Homeless</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>Minnesota Assistance Counsel for Veterans</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Central MN Legal Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc.</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Thomas Jefferson School of Law – Veterans Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Shelter Legal Services (now called Veterans Legal Services)</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Northwest Justice Project</td>
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<td>Open Door Legal Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>State’s Attorneys Office</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Legal Aid Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Public Counsel</td>
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### Examples of Veteran Partners

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>MD Center for Veterans Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>VISN Network Homeless Coordinator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VA Compensated Work Therapy Program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HUD/VASH Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State/Local Veterans Affairs and Veteran Services Officers</td>
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</table>
Examples of Veteran Partners

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Program/Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VA Grant &amp; Per Diem Liaison</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VA Outpatient Clinic</td>
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<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>VJO Program</td>
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<td>VA Healthcare Reentry</td>
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<td>Hennepin County Veterans’ Service Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Veterans Village San Diego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>VA Homeless Outreach Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>HUD – VASH Clinician</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goals

• Short term goals
  ▪ Identify homeless veterans with child support issues
  ▪ Establish realistic current support, address arrears, reinstate drivers license
• Long term goals
  ▪ Achieve consistent support payments
  ▪ Restore family connections
  ▪ Stabilize work
  ▪ Achieve independent housing

Outcomes

• Results among the sites vary
• Partners have provided services to over 1,000 veterans and resolved nearly $800,000 in state-owed child support debt
• The human stories document the most important results.

Outcomes (cont’d)

- Veteran leases his first apartment
- Custodial parents close arrears only cases in hopes of helping their veteran former partners and reuniting them with their children
- Custodial party and veteran plan to meet for dinner so he can see child for first time in over 10 years
- When veteran inquired about his case, he learned he had over $8000 waiting to be refunded! Checks had been sent to an old address. Veteran lives in public housing and is a recovering alcoholic. He went straight to his VA case manager for assistance in managing the money.
- Veteran received legal assistance to have his order modified. He is pursuing educational assistance through the VA and is currently in stable housing. He stopped by the child support area at Stand Down to say he feels like his life is on track for the first time in a long time!

Pilot Site Recommendations

- Learn about your targeted population
  - Homeless individuals
  - Veterans
- “Take temperature of the community”
  - What is needed?
  - Who is already providing services?
  - Who can you partner with to reach veterans?
- Determine scope and goals
- Don’t have reach that exceeds ability to deliver
Recommendations (cont’d)

• Identify funding sources
  ▪ Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) grant
  ▪ Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps
  ▪ Local bonds
  ▪ State department of veterans affairs
  ▪ State or local bar association
    • Legal Assistance to Military Personnel (LAMP) section
  ▪ Federal OCSE SIP or 115 grants

Recommendations (cont’d)

• Establish partners
• Designate contact point within each partner
• Ensure partners share mission
• Exchange information about each partner’s services
• Establish regular, periodic meetings among partners
Recommendations (cont’d)

• Conduct outreach
• Identify what you want to measure and who will measure
• Collect stories