

Transition Supports Project Discussion:
4/4/25, 12-1pm

Participants:

Ann Annis	Kevin Bohnsack	Amy Crisp	Paul Dery	Joan Deschamps
Randy Evans	Ariel Hawthorne	Adam LaVigne	Matthew Leach	Danielle Lesko
Frank Lombard	Rebecca Mendoza	Kathleen Oberst	Brian Pegouske	Dean Sienko
Renee Verbeke	Jim Yates			

Overview:

The goal of the brainstorming session was to identify specific projects that could benefit from additional support in achieving their objective(s). Emphasis was placed on existing initiatives, recognizing their potential for more immediate and efficient impact(s)- though new project ideas were also welcomed. Meeting participants were invited to express interest in serving as for Chair or Co-Chairs involvement as specific projects move forward. The staff of the Core Team is available to provide administrative supports as requested.

Key Repeated Themes:

- Localize and customize resource information for Michigan veterans.
- Screening for needs must happen immediately at all points of contact.
- Combat isolation through community engagement and peer support.
- Promote and expand the Battle Buddy App and similar scalable digital solutions.
- Engage families and care partners alongside veterans.
- Continue to use personal storytelling to build trust and drive better transitions.

Next Steps:

- Let us know if you have suggestions for potential collaborators in the event we inadvertently omitted current initiatives.
- Contact the admin team at ihp.vhwc@msu.edu if you would like to serve as Chair or Co-Chair for any of the specific opportunities.
- Review and respond to project specific workplan drafts as they are published.
- Participate in project specific touch-base meetings as they are scheduled.

Major Challenges Identified	Current Initiatives and Programs	Identified Needs	VHWC Contribution Opportunities
<p>Communication of overwhelming amount of information provided to service members during transition (“drinking water from a fire hose”).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of localized, Michigan-specific resources presented during TAPS classes and transition briefings. Competition between federal, state, and local veteran services, causing confusion for transitioning veterans. Gaps in accessing key benefits (e.g., dental intervention after service) 	<p>Existing resources in place to support veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-800-MICH-VET Battle Buddy App (VETLIFE) Veteran Navigators (MDHHS) County-based Veteran Service Officers (MVAA) Veteran employment services through MI Works <p>Promote targeted programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veteran-Friendly Schools and Employers (MVAA) SkillBridge Program Buddy-to-Buddy Mentorship (MVAA) Troops to Teachers Helmets to Hardhats 	<p>Clear, consistent messaging focused on accurate benefit information (eligibility and scope).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earned benefits not an entitlement, using them does not take away from someone else One-pager reference sheets with QR codes Proactive materials for military bases with “warm handover” information on MI Need to incorporate reservist/guard perspectives <p>Ability to refer/route veterans to locally available resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive screener tool to assess full scope of needs Integrate questions at every entry point: "Are you signed up for VA healthcare? VA benefits?" 	<p>Localized resource delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State-specific transition packet (perhaps county?) <p>Develop expanded outreach and dissemination methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person and online Balance content to avoid overload at demobilization events Leverage personal narratives <p>Collaborate with MICHWA and other organizations to develop social determinants of health type screener.</p>
<p>Difficulty finding community and social connection after service,</p>	<p>Existing resources in place to support veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCATs 	<p>Combat Isolation Through Socialization and Recreation</p>	<p>Build bridges with veteran related organizations:</p>

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<p>leading to isolation and disengagement.</p> <p>Volunteer potential underleveraged — many veterans want to continue serving but lack clear opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran Service Organizations (VFW, Am Legion, VVA, etc.) • Strength in Numbers • VETLIFE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized approaches for different eras • Host drop-in centers, monthly dinners, non-alcohol focused events. • Action driven activities – put “service back in service” • Strengthen partnerships with organizations like VETLIFE and VCATs to expand events. <p>Support Volunteerism and Peer Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame opportunities for veterans to “continue serving” through service organizations. • Foster peer-led support groups and drop-in social opportunities to fight isolation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran Service Organizations • Academic institutions
<p>Need to engage families, care partners, and friends alongside veterans in transition planning.</p>	<p>PsychArmor Institute Training Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free training for Michigan through MVAA to support veteran connection efforts. 		<p>Strengthen family and care partner supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person and online • Sharing PsychArmor and other resources • Develop family-centered outreach

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			Balance content to avoid overload at demobilization events (Yellow Ribbon, VetFest type events)