

Quality and Productivity Commission
34th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Leading with Excellence”

2021 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: OUTSIDE THE WIRE: TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: 2019

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2020)

CHECK HERE IF THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR THE **COVID-19 IMPACT AWARD ONLY**. (Projects must be implemented on or before December 31, 2020. **Note:** Projects implemented less than one year ago will not be eligible for any other PQA awards. In addition, once a project is submitted, you cannot submit the same project for awards consideration in subsequent years).

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

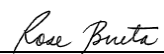
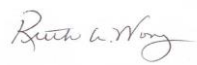
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 Funded by a Mental Health Services Act grant through the California Department of Veterans
 2 Affairs, (CalVet), Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) and U.S.VETS have partnered in *Outside*
 3 *the Wire-Transition Assistance (OTW-TA)*, to provide counseling and case management
 4 services at local community colleges for veterans transitioning from military service to civilian
 5 communities. The program offers post 9/11 veterans and their families fully coordinated,
 6 stigma-free prevention and early intervention services that address the root cause of military
 7 service reintegration problems, including homelessness, suicide and other mental health
 8 conditions, and includes services by Veteran Service Officers and peers with a whatever-it-
 9 takes approach to provide compensation, job training, education fee waivers, legal help, and
 10 other services. Connecting with veterans’ service organizations is, in and of itself, a step
 11 toward mental health; veterans flourish when integrated teams organize mental health
 12 treatment with a family systems orientation. In the spirit of leaving no one “outside the wire”
 13 upon transition to civilian life, the *OTW-TA* program, located on 13 campuses in LA County,
 14 has enriched the lives of over 805 veterans and their families.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATE D BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 1,032,990.	\$1,408,862.00	\$265,925.	\$ 2,707,777	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS LA County Department of Military & Veterans Affairs 1816 S. FIGUEROA ST., LA, CA 90015		TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-765-9680
PROGRAM MANAGER’S NAME George Dixon Gdixon@mva.lacounty.gov		TELEPHONE NUMBER 831-747-5498
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME) Rose Bueta 	DATE 6.24.21	TELEPHONE NUMBER 323-241-7031
DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Ruth Wong 	DATE 6.24.21	TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-765-9678

****ELECTRONIC, WET, OR SCANNED SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE****

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project **to the County**. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success **and specify assessment time frame**. Use Arial 12 point font.

CHALLENGE: Adjusting to civilian life can be difficult for whole households, not just for veterans. Untreated service-related psychological injuries, including major depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), increase the risk of severe mental illness, physical ailments, unemployment, substance misuse, homelessness, interpersonal violence, and suicide. One in 2,200 veterans aged 18-34 dies by suicide (*VA National Suicide Data Report, 2005-2016*). Adult veteran students have the same stressors as other students plus those relating to their military experiences. One graduate remembers, “*I had a strong sense of not belonging where I was and not understanding how to interact with students.*” They feel more mature but are less prepared for the college experience. This lack of common ground is a stressor.

Stigma: Many veterans were raised in families that believe mental illness should remain a private matter. Traditional military culture adds another layer of stigma. Although much has changed, servicemembers believe they are penalized if they ask for help.

Complexity of Benefits Structure: With only partial benefits, veterans face financial instability that could create relational stressors as well, which exacerbates mental illnesses.

Insufficient Campus Resources: Campus units lack the expertise for culturally sensitive, intensive counseling.

We know that some students stigmatize therapy. Even with strong skills in rapport-building, therapists may not be able to overcome some clients’ mistrust of mental health professionals, which could cause them to withdraw from the program. When this becomes an issue, veteran peers are there to engage with clients and urge them to stay committed to therapy.

Another possibility is that some students might be unaware of this resource altogether. Since we interact directly with numerous staff and faculty, they have directed students to *OTW-TA* program if they do not self-refer.

SOLUTION: By partnering with CalVet and USVETS, MVA Veteran Service Officers have assisted over 805 veterans and their families with healthcare services, education, jobs and housing. Both MVA and U.S.VETS have cross-trained staff who can step in temporarily to sustain operations in the event of staff turnover or changes in project leadership.

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SOLUTION (*continued*): County veterans service representatives across California bring in a half-billion dollars a year for veterans. We make sure that the most vulnerable college students get the full benefit of our experience. MVA has invested heavily in veteran students' success at community colleges. The OTW-TA program has demonstrated efficacy in treating veterans. With the successful demonstration of this expanded model, MVA anticipates being able to leverage CalVet's investment and partner with other potential funders.

In June, 2021, OTW-TA hit the one-year mark of working remotely due to COVID-19, with continued impact in the veteran community, providing much-needed resources of mental health, benefits assistance, and community support. Since the start of the pandemic, teams have worked virtually to provide individual mental health therapy, educational webinars, and outreach engagement to veterans and their families, community college and faculty, and veteran community services providers across Los Angeles County and the state, thanks to our strong partnership with U.S.VETS and CalVet. With the start of the new calendar year, many of our new and ongoing clients expressed a new interest in their benefits and were connected with MVA for assessment. Teams are also working together to develop and plan an "Accessing Your Benefits" workshop for student veterans across the county. We are in the initial planning phases of a return to campuses in late summer/early fall by meeting with each Veteran Resource Center head to discuss their re-entry plans post-COVID.

Benefits to the County of LA: Quality and Productivity outcomes are measured by analytics within the (Veterans Administration) VetPro software, with the following goals/results:

- 100% of participants are assessed for suicidal ideation, mental health needs, compensation need, and legal assistance
- 100% of homeless participants are assessed and linked to services
- 85% of participants claim benefits successfully
- 80% of those in treatment show a reduction in mental health symptoms

In FY20-21, OTW-TA served over 805 veterans and family members in the veteran community through individual and group mental health sessions, referral and linkage to ancillary services, and outreach engagement.

The County of LA has not had to pay for salaried workers, and veterans claims awards are tax-free dollars spent in the County, adding dollars to our economy. CalVet funds allow us to leverage dollars to assist more veterans and their families.

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12-point font.

Section B: Proposed Service/Project (1000 words max)

This program links to the LA County Strategic Plan by making investments that transform lives (Goal One). With funding by CalVet and by working with U.S.VETS at Community Colleges, MVA has demonstrated outstanding teamwork and service enrichment in our veteran community. The *OTW-TA* program has leveraged benefits, services and dollars to assist hundreds of veterans in their transition from active duty to civilian life. We’re increasing prevention initiatives in Community Colleges by offering a whatever-it-takes approach to help them achieve their goals. By using MHPA dollars from CalVet and partnering with U.S.VETS to provide counseling and financial, educational, vocational and legal support services, we are making investments that transform individual and family lives in an effective and permanent way.

Independent of one another MVA and U.S.VETS have worked with campus Veterans Resource Centers to improve transitioning veterans’ lives. MVA’s specialty is peer benefit counseling, claims development, and case management; U.S.VETS is the developer of the acclaimed *OTW-TA* program, which provides prevention and early intervention counseling and case management to veterans and their families. In the spirit of leaving no one “outside the wire” upon transition to civilian life, the program is now on 13 campuses in Los Angeles *OTW-TA* amalgamates core services of each partner.

Also, *OTW-TA* helps realize tomorrow’s government today (Strategic Plan Goal Three) by expanding public service and investing in today’s workforce for a better tomorrow.

Los Angeles County is home to 300,000 veterans, which represents the largest concentration in the nation. More than 43,000 veterans served in the post-9/11 era—many on multiple tours of duty. Each year, as thousands transition to civilian life in our County, many gravitate toward community colleges. Community colleges have proven to be excellent environments for prevention and early intervention. If we can find them at a younger age and provide the services they need to thrive, we are setting these veterans and their families up for a lifetime of success and productivity.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12-point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$ 1,032,990.00	\$1,408,862.00	\$265,925.	7 \$ 2,707,777.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY

1. Annual veteran benefit claims: \$433,194.00 (retroactive Federal payments)
 Monthly Payments: 49,983.00 X 12 months = 599,796.00 (Federal v. County)

Annual Cost Avoidance=\$1,032,990.00

2. State reimbursement (per benefits establishment claim filed) \$33 x 304 claims
 = \$10,032 (State v. County dollars)

Initial assessments by U.S.VETS - 805 visits x \$160 per hour=\$128,800
 Follow up counseling sessions by U.S.VETS –
 81 veterans x 15 sessions (annual) = 1,215
 @\$200 per session - 1,215 x 200 = \$243,000

Continuum of Care special needs veterans (homeless) to house –
 184 veterans housed at \$53,826 per month x 12 = \$645,912.
 Retroactive payments for housing (lump sum award) = \$381,118.
 Total Annual Continuum of Care (Federal dollars v. County)
 = \$1,027,030.

Annual Cost Savings (State reimbursement for claims filed and initial and follow up assessments paid by U.S.VETS) = \$1,408,862.00

3. Annual Revenue (MHSA CalVet Grant) \$265,925.00

Actual Estimated Benefit: \$2,707,777.00

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FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY

(For single department submissions, do not include this page)

DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
U.S.VETS, BOB HOPE PATRIOTIC HALL, 1816 S. FIGUEROA ST., 4 TH FLOOR, LA, CA 90015	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
 Juliana Scott, Operations Manager EMAIL _ julscott@usvets.org	 Robert Stohr, Executive Director EMAIL _ rstohr@usvets.org
DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 6 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____

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DEPARTMENT NO. 7 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS

PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE

DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE

EMAIL: _____

EMAIL: _____