We are truly grateful for the dedication and support over the last year from our community members and partners who have selflessly committed to honor, through action, our Tristate region’s veterans and their families. Their collective and collaborative efforts to organize and execute plans to identify and meet veterans’ needs, strengthen support networks, and design creative solutions to the challenges facing our veterans has been inspiring. Collectively, these efforts help ensure that no veteran is left behind.

In the delivery of this study, we must acknowledge the exceptional work of Dan Knowles, Pat Clifford, and Nate Pelletier, who coordinated these efforts. We’d like to acknowledge and thank our partners who advised us, provided background, workgroup updates, and data to support the study. Special thanks to Annie Ryan (United Way of Greater Cincinnati and Chairperson, Collaborative Impact Workgroup), John Clancy (Easter Seals Tristate), Chris Courtney (Chairperson, Education Workgroup), Sharron DiMario (Partners for a Competitive Workforce and Chairperson, Employment Workgroup), Kim Martin (Chairperson, Health, Wellness, and Family Support Workgroup), Sally Hammitt (Department of Veterans Affairs), and Rob Seideman (Cincinnati Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship).

We are especially grateful to Deloitte, who leveraged their collective experience, best practices, and data analytics capabilities from their engagement in four veteran needs studies in Los Angeles, Northern Virginia, Syracuse, and Chicago. Without them this report is not possible. We must also acknowledge the Deloitte team for their active collaboration and contribution to this work, including Caleb Longenberger, Jim Sowar, Matt Louis, Paula Mausar, Arunkumar Navaneethan, and Nick Tedesco.

Finally, we are indebted to the veterans of the Greater Cincinnati Area who served our nation in the military – and their families – who have chosen to call the Tristate region home after they transitioned from military to civilian life. Special thanks for those who continue to serve our community and their fellow veterans.
This study and report were made possible by the generous support of Deloitte.
Introduction

Thanks to the Tristate Veterans Community Alliance for its efforts to better align the hundreds of services available throughout our Greater Cincinnati Tristate region to improve the access to – and the quality of – the support available to veterans and their families. This effort reflects not only the compassion and service-oriented nature of many diverse organizations in our region, but their willingness to, and the value of, their collaboration to appropriately recognize the determination and courage that our Veterans displayed when they pledged to serve and protect all of us in places around the world.

Last night, you may have gone to sleep comfortably-closing your eyes and feeling safe, secure, and unafraid. This is possible, in part, because of the one percent of our population that has served in the military- enduring hardships, separations and, often times, multiple deployments. Our troops endure these hardships- they bond, they are there for each other, and they remain mission-focused on protecting America until they get home.

Afterwards, they return to communities that welcome them and say ‘thank you for your service’. The appreciation, though meant to be genuine, often rings hollow - it feels very perfunctory. More is required, for much has been required of them. Asking them where they served, who they served with, and what their plans are now shows a more genuine interest. And actually helping them answer that last question is where experienced veteran service providers and organizations, like the TVCA and others, make all the difference.

Today, the military and our community are working hard to facilitate better military to civilian transition programs for warriors, spouses, children, and entire families. Locally, collaboration in advising and assisting former service members on educational and employment opportunities is showing success on several fronts. Providing effective and efficient health and wellness services for veterans is also beginning to move in a positive direction, after many years of less than satisfactory progress.

I would like to thank all the members of the military and veteran services community for their efforts to ensure that our region becomes a primary destination for Veterans and their families and provides them the resources they need to thrive once their time of service protecting America is completed!

LTC (Dr.) Brad Wenstrup, USAR
Member of Congress
Chairman’s Message

Two years ago, an important and timely report on the state of veterans’ services in the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Region was prepared and released by Operation Vets THRIVE, an initiative of Easter Seals Tristate. The document was titled, “The Tristate Veteran Community Report: Needs Assessment and Initial Recommendations”. In just a few brief words, this report stressed the fact that our region is blessed with an adequate number of excellent services that assist our veterans and their families in getting on with their lives following their selfless service to our country.

However, the publication also documented an alarming series of gaps between the services available and the veterans’ knowledge of their availability. More acutely, the researchers discovered that even when a basic knowledge of veterans’ services did exist, those seeking services were confused about which services applied to them and found it very difficult to navigate those services.

At the conclusion of the report, a number of recommendations were made that could help close the knowledge gaps and simplify the navigation of services for veterans and their families. The first recommendation encouraged the creation of an ongoing, regional veteran community alliance to “coordinate, educate, and align the disparate veterans’ services”.

In answer to that primal recommendation, a number of individuals (the principal of whom are noted in the Acknowledgements in this new report that follows) gathered and commenced the ambitious objective to establish such an organization. Through the continuing support of The Farmer Family Foundation, The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, as well as new support from Major League Baseball, the Cincinnati Reds, Interact for Health, the Heidt Family Foundation, the George B. Riley Trust, and the Hatton Foundation, together with many other supporters, the Tristate Veterans Community Alliance (TVCA) was founded as an independent, veteran-led organization as a direct response to that first recommendation.

Since its inception in 2014, the TVCA has built an organization with senior leadership, a number of functional workgroups and a governing Board of Directors. What follows is our first report on the progress made over the past two years. It is my hope that you will recognize the processes we’ve put in place together with our early results as a promising leap into this collaborative space. Yet, there remains much to be done.

It is a singular privilege and pleasure to serve as the founding Chairperson for the TVCA. To be engaged in such a worthy endeavor with a distinguished group of dedicated, highly capable, and passionate leaders is, indeed, a highlight of my career and my life.

Leonard M. Randolph, Jr., M.D.
Major General USAF - Retired
Chair
Board of Directors
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Each year, thousands of veterans separate from the Armed Forces and begin their transition from military to civilian life. Community leaders across the country are focused on attracting veterans to their regions and ensuring this transition is as successful as possible. In order to be successful, leadership within Greater Cincinnati must be sensitive to the unique challenges facing veterans and employ strategies to overcome these obstacles to allow them to use their training, discipline, and skills for the benefit of the community.

Similar to veteran studies in Northern Virginia, Los Angeles, and Chicago, this study found that veteran support organizations tend to focus more on meeting acute and emergency needs of veterans; less attention is given to early intervention and preventive care. Going forward, more focus has to be placed on early intervention and preventive services to resolve veteran transition issues before they become emergencies acute and thus save the community the substantial investment required to triage and treat these issues.

Large communities have a myriad of veteran support organizations whose efforts, while well-intentioned, are suboptimal. These organizations individually tend to meet only one or two veteran needs, operate in silos, and seldom have deep insight into the specific needs of veterans and their families. The entirety of a veteran’s needs tend to not be holistically synchronized and coordinated, leaving their transition incomplete and unsuccessful. To address this challenge, TVCA has established a workgroup structure that enables horizontal and vertical integration of the Tristate’s service providers. Findings from our previous studies noted the need to focus on building a collaborative network of providers to provide holistic support to the returning veterans. While TVCA continues to strengthen their alliance, best practices and lessons learned should be shared with other nationwide veteran support efforts.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to document and assess the veteran population in the Greater Cincinnati Area to identify areas of needed support. This report builds upon the Easter Seals Tristate report released in 2014 and serves to detail the progress of the community’s collaborative partnerships over the last two years. It will also provide a framework to continue attracting, serving, and putting to use veteran talent in the community.

Findings

A study of the regional veteran population reveals that while there are substantial challenges facing veterans as they transition from military to civilian life, the community has significant capacity to respond to these concerns in the areas of employment and income, housing, education, and health. Service providers in the region have made notable progress in addressing access to emergency services. Additional efforts are underway to address higher needs and to provide preventative services.
A number of challenges exist for both service providers and veterans that remain to be addressed:

- Greater collaboration between non-profit service organizations, employers, educators, and government providers is needed.
- Veterans and their families, especially newly transitioning veterans, are largely unaware of the range of services and resources available to them in the community. Armed Forces transition trainings insufficiently prepare veterans and their families for their transition.
- The majority of provider services are focused on resolving emergency needs while less attention is devoted to preventive services.
- Disparate systems and nonstandard data are inhibiting TVCA and its partners’ ability to use data to make informed and effective decisions.
- While beginning to show the value of collaboration within a tightly defined network, participating community service partners are largely concentrated in Hamilton County, Ohio.
- Continued investment and support from government, individuals, and private foundations is critical to maintain momentum in making Cincinnati a destination for transitioning veterans and families.

While efforts are underway to address many of these findings, the following recommendations serve to focus the collective energy of the community moving forward.

**Recommendations**

An evaluation of regional demographics, service providers, and current efforts resulted in the development of the following recommendations:

- Continue to use a collective impact approach to improve intra- and cross-sector collaboration between partner organizations.
- Implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to heighten veterans' awareness of available resources, focusing on veterans within twelve months of separation.
- Develop a collaborative transition “accelerator” to successfully transition veterans to contributing community members as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.
- Standardize data capture and sharing across the veteran services network in the community, similar to the approach of the homeless continuum of care and other successful impact efforts.
- Continue expanding the network of partners throughout the region, with emphasis on those in the six adjacent Northern Kentucky and Southwest Ohio counties surrounding Hamilton County.
- Foster further collaboration among philanthropic groups to target investments towards partnerships and data driven interventions.

A coordinated community effort between service providers, corporations, academic institutions, and governmental organizations can help to mobilize and target resources available in the region to better serve veterans in their transition. This will enable veterans to thrive and become leaders in the community, further strengthening the region as a whole.
In order to focus efforts to help veterans and their families, a study of the regional veteran population was conducted that addresses the number of veterans, their demographic characteristics, and where they are distributed geographically. The study also evaluates what needs exist in employment and income, education, housing, and health. This section concludes with an analysis of population projections to better understand:

- The number of veterans, their demographic characteristics, and distribution;
- What needs exist in employment, income, education, housing, and health;
- And an analysis of population projections.

### Regional Overview

The Tristate region of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky is defined by the 16 county region including Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, and Warren counties in Ohio; Dearborn, Franklin, and Ohio counties in Indiana; and Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton counties in Kentucky.¹

This region is home to approximately 145,870 veterans as shown in Figure 4.1 below. The population is concentrated in and around the city of Cincinnati, with Hamilton County accounting for more than 34% of the regional veteran population. Regional veteran population, hereinafter, is defined as the veteran population within the Tristate region.

---

¹ Source: 2016 Veteran Community Report

**Figure 4.1:** Map of regional population by county
Publicly available national and community data sources were employed to analyze regional veteran demographics and explore the veteran needs that exist in the region. Table 4.1 below outlines the high-level demographics of the region’s veterans. More information is available in this [Interactive Veteran Data Dashboard](#).

**Table 4.1: Demographics of Greater Cincinnati Area veteran population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Population Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 to 34 years</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 54 years</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>38,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64 years</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>34,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74 years</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>30,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 years and over</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>31,971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Population Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>136,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>8,920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race*</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Population Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>129,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>14,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Service</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Population Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World War II veterans</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>10,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean War veterans</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>15,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam era veterans</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>50,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf War (8/1990 to 8/2001) veterans</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>20,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-9/11 veterans</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>13,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Cold War, unreported, etc.)</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>34,583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*U.S. federal government agencies must adhere to standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which specify that race and Hispanic origin (also known as ethnicity) are two separate and distinct concepts.* ([http://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html](http://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html))
The regional veteran population is predominantly white and male, consistent with the national trend. The largest group of veterans served during the Vietnam era, but veterans who served Post-9/11 now account for almost 13,924 (10%) of the regional total, as shown in Figure 4.2 below. This is a notable increase from the 9,986 (6%) reported in the 2010 ACS estimates used in the 2014 Community Report.

**Employment and Income**

The 2014 U.S. Census Bureau estimates show that 4,637 veterans are unemployed in the Tristate region. As a whole, veterans are less likely to be unemployed than nonveterans. The unemployment rate in the Tristate region (8%) is also slightly lower than the national average (9%). Figure 4.3 below outlines unemployment rate by county and veteran status.
While overall veteran unemployment is lower than nonveteran unemployment, this trend varies based on age group. Unemployment for those aged between 18 and 34 is of particular concern. Between 2012 and 2014, the unemployment rate for veterans aged 18-34 in Hamilton County, Ohio decreased from 9.8% to 7.9% but it is still notably higher than among older veteran age groups.

Persons who are neither employed nor unemployed are considered not in the labor force. This population includes retired persons, students, those taking care of children or other family members, and others who are neither working nor seeking work. In the Tristate region, this accounts for 24% of veterans.

While the overall veteran unemployment rate is lower than nonveterans, a significant number of veterans are considered underemployed. Figure 4.4 below highlights the results of a 2015 Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder reports.3 Perhaps it’s not surprising that nearly 46% of Midwest region veterans in a recent Military-Transition.org survey disagreed that their civilian job was a good fit for their existing skill set.4

![Figure 4.4: Percentage of employed veterans reporting they are underemployed or in a low-paying job](image)

In each of the 16 counties in the Tristate region, the median income for veterans is higher than for nonveterans. Figure 4.5 below shows median income and is separated by both veteran status and county.

![Figure 4.5: Median income for those 18 years and older with income by county and veteran status](image)
Housing

VA analysis indicates that 319 veterans were homeless in the Greater Cincinnati area at the beginning of 2015. An additional 981 veterans were estimated to enter homelessness between January and December of 2015 resulting in a total of 1,300 veterans homeless at some point during that time period. Figure 4.6 shows the estimate of 2015 veteran homelessness by status.

Of those 1,300 homeless veterans, 6% are considered to be chronically homeless. This status is defined as either, an individual homeless for a year or more, or an individual who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years. The rate of chronically homeless veterans in the region is significantly lower than the national average, 24%. The remaining 94% of veterans are considered to be homeless on an episodic and short-term basis and 25% of those individuals will exit homelessness without any permanent housing interventions.

In terms of Hamilton County, over the last two years the number of veterans experiencing homelessness has decreased 22%, from 913 in 2013 to 713 in 2015. Veterans account for only 10% of the individuals experiencing homelessness there.

Figure 4.6: Estimate of 2015 veteran homelessness by status
**Regional Demographics**

**Education**

Veterans are more likely than nonveterans to have graduated high school and to have some level of college education. Figure 4.7 below shows the highest level of educational attainment in the region by veteran status.

Educational attainment by veterans trends towards the middle of the spectrum with fewer veterans having less than high school, but also fewer veterans having a Bachelor’s degree or more.

Analysis by the Washington Post shows that less than 50% of veterans have used their GI Bill benefits. Of those veterans who used their benefits, 30% used those benefits at for-profit colleges.

**Health**

In the Tristate region, 25% of veterans reported having a disability. The severity of disabilities are evaluated by the VA on a scale ranging from 0% to 100%. Figure 4.8 shows the regional population frequency of each VA disability rating.

The majority of veterans in the Tristate have disability ratings in the range of 0% to 20%. 1,964 veterans, 9% of the total population who reported any disability, have a disability rating of 100%. Among veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom, the national incidence rate of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is estimated to be 14%.

According to studies conducted by Deloitte in Chicago and Los Angeles, the top three physical health issues reported by veterans were pain or problems with arms, legs, or joints; back problems; and trouble sleeping.
Regional Population Projections

The VA publishes county-level projections for veteran populations. The 2014 projection model shows a steady number in most Tristate counties. The number of veterans in Hamilton County shows a decline due to an aging population. More information is available in this Interactive Veteran Data Dashboard.

![Figure 4.9: Veteran population projection by county](chart)

The total veteran population is expected to decrease by more than 33,000 (24%). Eighty percent of that decrease comes from just 4 counties: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, and Kenton. These projections are based on modules that predict separation, mortality, and migration. The projections do not account for future conflicts.

While the total number of veterans in the region is projected to decline, the number of female veterans will remain relatively constant. As the male veteran population declines, the female veteran population will represent a larger percentage of the total population. Figure 4.10 below shows the veteran population projection by gender. This reflects a higher percentage of female veterans currently serving in the military versus previous eras. Please note that the total veteran population does not exactly match the number cited earlier as the estimates vary by data source.

![Figure 4.10: Veteran population projection by gender](chart)
The previous section, Regional Demographics, identified the needs that exist in the Tristate veteran community with respect to employment and income, education, housing, and health. The following sections discuss what resources are available in the region, how the resources are distributed, and what gaps currently exist based on service type, demographic characteristic, and geography.

Overall View of Service Availability

The community has been successful in building relationships with a wide range of diverse organizations in the region to assist veterans and aid successful transition to the community. Most of TVCA’s 90+ partners provide services to close the gap for employment and income, education, housing, or health needs. Others are employers, government and corporate partners that provide valuable support but do not directly provide services required for transitioning veterans. The majority of the providers (75%) have headquarters that are located in Hamilton County, but nearly all have offices or service centers in the 15 surrounding counties. Given that 55% of the local veteran population resides in the six immediately adjacent counties, it is likely that expansion outside of Hamilton County is required to meet veteran service support needs.

Employment and Income

Overall, veterans have a lower unemployment rate than nonveterans. Most partners in the region provide employment and income services to veterans, including three government-based services. While these providers conduct job fairs, workshops, and training programs to assist the veterans in the region, it’s been hypothesized that better tailoring these services, e.g. by geography, by industry sector, or by job type (i.e., entry level, supervisor, manager) may make them more effective. Many providers also offer job readiness, search, and interview training. Importantly though, relatively few providers train hiring managers and HR employees on how to hire, on-board, and retain qualified veterans.

While veterans have a lower overall unemployment rate, additional efforts are required to balance and right-size initiatives to meet employment needs across demographically different counties with very diverse employer bases. For example, largely rural Pendleton County has a 14% veteran unemployment rate but represents only 70 unemployed veterans. Other Northern Kentucky counties have a large manufacturing base and thus a relatively higher need for supervisors and licensed trade workers. Hamilton County has a relatively older veteran base and a need for more skilled healthcare and managerial talent, while counties to the north of Cincinnati require many more IT and logistics workers. Clearly, the same recruiting tactics are not prudent for each sector and geography. A more targeted approach may provide more cost-effective hiring opportunities for veterans in the Tristate.

One aspect that cannot be minimalized is the barriers or challenges that contribute to the difficulty that veterans experience as they transition to civilian
Employment. In his testimony to the United States House of Representatives, committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Mr. Knowles identified 10 key veteran employment challenges:

1. Aligning expectations in the hiring process
2. Identifying veteran-friendly employers
3. Preparing and translating resumes
4. Building comfort with, and skills in, networking
5. Sharpening job interviewing skills
6. Adjusting to new organizational cultures
7. Developing new interpersonal skills
8. Understanding that ‘teamwork’ means something different
9. Learning a different leadership style
10. Learning to give and receive feedback differently

In their report, Employing America’s Veterans, Perspectives from Businesses, Dr. Margaret Harrell and Nancy Berglass of the Department of Defence and the Center for a New American Security, respectively, discuss to what extent, and for what reasons, employers think it is good business to hire veterans. They provide empirical data from the experiences of 69 companies of varying size, location, and industry. As indicated in the report, the larger challenge for veterans is around job retention and translating their skills and competencies to civilian jobs, “…nearly 60% of the companies mentioned difficulty with skill translation and negative perceptions of veterans as barriers.”

Reinforcing this is some recent survey data. Brian Niswander of Military-Transition.org has surveyed transitioning veterans both in the Midwest and Nationally. His findings at both levels are similar. Although more than half of surveyed veterans attained civilian employment within 3 months of departing the military, more than a third disliked their civilian jobs once they attained them. More than a third also said that they did not receive the civilian job that they had wanted. More than 45% of veterans surveyed in the Midwest said that their first civilian job did not align with their existing skill sets.

Employment Transition Assistance program (VETA) is helping bridge the gap by providing training for employer HR teams and supervisors on recruiting, hiring, and retaining veteran employees.

Ohio House Bill 98, passed in June 2013, requires all state licensing boards and certification agencies have in place the ability to recognize and credential military training and service experience easing the effort to newly hired veterans. Ohio Means Jobs, the Veteran Employment Center, Military.com and other veteran organizations provide online tools for veterans to translate military specialties into civilian certificates or licenses and provides related websites.

Housing

There are 1,300 homeless veterans in the Tristate region. The Cincinnati VA Medical Center (VAMC) Community Outreach Division and nine other partners coordinate emergency shelter, transitional, low income permanent, and senior and disabled subsidized housing including housing specifically identified for women. These partners have also identified resources to provide assistance in rent, utility and financial assistance. Other programs such as People Working Cooperatively and Habitat for Humanity provide critical home repairs and maintenance services to keep people in their homes safely.

Since 2010, the VA and other federal partners have expanded the array of services aimed at identifying and rapidly connecting veterans to housing, clinical care, and social services. Through new funding from Congress, effective interventions — like the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, the Veterans Justice Outreach program, and Department of Labor’s Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration program — have grown substantially. Additional service providers include the Joseph House, Talbert House, Shelterhouse, Volunteers of America, and Goodwill.

The existing service providers in the Tristate region have made significant strides in meeting the Interagency Council on Homelessness goals. Once these goals are met, an ongoing community effort will be needed to ensure that homelessness for veterans is “rare, brief, and non-recurring.”
Education

Ninety three percent of veterans have a high school diploma and most have some college experience. However, the number of veterans obtaining a bachelor degree is 8% behind nonveterans. The passage of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 — better known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill — has increased the opportunity for veterans seeking higher education. A Rand research brief, Post-9/11 GI Bill and Adapting to Life in College highlighted that “The Post-9/11 GI Bill motivated some military veterans to pursue higher education [and] represented a vital renewal of the nation’s commitment to U.S. service members to help ease the transition from combat to civilian life.” In the Tristate region, 5,620 veterans used the Post-9/11 GI bill benefits at local academic institutions.

SVA studies indicate that many veterans take longer than traditional students to graduate, completing bachelor’s programs within 6.3 years on average. Veterans face unique challenges, including age differences, family responsibilities, and full-time employment that may contribute to the longer completion times.

There are 20 partners in the region including 11 academic institutions. To ease the veterans’ transition to student life, these partners provide college career planning, counselling, and tutorial assistance. The TVCA website includes links and information for Tristate colleges and scholarship information.

Health

There are 36,309 veterans (25% of the total population of veterans) in the Tristate region who have reported having a disability to the Census Bureau. In fiscal year 2014, the VAMC reports servicing over 39,835 veterans in the Tristate region with medical care expenditures totalling over $454 million. Data was not available to assess the quantity or quality of care provided to Tristate veterans.

There are 12 partners in the Tristate region who provide health services including three government organizations. These service providers cover emergency services, mental health, and rehabilitation. All indications are that the needs for veterans’ permanent disability care should continue to be met by the VA and that TVCA’s partners should focus on strengthening and expanding their mental health, rehabilitation, and family support.

Figure 5.1: Graduation rate of veterans enrolled in the Tristate region
Service Provider Data

TVCA has initiated an effort to formalize data sharing agreements with partner organizations to provide insight into how service providers in the region are addressing the needs of veterans. The following sections discuss data gathered from the United Way of Greater Cincinnati (United Way), Easter Seals Tristate, and the TVCA Veteran In-Processing (VIP) Center. The data was analyzed to determine what services were provided, and when possible, what outcomes were affected.

United Way of Greater Cincinnati – G*STARS

The United Way is engaged in nearly 1,800 communities across more than 40 countries and territories worldwide. The United Way offers a number of employment services to veterans.

G*STARS is a case management and analytics data system that captures data on workforce initiatives that provide programming in skilled training, work readiness, and employment. These programs are supported by the United Way, Partners for a Competitive Workforce, and the City of Cincinnati. Since 2013, G*STARS has captured data on employment status, wage, employer, and current barriers for 210 veterans in the region. Of the 210 veterans in the program, 160 reported no wage upon entry. The top barriers to employment included lack of reliable transportation, lack of computer skills, lack of work history, and lack of computer skills. At the end of their program, only 91 veterans reported no wage, a 43% improvement.

United Way of Greater Cincinnati – 2-1-1

In April of 2016, the TVCA, Easter Seals Tristate and 2-1-1 began a four-month veteran call coordination pilot project that identifies veterans seeking emergency assistance and transferring them directly to a veteran navigator. The 2-1-1 service connects callers to national and community based services. 2-1-1 can be accessed via phone by dialing 2-1-1 or via the internet at http://www.uwgc.org/211. In the Tristate region, 1,991 veteran related 2-1-1 service calls were received in 2015. 71% of those calls originated in Hamilton County. The most frequently requested services are shown below in Figure 5.2.

![Figure 5.2: Most frequently requested services based on 2-1-1 call records](image-url)
TVCA operates a Veteran In-Processing (VIP) Center within the CityLink Center to help veterans prioritize and create a plan for managing their financial, social, and personal reintegration needs as they transition from military to civilian life. CityLink provides co-located, integrated community services to help people improve their financial sustainability through education, job development, and counseling. The VIP Center, opened in July of 2015, has served more than 290 veterans or family members. A recent breakdown of data available through April 2016 illustrates the distribution of veterans by year of discharge.

Of the veterans who provided data, the majority were discharged prior to 2000. Figure 5.3 below shows the distribution of VIP Center visitors by discharge year. This demographic, while representative of the overall veteran population, is misaligned with the stated goal to target younger veterans who are earlier in their transition process. More recent data shows an increasing number of in younger veteran referrals.

Easter Seals Tristate

Easter Seals Tristate is an organization focused on creating opportunities for people with disabilities and disadvantages to fully realize their potential. One Easter Seals Tristate program, Operation Vets THRIVE, assists veterans in their transition from military to civilian life and includes services such as emergency assistance via Community OneSource and employment assistance.

Easter Seals Tristate captures data on services provided through their call service. Since 2013, the program has processed more than 1,000 veteran requests. Figure 5.4 shows the most common request categories for the Operation Vets THRIVE call service.

“TVCA has the connections to put you in touch with people looking to hire veterans. They helped me translate military experiences into real word skills and now I am working for the third largest grocery retailer in the country. I would definitely recommend TVCA to anyone transitioning out of the military” –Curtis Ashby
The majority of the requests focused on employment, utilities, rent, and benefits. Easter Seals Tristate also tracks the resolution rates for each request and has been able to resolve 91% of all calls. Only three primary need categories have resolution rates below 95%: car repair, travel expenses, and home repair.

Like other regional service providers, the majority of veterans served were discharged prior to 2000. Figure 5.5 below shows the decade of discharge for veterans who contacted the Operation Vets THRIVE call center since 2013.24

This caller demographic is consistent with other regional service providers and highlights a gap for younger veterans accessing services.
Vision and Mission

The Tristate Veterans Community Alliance (TVCA) is an independent, veteran-led, non-profit that helps veterans of all eras within the 16-county, Greater Cincinnati region. The TVCA vision is to make this region a preferred destination for veterans and families.

The goal is to attract and retain young military talent to the community by emphasizing strong employment opportunities, veteran friendly employers, and a collaborative network of support services. TVCA believes that veterans provide the leadership, discipline, personal accountability, and problem solving skills that will fuel continued growth of the community for decades to come.

To achieve the vision, the TVCA mission is to better align community support to improve the access to and the quality of support services, so that veterans and their families can more efficiently transition from the military and become successful in our community.

To accomplish this, the TVCA partners with over 90 local service providers, corporations, academic institutions, and government organizations to increase awareness and access to services in the areas of employment, education, health, wellness and family support. It also provides peer mentoring support for those requesting it.

Background

TVCA was founded in July 2014, in response to a 2014 Veteran Community Report, a community-based needs assessment coordinated by Easter Seals Tristate. This report documented the size and nature of some of the problems facing the Tristate region’s veterans and the readiness of community services to welcome and support returning veterans and military families. The formation of a Tristate veteran alliance was a direct result of the report’s recommendations. The formation of this alliance required a new leadership structure, a restatement of purpose, prioritization, and support for activities already begun by five separate assessment groups. These efforts have begun to address gaps in the way the community is currently serving veterans and their families, especially those new to the community.

Operations

The TVCA operates a Veteran In-Processing (VIP) & Welcome Center co-located with several community partners in the CityLink Center near the downtown area. The veteran staff and spacious meeting facilities enables it to conduct partner meetings, training programs, and individual coaching and orientation for those new to the area or seeking help advancing toward their personal goals. The TVCA staff also has a presence on-line through their Veteran & Family Resource Portal website. The website provides a calendar of veteran-oriented events in the community and interactive links to resources and trends to better understand the Tristate veteran community.

The TVCA has a small paid staff and a volunteer executive board. The board meets at least quarterly and is currently chaired by US Air Force (USAF) Major General (retired) Leonard Randolph, Jr. MD., former USAF Deputy Surgeon General and Chief Medical Officer of Mercy Health. Other board members include retired military leaders, business and service organization executives from Interact for Health, the law firm Keating, Muething, and Klekamp, PLL, the United Way of Greater...
Cincinnati, the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), consulting firm Guidance Partners, and the United Service Organizations (USO).

**Progress**

Since the TVCA founding in 2014, the team has made great strides to better align veteran support across the community and to help close the gap between veteran needs and available resources.

TVCA has brought together its community of partner organizations, launched an online resource portal that has served 4,500+ users, trained 450+ hiring managers and HR professionals through the VETA program, and launched the Community Veteran Volunteer program to enable veterans to help those less fortunate in the community in a structured and meaningful way.

A significant milestone for TVCA was the opening of the VIP Center at the CityLink Center. This facility has served more than 290 veterans to date. Referrals were made from the following sources: 50% from community service partners, 19% from CityLink, 15% from the VA, 8% from National Guard and Reserve units, and 8% via word of mouth or social media.

**Workgroup Organization**

The TVCA works to align and improve community services by working with its network of partner organizations, organized into five community-based workgroups. These workgroups support the areas of Employment; Health, Wellness, and Family Support; Education; Peer Mentorship; and Collaborative Impact. The workgroups meet independently, once per month, to share best practices and address common issues, trends and service gaps in the community. These meetings are open to those organizations wishing to contribute to, and benefit from, community partners in their respective areas of interest.

The volunteer chairpersons of the five workgroups form an Operations Committee that meets with TVCA leadership monthly to report on progress and secure TVCA executive board support and resources, where needed. Examples of support include providing resources for small pilot efforts between community partners to better serve veterans seeking after hours help, education and support seminars for parents and spouses of veterans having difficulty reintegrating, and support for an equine therapy start-up to expand services to veterans suffering with PTSD.

In December of 2015, the TVCA completed its second annual survey of partner organizations. The survey was designed to assess the strength of community collaborations across twenty research-based dimensions. The survey found better cross-sector participation and overall strong satisfaction and mission fulfillment. The percentage of respondents describing themselves as completely or mostly satisfied increased from 70% to 76%. Continued strong leadership was seen as a top factor in collaborative performance.

The following sections outline the notable accomplishments of the workgroups and the work planned for the next year for each of them.

**Employment Workgroup**

The Employment Workgroup was established with the goal of creating a strong community of both employers and employment service providers. To this end, the workgroup focused on developing strategies to recruit a balanced roster of partner organizations, training employers through the VETA program on what it means to be a veteran friendly employer, and establishing criteria for designating military and veteran friendly workplaces.

Since the founding of TVCA, the Employment Workgroup has:

- Assembled a committee of 45+ committee partners including Fortune 500 companies, locally owned businesses, non-profit organizations, and charitable foundations
- Created community based criteria for what makes an employer military and veteran friendly

Moving forward, the workgroup plans to continue building a community of employers and service providers. The team is actively working to identify additional VETA training opportunities and improve the effectiveness of local job / career fairs.

**Health, Wellness, and Family Support Workgroup**

The Health, Wellness, and Family Support Workgroup was created with the goal of building a community of partners to coordinate veteran support in a variety of areas including emergency services, mental health, and rehabilitation.

Over the past two years, the workgroup has managed to:

- Assembled a committee of 60+ partners
- Develop veteran specific call procedures with partners
- Encourage pilot programs with organizations like Cincinnati Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship (CTRH)
increase awareness, enrollment, and engagement of veterans and family members with numerous service and support partners

In partnership with the United Way and Easter Seals Tristate, the workgroup created a process and infrastructure by which veteran 2-1-1 callers are forwarded to a veteran specific call line. This program provides emergency support services to veterans during non-standard business hours when other services are unavailable.

Another program supported by the workgroup is an equine therapy program run by CTRH. This program is offered free of charge to veterans diagnosed with PTSD as well as their families. CTRH is currently working on an effort to incorporate wild mustangs into the program. The Executive Director of CTRH, Rob Seideman, explains in his testimonial to the right, the impact that TVCA and the Health, Wellness and Family Support Workgroup has had on the local veterans.

Looking forward, the workgroup is planning an art fair to highlight veteran creations, coordinate a meeting with the Board of Realtors to find ways of incentivizing veteran relocation to the area, and expanding a successfully pilot of the May 2016 Military Moms and Spouses Conference. The workgroup plans to continue its efforts to create a collaborative network of community partners.

Education Workgroup

The Education Workgroup began with a focus on curating a community of academic institutions and education service providers to ensure veteran students and graduates can take the best advantage of GI Bill benefits, state/local tuition support programs, and are in the best position to achieve their academic goals.

The workgroup met with academic institutions around the region to share best practices for veteran recruitment and retention. As an output of these meetings, the workgroup collaboratively developed a set of standards governing veteran policy at schools in the region.

To date, 11 academic institutions have committed to upholding the following seven “principles of excellence”.

1. Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
2. Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
3. End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentations.
4. Accommodate Service-members and Reservists absent due to service requirements.

“On my first day at CTRH, I attended a meeting of TVCA’s Health, Wellness, and Family Support Workgroup. Here I was introduced to the workgroup chair, Kim Martin, and a number of folks who provide veteran services in the region. I was immediately impressed by the variety of services available such as free legal aid, substance abuse assistance, etc.

However, it was eye-opening and motivating to learn that, in spite of all of this effort, we were not coming close to accommodating all the needs of veterans.

With the support of the TVCA, we are beginning a new collaborative program using mustangs to provide support activities of those enrolled in the VA’s residential PTSD program. We expect to serve over 400 veterans each year with this powerful opportunity.

As a member of the workgroup, I have had made countless contacts who have been instrumental in helping CTRH provide for veterans’ needs. For example, one challenge facing CTRH was transportation to and from the facility. By simply reaching out to the workgroup, we were able to identify organizations to volunteer to help get veterans to the center, and to brainstorm creative solutions.

On both a practical and personal level, TVCA has been pivotal in helping me provide better service for our veterans. TVCA gives my organization a voice in the community of service providers, and allows me to better understand other efforts that are in progress in the region.

I truly appreciate the opportunity to work with TVCA and look forward to all that is to come!”

Rob Seideman
Executive Director, CTRH

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5. Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advice.

6. Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.

7. Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of federal student financial aid programs.

The Education Workgroup’s network of organizations facilitates improved veteran support within and between academic institutions. Moving forward, the workgroup is focused on improving support facilities and programs for veterans on campuses, counselling new veterans on how to most cost-effectively benefit from their GI Bill benefits, and strengthening opportunities for veterans once they graduate and begin looking for jobs. In concert with the Employment Workgroup, the team is working to connect veterans with employers, and employers with veterans.

Peer Mentorship Workgroup

The Peer Mentorship Workgroup began as an informal group of veterans who met and helped each other through the process of transitioning from military to civilian life. Awareness was spread through word of mouth and mentoring relationships were created informally. TVCA recognized the value of mentorship and sought to leverage the existing cadre of peer mentorship resources available and scale the process across the region.

To date, 17 mentors have been trained and certified based on standards recognized by the State of Ohio and the VA. The workgroup is now focused on increasing the number and accessibility of mentors to veterans requesting them and increasing the number of spouse and family mentors to assist families in transition.

Collaborative Impact Workgroup

The Collaborative Impact Workgroup was originally founded as the Coordinated Access Workgroup, charged with establishing an agreed upon method for veterans to access the vast system of resources available in the community. The workgroup was to address the issue of veterans being shuttled back and forth between service providers looking for support.

The workgroup performed extensive mapping exercises to identify nodes in the system and developed three channels by which a veteran may access regional service providers: a website, a self-service web portal, and a physical in-processing center. By the end of the first year, the workgroup launched the TVCA website and self-guided directory and opened the VIP Center at CityLink.

Moving forward, the workgroup reorganized as the Collaborative Impact Workgroup with the mission of creating common data sharing agreements and strategies to evidence processes and measure impact. The workgroup has enabled data sharing between key partners such as Easter Seals Tristate, City Link, TVCA, and United Way of Greater Cincinnati (UWGC) 2-1-1. The workgroup has also worked on developing a comprehensive transition scale based on four dimensions of success.

Looking to the future, the workgroup plans on continuing to expand the network of partners with data sharing agreements. Additional efforts are underway to enable coordinated data capture with common fields, collection strategies, and storage. The group looks to align data collection with the community backbone organizations like United Way and the Cincinnati Regional Chamber of Commerce. In parallel, a marketing strategy will be developed to target communications based on a number of demographic factors. These communications will help drive traffic and awareness for the website, self-service portal, and VIP Center, enabling TVCA to provide even better service to the veteran community.
Goal

Shortening and smoothing the path to successful transition for the veteran benefits the community in several ways. By enabling the veteran to meaningfully contribute to society more quickly allows hiring organizations to benefit more quickly from the veteran’s experience. Also, the sooner a veteran transitions, their need to rely on community resources diminishes – particularly in areas such as emergency / urgent services in areas of substance abuse or homelessness and managing certain symptoms of depression / PTSD.

Therefore, shortening and smoothing the path to a successful transition for the veteran should be a community goal. The blue line in the graph below reflects this idealized path to transition and the red line reflects transition without assistance.

Challenge

There are challenges to meeting this goal, however.

1. Clarity and consensus on the definition of what a ‘successful transition’ entails must be reached

2. In order to baseline the current process, the length of time this process currently takes must be measured

3. The root causes driving the variability in the current process must then be identified

4. Finally, those services and programs that will have the most positive impact on smoothing and shortening the veteran’s transition must be identified

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Figure 7.1: Ideally Shortened Veteran Transition
Direction

Progress is being made against these challenges

1. The first challenge is already being addressed by TVCA in conducting system-wide evaluation that incorporates inputs from multiple partners.

2. Baselining the current process will require a common database for consistent operational definitions across the community. There is consensus, however, that components of that database would include measurements relating to the attitudes and behaviors, or the 4Cs, defined as:

   - **Clarity of Goals:** The veteran has a clear understanding of the goals to be achieved in the next twelve months
   - **Connection:** The veteran has an awareness of benefits and has connected the use of the benefits to achieving the goals
   - **Communication:** The veteran has regular communication with support personnel and other veterans to assist in meeting goals
   - **Contribution to the Community:** The veteran understands the importance of volunteering and is engaged in an activity to make a difference in the community

3. Likewise, efforts are being undertaken to identify root causes of variability in the current process. To test the effectiveness and applicability of the 4 Cs, a small online pilot survey was conducted in January 2016. TVCA consulted with survey researchers from the University of Cincinnati to align to best practices. Some of the final questions are based on the goal setting work of Locke & Latham (1984) and the civic engagement scales developed by Doolittle & Faul (2013). TVCA conducted a second pilot in May and June of 2016 to further refine the survey questions. Results are discussed in the following section.

4. Identifying the most impactful services will likely require an involved research proposal with economic analysis and multiple interactions.

Pilot Survey

As mentioned above, TVCA is charting new territory by creating a quantitative measure of veteran transition. The scale is meant to evaluate attitudes behaviors believed to lead to successful transition. A recently completed pilot survey to test this scale and the applicability of the 4Cs resulted in a number of preliminary findings.

- Regarding goal **Clarity**, the preliminary scores seem to indicate that its importance remains high despite employment status, however may wane slightly as a veteran attains full-time employment.
- In the area of **Connection** to benefits, the sense that veteran are aware of and accessing of benefits appears to be higher in the part-time employed population as well as those who are unemployed and not looking for work. Respondents who were unemployed and looking for work reported lower scores.
- As for **Communication** with support, it also appears to wane as one attains full-time employment; however, communication with other veterans remains relevant and increases in respective importance.
- Finally, in **Contributing to the Community**, there was a large disconnect between the importance participants attach to volunteering and how often they actually volunteer. This ‘attitude-behavior gap’ was prevalent across all employment status types.

Overall, the survey was successful in testing the scale, but the primary take-away was that additional outcomes data is required to definitively measure if a veteran is more or less fully transitioned. While the 4Cs are a necessary component of measuring the success of a veteran’s transition, a more holistic measure would include some achievement data (employment/career advancement), sufficient resource data (income needs being met), and progress on the achievement of meaningful roles (in the family or community).

Some other data-related findings included:

- The need to track veteran under-employment as well as job retention and advancement milestones.
- The need to continue tracking some specific data elements, such as ‘estimated date of separation.’ This provides the ability to analyze transition time more specifically and across multiple interactions.
Transitioning from military to civilian life is a complicated and ongoing process that is a challenge to navigate successfully. This study of the Tristate veteran population shows that there exists a significant need for support in the areas of employment, education, and health. The study also shows that there are a multitude of governmental and nongovernmental agencies already actively working on veteran issues within the community.

Below are findings and recommendations resulting from an evaluation of the Tristate regional veteran population and service providers. It should be noted that for a number of the recommendations efforts have already begun and progress is being made. In those cases, expansion and acceleration is recommended so that more veterans might benefit from those efforts.

**Finding 1: Greater collaboration between non-profit service organizations, employers, educators, and government providers is needed.**

The veteran support community has made progress over the last two years to build a collaborative framework and strong veteran support ecosystem. The focus has been on sharing best practices within service sectors, but opportunities exist to increase collaboration across sectors.

**Recommendation 1: Continue to use a collective impact approach to improve intra- and cross-sector collaboration between partner organizations.**

The collective impact approach encourages connectivity and alignment, while reducing organizational isolation and inefficiency. The community must focus on aligning vision and strategy, supporting collaborative activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, and ensuring returns on funding investments. The TVCA should leverage existing workgroup meetings to agree on community-wide strategic goals and expected outcomes, sharing best practices across and within workgroups.

**Finding 2: Veterans and their families, especially newly transitioning veterans, are largely unaware of the range of services and resources available to them in the community. Armed Forces transition trainings insufficiently prepare veterans and their families for their transition.**

One of the well-documented challenges that service members face as they leave the service is the overwhelming “sea of goodwill” that exists in many communities. This refers to the multitude of well-meaning organizations who reach out to help veterans and their families.

Responses to our Veteran Transition Survey point to a lack of coordination, service fragmentation, and the siloed nature of the services that can result in confusion, frustration, and disengagement.

In addition, the culture within the military can also condition veterans to avoid seeking help, a behavior that becomes detrimental upon separation.

**Recommendation 2: Implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to heighten veterans’ awareness of**
available resources, focusing on veterans within twelve months of separation.

As a collective impact group, TVCA is uniquely positioned to create clear pathways for veterans through the complex matrix of local employers and veteran services, and to work with partners to build broad-based awareness of the resources available in the community.

To reach these veterans and guide them through the complex transition process, TVCA needs to develop a coordinated community marketing strategy and executable plan to drive awareness and traffic towards service and employment networks such as the TVCA Family and Veteran Resource Portal and the VIP Center. Targeted communications that reach veterans prior to transition such as during the military services’ Transition Assistance Programs (TAP), services’ publications (e.g. Army Times), and social media can bolster TVCA and its partners’ reach to veterans who are early in their transition process.

Finding 3: The majority of provider services are focused on resolving emergency needs while less attention is devoted to preventative services.

Trends in areas such as veteran unemployment and homelessness have shown that veteran focused organizations have made progress in meeting emergency needs such as homelessness and unemployment. While many services are designed to provide crisis care, fewer are available for preventative services, under-employment, and peer support. This leads to many veterans only able to seek emergency care for chronic debt, depression, substance abuse, and homelessness when they become a crisis.

TVCA’s veteran leadership, staff, and network of partners are developing the capability to intercept and assist veterans earlier in their transition. Early identification and detection of common risk factors and a focus on preventative services will help veterans build and follow a personalized reintegration path, thereby avoiding costly emergency services.

Recommendation 3: Develop a collaborative transition “accelerator” to successfully transition veterans to contributing community members as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

TVCA and its partners should continue to build upon the preventative services available in the region such as veteran friendly employer opportunities, partnership with the realtor community and peer mentorship programs to reach veterans early in their transition process. However, to maximize its impact, the TVCA should consider creating an “accelerator” program for veterans that connects veterans to the community more quickly and intentionally. Corporate veteran affinity groups are likely partners for an effort of this kind.

Finding 4: Disparate systems and nonstandard data are inhibiting TVCA and its partners’ ability to use data to make informed and effective decisions.

Our efforts to compile regional service provider data has demonstrated that most local veteran organizations capture and record data in silos with unique systems, data elements, reporting structures, and governance. While this meets the needs of the individual organizations, it inhibits comprehensive understanding and coordinated service of the region’s veteran population.

Recommendation 4: Standardize data capture and sharing across the veteran services network in the community, similar to the approach of the homeless continuum of care and other successful impact efforts.

To enable end-to-end understanding of veteran needs, services available, and measurable outcomes, the greater veteran service provider community needs to apply a consistent strategy for data capture and sharing. This may be accomplished using a variety of solutions that vary in cost, effort to implement, and system maturity. There should be an evolutionary approach to ensure efforts are achievable and provide the greatest benefit over the course of time. This approach could take the form of the following phases:

Phase 1: Task the Collaborative Impact Workgroup to work with business and IT stakeholders to agree upon a standardization data strategy with common data fields, naming conventions, and critical veteran demographic information. The strategy should include a short term (six months) and long term (one year) plan to share readily available data.

Phase 2: Implement data sharing agreements between partner organizations to enable transparency and secure sharing of data across the community.
Phase 3: Implement the above data sharing strategy between existing systems across participating organizations. Plan for shared case management capabilities.

Phase 4: Fully implement a shared case management system for all veteran organizations in the region. All veteran interactions and outcomes would be tracked and analyzed in this system.

A coordinated effort to capture and share data will enable the veteran services community to take raw data and present it in meaningful ways that generate the most value.

Finding 5: While beginning to show the value of collaboration within a tightly defined network, participating community service partners are largely concentrated in Hamilton County, Ohio.

While TVCA has built a large network of partners throughout the Tri-state region, the majority are concentrated in the city of Cincinnati. Many partners provide services outside of the city, but the number of partners physically located in Northern Kentucky and Southeast Indiana is limited.

In addition to the limited service provider coverage, three of the top four counties for unemployment are located in Northern Kentucky and 55% of the region’s veterans reside in the 6 counties immediately adjacent to Hamilton County.

Recommendation 5: Continue expanding the network of partners throughout the region, with emphasis on those in the six adjacent Northern Kentucky and Southwest Ohio counties surrounding Hamilton County.

To address the shortfall of service providers and the disproportionately high unemployment rates, TVCA and its partners should focus on expanding partners and programming in the six additional counties containing the most veterans including Butler, Warren and Clermont Counties in Ohio and Kenton, Boone and Campbell Counties in Kentucky.

Engaging county-level leadership will be crucial in identifying opportunities and priorities for veteran support.

Finding 6: Continued investment and support from government, individuals, and private foundations is critical to maintain momentum in making Cincinnati a destination for transitioning veterans and families.

Over the past two years, TVCA has built a strong support base of private and corporate partners. While downward trends in unemployment and homeless show promise, there is still work to be done to fully leverage veteran skills and leadership and ensure that newly transitioning veterans are welcomed and supported. If sustained support for effective efforts are not identified, the community risks returning to dealing with the social costs of failed reintegration.

Furthermore investment in the long-term success of veterans benefits the community by encouraging veterans to continue their civic engagement and community leadership.

Recommendation 6: Foster further collaboration among philanthropic groups to target investments towards partnerships and data driven interventions.

The TVCA and its partners have been working to develop aligned programs to more quickly transition veterans into the community and develop shared measures to demonstrate success. In a similar way, those responsible for allocating community resources, whether they be public, private, and corporate, need to require evidence of effectiveness and collaboration with other veteran community organizations. This will lead to investments with greater impact and sustainability for the veteran serving community.
Appendices
Appendix A: Community Partners and Supporters

American Red Cross
Armed Forces Services Corporation (AFSC)
Army OneSource
Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
Brighton Center, Inc.
CareLink
CETConnect
Chatfield College
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Cincinnati Financial Corporation
Cincinnati Hamilton County Community Action Agency
Cincinnati Museum Center
Cincinnati Reds
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
Cincinnati Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship (CTRH)
Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce
Cincinnati VA Medical Center
Cincinnati Vet Center
Cincinnati Works
Cintas
Cintas Corporation
City of Cincinnati Police Department
CityLink Center
Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio
Darling Ingredients, Inc.
Deloitte LLP.
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
Easter Seals Tristate
Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P.
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Farmer Family Foundation
Fifth Third Bank
First Financial Bank
FirstGroup America
Freestore Foodbank
Gateway Community and Technical College
General Electric Co
HiFive Development Services
Hobsons Solutions
HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
Interact for Health
Ivy Tech Community College
Katz, Greenberger & Norton, LLP.
L3 Levine Electornics and Lectric, Inc.
Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati
Legion Logistics, LLC.
Life Learning Center
LOTH, Inc.
Luxottica Group S.p.A.
Macy's, Inc.
Miami University
Midwest New Media, LLC.
Military OneSource
Military Veterans Resource Center
Montgomery Inn
Mount St. Joseph University
Municipal Hamilton County Veterans’ Treatment Court
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
Nielsen Holdings, Inc.
Northern Kentucky University
Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company
OH Regional Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee
Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries
OhioMeansJobs
Orion International
Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW)
People Working Cooperatively
Per Scholas
PNC Bank
Pomeroy
Pro Seniors
Procter & Gamble Co. (P&G)
RecruitMilitary
ReelAbilities Film Festival
Serico, Inc.
Signature Marketing
Staffmark
Talbert House
Team Red, White & Blue (Team RWB)
The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. / U.S. Bank Foundation
The George B. Riley Trust
The Hatton Foundation
The Heidt Family Foundation
The Joseph House for Homeless Veterans
The Kroger Company
The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)
Total Quality Logistics (TQL)
TriHealth
Tuskegee Airmen Inc.
U.S. Bank

UC Health
Union Institute & University
United Parcel Service, Inc. (UPS)
United Service Organizations (USO)
United States Army Corps of Engineers
United Way of Greater Cincinnati (UWGC)
University of Cincinnati
VA NY Harbor Healthcare System; VITAL
Veteran Recruiting.com
Veterans Church Ministry
Veterans Economic Community Initiative (VECI)
Viox Services
VITAS Healthcare
Volunteers of America
Wesley Community Services
West Point Society of Greater Cincinnati
Western-Southern Life Assurance Company
Wood & Lamping LLP.
Wright State University
Xavier University
### Appendix B: Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACS</td>
<td>United States Census Bureau American Community Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>Community and Technical College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRH</td>
<td>Cincinnati Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DoD</td>
<td>United States Department of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>Grade Point Average</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HUD-VASH</td>
<td>United States Department of Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIP</td>
<td>Veterans In-Processing</td>
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End Notes

1 http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/metroarea/stcbsa_pg/Nov2004/cbsa2004_OH.pdf
2 U.S. Census Bureau: 2014 ACS 5-year estimates for select counties in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky
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4 http://www.military-transition.org/index.html and Brian Niswander
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7 http://chronicle.com/article/For-Profit-Colleges-Still-Cash/147977
8 VBA Office of Performance Analysis & Integrity, FY 2015 Compensation and Pension Recipients by County
9 http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/PTSD-overview/epidemiological-facts-ptsd.asp
10 2014 VA Veteran Population Projection Model
11 Statement of Daniel T. Knowles , President and CEO, Tristate Veterans Community Alliance to Committee on Veterans Affairs, February 19, 2016
12 Employing America’s Veterans, Perspectives from Businesses
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15 Department of Veteran Affairs, Veteran Homelessness Gap Analysis: FY2015 Q4
16 Ibid
17 Rand.org: Post-9/11 GI Bill and Adapting to Life in College
18 Northern Kentucky University research on Veteran Friendly Academic institutions in the tristate region, 2015
19 Macrothink institute: Understanding Patterns of College Outcomes among Student Veterans
20 Ibid
21 http://www.studentveterans.org
22 VIP Visitor Data provided by CityLink Center
23 Easter Seals call log from 2013 to 2015 provided by Easter Seal Tristate
24 Ibid