



Tri-County Veterans Support Network

“...when men like Tim Taylor take a stand, I want to be where he is because his heart is with our veterans...as a matter of fact, a part of my government shut down pay that I was going to donate to charity, I’m going to give to this organization because I believe in Tim.” - U.S. Senator Tim Scott

“The work of Tim Taylor and the Tri-County Veterans Support Network is so vital to our veterans. I appreciate what they are doing and commend Tim for it. I’m proud to be a part of it because it provides effective service to our veterans and their families, who need tremendous help.” – Maj Gen Charles Baldwin, USAF (ret)

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For over a decade the United States has been embroiled in a global conflict. Many valiant men and woman have voluntarily put themselves in harm's way in defense of our nation. As their term of service comes to an end, they face the challenge of transitioning home. While many veterans and their families make that transition into their new lives very successfully, becoming productive members of their communities, there are still many others who for a myriad of reasons, find the challenge a minefield full of insurmountable obstacles, each leading to an endless path of destruction.

Tri-County Veterans Support Network is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Charity committed to effective advocacy and holistic service to our veterans and families. Through the opening and managing a **Veterans Support Center** in a collaborative effort with other concerned community organizations, we are focused on innovative and proactive outreach methods, to reach veterans who, for whatever reason, have fallen through the cracks and help them to find stability in the midst of their crisis. Alarming current statistics on veteran's challenges reveal the following:

- More veterans have **committed suicide** than were killed in action in our two most recent major conflicts!
- We lose 22 warriors a day – EVERY 80 MINUTES to suicide with no end in sight.
- Up to 40% of those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
- There are approximately 800,000 to 1 million unemployed veterans at present.
- There are 12 million underemployed veterans, forced to work multiple part-time jobs in order to make ends meet.
- On any given night there are over 100,000 homeless veterans.
- There is an alarming increase in female homeless veterans that includes single mothers.

Veterans are the very best of us – disciplined and self-reliant. Many veterans are prone to isolation often as a result of frustration in their attempt to connect to help. While veterans wait for their benefits, some fall into substance abuse or other at risk behaviors in an attempt to medicate the pain they experienced from the traumas of war. This can lead to addictions and a path of destruction that devastates them and their families, which leaves them dealing with the aftermath of either jail or suicide which are highly possible outcomes. **It is a national tragedy that a veteran commits suicide in this country EVERY eighty minutes.**

There are many difficulties our veterans face in their transition home. A major challenge is overcoming the loss of identity and direction after leaving the military. Exiting the military triggers an extremely stressful and life changing pivotal moment of introspective evaluation and reinvention to find a sense of value and life purpose. How they resolve this can have a tremendous impact on their future. Many are ill prepared for reintegration into their community upon their return. In a word, **stability** for a veteran in crisis is our objective, which may come in many different forms given the wide array of difficulties veterans and their families face. Many are left deficient in coping with their difficulties and as they deal with the traumas of war. This added stress compounds their problems which can be extremely daunting and leave them feeling completely overwhelmed and without hope, causing any number of reactions ranging from depression and isolation to rage and suicide.

Communities are, for the most part, left to fend for themselves as the military does not notify the community that the soldier is returning home, who often feel unprepared for their transition home. Consequently, communities are left using their valuable resources in reactionary measures, picking up the pieces rather than proactively acclimating the veteran to their community and welcoming them as a new asset to their area.

In a recent account from a local mayor, he relayed how he regrettably had to let one police officer go, who was also a veteran, for being overly aggressive because he unloaded his weapon into an oncoming car because he felt threatened and was taking defensive measures. The mayor also had to comfort the widow of another officer who took his own life while on duty because he was unable to cope with his circumstances.

Tri-County Veterans Support Network serves as a community "clearinghouse", a hub or liaison to comprehensive supportive services for our veterans. Through the upcoming opening of a **Veterans Support Center**, we will be the crossroads where a grateful community and our veterans can meet. We serve them by proactively finding them in the community and after gaining a full understanding of their needs, help them to create an action plan,

Vision Statement

To find creative solutions that are duplicable and can be applied in any community, to bring a positive and uplifting source of strength that lifts our veterans out of their difficult circumstances and powerfully impacts and empowers them so as to bring stability into their lives so that they can in turn be a source of strength to the community around them.

This is accomplished through a 4 Step Plan:

Connect – Find, assess and link veterans to our network of resources to create and implement an action plan

Educate – Empower veterans with practical information, instruction and tools to overcome the obstacles they are facing to finding stability in the midst of their crisis and inform them of the services and opportunities available to them

Advocate – Find and facilitate strategic policy changes to create better and more efficient service as well as hold all parties accountable in their performance of service to ensure veterans receive the *comprehensive support* they need and have earned

Collaborate - Work with partners at all levels to facilitate comprehensive veteran care and support

Our Program is comprised of 4 main parts:

1. Outreach - The Tri-County Veteran Support Network is committed to seeking out and identifying veterans and families in our Tri-County community in a massive and consistent outreach campaign called OPERATION LOWCOUNTRY WARRIOR CONNECTION. With the help of members of the Tri-County Veterans Support Network and volunteers from the community, we strategically canvas the Tri-County Area monthly to find veterans and families in crisis. After identifying them we work to help them attain stability through:

2. Assessment - We have a powerful battery of assessments conducted by our Licensed Clinical Social Worker that help the individual come up with a specific plan for their situation.

3. Implementation - We plug them in to the various relevant resources and give them practical tools to educate and empower the veteran and their family to overcome their crisis, reach a place of stability and enhance their quality of life by going beyond stability into a place of thriving in the new chapter of their lives.

4. Accountability and Advocacy - We believe in the principle of leaving no veteran behind. We walk it out with our veterans and family, advocating for them and holding both the agency providing the service and the veteran and / or family accountable for their part in implementing the agreed upon plan. We continue service until they have reached the desired outcome of stability and successfully achieved their desired goal.

We believe that our veterans need a holistic approach to the services and treatments they require as they navigate the myriad of obstacles they face while transitioning home. Our mission puts a tremendous focus on Outreach and Engagement. Through our proactive outreach measures, we identify and connect with veterans and after assessing their needs, connect them with the relevant services they need, mostly from the member agencies of the network.

Our program also has a strong focus on Economic Empowerment. We utilize a powerful battery of very personalized assessments resulting in a summary which triangulates the confluence of the three sides of an individual's mind. This process explains the individual's personal Passions, Cognitive Strengths and Conative Instincts. This is given in tandem with our curriculum in a series of workshops or conferences, whereby the veteran or family member is given tools to adapt and overcome their circumstances and formulate a plan for the next chapter in their life. We also have a 2nd conference that will provide job seekers, job changers and people in career transition with powerful tools to enhance their search for job and career fulfillment. In addition to introducing world-class practices in Managing Change, Taking Stock, Job Searching (Networking), Resume Preparation and Interviewing, participants will receive personal encouragement, networking opportunities and expert advice from HR specialists as well as successful businessmen in the community. Simultaneously tools are given to those who are more entrepreneurially inclined, helping them with the practical applications of starting their own businesses. We will also have college and vocational schools as well as representatives of various certification programs on hand to work with those who would like to get more education.

Tri-County Veterans Support Network – A True Community Stimulus Package

As veterans and their families become more stable, they become more of an asset to their community. With an economy in decline, our mission in effect acts as a stimulus to our veterans and the local economy!

The statistics most commonly used come from the Veterans Administration which often fall short of the actual numbers of veterans in a given area because they can only reports statistics on veterans that have plugged into them. As a result we rarely have accurate numbers of veterans in the community since it is quite common for veterans not to plug into services. Consequently, when they are in need they naturally turn to any local or state service they can find and often become a drain on that organization’s resources. Through our diligent focus on outreach, we identify a veteran in need and as we plug them in, we in effect create a lateral transfer of funds from the drain on local and state resources to the Federal benefits they are actually eligible for. This begins the process of turning that veteran from being a drain on our community to an asset and the more stable they become the greater the asset they are to their local community.

For example, US Army veteran Joe Smith is interested in pursuing a certification or degree to help improve his life. Under the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Joe would be eligible for 36 months of paid tuition as well as a monthly housing allowance, which in Charleston County is \$1178.00.

This means for every 100 veterans we help get enrolled in our area:

Tuition (average \$21,000 per year)	\$2,100,000.00
Housing Allowance (average \$14,136)	<u>+1,413,600.00</u>
	\$3,513,600.00 per year infused into the local economy

For every 100 veterans we help find a job averaging 30,000 per year they will pay approximately:

\$2550.00 ea = \$255,000.00 Per Year in Sales Tax

For every 100 veterans who we have helped find stability that buy a house at an average of \$150,000 per year, they will pay approximately:

\$600.00 ea = \$ 60,000.00 Per Year in Property Tax

SC State reports an expense of \$7273.00 per suicide attempt which is 5 citizens per day! While it is hard to quantify attempts averted through our intervention, if we are able to save 25 veterans from attempting suicide per year:

\$7273.00 ea = \$ 181,825.00 Per year in savings

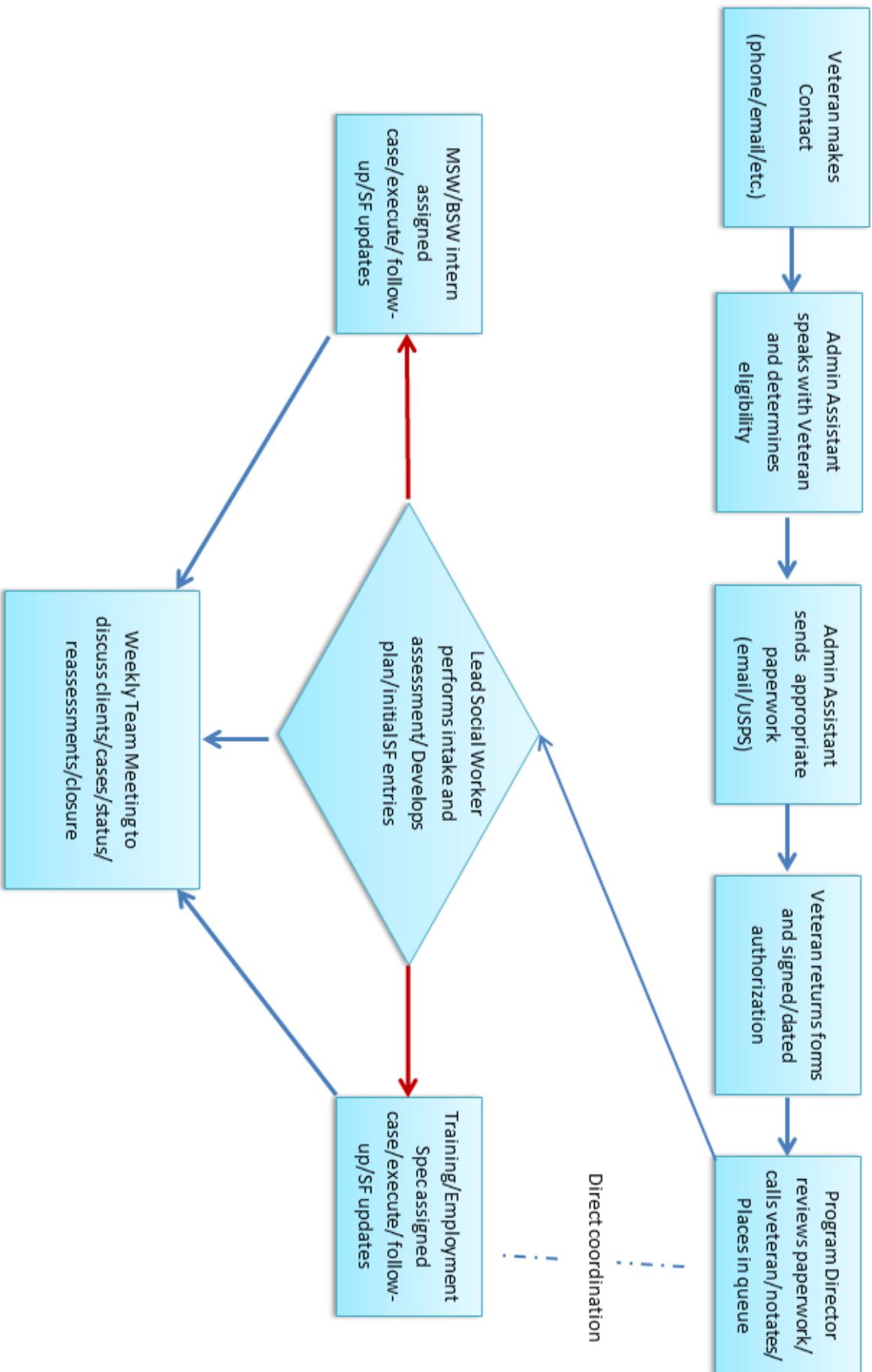
The final analysis shows it is clear that our mission pays for itself and is a tremendous financial benefit to our community!

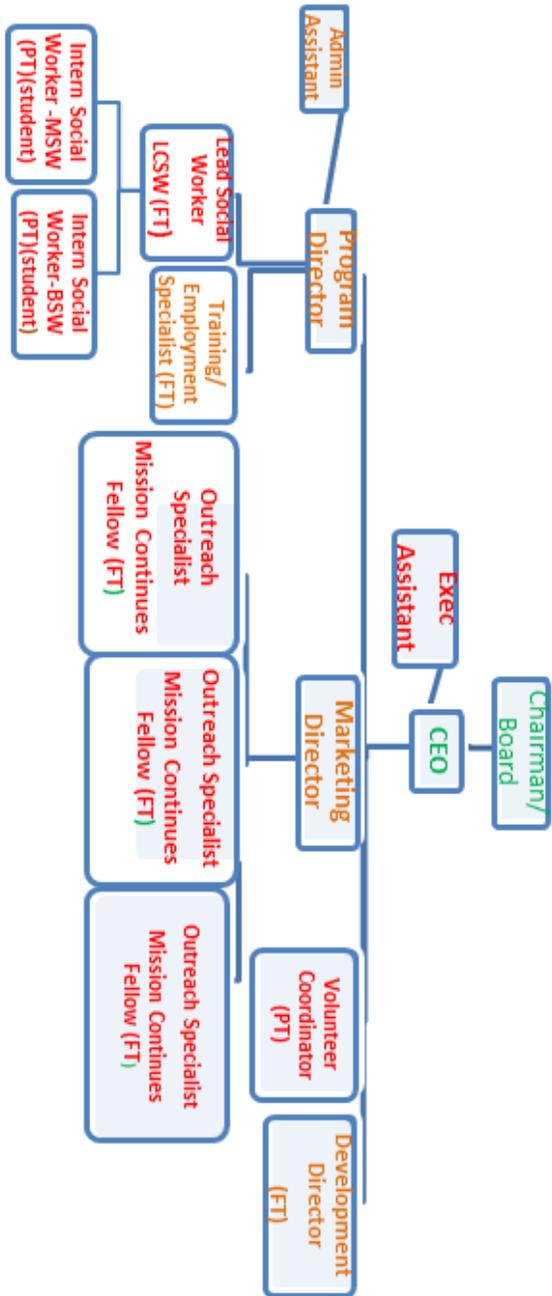
Our progress thus far

We have approached this tremendous challenge from a free market perspective, always seeking innovative approaches, to find impactful solutions. Our work thus far has yielded the following:

- Recognizing that outreach is the VA’s biggest problem and our top strength, we have been invited to collaborate with Charleston area VA in their outreach initiatives.
- Tasked by the VA, we have recently created a comprehensive Veterans Support Network Resource Directory comprised of over 175 Veteran Support Agencies in the Charleston Tri-County Area.
- In partnership with the American Red Cross, we have formed a collaborative veteran’s community networking roundtable, currently comprised of 53 Veteran Service agencies, chaired by our board member, Major General Charles Baldwin, USAF (ret). This creates greater networking and more effective comprehensive service for our veterans right here, right now.
- We have proposed new legislation which when enacted will reduce the incidence of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, addiction and crime rates among veterans.
- We have been approached by a major national veteran’s organization to take our curriculum to venues across the country where they serve veterans.

Tri-County Veteran Support Network : Veteran/Client Operational Flow Chart





Color Legend
 Green: current staff
 Red: proposed 2014 staff
 Amber: proposed 2016 Staff
 FT = Full time; PT = Part time

Conclusion

After laying their lives on the line in defense of our freedom, our veterans have not only earned our respect but also our enduring gratitude and thanks. To the Tri-County Veteran Support Network, thanks is more than just words; it is dedication to serving our veterans with excellence in their time of need, just as they served our country. We believe we will fulfill our mission with the proper appeal to so many Americans who have proven time and again to be a kind and generous people and grateful to those who have willingly risked their lives to protect our cherished liberties. We will continue to work creatively to see that every veteran who desires help and seeks it receives it. Our goal is their stability and in time, as our veterans find restoration, hope and a sense of purpose for their lives and as they take leadership roles in their communities, we will see greater stability and restoration of the very foundations of our communities. We will need the backing and the resources of the business community to accomplish this. Be assured that your generous financial support will be life-changing and will make the difference in turning the tide in this national battle for the lives and well-being of our veterans and their families in their hour of dire need. After all, our veterans deserve no less than our best.

We wish to express our deepest appreciation to Augusta Warrior Project, Charlotte Bridge Home and Upstate Warrior Solution for their guidance and wisdom and for blazing the trail for many years in this field of serving our veterans here in South Carolina and in neighboring states.