

Homeless Veterans Initiative



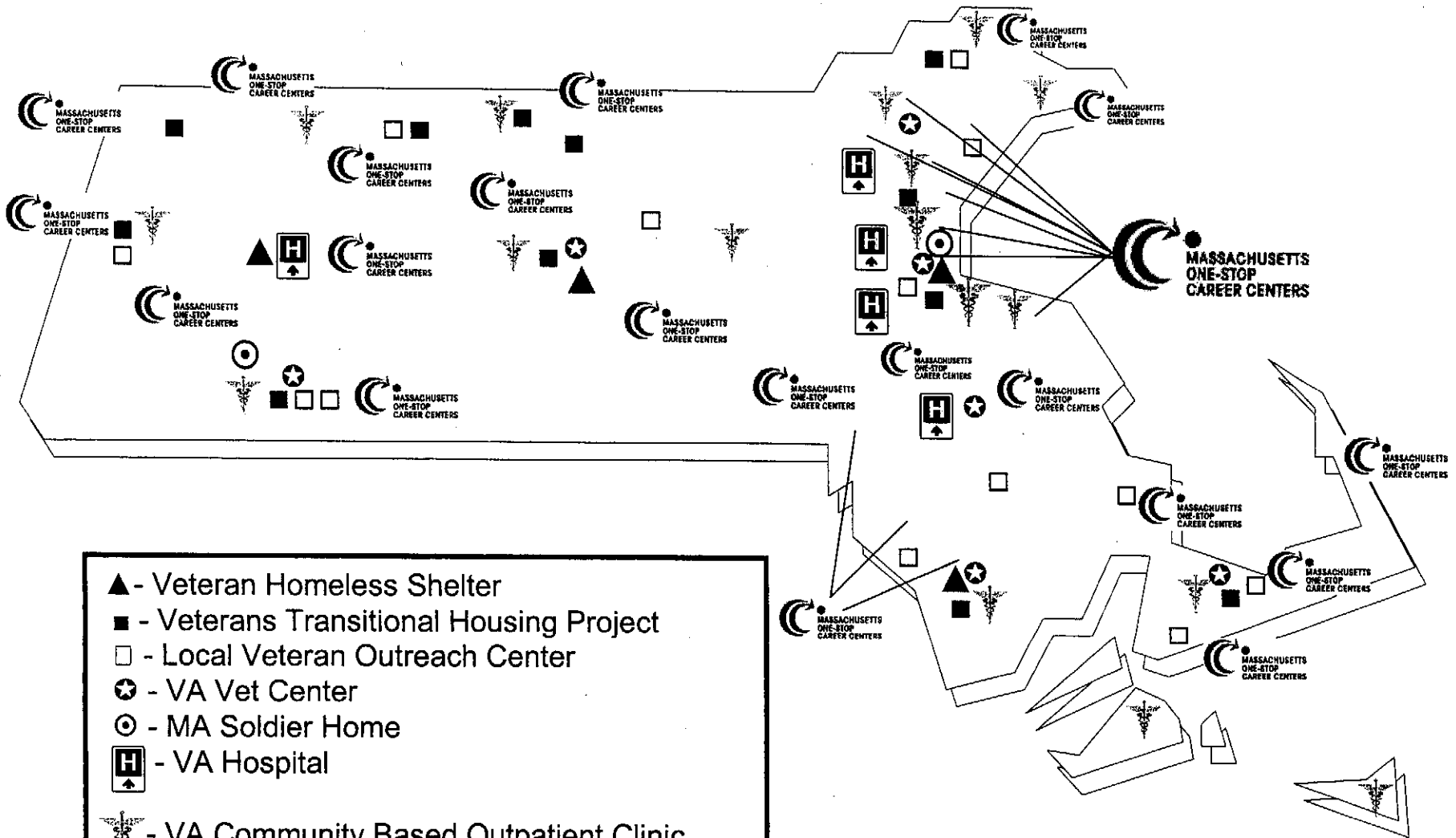
Department of Veterans' Services

Mission:

Advocate on behalf of all the Commonwealth's veterans and provide them with quality support services and to direct an emergency financial assistance program for those veterans and their dependents who are in need.

DVS Uniqueness

- Massachusetts is the only state in the country to help veterans at the local level. In 1861, the same year the Civil War began, the Legislature provided for support of dependents of the volunteer militia by cities and towns, with a 100% reimbursement up to \$12 per family per month.
- Municipal veterans' agents, who are veterans themselves, are uniquely suited to aid veterans and dependents. They provide c.115 public assistance and also help with employment, real estate tax abatements, auto benefits and federal benefits such as VA compensation, VA pension and social security.
- Massachusetts is the only state that pays a \$2,000 annuity each year to every 100% disabled veteran, every Gold Star parent, and every Gold Star spouse.



- ▲ - Veteran Homeless Shelter
- - Veterans Transitional Housing Project
- - Local Veteran Outreach Center
- ⊛ - VA Vet Center
- ⊙ - MA Soldier Home
- H - VA Hospital
- ⚕ - VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
- MASSACHUSETTS ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS - One Stop Career Centers with Vet Rep

Department of Veterans' Services

Veterans at a Glance

- 393,700 Veterans live in Massachusetts
- 38,000 have returned since 9/11
- Over 19,000 are OIF/ OEF/ Veterans
- 26,840 are Women Veterans
- 1 in 5 Veterans returning report symptoms Post Traumatic Stress (PTS)

PROGRAMS

- Needs-based, means-tested **benefits for veterans and eligible family members** under c. 115 of the general laws.
- **Annuities** under c. 115 of the general laws for:
 - ▶ **Veterans** with service-connected blindness, paraplegia, disabilities rated 100% by the VA;
 - ▶ **Gold Star Spouses** of veterans whose deaths are service-connected and who have not re-married;
 - ▶ **Gold Star Parents** of veterans whose deaths are service-connected.
- **Persian Gulf War bonus** under c. 153 of the acts of 1992.

PROGRAMS

- **Women Veterans' Network**
- **(SAVE) Statewide Advocacy for Veterans Empowerment Outreach Program**
- **2 state veterans cemeteries located in Agawam and Winchendon.**
- **16 Outreach Programs and 13 Transient Housing and Homeless Shelters operated by non-profit contractors, and 3 federal grants for employment training and homelessness.**

SERVICES

- **Providing financial assistance through our municipal counterparts and their Veterans' Service Officers (VSO) for shelter, home heating fuel, and medical needs of veterans and their eligible family members, including widows and dependents, whose income is under 200% of the federal poverty level.**
- **Paying semi-annual annuity (February and August) of \$2,000 to eligible annuitants.**
- **Issuing Persian Gulf War bonus of \$300 (\$500 for combat zone service) to eligible veterans.**
- **Providing semi-annual newsletter to members of the Women Veterans' Network (approximately 14,000 women) and hosting annual Women Veterans Conference.**
- **Providing peer-to-peer suicide intervention and prevention support through the SAVE Outreach Team for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who may be at greater risk for suicidal ideation and acts.**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Awarded 3 Federal Grants to help homeless and recently returned veterans transition back into the workplace.**
- **Enabled Massachusetts to secure an additional \$1 million in workforce grants under U.S. Dep't of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service for:**
 - ▶ **Veterans' Workforce Investment Program**
 - ▶ **(HVRP) Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program**
 - ▶ **344 Veterans employed in 2010 under grants (63 green jobs)**
- **Secured \$4.1 million in federal stimulus funds via partnership with (MBI) Massachusetts Broadband Institute to fund, in part, comprehensive web portal for veterans and eligible family members for effective, streamlined access to veterans' services state-wide.** 9

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(cont'd)

- **(SAVE)** Statewide Advocacy for Veterans Empowerment Outreach Program Team made **direct contact** with approx. 3,800 veterans returning from **Iraq** and **Afghanistan** in FY-10.
- Provided **peer-to-peer** information on veterans' benefits and direct referral to **suicide intervention and prevention hotline** operated by VA.
- **Increased awareness** of SAVE Program among veterans resulting in higher numbers of referrals.

M.G.L. Chapter 115

- Unique Benefit to Massachusetts
- Financial Assistance (Shelter / Fuel / Food) and Medical Assistance
- Administered by a local VSO in the community
- Reimbursed by the Commonwealth at 75%
- Prevented the Loss of Personal Homes on Average 10 Veterans per year

Chapter 115

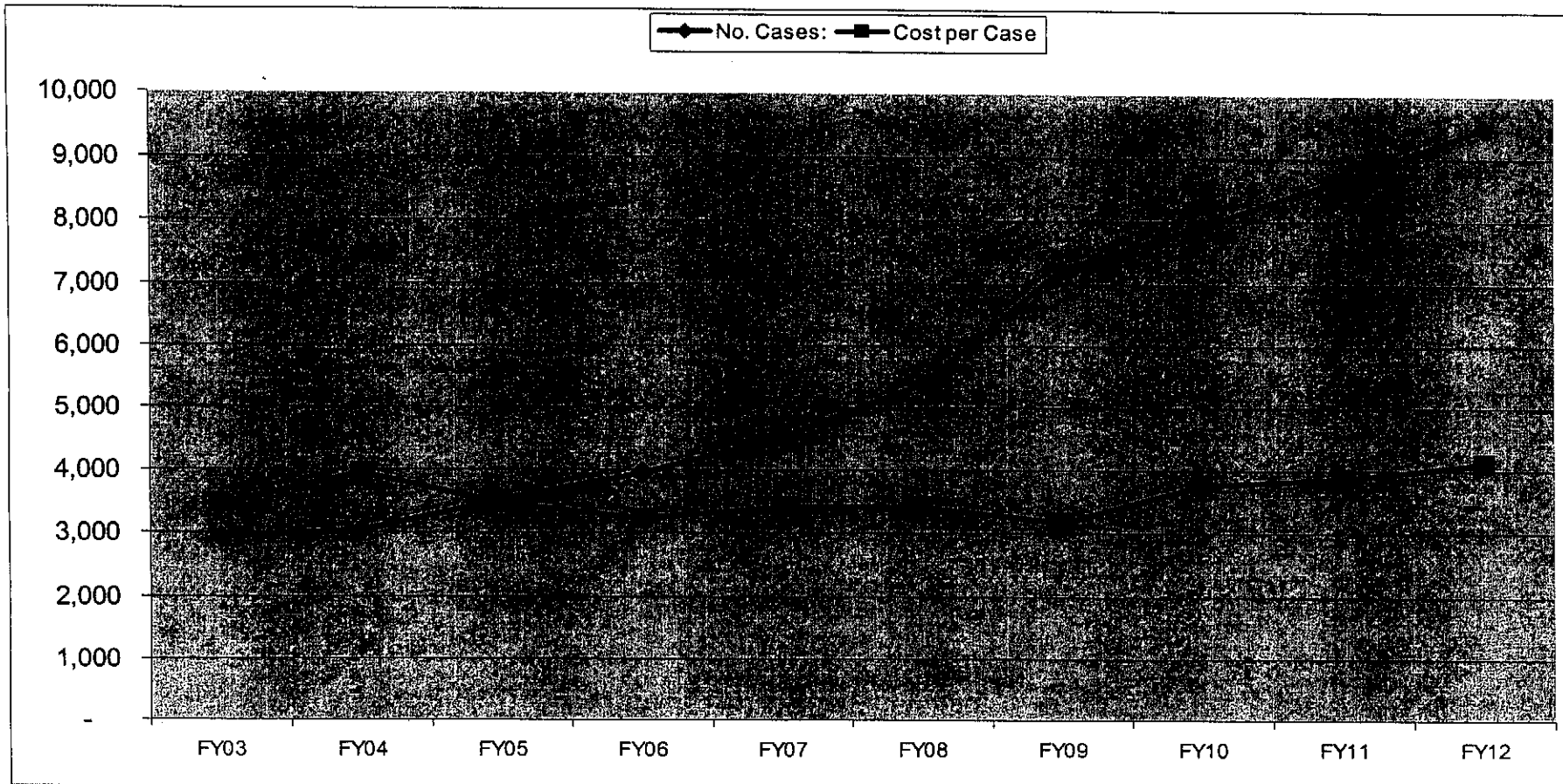
Eligibility

	Single	Married
Income	\$1,800	\$2,400
Assets	Less Than \$3,200	Less Than \$7,000

Annuity

- \$2000 per year (two payments)
- 100% Service Connected Veteran or Spouse
- Gold Star Parent
- Gold Star Spouse

10 YEAR HISTORY OF EXPENDITURES VS. CASES



Housing

Shelter & Transitional

- DVS contracts with over 30 non-profit organizations, which provide housing services and counseling to eligible veterans. Housing Services include:
 - ✓ Emergency Homeless Shelters,
 - ✓ Group residences,
 - ✓ Single Room Occupancy (SRO) quarters.
- Only Veterans' Hospice in the nation, and a program for veterans with Head Injuries. Services are available to both male and female veterans.

Emergency Shelter & Transitional Bed Report

	# of Emergency Shelter Beds	# of DVS- Supported Emergency Shelter Beds
Boston	105	105
Dorchester	0	0
Fitchburg	0	0
Gardner	0	0
Haverhill	0	0
Hyannis	0	0
Leeds	40	40
Lynn	0	0
New Bedford	10	10
Roxbury	0	0
Springfield	0	0
Springfield YMCA	0	0
Williamstown	0	0
Worcester	50	50
Total	205	205

	# of Transitional Beds	# of DVS- Supported Transitional Beds
	201	0
	17	17
	67	25
	15	15
	47	22
	10	10
	180	120
	16	16
	35	35
	10	10
	12	12
	22	22
	9	9
	41	0
Total	313	313

	# of Beds	# of DVS- Supported Beds
	306	105
	17	17
	67	25
	15	15
	47	22
	10	10
	220	160
	16	16
	45	45
	10	10
	12	12
	22	22
	9	9
	91	50
	0	0
Total	518	518

Other Resources

- DVS

- Contracted Shelter Providers
- SRO and Transitional Housing
- Ch. 115 and Annuities

- EOHHS

- Soldier Homes
- DTA
- MRC

- DHCD

- Section 8
- Non-Veteran Providers

Other Resources

- DMH
 - Jail Diversion Program in Worcester, Lawrence and 3rd Location TBD
- Cities and Towns
 - Public Housing
 - Section 8
- Judiciary
 - Homeless Court
 - Drug Courts
- Not for Profits
 - Regional Networks

Recent History of Massachusetts Homeless Initiatives

- July 2007 - A Legislative Commission to End Homelessness is established chaired by Rep. Byron Rushing and DHCD Undersecretary Tina Brooks and produces a Five Year Plan.
- Nov. 2007 - Governor Deval Patrick signed an Executive Order to reconstitute the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) chaired by Lt. Governor Timothy Murray to be charged with the overseeing the implementation of the Commission's Plan.
- July 2008 – The Commonwealth appropriates \$8.25M for the ICHH to develop regional networks across the state.
- July 2008 - MassHousing invests \$7M over four years to support a DTA~DHCD housing initiative called the *Moving to Economic Opportunity Pilot*.
- July 2008 – The ICHH convenes over 200 state employees to work across departments on Housing Needs & Supply, Uniform Assessment, Policy & Regulations, Civic Engagement, Asset Development, Homelessness Prevention Resources, and Housing Stabilization Services.
- December 2008 – Lt. Gov. Tim Murray announces 8 regional network awards.
- April 2009 – The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation commits \$1.3M to support the work of the ICHH including the development of two additional networks.

VA Efforts

- The VA announced in November of 2009 a 5-year plan to end homelessness among veterans. Elements include:
 - discharge planning for incarcerated Veterans re-entering society, supportive services for low-income Veterans and their families and a national referral center to link Veterans to local service providers. Additionally, the plan calls for expanded efforts for education, jobs, health care and housing.
 - \$3.2 billion this year to prevent and reduce homelessness among Veterans. That includes \$2.7 billion on medical services and more than \$500 million on specific homeless programs.
 - diagnosing and treating the unseen wounds of war that often lead to homelessness – severe isolation, dysfunctional behaviors, depression and substance abuse.

VA Efforts

- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
- Healthcare for Reentry
- Veteran Justice Outreach
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program
- VA's Compensated Work Therapy Program – supported housing plus work training. Bedford, Boston, Brockton, Northampton.