

Depts. of Corrections, Veterans Affairs: Host Resource Fairs for Incarcerated Veterans

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FOX LAKE – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC), the US Department of Veterans Affairs and multiple other local, state and federal groups, is hosting a series of expos to provide incarcerated veterans information about benefits, programs and services available to them. The expos help incarcerated veterans better prepare for release and give them the resources they need to help transition them to communities in Wisconsin.

“These events are an opportunity for veterans to engage one-on-one with experts regarding the resources available to them,” WDVA Secretary Daniel J. Zimmerman said. “We are committed to helping veterans transition from incarceration to independence. We are joining together to help these individuals who have served our country access health care, housing, training and employment, and various other tools so they can thrive in our communities.”

DOC Secretary Jon Litscher said: “We believe it is critical for DOC to prepare inmates for release, so they leave our facilities prepared to be successful. This resource fair is an opportunity for us to collaborate with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other partners to highlight programs and services are available to inmates inside the institution and in the community.”

There are currently about 1,400 incarcerated veterans in Wisconsin correctional

facilities.

The first round of expos were held last year in Oshkosh, Stanley, and Racine. This year, expos are being hosted at Fox Lake Correctional Institution, Redgranite Correctional Institution, and New Lisbon Correctional Institution. Each expo consists of two one-hour sessions for veteran inmates. At the beginning of each session, there is a brief explanation of the benefit or service available at each resource table. Veterans are then able to directly engage with the staff and seek the resources they need.

The expos are a collaborative effort by numerous agencies. Information will be offered on the following resources:

- State of Wisconsin Benefit Eligibility
- State of Wisconsin Programs such as the Wisconsin GI Bill
- Federal Pension and Disability Claims Assistance
- Wisconsin Homeless Veteran Assistance
- VA Employment Specialist, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and other employment programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation
- County Veteran Service Officers
- Healthcare for Reentry Veterans and Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- Veterans Benefits Administration
- Transition Case Management
- VISN Homeless Coordinator and other housing programs such as HUD/VASH and Tribal HUD/VASH
- VA Suicide Prevention
- Morale Recognition Therapy (MRT) and MRT for Domestic Violence

· The Vet Center