

# Veterans Village of Omaha

## Services, Screening, Accreditation and Licensure

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The Veterans Village is being developed as supportive housing for Veterans owned and operated by Volunteers of America. Veterans Village will provide housing for 75 Veterans. Volunteers of America is partnering with the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System to provide housing and supportive services to meet the needs of Veterans in the Omaha Metro Area. Providing supportive services will help and improve the lives of Veterans by promoting self-sufficiency, building new skills, creating strong support networks and integration back into community life-*Providing hope for our Heroes.*

### Services

**Volunteers of America** will provide property management for the development including leasing to residents, maintenance, and security of the property. Volunteers of America will have office space on the ground floor of the building to support these functions and provide 24/7 staffing to meet the needs of the residents after hours and on weekends. The staffing will consist of staff desk clerks, certified personnel, and a Program Director.

**VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System** will occupy up to 10,000 square feet in the building to provide support services to the residents. The staff assigned to the building will be licensed social workers and trained mental health practitioners from support roles to program coordinators. Case managers will comprise the majority of staff in the building and there will be administrative staff to support the operations of the case managers and Program Coordinator that will be located on site.

Services will consist of vocational rehabilitation and economic development, case management with referrals and linkages to community resources, counseling and therapeutic activities including individual and group interventions, health and wellness, and community Integration. Services will be offered during business hours, in the evening, and on weekends to support the different needs of the residents.

Vocational rehabilitation and Economic Development: Programming will include job searching and training, job placement in community businesses, financial literacy education "basic budgeting", income tax assistance and support, and computer classes. These services will be provided by VA Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists, case managers, mental practitioners, and community partners.

Case management with linkages to community resources: Each resident will be assigned a case manager and will have an individual assessment prior to entering into a lease agreement. The case manager will develop an individual service plan with each Veteran and make linkages to community programs and agencies based on their individual needs. Case managers will be responsible for addressing the compliance to the individual service plans.

Counseling and Therapeutic activities: Professional staff will be available to provide educational and supportive groups. Intensive therapeutic services like drug and alcohol treatment and Post Traumatic

Stress Disorder Treatment (PTSD) will not be offered on site and will continue to be offered on the VA Omaha Medical Center Campus.

Health and Wellness: Nutritional education, exercise education and support, weekly health and wellness classes including diabetes and high blood pressure education.

Community Integration: Working with residents to cohesively connect through volunteering, community involvement, voter registration, crime prevention and neighborhood watch.

### **Screening**

Each Veteran who is identified as a resident will have an assessment completed by the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System. This assessment will include information on current housing status, income, mental and physical health, and unmet needs. If a Veteran has active mental health problems and/or addiction issues that need addressed they will be referred to an appropriate clinical program through the VA's continuum of services including inpatient treatment, partnerships with Metro area non-profits to provide housing with treatment, and other clinical programs. Veterans who are clinically appropriate for the building will be referred to Volunteers of America and an additional needs assessment, rental application, and background checks will be completed to determine suitability for residency. Veterans who meet the criteria of the project will then be admitted. The VOA will not lease to any sex offenders or violent felons.

Treatment or lease violations will be addressed according to the violation. Residents may have leases terminated based on violations. When leases are violated eviction procedures will follow state law and case managers will work with the evicted residents to make arrangements for alternative housing.

### **Accreditation and Licensure of the Facility**

Volunteers of America, Dakotas is accredited by the Council On Accreditation (COA) Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) and have achieved the highest standards in the accreditation process. In addition, Volunteers of America is the largest developer of supportive housing in the United States. Veteran services are offered in 28 cities located in 16 states by Volunteers of America affiliates. Volunteers of America operate 16,000 housing units and provide services to 6,400 Veterans annually. VA Nebraska-Western Iowa is currently accredited by The Joint Commission including both Hospital and Behavioral Health Care standards. VA Nebraska-Western Iowa is seeking accreditation by Community and Residential Facilities (CARF) in 2011. The Veterans Village will also be required to meet the current Life Safety Standards and all City building requirements. No Volunteers of America developments have been converted to multifamily low income housing.

Decisions on services to be provided will be made by Volunteers of America and the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System if the development is passed through the City Council. The Veterans Village Advisory Council will participate in discussions about services and will make recommendations to be incorporated into the services plan.

The project will be a dry campus and alcohol and drugs will not be permitted on the grounds at any time. No weapons including knives and guns will be permitted on the property. These policies will be incorporated into the lease and signage will notify visitors and guests.

Security will be provided through video surveillance, controlled building access, i.e. desk clerks, access cards, and 24/7 staff. The VA Police will also patrol and monitor the space that the VA will occupy.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing, Mercy Housing, Catholic Charities have all been consulted with in regards to permanent housing and housing for Veterans. There are currently Veteran projects located in Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, and Battle Creek, Michigan in the Midwest.

The City of Omaha will not have fiscal responsibility for the Veterans Village.