

Resources for Attorneys and Courts Working with “Justice-Involved” Veterans.

The Veterans Justice Outreach Program (VJO) is a nationwide program run by the VA that is designed to assist veterans who have been caught up in the justice system. Vermont has a VJO program based at the White River Junction VA Medical Center in White River Junction and provides VJO services to every county in Vermont as well as all of the western counties of New Hampshire.

The aim of the VJO is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among veterans by ensuring that eligible, justice-involved veterans have timely access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services, as clinically indicated. **VJO specialists provide direct outreach, assessment, and case management for justice-involved Veterans in local courts and jails and liaison with local justice system partners.**

Most veterans who are in jail or prison will eventually reenter the community. VA’s Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) program is designed to promote success and prevent homelessness among Veterans returning home after incarceration.

HCRV services include:

- Outreach and pre-release assessments services for Veterans in prison,
- Referrals and linkages to medical, mental health and social services, including employment services on release,
- Short-term case management assistance on release.

The Veterans Health Administration VJO program is staffed by Veterans Justice Outreach and Re-entry Specialists James Bastien, LICSW MHD CMT-P and Michael Owens, MA, LICSW.

James is located at the VA Burlington Lakeside Outpatient Clinic, 128 Lakeside Avenue #260, Burlington, VT 0540. He can be reached by phone at 802-281-9214 or email at james.bastien@va.gov. He covers the following Vermont Counties: Bennington, Rutland, Addison, Chittenden, Grand Isle, Franklin, Lamoille, and Washington Counties.

Michael Owens, MA, LICSW covers Essex, Orleans, Windsor, Windham, Orange, and Caledonia Counties in Vermont as well as Cheshire, Sullivan, Grafton, and Coos Counties in New Hampshire. Michael is located at the WRJ VA Medical Center in White River Junction Vermont. Michael can be reached at 802-299-8175. His email is Michael.owens3@va.gov.

The VJO Program is part of the VA’s wider effort to combat homelessness and suicide by veterans. To learn more about the programs and services available to veterans, see the links below.

<https://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp>

This is the general VA Veterans Justice Outreach website. The site provides an overview of VJO services. It also details numerous links to programs to assist justice involved veterans including the contact info for all of the VJOs nationwide by state.

[\(245\) Finding the Way to Zero: Veterans Justice Outreach - YouTube](#)

This is a short video introduction to the VJO programs nationwide.

[\(245\) Preventing Suicide among Justice-Involved Veterans - YouTube](#)

This video focuses on the impact the VJO program can have on veteran suicide. An important VA initiative is to reduce veteran suicide as veterans are taking their lives at an alarming rate compared to the general population.