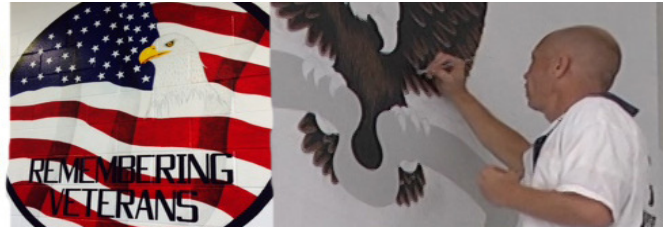


GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS | VETERANS REENTRY PROGRAM



Overview

On June 14, 2014, the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), in partnership with the Federal Department of Veteran's Affairs, Georgia Department of Veterans' Services and the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, implemented the Veterans Reentry Program Dorm initiative which created special housing units within the following facilities:

- Rutledge State Prison
- Johnson State Prison
- Emanuel Women's Facility

MISSION

Serves to provide opportunities for incarcerated veterans to live in supportive environments that foster the rebuilding of character, courage and commitment, while providing services and programs that allow opportunities for positive change. Assists in preparing offenders for reentry as they transition from incarceration to the community.

VISION

GDC has the most effective Veterans Reentry Program in the nation as we provide tangible opportunities for offenders to achieve positive change.

VETERAN POPULATION

- As of January 2014, the GDC identified 3,000 veteran inmates within the corrections system
- Of the 3,000 inmates, 70 are from the female population

Program Structure

CRITERIA

- Male inmates must be between 6 and 24 months of release (TPM, PED, or Max Release Date)
- Female inmates do not have a time restraint
- Medium security or less
- Mental Health level II or less

REQUIREMENTS

- Participate in all assessed program needs and details assigned
- Participate in at least five hours of self-study per week
- Meet with program staff on a weekly basis

PROGRAM MODEL

- Two-year, open-phased program
 - Open-phased is designed to allow inmates to enter the program at any given time
- Program is divided into four phases

Phases

Foundation - a three-month phase that deals with *character, life skills, and self-care*

- Participants will be assessed by a mental health (MH) professional where they will be screened for MH issues to include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Participants will be screened by a Veterans Administration (VA) representative
- Participants will work on learning to live in the community, participating in community meetings and journaling
- Participants will learn relaxation techniques

Discovery - a seven-month phase that deals with *self-discovery*

- Life Skills type training; weekly basis
- Meet with a MH Counselor, if deemed necessary
- Meet a minimum of once quarterly with a VA representative

Transformation - a seven-month phase that deals with *reentry and empowerment*

- Participants will complete the Interest Profiler to assist in finding employment
- Participants will complete the Career Center Program to assist in learning typing, computer use, how to write a resume and interviewing
- Participate in a mock job fair

Transition - a seven-month phase that deals with *transition and reentry into the community*

- Participants will be assessed for potential as a mentor in the dorm following
 - If selected as a mentor, the participant will complete a mentor training class
- Take Food and Nutrition courses
- Participate in Parenting classes, if needed
- Prepare a release and relapse prevention plan

Programming

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Cognitive Behavior Groups
- Rehabilitation
- Character Building
- Training for Employment
- Family Re-unification
- Self-care
- Community Giving Back
- Confronting Self
- Substance Abuse
- Reentry Vocational Programs
- Stress Management Classes
- Support Groups

- Identifying Benefits/Supports
- Wellness

Additionally, staff and veterans services will assist inmates in the following areas:

- Obtain military medical records
- Obtain birth certificate, SS, DD214, DL
- Assign veterans to Career Center

RUTLEDGE STATE PRISON

- Provides Mental Health (MH) II services and works in conjunction with Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga.
- 24-bed unit

Specific Programming

- Manhood to Fatherhood - a bi-weekly program taught by volunteers from Project Rebound, Inc. and It Takes a Village. The objective is to teach the participants how to define themselves as men, as fathers, and as positive role models within their homes and communities. Helping participants define themselves and their roles within their family unit will aid in the improvement of family relationships. The goal is to reconnect participants to their families as it is vital to their successful transition from prison back into their communities.
- Confronting Self - a series of 12 questions that help the participants look at their life and discover why they chose certain actions. In addition, participants look at their family and uncover patterns that may have led them to incarceration. Within the program, participants learn to take responsibility for their actions and discover how to make wise choices. The class helps participants build character, improve relationships with family and develop their faith-based beliefs.
- Freedom Fighters - a comprehensive two-tiered class to improve an inmates mental and physical well-being. Participants will learn basic coping skills and methods to help them improve their knowledge of nutrition and exercise. Teachers will also demonstrate how participants can improve their mood through techniques targeted to their mind, body, and spirit.

JOHNSON STATE PRISON

- Dorm provides housing for medically disabled and works in conjunction with the Dublin Veterans Affairs
- 70-bed unit with 35 ADA compliant beds

Specific Programming

- Trauma Group - provides education and coping skills for veteran offenders who have experienced traumatic reactions to combat, natural disasters, physical assaults, and accidents. The group is offered within all phases of the program.

EMANUEL WOMEN'S FACILITY

- Dorm provides housing for women veteran offenders
- 16-bed unit

Specific Programming

- Active Parenting - an education program targeted to parents wishing to improve their parenting skills. The program teaches parents how to raise a child by using encouragement, building the child's self-esteem, and creating a relationship with the child based upon active listening, effective communication, and problem solving.

Women Veterans Coordinator

- Will assist female veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services

Partners

- Conduct routine site visits
- Validate military service
- Assist in obtaining documents such as DD214, medical and service records
- Redirect disability/pension to family, if applicable
- Assist with VA Homeless/Addiction recovery facilities or housing assistance
- Evaluate discharge and determine if upgrade is applicable
- Process service connected disability claims

RESOURCES

VA Medical Center, Health Care for Homeless Veterans Coordinator

- Responsible for helping homeless veterans access VA and community based care to end homelessness among veterans
- Provides outreach, clinical assessments and referrals for medical and mental health care, long-term transitional residential assistance, case management and employment assistant with linkage to permanent housing

Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office

- Provides assistance with veterans benefits and entitlement information, VA claims process, representation and advocacy, trauma (PTSD) counseling, veteran homes and employment assistance through federal funded reintegration projects

National Coalition for Homeless

- Provides a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online

The Salvation Army

- Provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families

United Way

- Provides a variety of services through local organizations