

DHS Office of
Mental Health
& Substance
Abuse

 PA Department
of Military and
Veterans Affairs

 The Coalition for
Community Living



**VETERANS'
FAIRWEATHER LODGE
START UP GUIDE
AND
APPLICATION TOOL**

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I. INTRODUCTION/HISTORY

In 2016, the **PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (OMHSAS)** partnered with three Providers across the state to open four veteran centric Fairweather Lodges (FWL). Once the project was started the Partnership reached out to the **Coalition for Community Living (CCL)**, the national organization for FWL providers, to enhance the model and utilize their resources. In addition, the **Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)** joined the partnership providing referrals and support, as well as system linkages and knowledge of the veteran culture.

The Fairweather Lodge Program helps people reintegrate themselves into the community. The goal is to provide emotional support, a place to live, and employment for its' members. The program was developed by Dr. George Fairweather in California in 1963 as a result of extensive experimental research. In his studies, Dr. Fairweather found that people with serious mental illness are less likely to return to the hospital when they live and work together as a group, rather than live and work individually. His research also showed that the Lodge Program helps people stay in the community longer, provides more employment opportunities, and costs less than conventional treatment programs. Because of the success of the original groups, the Community Lodge Program has expanded considerably during the past 25 years, and there are now Lodges across the nation.

“The Coalition for Community Living” (www.thecccl.org) is a national organization that promotes the Fairweather Lodge model and monitors the lodge programs. The CCL is made up of members from across the nation that are either actively operating the lodge model or have extensive knowledge and background and history that supports the members. When looking to gain information for start-up of a new lodge, the CCL Board of Directors' can play an integral part in providing information and assistance.

Each quarter, the CCL collects outcome data on each lodge to determine if it can be certified as a Fairweather Lodge. The outcome measures gauge adherence to the Fairweather principles and are designed to track meaningful quality of life indicators, such as safety and desirability of housing, access to quality mental health services, employment and earnings, healthy lifestyle and community belonging and personal autonomy.

OMHSAS and the OVA continue to partner to utilize state and federal funding to increase the number of Veterans Fairweather Lodges (VFWL) in Pennsylvania. This “Start Up Guide” will assist a potential Provider applicant in gaining knowledge of the model and processes to consider when opening a VFWL.

II. FAIRWEATHER LODGE MODEL

A “Fairweather Lodge” is a home that offers support for adults with mental illness. The Lodge setting is shared, independent housing and can be offered either short-term or long-

term, depending on the needs and desires of the individual. Lodge members are active, productive men and women who share the responsibilities of household management and support each other in recovery. This interdependence relies on the skills and competencies of each individual and utilizes them to create a family style of living. By residing together, each member's potential standard of living can be greatly improved through companionship, shared expenses and mutual peer support. A Lodge is managed by its members through group decision-making. While staff, provided by a sponsoring agency, may serve as advisors and be available in emergencies, on-site staffing is very limited. The Fairweather Lodge model also includes an employment component, with the understanding that participation in gainful employment supports mental health recovery. To provide employment, a Lodge may run a small business chosen by member consensus and jointly planned. Alternatively, the sponsoring agency may provide employment to Lodge residents through its own business initiatives. Employment is key to the survival of the lodge as a supplement to occupancy expenses.

Program principles

1. The lodge must provide the residents a safe, healthy and caring environment that reinforces the recovery process.
2. The lodge must be a part of the overall plan for managing the residents' mental health symptoms and promoting good mental health.
3. The sponsor must provide services to the residents as long as they want and need them. The lodge must allow open entry and exit for the residents.
4. Residents with psychiatric disabilities can increase their community success and raise their social status through employment, through accumulating wealth and through direct consumerism.
5. Aside from their roles in the lodge business, residents need to have meaningful roles in the larger community.
6. A successful lodge resembles a family.
7. In order to progress, residents with psychiatric disabilities need autonomy that is commensurate with their abilities with the ultimate goal is full autonomy. The lodge must provide its residents with as much autonomy as possible.
8. The lodge must not depend on resources from any single entity, or on the philanthropy of its host community.

III. TOOLKIT/FAIRWEATHER TRAINING LODGE MANUAL

When a Provider becomes a member of “The Coalition for Community Living”, they will have access to a start-up **“Toolkit”**.

The Board of CCL developed this toolkit as a guide to help you as you develop your lodge program. The material in the toolkit is intended to provide the foundation of the key elements of a Lodge program. Every program is unique based on the sponsoring agency, community and individuals involved. As you go through this toolkit do not be alarm if your program does not meet the standards outlined in the material. The Board and Lodges established throughout the country are available to assist as you build your program.

Included in this kit are:

- Fairweather Lodge Directory
- CCL Board Members
- Username and Password for the member area of the CCL website www.thecccl.org
- History of the Fairweather Lodge
- Fact Sheets to be used as educational and marketing materials
 - o The Fairweather Lodge
 - o Desirable Housing
 - o Screening Lodge Members
 - o Fiscal Model – Sponsor
 - o Fiscal Model – Members
 - o Employment
 - o Health Maintenance

In addition, you will have access to the **“Fairweather Lodge Training Manual”**. To provide a more comprehensive tool, **PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) funded and partnered with the CCL** to access subject matter experts to create this Manual. The Manual provides members with additional tools for start-up. The Training Lodge model provides members with on-site staff support every day and more information surrounding routines, processes, as well as curriculum. The curriculum helps members to acclimate to Lodge Life and provides both Work Readiness and Job Search skill training. This manual can be extremely helpful when working with homeless veterans who might require a little more structure after moving into the lodge.

IV. ASSESSING VETERAN DATA FOR COMMUNITY NEEDS

This step is key to the Veteran Fairweather Lodges’ success. The veteran population tends to isolate and not reveal their circumstance. Therefore, accessing data on where there is the most need will help to provide a pipeline for your lodge. There are many resources to gather data on homeless veterans. Those resources could include: County “Mental Health Plans”; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) “Single Point In Time

Count”; Support Services for Veteran Families and the OVA Medical Center. In addition, the Office of Mental Health has contracted a Provider to collect pertinent data that has identified areas where there is a large homeless veteran population to ensure that there is a need. That data will be shared with the Provider seeking to apply to open a veteran-centric lodge.

V. PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY/ BACKGROUND REQUIREMENTS

Eligible providers must be a private non-profit 501C3. Bidders background should include:

- Bidder’s Name(s)
- Bidder’s Address
- Bidder’s Contact Information
- Bidders Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN)
- Company Description
- Evidence of established experience in providing services and/or deliverables subject to this proposal
- Organizational Chart showing Key Personnel that would provide services for this Project
- A copy of the most recent audited financial statement, or annual report by a certified public accountant
- State whether the Bidder or its’ parent company (if any) has ever received any sanctions or is currently under investigation by any regulatory or governmental body.

VI. VFWL MEMBER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Individuals requesting admittance to the VFWL must meet the following requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Homeless or currently in a restrictive setting
- A qualifying Mental Health Diagnosis
- Eligible veteran or any military experience, spouse or surviving spouse
- 90 days free from drugs and/or alcohol
- Motivated to work, volunteer, and/or attend school 20 hours a week.
- Must be insightful about their mental and/or physical illness
- Must be compliant with all prescribed medication and engaged in their recovery
- Must be willing to live and work with others
- Must be able to pay rent and a portion of the utilities
- Must have basic independent living and self-preservation skills including, but not limited to: housekeeping, medication management, money management (with assistance, if needed)
- Must provide financial information for income verification

VII. FUNDING/APPLICATION

Funding through the Office of Mental Health “**Money Follows the Person**” is available for start-up of a Veterans Fairweather Lodge. These funds include both federal and state grant funding for this project. The Venango Training & Development Center has been contracted as the Fiscal Administrative Agency that will process your application and budget to present to OMHSAS.

Guidelines for application are provided below:

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: June 30, 2022

QUESTION SUBMISSION DEADLINE: June 17, 2022

Questions may be submitted in written form or personal contact to:

Contact Name: Colleen Stuart, C.E.O.
Contact Address: P.O. Box 289, 239 Quaker Drive
Seneca, Pa 16346
Telephone Number: 814-676-5755
Email Address: castuart@vtdc.org

VTDC invites and welcomes proposals for their Veterans Fairweather Lodge Project. Based upon your previous experience, in either housing or the mental health field, your agency has been selected to receive this “Tool” and is invited to submit a proposal. Please take time to carefully read and become familiar with the proposal requirements. All proposals submitted for consideration must be received by the time specified above under the “**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE**”. Please note that the proposal must be accompanied by background material.

PROJECT MANAGER CONTACT INFORMATION:

The following individual(s) are the assigned contacts for the following:

For questions or information regarding the Project Proposal, contact:

Name: Colleen Stuart, C.E.O. (See contact information above)

For questions or information regarding Project Finances, contact:

Name: Tammy Messinger
Title: Chief Financial Officer
Phone: 814-676-5755
Fax: 814-676-9563
Email: cfo@vtdc.org

For questions or information regarding Programmatic Detail contact:

Name: Susanna Gieseey
Title: Chief Program Officer
Phone: 814-676-5755
Fax: 814-676-9563
Email: sgieseey@vtdc.org

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

The objective and ultimate goal for this project is to identify a Provider to open a VFWL in Pennsylvania in a County that has an identified need to support homeless veterans with a mental health diagnosis.

PROJECT PROPOSAL EXPECTATIONS:

VTDC shall award the contract to the proposal that best accommodates the various project expectations. Those expectations include:

- A **proposed residential site** that can accommodate four or more occupants.
- An identified **VFWL Coordinator** that will market the program, support, monitor and provide reports on member progress. This Coordinator will also be required to engage the existing CCL cohort of VFWL Coordinators. The cohort will provide support and information sharing to ensure success of the lodge.
- A **Budget** with allowable expenses (**attached**). Allowable expenses may include:
 - Salary of the Lodge Coordinator
 - Occupancy Costs (Note- Home purchase and/or renovations are not allowable in this grant. Existing owned home or home rentals are preferred.)
 - Marketing and Outreach
 - Technical Assistance
 - Furnishings
 - Vehicle lease/purchase
 - Administrative Expense (must not exceed 18%)
- The Provider is encouraged to recruit and identify possible **“Matching Funds”** for this project (i.e.- partnerships with local Human Service Administrative agencies for shared funding or Block Grants, Veterans Services Agencies like the VFW, American Legion, Rotary, etc.)
- In addition, the **Veterans Trust Fund** publishes a competitive **“Request for Proposals”** each year.
<https://www.dmOVA.pa.gov/veteransaffairs/Pages/Programs%20and%20Services/Veterans'%20Trust%20Fund/Veterans-Trust-Fund.aspx> Through our partnership with the DMVA, the Veterans Trust Fund has agreed to consider proposals for a VFWL start up. The chosen provider is strongly encouraged to apply for this grant.
- Your proposal should include samples of assessment tools (determining the needs of those you serve) that will be utilized to identify program eligibility.

- Identify a “**Plan for Sustainability**” of the project.

VIII. **STAFFING**

- IX. Staffing a VFWL Coordinator can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Special consideration should be given to veterans or individuals with family members who are or have been veterans, if possible. Veterans have a special culture and more readily connect to those that may have relatable life experiences. If selecting a staff member without veterans’ experience, connecting with the partners listed below, will provide a wealth of information on how to understand the veteran culture.

Shared staffing through your current agency housing or program coordinators, may be an option. One of the current VFWL Providers has partnered with their current County Mental Health Office to share one third of the current FWL Coordinator costs, to cover the VFWL staffing. This position also supports two other FW Lodges. This was accomplished by ensuring that they are connected with a local Mental Health Case Manager for an intake. Conversion of other resources is also a possibility. One agency converted a Community Residential Rehabilitation Home (CRR) and worked with their County to transfer some of those funds cover the VFWL start up. These are just some ideas. Each community is different and may offer unique resources which may allow you to find other ways to support staffing beyond those listed above.

X. **LOCATION/SIZE OF LODGE CONSIDERATIONS**

Finding the right location and size for your VFWL is crucial. Zoning and other restrictions may apply. Be sure to check with your local zoning board to update your agency on local government zoning rules. Current VFWL’s either own or are renting or buying their homes. For sustainability and developing an environment for a family unit in the lodge, a minimum of a four-bedroom house is preferred. Consideration should also be given to access to local resources and professional supports. Access to public transportation is a major consideration in today’s world. Although the Lodge Coordinator assists the members in securing their own transportation and, at times, may need to have the ability to provide transportation, access to public transportation provides long term alternatives for appointments, employment, etc.

XI. **STATE/COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS**

OMHSAS has identified both internal and external partners (i.e.- OVA Representatives, VFWL Providers and OMHSAS staff) to provide guidance, support and monitoring of VFWL projects.

As a Provider you are expected to develop strong partnerships with your local Mental Health County Office Caseworkers, DMVA Regional Program Outreach Coordinators (RPOCs) (attached), DMVA Caseworkers, local County Veterans Offices, Veterans Medical Centers

and/or Hospitals, and the local PA CareeLink® Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. All of these resources will provide access to referrals, as well as support for those individuals.

XII. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

During this time, community support for veterans is very positive. Providers have found that local service agencies, as well as churches, hospital volunteer groups, local Foundations and even private citizens are very supportive of homeless veterans and the VFWL. In developing a proposal, consideration should be given to engaging the local Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. At one lodge the local VFWs provided funding to roof the home. In addition, you may find that local larger companies may have a veteran group that volunteers and collects donations for veterans. For example, one Provider was approached by a group of veterans. This group has donated money and time to paint and carpet four bedrooms, erected a flagpole with flags, provided yard work services and put in a cement pad in the parking lot for a VFWL member utilizing a walker. Local churches have donated money and made quilts for all incoming members. The hospital groups and churches have donated food. Here again, the DMVA RPOC's are vital to connecting you locally to resources and supports. Providers have received grant funding from local Foundations and Charitable Groups. These are just a few of the possibilities that can occur from community partnerships.

Receiving local support can substantially offset some of your costs. In addition, you make many new friends that can help you to market the lodge.

XIII. GRANT RESOURCES

As mentioned above, the **“Veterans’ Trust Fund”** is a resource for start-up funding. In addition, you may want to research your local Foundations to identify their priorities for funding. Many times, in speaking with grant funders, when you mention it is to support homeless veterans, they perk right up. Take the time to do some research. As technical support VTDC will provide you with leads on how to progress in securing grant funds.