

Utah's ADRCs Building Community Partnerships with the VA

**Providing Options Counseling to
Rural Veterans**

Presenters

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Outline

- Introductions
- Improving access for rural Veterans
- ADRC Survey and Project Launch
- VA Benefits Training and New Partnerships
- Expectations and Overcoming Obstacles
- Veteran Stories
- Next Steps

One VA-Three Agencies



Veterans
Benefits
Administration
(VBA)



Veterans
Health
Administration
(VHA)



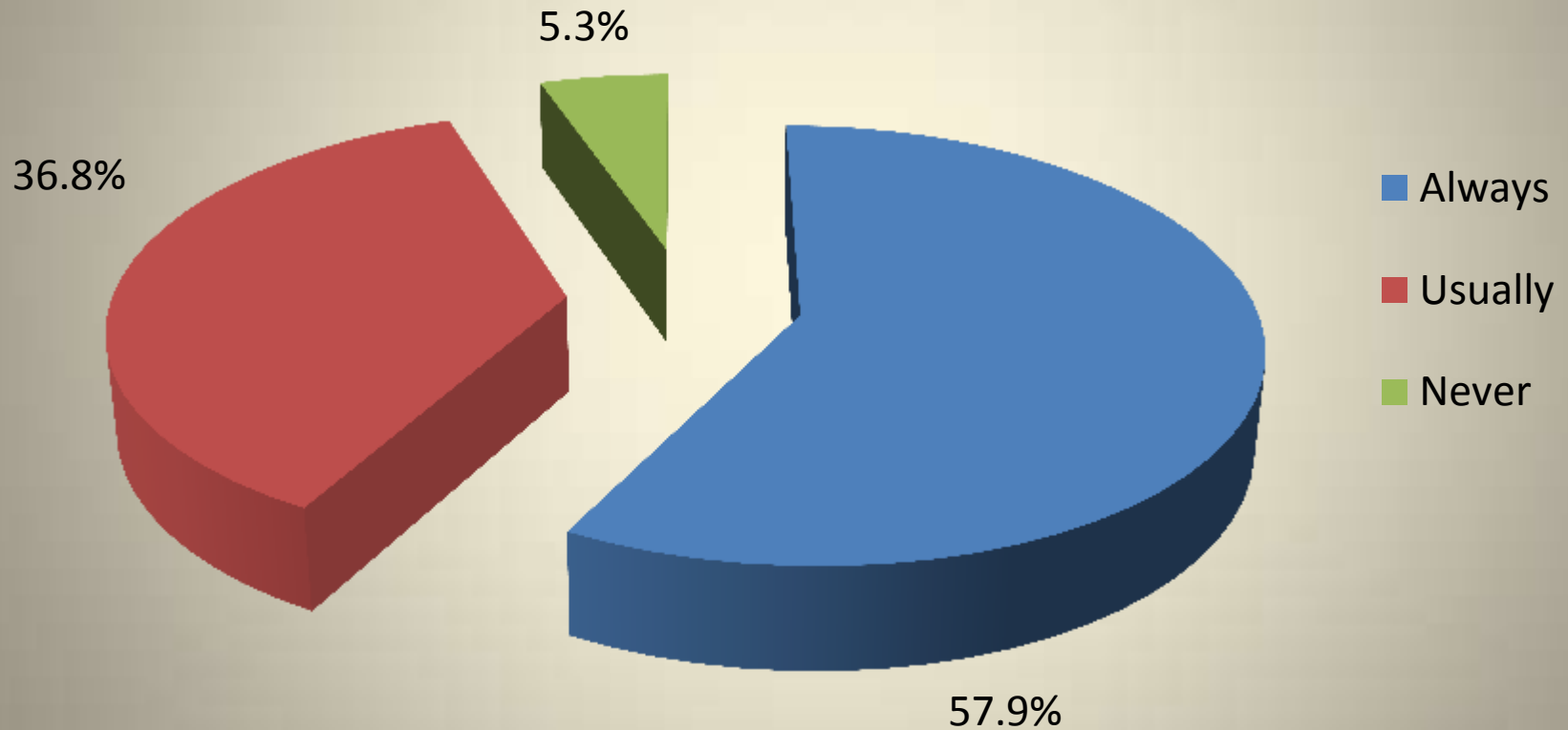
National
Cemetery
Administration
(NCA)

2010: Veteran Benefits Information

- 2010 National Survey of Veterans
- 41.0% had basic understanding of their VA benefits
 - Knowledge of specific benefits lower
- 28% had used VA healthcare
 - 42% of nonusers not aware of VA healthcare benefits
 - 26% did not know how to apply for healthcare

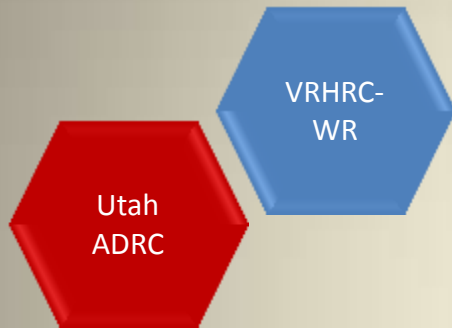
ADRC Survey

Do you regularly assess a caller's Veteran status?



PROGRAM EVOLUTION

2012: Nationwide Needs Assessment

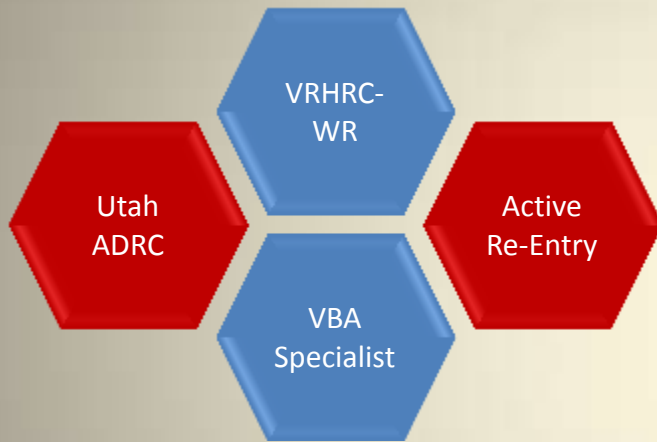


- Challenges
 - Rarely connect with VA to address Veteran needs
 - Lack basic information about most VA benefits
 - General awareness of VA information resources— not very helpful
 - Most positive feelings about VA resources with a personal contact at VA

Deborah Crowther – Bear River Before the Grant



2013: First Contact



- Utah Active Re-Entry contacts VBA specialist about veteran outreach

Active Re-Entry

Population:
Moab Utah 5,093
Grand County: 9,328



Christopher Scott – VBA Champion



**“I am the granddaughter,
daughter, wife and mother of
war time veterans”**

Joey Allred
Options Counselor

2013: ORH Funds Pilot (4 ADRC Sites)



- Goals
 - Create access point for rural Veterans
 - Provide options counselors training in VA Benefits
 - Build relationships with the VA and ADRC
 - Expand to all Utah ADRC sites in rural areas
 - Disseminate to ADRC programs nationwide

Utah ADRC's

Bear River - AAA

Serving: Box Elder, Cache, Rich

Salt Lake Aging and Adult Services - AAA

Serving: Salt Lake County

Mountainland - AAA

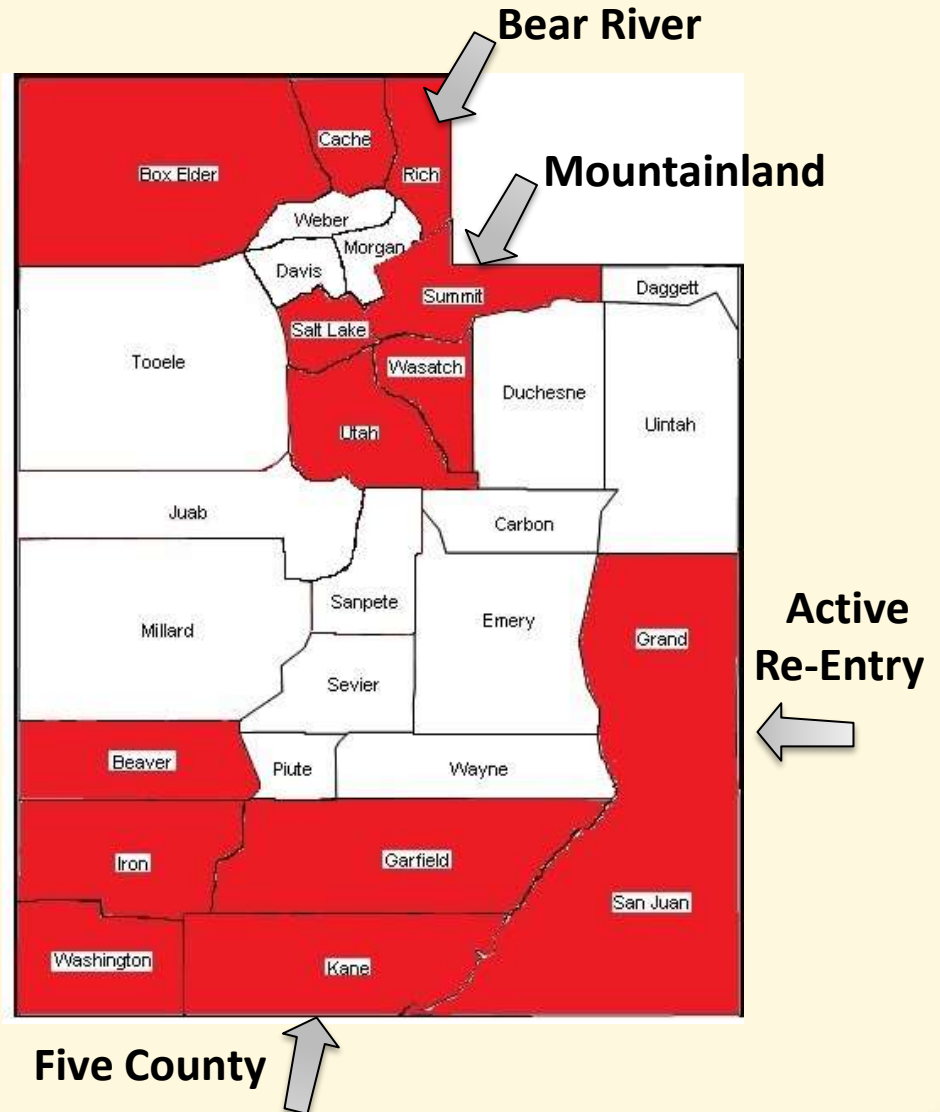
Serving: Summit, Utah, Wasatch

Active Re-Entry- CIL

Serving: Grand, San Juan

Five County - AAA

Serving: Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, Washington Counties



Deborah Crowther

VA Benefits Training



2013: VBA and VHA Training



- Same Training – Multiple times
- TRIP
- On the job training with VA Outreach
- Building relationships

2013: TRIP Training and VSO Certification

VBA Endorses ADRC for TRIP Training and VSO accreditation exam – November 2013

- Training Response, Involvement, and Preparations of Claims (**TRIP**)

19 online modules

- Veteran Service Officer (VSO) exam
2 Options Counselors have passed



Larry Dawson
UDVMA – Outreach
Specialist (VSO)

2014: VA Trainings Hours = 1182

February 1 2013 –August 30, 2014

Healthcare

Mental Health

Caregiver Support

Aid & Attendance

Pension

VA Nursing Home

Burial Benefits

Disability Compensation

New Partnerships



2014: Reaching New Partners



- UDVMA (State VA)
- Caregiver Support (VHA)
- Geriatric Social Worker (VHA)
- Outreach Worker and VA Project Champion (VBA)

Finding the Right Access Point



“What were your expectations?”

“Don’t send your client down the rabbit hole”



- Help Veterans find the right access points
- Streamline the application process
- Build **TRUST**

Overcoming Challenges



Overcoming Challenges

- Finding direct VA contacts
- Agency building trust with the veteran
- Agency building trust with the VA
- Learning the VA Language
- Understanding Military Culture

VA Language Alphabet Soup

VHA

VSO

Branches of
Veteran Affairs

DD-214

C-file

UDVMA

C&P

VBA

PTSD

“Fully Developed Claim”

10-10 EZ

OEF/OIF

NCA

VISN

CBOC

Presumptive Condition

VSO

RO

“Golden Ticket”

Military
Culture

TRIP Training

Veterans Served

April 1, 2013 – March 30, 2014

Total: 338

Over Age 60	96%
Under Age 60	3%
**81% over 70 years old	
World War II	43%
Korean Conflict	26%
Vietnam War	21%
Gulf War	.6%
War in Afghanistan	.3%
Other or Multiple Wars	9%

In a Veteran Client Survey of 46 veterans 86% called AAA/ADRC for the Primary purpose to find services

Active Re-Entry – Veteran's Story

Client:

- Vietnam Veteran, Age 61
- Suffering from full renal failure
- Had Medicare and had been denied SSDI
- Currently receiving Health Care at the Grand Junction VA Medical Center
- Had **NO INCOME** with medical bills piling up and going to collection

Options Counselor Intervention:

- Applied and receiving Medicaid – back dated 3 months and paid local Hospital Bills (but not the VA)
- Now receiving Disability Compensation for hearing loss and tinnitus
- Now receiving Aid and Attendance
- Set up payment plan for VA Medical Bills

Bear River – Veteran Story



Client

- WW II Veteran, Age 90
- Wife/Caregiver, Age 89
- Veteran suffers from multiple health issues, primary COPD
- Their goal is to keep Sam at home

Intervention:

- Client called Bear River AAA/ADRC to find services
- Veteran had a VA Primary Care Physician but was **unaware** he may be **eligible** for VA In-Home Services
- Options Counselor coached the veteran on how to request these services from the PCP
- Veteran is now receiving In-Home Services
- Veteran's wife/caregiver is participating in the Caregiver Support Program through the AAA

A Veteran Story



How did we make VA Connections?

- Finding Supporters
- Making Introductions
- Requesting Training for ADRC staff
- Additional Training Request for ADRC staff
- Asking for Direct Phone Numbers
- Learning VA Programs and Navigating the System
- Understanding the Gaps: what the VA offers and what it does not
- Tracking clients – DATA
- Commitment to help veterans**

Options Counseling for Veterans

Single Point of Entry



Things We Have Learned

- VA Branches do not always coordinate or communicate with each other
- Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) are not very familiar with VA Benefits
- Physicians TREAT patients typically do not make referrals to Services and Benefits
- Not all VA Programs have a waitlist
- Many veterans do not know they are eligible for programs
- Many veterans may have been told at one time that they were not eligible for services – BUT THAT MAY HAVE CHANGED
- VA staff are willing to give out their direct lines to our staff
- VA staff are willing to provide training – LOTS of it! Sometimes the same training over and over!!

Trainings, Partnerships take.....



What we did not expect

- Endorsement from VBA for TRIP training
- Support with applications for the Veteran Service Officer (VSO) accreditation
- Invitation to VA trainings
- Potential to self refer to the VD-HCBS program
- Divert veterans from State Program waitlist to VA Programs

2015: Project Next Steps

- Funding to sustain project activities
- Collection of outcome data
- Key Options Counselors pass Veteran Service Officer exam
- Creating a model for other states