


VETERANS SERVICES OF THE CAROLINAS



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



“VSC embodies the  
spirit of ‘Veterans  
helping Veterans’”

*Army Vietnam Veteran  
Tom Baker*

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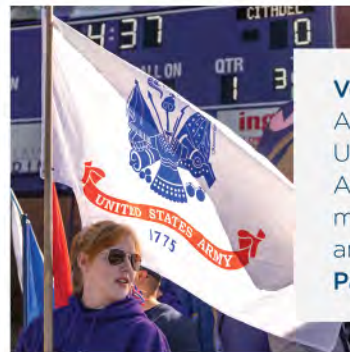


## The VSC Effect in 2022

By the numbers: How VSC impacted Veterans and their families across North Carolina. **Page 3**

## Homeless to Housed

See how our housing program helped a Veteran in Western North Carolina last year and how it's continuing to help his family move forward. **Page 9**



## Veteran Suicide Prevention

A new opportunity from the US Department of Veterans Affairs gives a new fervor to the movement to prevent suicide among Veterans. **Page 15**

## On The Cover

Peer Support Specialist Samantha Simmons marches for Veteran Suicide Awareness with her son.



**Reverend Scott Rogers**  
Executive Director, ABCCM

ABCCM calls people to common ground. Veterans ask where can I help or what can I do? We answer that question with the opportunity to roll up your sleeves, pull up a chair, or go to where the action is. All Veterans know that you don't just run at the problem, but you prepare, train, equip, and then engage with a strategic and tactical plan that resolves crisis, starts healing, and restores lives.

This report shows the amazing impact of what can happen when we engage in homeless prevention and rapid re-housing and combine it with education and employment training that leads to living wage or better career level jobs. ABCCM teaches more than how to fish; it teaches where to fish, when to fish, and most importantly how to catch more fish. ABCCM-VSC is building connections with the hardest to serve because we are committed to no Veteran being left behind. We are engaged and invite you, your service organization, or congregation to join us!

Our vision is to mobilize churches and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) as a force multiplier to connect with Veterans in crisis. In this way we can begin the resolution process to save lives and build intentional relationships that restore Veterans in community. ABCCM is casting a vision and a call to anyone wanting to volunteer. To serve Veterans in crisis or to be part of a trained Veterans Crisis Assistance Team, contact us at [volunteer@abccm.org](mailto:volunteer@abccm.org).



**Brandon Wilson**  
Director, Veterans Services of the Carolinas

With the healthcare landscape shifting across North Carolina, the past year presented both challenges and opportunities for VSC, and in particular for our role in changing how services are delivered for our Veterans. Through the dedication and hard work of our entire team, paired with the commitment of our community partners and faith based communities, VSC remains a beacon of light for Veterans and their families throughout North Carolina.

This annual report highlights just a few achievements, innovations, and critical initiatives designed to better serve our Military Connected community. Additionally, we have invested in staff, volunteers, and the community to ensure that we can serve our Veterans at the highest level through the best available resources. As our internal growth continues—through staffing, additional programs, and new office locations—we hold tight to our core values and are steadfast in becoming better together and keeping Veterans at the forefront of the ever-changing environment in North Carolina. Our focus on whole-person, integrated care, driven by a community of practice, is not only preparing us for changes in the system, it also enhances better overall care for those we are serving.

'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.' Romans 12:2  
Semper Fidelis

# Impact 2022

**26,304**

engaged calls  
in 2022

**61%**

Veterans enrolled  
in our housing  
program received  
healthcare and/or  
legal services

**\$109,579**

volunteer value  
impacting Veteran  
families

The  
**VSC**  
Effect

Adult Mental Health  
First Aid USA

**693**

first-time contact  
with North  
Carolinians  
experiencing  
homelessness

**4,600+**

hours of  
professional  
development  
provided in the  
community

**\$5.5 million**

projected wages  
earned by previously  
unemployed and  
homeless  
Veterans

As VSC continues to scale operations, we remain intent on building community capacity through additional direct-service programs, piloting innovative ideas, developing and enhancing resources, and forging new relationships.

This work continues to support Veterans and their families across North Carolina. It's important to recognize that the numbers on this page are not simply statistics; rather, they represent the impact on individual lives.

# Called to Serve

In alignment with ABCCM's core values and mission, VSC began a concerted volunteer initiative for the first time in the ministry's history. From January to December, VSC worked to recruit and retain community volunteers ranging from businesses, churches, schools, and other non-profits in order to supplement our staff's efforts to meet the needs of our neighbors. From helping with Stand Down events to packing bags for outreach, our volunteers also work within our coordination center to offer both initiation of services and follow-up of care for our Veterans and their families.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Due to our valued volunteers \$ .93 of every dollar donated goes to direct services to those in need.

To learn more about volunteering or to make a donation, scan the QR code.



### Reverend Mark McRacken Ebenezer-Mt. Ulla UMC

"Our church, Ebenezer-Mt. Ulla UMC, partnered with Veterans Services of the Carolinas this past year in some moments of dire need and immediate attention for homeless Veterans. Our church's motto is: 'Putting Our Faith Into Action' and we are honored to work alongside them to do exactly that. We are proud to be partnered with ABCCM-VSC to provide whatever we can to those who served our nation."

- ▶ 427 Unique Volunteers
- ▶ 2,583 Volunteer Hours
- ▶ \$32,579 Church Donations
- ▶ 25 Church Partners



## Veteran Stand Downs

Through VSC's efforts to equip Veterans with the appropriate resources, we continue conducting and participating in Veteran Stand Downs across North Carolina. These events provide invaluable gear to those experiencing homelessness and also serve as a platform for resource navigation while instilling hope and

resiliency. This past year, we partnered with the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina to host this region's first ever US Department of Labor-funded Veteran Stand Down. In addition to facilitating five stand downs, our team participated in another 12 community events.

- ▶ 350 Veterans Served
- ▶ 5 Stand Down Events Hosted
- ▶ \$30K Gear Issued
- ▶ 12 Community Stand Downs



**John L. Lowery, Lumbee Tribal Chairman  
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina**

“Because of the partnership between the Lumbee Tribe and Veterans Services of the Carolinas, our Veteran population has received vital resources such as food, case management, and utility and employment assistance. Our Lumbee Veterans are extremely important to us. We are thankful for the collaboration with VSC to hold a stand down that connects so many to services in our community and we look forward to being a part of their mission.”

# NC Serves: Veteran Care Starts Here



VSC has made strategic investments in new and upstream approaches to identify and connect Veterans in need, while simultaneously ensuring that Coordination Center staff have the most up-to-date, evidence-based training and practices to best serve all North Carolinians. In 2022, VSC's care coordination team continued its efforts to connect individuals to our network of providers quickly and intentionally, with the goal of improving health outcomes and effectively addressing the social determinants of health across North Carolina in partnership and in collaboration with NCCARE360. North Carolina is now the nation's first statewide coordinated network that connects human services and healthcare while coordinating service delivery.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Over the last five years our NC Serves team has supported over **11,505** households.

▲ **Call volumes are higher than ever**

129% increase over 2021

2021 **11,488**

2022

**26,304**

## VLP visits VSC

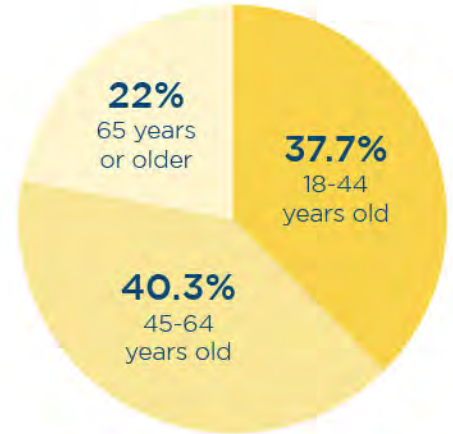
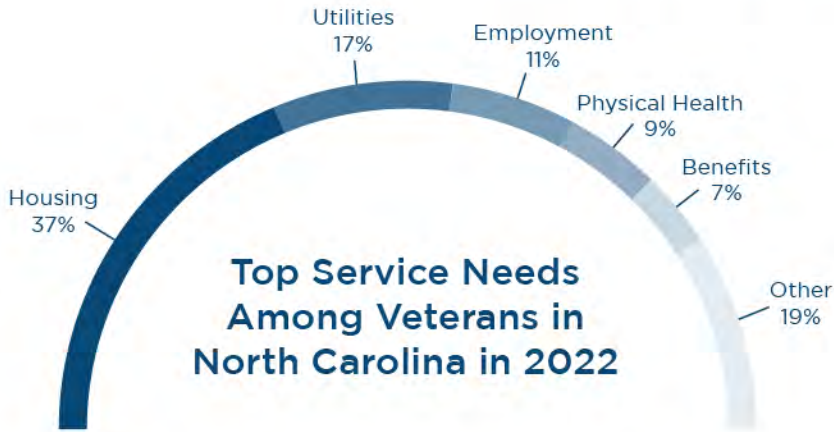
VSC's headquarters hosted members of the Veterans Leadership Program from Pittsburgh, PA whose programs mirror our own. Out of this visit grew a formal collaborative partnership that we're calling The Blue Collar Alliance. More to come in 2023.





# REPORT CARD

\*data collected Jan 1, 2022 - Dec 31, 2022



**3,647  
Clients  
Served**

**1.7  
needs**

industry-leading  
needs addressed  
per client

**5,873  
Community  
Referrals**

**62%**

provider  
utilization

**7,466  
Unique  
Episodes**

**2  
days**

median time to  
match Veterans  
to resources

# Housing Families

*"For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." Hebrews 3:4 NIV*

## Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

VSC's model of providing rapid rehousing and homeless prevention has now adopted a more comprehensive strategy for Veterans transitioning from homelessness. In 2022, our team initiated three holistic approaches to provide this higher level of support. By addressing healthcare needs, legal barriers, and long-term stability, our team is providing a deeper level of care for our Veterans and their families.

1) Through the implementation of our Healthcare Navigators, Veterans are now receiving more dynamic services to improve their overall health.

2) By way of our formal contract with Pisgah Legal Services, Veterans are now provided representation addressing legal challenges surrounding housing.

3) Another housing provision that supports long-term sustainability was generated with additional funding for the Shallow Subsidy program. This program allows for recurring rental payments at a fixed rate for an extended period while incentivizing households to increase their income and achieve self-sufficiency.



**Kathryn Monet, Chief Executive Officer  
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans**

"ABCCM has been a critical partner in efforts to end Veteran homelessness across North Carolina. Time and again, their team has stepped up to assist NCHV's Veterans who are facing housing instability. Their partnership and commitment are truly making a difference for Veterans across the state."

- ▶ 270 Veteran Families Housed
- ▶ 139 Rapid Rehousing
- ▶ 131 Homeless Prevention
- ▶ 164 Healthcare Connections
- ▶ 34 Received Legal Assistance



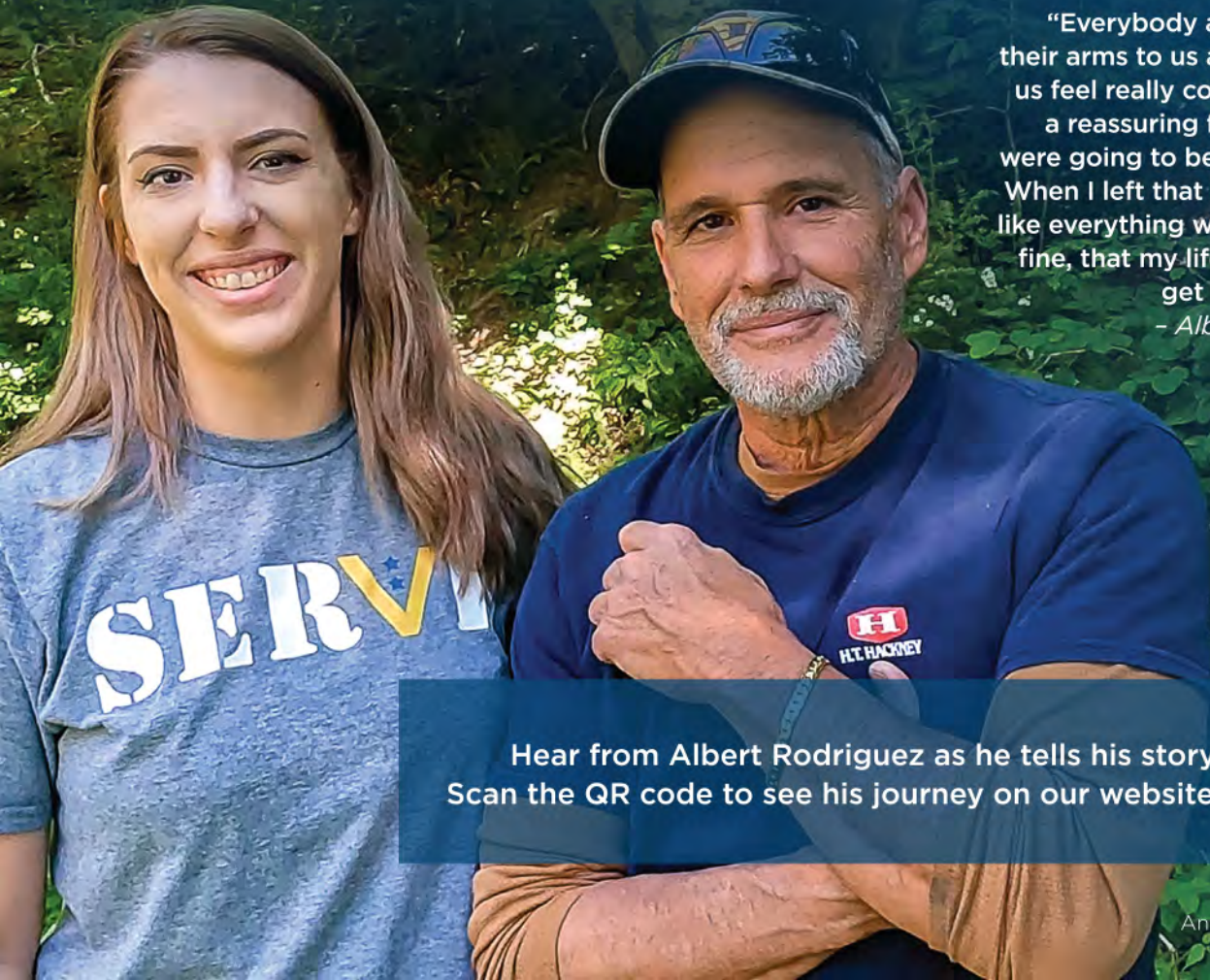
# Homeless to Housed in WNC

Army Veteran Albert Rodriguez and his wife had been living in their truck when he walked into ABCCM's Downtown Crisis Ministry in need of food and blankets. After receiving a referral, our NCServes team connected him to other available services. VSC's intake specialists quickly began the enrollment process for our SSVF Housing program for Albert and his wife, utilizing Emergency Housing Assistance funds

to get them out of their vehicle and into a hotel. SSVF Housing Case Manager Chariden Lewis wasted no time in working with them to find affordable housing in Haywood County. After a short time, they moved into a new house, Albert was back to work, and they transitioned into SSVF's Shallow Subsidy program, providing them with continued rental assistance and a strong foundation for prosperity.

**"Everybody at VSC opened their arms to us and they made us feel really comfortable, like a reassuring feeling that we were going to be taken care of. When I left that building, it felt like everything was going to be fine, that my life was going to get back in order."**

*- Albert Rodriguez,  
Army Veteran*



Hear from Albert Rodriguez as he tells his story.  
Scan the QR code to see his journey on our website.



# Employment for Everyone

## Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program

With the support of the US Department of Labor, VSC operated three separate employment grants across North Carolina that served 74 counties. This afforded the opportunity to deploy the **ABCs** of employment for Veterans transitioning from homelessness. VSC's dedicated case managers worked to first connect Veterans to **A** job through training and education, put them in a **B**etter job, and through our person-centered approach, facilitate entry into a **C**areer field. Our team accomplishes this through a comprehensive strategy that supports Veterans' skill sets, experiences, and aspirations, while simultaneously supporting their overall health and well-being.

## Services for Training, Employment, & Placement

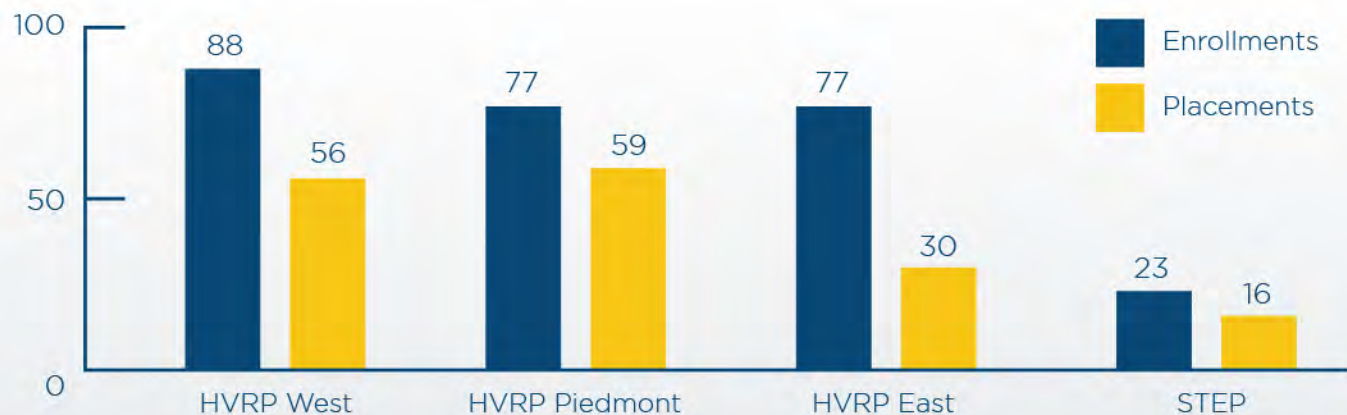
In the summer of 2022, ABCCM was the recipient of the Golden LEAF Foundation's Workforce Preparedness Grant. This grant focuses on expanding the workforce in rural communities by prioritizing an increase in industry certifications, licenses, and other credentialing. VSC has applied best practices learned from two decades of federal employment programming. Through coordination with our HVRP employment program, we have and will continue to fortify strong avenues into gainful employment that supports both the needs of our communities and adds value to our economy at scale.

▶ 265  
Enrollments

▶ 161  
Job Placements

▶ 61%  
Placement Rate

▶ \$16.21  
Average Hourly Wage



# New Welding Career

After some unforeseen medical challenges, Navy Veteran Randall Blake found himself unemployed and without housing. NCServes quickly connected him to our housing and employment programs. Healthcare Navigator Charlotte Craven assisted him with his immediate healthcare needs, which allowed him to focus on his housing and employment goals. In addition to being enrolled in our SSVF housing program, Assistant Director Curry Cromer assisted with car repairs to stabilize his transportation and open up employment opportunities.

Through his own determination, Mr. Blake leveraged his previous experience and earned a job as a welder. Now Mr. Blake is thriving with his daughter in permanent housing and is currently enrolled in VSC's SSVF Shallow Subsidy program and working in a high-growth industry with multiple pathways for advancement.



In 2022, VSC received the 2022 HIRE Vets Medallion Gold Award from the US Department of Labor for our commitment to employing and assisting Veterans in our communities.



## Ivan Denton, Director of National Programs US Department of Labor-VETS

"VSC has become the collaborative epicenter between the US Department of Labor and Veterans Affairs. Their model of blending the SSVF housing program and the HVRP employment program has become a national standard for comprehensive Veteran care. Evidence of this work led to the creation of the employment work group within the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans."



# Intensive Outreach

VSC is committed to making North Carolina healthier, from those who are making their military transition today to individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as mental health and substance use challenges. Through our outreach programs, we remain steadfast in reaching everyone who is perceived as being most vulnerable. As we expand our outreach efforts to engage more individuals who are homeless and struggling to simply survive, our PATH and HOPE teams strive to meet the clients where they are, offering intensive peer-support services, free of judgment, and predicated on a recovery-oriented, person-centered approach.

The intensive peer support services are rooted in evidence-based practices such as Critical Time Intervention, Motivational Interviewing, and Trauma Informed Care, among others. Our North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists (NCCPSS) are a beacon of hope for those we locate through intentional and targeted outreach that emphasizes a person-centered success plan. These built relationships are developed from staff that have similar lived experiences that lead to an environment of trust, empowering those we serve, and is the catalyst for positive, sustainable change.

▶ 693 First-Time Contacts Made

▶ 62 People Enrolled

▶ 37 Connected to Mental Health and Recovery Services

▶ 29 Clients Housed

## Lee Armistad, Military and Veterans Liaison NC Department of Health and Human Services

“VSC’s peer support specialists demonstrate how people with lived experiences can greatly impact and change lives. Over the last year I have had the honor of seeing their operations both at a strategic level and at an operational level. Their commitment to engaging with our state’s most vulnerable citizens is the model of care that we strive for in our communities across the state.”



# Helping Hands and Hearts

Army Veteran Donald Gingell was experiencing a period of homelessness after moving to Rutherfordton with his dog in 2022. Sydney Beck and Helene Hampton, two sisters and former volunteers at the VA, noticed Donald in the community and resolved to help him, ultimately paying for a hotel for Donald to provide him with a warm place to stay.

In the following weeks, they came into contact with VSC Peer Support Specialist Daniel Conway, who immediately connected Donald to our NCServes Coordination staff. After an initial assessment Donald was determined to be eligible for our SSVF housing program. With the help of VSC's case management, Donald moved into permanent housing in December

with his dog, Sissy, and is currently enrolled in our Shallow Subsidy program and continues working toward sustainability.

This is a prime example of how the community and VSC work together to change people's lives.

*"I am so grateful for the efforts of VSC and the other organizations. Without them, I would still be homeless. I can truly say that they are my Guardian Angels."  
- Donald Gingell, Army Veteran*



## Unwavering Love

While VSC is proud of its direct services and programs, our team also takes time to acknowledge those who have served our nation. Instances of recognition include medals presentations, serving as Guardians with Blue Ridge Honor Flight, and rendering honors at the four state Veterans nursing homes. A significant moment occurred on Veteran's Day 2022 as VSC staff were humbled to spend time with Vietnam Army Veteran Earl Rogers. Mr. Rogers spoke about his time in service, life, and unwavering love for his country. We were honored to present him with medals earned during his service, as well as a flag flown over the US Capitol in his honor.



# #CompassionInAction



## Feed Goldsboro

During the summer, VSC's outreach teams from across the state converged on the city of Goldsboro, NC for a collaborative event to provide resources and a free meal to residents in need. This occasion saw the distribution of 150 meals, along with other supplies that were distributed while conducting extensive outreach. Working alongside compassionate community partners such as ADLA, Inc., Restoration of Hope Village, American Red Cross, NCWorks, Warm Body Warm Soul Center, and the city of Goldsboro, this event demonstrates how one group can come together and positively impact our neighbors.



# SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program

In 2022, the US Department of Veterans Affairs released a study that reported that in 2020, there were 6,146 Veteran suicides, 343 fewer Veteran suicides than in 2019. Through new initiatives such as the Governors Challenge, the SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant, and collaborative efforts between local community and the VA, that number is decreasing. With that said, there is still much more work to be done.

On September 19th, 2022, ABCCM became one of 82 organizations across the US to receive a new grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide and coordinate suicide prevention services to the community. This pilot program provides VSC the necessary resources to execute suicide prevention strategies among our Veteran population in North Carolina. Our two-fold strategy is centered on prevention and crisis intervention. The robust training curriculum focuses on evidence-based modalities including Mental Health First Aid, Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR), Crisis Intervention Training, and Critical Time Intervention. These community trainings will deliver both soft and

hard skills that promote action, offer local healthcare resources, enhance localized collaboration, and help break down stigma around Veterans' mental health. In addition, VSC has started building community-based crisis intervention teams that consist of social service professionals, as well as schools, businesses, churches, Veterans' service organizations, law enforcement agencies, first responders, and neighbors of where Veterans live, work, and congregate. Through this two-pronged approach, VSC intends to support the NC Governors Challenge and to work alongside many other initiatives in order to decrease Veteran suicide.

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the 2022 Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, 17 Veterans/day take their lives, 4/week in North Carolina, and are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide. (VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Sept '22)

To launch the new program VSC partnered with WCU Athletics for their Military Appreciation Game-day to lead a 1.5 mile ruck march around campus.



# Better Together

## Community-Level Philanthropy

Elly Chastain is currently attending Western Carolina University and studying to become an EMT. As the daughter of a Veteran, she will be paying for school through her father's GI bill. Leading up to her first semester in Fall 2022, Elly planned to move to Cullowhee, NC but found herself unable to work. The GI Bill's housing allowance wasn't immediately available, and Elly looked for short-term solutions that would help her cover the cost of her new apartment.

After connecting with our NCServes Care Coordination team, Elly worked with VSC staff who took advantage of funding from a United Community Bank grant that provides education and housing support for local Veterans and their dependents. VSC paid for Elly's first-month rent (as well as her school's technology fees), and she was able to move into her apartment in time for school to start.

Funding from local businesses and organizations make up a small part of VSC's fiscal portfolio, but they still have a huge impact on people's lives.



### Philip Cooper, Workforce Equity Advocate Land Of Sky Regional Council

"As a nonprofit leader in a region that is saturated with nonprofits, it is refreshing to partner with an organization like Veterans Services of the Carolinas because they understand that collaboration is better than competition and that we are stronger together."

## DID YOU KNOW?

VSC partners with **10,950** community organizations across North Carolina with NCCare360.

# Intentional Learning

Proverbs 20:17 tells us that “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” To that end, VSC’s team continues to emphasize the importance of shared learning through soft and hard skills among both our staff and community partners. Throughout 2022, we have intentionally positioned ourselves to support our neighbors’ needs through the promotion of professional development. VSC currently offers 4 different evidence-based trainings at no cost for our military-connected communities in order to break stigma, master our craft, forge new relationships, and strengthen the ecosystem of care.

With the addition of the SSG Fox grant, we will continue to expand our training curriculum. This will include staff development and community outreach, which will continue to leverage existing and new partners who also bring invaluable training with modalities such as Motivational Interviewing and Trauma Resiliency.



- ▶ 6 Certified MHFA trainers
- ▶ 7 QPR Suicide Prevention trainers
- ▶ 6 Critical Time Intervention trainers
- ▶ 2 Crisis Intervention Team trainers
- ▶ 43 Trainings Held Across NC
- ▶ 900+ Community Members Trained
- ▶ 30 Counties Impacted



# National Community of Practice

ABCCM-VSC has become a national leader in providing services and programs for Veterans and their families. This is evident by their participation in several national initiatives that span the academic, federal, and non-profit sectors. We are honored to share best practices such as our model of both braiding and blending funding streams and coordinating direct services, as well as learning from other leaders' innovative approaches to care.

## National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

As a sustaining member of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans over the last five years we have been honored to support federal legislation that addresses Veterans' homelessness. Furthermore, our staff are fortunate to attend the NCHV Annual Conference in Washington, DC where we come together with other national leaders to share best practices, tackle challenges, and provide viable solutions that continue to shape the landscape of Veterans' care moving forward.

### Unsung Hero Award

Assistant Director of Housing  
Jessica Rice received the  
Unsung Hero award from the  
NCHV for her efforts in housing  
homeless Veterans.



## The Bob Woodruff Foundation

The Got Your 6 Network has provided essential resources for our military connected families. These resources have addressed food insecurity, utility assistance, and rent relief where there are "resource deserts" across North Carolina. To supplement this funding and all of our work in the communities the BWF partnership has also yielded a strategic perspective through our participation with the Local Partner Self-Assessment Tool. This tool has helped paint a clear picture of both our strengths and weaknesses as an organization and for our local communities.



## Syracuse University D'Aniello IVMF

Through Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families providers from across the country come together as a collective learning network dedicated to sharing insights in order to build organizational capacity through the AmericaServes blueprint. As an active community of practice member, VSC looks to provide care at the local and regional levels while shaping national initiatives.



### **Barb Carson, Managing Director of Programs and Services D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families**

"A successful Community of Practice is comprised of diverse organizations with a common mission: improving service delivery to Veterans and their families in the place they call home. We rely on our community partners, like Veterans Services of the Carolinas, to identify, share, and implement innovative solutions to reduce barriers Veterans face in accessing the resources they need the most. We're grateful to VSC for their expertise and commitment to build this collective work."

# 2022 Financial Transparency

Housing \$2,269,371.22

Employment \$1,215,249.14

Outreach \$1,016,348.79

Coordination \$601,429.58

Suicide Prevention \$138,420.38

**Total Budget** ▶ **\$5,240,819.11**

## DID YOU KNOW?

VSC supports individual households with an average of \$100/Veteran by utilizing community donations that help offset our larger grants and fill the gaps and social needs of Veterans and their families.

**Connect with us!**  
855-962-8387



Follow us on social media  
@veteransservicesofthecarolinas



abccm-vsc.org



**55%**  
of staff are  
Veterans



**329**  
years of work  
in social  
services

The  
**VSC**  
Team



**350**  
years of  
military  
service



**294**  
years of  
higher  
education



**67**  
staff

# VETERANS

SERVICES OF THE CAROLINAS

A Division of 

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