



*Connection.
Camaraderie.
Community.*

Portland Vet Center

1505 NE 122nd Avenue

Portland, OR 97230

503.688.5361





Vet Center History

- ▶ Public Law 906-22 passed by Congress in 1979 to serve Vietnam Veterans with readjustment concerns
- ▶ Eligibility Expansion:
 - ▶ Combat - all eras
 - ▶ Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
 - ▶ Drilling National Guard / Reserves
 - ▶ Couples & Families
 - ▶ Bereavement
 - ▶ Utilizing VA Education Benefits
- ▶ Over 300 Vet Centers
 - ▶ United States, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa

Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs)

- ▶ Vehicles designed to be mobile extensions of Vet Centers to bring counseling and outreach services to communities where distance or transportation may be barriers to reaching traditional VA facilities
- ▶ Often do outreach at events like a Stand Down, Yellow Ribbon, etc.
- ▶ Can be deployed to assist with natural disaster response
- ▶ Nearest MVCs are at Salem and Tacoma Vet Centers



What clinical services do we offer?

Individual therapy

- ▶ Specialize in combat trauma and military sexual trauma but address other mental health concerns as well
- ▶ Counselors do not diagnose, and our focus is on developing treatment goals in tandem with our clients to best meet their desired outcomes
- ▶ Counselors use a variety of evidence-based therapies including Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Somatic Experiencing (SE)
- ▶ Supportive therapy
- ▶ Grief and loss therapy

Couples therapy

- ▶ For non-complex problems related to military service/readjustment
- ▶ Referrals to outside providers and services when a couple's needs cannot be addressed in this setting

Group therapy

- ▶ Long-term psychotherapy process groups with specialized focus including Vietnam Veterans, Mixed Era Combat Veterans, Women Veterans, Mindfulness
- ▶ Short-term psychotherapy skills and trauma-processing groups including Cognitive-Processing Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Moral Injury, Wellness Group focused on skills for managing mental health

What other services do we offer?

- Outreach - full-time outreach specialist who maintains close relationships with local Guard and Reserves units, community colleges, and Veteran organizations such as VFW, American Legion
- Community education - staff provide education, resources, and support to community partners
- Assessment and referral to VA and community service partners for additional services outside our scope such as substance use treatment, residential treatment, housing services, legal aid
- Multnomah County VSO provides services at our office every Monday
- Social groups - art group, walking group, hiking group, music group

Vet Center Culture

- ▶ Most Vet Center staff are Veterans themselves.
- ▶ Vet Centers are required to be decorated in ways that feel warm, inviting, and reflect Veteran culture through art and memorabilia.
- ▶ Vet Centers have coffee and tea in the lobby, and people are always welcome to stop by and spend time here as a place to feel safe and comfortable. We have a massage chair and donated books & DVDs to take home and enjoy.
- ▶ People do not need to be enrolled in VHA healthcare to access Vet Center services.
- ▶ Vet Centers do not diagnose or prescribe medications.
- ▶ All services are free.



Vet Center Culture

- ▶ Staff partner closely with VA Medical Center but also maintain an intentional separation.
- ▶ Vet Center clinicians document in a separate record-keeping system from VA and DoD. Clinicians have read-only privileges in VHA's record-keeping system but they do not have access to ours.
- ▶ Vet Center clinicians will not share a client's information with anyone else, including VA or DoD, unless there is a written release of information in place or under special circumstances requiring mandated reporting including threats of imminent harm to self or others, reported abuse or neglect of children/older adults/vulnerable people, and court orders.





Who Do We Serve?

Veterans and Service Members who:

- ▶ served in a combat theater or area of hostility;
- ▶ experienced Military Sexual Trauma;
- ▶ provided direct emergent medical care or mortuary services to the casualties of war while on active duty;
- ▶ served as a member of an unmanned aerial vehicle crew that provided direct support to operations in a combat zone or area of hostility;
- ▶ served on active military duty in response to a national emergency or major disaster declared by the president, or under orders of the governor or chief executive of a state in response to a disaster or civil disorder in that state.



Who Do We Serve?

- ▶ Current or former members of the Coast Guard who participated in a drug interdiction operation, regardless of the location;
- ▶ Current members of the National Guard or Reserves who report a behavioral health condition or psychological trauma that is related to their military service, and which has an adverse effect on their ability to have a desired quality of life or hinders their adjustment to civilian life;
- ▶ Family members of Veterans/Service Members for military-related issues when counseling aids in the readjustment of the eligible individual;
- ▶ Couples therapy when the presenting problem is related to the eligible individual's military service/readjustment and is within the non-medical scope of the Vet Center;
- ▶ Bereavement counseling for Gold Star Families who experience the death of an active-duty Service Member;
- ▶ Bereavement counseling for families who lose a Veteran to suicide;
- ▶ Veterans utilizing VA education assistance benefits - GI Bill, VR&E

Where do we serve?

13 counties in Oregon and Washington

OREGON

Multnomah*
Washington*
Clackamas*
Tillamook
Clatsop
Columbia*
Hood River
Yamhill

WASHINGTON

Clark*
Cowlitz*
Pacific
Skamania
Wahkiakum

* Denotes counties with
in-person services

Community Access Points

- Hillsboro, OR - individual & couples
- Sandy, OR - individual & couples
- Oregon City, OR - group only
- St. Helens, OR - individual & couples
- Vancouver, WA - group only
- Longview, WA - individual & couples
- Currently developing additional locations



Other nearby Vet Centers



Salem, OR

Bend, OR

Eugene, OR

Grants Pass, OR

Tacoma, WA

Lacey, WA (outstation of
Tacoma Vet Center)

Walla Walla, WA

Combat Call Center
877-WAR-VETS
(927-8387)

Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988, option 1

*After hours calls route to our
combat call center in Denver, CO.
This ensures that any caller
reaches a real person 24/7 and not
an automated message or phone
tree.*



How do I get started?

- ▶ Call our office and request a phone screening appointment. We will ask a few demographic and eligibility questions to open the chart in our system. Clients will be asked to verify eligibility by providing a DD214 or military ID.
- ▶ Director meets with all incoming clients to assess basic needs and appropriateness for services. Clients are then scheduled for an intake with their new counselor.
- ▶ Counselors develop an assessment, history, and treatment plan goals with clients over the course of the first several sessions.

Call us: 503-688-5361

Stop by in person: 1505 NE 122nd Avenue Portland, OR 97230

Monday - Friday 0800-1630

www.va.gov/portland-or-vet-center/



Last but not least... we're moving!



- ▶ New location is 4706 NE Glisan, across the street from Providence Hospital
- ▶ We'll be gaining a much larger space and a second group room so that we can increase our clinical offerings
- ▶ Exact date of move is TBD (construction is still happening) but likely in December 2025
- ▶ Please call us if you want more details