**Ending Veteran Homelessness**

**Veteran Action Board (VAB)**

**Purpose:** The Veteran Action Board (VAB) will ensure that the effort to end Veteran homelessness in Kent County incorporates the expertise of people who experience homelessness. Representation can include Veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless, are currently homeless, or were formerly homeless. VAB members will participate at all levels of implementation, evaluation, and plan revision.

The VAB will serve as a forum to incorporate consumer feedback within policy, strategic decisions, and action items under the plan to end Veteran homelessness.

At least one member of the VAB shall have a seat on the CoC Steering Council and members are also encouraged to serve on CoC subcommittees and workgroups. Participation on subcommittees and workgroups may also include additional consumers and users of homeless housing services outside of action board members.

**Convening:** The Ending Veteran Homelessness lead agency and CoC leadership will work closely with the VAB. The VAB will convene at least four meetings in a calendar year.

**VAB Responsibilities**

1. Educate members of the CoC and the larger community on the realities of homelessness, and help members develop relationships with people in homeless or low income communities.
2. Help to assess needs of people currently experiencing homelessness and their concerns about the homeless system through the convening of focus groups and other feedback opportunities, and convey findings from these focus groups to the steering council and other policy developers as needed.
3. Develop recommendations regarding resources and programs for people experiencing homelessness to inform the steering council, funding review committee, and other CoC policymaking and grant making entities.
4. Critically review and provide feedback on recommendations forwarded by other advisory bodies to ensure CoC policies and initiatives are informed by consumer perspective.
5. Advocate for systems reform on the local, state, and federal levels that would implement the adopted policies of the plans to end homelessness.
6. Suggest and support means for the members of the CoC to participate in activities that would help them to develop an understanding of the realities of homelessness, and develop relationships with people in homeless or low income communities.
7. Participate in training and orientation related to the role of the CoC and strategic plans to end homelessness.
8. Attend scheduled meetings of the action board.

**Decision Making**

1. Participate on advisory bodies / task forces and information sharing across systems.
2. Make recommendations regarding resources and programs to inform CoC policy, project development, and strategic actions designed to end homelessness.

**Commitment**

1. Regular personal attendance at action board meetings and events. This commitment is not delegated to others.
2. A one-year term is required with the option of serving one additional term.
3. Additional efforts as needed to further the goals of the CoC plan to end homelessness, including serving as a community champion, assuring ongoing dialogue with the community on opportunities, progress, results and barriers to ending homelessness in Kent County.

**Veteran Action Board Member Profile**

1. A membership of approximately 3-8 members.
2. Members will include Veterans who are currently experiencing homeslessness, formerly experienced homelessness, and those in poverty who are at risk of experiencing homelessness Members will reflect the diversity of residents of Kent County and represent the target population of each specific action board.
3. The VAB will seek to ensure cross-representation among LGBTQIA+, seniors, ex-offenders, immigrants and refugees, people of color, currently or recently unsheltered, and others. Individuals may fulfill cross-representation of categories.

**Appointment/Selection Process**

1. Homeless housing and service programs may nominate a client / former client to serve on the VAB and forward their name and contact information to the lead agency at events@communityrebuilders.org. Nominees will be understood to be referred by that program, but are not serving on behalf of that program. Individuals may also contact the lead agency directly.
2. Individuals will complete an application to identify what areas of expertise/experience they represent and submit this to staff.
3. The nominating committee will work with staff to screen applications to ensure the filling of the various representation categories as needed.
4. If there are openings on the VAB for that representation category, individuals will be invited to attend two meetings to observe a board meeting and meet current board members and staff. Nominees will receive a stipend for attendance and will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and share why they are interested in participating on the board.
5. Pending successful attendance at the initial meetings, VAB members will vote on extending membership to the person at the next regularly-scheduled action board meeting.