



Veteran's Reentry Program

On June 14, 2014, the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), in partnership with the Federal Department of Veteran's Affairs, Georgia Department of Veterans' Services and the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, implemented the Veterans Reentry Program Dorm initiative which created special housing units within Rutledge State Prison, Johnson State Prison, and Emanuel Women's Facility.

MISSION

To protect Georgians by operating secure facilities and providing opportunities for offender rehabilitation.

Tyrone Oliver, Commissioner
Alan Watson, Chief of Staff
Ahmed Holt, Assistant Commissioner Facilities Division

MISSION

Serves to provide opportunities for incarcerated veterans to live in supportive environments that foster the rebuilding of character, courage and commitment, while providing services and programs that allow opportunities for positive change. Assists in preparing offenders for reentry as they transition from incarceration to the community.

VISION

GDC has the most effective Veterans Reentry Program in the nation, providing tangible opportunities for offenders to achieve positive change.

POPULATION

As of January 2014, the GDC has identified close to 3,000 veteran inmates within the corrections system.

INFORMATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

CRITERIA

- Have served in the Armed Forces
- Male inmates must be between six and 24 months of earliest release (TPM, PED, or Max Release Date)
- Female inmates do not have a time restraint
- Medium security or less
- Mental Health level II or less

REQUIREMENTS

- Male inmates must be between six and 24 months of release (TPM, PED, or Max Release Date)
- Female inmates do not have a time restraint
- Medium security or less
- Mental Health level II or less

PROGRAM MODEL

- Two-year, open-phased program
- Open-phased is designed to allow inmates to enter the program at any given time
- Program is divided into four phases

PHASES

Phase 1- Foundation

Three-month phase dealing with character, life skills & selfcare

- Participants will be assessed by a mental health (MH) professional where they are screened for MH issues to include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Participants are screened by a Veterans Administration (VA) representative
- Participants work on learning to live in the community, participating in community meetings and journaling
- Participants learn relaxation techniques

Phase 2- Discovery

Seven-month phase dealing with self-discovery

- Life Skills type training; weekly basis
- Meet with a MH Counselor, if deemed necessary
- Meet a minimum of once quarterly with a VA representative

Phase 3- Transformation

Seven-month phase dealing with reentry and empowerment

- Participants complete the Interest Profiler to assist in finding employment
- Participants complete the Career Center Program to assist in learning typing, computer use, how to write a resume and interviewing
- Participate in a mock job fair

Phase 4- Transition

Seven-month phase dealing with transition and reentry into the community

- Participants are assessed for potential as a mentor in the dorm, and if selected as a mentor, the participant will complete a mentor training class
- Take Food and Nutrition courses
- Participate in Parenting classes, if needed
- Prepare a release and relapse prevention plan

Programming

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Cognitive Behavior Groups
- Rehabilitation
- Character Building
- Training for Employment
- Family Re-unification
- Self-care
- Community Giving Back
- Confronting Self
- Substance Abuse
- Reentry Vocational Programs
- Stress Management Classes
- Support Groups
- Identifying Benefits/Supports
- Wellness

Additionally, staff and veterans services will assist in the following areas:

- Obtain military medical records
- Obtain birth certificate, SS card, DD214, DL
- Assign veterans to Career Center

PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

PARTNERS

- Conduct routine site visits
- Validate military service
- Assist in obtaining documents such as DD214, medical and service records
- Redirect disability/pension to family, if applicable
- Assist with VA Homeless/Addiction recovery facilities or housing assistance
- Evaluate discharge and determine if upgrade is applicable
- Process service connected disability claims

UNITED WAY

- Provides a variety of services through local organizations

THE SALVATION ARMY

- Provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families

DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE

- Provides assistance with veterans benefits and entitlement information, VA claims process, representation and advocacy, trauma, PTSD counseling, veteran homes and employment assistance through federal funded reintegration projects

NATIONAL COALITION FOR HOMELESS

- Provides a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs on-line

VA MEDICAL CENTER, HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS COORDINATOR

- Conduct routine site visits
- Validate military service
- Assist in obtaining documents such as DD214, medical and service records
- Redirect disability/pension to family, if applicable
- Assist with VA Homeless/Addiction recovery facilities or housing assistance
- Evaluate discharge and determine if upgrade is applicable
- Process service connected disability claims

RUTLEDGE STATE PRISON

This 24- bed unit, provides Mental Health (MH) II services and works in conjunction with Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga.

Specific Programming

- **Manhood to Fatherhood** is a bi-weekly program taught by volunteers from Project Rebound, Inc. and It Takes a Village. The objective is to teach the participants how to define themselves as men, as fathers, and as positive role models within their homes and communities. Helping participants define themselves and their roles within their family unit will aid in the improvement of family relationships. The goal is to reconnect participants to their families as it is vital to their successful transition from prison back into their communities.
- **Confronting Self** is a series of 12 questions that help the participants look at their life and discover why they chose certain actions. In addition, participants look at their family and uncover patterns that may have led them to incarceration. Within the program, participants learn to take responsibility for their actions and discover how to make wise choices. The class helps participants build character, improve relationships with family and develop their faith-based beliefs.
- **Freedom Fighters** is a comprehensive two-tiered class to improve an inmates mental and physical wellbeing. Participants will learn basic coping skills and methods to help them improve their knowledge of nutrition and exercise. Teachers will also demonstrate how participants can improve their mood through techniques targeted to their mind, body, and spirit.

JOHNSON STATE PRISON

This program provides a 70-bed unit with 35 ADA compliant beds. Providing housing for medically disabled Veterans and works in conjunction iwth the Dublin Veterans Affairs in Dublin, Ga.

Specific Programming

- **Trauma Group** provides education and coping skills for veteran offenders who have experienced traumatic reactions to combat, natural disasters, physical assaults, and accidents. The group is offered within all phases of the program.

EMANUEL WOMEN'S FACILITY

This program provides a 16-bed unit for female Veterans.

Specific Programming

- **Active Parenting** is an education program targeted to parents wishing to improve their parenting skills. The program teaches parents how to raise a child by using encouragement, building the child's self-esteem, and creating a relationship with the child based upon active listening, effective communication, and problem solving.

Womens Veterans Coordinator

- Will assist female veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services