



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2017

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WDVA Hosts Resource Fairs for Incarcerated Veterans

OSHKOSH – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC), the US Department of Veterans Affairs and multiple other local, state and federal groups, is hosting a series of expos to provide incarcerated veterans information about benefits, programs and services available to them. The expos will help incarcerated veterans better prepare for release and give them the resources they need to help transition them to communities in Wisconsin.

“These events are an opportunity for veterans to engage one-on-one with experts in the resources available veterans,” WDVA Secretary Daniel J. Zimmerman said. “We are committed to helping veterans transition from incarceration to independence. We are joining together to help these individuals who have served our country access health care, housing, training and employment, and various other tools so they can thrive in our communities.”

DOC Secretary Jon Litscher said: “These expos build on the many programs and services available to veteran inmates, including education, vocational training, and programming. We welcome the opportunity to work with the many organizations participating today to make veteran inmates aware of options available in the community. These events are part of our focus on providing opportunities for inmates to release with skills needed for success in the community.”

In December 2016, there were about 1,500 incarcerated veterans in Wisconsin DOC institutions.

Expos are being hosted at Stanley Correctional Institution, Oshkosh Correctional Institution, and Racine Correctional Institution. Each expo consists of three 45-minute sessions for veteran inmates. At the beginning of each session, there is a brief explanation of the benefit or service available at each resource table. Veterans are then able to directly engage with the staff and seek the resources they need.

The expos are a collaborative effort by numerous agencies. Among the resources offered are:

- Healthcare for Reentry Veterans
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- Veterans Benefits Administration
- Treatment Case Management
- State of Wisconsin Benefit Eligibility
- State of Wisconsin Programs such as the Wisconsin GI Bill
- Federal Pension and Disability Claims Assistance
- Wisconsin Homeless Veteran Assistance
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
- County Veteran Service Officers