



MARYLAND CENTER FOR VETERANS  
EDUCATION & TRAINING, INC.

*Our Mission is to provide homeless veterans and other veterans in need with comprehensive services that will enable them to rejoin their communities as productive citizens.*

February 13, 2020

To whom it may concern,

We are writing in support of the Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members & Veterans (SB0904/HB1515) that calls for the creation of a state fund to provide matching grants to community-based organizations providing evidence-based behavioral health treatments for service members (including the Guard and Reserves), veterans, and their family members. There is great need for behavioral health services among veterans, service members and their families in Maryland. There are approximately 399,000 veterans living in Maryland, of which an estimated 24,000 have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Across the state, approximately 10,000 veterans are dealing with post-traumatic stress or major depression. We know that veterans comprise 18% of all deaths by suicide in Maryland and this group is twice as likely as non-veterans to die by suicide. Community-based organizations play a crucial role in providing timely, evidence-based services that fill the existing gaps in the VA system.

The Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Inc. (MCVET), has seen firsthand the devastating effects of lack of behavioral health services for those of have served this country; resulting in mental trauma, along with drug and alcohol addiction. Our mission of providing comprehensive services specifically to the homeless veteran population for the past twenty-five years has resulted in over 70% of enrollees becoming housed and employed. MCVET's three housing venues, along with on-site Case Management, Drug and Alcohol Treatment groups, and mental health counselors have become a staple in the Maryland community. The need for state procured federal funding will allow similar minded organizations the ability to continue to meet the needs of the military member and their family.

The Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program goes a long way towards solving the problem. We encourage its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffery L. Kendrick".

Jeffery L. Kendrick, USAF (Ret.)

Executive Director

Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Inc.