



Maine Veterans In Need

**Thank You for the Opportunity to
Talk About How MVN Serves our
Veterans**



Maine Veterans In Need

- Who we are
- What we do
- How we do it
- What we need



Background



United States
Interagency Council
on Homelessness
*Preventing and Ending
Homelessness in the United States*

“USICH is the only federal agency with **the sole mission** of preventing and **ending homelessness** in America. We coordinate with our **19 federal member agencies, state** and local governments, and the private sector to create partnerships, implement evidence-based best practices, and use resources in the most efficient and effective ways.”



Background USIACH on Veterans



- “Veteran is any person who served on active duty in the armed forces, **regardless of how long they served** or the **type of discharge they received.**”
- “While ending veteran homelessness is primarily about the community’s capacity to connect veterans to permanent housing, the community also has the capacity **to immediately offer and provide some form of shelter.**”
- “Access to shelter is not contingent on sobriety, **minimum income requirements**, lack of criminal record, or other unnecessary conditions.”



The Need

- All current programs vary as to the eligibility of veterans
- All current programs have a “process” required to get support
- Most agencies/organizations are 9-5, 5 days a week
- Veteran “emergencies” happen at any time

The History



- 2000: 1 VA Homeless Veteran Coordinator located at the Portland Vet Center
- 2003: Homeless Veteran Network Group (HVNG), hosted by the VA, formed and met 11 months a year
- 2008: 1st VISN 1 Homeless Veteran summit met at Togus due to the VA Maine success
- 2018: HVNG Dissolved
- 2020: VA Stopped hosting the Homeless Veteran Standdowns due to COVID

The History



- 2018: Some of those who attended the HVNG met at MBVS to discuss how to meet the recognized need

- 2020: MVN formed as a 501(C)3
 - Membership organization (no cost)
 - Membership goal is for all organizations involved with helping veterans in need be members.
 - All volunteer
 - Funded by donations only
 - Available 24/7
 - Meet monthly, all invited to attend



Immediate Assistance Can BE:

- Just **listen**/talk
- Referring to appropriate agency with warm hand off
- Provide hotel until “system” takes over
- Provide food until “system” takes over
- Fund something that needs immediate attention
- Ensure getting VA services they deserve, help navigate the system



The Process

Referrals come from:

- Veterans themselves (word of mouth or **211**)
- Agency social and/or case workers
- VA social and/or case workers
- MBVS
- First responders/law enforcement

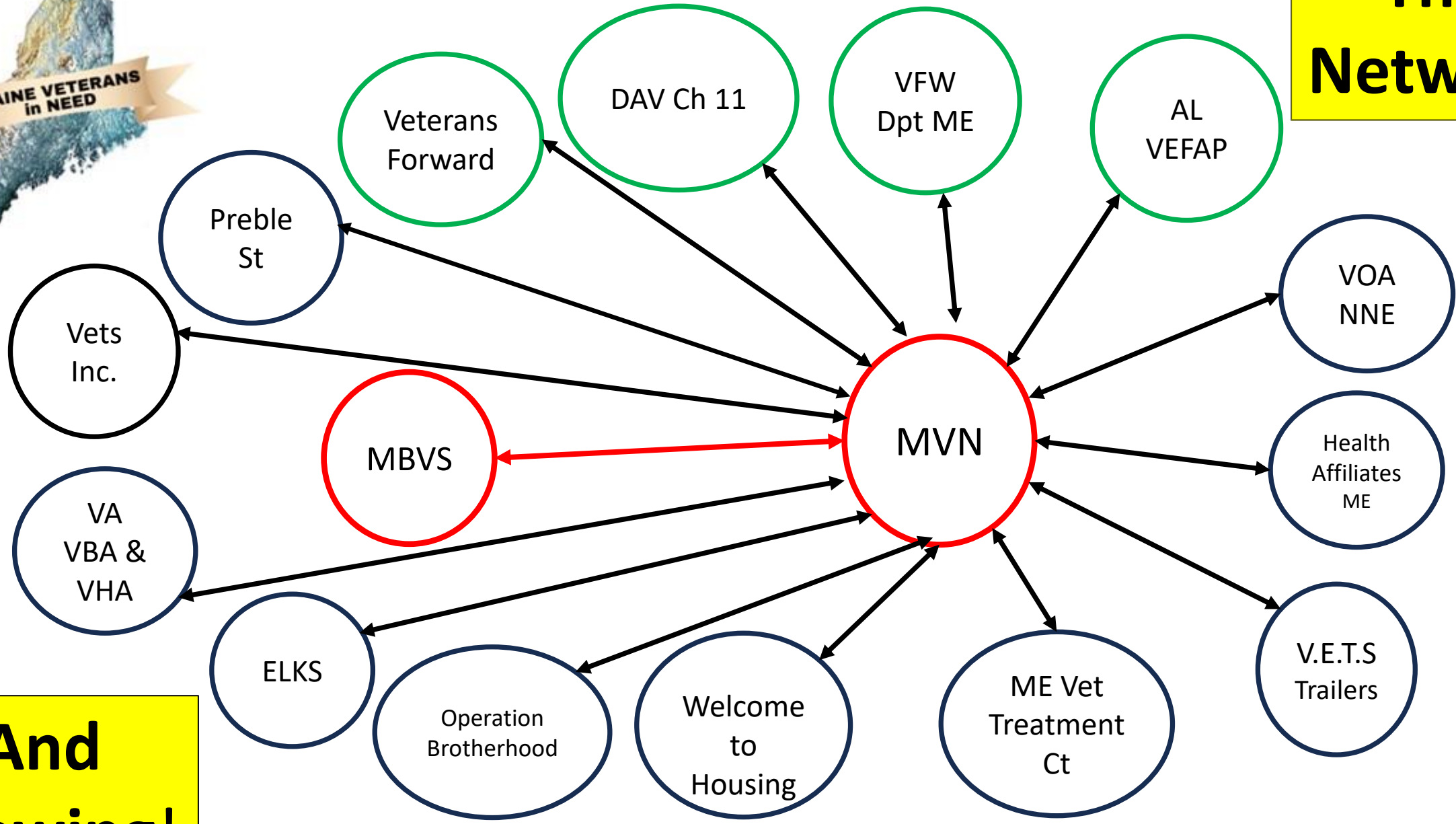


The Process

- Determine what is needed to **stabilize** the immediate situation and, if possible, provide that resource
- **Record** information on an MVN form (typically over the phone)
 - Basic contact information
 - In the VA system?
 - MBVS Notified
 - Agencies involved
 - Have a DD 214 (not required)
 - Determine action required
- **Send** MVN form **to the Network**
- **Follow-up** with MBVS and Agencies involved



The Network



And Growing!



**Typical Cost to Stabilize the Veteran's situation:
Less than \$500**



117 Veterans Helped in 2024

Sample Situations:

All situations were immediate resources where not available

- Disabled elderly wheelchair bound veteran with service dog (**Good Samaritan**)
- Bread of Life veteran, heart attack in Los Vegas (**VA Case Manager**)
- Veteran living in his car had an accident totaly his car leaving Togus on a Friday; (**Lincoln County Sherriff**)
- Veterans transitioning from shelter to apartment...transportation &... connecting with other resources (**Case workers and Veterans**)
- Gas to enable transportation (**all sources**)
- Heating fuel (**all sources**)
- Immediate shelter – hotels (**all sources**)



The NEED

- 1. Donations/grants without “restrictions” to enable immediate solutions to veteran’s needs**
- 2. Volunteer Secretary**
- 3. Volunteer drivers and movers**
 - a. To appointments**
 - b. Hauling trailers and moving in**



Final Comment

Over the past 3 years, the veteran support community NETWORK is becoming more of a coordinated TEAM. Many/most on that TEAM are committed to helping veterans in need ... going beyond their job description or 40 hours weeks. Some are superstars who I won't name but they know who they are.