

New England group with a homeless residence in Bradford gets boost to help veterans

Senator Patrick Leahy (D), Senator Bernie Sanders (I) and Representative Peter Welch (D) Tuesday announced a new \$1 million Department of Veterans Affairs grant to Veterans Inc., a Worcester, Mass., based group that operates a residence for homeless veterans in Bradford, Vt. Veterans Inc. has been in operation for 20 years and provides supportive services to veterans and their families throughout New England.

Veterans Inc. received the renewal grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program. The program focuses on stable housing for very low-income veteran families. The SSVF program will serve 45 veteran families in Vermont throughout the program year.

Veteran families that meet eligibility criteria will also be able to take advantage of limited temporary financial assistance payments made possible by private donors. These payments can be used to cover rent, utility costs, security deposits, moving and other expenses.

"We are thrilled to once again be selected to provide much needed services to veterans and their families in Vermont," said Vincent J. Perrone, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Retired), Veterans Inc. President and CEO, "Programs such as SSVF would not be possible if not for the support and advocacy of our federal legislative delegation."

In a joint statement, Leahy, Sanders and Welch said: "We are delighted that these services are coming to Vermont. Smaller states with smaller veteran populations face challenges competing for federal funds, but Veterans Inc. has done an outstanding job. The organization brings New England together to compete as a region while staying focused on the local homeless veteran populations it serves here in Vermont."

In addition to the SSVF grant, Veterans Inc., also recently received a grant through the Non-Urban Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). Those funds will enable Veterans Inc. to continue to provide direct specialized employment and training services to unemployed homeless male and female veterans and underemployed homeless in Vermont

and New Hampshire. Veterans who are enrolled will receive training to prepare them for the workforce. Over the course of the year, Veterans Inc. expects to assist 90 veterans and place 65 into jobs.

"These awards will allow us to continue to be there for our veterans when they need us and to provide our veterans and their families the support that they need through troubling times," said Denis Leary, Veterans Inc. Executive Director, "We cannot thank our federal legislators enough for supporting these programs that can improve the lives of our veteran families and for the work they do on behalf of our brave men and women when they return home."