

Government gives grant to help Oregon's homeless veterans

■ **FUNDS:** Two programs allocated federal money for veteran job training and support services

By Sherry Rainey
Community Editor

A federal grant was awarded to Oregon last Friday to help homeless veterans in the state.

The U.S. Labor Department's Veterans' Employment and Training Service awarded Oregon a \$70,000 grant to help

homeless veterans find employment and training for jobs.

These funds can be used for up to nine months to provide homeless veterans with training and placement in long-term jobs.

Of the funds, \$45,000 has been allocated to the Incarcerated Veterans Program, and \$25,000 has been allocated to the Klamath Falls Employment Department, according to Mark Miller, veterans program coordinator for Oregon.

In Klamath Falls, the Kingsley Air Force base has been preparing for closure, and the community needs money for transitional housing for the veterans, Miller said.

Also, veterans who have been released from jail meet the federal definition of homelessness, Miller said. To be eligible for the Incarcerated Veterans Program, the veteran must be homeless and a veteran of the Vietnam era and/or disabled and/or separated from the military within the last four years.

The funds are primarily for training or support services — 50 percent is dedicated to job training, Miller said.

"Unemployment, not the lack of affordable housing, is the chief cause of homelessness among veterans," said Preston Taylor Jr., assistant secretary for labor for veterans' employment and training, in a news release. "These grants will help eliminate the major problems homeless veterans face."

Those problems include the

lack of transitional housing, inadequate job skills, resistance of employers to hire homeless veterans, few drug treatment programs and no transportation to and from jobs, Taylor said.

Last year, the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project had 7,432 participants and placed 4,017 veterans in jobs across the nation. This program expired in October 1995, according to a news release. The cold winter and continued problem of homeless veterans made the emergency grants necessary.

Oregon Daily Emerald



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Shelter: Family centers provide housing

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motor homes are allowed to park. The camp also provides services to the residents, such as toilet and shower facilities, and a 24-hour staff to supervise the residents. The residents buy their own food.

The state continued to fund the camp near Autzen Stadium for the next two years. But because the state cut funding in 1995, and without incoming funds from Springfield and the surrounding areas, the Eugene City Council decided in late October not to fund a car camp this year.

The car camp was a service Eugene couldn't afford to fund without help, Weinman said. The camp costs \$100,000 to run for seven months.

"It is difficult to [find a] site, and it costs a lot of money to staff 24-hours a day, seven days a week," Weinman said.

The area used for the camp was relatively small and created an unpleasant condition for everyone involved, he said.

City Councilor Barbara Keller said the car camp was a temporary fix. She said she was one of the councilors who promoted the car camp and believes the camp should have stayed open.

"The problem isn't solvable," Keller said. "We tried to find a more permanent way to deal with the problem or to find a more permanent place for the car camp."

The City Council wanted to put the money into something that would help more people and be more worthwhile, Weinman said.

St. Vincent DePaul is one organization the City Council works with to try and solve the problem.

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If you are approached by a police officer:

YOU SHOULD:

- Be polite to the officer at all times.
- NOT physically resist the officer for any reason.
- Tell the officer your name. It's a crime to give a false name.
- Never offer money to a police officer.

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- Stop or talk to an officer unless you are ordered to stop.
 - Show any ID unless you are being arrested or given a ticket.
 - Consent to any search or seizure.
- If the officer threatens to get a warrant, let the officer get one. If the officer searches you without a warrant, DO NOT RESIST, but say that you do not consent to the search.
- Talk to police without a lawyer present even if you have been arrested or ticketed.

SOURCE: ACLU Foundation of Oregon

DENNIS BOLT/Emerald

St. Vincent's Interfaith Emergency Shelter System, which was started in 1989, is a group of more than 50 churches that allows one family to stay up to seven nights a month. A family is allowed to stay in the churches for 30 days and then is referred to another shelter or program, said Jake Dudell, emergencies services director.

In 1990, Interfaith became the First Place Family Center. This program services homeless with families or families with low incomes. It provides showers, laundry, clothing, brown bag lunches, phone, mail drop, gives referrals and provides child care.

Another program through St. Vincent DePaul is the Eugene Service Station, which will open the second week of March.

The Service Station is a pro-

gram for adults without children, and meets in a former convenience/gas station on Highway 99, and provides many of the same services as the First Place Family Center.

The station will receive funding from Eugene for the first six months, Dudell said, and funding may continue if the program is successful.

Eugene residents will vote on a utility consumption tax (Measure 20-54) on the March 12 ballot that would help homeless by increasing the number of affordable housing units.

By the year 2005, the tax will have raised enough money to build approximately 1,500 to 2,000 new units to buy or rent.

The typical resident would pay a total tax of about \$1 a month.

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