



In 2021, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services was awarded a \$1 million grant from the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services to participate in the Governor's recovery initiative. This program, called Ohio's State Opioid Response (SOR), focuses on building a community system of care (prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support) that emphasizes service integration between physical health, emergency healthcare, behavioral health care, criminal justice, and child welfare. Through its participation in this program, ODVS also partnered with the OHIOcares initiative to assist with the mental health and recovery of the veteran community within Ohio.

Peer Support is the act of people who have similar experiences with mental illnesses and/or substance abuse diagnosis giving each other encouragement, hope, assistance, guidance, and understanding that aids in recovery. Peer Support work can be done anytime, anywhere when two or more peers are in a mutual, supportive relationship.

The ODVS SOR Program has, for the past two years, facilitated eight peer recovery supporter training courses that enable participants to become licensed peer recovery supporters and empower them to work as licensed professionals throughout the state of Ohio. The courses are offered with a focus on veterans, and they receive priority entry into our courses. Our vision is to have a network of licensed peer recovery supporters who are military veterans, creating a unique community to help veterans throughout the state of Ohio who may be struggling with a mental health or substance use disorder issue.

In addition to the peer recovery supporter courses, the program partners with local community mental health and recovery providers like the Erie County Alcohol, Drug Addition, and Mental Health Board and the Sandusky Artisans Recovery Community Center to provide services such as Whole Health Action Management (aka WHAM) and a veteran-based support group, Connections, to promote a focus on mental and physical well-being and improvement in the Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky.

Crisis Intercept Mapping (CIM) is an innovative, collaborative process used to identify gaps in care, highlight opportunities to strengthen community partnerships, and engagement for service members, veterans, and their family members (SMVF).

The team is working to create a community-wide military-friendly, veteran, and civilian interagency team for a 1.5-day facilitated site visit June 27 and 28 at the Erie County Health Department. This visit will identify gaps in care and discover service opportunities that exist across the local crisis system, map key intercept points, implement best and evidence-based suicide prevention practices for SMVF, establish goals, and develop a preliminary actionable plan to close gaps.

The ODVS SOR Team is a small but growing team of four – Chief Fiscal Officer of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, Rosaland Gatewood-Tye; Program Manager and 20-year Army veteran, Julian Walk; and Office Professionals/Grant and Training Coordinators, Ariel Cromer and Jacob Raffo. Together, they have worked to implement programming that helps serve veterans throughout the state and provide hope that the upcoming Crisis Intercept Mapping event can serve many more in the months to come.



Ohio

**Department of
Veterans Services**