

VRSS

Veterans Re-entry Search Service

Mya Jenkins, LISW-S
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System
Healthcare for Reentry Veterans/HCRV/prison reentry
10701 East Blvd
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-701-3580

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Purpose

- At the request of former Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA), Eric Shinseki, the Homeless Program Office developed an automated system called Veteran Re-entry Search Service (VRSS) to locate Veterans who are currently incarcerated in federal, state, city and county correctional facilities, or who are represented as defendants on court dockets.
- VRSS is a Web-based tool that allows VA to offer its criminal justice partners an improved method of identifying Veterans within their inmate populations. It also allows VA to conduct more targeted, effective outreach in these settings.
- VRSS is part of the VA's major initiative to End Veteran Homelessness
 - Incarceration is the most powerful predictor of homelessness
 - Ending Veteran Homelessness is an urgent and enduring priority for VA
- The system is designed to enable outreach specialists involved with VA's Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV) program (prison populations), and Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) ("front end" jails and court populations) program to identify Veterans as early as possible and get them linked to VA services upon their release. Both programs are focused on preventing homelessness among justice-involved Veterans.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Purpose, cont

- To identify justice involved individuals at the earliest possible time
- Goal of connecting with resources and interventions to support Veterans
- Criminal justice partners include not only correctional facilities such as jails, prisons and detention centers but also entities within the court system such as pre trial services, probation, prosecutors and public defender offices

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Background

- Historically, efforts to identify Veterans in criminal justice settings have relied on self-reporting (“Did you serve in the U.S. military?”).
- For a variety of reasons, Veterans may not self-report (shame associated with being involved in the criminal justice system; individual beliefs/understanding of what it means to be a Veteran
- The Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 7-8% of the U.S. prison and jail populations are Veterans.
 - Example—California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation houses about 100,000 prisoners. By self-reporting, 2.7% inmates identified themselves as Veterans. Using VRSS, 7.7% of inmates were determined to have a record of military service. That five percent difference = approximately 5,000 previously unidentified inmates.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

What is VRSS?

- VRSS is an online tool that allows external users (prison, jail, and court staff users) to identify the individuals in their facility who have a record of military service.
- VA checks against records of U.S. military service in the VA-DOD Identity Repository (VADIR)
- VRSS checks for any record of military service and not just VA eligibility.
- List posted to the VRSS web portal for download by correctional staff and Veterans Justice Programs staff
- Schedule uploads as needed

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

VRSS-What does it do?

- Helps identify individuals in the criminal justice system who have served in the U.S. military
- Provides correctional facilities with accurate information on Veterans within their institutions
- Enables VJP Staff to engage with Veterans
- Accelerates Veteran enrollment and reduces delays in accessing VA services post release
- Enhances collaboration between VA, correctional institutions and other Veteran service organizations

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

VRSS-How does it work?

- Requesting access to and using VRSS is done through <https://vrss.va.gov>
- An external user logs into VRSS and uploads a file with basic information on their population (prison/jail inmates, or criminal defendants).
- After allowing 2 hours for processing, the user receives a result file that identifies those individuals included in the original uploaded file who have a record of military service.
- Matches are identified through a query mechanism that checks the record against the VA DoD Identity repository (VADIR), the VA's copy of the DoD's Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).
- At the same time, another version of the results file is sent to the VA VJO or HCRV specialist responsible for the facility/geographic area.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Uploaded files contain:

- First Name
- Middle Name
- Last Name
- Suffix Name
- SSN Social Security Number
- Date Of Birth
- Gender
- Prisoner ID Number
- Cell Location
- Facility Name or Court Name for your location
- Facility ZIP Code
- Facility State
- Parole Date
- Release Date- Actual or projected release date

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Results: Who gets what?

- CF/CS User (court, jail, prison): PIDs (user-assigned unique identifiers) only – no names or other identifying information
- VJP User: name, DOB, SSN, discharge status, number of days active duty service (all pulled from VA copy of DoD personnel records)
- Why?
 - An individual's Veteran status is not protected information, so when asked whether someone served, VA can answer yes or no.
 - However, VA cannot provide VRSS users with names other identifying information without a Veteran's express permission – even though that information was included in the user's submission file

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

VJP Staff receives

- The VJP specialist is able to receive more detailed information including Character of Discharge and Number of Days of Active Duty Service (the 2 pieces critical for determining eligibility for VA healthcare and benefits). However, VRSS cannot definitively confirm a Veteran's eligibility for VA services.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas **Data** Review View Help

Get & Transform Data: Get Data, From Text/CSV, From Web, From Table/Range, Recent Sources, Existing Connections

Queries & Connections: Refresh All, Properties, Edit Links

Sort & Filter: Sort, Filter, Clear, Reapply, Advanced

Data Tools: Text to Columns, Flash Fill, Remove Duplicates, Data Validation, Consolidate, Relationships, Manage Data Model

Forecast: What-If Analysis, Forecast Sheet

Outline: Group, Ungroup, Subtotal

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V |
|------|---------|----------|--------|---------|-----|---------|--------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Last Na | First Na | Middle | SuffixN | SSN | Date of | Gender | Prisone | Cell Loc | Facility | Facility | Facility | Military | Parole D | Release | Days of S | Qualifying | Service C | ected Disability | | | |
| 2093 | | | | | | | | | C3E0013 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | 20440417 | 967 | N | N | | | | |
| 2094 | | | | | | | | | C3E0004 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | 20431203 | 20431203 | 1580 | | Y | | | | |
| 2484 | | | | | | | | | B2E0011 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | B | | 20400416 | | N | | | | | |
| 2490 | | | | | | | | | C3E0022T | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | 20280223 | 590 | N | N | | | | |
| 2495 | | | | | | | | | C4W0008 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | B | | 20300308 | 0 | N | N | | | | |
| 2496 | | | | | | | | | A1W0023 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | 88880101 | 89 | N | N | | | | |
| 2497 | | | | | | | | | B1E0007 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | B | | 88880101 | 0 | N | N | | | | |
| 2498 | | | | | | | | | C3W0024 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | 20400807 | 20400807 | 31 | N | N | | | | |
| 2504 | | | | | | | | | A1E0012 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | 20240701 | 20240701 | 84 | N | N | | | | |
| 2505 | | | | | | | | | A2N0019 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | 20231223 | 1273 | Y | N | | | | |
| 2506 | | | | | | | | | ZOTC14 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | H | | 20260107 | 0 | N | N | | | | |
| 2509 | | | | | | | | | C4E0001 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | | 242 | N | N | | | | |
| 2510 | | | | | | | | | C3W0006 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | E | 21510201 | 21510201 | 690 | N | N | | | | |
| 2512 | | | | | | | | | C3E0006T | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | B | | 20330127 | 948 | N | N | | | | |
| 2513 | | | | | | | | | A2E0007 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | E | 20380216 | 20380216 | 422 | N | N | | | | |
| 2514 | | | | | | | | | C4E0012 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | 20250304 | 1461 | N | N | | | | |
| 2519 | | | | | | | | | C3W00141 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | 20270430 | 20270430 | 3106 | N | N | | | | |
| 2520 | | | | | | | | | A1W0013 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | E | 20240201 | 20240201 | 814 | N | N | | | | |
| 2524 | | | | | | | | | B4S0011 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | B | | 20340127 | 134 | N | N | | | | |
| 2525 | | | | | | | | | C3E0021 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | | 20270422 | 1461 | N | N | | | | |
| 2528 | | | | | | | | | B4N0023 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | B | | 20260607 | 448 | N | N | | | | |
| 2529 | | | | | | | | | C3E0003 | TOLEDO C | OH | 43608 | A | 20510417 | 20510417 | 1857 | Y | N | | | | |
| 2533 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2534 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2535 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2536 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2537 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2538 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



Benefits to VJP Staff

- Enables VJP staff to prioritize outreach activities.
- Provide better veteran identification to increase Veterans treatment dockets implementation and enrollment
- Some Veterans can be pre-registered prior to face-to-face contact.
- Facilitates access to remote data from other medical centers.
- Allows VJO Specialists to proactively collaborate with correctional staff on community-based referrals.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

VRSS: New User Quick Guide

- 1. Visit <https://vrss.va.gov>
- 2. Agree to the Terms and Conditions and click to Login
- 3. Click "Register a New Account"
- 4. Choose your Facility Type a. Correctional Facility b. Court System
- 5. Enter your First Name, Last Name, Email Address, and Phone Number
- 6. Choose your Correctional System Type: a. Federal b. State c. County d. Municipal
- 7. Or Choose your Court System Type: a. Federal b. State c. Statewide (ex. Administrative Office of the Courts) d. County e. City/Municipal
- 8. Enter your desired Username and Password
- 9. Click "Create Account"
- 10. You will receive an email asking to verify your account sent to the email address used to register.
- 11. Click the link to verify your account and sign-in to begin using the VRSS system.
- If you encounter any issues during this process, please contact the VRSS Help Line: 1-800-983-0935 Monday-Friday, 7AM – 5PM (CST) Please have your Name, Username, and account information ready for the



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Summary

- Within the criminal justice system, attempts to identify individuals with military service should be done early and often.
- Without this identification, we miss the opportunity to integrate services and resources tailored to this population.
- VRSS can be implemented within many points along the sequential intercept model.
- As of 9/30/23, there were a total of 455 local jails and state prison systems using VRSS.

VA

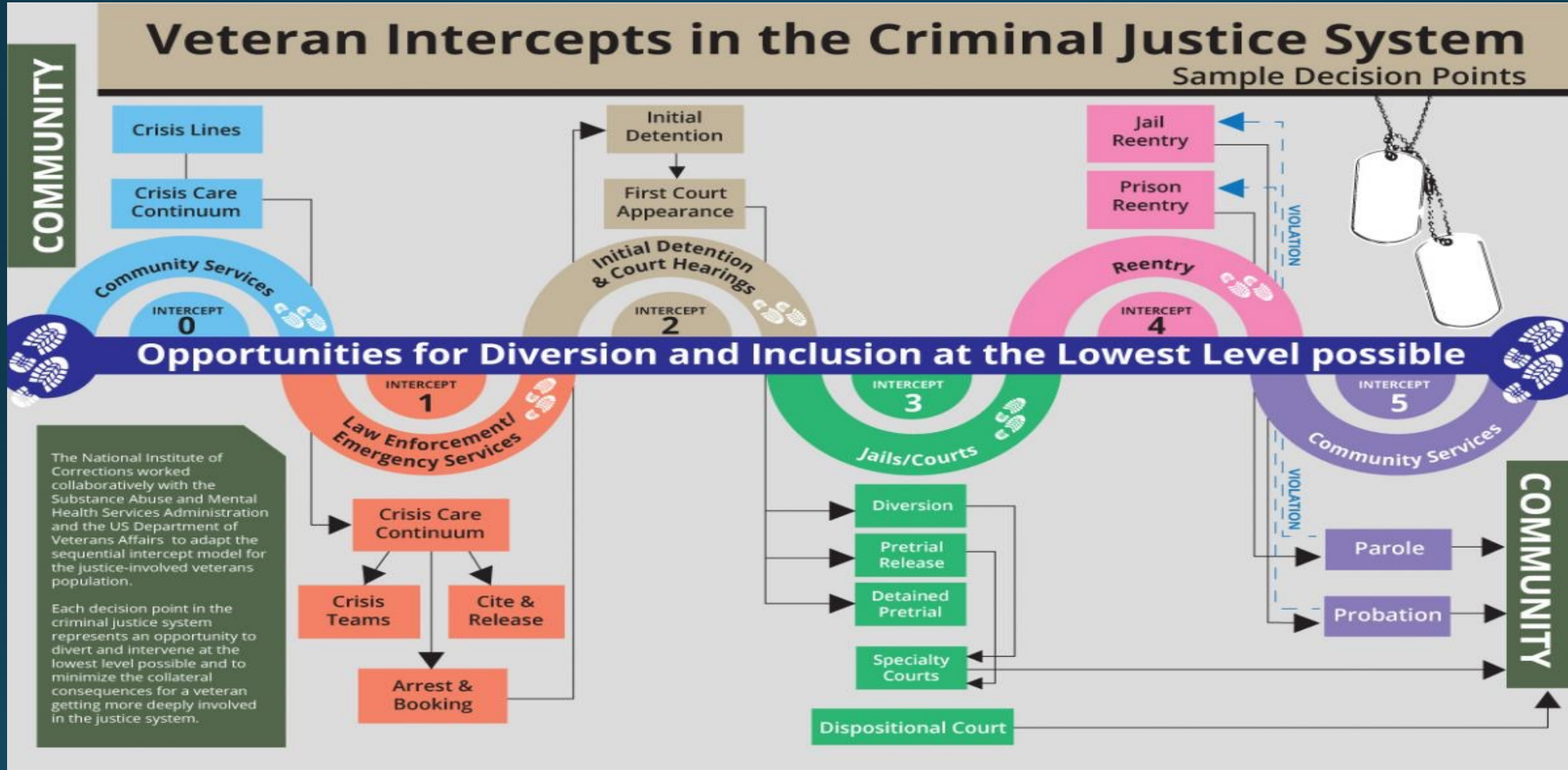


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System

Sequential Intercept Model & VRSS



Summary

- [VRSS_FINAL_4K_TEXT.mp4](#)
- <https://youtu.be/DKilRc8prBc?si=S-Yfy44UOW712gTW>

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System