

## **FPHA Veterans Transitional Housing Coming Soon!**

There is a long and honored tradition of military service for the Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes at Ft. Peck Indian Reservation. And often veterans return home to difficulties finding employment, physical and mental health needs, and not enough stable and sustainable housing options. The Fort Peck Housing Authority, with the support of the Tribal Executive Board and the FPHA Commissioners, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, will be soon be opening the Fort Peck Warriors Center program to serve at-risk and homeless veterans with transitional housing, wraparound services, and enhanced access to VA and VA healthcare.

FPHA is renovating three houses, 2 located at 305 C Street to serve 13 men (the former Atkinson property), and one at 307 D Street to serve 6 women (the former Magnan property). The veterans participating in the program will be provided with enriched services, including case management, community guidance, transportation to Ft. Harrison to the VA Medical Center, access to job training and job development, nutrition and diabetes healthcare supports, and a range of other services from multiple partners. In addition to the veterans receiving services, this program will also create 5 new permanent professional and para-professional jobs, and will utilize veterans preference for employment in all 5 positions.

The Tribal Executive Board was the initial force and motivator to develop this project, and the Housing Authority was poised to begin serving veterans – this important alignment of objectives and timing made it possible for FPHA to be successful in competing for this program and its ongoing operational dollars to serve veterans. Tommy Christian, the Chair of the Veterans, Elders and Youth subcommittee of the Tribal Executive Board, is firm on the TEB's ongoing commitment to this project: "We need this program, and we want it and stand behind it. The Tribal Council supports this, and the biggest priority is to get the project open and operational, so we can serve veterans in northeastern Montana."

The TEB and FPHA have put together a wide range of supportive service partners, including veterans and elders from the community, the Montana VA Healthcare System, the VA's Grant & Per Diem program, Indian Health Services, diabetes educators, transportation accessibility, Fort Peck Community College, and job training opportunities. The community and the provider partners are excited about this opportunity to provide services and programs to meet the long-standing needs of veterans at Fort Peck and in the Northeastern Montana sector.

Robin Korogi, Director of the VA-Montana Healthcare System, sums up this excitement and potentials for future, by saying: "VA Montana Healthcare System is very proud and excited to be part of the VA Grant & Per Diem project at Fort Peck Indian Reservation. The transitional housing they are renovating – 3 houses (with 13 beds for men, and 6 for women) – are very much needed and we are excited to be a partner with the Tribes to establish this transitional housing. This is the first transitional housing on any reservation in a very long time and we look forward to the grand opening..... We will be there to celebrate, and we hope that other Tribes in Montana will contact the Fort Peck planning group to get information and implementation guidance so they may also look at renovating or establishing new

transitional housing on their reservations. I look forward to this project getting off the ground and believe that it will not only benefit the veterans in the area, but the entire community."

Dr. Robin Bighorn, Executive Director of the Fort Peck Housing Authority, is clear that FPHA's dedication to serving veterans is ongoing, that "FPHA has a long-term commitment to and investment in serving veterans, and we are excited to open this new project in November. FPHA looks at this project developed with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as the first step in a long and successful partnership to serve our veterans."

If you are a veteran in need of services or transitional housing, or have an interest in working for the Fort Peck Warriors Center, please see the new job postings just out, or contact Dr. Robin Bighorn, Fort Peck Housing Authority, (406) 768-3459.

By:

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