



OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADER RECOGNITION

April 17, 2025



Name: Meisha Jensen, LCSW

Role: Coordinated Entry Specialist

Organization: VA Salt Lake City Health Care System Homeless and Justice Clinical Recovery Program

Nomination:

Meisha is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has worked in homeless services at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System for the past seven years. Meisha has experience working with clients in many different areas such as adoptions, substance use treatment services, crisis work, and homeless services. Meisha graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Southern Utah University and with a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Utah in 2006. For the past 18 years Meisha has been driven to speak out for clients, and to help them reach their highest level of self-actualization.

Meisha's current role is Coordinated Entry Specialist for VA Salt Lake City Health Care System Homeless and Justice Clinical Recovery (HJCR) program. The Coordinated Entry process is a vital part of ending homelessness among Veterans. Meisha has been instrumental in developing and implementing the Coordinated Entry process for the HJCR program. She has worked tirelessly to help develop partnerships and cooperation between local homeless agencies and service providers who work together as one unit rather than individual entities to effectively connect those experiencing homelessness with stable housing and service interventions. Through this streamlined approach, Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness can have their needs assessed quickly and get connected with personalized housing opportunities and various social services. Standardized assessment tools and practices are used to evaluate the unique needs of each Veteran, which increases access to housing options and supportive services that will fit their needs. This process creates a standard set of guiding principles so homeless service providers can make consistent decisions about combining their resources and using them effectively when serving the

community. By employing uniform processes across the board, this increases accessibility for Veterans and offers them a better-connected network of services. It also emphasizes that instead of making a person fit into one program, we as service providers must understand and respond to each Veteran's individualized needs.

Additionally, Meisha was the only Salt Lake City VA homeless outreach worker during the global COVID-19 pandemic. She was fearless in her dedication to serve homeless Veterans during a time of great uncertainty in our collective history. Meisha has also organized countless Homeless Stand Downs which are events where food, clothing, and health screenings are provided to homeless and at-risk Veterans. During these events, Veterans can also receive referrals for health care, housing, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling, legal resources, and other essential services. Meisha has been integral in organizing VA teams to participate in Point in Time counts across the state. She was also influential in the creation of a PIT training video specifically addressing and educating about Veteran issues. This year, the VA had a record number of volunteers participate in the count, all due to Meisha's advocacy of the event. Meisha has never met a stranger. She is exuberant in talking about homeless issues to anyone who will listen. She is a fierce advocate for vulnerable and marginalized populations, especially homeless Veterans. It is only through the great partnerships with community agencies that the VA will be able to end Veteran homelessness in Utah but we are all lucky to have someone like Meisha Jensen leading the charge.