

Tomah VAMC
La Crosse Transitional Residence (TR) Program Home
Informational Sheet

Overview:

The Tomah VA Medical Center's Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Residence (CWT-TR) Program provides a bridge between residential treatment and successful independent community living. The CWT-TR program is designed to help Veterans increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, and assist in maintaining each individual Veteran's recovery gains to achieve optimal wellness. The program provides a supportive residence and work experience, with the primary goal of assisting Veterans in maximizing their independent living and vocational capabilities. Each Veteran in the program has the overall goal of community reintegration by independently living and working in the community. The average time spent in the CWT-TR program is between 6 to 12 months. Incorporated in the CWT-TR program is vocational placement in local private industry or in the Tomah VA Medical Center's Compensated Work Therapy Program. 100% of Veterans are employed within one week of entering the program and it is a requirement that they maintain employment during their stay in the program.

VHA Transition Residency Program Information:

Nationwide, the VA's CWT-TR program has been actively assisting Veterans since 1994. The program was designed to be integrated into local communities. Currently, there are 41 CWT-TR programs across the VA system with over half of the programs located in a community setting. As a whole, all of these programs have been accepted by the community they are housed in, and the Veteran-community partnership thrives on the integration.

Number of Residents:

The proposed TR program located in LaCrosse will house 8 Veterans.

Screening Criteria:

The CWT-TR program is an advanced program where Veterans meeting the admission criteria are both medically and mentally stable. Veterans are assessed by a clinical treatment team to ensure they are ready for the responsibilities of the program. Many of the Veterans admitted to the program are graduates from one or more other VA treatment programs. This program is the final step toward independent living. As an additional screening measure, the Tomah VA medical center will still run a TR program on the Tomah campus. Only stable, non-sex offender, Veterans who are successfully progressing toward program graduation will be admitted to the LaCrosse location.

Staffing:

A full-time TR Care Manager (VA employee) will oversee the program, and be responsible for the screening of candidates. In addition, a security assistant or similar staff will be on duty during night, weekend, and holiday hours. VHA TR programs are also staffed by resident managers, who are on-site 24/7 and are Veterans who have been successful in treatment.

Parking:

The maximum number of vehicles that will be parked the property is 4. Should there be more than 4 residents with a vehicle, arrangements will be made with the LaCrosse Veterans Outpatient clinic to accommodate the additional vehicles.

Building Upkeep and Maintenance:

As a part of their program responsibilities, the Veterans residing at the LaCrosse property will maintain the house both inside and out. It will be inspected daily by staff. In addition, the house will be included in the Tomah VA Medical Center's annual budget like all buildings located on the Tomah campus and have a planned maintenance allowance to ensure upkeep to established Federal standards. It will carefully be maintained and decorated appropriately to continue to blend into the community as it currently does.

Resident Life and Goals:

Veterans are expected to do the same things other citizens do, such as pay for their housing, shop, cook, clean and maintain the house, and care for the residence. Living in the therapeutic residence provides Veterans with opportunities to develop and practice responsible, positive life skills as they reintegrate into the community. Some of the goals of the CWT-TR program are to help Veterans:

- Manage their life in an independent and productive manner.
- Receive skills training such as money management.
- Learn independent living skills such as cooking, cleaning and home maintenance.
- Develop good work habits.
- Remain sober and improve their mental health status in a supportive residential setting.
- Strengthen stress management, interpersonal skills and other individualized coping skills.
- Identify and utilize existing community support systems such as AA/NA/SMART, sponsors and other positive influences and community resources.
- Minimize reliance on institutional care.
- Sharpen job-search techniques for competitive job placement, such as interview skills
- Explore reintegration into community and family living.
- Obtain and maintain employment and stable housing in the community.

Resident Conduct:

All Veterans must conduct themselves in a respectful manner, always considering the thoughts, feelings, and rights of others. Veterans in the program have the following code of conduct that they are expected to follow:

- No firearms, alcohol, or drugs allowed
- Follow all the Tomah VA Medical Center's CWT-TR's safety rules and posted signs.
- Be considerate and respectful of all other Veterans, staff members and community neighbors.
- Cooperate with staff and following their treatment plan.
- Keep all scheduled diagnostic or treatment appointments, and take their medications as prescribed by their VA physician or Primary Care Provider.
- Avoid interference in the treatment of other TR residents.
- Alert the staff when another resident is having difficulties.
- Ensure that visitors be considerate of other residents and neighbors, while observing visiting hours and rules. (No overnight guests)
- Behave in a manner that is not abusive and does not violate the rights of others.

- Participate in community-based activities as part of their treatment plan.
- Participate in community volunteer activities as determined by all the house members and the CWT-TR Care Manager.

Compliance:

There are several house rules and responsibilities that each Veteran must effectively adhere to, not only to stay in the program, but to successfully complete the program. Veterans must be serious about their recovery to be successful in the program. They rely on each other, VA staff, family and friends for support as they work towards their successful completion of the program. As stated earlier, the CWT-TR program is a program that was designed to be in the community.

Tax Status:

Once the property is transferred to VA (Federal Government), it will become tax exempt. The VA is willing to work with the City of LaCrosse by making payments in lieu of taxes (PiLoT).

Opportunity:

The opportunity to locate the TR program in LaCrosse provides significant benefits for the Veterans. The job market is considerably larger than the Tomah community and public transportation is readily available. Location of this program in LaCrosse allows the Veterans to continue their mission of service to the community—a mission they started in the military, and now continue through volunteerism. The Tomah VA Medical Center and the TR Veterans look forward to becoming strong and trusted community partners.