

Veterans Law Clinic Feasibility Study

Prepared for Valparaiso University Law School

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In the following report, Hanover Research examines the potential viability of a veterans law clinic in Northwest Indiana. The report considers indicators of demand for services, the proximity of similar services, potential partner organizations, and the organization and funding strategies of existing veterans law clinics in the United States.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the following report, Hanover Research provides information to aid Valparaiso University Law School in the development of a veterans law clinic. The report considers indicators of demand for associated services, the proximity of similar services, potential partner organizations, and the organization and funding strategies of existing veterans law clinics in the United States.

Research indicates that veterans law clinics are growing in number but remain relatively rare. A 2012 compilation of research published by LLRX includes information from the veterans clinic at Widener University School of Law, which notes that while “the number of veterans law clinics at ABA-accredited law schools has grown significantly in recent years ... only a handful of ... law schools have established clinics focusing on the legal needs of veterans.”¹ Hanover’s research into veterans legal clinics bears out this trend and suggests that many existent veterans legal clinics have difficulty keeping pace with the demand for services.

KEY FINDINGS

- **The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics estimates that over 62,000 veterans currently reside in Northwest Indiana (Porter, La Porte, Jasper, Newton, and Lake Counties).** More detailed – though less recent – data from the American Community Survey indicate that a relatively small percentage of area veterans have incomes below the poverty level, but that a significant number – just over 7,000 – have a service-connected disability rating. While these statistics are a somewhat indirect means of assessing the size of the population that could potentially be served by a veterans legal clinic, qualitative information confirms the demand for associated services. Nearly all of the veterans law clinic directors interviewed by Hanover for this report indicated difficulty in meeting demand.
- **If Valparaiso University Law School were to launch a veterans clinic, it would be the only one of its kind in Northwest Indiana.** The closest comparable offerings in the region are currently operated by The John Marshall Law School, the University of Detroit Mercy, and Southern Illinois University, which is reportedly planning to re-launch its clinic in 2014.
- **The average volume of cases varies widely across U.S. veterans law clinics** and is largely dependent on the scale of the initiative. The University of Detroit Mercy handles approximately 32 VA cases per year, while The John Marshall Law School serves 400 veterans per year. Emory University School of Law’s clinic, which relies entirely on volunteers and does not employ any paid staff, has handled only 23 cases since its inception in March 2013.

¹ Strutin, K. “Veterans in the Criminal Justice System: Defending Conditions of the Mind (Legal Assistance Subsection).” LLRX.com, April 20, 2012. <http://www.llrx.com/features/veterancriminaldefense.htm>

- **The organizational structures of veterans law clinics vary substantially across institutions.** Typically, clinics are overseen by a director or managing attorney. In some cases, clinics employ a small core of paid legal and administrative staff, although some (like Emory) rely entirely on volunteers. Clinic directors at the University of Detroit Mercy and The John Marshall Law School indicated the importance of maintaining a strong network of attorneys. Both institutions have developed extensive networks to facilitate service delivery.
- **Several of the veterans legal clinics examined in this report have established partnerships with external organizations to enhance or diversify service offerings.** Common partnerships formed by clinics that consult and represent veterans with claims before the VA include the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program, local veteran's support organizations, bar associations, and national non-profit organizations, such as Equal Justice Works. The Lewis B. Puller Benefits Clinic at William & Mary Law partners with the Center for Psychological Services and Development at Virginia Commonwealth University to provide therapy and counseling services in addition to legal aid for benefits claims.
- **Veterans legal clinics commonly receive funding from diverse sources, including institutional funds, grants, and private donations.** Several existing veterans legal clinics, including those at The John Marshall Law School and Thomas Jefferson School of Law, were launched with grant funds and currently subsist on some combination of institutional funds and private donations. Other clinics, such as Chapman University's, have entered into partnerships in order to launch. Chapman's clinic is funded entirely by the AMVETS Department of California but has received additional gifts from the Jewish Communal Fund, the California Community Foundation, and private donors.

SECTION I: POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR SERVICES

In this section, Hanover Research examines veteran population trends nationally and in the State of Indiana, with the aim of gauging potential demand for the services offered by a veterans law clinic.

GAUGING DEMAND FOR SERVICES

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides a wide range of benefits and services to veterans.² According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, there are currently 23 million veterans in the United States, 3.9 million of whom are “currently in receipt of disability benefits” from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).³ Just under 500,000 of the veterans in the United States live in Indiana.⁴ Figure 1.1 displays the number of veterans the VA estimates currently reside in the counties in Northwest Indiana.

Figure 1.1 Number of Veterans by County, Northwest Indiana

COUNTY	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VETERANS, 2013
Porter	14,002
La Porte	10,447
Jasper	2,618
Newton	1,402
Lake	33,598
Total	62,067

Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.⁵

Unfortunately, the VA is not particularly efficient at processing disability claims. Anecdotal accounts suggest that it can take several years for the Agency of Original Jurisdiction (AOJ) to rule on the eligibility of disability claims, and that more than half of the denials for disability claims issued by the VA are eventually overturned.⁶ The lack of efficiency and the number of incorrect decisions made by the AOJs have created a voluminous backlog of claims and appeals, further complicating the VA’s ability to efficiently handle disability claims. In the 2012 fiscal year, the VA Board of Appeals estimated that it took an average of 1,040 days “between the filing of an appeal at the AOJ and the Board’s disposition of the appeal.”⁷

² “Veterans Services.” Department of Veterans Services.” http://www.va.gov/landing2_vetsrv.htm

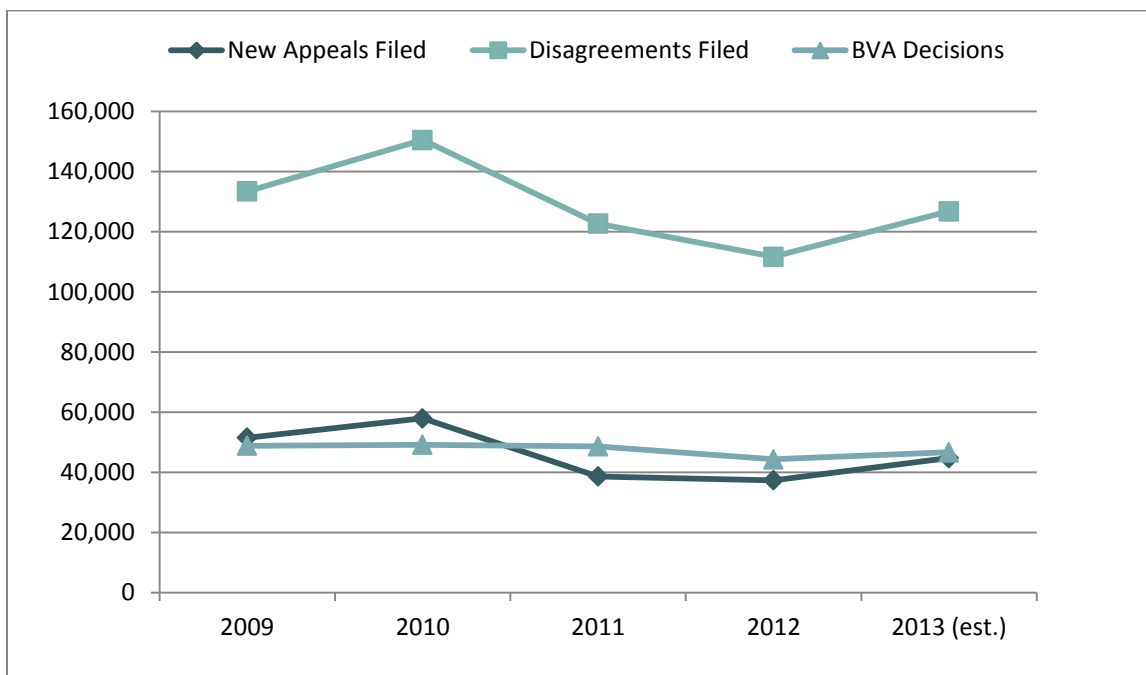
³ “Veterans Benefits Administration Reports.” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/mmwr/index.asp>

⁴ “National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.” Department of Veterans Affairs. http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp

⁵ Ibid. These figures are based on the VA’s most recent (2011) Veteran Population Projection Model.

⁶ See, e.g., “Veterans Clinic to Open at School of Law in January.” *Mizzou Weekly*. 35:8, October 10, 2013. <http://mizzouweekly.missouri.edu/archive/2013/35-8/veterans/index.php>; “Veterans Law Clinic Appeal Specialists.” Veterans Law Clinic. <http://law.widener.edu/vetclinic/>

⁷ “Report of the Chairman: Fiscal Year 2012,” p. 19. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Board of Veterans’ Appeals. http://www.bva.va.gov/docs/Chairmans_Annual_Rpts/BVA2012AR.pdf

Figure 1.2: Workflow Metrics, Board of Veterans Appeals

Source: "Report of the Chairman: Fiscal Year 2012." Board of Veterans' Appeals.⁸

Although there has been some progress in reducing the overall backlog of disability claims more generally,⁹ based on the average rate at which decisions were made in FY2012, the VA estimated that it would take 27.6 months of work to clear out the appeals backlog. As Figure 1.2 shows, the BVA is currently making decisions at the same rate as they receive new appeals.¹⁰

A significant need for veterans' pro bono legal services exists. The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono program—a national organization that facilitates pro bono veterans' legal work through education and case referrals—has only touched a little more than 28,000 cases in the last 21 years.¹¹ Veterans legal clinics typically provide pro bono services to veterans without the ability to represent themselves or the means to pay for representation. To offer a general indication of the potential size of the population that could be served by this type of clinic in Northwest Indiana, Figure 1.3, on the following page, provides an overview of the veteran population in Northwest Indiana by income level and disability status. Note that detailed data were not available for Newton County. While the data presented in Figure 1.3 are older than the VA's state-level veteran population estimates (see Figure 1.1), they

⁸ Ibid., pp. 18, 21, 24.

⁹ Levardi, Y. "Backlog of Disability Claims Reduced by 34 Percent since March, 93 Percent of Claims over One Year Old Completed." Vantage Point, Nov. 7, 2013, <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/10840/backlog-of-disability-claims-reduced-by-34-percent-since-march-93-percent-of-claims-over-one-year-old-completed/>

¹⁰ "Report of the Chairman: Fiscal Year 2012." Op. cit., p. 20.

¹¹ "2011 Annual Report," p. 5. The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. May, 2011. <http://www.vetsprobono.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Pro-Bono-Report-2011.pdf>

nonetheless provide a useful general overview of the breakdown of the veteran population by basic income level and disability status.

Figure 1.3: Estimated Veteran Population in Northwest Indiana by Age, Disability Status, and Poverty Status (American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, 2009-11)

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS	JASPER	LAKE	LAPORTE	PORTER
18 to 34 years				
Veterans	160	1,990	272	811
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	0	324	66	96
With a disability	0	34	0	0
No disability	0	290	66	96
Income in the past 12 months at or above poverty level	160	1,666	206	715
With a disability	32	138	0	70
No disability	128	1,528	206	645
35 to 54 years				
Veterans	806	8,429	2,410	3,233
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	41	836	156	242
With a disability	19	308	7	63
No disability	22	528	149	179
Income in the past 12 months at or above poverty level	765	7,593	2,254	2,991
With a disability	93	758	192	270
No disability	672	6,835	2,062	2,721
55 to 64 years				
Veterans	882	8,087	2,320	3,343
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	11	542	229	306
With a disability	11	200	159	189
No disability	0	342	70	117
Income in the past 12 months at or above poverty level	871	7,545	2,091	3,037
With a disability	297	1,620	527	624
No disability	574	5,925	1,564	2,413
65 years and over				
Veterans	1,003	14,539	3,973	4,704
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	50	785	187	160
With a disability	13	280	132	52
No disability	37	505	55	108
Income in the past 12 months at or above poverty level	953	13,754	3,786	4,544
With a disability	413	5,182	1,577	1,523
No disability	540	8,572	2,209	3,021

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.¹²

Note that county-level data are not available for Newton County.

Note that the disability status in Figure 1.3 constitutes general disability status, which may or may not be the result of military service. The U.S. Census Bureau provides separate data

¹² Data compiled through American FactFinder. <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

(not segmented by income level) for **service-connected disabilities specifically**. These data are shown in Figure 1.4, below.

Figure 1.4: Service-Connected Disability Rating Status for Civilian Veterans 18 Years and Over (American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, 2009-11)

	JASPER	LAKE	LAPORTE	PORTER
Total Civilian Veterans 18 years and Over (Est.)	2,865	33,357	9,569	12,199
Has no service-connected disability rating	2,546	29,054	8,583	10,849
Has a service-connected disability rating	319	4,303	986	1,350

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.¹³
Note that county-level data are not available for Newton County.

¹³ Ibid.

SECTION II: FUNDING AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS FOR VETERANS LAW CLINICS

In this section, Hanover Research examines the organization and funding sources of veterans legal clinics throughout the United States. Hanover’s research indicates that funding and organizational structures vary widely from institution to institution. However, despite these differences, veterans legal clinics typically adhere to one of two basic service models: a short-term model providing advice but not legal representation, or a more comprehensive model offering a fuller suite of services, including representation. Note that a few law schools offering veterans legal clinics cover both of these dimensions in more diversified service models.

The advice model is exemplified by **Marquette University Law School**, which partners with the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office to offer two, two-hour-long clinics each month. A volunteer attorney supports law students as they offer legal advice to veterans on a variety of civil law matters, including family law, landlord-tenant issues, probate law, guardianship issues, and others. Twenty-four private practice attorneys have volunteered to work in the clinic, and 34 of the school’s current law students have participated at some point in their education.¹⁴

Marquette University Law School partners with the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office to provide legal advice – but not full legal representation – to local veterans on a bi-monthly basis.

The clinic has served a total of 793 veterans since its launch in August 2009. The Veterans Service Office provides three rooms and storage facilities to Marquette students. The law school provides laptops and printers for each clinic; no additional resources are typically required.¹⁵

Because of the shorter time commitment of the volunteers, this clinic model does not lend itself to more time-intensive activities such as case file examination, brief composition, and representation that other veterans clinics often offer. In fact, the students and attorneys involved in Marquette’s veterans legal clinic actively screen requests for legal assistance that may require more resources than the clinic offers.¹⁶

In a more comprehensive service model, the provision of advice and representation for appeals of denied benefits claims is a particularly common offering. The veterans clinic at **Widener Law** provides a prototypical example of this approach. It offers representation to disabled veterans in the state and surrounding area before the Department of Veterans Affairs and relevant federal courts. In particular, the clinic “offers free legal aid to qualified

¹⁴ Schultz, A. Director of Pro Bono Legal Services. Marquette University Law School. Telephone interview. Friday, November 8, 2013.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

veterans who have been denied benefits by the Regional Office and wish to take an appeal.”¹⁷ The clinic involves law students in “reviewing cases, communicating with clients, representing clients at hearings, writing briefs and advising clients on a course of action for their claim(s).”¹⁸

The clinic actively serves approximately 200 clients at any one time, operating with the equivalent of four paid staff serving the program: a full-time director, a part-time attorney, two fellows per year, and one part-time secretary. Seventy-five volunteer attorneys who practice near the school partner with the clinic on individual cases and are supported by approximately 15 students every semester and approximately eight students during the summer.¹⁹

The clinic is funded by a variety of sources, including institutional funds, grants, and some private and corporate donations. Institutional funds cover the director’s salary; grants from the State of Delaware and several other organizations, such as Equal Justice Works, fund the part-time attorney’s position and the two fellows; private and corporate donations only account for “a very small portion” of the clinic’s operating revenue.²⁰

The University of Detroit Mercy School of Law offers a full suite of legal services for veterans through a Law Clinic, Appellate Clinic, and Project SALUTE.

A few institutions offer both short-term legal advice *and* representation to veterans. The **University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) School of Law** is one such institution. UDM’s Law School operates a Veterans Law Clinic, a Veterans Appellate Clinic, and a pro bono program called Project SALUTE. The first two serve veterans’

long-term needs, assisting with case preparation and representation before the Veteran’s Affairs Regional Office and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, respectively. Project SALUTE is jointly sponsored by UDM, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Macomb Community College, and facilitates the provision of a variety of shorter-term services—such as “education, self-help assistance, and sometimes placement with a volunteer attorney.” Project SALUTE is structured to be temporary and mobile, only staying in one location for a short time.²¹ Students participating in either clinic are given course credit for the term in which they serve.²² On average, six students per year (approximately

¹⁷ “Information for Law Students.” Widener Law.

<http://law.widener.edu/Academics/ClinicalProgramsandProfessionalTraining/Clinics/VeteransLawClinic/InformationforLawStudents.aspx>

¹⁸ “Contact Information.” Widener Law.

<http://law.widener.edu/Academics/ClinicalProgramsandProfessionalTraining/Clinics/VeteransLawClinic/StaffandContactInformation.aspx>

¹⁹ Saidel, S. Veterans Law Clinic Director. Widener University School of Law. Email correspondence. Monday, November 11, 2013.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kudialis, T. Project SALUTE Director. University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Email correspondence. Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

²² “Clinics.” University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. <http://www.law.udmercy.edu/index.php/academics1/clinics>

two per term) participate in the Veterans Law Clinic, and 12 students (approximately six per term) participate in the Veterans Appellate Clinic.²³

The pro bono veterans legal services provided by the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law are supported by one paid director; one tenure-track faculty member who oversees the Veterans Law Clinic; one adjunct faculty member who oversees the Veterans Appellate Clinic; two paid support staff; and approximately two or three work study students.²⁴ Figure 2.1 displays the average number of veterans assisted by these programs.

Figure 2.1: Number of Veterans Served, University of Detroit Mercy

CLINIC/PROGRAM	AVERAGE NUMBER SERVED
Veterans Law Clinic	<25 per year
Veterans Appellate Clinic	4-6 per year
Project SALUTE	4,200 since 2008

Source: Email correspondence.²⁵

Of the three programs at the UDM Law School, Project SALUTE requires the most partnerships. The institution has partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs, “many veteran service organizations, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, local legal aid offices in numerous states, VOA, [and] community based non-profits,” among others. All of UDM’s programs and activities are funded by a combination of institutional funds and private contributions.²⁶

The **Thomas Jefferson School of Law** also offers both short- and long-term legal assistance services to veterans through its clinic. The long-term services are offered to the residents and alumni of Veterans Village of San Diego, a “highly successful, residential program that provides housing, substance abuse, mental health, and job training services to formerly homeless veterans who are struggling to regain full participation in society.”²⁷ The clinic essentially serves as an in-house civil, legal, and general practice council to the Village, and works on family law, bankruptcy, criminal record expungement, and government benefits issues for the residents and alumni. Students who participate—approximately 25 per year—receive six credit hours, and are directed by the clinic’s staff attorney.²⁸

In response to demand from veterans, the clinic also recently began offering limited-assistance advice clinics to local veterans with any legal question, in addition to the long-term consulting and representational work typically provided. The limited-assistance clinic operates once a month for two hours, and serves an average of eight clients per month,

²³ Kudialis, T. Op. cit.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic.” Thomas Jefferson School of Law. <http://www.tjssl.edu/clinics/veterans-clinic>

²⁸ Berenson, S. Director, Veterans Legal Clinic. Thomas Jefferson School of Law. Telephone interview. Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

which is sufficient to meet local demand. The students that staff the events are volunteers and receive training prior to the event.²⁹

U.S. VETERANS LAW CLINICS

Hanover's scan for veterans law clinics in the United States identified 20 existing clinics and two currently in development at ABA-approved law schools. To identify legal clinics, Hanover utilized the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono program's directory of veterans law clinics and also consulted the Benchmark Institute's "Guide to Veterans Legal Issues."^{30,31} Hanover additionally conducted general online searches and scans of news and press releases to identify new or planned veterans legal clinics. Note that some institutions, such as the University of San Diego, offer veterans legal clinics with very narrow focus areas not comparable to Valparaiso's proposed offering;³² these are excluded from the figure below. Figure 2.2 displays a list of the institutions offering generally comparable veterans legal clinics, along with information about the number of staff and veterans served, where available.

According to Hanover's interview with the executive director of The John Marshall Law School's Veterans Legal Clinic, the Southern Illinois University's veterans law clinic is being re-launched in 2014, having briefly ceased operations after the departure of its director several years ago. JMLS's executive director additionally indicated that the College of Law at the University of Utah and the Shepard Broad Law Center at Nova Southeastern University in Florida are also launching new veterans clinics.³³ Hanover was able to confirm this information for Nova Southeastern through recent press releases; however, we were unable to find definitive confirmation of the University of Utah's planned clinic.³⁴

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Veterans Law Clinics – Updated March 2013." (Most recent listing available). Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. <http://www.vetsprobono.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Law-Clinics-2013.pdf>

³¹ "Guide to Veterans Legal Issues," p. 19. Benchmark Institute. http://www.benchmarkinstitute.org/t_by_t/substantive/Guide_to_Veterans_Legal_Issues.pdf

³² The University of San Diego's clinic, for instance, is specifically focused on veterans in need of legal assistance related to the use of the GI Bill. See "Veterans Legal Clinic: Defending Your GI Bill." University of San Diego. <http://www.sandiego.edu/veteransclinic/>

³³ Clauss, B. Executive Director, Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic. The John Marshall Law School. Telephone interview. Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

³⁴ See "South Florida's First Veterans Law Clinic." Nova Southeastern University. <http://www.nsulaw.nova.edu/spotlights/veteranclinic.cfm>

Figure 2.2: Listing of U.S. Veterans Law Clinics

INSTITUTION	STATE	NO. OF ASSOC. STAFF	STAFF TITLES	NUMBER OF VETS SERVED	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
<p>Chapman University Dale W. Fowler School of Law <i>AMVETS Legal Clinic</i></p>	<p>CA</p>	<p>7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director, Institute for Military Personnel, Veterans, Human Rights & International Law & AMVETS Legal Clinic ▪ Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor and Supervising Attorney in the Military Law Institute and AMVETS Legal Clinic ▪ Post-doctoral Clinical Fellow (4) ▪ Office Coordinator/Assistant 	<p>~ 50 per year</p>	<p>“Legal representation on issues ranging from Discharge Upgrades, Traumatic Service Group Life Insurance Appeals, VA Benefits Appeals, and issues arising under the Service Members Civil Relief Act.”</p>
<p>Emory University School of Law <i>Volunteer Clinic for Veterans</i></p>	<p>GA</p>	<p>4³⁵ (unpaid)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professor of Law (Co-director) ▪ Adjunct Professor (Co-director) ▪ National Security Law Society Student Leaders (2) 	<p>6 current active cases listed; 23 total cases since inception</p>	<p>“Disability benefit claims both before the Veterans Administration and in subsequent appellate proceedings.”</p>

³⁵ Emory’s clinic is co-directed by a full professor in the School of Law, whose oversight is pro bono, and an adjunct professor with a full courseload. In email correspondence, the clinic’s co-director noted that “The Clinic does not currently have paid staff, faculty, interns and/or fellows supporting its efforts.” Thirty-five student volunteers have worked on cases since the clinic’s inception. (Dennard, L. Co-Director, Volunteer Clinic for Veterans, Emory University. Email correspondence. Thursday, November 14, 2013.).

INSTITUTION	STATE	NO. OF ASSOC. STAFF	STAFF TITLES	NUMBER OF VETS SERVED	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
<p>George Mason University School of Law <i>Clinic for Legal Assistance to Servicemembers and Veterans</i></p>	VA	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director 	"Over 70" since 2004	<p>"Representation is limited to civil matters such as negotiation and litigation in consumer protection, family law, bankruptcy, immigration, landlord-tenant, contract, estate and entitlement matters in federal and state forums.</p> <p>The clinic also handles administrative and military law and entitlements matters such as Traumatic Service Group Life Insurance issues and appeals; Physical Evaluation Boards; and discharge upgrade applications."</p> <p>As of 2012, the clinic provides "representation related to appeal of initial (partial or total) denials of disability compensation claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the filing of requests for increases in previously approved disability compensation, and appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims."</p>
<p>Harvard Law School <i>Veterans Clinic</i></p>	MA	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinical Professor of Law 	n/a	<p>"Case types include discharge upgrade and correction of military records cases; veterans benefits cases before Veterans Administration Regional Offices, the Board of Veterans Appeals, and the U.S. court of Appeals for Veterans Claims; and representation of veterans, family members, or both in other matters involving access to healthcare, financial assistance, and similar life necessities."</p>

INSTITUTION	STATE	NO. OF ASSOC. STAFF	STAFF TITLES	NUMBER OF VETS SERVED	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
John Marshall Law School <i>Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic</i>	IL	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director ▪ Clinical Director ▪ Senior Staff Attorney ▪ Staff Attorney ▪ Hourly Attorney (2) ▪ + Hourly Ad Hoc Attorneys (typically, JAG attorneys between bar and duty) 	400 per year	“The VLSC works on all aspects of Veteran Benefits Administration claims, from the initial, factual intake to the technical representation of claims at the appellate level.”
Marquette University Law School <i>Volunteer Legal Clinic for Veterans</i>	WI	3 ³⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MJC Clinic Facilitator/Pro Bono Facilitator ▪ VA Clinic Facilitator/MVLC Director and Steering Committee Chair/Adjunct Professor of Law ▪ MVLC Program Assistant 	Average of 192 per year	Legal advice related to legal advice to civil law matters, including family law, landlord-tenant issues, probate law, and guardianship issues. <i>No in-court representation offered.</i>
North Carolina Central University Law School <i>Veterans Law Clinic</i>	NC	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director 	n/a	“The Veterans Law Clinic is handling all types of claims at all stages of the Veterans Affairs’ claims adjudication process including judicial review. Under extensive supervision, law students assist veterans and their families with the complexities and technical aspects of filing their claims with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Offices nationwide, the Board of Veterans Appeals, and the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.”

³⁶ There are three individuals involved directly in clinic operations; however, the clinic employs 1.5 *paid* FTE: the clinic facilitator (1), and the adjunct professor, who directs and coordinates the brief legal advice clinics (part-time). Approximately 12 students are actively involved at a time, along with 24 volunteer lawyers.

INSTITUTION	STATE	NO. OF ASSOC. STAFF	STAFF TITLES	NUMBER OF VETS SERVED	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
Phoenix School of Law (Arizona Summit Law School) <i>Veteran's Legal Assistance Clinic</i>	AZ	<i>No information available. Clinic may have closed since its listing in the March 2013 Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program directory.</i>			
Southern Illinois University School of Law	IL	<i>Not currently operational; re-launching in 2014.</i>			
Stetson University <i>Veterans Law Institute</i>	FL	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Associate Professor & Clinical Director 	n/a	For area veterans, the clinic offers representation for disability benefits appeals. For actively deployed servicemembers, the clinic provides "free legal assistance for legal problems," as well as referral services.
Thomas Jefferson School of Law <i>Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic</i>	CA	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professor, Director of VLAC ▪ Staff Attorney 	~ 100 per year	The clinic "provides limited legal assistance, as well as full service legal representation, to the residents and alumni of Veterans Village of San Diego."
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law <i>Veterans Law Clinic; Veterans Appellate Clinic; Project SALUTE</i>	MI	7-8*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director ▪ Professor (full) ▪ Professor (adjunct) ▪ Support staff (2) ▪ Work study students (2-3) 	Over 4,200 in 5 years; ~ 32 VA cases per year	"The University of Detroit Mercy School of Law has pioneered Project SALUTE, the Veterans Law Clinic and the Veterans Appellate Clinic to address the compelling legal needs of veterans. These programs focus on Veterans Federal Disability and Pension Benefits matters through education, law student representation, and volunteer attorney referral."
University of Missouri School of Law <i>Veterans Clinic</i>	MO	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervising Attorney 	New program, no clients yet served	"The new Veterans Clinic at the MU School of Law will help veterans and their families secure disability benefits."
University of South Carolina School of Law <i>Veterans Rights Placement Clinic (course)</i>	SC	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Clinical Education 	n/a	"This clinic will offer students both skills and substantive instruction in representing veterans in the prosecution of their benefits within the Department of Veterans Affairs' unique adjudicatory system."
University of Virginia Law School <i>Veterans Medical Disability Appeals Pro Bono Program</i>	VA	<i>No information available. Clinic may have closed since its listing in the March 2013 Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program directory.</i>			

INSTITUTION	STATE	NO. OF ASSOC. STAFF	STAFF TITLES	NUMBER OF VETS SERVED	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
University of Wisconsin Madison Law School <i>Veterans Law Center</i>	WI	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Veterans Law Center Administrator ▪ Attorney and Paralegal Volunteer Coordinator ▪ Student Volunteer Coordinator (2) 	n/a	“The Veterans Law Center (VLC) is a free walk-in legal clinic to serve low-income veterans and their families. Brief legal advice, information and referrals on a variety of civil legal matters are provided by volunteer lawyers, paralegals and law students.”
Widener University School of Law <i>Veterans Law Clinic</i>	DE	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director ▪ Staff Attorney ▪ Professor Emeritus ▪ Legal Fellow (2) ▪ Office Coordinator ▪ 2 part-time graduate interns 	n/a	“The VLC provides free legal assistance to veterans residing in Pennsylvania and Delaware and surrounding areas with meritorious VA claims resulting from a denial of benefits by their Regional Office. The VLC also engages in community outreach, providing wills and other estate documents to low-income veterans, sharing best practices with other clinics around the country, and recruiting and training local attorneys willing to take on veterans’ cases pro bono.”
William & Mary Law School <i>Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic</i>	VA	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing Attorney/Professor of the Practice of Law 	~50 at any one time	Services are currently limited to disability compensation claims.
Yale University <i>Veterans Legal Services Clinic</i>	CT	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinical Associate Professor of Law ▪ Clinical Visiting Lecturer ▪ Deputy Dean for Experiential Education 	10 matters listed as currently on docket	“In this clinic ... students have represented Connecticut veterans in litigation before administrative agencies and courts, on benefits, discharge upgrade, immigration, and pardon matters. In addition, students represent local and national organizations in non-litigation matters relating to the legal needs of veterans, including regulatory and legislative reform efforts, media advocacy, strategic planning, and other matters.”
University of Pittsburg <i>Veteran’s Legal Practicum (course)</i>	PA	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjunct professor 	New program, no clients yet served	“The practicum has at its core, four main goals: to assist veterans in filing and processing their initial claims for benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); to identify trends in veteran’s legal issues for the region; to connect existing programs designed to assist veterans; and to refer veterans to other attorneys for legal issues that the clinic cannot address.”

INSTITUTION	STATE	NO. OF ASSOC. STAFF	STAFF TITLES	NUMBER OF VETS SERVED	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
<p>Duquesne University <i>Veterans Clinic</i></p>	<p>PA</p>	<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Clinical Legal Education ▪ Assistant Director of Clinical Legal Education ▪ Administrative Assistant ▪ Adjunct Clinical Professor, Supervising Attorney 	<p>n/a</p>	<p>“The Veterans Clinic provides assistance to veterans charged with misdemeanors and felonies who have been accepted into the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Veterans Court.”</p>

Source: Institutional websites; primary outreach to law schools.

Note that staff counts include all staff directly associated with the operation of each clinic. These do counts do not include volunteers and attorneys engaged in pro bono work on an ad hoc basis. Except in cases in which Hanover held interviews with law school representatives, these numbers are based on publically-listed staff for each clinic. Most law schools do not specify paid vs. unpaid positions.

*Across all initiatives.

POTENTIAL REGIONAL COMPETITORS

There are no other law schools in the State of Indiana offering veterans legal clinics similar to the one proposed by Valparaiso Law. The clinics at **Indiana University's Robert H. McKinney School of Law**, listed below, provide a variety of generally similar services; however, none target veterans specifically, and none indicate that they assist with VA benefits claims. Both the Civil Practice Clinic and the Disability Clinic at the McKinney School of Law provide services most similar to those offered by veterans clinics. In particular, the Civil Practice Clinic assists low-income clients in a variety of civil litigation areas, and the Disability Clinic assists clients with qualifying or maintaining disability benefits.³⁷ The full list of Indiana University's clinics is as follows:

- Appellate Clinic
- Civil Practice Clinic
- Criminal Defense Clinic
- Disability Clinic
- Health and Human Rights Clinic
- Immigration Clinic
- Wrongful Conviction Clinic

The closest veterans legal clinics to Valparaiso University Law School are at the University of Detroit Mercy, the John Marshall Law School, and Southern Illinois University. Despite the fact that this constitutes a fairly high number of institutions in broad regional proximity offering veterans law clinics, all of the clinics Hanover spoke with indicated a high level of demand for legal assistance from the veteran population. Furthermore, given the size of the need and the service-oriented nature of the clinics, directors interviewed by Hanover tended to indicate that a sense of competition does not exist between clinics.³⁸

ORGANIZATION OF VETERANS CLINICS

Veterans clinics exhibit highly varied organizational structures, but are typically overseen by at least one faculty member (usually a supervising attorney or director) with relevant training and/or experience in veterans law.³⁹ Although clinics typically engage law students and external attorneys on a volunteer basis, the specific number of volunteers engaged is often not noted, and may depend on case volume. Emory University has recruited 58 lawyers to participate as pro bono counsel and student mentors, 25 of whom have agreed to participate in veterans law clinic activities;⁴⁰ other clinics, as noted below, maintain significantly wider networks of volunteers.

³⁷ "Law School Clinic." Indiana University. <http://mckinneylaw.iu.edu/practice/clinics/clinics-list.html>

³⁸ Clauss, B. Op. cit.; Berenson, S. Op. cit.; Kudialis, T. Op. cit.

³⁹ For examples, see "Veterans Law." North Carolina Central University School of Law. <http://law.nccu.edu/clinics/veterans-law/>; "Veterans Clinic." Legal Services Center, Harvard Law School. <http://www.law.harvard.edu/academics/clinical/lsc/clinics/veterans.htm>; "About Us." Clinic for Legal Assistance to Servicemembers & Veterans. <http://clas.law.gmu.edu/about/>; "Veterans Advocacy Clinic – Legal Help for Veterans." Stetson Law. <http://www.stetson.edu/law/veterans/legal-help-for-veterans.php>

⁴⁰ Dennard, L. Op. cit.

The clinics operated by William and Mary Law School, the University of Missouri Law School, the George Mason University School of Law, and several others included in Figure 2.2 list only one directly affiliated staff member. Some well-established veterans legal clinics—such as those operated by the University of Wisconsin and William & Mary—also have advisory boards to guide the development and deployment of services.⁴¹

The University of Detroit Mercy’s Project SALUTE has a relatively unique organizational structure: it has a single director but relies on a large network of volunteer attorneys and students to man its traveling clinic. Because the clinic travels, the program has partnered with a variety of federal and local institutions and organizations, including the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division.⁴² The institution offers two courses for students at the law school who are interested in the clinic.⁴³

The John Marshall Law School’s Veterans Legal Clinic also operates a somewhat unique structure, in that it runs a “lean operation” without support staff or administrative assistants. The clinic’s executive director noted in an interview with Hanover that the clinic is trying a variety of organizational structures to determine what will work. In addition to its core staff, the clinic has a volunteer network of more than 300 trained and accredited attorneys.⁴⁴

Instead of creating a dedicated clinic course or legal center, some law schools host day-long events designed to provide a variety of free services to veterans. Hofstra University in New York, for example, held events this year to provide veterans free legal services in a wide variety of areas, including “elder law, tax, wills, estates, family law, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ benefits and claims, disability employment, USERRA, housing, bankruptcy, debtor/creditor matters, Medicare/Medicaid, and landlord-tenant disputes” among other areas. The law school’s first event served 70 veterans in eight hours.⁴⁵

Thomas Jefferson Law School participates in a similar annual event in San Diego: a day-long resource fair for homeless veterans called Stand Down. A wide variety of services and organizations (including food, shelter, and recovery, VA, Social Security, Homeless Court and

⁴¹ See “HMVHE Advisory Board Members.” William & Mary Law School.

<http://law.wm.edu/academics/programs/jd/electives/clinics/hmvhe/HMVHE%20Advisory%20Board/index.php> & “Veterans Advisory Board.” University of Wisconsin Law School.
<https://law.wisc.edu/probono/veteranslawcenter/>

⁴² “Meet the Director.” University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. <http://www.law.udmercy.edu/index.php/what-is-project-salute/meet-the-director>; “University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Partners with American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division to Serve Veterans.” News Release. University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. October 3, 2011. http://www.law.udmercy.edu/images/project_salute/ABA_YLD_Press_Release_9-28-11.pdf; “Who We Are.” University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. <http://www.law.udmercy.edu/index.php/what-is-project-salute>

⁴³ “Clinical Program.” University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. <http://www.law.udmercy.edu/index.php/what-is-project-salute/clinical-program>

⁴⁴ Clauss, B. Op. cit.

⁴⁵ Al-Muslim, A. “Free legal assistance for veterans at Hofstra event.” Newsday.com. November 4, 2013.
<http://www.newsday.com/long-island/towns/long-island-now-1.1732330/free-legal-assistance-for-veterans-at-hofstra-event-1.6373456>

Child Support Court) are represented at the fair, and Thomas Jefferson Law School students and volunteer attorneys represent approximately 40 to 50 homeless veterans before the Child Support Court throughout the day.⁴⁶

FUNDING OF VETERANS CLINICS

The methods through which veterans clinics are funded vary widely. Most of the clinics identified in Hanover’s research are funded through a combination of institutional funds, private donations from local businesses or non-profit organizations, partnerships with veterans organizations, and/or bar associations. It is not uncommon for institutions to delegate administrative coordination to students or other unpaid staff to reduce operating costs; the University of Wisconsin’s Center has two student volunteer coordinators, for instance.⁴⁷

Project SALUTE, at the University of Detroit Mercy, was initially funded by private and corporate donations.⁴⁸ The clinics at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and the John Marshall Law School also began with grant seed money and persist on institutional and donated funds.⁴⁹ Figure 2.3 shows the tier structure for private donations employed by The John Marshall Law School. The Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic at William & Mary Law “relies on private donations” from individuals, corporations, and foundations including the Jesse Ball DuPont Fund and the Honeywell Hometown Solutions Foundation.⁵⁰

Figure 2.3: Sponsorship Levels, John Marshall

SPONSORSHIP LEVEL	COST	SPONSORSHIP LEVEL	COST
Naming of the Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic	\$5,000,000	Waiting Area Sponsor	\$100,000
Naming of the Clinical Student Operations Center	\$1,000,000	Additional Office Sponsors	\$100,000
Classroom/Main Conference Room Sponsor	\$500,000	Lobby Display Wall Sponsor	\$75,000
Lobby Sponsor	\$250,000	Large Corridor Display Wall Sponsor	\$50,000
Jackson Boulevard Conference Room Sponsor	\$250,000	Corridor Display Wall Sponsors	\$25,000
Internal Interview Room Sponsor	\$150,000	Display Alcove Sponsor	\$25,000
Jackson Boulevard Interview Room	\$150,000	Kitchen Sponsor	\$25,000

⁴⁶ Berenson, S. Op. cit.

⁴⁷ “Civil Legal Services for Veterans and Their Families.” University of Wisconsin Law School. Op. cit.

⁴⁸ “Who We Are.” University of Detroit Mercy. Op. cit.

⁴⁹ Clauss, B. Op. cit.; Berenson, St. Op. cit.

⁵⁰ “Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic.” William & Mary Law School. <http://law.wm.edu/academics/programs/jd/electives/clinics/veterans/>

SPONSORSHIP LEVEL	COST	SPONSORSHIP LEVEL	COST
Sponsor			
Executive Director's Office Sponsor	\$150,000	Display Case Sponsors	\$15,000
Clinic Director's Office Sponsor	\$125,000	Carrel Bank Sponsors	\$10,000
Visiting Organizations' Office Sponsor	\$125,000	Individual Carrel Sponsors	\$3,500

Source: John Marshall Law School⁵¹

Emory University School of Law's clinic reports that it has had "little financing" since its inception, although the law school offers some resources, including a meeting room and phone service. The clinic's director notes that one of the most significant challenges for the clinic currently is raising sufficient funds to hire a director and to pay for expenses needed by many of the clinic's clients (such as psychological or medical examinations). The director notes also that, while the clinic receives referrals from the Georgia State Bar Military Legal Assistance Committee, the Veteran's Consortium Pro Bono Program, and a legal clinic at a local VA Hospital, a "significant portion" of recent cases have come into the clinic directly. The director feels the clinic "needs to offer a VA/Disability/Pension course for credit rather than rely completely on volunteer students."⁵²

Chapman University's AMVETS Legal Clinic is entirely funded by the AMVETS Department of California, but has received some additional gifts from the Jewish Communal Fund, the California Community Foundations, and other private donors.⁵³ On its initial launch, the Veterans Legal Assistance Program at Southern Illinois University was entirely funded by the Illinois Department of Veteran's Affairs through a grant program.⁵⁴

PARTNERSHIPS AND ADDITIONAL SERVICES OFFERED

In addition to the already described need for legal advice and representation related to benefits claim appeals, a number of veterans law clinics offer a variety of additional services to veterans.

The Lewis B. Puller Benefits Clinic at **William & Mary Law**, for instance, partners with the Center for Psychological Services and Development at Virginia Commonwealth University to

⁵¹ "John Marshall Law School Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic," p. 3. John Marshall Law School. <http://www.jmls.edu/foundation/pdf/new-vlsc-facility.pdf>

⁵² Dennard, L. Op. cit.

⁵³ "Institute for Military Personnel, Veterans, Human Rights & International Law & AMVETS Legal Clinic." Chapman University. <http://www.chapman.edu/research-and-institutions/military-law-institute/index.aspx>; Rotunda, K. Executive Director, Institute for Military Personnel, Veterans, Human Rights & International Law & AMVETS Legal Clinic. Email correspondence. Thursday, November 14, 2013.

⁵⁴ "Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs presents \$100,000 Veterans Cash grant to establish the SIU School of Law Veterans' Legal Assistance Program." State of Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. Press Release. July 23, 2008. <http://www3.illinois.gov/PressReleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=57&RecNum=7028>; Rosenbery, P. "State funds Veterans Legal Assistance Program." Southern Illinois University. <http://news.siu.edu/2009/08/081009par9119.html>; "SIU law school gets funds to help veterans." *Carmi Times*. July 23, 2010. <http://www.carmitimes.com/article/20100723/NEWS/307239906>

provide “assessments, therapy, and a range of social work and counseling services” to veterans in addition to legal help with benefit claims.⁵⁵ Together, the two institutions launched Helping Military Veterans through Higher Education (HMOVHE) to “bring together Virginia’s higher education institutions to participate” in “helping...veterans in education, outreach, evaluation, treatment and the benefits claims process.”⁵⁶ Currently, 12 additional higher education institutions in Virginia are listed as HMOVHE partner institutions, although a recent press release suggests that a total of 19 institutions are involved.⁵⁷

The John Marshall Law School’s Veterans Legal Clinic maintains relationships with state agencies, local medical schools, and the local judiciary – these relationships help to build the clinic’s “aggressive public presence,” which is also bolstered through frequent lectures, events, and publications.⁵⁸

Several law schools have forged partnerships or diversified services to move beyond the traditional veterans legal clinic model.

The unique partnerships initiated by the John Marshall clinic caught the attention and spurred the advocacy of U.S. Senator Mark Warner (D-VA). His efforts resulted in the clinic receiving the first national “best practice” certification from the VA. This status provides the clinic with an approved “expedited process for submission of disability claims.”⁵⁹ In 2010, John Marshall’s VLSC received a Department of Justice grant allowing for the development of the Justice Involved Veterans Initiative. The Initiative operates within the clinic to work with Illinois Veterans Treatment Courts; “work with federal magistrates in implementing a holistic approach to aid veterans at the Federal Enclave Misdemeanor Court”; and “to provide a centralized source of information about the relationship of domestic violence to post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain disorder.” The Initiative also aims to aid other law schools in the development of similar clinics throughout the country.⁶⁰

The Volunteer Clinic for Veterans at **Emory Law** exemplifies another approach to diversifying services to meet longer-term legal needs of veterans. In addition to providing legal aid and representation for disability claims before the VA, the clinic considers a variety of other case types, including:⁶¹

⁵⁵ “About the Clinic.” William and Mary Law School.

http://law.wm.edu/academics/programs/jd/electives/clinics/veterans/about_the_clinic/index.php

⁵⁶ “HMOVHE.” William and Mary Law School.

<https://law.wm.edu/academics/programs/jd/electives/clinics/hmvhe/index.php>

⁵⁷ “Our HMOVHE Partners.” William and Mary Law School.

<https://law.wm.edu/academics/programs/jd/electives/clinics/hmvhe/HMOVHE%20Partners/index.php>; “Sen. Warner Announces Dept. Of Veterans Affairs Certification of William & Mary Puller Clinic As a National Model.” Mark R. Warner. Press Release. August 21, 2013.

http://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ContentRecord_id=0ae06281-8e7d-41aa-a49c-24cc69469bee

⁵⁸ Clauss, B. Op. cit.

⁵⁹ “Sen. Warner Announces Dept. Of Veterans Affairs Certification of William & Mary Puller Clinic As a National Model.” Op. cit.

⁶⁰ “Serving Our Servicemembers.” John Marshall Law School. <http://www.jmls.edu/veterans/clients/index.php>

⁶¹ Bulleted points are quoted from source with slight adaptation: “Legal Assistance.” Emory Law.

<http://www.law.emory.edu/centers-clinics/volunteer-clinic-for-veterans/legal-assistance.html>

- *Pension claims* before the VA;
- *Claims for increased rating* before the VA Regional Office;
- *Claims for total disability* based on individual employability (TDIU) before the VA;
- *Request to reopen a claim* previously denied by the VA;
- Other VA issues including *assistance with the VA healthcare* and VA determinations of incompetency;
- *Applications for discharge upgrade* and record correction;
- *Employment law claims* and representation under USERRA and non-litigation “preventative” advice to non-profit organizations that represent veterans;
- *Criminal records*: the clinic will consider assisting veterans with problems associated with their records of arrest and conviction—these activities are civil in nature and the clinic will not become involved in the underlying criminal cases;
- *Policy issues*, including creation of veterans courts and issues arising under UDPCVA; and
- The clinic may consider assistance with *consumer law* and real property matters.

While a number of institutions offer additional civil law advice or long-term representation services, **Thomas Jefferson School of Law** in San Diego, California also provides some students the opportunity to work with veterans on criminal cases. Through the San Diego Office of the Primary Public Defender and the Servicemembers Legal Network, “the clinic places two students per semester with criminal defense attorneys who specialize in representing veterans in criminal cases.”⁶²

The Veterans Law Clinic recently founded at **NOVA Southeastern University** is planning to focus its advice and representation services on the “cases that will have the greatest impact on the stability and success of its clients, such as landlord-tenant cases, consumer matters, domestic relations and state/federal misdemeanors, among others.”⁶³ After offering short-term services and training through workshops, the clinic plans to offer services in a few areas of family law in fall 2013 and expand to other areas of civil law next year.⁶⁴

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CLINIC DESIGN

When considering the development of a veterans legal clinic, several features of the veteran demographic should be considered. The design of the space in which the clinic meets is “absolutely critical” to the success of the clinic, according to Brian Clauss, the executive

⁶² “Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic.” Op. cit.

⁶³ “South Florida’s First Veterans Law Clinic.” NOVA Southeastern University. <http://www.nsulaw.nova.edu/spotlights/veteranclinic.cfm>

⁶⁴ “NSU Law Names Jayme Cassidy as First Staff Attorney for South Florida’s Only Veterans Law Clinic.” NOVA Southeastern University. Press Release. April 25, 2013. <http://nsunews.nova.edu/nsu-law-names-jayme-cassidy-staff-attorney-south-floridas-veterans-law-clinic/>

director of The John Marshall Law School’s Veterans Legal Clinic. As many of the veterans who will seek aid through the program will suffer from mental or physical disabilities, the design of the space should receive significant attention.⁶⁵

The clinic at The John Marshall Law School, which recently underwent a significant restoration, implemented simple features designed to make veterans more comfortable so they will return if they need more support. These features include glass windows—an “egress perimeter sightline”—and an open floor plan to remove the impression of being enclosed, custom tiling for sound insulation, “a soothing color palette,” and natural light. The furniture looks more like home furniture than office furniture, the staff does not use paper files, and everyone at the clinic dresses casually to enhance clients’ comfort levels.⁶⁶

Aside from the persistent need for assistance with VA benefits claims and appeals, Clauss notes that many veterans seek assistance with family and employment law, which the JMLS clinic handles occasionally. Transition issues for female veterans are also another area of significant need among veterans, with few programmatic support options.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Clauss, B. Op. cit.

⁶⁶ Ibid.; “Veterans Legal Center and Clinic,” p. 2. John Marshall Law School.
<http://www.jmls.edu/foundation/pdf/new-vlsc-facility.pdf>

⁶⁷ Clauss, B. Op. cit.

SECTION III: POTENTIAL PARTNERS

In this section, Hanover Research profiles a variety of government, non-profit, and other organizations with which Valparaiso University Law School may partner in the development of a veterans legal clinic. Hanover focuses its identification of potential partner institutions on the state of Indiana, focusing on those that may constitute viable possibilities for either the pursuit of funding or provision of services or referrals.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM PRO BONO PROGRAM

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program provides legal “assistance to unrepresented veterans or their family members who have filed appeals at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.”⁶⁸ The program offers internships to first- and second-year law students, and collaborates with clinics at law schools. In the latter capacity, the program provides training, resources, and cases for consideration.⁶⁹ U.S. veterans clinics examined in this report, including Emory University School of Law, report having received referrals from the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program.⁷⁰

HOOSIER VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

The Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation (HVAF) of Indiana, a United Way organization, provides “transitional housing and basic needs to veterans and their families.”⁷¹ In addition to providing housing throughout Indiana, HVAF provides substance abuse, mental health, and support services to veterans and their families.⁷²

INDIANA LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

Indiana Legal Services, Inc., is a nonprofit firm that “provides free civil legal assistance to eligible low-income people” in Indiana. The organization specializes in assisting individuals whose legal situations inhibit access to food, shelter, income, medical care, or personal safety. Although they do not serve veterans exclusively, the organization may offer a source of volunteer attorneys to aid in the provision of legal services for a veterans law clinic.⁷³ The organization has offices throughout the state.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ “About Us.” The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. <http://www.vetsprobono.org/about-us/>

⁶⁹ “Law Clinics & Students.” The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. <http://www.vetsprobono.org/law-clinics-students/>

⁷⁰ Dennard, L. Op. cit.

⁷¹ “Who We Are.” HVAF of Indiana, Inc. <http://www.hvafofindiana.org/who-we-are/>

⁷² “Housing.” HVAF of Indiana, Inc. <http://www.hvafofindiana.org/what-we-do/housing/>; “Programs and Services.” HVAF of Indiana, Inc. <http://www.hvafofindiana.org/what-we-do/programs-services/>

⁷³ “About Us.” Indiana Legal Services, Inc. <http://indianalegalservices.org/section/15>

⁷⁴ “Location of ILS Offices.” Indiana Legal Services, Inc. <http://indianalegalservices.org/page/location-ils-offices>

MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF FUND

The Military Family Relief Fund provides emergency grants up to \$5,000 to families of Indiana National Guard members and the Selective Reserves for “needs such as food, housing, utilities, medical services, transportation and other essential family support expenses which have become difficult to afford.” The Fund is also available to certain active duty service members.⁷⁵ The fund may prove to a viable partner for a veterans legal clinic given the likelihood that veterans and families applying for aid may also need referrals to legal assistance with the VA.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHRISTIAN LEGAL CLINIC

The Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic is a non-profit organization offering “pro bono legal representation and preventative legal education to low income families, including immigrant families.” The organization has locations in both Indianapolis and Fort Wayne.⁷⁶ It provides a variety of legal services to eligible clients, including legal representation (civil only, not veteran-specific), foreclosure prevention, immigration law, low income taxpayer clinic, post-incarceration services, family law mediation, and preventative legal education workshops.

INDIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

The Indiana State Bar Association and the local bars throughout the state may also be valuable partners for a veterans clinic.⁷⁷ In particular, the Pro Bono Committee of the Bar Association is charged with “develop[ing] and implement[ing] programs to educate the members of the Association about the need for and opportunities to engage in pro bono civil legal services” among other responsibilities, such as coordinating with non-Association pro bono efforts in the state.⁷⁸

INDIANA PRO BONO COMMISSION

The Indiana Pro Bono Commission’s mission statement suggests that it may also prove a valuable partner for any new pro bono efforts in the state.⁷⁹

The Indiana Pro Bono Commission will strive to promote equal access to justice for all Indiana residents by facilitating the integration and coordination of existing services; fostering the development of new pro bono programs; supporting and improving the quality of existing pro bono programs; fostering the growth of a public service culture within the Indiana Bar which values pro bono publico service; promoting the ongoing development of financial and other resources for pro bono organizations in Indiana; and enabling Indiana attorneys to discharge their professional responsibility to provide pro bono services.

⁷⁵ “Military Family Relief Fund.” Indiana Department of Veteran’s Affairs. <http://www.in.gov/dva/2329.htm>

⁷⁶ “Home.” Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic. <http://www.nclegalclinic.org/>

⁷⁷ “Local Bars.” Indiana State Bar Association. <http://www.inbar.org/LocalBars/tabid/56/Default.aspx>

⁷⁸ “Pro Bono.” Indiana State Bar Association. <http://www.inbar.org/ISBALinks/Committees/ProBono/tabid/149/Default.aspx>

⁷⁹ “About the Commission.” Indiana Pro Bono Commission. <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/probono/2332.htm>

EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS

Equal Justice Works is a non-profit organization “dedicated to creating a just society by mobilizing the next generation of lawyers committed to equal justice.” It collaborates with law schools to “expand public interest programming on law school campuses,” largely through the funding of practice-oriented fellowships focused on “the justice gap on issues such as foreclosure, community economic development, immigration, civil rights, homelessness, access to healthcare, and domestic violence.”⁸⁰ The organization’s funding of two fellowship programs at Widener Law suggests their interest in veterans issues as well.⁸¹

VETERAN’S SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

In addition to the organizations listed above, a number of veteran’s legal clinics have formed beneficial partnerships with local veterans service organizations and government agencies. As noted above, Chapman University’s AMVETS Legal Clinic is entirely funded by the California department of AMVETS, and nearly all of the facilities and supplies required to operate Marquette University’s veterans legal clinic are supplied by the county’s veterans service organization. Valparaiso Law may consider outreach to the AMVETS Department of Indiana,⁸² or to county-level veterans service officers, to identify potential partnership opportunities.⁸³

RELATED SERVICES

Depending on the services offered by a clinic, or those requested by veterans, some law clinics have partnered with medical services providers or psychiatric care institutions to supplement their range of services. The partnership between the Lewis B. Puller Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic at William & Mary and the Center for Psychological Services and Development at Virginia Commonwealth University has already been noted.⁸⁴ In addition, the veterans clinic at the John Marshall Law School has developed relationships with area medical schools.⁸⁵

DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

According to the primary research conducted for this report, lawyers involved in veterans legal assistance compose a fairly tightly-knit network of personal and professional relationships. Many are comfortable sharing information and resources to assist each other and the development of new and additional veterans’ programs.

The John Marshall Law School and William & Mary Law School appear to have a particularly strong record in this respect. William & Mary is interested in exporting its clinic’s model and

⁸⁰ “About the Organization.” Equal Justice Works. <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/about/history>

⁸¹ Sidel, S. Op. cit.

⁸² “AMVETS Department of Indiana.” <http://www.amvets-in.org/>

⁸³ “Service Officers.” Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.in.gov/dva/2370.htm>

⁸⁴ “HMOVHE.” Op. cit.

⁸⁵ Clauss, B. Op. cit.

best practices to other areas of the country.⁸⁶ The John Marshall Law School regularly hosts faculty from other institutions for short periods so they can receive training and observe how the institution's clinic operates. The clinic is also willing to send volunteer teams to other institutions to advise, train, and provide their best practices resources to new clinics.⁸⁷ As was already noted, the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program also offers training and resources to new veterans legal programs. Development resources of this sort may prove valuable to Valparaiso Law, should the institution elect to move forward with the development of a veterans law clinic in Northwest Indiana.

⁸⁶ "HMHVE." Op. cit.

⁸⁷ Clauss, B. Op. cit.

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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CAVEAT

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