

# Orting Village: Affordable Housing for Veterans

## Background

The Puget Sound Veterans Hope Center (PSVHC) and Panza are working to expand housing options for veterans, and to provide them with the supportive services they need to succeed in civilian life.

## Need

Veterans experience a distinct set of challenges, including difficulty transitioning from active duty, higher rates of post-traumatic stress, and traumatic brain injury. Many veterans also face poverty, lack of support from family and friends, substance use or mental health issues, and precarious living conditions.



*PHOTO: Resident with his tiny house in Quixote Village*

## Project Description

The Orting Veterans Village would be similar to Quixote Village (a tiny house community in Thurston County) with 30 tiny homes. The homes would be approximately 150 square feet, with a living area, ½ bath, and closet. A community building will provide a kitchen, laundry and bath facilities, and social, recreational, and staff space. The project would be built on about 2 acres of un-used land at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting.

The Orting Veterans Village would employ a full-time program manager and a resident advocate. In addition to managing the property, these staff members would link residents to services, arrange for educational and therapeutic programs at the site, and coordinate transportation to American Lake or other locations for services.

## Project Partners

Panza is a non-profit originally formed to support Camp Quixote, a transient tent city for adults that was hosted by Thurston County faith communities. Panza and the residents of the Camp built Quixote Village in 2013. The Village is composed of 30 tiny houses and a community building that houses a shared kitchen, laundry facilities, showers, and social and office space.



*PHOTO: Several Tiny Houses in Quixote Village*

PSVHC and Panza have teamed up to develop a new tiny house village for veterans at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting, a facility owned by the Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA). The land would be provided by WDVA at no cost through a long term lease.

For more information about Orting Village, contact:

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Where is the Village located?**

The Village will be located at the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA) Soldier's Home in Orting, a 181 acre campus with nursing and domiciliary facilities for veterans as well as other programs. The campus was first established in 1891 for veterans of the Civil War and is located 1.5 miles from downtown Orting.

### **Who will live in the Village?**

The Village will serve previously homeless veterans. Background checks and drug screenings will be required. Residents may not have outstanding warrants, a recent history of violence, and may not be sex offenders. Village staff will interview applicants to assess their eligibility, and applicants will have an opportunity to meet with Village residents.

### **Is this temporary or permanent housing? Will there be rules?**

The Village will be permanent housing and will not provide emergency shelter beds. Some residents may use the Village as a stepping stone and move on to other housing options. Others – generally those whose disabilities preclude economic independence – may stay at the Village for a long time. All residents will pay 30% of their income in rent and sign a lease agreement in which they agree to abide by Village rules, including not using marijuana, alcohol, or illegal drugs on the campus. If a resident violates his or her lease, staff may work with the resident to prevent future infractions or may move to terminate the lease.

### **Who will run the village? Who is in charge?**

Panza, a non-profit organization that operates a similar village in Olympia, will be the owner and manager of the Village. The Village will have two full-time staff, a program manager and a resident advocate. The program manager will collect rent, enforce rules, arrange for repairs, and manage the facility. The resident advocate will link residents to services, arrange for educational and therapeutic programs at the site, and coordinate transportation to American Lake VA Hospital or other locations for services.

### **How will the construction of the Village be funded?**

The Orting Veterans Village will cost approximately \$3,850,000 to build. PSVHC has a \$600,000 direct allocation in the state capital budget. Additionally, WDVA has committed to providing the land to the project at no cost through a long term lease. Other proposed capital funding is:

Washington State Housing Trust Fund	\$2,467,500
Pierce County	\$300,000
Private Fundraising/Capital Campaign	\$382,500

### **How will the operation of the Village be funded?**

Panza and PSVHC hope to get project-based Section 8 or HUD VASH vouchers to supplement tenants' rent to help cover operating costs. In addition, we are hopeful that Pierce County will provide funding for the resident advocate and other services necessary for the residents to succeed. The Village's capital budget includes \$120,000 in capitalized reserves to protect the project from operating or service shortfalls in the future.