

## HVAC Testimony Script

*Thursday, May 4th*

- Good Afternoon to the assembled members of this distinguished Committee. It is my great honor to be here on behalf of ADJOIN.
- I want to specifically thank Congressman Levin for inviting me here today and for his persistent pursuit to find solutions to end Veteran homelessness.
- My name is Dr. Dustin Potash and I have the honor of serving as the Veterans Director for ADJOIN.
- ADJOIN is one of the most impactful veteran homeless service providers in San Diego and Imperial County, serving over **4,000 homeless veterans since its inception in 2011**.
- I supervise several programs that focus on Veterans experiencing homelessness, including Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, or HUD VASH; Supportive Services for Veterans Families, or SSVF; and the Veterans Affairs Shallow Subsidy Program; and I've been working with unhoused Veterans for a large portion of my career.
- The most significant point that I can share with you today is that San Diego is making great advances in reducing Veteran homelessness through the use of SSVF and Shallow Subsidy.
- This remarkable progress has come thanks to a meaningful focus and investment from Congress, our federal partners, strong collaboration at the local level, and our dedication to the Housing First model.
- This model is especially vital to our Veterans, who may have greater substance use and mental health needs due to the inherently difficult, and potentially traumatic, nature of their military experiences.
- With nearly **12 years of work in this sector**, our organization is built upon the Housing First model, ensuring the goal of low barriers to entry for those in need.
- ADJOIN is a firm believer in this approach and is fully committed to this goal.
- Greater adherence to the Housing First model in all SSVF programs across the nation can help to replicate San Diego's success in reducing Veteran homelessness.

- Most of our participants frequently have high barrier obstacles that make it harder for them to successfully get housed. **We would encourage you to continue the landlord incentive program so that providers can continue to offer a greater variety of options to this important population.**
- ADJOIN and our fellow grantees are here as a final line of defense when all other systems and policies fail.
- In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach and show how these programs are working in real life, I'd like to share a client story; I did change the names in this story to protect identities.
- Emily is an Air Force veteran who received an honorable discharge. When she came into the program, she was living in an abandoned RV that had no running water or electricity.
- She had been asked to leave the RV as it was just parked on someone's property and Emily did not pay rent to live there.
- Emily was a registered nurse but at the time she came into the program, her nursing license was suspended.
- Emily had a service connection compensation of \$1100.00 per month from the VA. At the time of enrollment, Emily's money was spent paying for drug testing as required by the licensing board as part of her efforts to reinstate her license.
- Most of the time Emily was left with no money for other needs. Emily was in high crisis mode when she reached out to be enrolled in the SSVF program and it was often difficult to engage with her.
- Emily was constantly stressed due to not having a place to live and no money to cover her most basic needs.
- Emily was estranged from friends and family members due to her constantly asking them for money to sustain her needs.
- With the assistance of a SSVF housing coordinator, Emily found a unit that she liked and we helped move her in.
- Emily continued to work on completing all requirements with the licensing board and after being housed, she was able to apply for Cal-Fresh assistance and was approved.
- With the assistance of Adjoin with rent payment and utilities, Emily was able to concentrate on getting her nursing license reinstated.

- Emily completed all requirements, and her license was reinstated in January 2022. Emily was hired as a nurse and Adjoin assisted with her nurse uniforms and shoes.
- Emily is now a fulltime nurse at a local hospital, making \$36 an hour.
- Emily has since moved into our Shallow Subsidy program where she has been very successful.
- We appreciate the dedication of this Committee and this Congress to helping us increase the options available to us to serve our country's Veterans with dignity in the hopes of replicating success stories like Emily.
- I do believe however, that there is still a gap in our system when it comes to a service member transitioning from the military into civilian life.
- When talking to many of our clients, many of them state that they were rushed out of the military with no plan in place which played a role in them becoming homeless.
- Since my separation from the military, I know this Committee and Congress has implemented the Transition Assistance Program to help servicemembers with resources, classes, and training but I believe it needs to go a step further.
- It is my belief that service members should **already** have a job, permanent housing, and VA disability income (if applicable) all secured **before** leaving the military.
- I don't know who that responsibility falls on to; the military or the community?
- One possible solution is to allow providers and grantees to be part of the transition process **on** military installations.
- I believe with this type of collaboration it would drastically reduce the number of homeless veterans not just in San Diego County, but nationwide.
- The rental rates here in San Diego are high and the available housing is low which is another barrier for our clients.
- A possible solution would be to allow SSVF and Shallow Subsidy providers to take over run down hotels and motels in undesired parts of the county and bring in development dollars to turn them into permanent housing units.
- Case Management and wrap-around services would be available onsite.
- It was a great honor to be here today to share our experiences with the SSVF and Shallow Subsidy programs and some suggestions on how to improve its efficacy moving forward.

- Achieving functional zero for Veteran homelessness is possible, but we can only do this together and with out of the box thinking.
- I look forward to answering your questions.
- Thank you.

## Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)\* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: Veterans' Affairs

Subcommittee: Economic Opportunity

Hearing Date: 05/04/2023

Hearing Title :

All Hands on Deck: Ending Veteran Homelessness in San Diego

Witness Name: Dr. Dustin Potash

Position/Title: Veterans Director

Witness Type:  Governmental  Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization?  Self  Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

Adjoin

### **FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY**

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

Adjoin

**Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.**

SSVF-VA-5.6Million

**Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.**

N/A

**Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.**

- I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

\* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

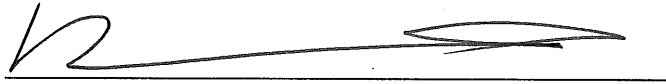
(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(ii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.

**False Statements Certification**

Knowingly providing material false information to this committee/subcommittee, or knowingly concealing material information from this committee/subcommittee, is a crime (18 U.S.C. § 1001). This form will be made part of the hearing record.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'W' followed by a long horizontal line that ends in a flourish.

Witness signature

5/2/23

Date





# DUSTIN POTASH

San Diego, CA • 610.568.6449 • dustin.potash@gmail.com

## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

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Self-motivated Non-Profit and Educational Director and Military Veteran with 10+ years of experience managing and improving operations, capable of overseeing multiple projects and personnel and implementing operational improvements. Confident communicator who demonstrates a strong ability to lead, educate, and maximize performance results through project management and strong leadership skills. Collaborative, enthusiastic leader with a keen grasp on goal identification and execution, able to achieve organizational objectives. Career supported by a Doctor of Strategic Leadership and a Master of Public Administration Degree.

### *Core qualifications include but not limited to:*

Project Management	Leadership & Team Building	Non-Profit Administration
Process & Operational Improvement	Prioritization & Multitasking	Staff Motivation & Supervision
Organizational & Analytical Skills	Strategic Planning	Written & Verbal Communication
Client Relationship Management	Positive & Dynamic Attitude	Complex Problem Solving

## EDUCATION

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Doctor of Strategic Leadership, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA	2022
Master of Science in Public Administration, National University, La Jolla, CA	2020
Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa CA	2019

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Adjoin, San Diego, CA

*November 2022 – Present*

### *Veterans Director*

- Works effectively with the CFO to develop budgets and to increase program revenues annually.
- Evaluates overall divisional performance by gathering, analyzing and interpreting data, metrics and developing and applying plans for continuous improvement.
- Develops and implements strategies that will maximize the synergies among various programs.
- Collaborates with COO to make decisions operational activities and set strategic goals.
- Ensures programs are meeting funder and auditing standards and successfully passes applicable audits.
- Facilitates the implementation and monitoring of the Quality Assurance Program for all assigned geographic areas to ensure consistency across programs.
- Represents the organization at meetings, conferences, marketing and/or vendor fairs.

Bryan College, Dayton, TN

*April 2022 – Present*

### *Adjunct Professor, School of Business*

#### **Courses Taught: Principles of Leadership Principles of Management**

- Creates, distributes, and reviews the course syllabus.
- Utilizes a variety of instructional strategies to engage students, including cooperative and experiential learning.
- Meets with the academic department chair to develop courseware and curriculum.
- Evaluates student performance promptly and accurately based on departmental rubrics.
- Maintains records of student attendance, involvement, and progress.
- Teaches assigned class material in accordance with learning objectives that are developed by the department.
- Communicates with students outside of class to provide supplementary instruction, when necessary.
- Participates in faculty meetings involving departmental updates.

Shelter to Soldier, Oceanside, CA

*September 2020 – Present*

### *Director of Veteran Services*

- Develops and leads the departmental vision, mission, goals, programs, services, and budget.
- Ensures that eligible and prospective students are informed about their benefits, new and existing laws, and services available to them through the department.
- Serves as the primary resource and advocate for veterans regarding their concerns.
- Directly measures the efficiency of the department through assessment planning and coordination.
- Creates an active veteran's network/support group.
- Coordinates the outreach to and recruitment of veterans.
- Directs, evaluates, and reviews the job performance of staff and oversees their professional development and training.

# DUSTIN POTASH

S.T.O.P. Area 6, San Diego, CA

December 2019 – September 2020

## **Program Director**

- Handled and optimized all operations for 2 physical campuses.
- Conducted weekly climate surveys to determine quality of program and effectiveness of instruction.
- Oversaw client success for over 250 clients, including client counseling and referrals, improving instructor classroom effectiveness, coaching, and mentoring staff for client success, mediating for client conflict.
- Lead multiple contract programs for over 400 clients including intaking and sorting applications, managing current clients, and scheduling, and organizing orientation and completion.
- Coordinated workflow of projects from conception to completion, including advanced and diversified administrative decisions requiring good judgment.
- Communicated with other management on a regular basis as it pertains to issues, performance, suggestions for improvement, and daily coordination of projects and processes.
- Supervised team including staff development, training, morale, performance reviews, policy implementation, necessary discipline, and continuous improvement.
- Analyzed and met budget objectives by adjusting expenses to improve overall process, budget, performance, etc.

New Connections, Lemon Grove, CA

November 2018 – November 2019

## **Program Manager**

- Managed the daily operations of a team of 25, while overseeing two programs focusing on detox and residential treatment programs for addicts.
- Performed employee performance reviews monthly, coaching and training personnel accordingly to increase quality of work and employee retention.
- Coordinated weekly meetings for internal and external groups, including teleconferences and video conferences, interacting with all levels of management to resolve complaints and convey new policy implementation.
- Oversaw internal operations of offices to ensure productivity, efficiency, and organization of the office environment.
- Conducted daily welfare checks for 30 residents and held weekly director meetings to advocate for resident needs.
- Facilitated the organization's communication effort to fully engage members and the broader community in the organization's mission and programs.
- Managed public relations activity, including developing policies and brand awareness strategies.
- Coordinated and executed the training and management of volunteers.

Dunn School, Los Olivos, CA

October 2014 – June 2017

## **Assistant Director of Health Services**

- Successfully instructed students and managed multiple courses simultaneously while working closely with administration on process improvements for the organization.
- Created best practices for students in online education.
- Developed a health care program for boarding school, by writing grants, planning operational structure, and identifying shortfalls ongoing projects, resulting in improved services for 135 students.
- Managed a program tracking system, creating digital files for all new patients, monitoring an annual budget of \$500K and maintained program reports/statuses.
- Supervised two Program Managers, holding each accountable for two budgets, both worth \$100K.
- Completed evaluations on 10 employees, conducting monthly staff meetings to gather feedback on work performance, provide consultation, follow-up, and additional support.

U.S. VETS-Inland Empire, Riverside, CA

July 2013 – October 2014

## **Outreach Coordinator**

- Supervised and scheduled outreach team to maintain outreach goals of 20 intakes and 10 new clients per month.
- Met fundraising goals of up to \$1M by developing presentations for potential donors in relation to the company's daily operations, program scopes, and goal outcomes.
- Facilitated over 200 new client intakes and maintained accurate record keeping, data collection and tracking required to prepare weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports.
- Prepared and facilitated presentations to community partners and outside organizations, maintaining a database of over 150 outreach contacts.
- Conducted business analysis, project management, marketing, strategy development, human resource planning, and customer service for the organization to expand programs.

# DUSTIN POTASH

- Coordinated 10 large scale events in relation to veteran welfare by coordinating with other nonprofits, county representatives, and communities, scheduling the locations, resources, and staff members.

**Roy's Desert Resource Center, Palm Springs, CA**

*July 2009 – July 2013*

***Veterans Case Manager***

- Assessed the needs for over 150 clients to create both short and long-term housing plans and help clients achieve their goals of becoming self-sufficient.
- Developed and maintained collaborations with local service providers by attending events and making presentations.
- Participated in community outreach by visiting facilities e.g., shelters, treatment programs, transitional housing, sober living programs, soup kitchens, parks, and other locations, maintaining daily outreach reporting.

**Abraxas Academy, Morgantown, PA**

*February 2007 – June 2009*

***Counselor Supervisor***

- Instructed non-traditional students in writing skills both online and on-campus.
- Successfully worked with the education department to develop curriculum to improve student outcomes.
- coordinated with admissions and student service teams to support struggling students through development of tutoring services within the school.
- Supervised a staff of 25-40 to assist over 250 students, developing treatment plans and finding solutions to emotional, mental and lifestyle problems, ensuring the implementation of aftercare recovery plans.
- Liaised with other professionals such as medical practitioners, psychologists, and social workers as part of a health management team.
- Facilitated group counseling sessions and worked with adjudicated drug and alcohol, habitual and violent sex offenders.

**Department of Correctional Services, Reading, PA**

*February 2005 – June 2009*

***Bail Enforcement Officer***

- Completed over 300 detailed reports and required paperwork related to serving warrants, investigating criminal activity and force deployments.
- Established and maintained effective working relationships with city leaders, outside organizations, and the public, investigating incidents and crime, including evidence collection and witness statements.
- Maintained criminal documents such as logs, records, reports, and agendas to streamline processing and improve traceability.
- Managed over 100 debriefings for criminal subjects to acquire data relevant to investigations.

**United States Army, Fort Campbell, KY**

*January 2003 – January 2005*

***Technical Crew Member***

- Taught over 500 adult learners for courses and certifications programs revolving around, Sexual Harassment/Assault, Response and Prevention (SHARP), Suicide Awareness and Prevention, Army Concussion Course (TBI), Level 1 Antiterrorism Awareness Training, Threat Awareness and Reporting Program, Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP), Personnel Recovery, Operational Security (OPSEC), DoD Cyber Awareness Challenge, Information Security Program – Refresher, Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness, Fraternalization Policy Training.
- Operated high technology defense systems, communicating using voice and digital wire and radio equipment.
- Participated in reconnaissance operations to include security and position preparation for a team of 20.

