

Washington, DC -- U.S Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced today that the Workforce Investment Board of Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties (WIB) was awarded a \$154,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to operate a Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.

“Our country owes a tremendous debt to our veterans,” **Arcuri** said. “This project is one way that we can help veterans who are experiencing homelessness find a way to a new start and a better future. Critical support services like these are vital to keeping our promise to our nation’s heroes, and I’m pleased to see them earn these federal dollars.”

“We are very honored that the Department of Labor has supported our effort to help veterans who have served our nation and who now need the help we want to provide so that they can acquire skills, overcome barriers and find work,” said **Alice J. Savino, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board**. “We appreciate the support we received from Congressman Arcuri and from Senator Schumer, who both share our commitments to help our region’s veterans and to help homeless individuals.”

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) funded 82 projects this year. The WIB was among 35 first-time grantees – marking the first time the Department of Labor’s HVRP has been offered in the Greater Utica-Rome area.

Through HVRPs, homeless veterans may receive occupational, classroom and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, including follow-up services. HVRP is recognized as an efficient and effective program and is the only federal program that focuses exclusively on employment of veterans who are homeless.

“This Spring, I visited the State Veterans’ Home in Oxford, where I saw first-hand what local agencies are doing to take care of veterans here in Upstate New York, and I have named a Veterans’ Advisory Committee to assist me with federal veterans’ legislation and outreach to local veterans. By providing local organizations the federal support they need, I am honored to be part of a community-wide effort to ensure that local agencies have the resources they need to care of our veterans,” said **Arcuri**.

“We live in a very caring community with many outstanding organizations that are anxious to

help homeless veterans have the supports they need so that they can lead better lives,” **Savino** said. “I want to thank every one of our partners for being willing to work with us on behalf of our homeless veterans across our region. The project could not have been possible without the outstanding support and collaboration of officials from the Donald J. Mitchell VA Outpatient Clinic in Rome.”

The project’s partners include: The Oneida County Veterans Services Agency, New York State Department of Labor, Oneida County Re-Entry Task Force, Mohawk Valley Community College, Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Mohawk Valley Housing Coalition, Cosmopolitan Center, Oneida County Workforce Development, Rescue Mission, Oneida County Department of Mental Health, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce and New York State Office of Vocational Educational Services to Individuals With Disabilities.

Earlier this month, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R 2642, the 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, the largest single increase in the 77-year history of the VA, providing critical resources for the 1,094,391 veterans in New York State.

In March, Arcuri voted with a bipartisan majority to pass the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act (H.R. 1538), which would ensure that wounded service members receive the highest quality care as well as increase the efficiency and accountability of the Veterans’ Administration (VA) health care system.

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project will work as part of the existing Jobs and Hope program that is working to help homeless individuals find jobs and training. Homeless veterans, or anyone in the region who knows of homeless veterans who need help finding jobs or learning skills, can contact Jobs and Hope Vocational Services Coordinator Jeff Shulkin, phone: 797-7384, email: jobsoneida@yahoo.com .

###