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## Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ February 2014

Welcome to the February edition of our VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) National Monthly Newsletter.

We have had some changes since the January newsletter. As reported in January, John Garcia, the Intergovernmental Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary has returned home to New Mexico. The Administration is working to fill the position. In the meantime, I am covering Mr. Garcia's duties as the Acting Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. At the same time, Erika Moott, the OTGR Executive Officer, has left OTGR to take a new position closer to home. To make sure OTGR Central Office work continues during this transition phase, we were fortunate enough to arrange to have two employees from the Department of the Interior join us for 120 days. Jerry Gidner, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribe, and a former Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is filling in behind me as the Acting Director of OTGR. Archie Barnes, a 21-year Marine Corps Veteran, is filling in behind Erika. Jerry and Archie have been with us since February 3, are hard at work, and are already a part of our team.

February has been a busy month here in DC. We had a conference call with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe to discuss how their members who are Veterans can apply for loans through the Native American Direct Loan program, since the Tribe recently signed a Native American Direct Loan Memorandum of Understanding with the VA. We attended the National Association of State Veterans Affairs Directors meeting, and had great discussions with some of the State Directors about how we can work together to reach Native Veterans. We had a workgroup meeting regarding the Tribal Consultation Directory and Handbook, both of which should be available in draft form in the next several weeks. We made contact with the VA Learning University about the process for developing online training for VA employees on tribal consultation and working with tribal governments. The VA awarded a contract for VA's 2014 consultation process and we had the kick-off meeting with the contractor. And last, but certainly not least, we met with two tribal housing authority delegations about how VA can help meeting the housing needs of Veterans on their reservations.

Terry Bentley, OTGR specialist for the Western Region, has attended numerous events with Tribes and VA partners in February, including the Joint American Indian Veteran Advisory Council (VHA Puget Sound in Vancouver, WA), to discuss the NADL program and many other issues affecting Native Veterans, and a planning meeting for the a July 2014 Veterans Summit: Gathering of Warriors, to be hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Mary Culley, specialist for the Southern Plains and Eastern (Southeast) regions organized a Veterans Benefit Enrollment Fair at Holdenville, OK, at which several Native veterans or their families signed up for VA benefits. The Muskogee (Creek) Nation and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma co-sponsored the event. She also visited the Mississippi Choctaw tribe to discuss their reimbursement agreement, a NADL MOU, and to confirm that the Tribe will host the Eastern Region Tribal Training Summit, tentatively scheduled for late May, 2014 with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

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HoMana Pawiki, our specialist in the Southwest Region, visited the San Carlos Apache Tribe. They discussed the Tribe's reimbursement agreement with the VHA for health care, the NADL program, and other issues affecting the Tribe's veterans. HoMana has also been busy finalizing the Southwest Region Tribal Training Summit, to be held March 20 and 21, 2014, at the Twin Arrows Resort on the Navajo Nation outside of Flagstaff.

Peter Vicaire, in the Central and Eastern (Northeast) Regions, met with the Oneida and Menominee tribes in Wisconsin, the four Kansas Tribes at the Sac & Fox Reservation, as well as tribes in Michigan during a United Tribes of Michigan meeting, to talk about their Veterans issues and available programs. Like the National Congress of American Indians did last summer, the "4 Tribes" of Kansas have just passed a resolution urging Congress to return illegally withheld taxes from reservation-domiciled servicemembers (now veterans). Peter is also planning a benefit fair to take place at Lac Courte Oreilles on April 30, and which I will be attending. He is also jointly planning the Western/Central Region Tribal Training Summit that is being held April 9 – 10, 2014, in Lewiston, Idaho and another in late-May with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

We are planning a robust training and outreach schedule for the remainder of 2014. These events provide training and information about access to services and benefits for our Veterans. Dates and Locations are as follows: March 20 – 21 is the Southwest Region Veterans Training Summit to be held in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort. We are excited to announce that it is very possible that the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Law Enforcement Services will attend the Training Summit to recruit Native Veterans for law enforcement positions. On April 9, we are having Ute Indian Tribe Veterans Health and Benefit Training at Fort Duschene, Utah. Contact [lorae.pawiki@va.gov](mailto:lorae.pawiki@va.gov) for more information about these events. April 9 – 10, the Western/Central Region Training Summit will be held in Lewiston, Idaho at the Clearwater River Casino. This Veterans training event will be hosted by the Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Coeur d'Alene. Contact [peter.vicaire@va.gov](mailto:peter.vicaire@va.gov) or [terry.bentley@va.gov](mailto:terry.bentley@va.gov) for more information. We are in discussion to have Training events on the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation on April 30, the Mississippi Choctaw Reservation in May, and hopefully Northern California and Fargo, North Dakota later in the summer. Stay tuned for more information about those events.

Warm Regards - Stephanie





## VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations Training Summits

We are pleased to announce the dates and locations of our next two training summits for veterans, their families and service providers.

### **Flagstaff, AZ – March 20-21- Twin Arrows Resort & Casino**

Supportive Services for Veterans Families; •Health Care: VA, IHS, Tribal Health Programs; Services: Arizona Department of Veterans Services; Veterans Employment and Training Services; Native American Direct Home Loan; Veterans Justice Outreach; National Cemetery Administration: Tribal Governments; Services: Department of Navajo Veterans Services; SBA: Veteran and Native-Owned Small Business; VHA Caregiver Support; Post 9/11 GI Bill - Dependents Education Assistance; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; eBenefits: Submitting Claims and Appeals; Vet Centers; Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program; OEF/OIF/OND Reintegration

For more information, contact Lorae HoMana Pawiki at [Lorae.Pawiki@va.gov](mailto:Lorae.Pawiki@va.gov) and 928-776-5306. Rooms at the event location can be made by calling 1-855-946-8946 with a room rate of \$99/night (ID 748).

Exhibit booth info can be gotten by contacting Matt Herriman at [Matthew.Herriman@va.gov](mailto:Matthew.Herriman@va.gov)

### **Lewiston, ID – April 9-10: Clearwater River Casino & Resort**

Vocational Rehabilitation; DOL-VETS; Wyakin Warrior Foundation (2) ; Idaho State Department of Veteran Affairs; Veteran Benefits Administration; Housing: Native American Direct Home Loan Program (NADL); Specially Adapted Housing (SAH); HUD; VA Homeless Programs: Grant and Per Diem; Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF); Fully-Developed Claims; VHA "Healthcare 101"—Eligibility, Enrollment and Billing; Tribal Health Reimbursement; Social Security Administration; Illegal State Taxation of Rez-Domiciled Servicemembers; Veterans Courts/Tribal Courts; Listening Session With Senior VA Leaders; Camp Chaparral Program.

To register (FREE) please visit the website here:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/veterans-training-summit-tickets-9852083848> or contact Terry Bentley at 541-440-1271 – [Terry.Bentley@va.gov](mailto:Terry.Bentley@va.gov) or Peter Vicaire at 651-405-5676 - [Peter.Vicaire@va.gov](mailto:Peter.Vicaire@va.gov). Rooms can be booked at the Clearwater River Casino (\$49.95/night) 208-746-0723 or at the Red Lion Hotel (\$88/night) 208 799-1000.



## By the Numbers: A look at Native Enlistment During the Major Wars

For the original (February 6, 2014) Indian Country Today article by Vincent Shilling, [click here](#)

“When looking back at the history of this United States, the participation of Native American warriors on the battlefield is a largely untold number. Considering Indians were involved in the American Revolution against the British, American Indians have been fighting for this country before it was a country. According to the Department of Defense, in 2010 22,569 enlisted service members and 1,297 officers on active duty were American Indian. Considering the population of the United States is approximately 1.4 percent Native and the military is 1.7 percent Native (not including those that did not disclose their identity) Native people have the highest per-capita involvement of any population to serve in the U.S. Military.

In this light we thought we would list the amount of Native American participation in some of the major wars in history. In some of the earlier wars, the amount of specific Indian participation is unknown.

### **The American Revolution (1775-1783)**

The Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy could not agree on which side to fight during the Revolutionary War and tried to remain neutral. While the Mohawk, Seneca, Onondaga and Cayuga sided with the British, the Oneida and Tuscarora fought with the Americans. Though the exact number of Indians fighting is unknown, some approximate only 8,000 Iroquois remained after the war.

### **The Indian Wars (1775-1890)**

The Indian Wars describe the countless conflicts between American Settlers and the Government who were seeking further settlements and westward expansion. According to the U.S. Census Bureau of 1894, there were more than 40 Indian wars, and 19,000 white men, women and children and 30,000 Indians were killed.

### **The War of 1812 (1812-1815)**

In the 32-month conflict between the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Indian Allies, many tribes fought as allies for either side. Some estimates count as high as 10,000 or more Indians participated in the conflict.



### **United States Civil War (1861-1865)**

In 1862 Home guard Regiments were organized and were expedited to Indian Territories. Statistics show fewer than 3,600 Native Americans served in the Union Army during the Civil War.

### **World War I (1917-1918 – American involvement only)**

In World War I Native Americans were not even yet considered U.S. Citizens yet well over 12,000 Native people enlisted to serve in the U.S. Military. Additionally four American Indian soldiers serving in the 142nd Infantry of the 36th Texas-Oklahoma National Guard Division received the Croix de Guerre medal from France.

### **World War II (1941-1945 – American involvement only)**

Over 44,000 Native Americans served in WWII between 1941 and 1945. In 1942, 99 percent of all eligible Indian healthy males from ages 21 to 44 had registered for the draft. In the Summer of that same year, 7,500 had enlisted. By the beginning of 1945, 22,000 had enlisted. By the end of WWII, 24,521 reservation Indians and another 20,000 off-reservation Indians had served in the military effort – or 10 percent of the American Indian population.

### **The Korean War (1950-1953)**

Approximately 10,000 Native Americans served in the Korean War Conflict and three of them were awarded the Medal of Honor.

### **The Vietnam War (1956-1975)**

More than 42,000 Native Americans served during the Vietnam War. Ninety percent of them were volunteers.

### **Second Persian Gulf War "Operation Desert Storm" (1991)**

### **"Desert Fox" Campaign (part of U.S./Iraq Conflict) (December, 1998)**

### **Third Persian Gulf War "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (March 19, 2003-Present)**

During the Gulf Wars, according to the DOD's July 2005 report, more than 3,000 American Indians served in the Gulf Region and as of that time 24,000 active duty service members out of 1.4 million active duty are American Indians."



## Proposed Rule Changes for VA Benefits Claims Forms

Here's an excerpt from the [Federal Register](#) (Vol. 78, Issue 211, October 31, 2013) dealing with recent proposed changes for veterans benefits applications. There is some concern from the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program that the mandate for electronic processing of claims is detrimental for veterans in rural areas with little or no access to the internet. For more information, contact Carol Wild Scott at [Carol.Scott@vetsprobono.org](mailto:Carol.Scott@vetsprobono.org) or 202-628-8164

**Summary of Major Provisions:** Regulatory change is necessary to promote the submission of claims and appeals in standard formats that are more easily digitalized and processed than non-standard submissions. When a compensation claim is granted, VA pays a monthly benefit according to the severity of the veteran's disability, beginning from the claim's effective date, which is usually the date the claim was filed. VA's current rules allow a claimant to submit an "informal" claim in a non-standard format that not only may be difficult to distinguish from other routine correspondence but may be incomplete for adjudication. While the current rules are meant to minimize the burden associated with initiating a claim, and allow benefits to be paid from the earliest possible date if the claim is ultimately granted, they also unintentionally incentivize the submission of claims in non-standard formats that frustrate timely, accurate, and orderly claims processing. This rule proposes to eliminate the concept of an "informal" claim, and replace it with a process that would incentivize the submission of claims in a format more amenable to efficient processing, while still allowing veterans to receive favorable effective date treatment similar to that available under the current "informal" claim rule.

In order to achieve the requirement that all claims be filed on a standard form, VA proposes to amend 38 CFR 3.155. Claims filed through an online claims submission tool within a VA Web-based electronic claims application system would be considered filed as of the date of an "incomplete claim" if the claim is ultimately completed within 1 year. This would allow the claimant to preserve an effective date, secure any necessary evidence, and submit the claim to VA in a package that facilitates efficient processing. VA proposes to establish rules for assigning effective dates for claims depending on the format in which they are filed. In particular, paper and other claims would be considered filed as of the date a complete claim is filed. VA further proposes to amend 38 CFR 3.160, to clarify what constitutes a complete claim. VA also proposes to remove 38 CFR 3.157, which generally requires VA to deem various documents other than claims

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forms to constitute claims. However, VA would seek to preserve many of the features of Sec. 3.157 that are favorable to veterans through an amendment to 38 CFR 3.400, providing that medical records which indicate an increase in disability may be the basis for an effective date of increased compensation provided a complete claim for increase is received within 1 year.

Regulatory change is also necessary to improve the quality and timeliness of VA's processing of appeals. By statute, the first step in the VA appellate process is filing an NOD. VA's current rule [[Page 65491]] allows an NOD to be filed in any format, so long as it contains a statement that can be "reasonably construed" as seeking appellate review. As explained more fully below, this standard turns the identification of an appeal into a time-intensive and inefficient interpretive exercise, complicated by the fact that an NOD may be embedded within correspondence addressing a variety of other matters. This contributes to delay and error. Requiring appeals to be initiated on a standard form would reduce errors in identifying appeals and reduce the time AOJ personnel must spend clarifying the scope and nature of the disagreement with VA's initial decision.

Therefore, VA proposes to require that a claimant may initiate an appeal from an adverse decision of the AOJ only by submitting a standard form whenever the AOJ provides a form for that purpose. VA proposes to amend 38 CFR 20.201 to redefine what constitutes an NOD. VA proposes to add a paragraph (a), which would state that VA will accept as an NOD only the form provided by the AOJ for the purpose of initiating an appeal in cases where such a form is provided. In cases where the AOJ provides a form for purposes of initiating an appeal, an NOD would consist of a completed and timely submitted copy of that form. VA also proposes to add a new paragraph (b) to Sec. 20.201, which would retain the current standard for NODs relating to decisions of the AOJ in cases where no such form is provided. This proposed rule is necessary to allow VA to require the use of a standard form and design appeal forms tailored to the specific needs of particular benefit lines rather than a single agency-wide generic form.

VA also proposes to add two new sections to part 19. New Sec. 19.23 would clarify whether the requirements of current 38 CFR 19.26, 19.27, and 19.28, or proposed Sec. 19.24, apply to a case. New Sec. 19.24 would set forth procedures for AOJ processing of NODs governed by proposed Sec. 20.201(a), including procedures governing the treatment of incomplete forms. Additionally, VA proposes to make minor changes to Sec. 3.2600, which discusses review of benefit claims decisions after filing of an NOD, Sec. 20.3(c), which defines "appellant," and Sec. 20.200, which describes what constitutes an appeal. The specific revisions are explained in further detail below.

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These changes generally would preclude claimants from initiating claims and appeals through non-standard means. However, VA believes the benefits of these changes would outweigh any burden of that limitation, for three primary reasons. First, requiring the use of standard forms would impose minimal if any burden on claimants because the forms are designed to be simple to use and guide the claimant in providing information necessary to substantiate their claim which would otherwise be required to be provided under current procedures. Second, these proposed changes would allow claimants, through use of VA's electronic applications process, to preserve the same beneficial effective-date treatment they could obtain under current procedures regarding non-standard informal claims. Third, the use of standard forms would enable VA to more quickly process claims and would enhance the efficiency and timeliness of VA's claims processing and benefit delivery system-wide.

This proposed rule would apply only with respect to claims and appeals filed 30 days after the date this rule is published in the Federal Register as a final rule. Claims and appeals pending under the current regulations as of that date would continue to be governed by the current regulations.

## **Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) Grant Still Open ~ Deadline March 14**



This grant opportunity was in a previous OTGR newsletter, but it bears repeating. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced the availability of funds for supportive services grants under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF). The NOFA, published in the Jan. 14, 2014 Federal Register, contains information concerning the SSVF Program, initial and renewal supportive services grant application processes, and amount of funding available.

The SSVF Program's purpose is to provide supportive services grants to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives who will coordinate or provide supportive services to very low-income veteran families who: (i) Are residing in permanent housing, (ii) are homeless and scheduled to become residents of permanent housing within a specified time period, or (iii) after exiting permanent housing within a specified time period, are seeking other housing that is responsive to such very low-income veteran family's needs and preferences.

The overriding goal for this NOFA is to ensure that appropriate levels of resources are provided to communities with the greatest need to end veteran homelessness. Under Priority 1, VA will provide up to \$300 million

over a 3-year period for non-renewable grants to eligible entities proposing services for one of the 76 priority Continuums of Care (CoC) listed in the NOFA. VA has designed this 3-year effort to provide a surge of resources in communities with the highest need. These 76 locations have been selected based on factors that include current unmet service needs, levels of veteran homelessness, levels of veteran poverty, and the overall size of the veteran population. Priority 2 is for existing SSVF Program grantees seeking to renew their supportive services grants. To be eligible for renewal of a supportive services grant, the grantee's program concept must be substantially the same with the program concept of the grantee's current grant award. Priority 3 is for eligible entities applying for initial supportive services grants. To read the NOFA in its entirety, [click here](#).

## AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Notice of Funding Opportunity ~ Veterans Programs



Corporation for  
NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE

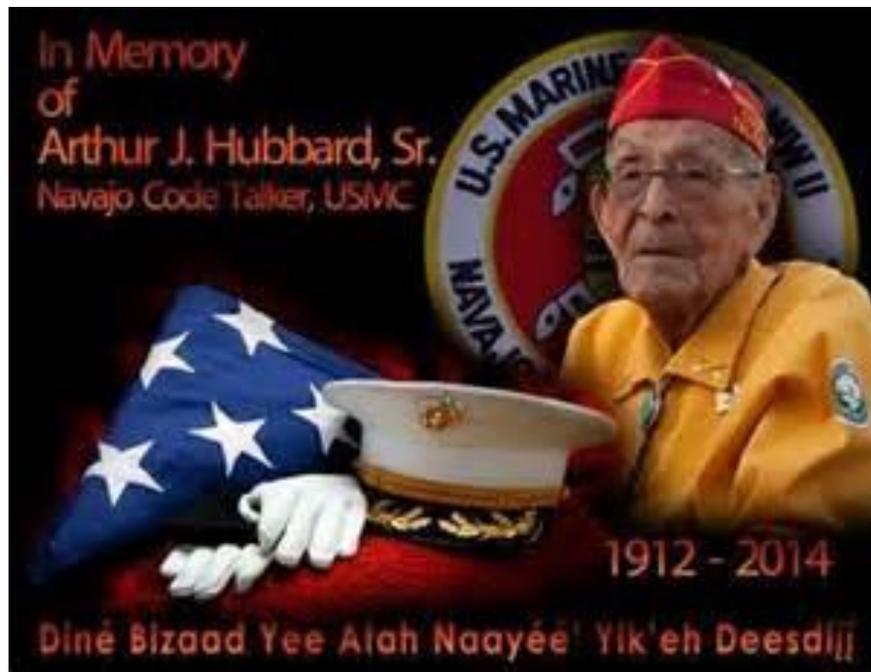
With this 2014 AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice), the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in economic opportunity, education, veterans and military families, and disaster services in Native American communities. Through this grant competition, CNCS will continue to focus on national service programs that: Improve academic outcomes for children, youth, and young adults - reflecting the extensive experience and past success of national service programs in education; **Serve veterans and military families or engage veterans and military families in service**; Increase community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation; and Increase economic opportunities for communities and AmeriCorps members.

**Applications are due Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.** CNCS expects that successful applicants will be notified no later than June 20, 2014. Only federally-recognized Indian Tribes and tribal organizations are eligible to apply to this competition. A nonprofit that desires to apply for a grant as a "tribal organization" on behalf of a federally-recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally-recognized tribes, must submit a sanctioning resolution adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each tribe. The resolution must identify the nonprofit by name as a "tribal organization" and it must authorize the nonprofit organization to act on behalf of and include the tribe in a CNCS grant application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application. The *Notice* can be found online here: [http://www.americorps.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/nofa.asp](http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp), along with additional information such as: the application instructions, performance measure instructions, and brief presentations explaining basic components of AmeriCorps programs. Questions regarding this funding opportunity should be directed to [AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov).



## Ex-Senator and WWII Navajo Code Talker Dies at Age 102

Arthur Hubbard Sr., a Navajo Code Talker and the first American Indian to serve in the Arizona Senate, has died at age 102. Tribal officials say he died Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, of natural causes. Hubbard was born in Topawa on the Tohono O'odham Reservation but also lived on the Navajo Reservation. He was one of hundreds of Navajo Code Talkers who stumped the Japanese during World War II by relaying messages in the Code Talkers' native language. He was elected to the state Senate in 1972 and served 12 years. A 2011 Senate resolution listed Hubbard as the first American Indian to serve in the Senate. Numerous Indians have served in the House.





## Strategies for Improving Rural Behavioral Services for Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

The archive of the webinar entitled, “Strategies for Improving Rural Behavioral Health Services for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families,” is now available for viewing. Sponsored by SAMHSA’s Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Technical Assistance Center, the presenters of the webinar provided an overview of the distinctive needs and characteristics of rural SMVF. They explored opportunities for partnerships with veteran service organizations, community-based health center, peers, clergy, volunteers, family, and friends. The webinar also included examples of new, integrated models of care and emerging technologies.

Presenters: Byron D. Bair, M.D., M.B.A., Director, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center – Western Region, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Rural Health, Hilda R. Heady, M.S.W., A.C.S.W., Senior Vice President and Chair of the Rural Health Research and Policy Group, Atlas Research. [Please click here to view the webinar replay and access materials](#) and [Please click here to view the webinar slides](#)

## Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs ~ Legislation on Accreditation of Tribal Veteran Representatives



Here’s a link to section 1950 of a bill from the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (SVAC) which should be on the floor soon. If you want to read the bill or a summary, it’s available on the SVAC website [here](#). It’s 352 pages long – but **sections 624 and 625** deal specifically with the accreditation of Tribal Veteran Representatives (TVRs) and VBA partnerships with tribal organizations for claims assistance. Also, here’s a link to a recent press release (1/22) – from Sen. Bernie Sanders – Chairman for the Committee -<http://www.sanders.senate.gov/download/s-1950-bill-text?inline=file>



## VA Announces Rollout of Secure Veteran Health Identification Cards

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today [February 20] announced the phased roll out of newly designed, more secure Veteran Health Identification Cards. The new cards are distinguished by additional security features and will have a different look and feel. In addition to being more secure, the card has been transformed into a Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC). Similar to a typical health insurance card, the VHIC displays the Veteran’s Member ID, a new unique identifier, as well as a Plan ID, reflecting the Veteran’s enrollment in VA health care.

“VA is committed to providing high quality health care while ensuring the personal security of Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “These new identification cards are an important step forward in protecting our nation’s heroes from identity theft and other personal crimes.” The VHIC is personalized to display the emblem of the Veteran’s branch of service. It also provides features that make it easier to use, such as the addition of “VA” in Braille to help visually impaired Veterans, and the printing of VA phone numbers and emergency care instructions on the cards.

The card replaces the Veteran Identification Card (VIC), which was introduced in 2004. As part of a phased rollout, starting this month, the card will only be offered to newly enrolled and other Veterans who have not been issued a VIC. Then, in early April, VA will begin a three month effort to automatically issue the more secure VHIC to current VIC cardholders. VA recommends Veterans safeguard their VIC as they would a credit card, and cut up or shred the card once it is replaced. While not required to receive VA health care, all enrolled Veterans are encouraged to get a VHIC.

Enrolled Veterans can get more information about the VHIC by visiting their VA medical facility enrollment coordinator or the website [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic), calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visiting their local VA health care facility. Veterans who are not enrolled in the VA health care system can apply for enrollment at any time by visiting [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll), Calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visiting their local VA health care facility.



## Rural Chaplains and Clergy Caring for Veterans: Paving the way Home after the Wounds of War

Virtual Conference @MyVeHU Campus - March 18th and 20<sup>th</sup>. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the website to register for the training.

War has a significant impact on Veterans and their families and often chaplains and clergy members are the first to notice changes when veterans return home. The Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Rural Health is presenting a two-day event aimed at providing an understanding of day-to-day issues faced, the differences in military and civilian culture, what services and resources are available, and how to obtain help. Join us for this informative event and learn how you can help pave the way home.

<b>Tuesday, March 18th</b> <b>Military Culture &amp; Wounds of War</b> <i>1:00 PM - 2:30 PM EST</i> <b>Pastoral Care</b> 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM EST	<b>Thursday, March 20th</b> <b>Mental Health Services &amp; Referrals</b> 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM EST <b>Building Community Partnerships</b> 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM EST
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## Society of American Indian Government Employees 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Program

SAIGE will be having their 11<sup>th</sup> annual training program in Albuquerque, New Mexico on June 8-13 at the Isleta Resort (11000 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87105). A free shuttle from the ABQ airport will be available – just call (505) 724-3800 to inform when you are arriving. Hotel reservations can be made by calling (877) 747-5382 or (505) 848-1999; attendees must mention the group code SA10614 to receive the special government rate. All reservations must be made before May 9, 2014. Visit the SAIGE website ([www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org)) for more information to come.



## Western Region

### Northwest Justice Project Veterans Project



Eligible veterans can get free legal services. Please call 1 (855) NJP-VETS – 1-855-657-8387 if you are a low-income veteran with one of these legal issues: child support, vacating criminal convictions/records, driver’s license suspensions, housing issues, discharge upgrades, consumer law, veterans benefits, veterans benefits of justice-involved, incarcerated and recently-released veterans. If your issue is not listed, you may still call the hotline at 1 (855) 657-8387. The Veterans Project maintains a website at: <http://nwjustice.org/veterans>.

Also, <http://washingtonlawhelp.org> offers free legal information on a variety of issues, including a section specifically for veterans. Veterans and advocates can also visit <http://bit.ly/MOS1LO> to gain detailed information of the legal and cultural considerations for assisting veterans with civil legal issues in Washington.

## Central Region

### New Minority Veterans Program Coordinator



Darwin Goodspeed, Director of the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, has appointed Teri St. Pierre as their new Minority Veterans Program Coordinator. She is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, a Navy Veteran who served in Kosovo, and a VA employee since November 2013. Her father is a Vietnam Veteran as are her two brothers and sister. Prior to coming to the Sioux Falls VA, Teri was a paralegal in Kansas. She looks forward to working with minority Veterans and attending area pow wows and other outreach events. You can reach her on her VA cell phone, 605-360-6171.



## Southern Plains Region

# Cross Cultural Learning Collaborative (CCLC) Training

### TRAINING OVERVIEW

The Cross Cultural Learning Collaborative (CCLC) is a FREE training being presented by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Tribal State Relations Workgroup. The purpose of the training is to educate service providers about American Indian populations in Oklahoma. The trainings are held in different regions throughout Oklahoma so that Tribal Nations within these regions can take an active role in educating service providers about the uniqueness of their tribe and their specific community needs. The March 20th training will focus on the southwest region.

### TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- Gain a better understanding of the Historical Trauma concepts and its impact on the mental wellness of American Indian populations.
- Increase skills on how to work with American Indian populations.
- Meet points of contact and supportive partners for Tribal Nation resources.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This training will appeal to anyone working in the areas of prevention, recovery, and overall wellness, including behavioral health service providers, healthcare workers, child welfare workers, and criminal justice representatives.

Training is FREE and will offer CEU hours. To register online, please click [HERE](#).

**CONTACT: Lucinda Myers, ODMHSAS Tribal Liaison @ 405-522-6810  
or email: [lmyers@odmhsas.org](mailto:lmyers@odmhsas.org)**