
Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ February 2016

Note from the Director

Hello and welcome to our February 2016 edition of VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) newsletter. As the month draws to a close, we're pleased to report that VA Secretary Bob McDonald had the opportunity to address the National Congress of American Indians during their Executive Council Winter Session held in Washington, D.C. earlier this month. In his remarks, Secretary McDonald shared with tribal leaders and Veterans in attendance highlights of VA's engagement and partnership efforts with tribal governments. Some of the highlights he touched upon included: \$35 million (to date) reimbursed to Indian Health Service and Tribal Health Programs (90 agreements are in place with Tribal Health Programs as of the date of this newsletter); VA's Office of Rural Health has invested \$3.9 million in 13 rural projects benefitting Veterans across Indian Country; and the launch of Tribal HUD VASH within Indian Country (a program to assist Veterans struggling with homelessness).

The OTGR team has been involved with assisting and advising with communications, tribal government leader engagement and facilitating technical assistance on all of the programs and partnerships referenced by Secretary McDonald in his remarks. Collaborative informational and technical assistance meetings (and calls) are being held with local VA Medical Center leadership, staff, tribal leadership and tribally designated housing entities as the Tribal HUD VASH pilot rolls out in 26 locations nationwide.

An important proposed change or expansion is being announced today. VA is initiating tribal consultation on proposed amendments to Title 38, Part 14 which would "expressly provide for the recognition of tribal organizations so that representatives of the organizations may assist Native American claimants in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of their VA benefit claims. The purpose of the proposed rulemaking would be to address the needs of Native American populations who are geographically isolated from existing recognized Veterans Service Organizations or who may not be utilizing other recognized Veterans Service Organizations due to cultural barriers or lack familiarity with those organizations....The proposed rulemaking would allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recognize tribal organizations in a similar manner as the Secretary recognizes state organizations." Written comments may be submitted to Tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov no later than April 3, 2016. We strongly recommend that tribal leaders provide feedback regarding concerns or recommendations (pro and con) about the proposed amendments to the rule as this is an important development and it is vitally important to our Veterans and their families that tribes' voices be heard on this matter.

The next few weeks are very much a time of planning for the OTGR team. Tribal Veterans Representative training is in the works, Veterans Training Summits and intergovernmental site visits are on the horizon. I'll have more specific dates and locations for you coming up in my next message to our readers. I think you'll find this issue has enough information until our next newsletter...

Happy Reading,



Stephanie



National Native American Veterans Memorial

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) has been charged by Congress with establishing a National Native American Veterans Memorial, to give "all Americans the opportunity to learn of the proud and courageous tradition of service of Native Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States."

The Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne) and Chickasaw Nation Lieutenant Governor Jefferson Keel are leading an advisory committee of tribal leaders and veterans representing the geographic diversity of Indian Country and the various branches of the Armed Forces. The committee will assist with outreach to Native American nations and tribes and their veterans and advise on plans for the memorial.



In 2016, the advisory committee and the museum will conduct community consultations to seek input and support for the memorial. Regional events will bring together tribal leaders, Native veterans, and community members to gather their insights and advice.

A traveling banner exhibition, *Patriot Nations: Native Americans in Our Nation's Armed Forces*, will tell the stories of American Indian veterans as well as the museum's plans to build the memorial. The exhibition, made possible with support from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, will travel to tribal centers, museums, and libraries beginning in mid-2016.

A design for the memorial will be selected by a juried competition. The National Native American Veterans Memorial will be located prominently on the NMAI's grounds on the National Mall, between the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol, and will honor the immense contributions and patriotism of Native Americans in the U.S. Armed Forces.



National Native American Veterans Memorial



**NATIONAL
NATIVE AMERICAN
VETERANS
MEMORIAL**


Smithsonian
Institution

Kevin Gover
Director
National Museum of the American Indian

invites you to a reception
for the National Native American Veterans Memorial
at the Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention

**Monday, March 14, 2016
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

**Phoenix Convention Center, Room 127B
100 N 3rd Street
Phoenix, AZ**

The National Museum of the American Indian has been authorized by Congress to create a memorial honoring the service of Native Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Please join us for refreshments and remarks from Director Gover and the co-chairs of the memorial advisory committee, the Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne) and the Honorable Jefferson Keel, Lieutenant Governor of the Chickasaw Nation

RSVP to NMAI-RSVP@si.edu by
Monday, March 7.

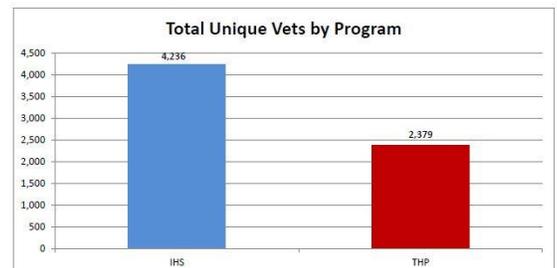
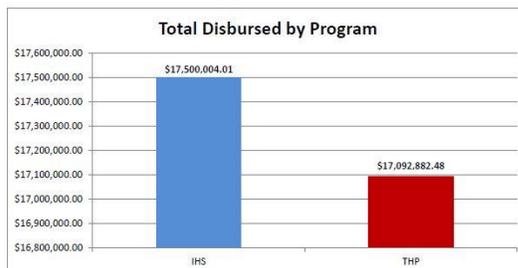
War bonnets adorn uniform jackets at a Ton-Kon-Gah (Kiowa Black Leggings Warrior Society) ceremonial near Anadarko, Oklahoma, 2006. Photo by Emil Her Many Horses.



VA Reimburses over \$34.5+ Million to IHS and Tribal Health Programs

Tribal health clinics interested in entering into a reimbursement agreement with VA for serving veterans should send an initial note of interest to:
tribal.agreements@va.gov

National Data				
Total Disbursement for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD	Total Disbursement by Program - Agmt Date to FYTD			Total Unique Veterans for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD
\$34,597,193.49	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	6,537
	IHS	\$17,500,004.01	4,236	
	THP	\$17,092,882.48	2,379	
Total Disbursement of Out of System Ret repayments (only) - payments are included in above totals				
Total Disbursement - Out of System Ret repayments (only)	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	Total Unique Veterans - Out of System Ret repayments (only)
\$19,795.23	IHS	\$15,488.23	638	721
	THP	\$0.00	0	



Native American Veteran lives to serve his fellow Veterans and tribal members



Here's a blog from Gary Hicks from Vantage Point which ran on February 23 and which can be accessed [HERE](#).



Bill Hale is an interesting man, even though he would probably tell you that he's not.

He could tell you stories of his youth attending Catholic boarding school, or the life lessons he learned from his grandparents while growing up on the [Fort Berthold Reservation](#). He could also tell you about communing with nature, being an Army Infantryman, or an oil field roughneck. Hale could even tell you what it's like busting broncs and riding bulls in rodeos.

But Hale, he would rather talk about helping Veterans. The 60-year-old Native American is a member of the Hidatsa and Mandan tribes, and serves as a Veterans Service Officer for the Three Affiliated Tribes – the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Sahnish also known as the [MHA Nation](#) in New Town, North Dakota.



If you haven't noticed, Bill Hale isn't exactly a one-job-at-a-time kind of guy. And his work for the MHA Nation is no different. In his current position, he does a lot of different things from driving Veterans to their doctor appointments to finding homeless Veterans a place to sleep. He's even trying to build the tribe a new building to better serve their Veterans. That is when he's not traveling the outlying and remote areas reaching out to older and new Veterans to inform them about the benefits and services available to them through the tribes, VSOs and VA.



But this story didn't start about Hale, or the other many hats he wears. It began last month when [Wounded Warriors Family Support](#), a Nebraska-based VSO, purchased a truck from a local Ford dealer and presented it to the MHA Nation.

"Native Americans provide the highest percentage of our soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines than any other demographic group, yet they are underserved because of their isolation," said retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. John Folsom, founder and president of *Wounded Warriors Family Support*. "This vehicle will help in providing adequate transportation for those who served."



The vehicle purchase by Wounded Warriors Family Support is one of [several programs](#) the organization runs to support and improve the lives of Veterans across the country. A presentation ceremony was held at Eide Ford in Bismark, North Dakota, where dealership's general manager, Casey Neumann, presented the keys to MHA Nation Chairman of the Tribe Mark Fox to a brand new Ford F150 gifted by WWFS to the MHA Nation. It was a pretty big deal to all. Immediately following the ceremony, the keys were handed to – you guessed it – Bill.



Eide Ford general manager, Casey Neumann (right), presents the keys to a new truck to MHA Nation Chairman of the Tribe Mark Fox, who in turn passed them to Bill Hale (left) so he could pick up a Veteran.

As luck (or a carefully planned schedule) would have it, a fellow Veteran had a medical appointment earlier that day in Bismarck. Bill Hale hopped in the new truck and drove to the VA outpatient clinic located there to pick up the visually impaired Veteran and drive him roughly three hours back to his home. Just another day at the office for Hale.

“Having a way to transport Veterans is very important up here,” Hale said. “We have a large lake that separates many of the communities and you might have to drive 90 miles or more to get around to some of the outlying areas. We need to maintain the ability to get Veterans to where they need to go – especially for their medical needs. This truck is a blessing.” What was evident in my conversation with Hale — while he was on the road by the way — was not the fact that he busted broncs in his youth or is the American Legion Commander of the Myron B. Johnson–Nathan J. Goodiron Post 271 in North Dakota, but it’s his passion for helping his fellow Veterans.

A passion you can feel by talking to him, although it’s not being said in his words, for his words are always about helping others.

That passion helps Hale succeed in helping his fellow Veterans as a part of the MHA Nation. It’s the same type of unspoken dedication that is reflected in many others, such as Folsom of the Wounded Warriors Family Support, and the thousands of others like them, who dedicate their lives to improving the lives of their fellow Veterans in any manner they can.

While you may not know Bill Hale, you probably have someone like him in your community – someone who gives a Vet a ride to the hospital, or goes around collecting clothes for the next homeless stand-down event. It’s the people who get things done, not necessarily because they are paid to, but because they want to and because caring for Veterans is the right thing to do.

If you know someone like this, ask them how you can help, or maybe [volunteer](#) at your local [VSO](#) or VA [facility](#).



Native Veterans in Oklahoma Process Trauma Through Culturally Sensitive Care

Here's an article by Allison Herrera which ran online on January 29 and can be accessed [HERE](#).

Soldiers returning from battle face special challenges. Thousands suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and their care can be more involved and long-term. The nation's VA hospitals, although under recent scrutiny, will care for more than a million of the nation's soldiers. But, the nation's Native American veterans face a set of extra challenges after fighting on the front lines.

Localore producer Allison Herrera tells us about a groundbreaking program started at the Oklahoma City VA hospital that helps Native vets meet those challenges, and go beyond.

Matheson Hamilton was a state side medic serving at the Presidio during the Vietnam War where he saw a lot of soldiers tragically wounded and die. When he returned to Oklahoma in 1977, he started drinking to cope with the things he saw. To get sober, he tried a number of different programs, including Alcoholics Anonymous, but nothing worked. "Dealt with it the best way I could. To get to sleep at night, I'd get drunk. I thought it was sleep, but I was just passed out. I'd wake up and the first thing I want to do is get drunk again so I don't have to think about things."

Then he found the Warriors group, a special substance abuse program at the Oklahoma City VA hospital aimed at Native veterans. It started in 1999 when the VA decided it wanted to better serve two population of its veterans: women and Native Americans. The program was the first of its kind in the country. "Through friends of mine they said, 'go to the warriors group. It'll help you out a whole lot.' And I got back into the ceremonies after I joined the Warriors group. Started going to sweats and did the sundance. Just got my life back on the right road."

He's been sober for eight years now. He says it was Susan Vaughn, one of Warriors group founders who helped him stick it out. Vaughn started as a licensed social worker at the VA in 1997. When she was approached to start the Warriors group, she quickly learned that this program needed to be different. Rather than sitting in group talking and processing like Alcoholics Anonymous, these Native veterans wanted to be active and give back to the community. She says it's the key to the program's success.

"I think the cultural piece of that is that they wanted to be very involved with their families and the community. Pow Wows. We started the pow wow in 2000 because they wanted to give back. The guys went up on the floors and got veterans in wheelchairs and brought 'em down to the dance and it was wonderful."

The Veterans Honor Dance at the Oklahoma City VA Hospital is now in its 16th year.



Participants from the Warriors group and the Elders council—an offshoot from the Warriors group—honor veterans both living and fallen. Gifts are given, songs are sung and a Grand Entry rivaling that of any major Pow Wow takes place in the VA's auditorium.

CARING FOR NATIVE VETERANS

At this year's Veterans Honor Dance, they honored Candy Klump, who is leaving the VA this month to care for another veteran: her dad, who fought in World War II. Throughout her time at the VA, she's gained new respect for Native Americans who serve our country. Candy Klump begins her day like any other at the VA hospital in Oklahoma City—making the rounds, chatting with hospital friends and offering up words of support. We're walking towards the ER to see a patient Candy helped admit after he complained of serious pain. We arrive to find him lying on his side waiting to for the ER doctor to check him out.

Klump has been with the VA for 27 years, and her goal is simple: help Native American Veterans get the care he or she needs. It turns out that may be more complicated than you think—that's because Native veterans face an extra set of challenges. They have more health issues before serving their country and, according to the VA's own 2015 study, they serve their country at higher rate than other veterans.

And then there's the cultural piece—family and community are a big part of people's lives in Indian country. So are ceremonies, which serve as an extra layer of protection when dealing with war time trauma. "If you see a veteran sitting in a room and they see another veteran there and they get to talking, there's a camaraderie and there's a connection there will not be between any other two people in the room. Well, if you get Native American veterans in a room and they get to talking, that is even double. To me, Native American veterans are a sub-culture of a sub-culture."

Since 2013, Klump has worked exclusively with Native veterans after the VA signed an agreement with Indian Health Service to streamline the care they receive. It's a big deal if you live far away from the nearest VA facility. Clump's job is a lot of cutting through the red tape so vets can have easier access to care. The main issues are transportation, making sure that veterans know they're even eligible for care and communication.

In addition to her rounds at the hospital she gives trainings to non-native staff about how to talk to native vets, whose communication style might not be what they're used to. "A Native person may not look you in the eye. It doesn't mean he's lying. A Native American person if you tell them no, is probably not going to come back and ask you again."

Native veterans still seek a lot of their care from the VA hospital, which doesn't plan on ending the unique services for this special class of veterans. And even though Candy Klump is leaving the VA, the program she helped start and the work she did will continue.

You can interact with Invisible Nations and provide your own experiences by texting the word "Press" to 405-759-8336.



“Ending All Native Homelessness Next Federal Target”

Here’s an [article](#) by Mark Fogarty which ran in Indian Country Today on February 4

“The multi-agency effort just announced by the federal government to alleviate Native American veteran homelessness may just be the tip of the iceberg. Last fall, eight federal agencies signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on an effort to end all Native American homelessness, not just Native veteran homelessness. The MOU specifically recognizes tribal sovereignty. In November, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness signed an MOU with seven more federal agencies, the Departments of Interior, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development, “to work together on several key actions that will begin to address homelessness both on and off tribal lands,” according to Lindsay Knotts, policy advisor for USICH.

USICH is in charge of an even larger strategic program, “Opening Doors,” that seeks to end all homelessness anywhere in the country. Started in 2010, the program has been amended in both 2012 and 2015. The November MOU, worked out after a report to USICH by the Interagency Working Group on Homelessness among American Indians and Alaska Natives has been informed by input from tribal leaders and urban Indian experts, according to Knotts in a posting on the USICH website.

Two of the agencies, HUD and VA, have just announced a joint effort (HUD-VASH) to alleviate homelessness among Native vets. The \$5.9 million effort envisions HUD providing vouchers for rental housing and the VA providing supportive services for the vets. This represents an extension to rural and reservation areas of a program that had formerly only been available through Public Housing Authorities, which are mainly urban.

HUD spokeswoman Heather Fluit noted that the amount allocated to the HUD-VASH effort was increased to \$5.9 million from the original \$4 million, because of the high volume of tribal requests for funds (26 tribes were awarded the money). However, she noted that Congress has yet to appropriate the funds.

The MOU in the larger effort to end all Native homelessness noted Native need was “both unique and uniquely underserved,” according to Knotts. She said the USICH focus on Natives is a result of treaties and trust obligations the federal government has to tribes. The Council heard testimony that “while only 1.2 percent of the national population self-identifies as AI/AN, 2.3 percent of all people experiencing sheltered homelessness, 2 percent of all sheltered individuals, and 2.9 percent of all sheltered families self-identify as AI/AN. These data are primarily limited to Native Americans experiencing homelessness off tribal lands.

Also, “at least 8.8 percent of households in Native American communities are overcrowded



Indian Country
TODAY MEDIA NETWORK

compared with 3 percent nationwide. By some estimates, as many as one in five people (19 percent) living on tribal lands are living in overcrowded housing situations.”

But Knotts said these numbers do not fully reflect the housing crisis in tribal communities. The group’s plan centers around four strategies:

- Improving access to housing and services through Administrative action, and providing guidance and technical assistance; and to increase the availability of housing options for Native Americans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness both on and off tribal lands.
- Improving data collection on homelessness among Native Americans both on and off tribal lands.
- Ensuring that Federal strategies and actions to set a path to end Native American homelessness are informed by consultation and engagement with tribal leaders, urban native communities, and experts in the field.
- Elevating awareness of the crisis of homelessness and housing instability among Native Americans, both on and off tribal lands.

 Heard Museum

Inter-Tribal Golf Association ~ American Indian Veterans National Memorial Gold Classic

Any Veterans or Veterans organizations wishing to participate in this tournament should contact John Breuninger, Inter-Tribal Golf Association, Director of Tribal Relations, at (920) 562-7536 or Johnb@golfnative.com





Telehealth in Indian Country

Here's some telehealth information provided by Pauline Anderson, VISN 23, CCHT
Program Manager

Telehealth is the use of a broad variety of technologies and tactics to enhance health care, public health, and health education delivery. In Veterans Healthcare Administration, three different services comprise telehealth: Clinical Video Telehealth, Store & Forward Telehealth, Home Telehealth.

Clinical Video Telehealth uses a secure connection to provide face-to-face real-time video and looks a lot like SKYPE which can help minimize unnecessary travel. Clinical Video Telehealth visits may involve a conversation with the provider or even a physical exam. Clinical Video Telehealth can take place with the Veteran in a clinic setting or with the Veteran in their home. There are many benefits to doing Clinical Video Telehealth from your home. Here are just a few: -there is NO co-pay; less time away from work or family, since there's no drive-time to consider; less stress, since you don't have to worry about navigating icy roads or busy parking lots.

Also with the potential to reduce the need for Veteran travel, Store & Forward Telehealth is an asynchronous process in which the Veteran's part of the process takes place at a different time than the provider's part. When the Veteran is in the clinic for another appointment digital data is gathered (like a picture of a dermatologic lesion for example), stored on a Veteran's Affairs (VA) server behind a VA firewall and forwarded to the specialist who will evaluate the data and provide a clinical impression which is sent to the Primary Care Provider. This process allows Veterans to access the expertise of medical specialists without having to travel sometimes hundreds of miles to see the specialist in person. Some clinical specialties that use the Store and Forward Telehealth process are teleRetinal Imaging, teleSpirometry, teleDermatology, and teleCardiology.

In Home Telehealth, specially trained care coordinators use different technology to connect with Veterans daily. This close communication allows Veterans to receive timely information, education and guidance around their chronic illnesses in order to help them learn how to better self-manage their conditions. The goal of Home Telehealth is to improve clinical outcomes while reducing complications, hospitalizations and clinic or emergency room visits for Veterans with chronic illnesses through education, case management and coaching. This is accomplished through improved disease management, improved self-care management and earlier and proactive interventions resulting in positive outcomes.

If any of this interests you, do not hesitate to contact the Facility Telehealth Coordinator at your local health care system.



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VA Helps Seminole Vets Get Homes

Here's an article by Brian Daffron which ran in Indian Country Today on February 12 and which can be read [HERE](#).

Getting a home loan for any purpose—whether it is to buy, build, renovate or refinance—can be a highly difficult process. For Native people trying to build on their BIA trust or restricted land, it is an even more laborious process. The proverbial red tape can be miles long and go all the way to the Secretary of the Interior. However, through memorandums of understanding (MOU) with specific tribes, the Department of Veterans Affairs is finding ways to get home loans to Native veterans.

On February 5, the VA Loan Guaranty division expanded its Native American Direct Loan (NADL) program by signing an MOU with the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. The signing took place at the Donald Reynolds Wellness and Community Center in Seminole, Oklahoma, with the signatures of Guaranty Loan Director Mike Frueh and Seminole Nation Chief Leonard Harjo making everything official. The MOU had been in development since at least 2014. Harjo told ICTMN that the permanent MOU will “allow our Native American veterans to build a home on their land—land they grew up on, land in some ways they fought for. That’s something that has been denied them,” he said.

The MOU is the final step needed for Seminole veterans to obtain a NADL loan, which went into effect immediately after signing. The VA Loan Guaranty program has nearly 100 specific MOUs with tribal nations—nearly one-fifth of all the federally recognized tribes. “We’ve still got a long way to go, but we have momentum going,” said Ivonne Perez, the national coordinator of NADL. “We’re going to continue on. Our goal is to have an MOU with every single one of our federally recognized tribes.”

The specifics of NADL include a current interest rate at 4 percent, with the maximum loan amount in most parts of the country being \$417,000. Furthermore, the loan is directly from the VA, has simpler qualifications than other loans, and does not require a down payment. Although there is a funding fee of 1.5 percent on newly purchased homes and .5 percent for renovations, this amount may be rolled into the loan amount.

An additional benefit is that, according to Perez, VA loans have the lowest foreclosure rate in the country, especially with tribes where the MOU exists. “If there is a delinquency, a default or a foreclosure, the VA and the tribes work together to resolve that,” Perez said. According to Harjo, a VA loan is “one of the best lending programs out there—no principal mortgage interest,” he said. “No down payments. They’re willing to work with people who may not have credit. This is one of the most tangible benefits available to veterans for the last 70-plus years.” Although interest rates and loan amounts are measurable, home ownership, ultimately, provides more than holding a deed. It can provide a sense of security. This is one area that Perez emphasized beyond the numbers and monetary amounts. “I truly believe one of the main things for health, for quality of life, for personal satisfaction is a home—a home you can call your own, a home for your family. It’s stability.”



4 VA Loan Myths That Hamper Veteran Home Buyers

Here's an article by Chris Birk which ran online in Fox Business on February 4 , and which can be accessed [HERE](#).

Part of the original GI Bill of 1944, VA home loans — mortgage loans guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) — have soared since the housing crash. During a time of tight credit and tough lending, this long-cherished program backed a record 631,151 loans in fiscal year 2015. VA loans aren't just grabbing market share — they're snagging headlines, too, from talk of their industry-low interest rates to their surprising safety.

But countless veterans and military families are still missing out, in part because of longstanding myths and misconceptions. A perception of red tape and bureaucracy is something Department of Veterans Affairs officials continue to combat.

Mike Frueh, the head of the loan program, calls it the “myth of my father's VA.” “It's the myth that the loan takes too long to get, it's too cumbersome, it's difficult,” Frueh said. “We can counter that through education, and through constantly addressing our program to make it better.” To that end, let's take a look at four pervasive VA loan myths that can keep veterans from exploring their hard-earned home loan benefits.

Myth 1: You need perfect credit

This one is almost laughably wrong. VA loans were created to help level the playing field for veterans and military members who've sacrificed for our country. More flexible and forgiving credit guidelines are a key part of the benefit. While the VA doesn't require a certain credit score, the private lenders ultimately making these loans certainly will. The good news is, many are looking for a minimum 620 FICO score to qualify. That's considered just “Fair” credit, a step below “Good” and two beneath “Excellent.” VA loans also typically feature shorter waiting periods than conventional loans following negative credit events like a bankruptcy or foreclosure.

Myth 2: VA loans cost more

These \$0 down loans come with a host of big-time benefits that have made homeownership possible for millions of veterans and service members who might otherwise be left on the sidelines. They also don't inherently cost more than other loan types. The VA limits what lenders can charge in closing costs, and these no-down-payment loans also come with no mortgage insurance. The latter can prove especially costly and eat into a veteran's buying power. Conventional buyers without a 20-percent down payment usually need to pay for private mortgage insurance. FHA buyers face both upfront and annual mortgage insurance charges. Compared to FHA, the VA estimates its 2015 buyers will save \$44 billion in mortgage insurance costs over the life of their loans.



VA buyers do have to contend with an upfront funding fee, which can be paid in cash at closing or rolled on top of the loan. The VA Funding Fee varies depending on your down payment, your service history and whether it's your first use of the benefit. For most first-time buyers, it's 2.15 percent of the loan amount. Veterans who receive compensation for a service-connected disability don't have to pay this fee.

Myth 3: VA loans take forever to close

VA loans have long fought a reputation for being slow and choked with red tape. Some of that reflects old truths, but the program has become considerably more efficient over the past 15 years. Long a sore spot for buyers and real estate agents, VA appraisals now come back in under 10 business days on average, which is on par with the other loan types, Frueh said. Wait times can be longer in more remote parts of the country. There's also little difference between VA and conventional loans in terms of getting to the finish line. The average VA purchase in December closed in 51 days, which was a day longer than the typical conventional loan, according to mortgage software provider Ellie Mae. VA loans also had a higher closing success rate than conventional loans throughout all of 2015.

Myth 4: No down payment makes VA loans risky

This is one of the surprising — and surprisingly neglected — stories of the housing recovery. These \$0 down loans have had the lowest foreclosure rate of any mortgage on the market for most of the past eight years, according to data from the Mortgage Bankers Association. That success is partly due to the VA's common-sense guideline for discretionary income, which helps ensure buyers can weather financial hiccups and stay current on their mortgage. But the VA's foreclosure prevention team deserves a lot of credit, too. Foreclosure specialists get regular updates on each of the 2.5 million active VA loans, and they can reach out to homeowners at the first sign of danger. The foreclosure team also encourages lenders and mortgage servicers to offer foreclosure alternatives to borrowers in jeopardy. Those efforts helped more than 90,000 veterans avoid foreclosure last year alone.

“There's not many times that a government agency is leading the industry in something, and in something as important as housing,” Frueh said. “I want our children's VA to be better than it is today, and we're doing everything we can in our power to get there.”

VA

VA DIRECT HOME LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICANS LIVING ON TRUST LAND

Helping You Use the Benefits You've Earned



How to Apply for a Loan

- Check whether your tribal organization has a Memorandum of Understanding with VA to participate in the program.
- Log on to www.eBenefits.va.gov to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility or submit a paper application (VA Form 26-1880) to the Atlanta Eligibility Center.
- Contact your local VA Regional Loan Center to learn more.
- Find a home and sign a purchase agreement or contract with a homebuilder.

NADL Program Benefits

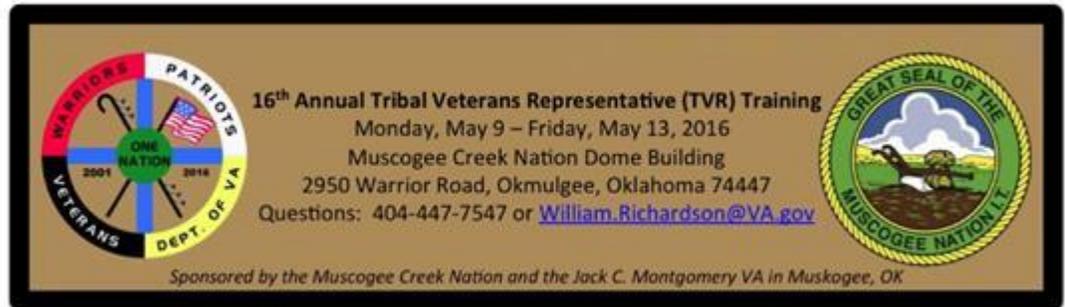
- No downpayment
- No private mortgage insurance
- Low fixed interest rate
- Low closing costs
- Up to \$417,000 in most areas, more in high-cost areas such as Alaska and Hawaii
- Reusable benefit



For more information, visit
www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/nadl.asp
or call 1-877-827-3702.



Tribal Veteran Representative Training



The Department of Veteran's Affairs, the Muscogee Creek Nation and the Jack C. Montgomery VA in Muskogee will be hosting a **FREE** training on 5/9/2016 to 5/13/2016 at the Muscogee Creek Nation Dome Building in Okmulgee. This training is open to anyone who is interested in attending.

The purpose of this knowledge-based training is to help the attendees understand the VHA-VBA-& NCA benefits, programs, and services available so they can most effectively help the returning Veterans of the current OEF/OIF conflict and engage them in current programs available to them. We hope that you will be able to attend this important training and look forward to seeing you in Okmulgee!

If you should have any questions about this event, please feel free to email William.Richardson@VA.gov or call (406) 447-7547.



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs | Washington, DC 20420
Media Relations | (202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 2016

Care and Benefits for Veterans Strengthened by \$182 Billion VA Budget

WASHINGTON – In his FY 2017 budget, President Obama is proposing \$182.3 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Funding will continue to support the largest transformation in VA history; expand access to timely, high-quality health care and benefits; and advance efforts to end homelessness among Veterans.

“VA has before it one of the greatest opportunities in its history to transform the way it cares for our Veterans who nobly served and sacrificed for our Nation,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “As we work to become a more efficient, effective and responsive, Veteran-centric Department, we can’t do it alone; we need the help of Congress. This year, VA submitted over 100 legislative proposals, including 40 new proposals to better serve Veterans. Our goal is provide the best care to our Veterans while removing obstacles or barriers that prevent them from getting the care they deserve.”

Highlights from the President’s 2017 Budget request for VA

The FY 2017 budget includes \$78.7 billion in discretionary funding, largely for health care and \$103.6 billion for mandatory benefit programs such as disability compensation and pensions. The \$78.7 billion for discretionary spending is \$3.6 billion (4.9 percent) above the 2016 enacted level, including over \$3.6 billion in medical care collections from health insurers and Veteran copayments. The budget also requests \$70.0 billion, including collections, for the 2018 advance appropriations for medical care, an increase of \$1.5 billion and 2.1 percent above the 2017 medical care budget request. The request includes \$103.9 billion in 2018 mandatory advance appropriations for Compensation and Pensions, Readjustment Benefits and Veterans Insurance and Indemnities benefits programs in the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Health Care

With a medical care budget of \$68.6 billion, including collections, VA is positioned to continue expanding health care services to its millions of Veteran patients. Health care is being provided to over 922,000 Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn/Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) and Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS). Major spending categories within the health care budget are:

- \$12.2 billion for care in the community;
- \$8.5 billion for long-term care;
- \$7.8 billion for mental health;
- \$1.6 billion for homeless Veterans;



- \$1.5 billion for Hepatitis-C treatments;
- \$725 million for Caregivers;
- \$601 million for spinal cord injuries; and
- \$284 million for traumatic brain injuries.

Expanding Access

The President's Budget ensures that care and other benefits are available to Veterans when and where they need them. Among the programs that will expand access under the proposed budget are:

- \$12.2 billion for care in the community compared to \$10.5 billion in 2015, a 16 percent increase;
- \$1.2 billion in telehealth funding, which helps patients monitor chronic health care conditions and increases access to care, especially in rural and remote locations;
- \$515 million for health care services specifically designed for women, an increase of 8.5 percent over the present level;
- \$836 million for the activation of new and enhanced health care facilities;
- \$900 million for major and minor construction projects, including funding for seismic corrections, two new cemeteries, and two gravesite expansions; and
- \$171 million for improved customer service by providing an integrated services delivery platform.

Improving the Efficiency of Claims Processing

The President's Budget provides for continued implementation of the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) robust Transformation Plan -- a series of people, process, and technology initiatives -- in 2017. This plan will continue to systematically improve the quality and efficiency of claims processing.

Major claims transformation initiatives in the budget invest \$323 million to bring leading-edge technology to claims processing, including:

- \$180 million (\$143 million in Information Technology and \$37 million in VBA) to enhance the electronic claims processing system -- the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS); and
- \$143 million for Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) to continue conversion of paper records, such as Veterans' medical records, into electronic images and data in VBMS.

In addition, the President's Budget supports increasing VBA's workforce to address staffing needs so it can continue to improve the delivery of benefits to Veterans. As VBA continues to receive and complete more disability compensation rating claims, the volume of non-rating claims correspondingly increases. The request for \$54 million for 300 additional full-time equivalent employees (FTE) and claims processing support will allow VBA to provide more timely actions on non-rating claims.



Appeals Reform

The current appeals process is complicated and ineffective, and Veterans on average are waiting about 5 years for a final decision on an appeal that reaches the Board of Veterans' Appeals, with thousands waiting much longer. The 2017 Budget proposes a Simplified Appeals initiative – legislation and resources – to provide Veterans with a simple, fair, and streamlined appeals process in which they would receive a final appeals decision within one year from filing an appeal by 2021. The Budget requests \$156 million and 922 FTE for the Board, an increase of \$46 million and 242 FTE over 2016, as a down payment on a long-term, sustainable plan to improve services to Veterans.

Ending Veterans Homelessness

The Administration has made the ending of Veteran homelessness a national priority. The Budget requests \$1.6 billion for programs to prevent or reduce Veteran homelessness, including:

- \$300 million for Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) to promote housing stability;
- \$496 million for the HUD-VASH program, wherein VA provides case management services for at-risk Veterans and their families and HUD provides permanent housing through its Housing Choice Voucher program; and
- \$247 million in grant and per diem payments that support temporary housing provided by community-based organizations.

MyVA

The 2017 budget continues the largest Department-wide transformation in VA's history through the MyVA initiative, which is changing VA's culture, processes, and capabilities to put the needs, expectations and interests of Veterans and their families first. MyVA has developed five objectives fundamental to the transformation of VA: 1) improving the Veterans' experience; 2) improving the employee experience; 3) improving support service excellence; 4) establishing a culture of continuous performance improvement; and 5) enhancing strategic partnerships. To aid in this transformation, the Department established the Veterans Experience Office (VEO). The VEO will represent the voice of Veterans and their families in Departmental governance; design and implement customer-centric programs to make interactions with VA easier; and support VA's "mission owners" in carrying out MyVA improvements across the system.

Veterans Choice Act

The Veterans Choice Act provides \$5 billion to increase Veterans' access to health care by hiring more physicians and staff and improving the VA's physical infrastructure. It also provides \$10 billion through 2017 to establish a temporary program (the Veterans Choice Program) to improve access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans who meet certain wait-time or distance standards to use eligible health care providers outside of the VA system. In 2017, VA will use the Choice Act funds in concert with annual appropriations to meet VA staffing and infrastructure needs and expand non-VA care to Veterans who are eligible for the Veterans Choice Program. VA plans to spend \$1.4 billion in 2016 and \$853 million in 2017 to support



more than 9,700 new medical care staff hired through the Choice Act; \$980 million in 2016 and \$116 million in 2017 to improve VA facilities.

Other Key Services for Veterans

- \$286 million to administer VA's system of 134 national cemeteries, including additional funding for operations of new cemeteries and the National Shrine program to raise and realign gravesites;
- \$4.3 billion for information technology (IT), including investments to strengthen cybersecurity, modernize Veterans' electronic health records, improve Veterans' access to benefits, and enhance the IT infrastructure; and
- \$125 million for state cemetery grants and state extended care grants.

Enhanced Oversight of VA's programs

- The 2017 budget requests an additional \$23 million and 100 FTE for the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to enhance oversight and assist the OIG in fulfilling its statutory mission and making recommendations that will help VA improve the care and services it provides.

VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country; the tenth largest life insurance program in the Nation, with \$1.3 trillion in coverage; monthly disability compensation, pensions, and survivors benefits to 5.3 million beneficiaries; educational assistance or vocational rehabilitation benefits and services to nearly 1.2 million students; mortgage guaranties to over 2 million homeowners; and the largest cemetery system in the Nation.

Applications now open for Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Court Program



Tribal courts interested in finding ways to help veterans should consider the program below. There is also the [Veteran Treatment Court Planning Initiative](#) as well as the [Veteran Justice Outreach Program](#).

There is no better way to learn how a Veterans Treatment Court operates than by observing it in person. That's why [Justice For Vets](#), in collaboration with the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, created the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Court Program. If your application is approved, Justice For Vets will fund up to three members of your Veterans Treatment Court team to visit an approved mentor court. Costs covered include transportation, lodging and meal per diem. Requests for visits are reviewed based on the needs of the applying jurisdiction.

Mentor courts serve as model programs for court teams interested in starting a Veterans Treatment Court or established courts interested in learning innovative practices. **Space is limited! Submit your applications by March 15.** You can learn more about the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Court Program, including how to apply, at justiceforvets.org/veteran-mentor-courts.



Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program

The purpose of the [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program \(HVRP\)](#) is to provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.

HVRP was initially authorized under Section 738 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in July 1987. It is currently authorized under Title 38 U.S.C. Section 2021, as added by Section 5 of Public Law 107-95, the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible applicants such as: State and local Workforce Investment Boards, public agencies, for-profit/commercial entities, and non-profit organizations, including faith based and community based organizations.

Grantees provide an array of services utilizing a case management approach that directly assists homeless veterans as well as provide critical linkages for a variety of supportive services available in their local communities. The program is "employment focused" and veterans receive the employment and training services they need in order to re-enter the labor force. Job placement, training, job development, career counseling, resume preparation, are among the services that are provided. Supportive services such as clothing, provision of or referral to temporary, transitional, and permanent housing, referral to medical and substance abuse treatment, and transportation assistance are also provided to meet the needs of this target group.

Since its inception, HVRP has featured an outreach component using veterans who themselves have experienced homelessness. In recent years, this successful technique was modified to allow the programs to utilize formerly homeless veterans in various other positions where there is direct client contact such as counseling, peer coaching, intake, and follow-up services.

The emphasis on helping homeless veterans get and retain jobs is enhanced through many linkages and coordination with various veterans' services programs and organizations such as the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives stationed in the local employment service offices of the State Workforce Agencies, Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Centers, Veterans' Workforce Investment Program, the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Departments of Veterans' Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services. For more information about U.S. Department of Labor employment and training programs for veterans, contact the Veterans' Employment and Training Service office nearest you, listed in the phone book under United States Government, U.S. Department of Labor or at:

<http://www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/contacts/main.htm>. The closing date for receipt of the application under this announcement is March 23, 2016. The application must be received no later than **4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**



Home Depot Veteran Housing Grants

The Home Depot Foundation's (THDF) Veteran Housing Grants Program awards grants to nonprofit organizations for the development and repair of veterans housing. To date, the Foundation has awarded more than \$80 million, and has helped impact more than 17,000 units of housing for veterans. Awards typically range from \$100,000 to \$500,000.

Many one-off single family home repair requests are a better fit for our [Team Depot](#) or [Community Impact Grant](#) programs. Veteran Housing Grants are best suited to fund single family home repairs when they are a part of a permanent program managed by the nonprofit partner.

Eligible Projects

- New construction, rehab or repair, single family or multifamily, permanent supportive housing or transitional housing.
- Grants are awarded solely for the physical construction or repair of housing for veterans (hard costs). THDF does not provide funding for soft costs, such as furnishings, rental subsidies, tenant services, etc.
- Target population of veterans, at or below 80% AMI.
- Projects in which at least 20% of the units are reserved for veterans.
- All veterans served are honorably discharged.
- Project will commence within the next twelve months.
- THDF grant funding must comprise less than 50% of the total development cost of the project.
- 75% of the project's funding sources have been identified at the time of proposal submission.
- The amount of funding requested does not exceed \$25,000 per veteran unit.
- For multifamily rental projects, proposals requesting above \$100,000 must provide evidence of a third party binding agreement that ensures the units are a.) reserved for veterans; b.) occupied by veterans for a minimum of 15 years for rental or 3 years for homeownership (i.e. project-based HUDVASH, other funder requirement, deed restriction, zoning requirement, etc.).

Eligible Applicants

- Grants are only awarded to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations that have been in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service for at least 5 years.
- Organizations with a current operating budget of at least \$300,000 and audited financial statements from the past three years.
- Organizations with previous experience developing, and either currently manage or own, veteran specific housing.
- For rental projects, nonprofit must have a 15+ year ownership stake in the development.

Preferred Project Criteria

- Projects which serve the housing needs of women veterans with children, Post 9/11 wounded warriors, veterans with caregivers, homeless veterans, or aging in



- place for senior veterans.
- Projects which combine addressing the housing needs of veterans with supportive services or opportunities for community service activities.
 - Projects with a funding request between \$15,000 and \$25,000 per veteran unit.
 - Projects located in urban/major metropolitan areas.
 - Projects with a mix of local private/public financial support as well as a mix of local, city, state, federal and private funding.
 - Proposals which clearly demonstrate how organization will track and report outcomes.
 - Proposals which clearly demonstrate how organization will locate and identify veterans.
 - Organizations willing to provide volunteer opportunities for local Home Depot store associates.
 - Multi-family developments which;
 - o Have a substantial track record in developing and managing housing projects for veterans as well as providing services to veterans.
 - o Have site control.
 - Single Family New Construction projects which;
 - o Have a track record in developing, gifting and selling housing to veterans.
 - o Have site control of the lots.
 - o Veterans have been identified and qualified.
 - Single Family Home Repair projects which;
 - o Have a track record of identifying and managing critical repairs on a veteran's home.
 - o A waitlist of veterans exists.

Process

All applicants will first complete a questionnaire to determine their eligibility to receive funding through this program. If the project is eligible, applicants will be directed to submit a Grant Proposal for consideration by THDF. Only proposals submitted through the online application process will be considered for funding. Proposals submitted by mail, phone, or e-mail will not receive funding and will be directed to the online application process.

A THDF staff member will follow up with you regarding the status of your proposal no later than 45 days after submission. Proposals will be declined, approved for Application or queued for the next funding cycle. Proposals are meant to gauge the Foundation's interest in participating in a project while allowing us to queue projects strategically in our pipeline. Proposals will continue to be accepted year round and after the deadlines below however will be queued for the next funding cycle.

If your proposal is competitive, you will be invited to complete an Application. Upon completion, a site visit may be conducted and your organization will be subject to a third party review. Pending a successful review, a final decision will be reached at the Foundation's Board meeting. Please review the table below to determine the appropriate deadline to submit your proposal.



Determinations

Final determinations will be made three times a year. Please review the table below to determine the appropriate deadline to submit your proposal. Again, proposals are accepted year round. If a proposal is submitted after the deadlines below, it will be queued for the next funding cycle.

2016

Cycle | Grant Proposal Due Date | Final Determinations

1	10/27/15	April 2016
2	2/24/16	August 2016
3	6/23/16	December 2016

You may access the Grant Proposal using the links below. To complete the questionnaire and to submit a Grant Proposal, [click here](#). To access a saved Grant Proposal, [click here](#).

Grant Terms & Reporting Requirements

If awarded, the terms for this grant will be 12 months from the approval date. You will be required to submit an interim report and a Final Report that will be outlined in your grant agreement. Site visits may be conducted with prior notification by THDF Staff.

Contact Information

Questions? Please visit our [FAQ page](#).

For further inquiries, contact us via email at HD_Foundation@HomeDepot.com. The Veteran Housing Grant Program only provides grants to nonprofit organizations for the development and repair of housing for veterans. Please use "Veteran Housing Grant Program" in the subject line of your email.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WWFS Announces New Program to Benefit Native American Veterans

OMAHA, Nebraska, Feb. 1, 2016 – *Wounded Warriors Family Support* has launched a new program to support Native American veterans who need transportation and transition assistance on their reservations.

Wounded Warriors Family Support has teamed with the Office of Tribal Government Relations at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on the new Native American Veterans Support, Transition and Resources (NAVSTaR) program. This program will ensure that Native American veterans, especially those who are combat wounded, are helped in a meaningful way.

"As a youngster growing up in New Mexico, I learned first-hand about the Navajo Code Talkers and their contribution to Marines during the brutal island hopping campaign in the South Pacific during World War II," said Col. John Folsom, USMCR (Ret.), founder and president of *Wounded Warriors Family Support*. "I have had the honor to serve with Native Americans during my 30 years of service. We have a firm commitment to support our Native American veterans, especially tribes that are the most isolated and poor."

So far, *Wounded Warriors Family Support* has provided Ford vehicles to the Blackfeet Nation, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Fort Belknap Indian Community, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Three Affiliated Tribes.

Last November, *Wounded Warriors Family Support* donated a 2016 Ford Transit Connect to the Oglala Lakota Nation in an effort to provide safe and dependable transportation to VA facilities. The donation was in memory of Lance Cpl. Brett Lundstrom, who was killed Jan. 7, 2006, while serving with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment in Iraq.

"Brett was returned to Pine Ridge and honored with a warrior's funeral," Folsom said. "I appreciate his life and service, especially given the backdrop of the crushing poverty of the Pine Ridge reservation."

About *Wounded Warriors Family Support*

Wounded Warriors Family Support is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide support to the families of those who have been wounded, injured or killed during combat operations. This organization is run by combat veterans for combat veterans. Rated a four-star nonprofit by Charity Navigator, *Wounded Warriors Family Support* aids veterans and their families in healing the wounds that medicine cannot. For more information about *Wounded Warriors Family Support*, visit www.wwfs.org.

###

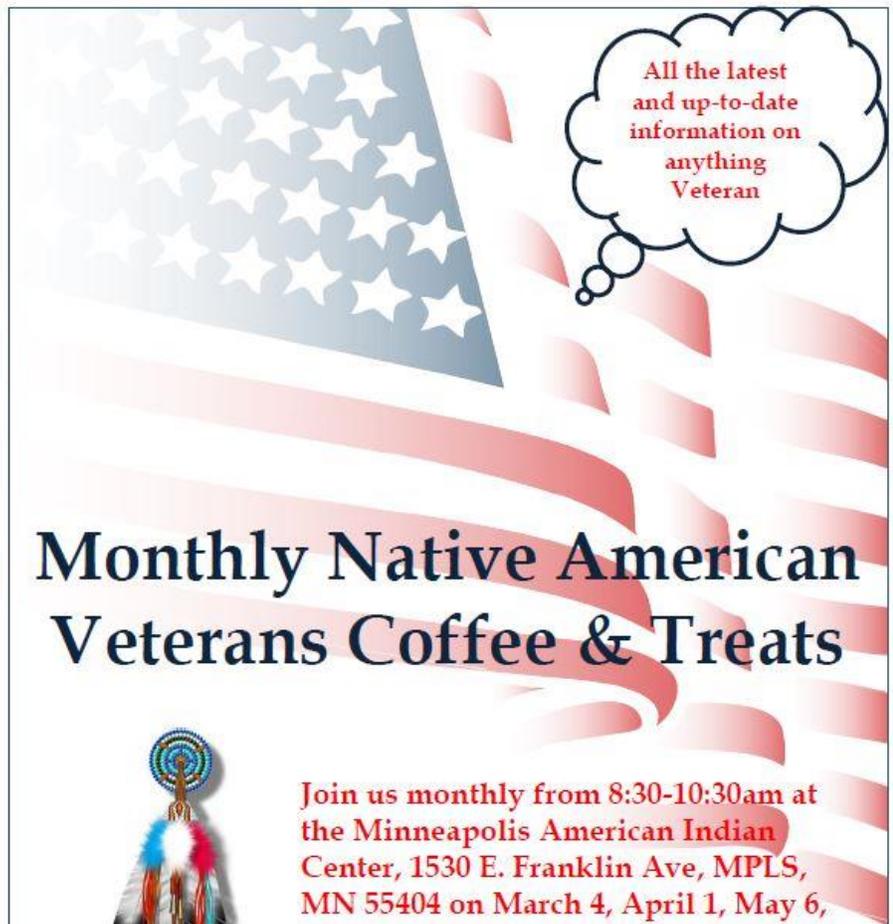
Media contacts:

Kevin Schuster, PR Coordinator
402-895-2552 ext. 314
kschuster@lukaspartners.com

Col. John Folsom, *Wounded Warriors Family Support*
402-490-7875
johnfolsom@wwfs.org

OTGR Central Region

(IA; MI; MN; MT; ND; NE; SD; WI; WY)



All the latest
and up-to-date
information on
anything
Veteran

Monthly Native American Veterans Coffee & Treats



Join us monthly from 8:30-10:30am at
the Minneapolis American Indian
Center, 1530 E. Franklin Ave, MPLS,
MN 55404 on March 4, April 1, May 6,
June 3, July 8 and August 5.

Sponsored by your HNAV committee:
Amanda Linden, Fond du Lac Band
Barbara Benjamin-Robertson, Mille Lacs Band
Jacque Wilson, Bois Forte Band
Johnny Smith, Red Lake Nation
Nancy Davis-Ortiz, Retired U.S. Army LTC
Todd Dionne, MN Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Roberta Boyd, Red Lake Nation
Carl Fransen, White Earth
Valerie A. Larsen, Leech Lake
Lyle H. Iron Moccasin, Veterans Employment Rep
Questions - 952-703-3104



OTGR Southern Plains Region

(KS; OK; TX)



*Society of American Indian
Government Employees*

13th Annual National Training Program
Hard Rock Hotel, Catoosa, OK

Save the Date
June 6 - 9, 2016

Qualified Training in the areas of

- Professional Development
- Cultural Awareness
- Federal Indian Law & Trust Responsibility
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity and Inclusion
- Indigenous Natural Resources
- Special programs for Veterans, Youth and Tribal Government Employees

Please join us at this beautiful newly renovated tribal facility owned and operated by the Cherokee Nation.
www.visitchokeenation.com



Watch for updates at www.saige.org

OTGR Southwest Region

(AZ; CO; NM; UT)

SAVE THE DATE

HOPI CODE TALKERS RECOGNITION DAY

APRIL 23, 2016

HOPI VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

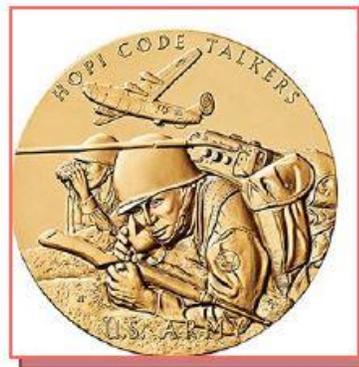
KYKOTSMOVI, AZ

**TENATIVE TIME: 10:00 A.M. TO 2:00 P.M.
(MST)**

PUBLIC INVITED TO ATTEND EVENT

CONTACT: (928) 734-3461

E-MAIL: ETalas@hopi.nsn.us



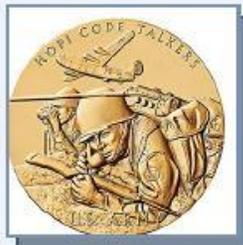
2016 HOPI CODE TALKERS RECOGNITION DAY THEME CONTEST

Submit your theme to celebrate Hopi Code Talkers (HCTs) Recognition Day on April 23, 2016. Here is the criteria:

1. Keep your wording, total of both English and Hopi, between 10 to 12 words.
2. Your suggested theme can center on:
 - HCTs use of Hopi language during World War II.
 - HCTs exploits celebrated, remembered and honored.
 - HCTs legacy inspires our Hopi youth today.
 - Speaking our native language is important.
3. Submit your theme by January 29, 2016 to Hopi Veterans Services. Or you can e-mail your theme to ETalas@hopi.nsn.us. The office is located in the H.O.P.I. Cancer Support Services Office, at Kykotsmovi, AZ.
4. The Planning Committee will select this year's theme for event and poster. As prize, the selected winner will receive a small replica of the Congressional Hopi Code Talker Gold Medal.

GOOD LUCK!

For more information on theme contest or the 2016 Hopi Code Talkers Recognition Day, please contact us at (928) 734-3461.



VA TRANSPORTATION



ATTENTION HOPI/TEWA VETERANS!

**HOPI VETERANS SERVICES CONDUCTS
TRANSPORT FOR HOPI/TEWA VETERANS
TO VA MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS ON & OFF
THE HOPI RESERVATION.**

To enroll and apply for this transport service, stop by the Hopi Veterans Services, located in the H.O.P.I. Cancer Support Services building at Kykotsmovi, AZ.

Office hours are Monday through Friday, excluding Hopi Tribal declared holidays, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (MST).

Call us for specific details on transportation services or if you are interested in applying for VA Health Care Services.

Telephone contact: (928) 734-3461 or 3462.

RELAX AND LET US DO THE DRIVING!



**American Healing
Arts Foundation**
501(c) (3) non-profit veteran charity

Free Art Classes for Veterans!
Taught by renowned, award-winning instructors.
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

- 1 & 2 Point Perspective Drawing
- Painting classes in Oils & Acrylics
- Sculpting in Clay
- Sketching, Drawing & Creative Writing
- Harmonica & More!

Classes held at the Arizona Fine Art EXPO
ADDRESS: 26540 N. Scottsdale Road
LOCATION: Next to MacDonald's Ranch
DIRECTIONS: SW corner of Scottsdale Rd & Jomax
5 miles South of Carefree & 5 miles North of Loop 101

Call for dates and times @ 480-837-5637
CONTACT: Judi Combs

Art classes are intended to reunite veterans with their comrades, away from hospitals and the battlefields in a peaceful drug-free environment. Art is proven to be a great form of therapy. Veterans, please let American Healing Arts Foundation say, "Thank You for your service and the great freedoms we enjoy everyday".

Help a Vet! Get involved!
We welcome volunteers, transportation support, sponsorships and donations.

Bronze by Dave Vencell

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MARINE RAIDER WWII

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Military/Veteran Women's Expo 2016

For women who have served or
are still serving in the military

Outstanding Keynote Speaker • Informative Educational Workshops
Legal & Financial Services Onsite • Networking Opportunities
Career Resources • Salon Services
FREE: Breakfast • Lunch • Parking • Childcare Available



Saturday, April 9, 2016, 9am-3pm
Arizona State University - Memorial Union
301 Orange Mall, Tempe, AZ 85281

Please Register Online at: azdvs.gov/womenvetexpo2016
For more information, email: wvhkf@azdvs.gov



REGISTER NOW!
Go to www.nmvboc.org

FREE

2016 Southwest VETERANS' BUSINESS CONFERENCE



Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid

5151 San Francisco Road NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109
Military Rates (\$89 + Taxes) for Attendees
Reserve your room now at 1-800-262-2043



April 1, 2016
8:00am – 3:30pm



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VETERAN BUSINESS OWNERS AND SPOUSES
VETERANS STARTING-UP A NEW BUSINESS
VETERANS EXPLORING BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

You may win one of 2 giant screen TVs

- What Every Veteran Entrepreneur Should Know
- Is Franchising for Me?
- Basics of Veteran Business Taxes
- Creating an Effective Website
- Doing Business with Prime Contractors
- Business Basics for the Southwest

...and Much More



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HIRING OUR HEROES
THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016
GILA RIVER ARENA— GLENDALE
 11:00AM – 2:00PM

Join us for a one-of-a-kind event featuring a hiring fair, networking opportunities and workshops tailored for veteran job seekers, active duty military members, guard and reserve members, and military spouses. All registered veterans and military spouses are eligible to receive up to two (2) free tickets for them and their families to attend that evening's game between the Coyotes and Sharks.

EMPLOYERS & MILITARY JOB SEEKERS REGISTER AT

HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG





JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

PHOENIX, AZ

**MARCH 16TH | 7:00-9:00 PM NETWORKING RECEPTION
RENAISSANCE PHOENIX GLENDALE HOTEL & SPA
9495 W COYOTES BLVD, GLENDALE, AZ 85305**

**Please join us for a special catered networking reception
on March 16th, 2016**

for all military spouses, military members, employers, and service organizations. This event is free of cost

- Network with vetted employers, community leaders, senior military spouses, and other job seekers
- Gain valuable insight on career planning and how to stand out as a candidate
- Discover flexible jobs from a wide array of industries and skill levels
 - Resume help and free professional head shots

REGISTER ONLINE: HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG/EVENTS

The event is open to all military spouses, including Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Veteran, and Gold Star Spouses. Veterans and Service Members are encouraged to attend. Questions? Contact eobrien@uschamber.com



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION



An Affiliate of the
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



10th Annual Salt River Veterans Recognition Pow-Wow

"Celebrating Tradition, Honoring Service"



March 25-27, 2016



Salt River Football Field

10,000 E. McDowell Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85256
(NW Corner of McDowell & Longmore Roads, SRPMIC, AZ.)

All Events are Free and Open to the Public!!

Friday, March 25 - 6pm
On Akimel O'odham/Xalychidom Piipaash Social
 Bird Dance and Singing Contests - 8 pm
 Salt River Ballfield

Saturday Morning, March 26 - 9am
 Veterans Recognition Parade
 SR Two Waters Complex to SR Community Building

SRPMIC Veterans Pow-Wow/Gourd Dance will require proper attire.

Saturday

10am Gourd Dance
 5pm Retrieval of colors/Dinner break
 7pm Grand Entry
 11pm Closing Song

Sunday

10am Gourd Dance
 12pm Grand Entry
 6pm Retrieval of Colors/
 Closing Song

Master of Ceremonies
 Ryan Rumely, Phoenix, AZ
Arena Director
 Ipa Dutchover, Salt River, AZ
Host Southern Drum
 Alliance West, Jemez, NM
Host Northern Drum
 Maswade, Phoenix, AZ
Host Gourd Society/Color Guard
 "Bushmasters" American Legion Post #114
 Salt River, AZ
Whip Man:
 Mr. Rick Dumas, Phoenix, AZ
Head Man/Lady
 Chosen Daily
Head Girl/Boy
 Chosen Daily



Contests:

Saturday Night Spotlight

Men's Fancy and Women's Fancy Shawl

Other Contests:

J. Jefferson Memorial

Southern Straight

Jr's combined Categories

Boys and Girls

Teen Categories

Fancy/Grass Combined

Southern Straight/N. Traditional Combined

Buckskin/Cloth Combined

Jingle Dress/Fancy Shawl Combined

Women's Adult Categories

N. Cloth and Buckskin, Southern Traditional

Fancy Shawl, Jingle Dress

Men's Adult Categories

Chicken and Grass Combined

Fancy, N. Traditional, Southern Straight

Mens Southern and Northern Golden Age

Womens Southern and Northern Golden Age

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, WEAPONS, and GANG ATTIRE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Parade info. contact James at RedMountainRiders@yahoo.com
 For other info. contact Pacer Reina at 480-362-7490 / pacer.reina@srpmic-nsn.gov

Wellness for Women

A new class offering in Primary Care and Women's Health

Monthly Class

Every 2nd Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:30pm in the Amethyst Clinic, beginning
Feb. 10th, 2016

Class Goals:

- Provide general information about services for women at the Phoenix VA.
- Create a safe space for female Veterans to share their life experiences.
- Increase Veteran's quality of life by learning new coping skills.
- Cover topics including: Relationship Skills, Stress Management, Self-Care, Reproductive Health, and Career Development.



Providers, please co-sign Dr. Kathy Doyle, Ph.D. or Dr. Janelle Thompson, Psy.D.

Women Veterans, Contact Dr. Doyle directly for more information or to sign up
for the class. 602-277-5551 extension 4216.

OTGR Western Region

(AK; CA; ID; NV; OR; WA)



VETERAN'S Resource Day

Friday, April 15, 2016

Veterans and families are welcome to attend
Meet with local Veterans Organizations
Discover Community Resources and Services

Free Lunch

**Benefits * Counselling * Education * Employment
Housing * Health * Transportation and more**

Location: Veteran's Memorial Hall
810 "H" Street, Crescent City, CA 95531

Hours: 9:00am to 2:00pm

Call: (707) 464-2154 for more information

<http://www.facebook.com/DelNorteCountyVeteransServices>

Veteran Driver License and ID Available

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE U.S. MILITARY? YOU MAY QUALIFY TO PROUDLY
DISPLAY VETERAN ON YOUR DRIVER LICENSE OR IDENTIFICATION CARD.

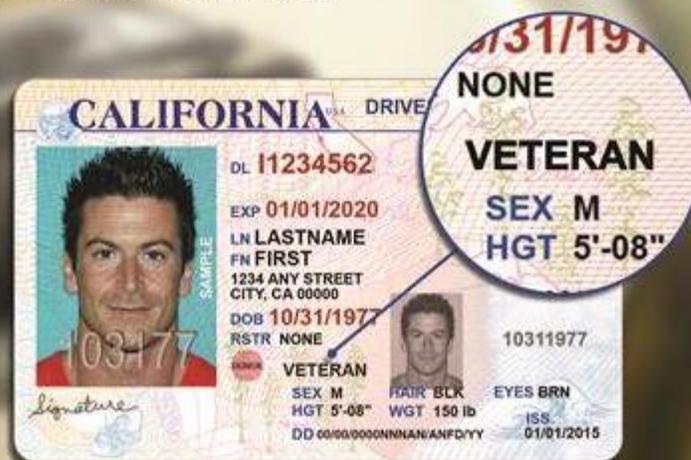
IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

- 1** Find your military discharge certificate (DD214). If you need assistance obtaining your military records, then contact your County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO).
- 2** Take your DD214 and government identification to your CVSO to obtain your Veteran Status Verification Form.
- 3** Go on-line or call DMV for an appointment. Then bring your Veteran Status Verification Form to DMV. Complete your application, pay any application fees plus a \$5.00 fee for your Veteran designation. You must complete all applicable application and testing requirements.

For faster CVSO service, schedule an appointment by visiting www.calvet.ca.gov or call 1-844-SERV-VET.



To schedule an appointment at a DMV, visit www.dmv.ca.gov or call 1-800-777-0133.





ARE YOU A VETERAN OR ACTIVE DUTY
SERVICE MEMBER WHO MAY HAVE
GULF WAR ILLNESS?

We are seeking participants to take part in a
research study testing a new treatment to
help those with Gulf War Illness.

- PARTICIPATION INVOLVES 8 VISITS OVER A 20 WEEK PERIOD
- ALL VISITS TAKE PLACE AT VAPAHCS IN PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA
- PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE STUDY RELATED TREATMENTS & PROCEDURES FREE OF CHARGE, AS WELL AS (LIMITED) COMPENSATION FOR TIME AND TRAVEL

GULF WAR SYNERGY TRIAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Jessica Lopez, Study Coordinator at: (650) 493-5000, ext 62750
VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS)**



“Thank You For Your Service “
Sports Experience Day



Thursday, April 28, 2016

You are invited!

The Northern California Regional Paralympic Sport Club program invites injured, ill or wounded veterans or injured active duty members of the Armed Forces, to join us on Thursday, April 28, 2016, from 10:00am to 2:30pm at River Cats Independence Field at the Sam Pannell Community Center located in South Sacramento for a **FREE** day of sport, camaraderie, laughter and lunch. This event is hosted by the City of Sacramento, Paralympic Sport Sacramento club, and is funded from a grant provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Adaptive Sports Grant. Paralympic Sport Clubs from Sacramento, Menlo Park, Reno, Silicon Valley, Bay Area, Fresno, Mammoth Lakes, and Ability Frist from Chico, are joining forces to offer a free day of handcycling, tandem cycling for those that are blind or have low vision, recumbent cycling, swimming, wheelchair softball, wheelchair basketball, shot put, discus and javelin, powerlifting, scuba, strength and conditioning training, archery, and rock climbing with Mark Wellman. Pre-registration is required, **REGISTRATIONS ARE DUE BY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20TH, 2016. BRING A BATHING SUIT, TOWEL AND SUNSCREEN FOR POOL ACTIVITIES. THE POOL WILL BE HEATED.**

When: Thursday, April 28, 2016
 9:45 am – Please arrive by this time
 10:00 am - Opening Ceremonies
 10:15 am – 12:00 pm – Sports activities
 12 – 1:00 pm - Lunch
 1:15 – 2:30 – Sports activities

Where: Samuel C. Pannell Community Center & River Cats Independence Field
 2450 Meadowview Road, Sacramento, CA 95832

Sport wheelchairs will be provided for wheelchair sport games. handcycles, tandem and recumbent cycles will be provided for cycling. **Note: All participants will use a manual wheelchair to play wheelchair softball and wheelchair basketball.** Please contact Paula Black at pblack@cityofsacramento.org or call 916-808-1205 to receive a registration form. To return completed form via Fax, please include a cover sheet to: Attn. Paula Black @ 916-808-3559.

- This event was funded [in part] by a grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The opinions findings and conclusion stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.



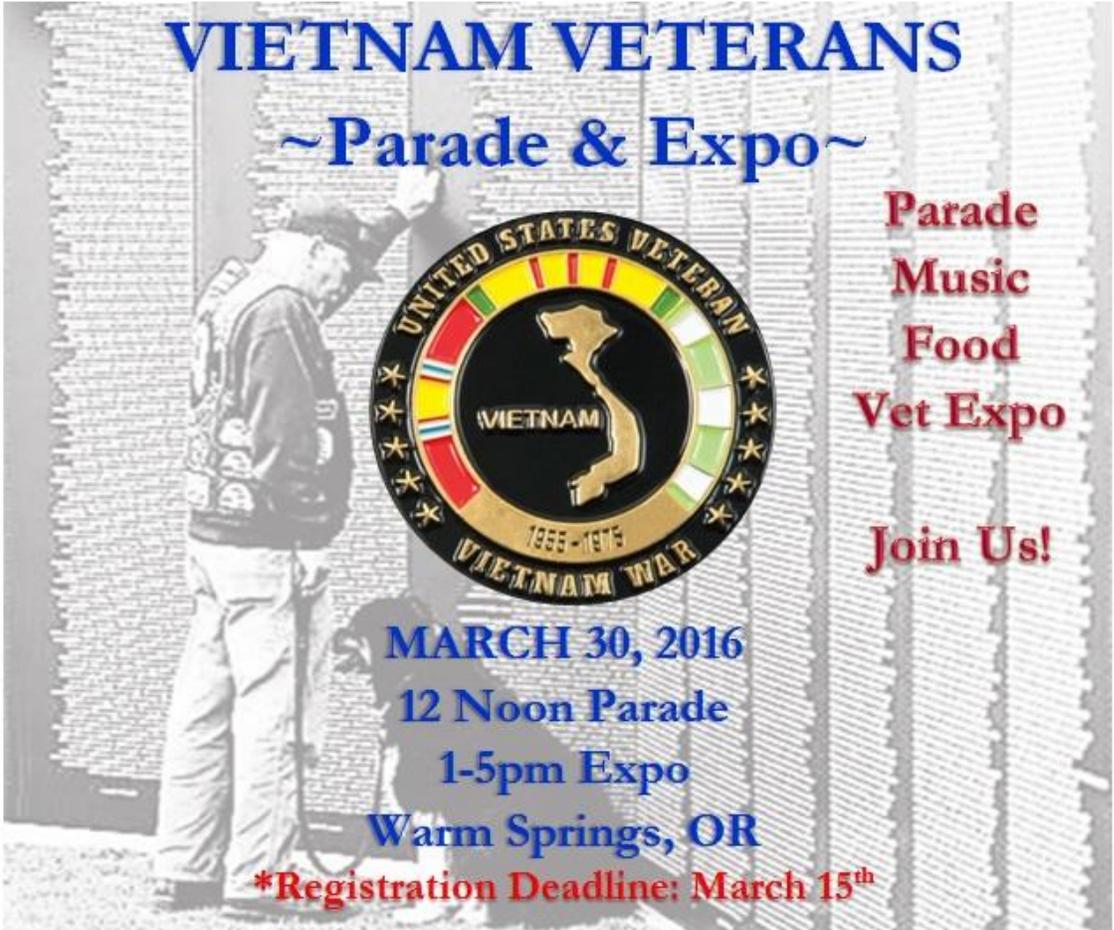


Eugene Greene, Sr. American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 48 presents



WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS

~Parade & Expo~



Parade
Music
Food
Vet Expo

Join Us!

MARCH 30, 2016
12 Noon Parade
1-5pm Expo
Warm Springs, OR

***Registration Deadline: March 15th**

Veteran/Parade/Expo Registration:
www.wsala48.org or call (541) 460-8212



Women Veterans are under served in our community and through this ONE STOP, they will have immediate access to resources

<i>Education Benefits</i>	<i>Financial Coaching</i>	
..... <i>Legal</i>	<i>Mental Health</i>	<i>VA Benefits</i>
<i>Housing</i> (transition, home buying and selling) <i>Clothing Closet</i>	
<i>Starting a Business</i>		<i>Careers</i>
		
<p>One Stop is open the 4th Thursday of every month. 1792 Tribute Rd. Suite 270 Register at: www.WomenVeteransAlliance.org/OneStop</p>		
<p>Walk ins Welcome Bring your identification, DD214 or VA Card</p>		
<p>www.WomenVeteransAlliance.org melissa@womensveteransalliance.org (t) 916.442.1729</p>		



"Capital and Capacity to Serve Communities"