



# Department of Veterans Affairs

## Senior Executive Biography

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### **Kayla M. Williams**

#### **Assistant Secretary Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Honorable Kayla M. Williams assumed the duties of the Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) on January 20, 2021, at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Prior to that, she was a Senior Fellow and Director of the Military, Veterans, and Society Program at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) focused on issues facing Veterans, military readiness, and civil-military relations. Ms. Williams provides executive level oversight and direction to OPIA's team of up to 95 employees who help to build and maintain public confidence in VA by developing, routinely updating and communicating the Department's key messages to many audiences through media relations, public affairs, intergovernmental affairs, outreach and Veteran engagement to reach Veterans and their families, and other stakeholders. OPIA is designated as the enterprise policy and functional coordinator of internal employee and external communications to ensure consistent messaging and to be the unified voice of the Department.



Ms. Williams has a distinguished career as a leader focusing on policies, programs, and support related to Veterans and their families. Previously, Ms. Williams served as the Director of the Center for Women Veterans at VA, where she was the primary adviser to the Secretary on department policies, programs, and legislation affecting women Veterans. Ms. Williams previously spent eight years at the RAND Corporation conducting qualitative and quantitative research on military and Veteran policies and programs.

Ms. Williams was enlisted for five years as an Arabic linguist, serving in a Military Intelligence company of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). She is the author of the memoirs *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* and *Plenty of Time When We Get Home: Love and Recovery in the Aftermath of War* about her military service and her family's journey from war trauma to healing. She is the former chair of the Department of Labor Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach; a former member of the Army Education Advisory Committee and VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; and recipient of recognitions including 2013 White House Woman Veteran Champion of Change and 2017 We Are the Mighty 25 Veterans to Watch.

#### **CAREER CHRONOLOGY:**

2021 – Present	Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, Washington, DC
2018 – 2021	Senior Fellow and Director, Military, Veterans, and Society Program at (CNAS)
2016 – 2018	Director, Center for Women Veterans, Washington, DC
2007 – 2016	Project Associate, RAND Corporation, Washington, DC

#### **EDUCATION:**

A *cum laude* graduate with a BA in English Literature from Bowling Green State University and an MA in International Affairs with a focus on the Middle East from American University.