



U.S. Department
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News Release

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VA wins 16 awards boosting customer service for America's Veterans

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) received 16 [Gears of Government Awards](#), this March, for work in the department aimed at improving customer service and fostering medical innovations for Veterans.

The annual awards recognize federal employees and groups that achieve tangible results for the American people.

This year's winners include 14 teams and two individual VA employees. This reflects the dedication seen across the department throughout the last few years.

"The Gears of Government Awards reflect VA's mission results, customer service and accountable stewardship needed to accomplish the president's goals towards becoming a [modern and effective government](#)," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Processing [appeals decisions](#), developing [3D printing](#), public-private partnerships to create [innovative tools](#) for Veterans and creating an [experience](#) that meets our Veterans' needs are all a part of these accomplishments."

VA employees were recognized for contributions including:

- **Benefit claims** – VA automated the establishment of 40% of the department's disability compensation claims helping to reduce the processing time of these claims.
- **Technology** – VA applied technological advancements benefitting more than 280,000 Veterans for delivering eyeglass orders in minutes, instead of a full day.
- **Patient safety** – VA implemented a management practice to prevent in-hospital pneumonia and reduce the prescription of unnecessary medicines to Veterans. VA police have been trained to carry opioid overdose reversal medication, to put them in a position of helping Veterans in dire need. These projects improved care for 120,000 plus Veterans, lowered taxpayers' costs by more than \$24 million and saved lives.
- **Customer service** – Committed to a patient-focused system, VA delivered customer experience training to more than 350,000 employees, improved and modernized VA data systems and customer engagement tools, along with gathering feedback in near real-time, allowing the Voice of Veterans guide further improvements. These tools helped to push a cultural shift, improving customer service in 147 medical centers.

Awards were also received for efforts in loss prevention, training, education and employment for Veterans.

For information on VA staff, their results-oriented projects and how those projects help Veterans visit [Gears of Government Awards VA Hall of Fame Winners](#).

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