

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MISSION STATEMENT

1. **PURPOSE:** This notice updates the Department of Veterans Affairs' mission statement.
2. **POLICY:** In accordance with his authority under 38 U.S.C. §303, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced an updated version of its 1959 mission statement, on March 16, 2023.
  - a. The new mission statement is: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers and survivors."
  - b. The previous mission statement was established in 1959 and appears in various versions of the following: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise 'to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.'"
  - c. The previous mission statement is posted in roughly 50% of VA's facilities and a variety of media.
  - d. Over the coming months the new VA mission statement will replace the previous version. The purpose of this notice is to make needed changes as outlined here no later than March 29, 2024. If this is not feasible, the rationale with an accompanying action plan must be submitted to the senior leader of that Administration or Staff Office.
    - (1) No Administration or Staff Office is required to display the new mission statement in any way (for example: plaques, printed or electronic media or structures).
    - (2) VA facilities, whether owned or leased (to include National Cemeteries) currently displaying the 1959 mission statement have multiple options, at the discretion of the pertinent Administration:
      - (a) Remove the 1959 mission statement. The new mission statement may be posted if desired.
      - (b) Retain the 1959 mission statement displayed as a historical artifact. If retained, it must be accompanied by the approved interpretive statement in Appendix A, reflecting its history. The new mission statement must also be prominently displayed nearby.
      - (c) If the display of the 1959 mission statement is permanent and immovable, it must be accompanied by the interpretive statement, in

Appendix A, reflecting its history. The new mission statement must also be prominently displayed nearby.

- (3) Printed and electronic media. The updated mission statement should replace the 1959 version in any printed or electronic media.
- (4) Organizations must retain a record of their assets, decisions, and associated funding related to implementing the new mission statement.

**3. RESPONSIBILITIES. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials** shall: Be responsible for funding all activities associated with implementing the mission statement.

**4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Construction and Facilities Management (003), Office of Facilities Planning.

**5. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** None.

**6. RESCISSIONS:** This notice will be rescinded, and guidance incorporated into the appropriate directive no later than one year after the date of publication.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/  
Guy T. Kiyokawa  
Assistant Secretary for  
Enterprise Integration

/s/  
Michael D. Parrish  
Principal Executive Director, Office of  
Acquisition, Logistics and Construction  
and Chief Acquisition Officer

**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic only

**APPENDIX A**

## Lincoln Quote – VA interpretive language recommendation

**VA Mission Statement 1959-2023:**

In his second inaugural address, delivered just weeks before the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), President Abraham Lincoln spoke of the need to heal a divided nation. His words focused on caring for Veterans in an era when only men could officially serve. A passage was adopted as the informal VA motto in 1959 and later became the official mission statement. In 2023, VA revised its mission statement, reframing Lincoln's words with more inclusive language.