



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS

THE CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS was established by Congress in November 1994 by P. L. 103-446 to oversee Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs for women veterans.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Center for Women Veterans is to ensure that:

- ◆ Women veterans receive benefits and services on par with male veterans.
- ◆ VA programs are responsive to gender-specific needs of women veterans.
- ◆ Outreach is performed to improve women veterans' awareness of services, benefits, and eligibility criteria.
- ◆ Women veterans are treated with dignity and respect.

The Director, Center for Women Veterans, acts as the primary advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on all matters related to policies, legislation, programs, issues, and initiatives affecting women veterans.

OUR GOALS

- ◆ Identify policies, practices, programs, and related activities that are unresponsive or insensitive to the needs of women veterans and recommending changes, revisions or new initiatives to address these deficiencies.
- ◆ Foster communication among all elements of VA on these findings and ensuring the women veterans' community that women veterans' issues are incorporated into VA's strategic plan.
- ◆ Promote and provide educational activities on women veterans' issues for VA personnel and other appropriate individuals.
- ◆ Encourage and develop collaborative relationships with other Federal, state, and community agencies to coordinate activities on issues related to women veterans.
- ◆ Coordinate outreach activities that enhance women veterans' awareness of new VA services and benefits.
- ◆ Promote research activities on women veterans' issues.

OUR ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Regularly monitor changes VA-wide and assess the impact these changes may have on the delivery of services to homeless women with children, rural and elderly women veterans, and minority women veterans.
- ◆ Regularly monitor VA briefings during Transition Assistance Program to ensure that active duty women are provided access to information on the benefits and services available to them as veterans prior to their release from active duty.

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- ◆ Foster the implementation of a “One VA” approach by facilitating joint training and networking among Women Veterans Program Managers and Women Veterans Coordinators across VA.
- ◆ Provide women veteran consumers the opportunity to share their concerns and issues with VA managers through town hall meetings, community forums and gatherings, and regional/national summits.
- ◆ Monitor VA’s research agenda to ensure that women veterans and their issues are included in all VA studies.
- ◆ Continue to outreach to the women veterans’ community with increased emphasis on outreach to the elderly, minority and those living in rural areas.
- ◆ Establish and continue relationships with state and county departments of veterans affairs.
- ◆ Establish and continue partnerships with national veterans service organizations to enhance and increase outreach efforts to women veterans.
- ◆ Establish and continue partnerships with other federal agencies responsible for providing services to women.
- ◆ Widely distribute the pocket guide, “Women Veterans - 25 Frequently Asked Questions.”

THE FUTURE

The Center for Women Veterans is committed to ensuring that services and benefits responsive to the needs of women veterans are maintained and, when necessary, enhanced.

NATIONAL SUMMITS

The Center for Women Veterans sponsored the first National Summit on Women Veterans Issues in 1996. Subsequent Summits were held in 2000, 2004, and 2008, with the next Summit scheduled for 2012. The purpose of these Summits was to provide veterans, veteran service providers, federal agency representatives, legislative staffers and other interested individuals a forum in which to discuss current initiatives for women veterans, identify issues of concern to the women veterans community, and share ideas on how these issues might be addressed through legislative, programmatic and outreach activities. Summit Proceedings may be viewed at www.va.gov.

LEGISLATION RELATED TO WOMEN VETERANS

- ◆ P.L. 98-160, “Veterans Healthcare Act of 1983,” established the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.
- ◆ P.L. 102-585, “Veterans Health Care Act of 1992,” provided specific provisions for women’s health and broadened the context of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to include care for the aftermath of sexual trauma associated with military duty.
- ◆ P.L. 103-446, “Veterans Improvement Act of 1994,” established the Center for Women Veterans.
- ◆ P.L. 106-419, “Veterans Benefits and Healthcare Improvement Act of 2000,” authorized special monthly compensation for women veterans with a service-connected mastectomy. It also authorized benefits to children born of mothers who served in Vietnam and who have certain types of birth defects.
- ◆ P.L. 107-330, “Veterans Benefits Act of 2002,” authorized special monthly compensation for women veterans who have lost twenty-five percent or more of tissue from a single breast or both breasts in combination (including loss by mastectomy or partial mastectomy) or has received radiation of breast tissue.
- ◆ P.L. 108-422, “Veterans Health Improvement Act of 2004,” extended VA’s authority permanently to extend Military Sexual Trauma (MST) counseling and treatment to active duty service members or active duty for training.

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