

WELCOME

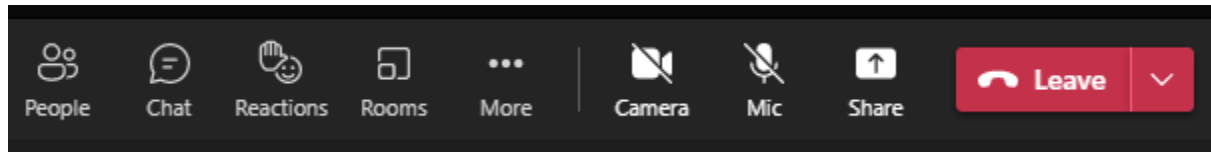
February 7, 2024

Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services
NCTC Classroom, Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, PA

**This meeting, and all content, is being recorded for executive documentation only.
Your continued participation is acknowledgement and approval of recording.**

--We will begin shortly--

Chat function is used to submit comments or questions



*Please enter your **full name and agency** for attendance purposes



INTRODUCTIONS & OPENING COMMENTS

OLD BUSINESS

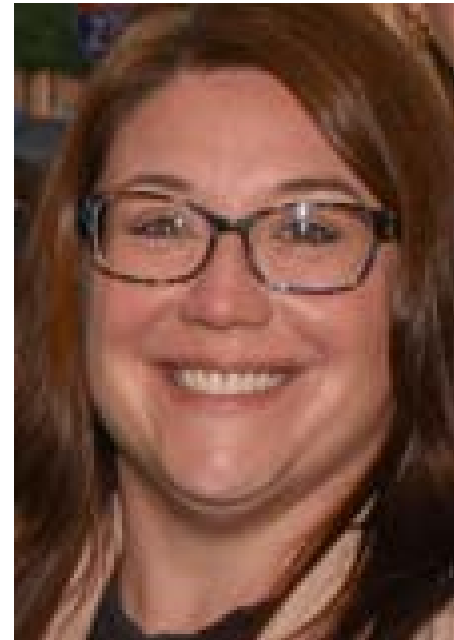
YEAR IN REVIEW



- GAC-VS Purpose
- 3 GAC-VS overview sessions
- 54 committee meetings in 2023
- Recognized about 1,000 employees through the State Employee Military Service Recognition Campaign
- Increased partners on the annual Pension Poaching Awareness Campaign
- Dept. of Education posted information about Honorary High School Diplomas (Operation Recognition) on their website and developed materials to assist school districts
- Pennsylvania is now a Hidden Heroes Commonwealth through the Elizabeth Dole Foundation
- 10-Year Anniversary Report

Margo Coleman

- Served as the Aging Committee Chair for over three years and has made numerous connections with subject-matter experts.
- Treated every committee meeting as a platform to share her expertise and thinking critically and creatively.
- Worked tirelessly to embody interagency collaboration for the benefit of Pennsylvania's veterans, and their families, advocates, and caregivers.



GUEST SPEAKER

- **PA VETERANS' TRUST FUND**
Mr. John Noll, Grants Administrator



pennsylvania
VETERANS' TRUST FUND

Serving Pennsylvania Veterans

The VTF supports local PA veterans in two ways:

1. Direct monetary assistance - Veterans Temporary Assistance (VTA), and,
2. Grants awarded to non-profit organizations and County Directors of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) focused on veteran's needs

Veterans Temporary Assistance (VTA):

- Awards local veterans and their beneficiaries in desperate need a once-a-12-month period grant up to \$1,600
- Applications are on the rise
- Applicants must complete an application and go through a thorough vetting process

Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) Grants:

- Annual grant opportunities are announced for 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) non-profit organizations, eligible for grants up to \$40,000
- Annual grant opportunities are announced for County Directors of Veterans Affairs, eligible for grants up to \$15,000
- Applicants must have a program which addresses one of the priority areas. Priority areas are determined each year
- Grant amounts are determined in relation to the total amount DMVA can grant out, relative to the total donations collected from the past year

VETERANS' TRUST FUND



Impact:

- Last year: 482 veterans were assisted through VTA (direct monetary assistance)
 - Provides for necessities of life such as food, shelter, fuel, and clothing

- Last year: More than \$1.6 million disbursed
 - \$687,000 in VTA
 - \$1M to organizations and counties

- Lifetime: More than \$13.4 million disbursed
 - \$6M in VTA
 - 4,430 veterans directly served
 - \$7.4M to organizations and counties

VETERANS' TRUST FUND



Important to remember:

- The Veterans Trust Fund is donations driven
- 100% of all money donated goes directly to veteran neighbors and organizations who support veterans in Pennsylvania
- Donations have been declining for years. Without additional revenue streams, money may not be available to veterans most in need

www.donate.dmva.pa.gov

Questions?

Contact information:

John Noll, johnnoll@pa.gov

HOMELESS

Mr. Brendan Auman, Co-Chair
Mr. Jim Rowland, Co-Chair

Goals/Initiatives

- Expand distribution list to other service providers who work in or are adjacent to our homeless network
- Assist with forming partnerships and best practices to house our hard-to-place veterans
- Continue sharing new resources to improve service delivery
- Advocate for new affordable housing

Updates

- VA 38K Housing Challenge Update
- Tunnels to Towers Project – New housing project coming to Harrisburg
- Fairweather Lodge Presentation
- Examining how committee can support Veteran Suicide awareness programs

Challenges/Barriers

- Hard-to-place veterans
- Affordable Housing availability
- Data to support committee efforts

HEALTH PROMOTIONS

Ms. Erica Nocho, Chair

Goals/Initiatives

- Report on, and work to improve, any programs that promote whole health and trauma-informed care for veterans.
- Continue to promote and share resources or information regarding suicide prevention and intervention.
- Empowering behavior change and actions through increased knowledge about the needs of service members, veterans and families.
- Educating others about existing programs that help veterans with behavioral and social determinates of health.

Updates

- Social Media Posts will be broken down into 4 segments that discuss:
 - ✓ Veterans in Crisis (promotion of hotline for mental health issues. Share the information on the hotline, how to access it, etc.)
 - ✓ Family Members of Veterans (promotion of Hidden Heroes)
 - ✓ Public Support for Veteran Programs (promotion of Veterans' Trust Fund)
 - ✓ Veteran Health (promotion of federal VA programs and hospitals)

- Learning Sessions that will feature programs that support Veteran's:
 - ✓ Northbound Community Recovery Center

(First session in early March)

Challenges/Barriers

- Gaps in service availability;
- Lack of appropriate human resources and expertise for service delivery;
- Difficulties integrating services with the existing health systems framework;



Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services

--SHORT BREAK--

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Crystal Houser, Chair

Office of Administration: Veterans Preference Hiring - Goals

- Veterans' Preference Hires into State Government ... PA Military Code 51

Updates

- State Fiscal Year 2022-2023 ... over 1000 veterans selected
- 10% of hires were vets / only 4% of PA's working age population are vets
- Veteran population in nation/state declining ... 75% of PA vets are over age 55
- Anticipate a downslope in veteran hiring

Challenges/Barriers

- Change "I have to hire a veteran" to "I want to hire a veteran"

"Trust, self-motivation, confidence, mission-driven, work ethic, loyalty, respect, ability to improvise, discipline, teamwork and leadership. These are just some of the qualifications that the veteran brings to the table. These are qualities and traits that every employer wants and needs in its workforce."

PA CareerLink® - Goals

- Serve veterans across 62 PA CareerLink® locations. There are 33 DVOPs and 21 LVERs across the state.

Updates

- State CY 2023 ... 35,472 veterans served
 - Served through JVSG, Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Title I, and Trade workforce programs
 - 2,250 with SBEs receive intensive services through DVOP.

Challenges/Barriers

- Getting the information out about PA CareerLink® programs and services.

Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) - Goals

- Increase the number of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities in PA
- Expand into new sector occupations, serve traditionally underrepresented populations
- Raise Awareness about the benefits of RAs and how to access them
- Advocate for RAs as a premier solution to meet workforce needs
- Provide programs the support and resources needed to align with PA standards and practices.

Updates

- Sector Strategies
- Education Sector Work/Addressing Teacher Crisis
- Cross Agency Collaboration
 - OVR
 - PDE
 - DOC
- Targeted Workforce System Outreach and Education
 - Additional PACareerLink® Professional Development

Challenges/Barriers

- Combating misconceptions/miseducation on Registered Apprenticeships, and reaching audiences

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) - Goals

- Assist eligible, disabled veterans to prepare for, enter into, and retain complete integrated employment in a career of choice suited to their interests, strengths, and overall abilities
- Increase referral timeliness from initial contact to receiving services and successful outcomes

Updates

	FFY 2022		FFY2023		FFY 2024 Through 12/31/23	
Number of Individuals Served	33,093		49,834		40,333	
Number of Individuals Opening New Cases	2,123		23,384		8,913	
Number of Veterans (Disability after service) Receiving Services; Number of Individuals and Percentage of total	641	1.94%	918	1.84%	676	1.67%
Number of Veterans (Service-Related Disability); Number of individuals and Percentage of total	10	0.03%	14	0.03%	9	0.02%

Challenges/Barriers

- Awareness of OVR and how to apply via CWDS or calling a local OVR office
- Ability to advocate for needs and request reasonable accommodations to be successful
- Rural transportation resources
- Needing skill and credential attainment to unlock middle income career opportunities
- Understanding how OVR, WF programs & USDVA can collaborate and braid funding

WOMEN VETERANS

Ms. Elizabeth Cooper, Chair

Goals/Initiatives

- PA Women Veterans Magazine – created by the Women Veterans Alliance
- Delivering women veteran resources and digital literacy to the PA Veterans Homes
- Veteran Service Unit (SCIMuncy), Women Veterans Empowered and Thriving (WVET), and American Legion Groups collaboration
- Military Sexual Trauma Awareness through Town Halls

Updates

- Marilyn Kelly-Cavotta is the new Special Advisor for Women and Minority Veterans for DMVA.
- Resource magazine has 20 pictures for the cover and 5 articles submitted. Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2024.
- Connection between Margo Coleman, Commandant of the Delaware Valley Veterans Home and AARP National Director in progress to deliver digital literacy classes and well as women veteran resources to aging/women veterans.
- SCI Muncy, the American Legion, and WVET are in collaboration.

Challenges/Barriers

- Rallying women veterans in PA to submit articles and photos for the resource magazine.
- Collaborating with the National Director of AARP.
- Considering if Town Halls be the most effective way to spread awareness on MST.

JUDICIARY

Mr. Michael Carrington, Chair

Goals/Initiatives

- Improve outreach efforts to veteran staff within the Department of Corrections (DOC) through collaboration with external agencies
- Expand/enhance programming, workshops, and educational/employment opportunities within the veteran service units (VSUs)
- Increase the amount/availability of veteran-specific trainings and/or educational opportunities for employees/spouses/dependents
- Advocate for the creation/enhancement of veteran courts/tracks
- Expand veteran services within the DOC to field supervision to enhance the care continuum

Updates

- Regional Veteran Treatment Court is scheduled to begin proceedings in March; Counties include Blair, Clinton, Centre, Mifflin, Huntingdon, Perry, Juniata, and Clearfield
- SCI Huntingdon Superintendent John Rivello will now provide oversight to the DOC Veteran Services Team
- SCI Dallas and SCI Waymart have requested American Legion Posts
- SCI Mercer will expand their VSU in 2024
- Veteran inmate outreach events scheduled at SCI Coal Township (2/8), SCI Benner Township (2/22) and SCI Rockview (2/23)

Challenges/Barriers

- Early identification for criminal-justice involved veterans
- Nursing home care for Hard-To-Place veterans that have been paroled or are approaching their maximum date of sentence
- Housing for veterans with prior sex offenses
- Enhanced training for first responders dealing with veterans in crisis
- Additional programming for those incarcerated with PTSD and/or TBI
- Technological needs continue to create barriers for PA VETConnect delivery to incarcerated veterans

GOOD OF THE ORDER

LEADERSHIP COMMENTS /
ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **DMVA website: www.dmva.pa.gov**
- **GAC-VS page: [Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services \(pa.gov\)](#)**
- **Sign up for the Veterans Registry and DMVA Digest!**
www.register.dmva.pa.gov

NEXT MEETING:

MAY 1st, 2024 at 1:00PM
Dept. of Corrections, HQ
1920 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050