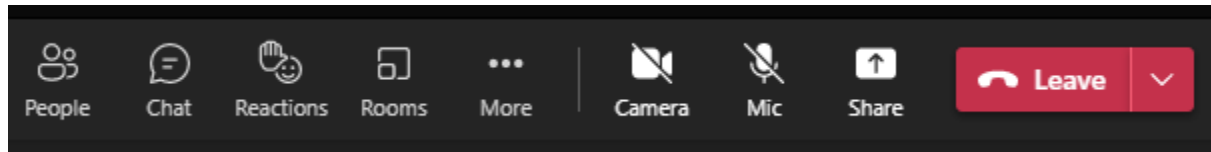


WELCOME

November 1, 2023

Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services
Governor's Residence,
Harrisburg, PA 17102

Chat function is used to submit comments or questions



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



COUNCIL INTRODUCTIONS

OPENING COMMENTS

WELCOME GOVERNOR SHAPIRO

OLD BUSINESS

Jamie Dunlap

- Jamie works to bring art to all Pennsylvanians, but her support of veterans is paramount.
- While serving on the Aging Committee, she contributed to the Trauma and Mental Health Awareness Capitol Day and assisted with the Caring Messages Campaign.
- Jamie never fails to embrace an opportunity to improve the health and well-being of those who have served.



VETERANS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Kory Auch

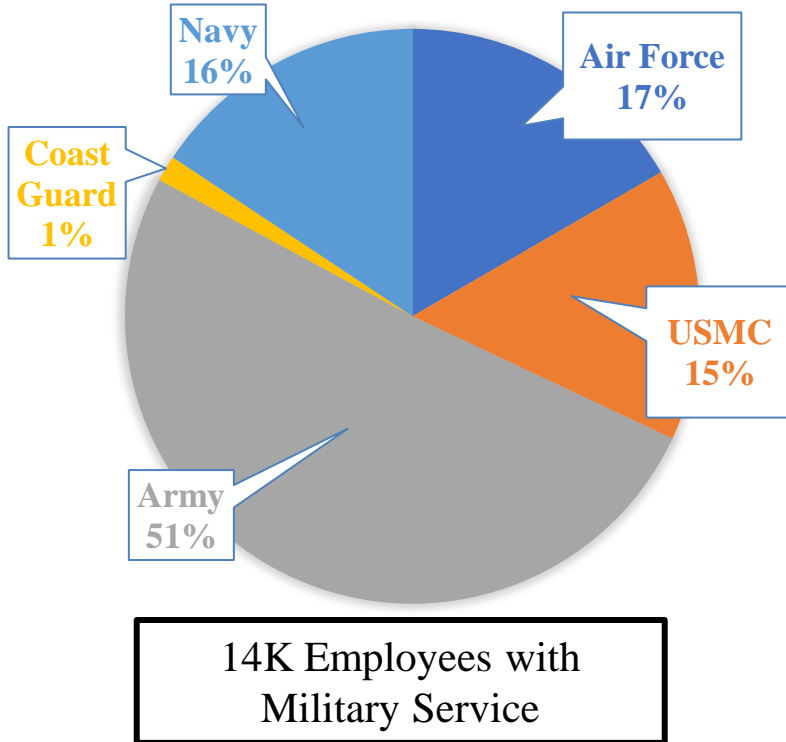
Employee Engagement

They know each other:

“But at the end of the day, few benefits compare to the camaraderie that comes from working alongside those who understand the experience of having served one’s country.” **Forbes**

The company knows them:

‘For those veterans whose veteran status is well known at work, this is largely a positive thing ... ’ **Pew Research Center**



- Annual Recognition Campaign
- Veterans in Public Service Rosters
- Agency Efforts ... seeds growing
- Service Birthdays / Armed Forces Day



History:

2019 Campaign: 14000 employees
 2020 Campaign: 1100 employees
 2021 Campaign: 800 employees
 2022 Campaign: 1150 employees
 2023 Campaign: 1000 (estimate)

Top Five Percent	Top Five Number
DOC 39%	DOC 5625
Parole 31%	PSP 1360
PEMA 29%	PennDOT 1323
Fish & Boat 25%	DHS 1256
PSP 22%	L&I 542

AGING

Ms. Margo Coleman, Chair

Initiative Updates

- Reestablished Arts in Residency Programs in 4 or the 6 Veterans home for 2023
- Increased annual distribution of pension poaching toolkit via listserv to 63 partners
- Expanded working relationship with the Center for Combating Financial Exploitation and West Chester University
- Established connections between PA Dept. of Aging and Veteran-Centric Fairweather Lodge

Looking Forward

- Looking to partner with VA for identifying community and home care services
- Following updates on PA Master Plan for Older Adults and participating in open town halls
- Continuing partner search for pension poaching toolkit
- Looking to generate a veteran-centric training for commonwealth social workers with collaborative partners (Letter of Understanding in process)

HOMELESS

Mr. Brendan Auman, Co-Chair

Initiative Updates

- VA 38K Challenge Update as of September 2023:

Goal 1: Permanent housing of 38,000 unique veterans nationally

VISN 4 target = 1,545 Actual = 1,564 (101.2%, goal exceeded)

Goal 2: Prevent Returns to Homelessness

A. 73 Veterans housed through September 2023 returned to homelessness

B. 70 of 73 (95.9%) who returned to homelessness have been re-housed or on a path to re-housing.

Goal 3: Engagement with 28,000 unsheltered veterans nationally

VISN 4 target = 964 Actual = 1,176 (122%, goal exceeded)

- Continue supporting the development of new and existing affordable housing programs/initiatives.

Looking Forward

- Welcome James Rowland as the new Co-Chair
- Engage with community partners who may not be at the table to participate
- Continue bringing information on housing resources for discussion
- Share more data and trends about veteran homelessness to assist with decision making
 - PA VETconnect
 - National data
 - Continuum of Care data, etc.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Crystal Houser, Chair

Initiative Updates

- PA Business One-Stop Shop: The Business Hub Application has been expanded to include a [Help Center](#).
- SBA: Quarterly Boots to Business classes through the Transition Assistance Program/ Soldier for Life Program have decreased in attendance, from 54 in FY22 to 39 in FY23 due to weather.
- SBA: Reboot to Business classes have remained all online and have increased in attendance from 51 in FY22 to 76.
- PA Dept of Ag: The Department awarded two Veterans in Ag Grants: \$100,000 each to Butler Community Action and PA Veteran Farming Network

Looking Forward

- PA Business One-Stop Shop: Create a webinar series that targets specific business owners and entrepreneurs (Individuals with a Disability, LGTB+, Minorities, Veterans and Women).
- SBA: Boots to Business program at Carlisle Barracks has partnered with Penn State Dickinson Law to offer a Legal Clinic in tandem with Veterans attending the Carlisle Barracks class.
- PA Dept of Ag and others will work to increase apprenticeships for veterans.
- Future CareerLink efforts to include outreach to prisons, soup kitchens, and shelters.
- The HIRE Vets Medallion Program hopes to continue increasing the number of employers who recruit, hire, and retain veterans.

PA Business One-Stop Shop Initiative Updates

- The Business Hub Application has been expanded to include a [Help Center](#). The Help Center (can be accessed pre and post login) includes a collection of help guides, videos and business license reference guides that can be utilized to assist businesses and entrepreneurs with starting, growing, and/or operation a business in Pennsylvania.
 - The Help Center boasts:
 - 25 Help Guides
 - 12 Videos
 - 18 Business License Reference Guides
 - Established a Quarterly Newsletter. The newsletter was released first in January 2023, followed by April 2023 and September 2023. The newsletter is focused on latest business updates, news from State Government, business application deadlines, funding opportunities, partner resource spotlights and more!
 - In Summer/Fall 2023, created and/or expanded content to the following webpages to our [website](#):
 - Resources to businesses for [Hiring an Inclusive Workforce](#)
 - State and Federal Resources to support [Disability-Owned Businesses](#) and [LGBT+ - Owned Businesses](#)
 - [New Hiring Reporting requirements](#)
 - [Common State Permits and Licenses](#)
 - [Becoming a Government Supplier](#)
 - Speaking Engagements
 - Participated in the Small Business Administration's Boots to Business
 - Partnered with the Small Business Development Center on a "How to Start a Business" webinar
 - Participated in 10 webinars and/or speaking engagements in 2023

PA Business One-Stop Shop Looking Forward

- Continue to build partnerships with State Agencies and increase interagency collaboration.
- Create a webinar series that targeting specifics business owners and entrepreneurs (Individuals with a Disability, LGTB+, Minorities, Veterans and Women).
- Continue to review our Customer Survey data against the services we currently offer; and adjust where appropriate to best meet customer needs.
- Continue to review our website to address any gaps and create appropriate content to include on the site.

Contact Information:

- Website: business.pa.gov
- Phone: 1-833-722-6778, Option 0
- Email: business.dced@pa.gov

Boots to Business Initiative Updates

- Quarterly Boots to Business classes through the Transition Assistance Program/ Soldier for Life Program have transitioned back to in-person at Carlisle Barracks. There has been a slight decrease in attendance, from 54 in FY22 to 39 in FY23. This may be due to a class cancelled for inclement weather.
- Reboot to Business classes have remained all online and have increased in attendance. Three classes were held with 76 Veterans attending. This is an increase from 51 in FY22.
- SBA grantee St. Joseph's University held a weeklong course called "Entrepreneurial Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities". 35 SDVOSB's graduated this 3-step program; having received business education, continuing mentorship, and a viable business plan.

Boots to Business Looking Forward

- Our Boots to Business program at Carlisle Barracks has partnered with Penn State Dickinson Law to offer a Legal Clinic in tandem with Veterans attending the Carlisle Barracks class. Veterans can receive free business legal advice and assistance with creating their entity.
- With seeing an increase in demand in Veteran inquiries, both the Pittsburgh and Eastern PA District office Veteran Business Development Officers have teamed up to host a virtual monthly “Veterans Hour Q&A” the third Friday of every month. Veterans can have all their business questions answered and received directions to resources to help them grow their business. Subject matter experts are invited to participate.
- The SBA has recently rolled out new curriculum for Military Spouses. This course is aimed toward helping spouses with creating mobile and home-based businesses.

Homegrown by Heroes Initiative Updates

- PA Preferred Homegrown by Heroes:
 - 57 members
 - 34 counties
- The Department awarded two Veterans in Ag Grants
 - \$100,000 to Butler Community Action
 - \$100,000 to PA Veteran Farming Network
 - PA Veteran Farming Network used these funds to support 11 recipients, closing out the inaugural round of the program in September.
- A new Dairy Herds Manager apprenticeship program was registered with the State. There are now 8 Agriculture related Apprenticeships.

Homegrown by Heroes Looking Forward

- The Department will continue to expand the PA Preferred Homegrown by Heroes program and other Veterans in Ag initiatives.
- The Department will continue to work with current Veterans in Ag grant recipients and will be opening a new round of grants soon.
- The Department will work with Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship sponsors and other training providers to ensure veterans have access to these programs.

HEALTH PROMOTIONS

Ms. Erica Nocho, Chair

Initiative Updates

- Educational Awareness Campaign: Focus on education to healthcare workers
 - Making it general enough so that it could be understood by multiple disciplines such as physical health care, mental health care and substance use disorder providers, etc.
- We have a draft of the next infographic that will be sent for approval that has a mix of state and federal resources

Looking Forward

- Discussion with the committee on new approaches to education and outreach
 - Possible learning collaboratives or spotlight on work being done to share resources
- Planning for quarterly information dissemination on veteran resources
- Work with other committees to address population-specific issues

WOMEN VETERANS

Ms. Elizabeth Cooper, Chair

Initiative Updates

- SCI Muncy Veteran Service Unit- Victory Garden, Military Share Donations, TAL Claims Consultant, and Women Veteran Empowered and Thriving (in person & Virtual) Groups.
- PA Women Veterans Magazine- Assisting Melissa Washington and her non-profit with information to generate the magazine.
- American Legion Consultant- Collaboration with VFW to better serve PA women veterans. Alicia Murr is the first to serve in this role.
- Additional Women Military Memorial Ambassadors to connect with DMVA Regional Program Outreach Coordinators as they come on board.

Looking Forward

- Collaborating with the Aging Committee, AARP, and PA CareerLink to deliver services within the PA veteran's homes.
- Hosting in-person women veteran town halls throughout the commonwealth.
- Delivering services to women veterans that serve as corrections officers, as well as those incarcerated.
- The American Legion and VFW collaborating to host conferences for PA Women Veterans.
- PA Women Veterans Magazine should launch in June of 2024.

JUDICIARY

Mr. Michael Carrington, Chair

Initiative Updates

- PA DOC and PPB hired 180 new veteran employees between 1/1/23 and 9/30/23. Each received an individualized welcome aboard email and/or phone call.
- Veteran enhancements in the DOC CAPTOR program have enabled all agency employees to identify veteran inmates at classification.
- DOC/DMVA Regional Veteran Employee Symposium held at SCI Dallas on 5/19/23 provided information and resources to hundreds of regional veteran staff and family members.
- Within past 6 months, PCI partnership with DOC Veteran Services Team and regional DMVA staff resulted in 200+ supply bags, 300+ new towels, and 1,200+ new blankets being distributed to veteran organizations/issued to veterans in need.
- DOC/DMVA Regional Facility Tours positively impact Veteran Services in 2023.

Looking Forward

- DOC working on MOU with Dept. of Agriculture to enhance and expand growing/greenhouse initiatives.
- Committee plans to partner with DMVA and coordinate a 2024 statewide veteran symposium in the capitol region.
- Support existing county veteran's courts and assist with program needs such as mentors/volunteers.
- Discover new ways to enhance family reintegration component for criminal justice involved veterans reentering society.
- Work through IT barriers to allow PA VETConnect to be accessible to incarcerated veteran inmates throughout the commonwealth.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

LEADERSHIP COMMENTS /

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **DMVA website: www.dmva.pa.gov**
- **Sign up for the Veterans Registry and DMVA Digest!**
www.register.dmva.pa.gov
- **Veterans Trust Fund**
[Veterans Trust Fund Grant Program \(pa.gov\)](http://www.veterans-trust-fund.pa.gov)
- **December 16th – National Wreaths Across America**

NEXT MEETING:

FEB 7 at 1:00PM

NCTC Classroom, Bldg. 8-63, FTIG

*All 2024 GAC-VS quarterly meetings will take place
on the 1st Wednesday in FEB, MAY, AUG, & NOV