



*"Serving Those Who Served"*

## Centennial Accord Plan June 2016



## Introduction

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is cabinet-level state agency which is committed to serving veterans and their families, including the approximately 6,500 American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans and their families in Washington State. American Indians and Alaska Natives serve in the United States armed forces at a higher rate than any other ethnic population and they have access to some unique programs in order to better meet their needs. It is the goal of the Department to better serve these veterans by partnering with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to support the expansion of programs, and to ensure that tribal veterans have access to all the same benefits as other veterans.

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs does not have funding opportunities available to tribes or local governments but does collaborate with tribes and local governments to support veterans and their families. The Department also sponsors an annual Tribal Veterans Representatives Summit and Training in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Tribal Government Relations and a host tribe in Washington State. All tribes in Washington State and in nearby areas of Idaho and Oregon, as listed in the Washington State Tribal Directory maintained by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, are invited to this annual event.

## Vision, Mission, Goals

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs strives to make Washington the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

**Vision:** *All Washington veterans and their families are connected to their earned benefits*

**Mission:** *Serving Those Who Served*

**Goals:**

1. *Outreach and Access* – Provide information and opportunities for veterans to connect to their earned benefit
2. *Quality Health Services* – Provide quality care and services in our veterans homes
3. *Education and Employment* – Help veterans prepare for and achieve family wage jobs
4. *Continuous Improvement* – Serve more veterans by developing innovative approaches

5. *Exceptional Customer Service* – Treat our customers with the dignity and respect they deserve

## **Programs and Services Available to Veterans**

### **Veterans Homes**

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs serves veterans in three Veterans Homes, where veterans are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve in settings that provide a sense of belonging unique to veterans. All Washington State Veterans Homes are Medicare and Medicaid certified skilled nursing facilities. A fourth Veterans Home is under construction in Walla Walla.

### **Veterans Cemetery**

The Washington State Veterans Cemetery was established in a collaborative partnership between the Department and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The cemetery is located on 120 acres three miles west of Fairchild Air Force Base. From the flag assembly area looking southward, Francher Butte and West Medical Lake are present. Looking northward from the Committal Shelter, military aircraft banking northward off the 90-foot flagpole with its 30-foot flag lowered to half-staff often form the backdrop to interment services.

### **Veteran Owned Business Certification**

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs operates a certification program for Veteran or Servicemember Owned Businesses. A list of certified businesses is maintained on our website which gives private business and citizens across the state easy access to veteran businesses in their communities. Businesses also receive a decal to put on the door or window of their business.

### **Veterans Services Division**

- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project - Two grants (Urban and Rural) through US Department of Labor (general fund federal) provide resources to help homeless and at-risk-of-homeless Veterans to reintegrate into the labor force and obtain a sustainable independent living. Services include case management, housing placement, and employment assistance.
- King County Homeless Services - Addresses the needs of homeless Veterans in King County by identifying and targeting for services eligible Veterans who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. Services include case management, housing placement, financial assistant, referrals and employment assistance

- Incarcerated Veterans Re-Entry Services - A joint project with King and Thurston Counties to address the needs of Veterans' incarcerated in county correctional facilities, offering alternatives to jail and referral to housing, employment services, and treatment. Many of the veterans have come to the jail due to un-treated drug and alcohol issues, poverty, homelessness, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Veterans who are referred to this program receive reduced sentences in exchange for drug and alcohol treatment and mental health services, housing and employment. Services include case management, financial and employment assistance.
- Building 9 for Veterans – a 60 bed transitional housing program designed to provide safe and stable housing for both male and female homeless veterans who are committed to returning to employment and/or independent living. There is a service center onsite providing VA claims assistance to the public.
- Veterans Estate Management Program – The Department serves as fiduciary/payee for approximately 400 clients who were declared incompetent to manage their personal finances by the VA and/or Social Security Administration.
- Toll-Free Call Center – The Department provide a toll-free number so that veterans and their families may speak to a Department representative in order to learn about the veterans' benefits and entitlement that may be available to them.
- Veterans Benefits Enhancement Program - A partnership between the Department, the Department of Social and Health Services, and the Health Care Authority which identifies veterans and their dependents who are receiving state social and health services to access the maximum federal benefits for which they are eligible.
- VA Claims Assistance and Claims Quality Assurance Program – the Department contracts with seven accredited and nationally recognized veteran service organizations to provide claims assistance services to veterans and their family members throughout the state. The Department also partners with Counties with County Veteran Service Officer positions.
- Transitioning Warrior Program – An outreach program for military service members and who are beginning their transition back to civilian life
- Veterans Innovation Program - Provides transition assistance to veterans and their families facing financial hardships due to deployments in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### **Behavioral Health Services Division**

- Post-Traumatic Stress/War Trauma Counseling - Services provided throughout the program include individual, couples, family, and veteran group counseling. Some contractors offer group services to women veterans and spouses of veterans.

Veterans may be referred to specialized inpatient or outpatient treatment offered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers or Vet Centers within Washington State. Additional funds have been contracted with King County for services provided which include individual, couples, family, and group counseling for veterans and their family members living in King County.

- King County Funded Training and Support Center - Educational training opportunities, prepared by educators, authors, treatment professionals, Veterans, and trainers with specialty skills in assessment and treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and a range of military and veteran related trauma and homecoming concerns.
- Veterans Conservation Corps - The Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) seeks to connect veterans to Washington states natural resources as a mode of eco-therapy. As part of the VCC, Veterans are able to connect with the environment, their communities and themselves while serving in paid internships.
- Vet Corps - The Vet Corps program employs 50 Veterans in national service through AmeriCorps. Members serve as peer mentors to help veterans transition to civilian life through training, education and outreach. Primarily on college campuses, Vet Corps is able to serve a large portion of post-9/11 veterans where they are.
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program - Interagency agreement with the Department of Social and Health Services and the Traumatic Brain Injury Commission to provide outreach to veterans who may have a traumatic brain injury so that they can be referred to the VA and training to community members and veterans state wide, increasing the understanding of TBI and its symptoms.

### **Tribal Liaison and Points of Contact**

The Tribal Liaison for the WDVA is the primary point of contact for tribal officials or representatives including Tribal Veterans Representatives and/or Tribal Veterans Service Officers and serves as a policy advisor to the Director. The Tribal Liaison is responsible for assisting Tribes and the Department with implementing effective government-to-government relations including the development of formal and informal partnerships and collaboration efforts. The Tribal Liaison is also the Department's primary point of contact for the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations and other VA offices:

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PO BOX 41155

Olympia WA 985-4-1155  
360-725-2235  
[steveng@dva.wa.gov](mailto:steveng@dva.wa.gov)

Veterans and the public may also wish to use other points of contact within the Department in order to learn more about Federal and State veterans' benefits and the Department's programs and services. Other frequently used points of contact include:

- Website: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov)
- Information on veterans' benefits and programs: 1-800-562-2308 or [benefits@dva.wa.gov](mailto:benefits@dva.wa.gov)
- Media inquiries: 1-800-562-0132 (option 1), or [communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov)
- State Veterans Homes: 1-877-838-7787, or <http://www.dva.wa.gov/veteran-homes/veterans-homes>
- State Veterans Cemetery: 509-299-6280, or [cemetery@dva.wa.gov](mailto:cemetery@dva.wa.gov)
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or <https://www.veteran-crisisline.net>

### **Consultation Process-Procedures**

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to respectful and effective communication with tribal governments which honors the legacy and service of tribal veterans and warriors. Formal consultation may be initiated by the Department or at the request of tribes and will be conducted on a government-to-government basis between senior Department leadership and respective Tribal Councils or Tribal Business Committees.

Informal communications between the Department and tribes may address most questions or comments, including inquiries to assist individual veterans and their families with their earned benefits, and are encouraged at all levels of the Department. The Tribal Liaison and senior Department leadership will may also participate in listening sessions with tribal leaders or join the veteran's committee meetings of the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians and the National Congress of American Indians for the purpose of sharing information on topics of interest to the Department, tribes, or both.

## **Dispute Resolution Process**

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs does not have a formal dispute resolution process but Tribes or individual veterans or family members may contact the Department's Tribal Liaison by any at any point in time to initiate a dispute, complaint, or inquiry. The Department will consult with the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the Washington State Office of the Attorney General, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Tribal Government Relations as needed in order to resolve any disputes in a respectful and amicable manner.

## **Definitions**

- Department / WDVA – Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs or Washington Department of Veterans Affairs
- PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury
- Tribal Veterans Representatives/Tribal Veteran Service Officer – Officially designated person or persons appointed by a tribal government to represent the tribe on veteran issues
- VA - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, including the following offices:
  - VBA – Veterans Benefits Administration
  - VHA – Veterans Health Administration
  - NCA – National Cemetery Administration
  - OTGR – Office of Tribal Government Relations
- Veteran – a person who has served in the Armed Forces of the United States as defined in Revised Code of Washington 41.04.005 or 41.04.007
- VCC - Veterans Conservation Corps
- Veterans Homes – long-term care facilities operated by the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs. These facilities include
  - Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard, WA
  - Washington Soldiers Home in Orting, WA
  - Spokane Veterans Home in Spokane, WA
  - Walla Walla Veterans Home in Walla Walla, WA (presently under construction)