

WDVA Veteran Voices
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WDVA Veteran Voices

FEBRUARY 2023



WDVA Hot Jobs - Incentives Available



A Message from the Director

Greetings from Your New WDVA Director - David Puente

This is my first official message as the Director of *your* Washington Department of Veterans Affairs! I am humbled and honored to have this opportunity.

My journey is not unlike many Veterans. I joined the military as a way to get out of my hometown and encounter more experiences, more opportunities, and more education than what was available in a migrant farmworker community in rural Florida. The United States Army was the perfect answer for me and provided an opportunity to serve my country. This allowed me to begin a career in public safety as a Military Policeman and I ended my military service with the Criminal Investigations Division. Some may wonder how I transitioned to Washington State, after nearly seven years, I saw an opportunity in a law enforcement magazine for a bilingual investigator at the Department of Labor and Industries. I discharged from the U.S Army, and began my journey with Washington State

WDVA
WE'RE HIRING

RNs | Drivers
LPNs | Chefs
CNAs | & More

Make an impact and join a career in Serving Those Who Served!

APPLY NOW!
Recruiters@DVA.WA.GOV

Available Opportunities:

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified, IN-TRAINING, Washington Veterans Home](#)

[WDVA Licensed Practical Nurse 2, Full Time - Permanent, Washington Soldiers Home](#)

[WDVA Registered Nurse 2, Full Time Float - NOC Shift, Washington Veterans Home](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Walla Walla Veterans Home](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Multiple Positions, Port Orchard](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Multiple Positions, Spokane](#)

Government.

Like many other Veterans, because I didn't serve in combat, I questioned myself and thought "am I really a veteran?". The answer is a resounding yes, I served honorably, and utilized my earned benefits, such as my GI Bill and VA Home Loan.

Only after serving in the deputy director role for your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, did I truly learn about all of the earned benefits that veteran and family members are afforded, but often do not claim because they are not aware or believe that they are not worthy of the benefits. My goal is to make more veterans and families aware of the many available resources available to them.

My promise to you is that I will be open to learning how we can continue making things better. I want to listen to our WDVA Team Members, our customer base, our Veterans Organizations, and community partners to hear about your priorities and your challenges.

My intention is to see where our missions and values align and where we have room to grow together.

We will continue to focus on these priorities to ensure we can serve those who serve:

- Recruitment and retention in our agency.
- Assist Veterans without homes in Transitional Housing.
- Reduce service member, Veteran, and family member suicide.
- Connect Veterans to their earned benefits.

My goal is to connect even more of our WDVA Team Members with our customer base, with our Veterans organizations, and with community partners to continue to hear about your priorities and your challenges.

I am excited to roll up my sleeves with you all and continue our business of *Serving Those Who Served!*

Regards,
David Puente

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Orting](#)

[WDVA IT Business Analyst - Journey, TLA Project, Olympia](#)

[WDVA Stationary Engineer 2, Non-Permanent, WA Soldier's Home](#)

[WDVA Veterans Benefit Specialist 2, Full Time - Project, Pierce County](#)

[WDVA Licensed Practical Nurse \(LPN2\), Port Orchard](#)

ALL WDVA JOBS:

[State of Washington Job Opportunities |](#)

Hiring Incentive of up to \$4,500!

All newly hired permanent NAC's or NAC Leads are eligible!

Other Positions Available at our Walla Walla, Spokane, Orting & Port Orchard Veterans Home. Recruiters@dva.wa.gov

Washington State Arts Commission and Department of Veteran Affairs partner to support Veterans through the Arts



Washington State Arts Commission and Department of Veteran Affairs partner to support Veterans through the arts

\$250,000 in grants will support arts programming across four Veteran Homes

[Read More](#)

February Events & Observances List



Here is a current list of upcoming events that your WDVA is tracking.

Please email us your events at communications@dva.wa.gov so we can get them added.

February 09 - [VA S.A.V.E. Suicide Prevention Training \(1.5 CEU\) | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

February 09 - [Virtual Minority Veterans Outreach Symposium | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

February 10 - [Veterans Treatment Courts: Serving Justice Involved Veterans \(3 CEUs\) | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

February 15 - [Veteran Resource Fair - Lewis County | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

February 16 - [JBLM VA Claims 101 Information Session | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

February 22 - [Women Veterans Advisory Committee Lunch & Learn - Lauren Feringa | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

April 15 - [Tacoma Dome Resource Fair & Stand Down | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

Submit your event at www.dva.wa.gov/calendar

OLYMPIA, WA – The Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) and the Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA) gathered on January 18 to celebrate a new partnership— together, the two agencies will distribute \$250,000 in grants for arts-based programming at the four State Veterans Homes and the Transitional Housing Program.

“The past three years has been especially challenging for Veterans and families in our State Veterans Homes and Transitional Housing Program. COVID related precautions severely limited our ability to offer in-person programming such as painting, live music from community groups, or attending local theater events,” said David Puente, Director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs.

“Funding from the ArtsWA Grant will allow our Veterans and families to connect with the arts and we know this will have a positive impact on their quality of life. We are extremely grateful for this partnership with the Washington Arts Commission and look forward to sharing stories of its impact.”

[Read More](#)

Stay Updated with Legislature for Veterans and Families

Interested in what’s happening at the Washington State Legislature for Veterans and their Families?

Visit the WDVA Legislative Updates website to see what has been introduced so far and sign up for weekly updates from the WDVA Legislative Update **ListServ** [Legislative Updates | WDVA](#)

The 2023 Legislative Session begins on January 9 and runs for 105 days. You can watch hearings at www.tvw.org and in some cases participate virtually by signing up at: [Washington State Legislature How to Testify](#)

WDVA Spotlight Video

Spokane Veterans Home



Valentine's at the Spokane Veterans Home

Spokane Veterans Home is excited to have a Valentine's Day party coming up. We are voting for King/Queen for our facility.

The staff, family and veterans all vote and then we celebrate with a party on Valentine's Day.

Look for photos of our Valentines King and Queen across our social media platforms.

Veterans in suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for free emergency health care

As of Jan. 17, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis will be able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.



Honoring Former WDVA Director - Alfie Alvarado-Ramos

Walla Walla Veterans Home



Walla Walla Veterans Home Welcomes Newly Adopted Pup

This expansion of care will help prevent Veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to Veterans in times of crisis. It will also increase access to acute suicide care for up to 9 million Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA.

[Read More](#)

Pet Visits at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting



Residents can't get enough of pet visits from Fluff the cat!

A Veteran Homes Volunteer, Donna Williamson and her cat Fluff, are the pet visiting team who visit residents who love cats! It's not just about the pups 😊

Honored residents benefit from these pet visits and pet therapy teams. A visit from a dog, cat or other animal can make a difference and brighten a resident's day. Often animals can reach people in ways that people cannot.

Meet "Duke", our newly adopted family member who will also serve as our; activities assistant; ball-fetcher extraordinaire; smile-inducer; serotonin-booster; treat-lovin good boy!

Duke is remarkably well trained already. He's super smart, affectionate, gentle, goofy, obedient, and very perceptive.

Thank you, [Blue Mountain Humane Society](#) for helping to bring love and joy every day to our Veterans, Vet Spouses, Gold Star Parents, and staff.

Stay tuned for plenty of photos and heartwarming stories of Duke with his new WWVH family.

You can help recognize Washington as a Purple Heart State...Donate Today!

Mail Donations To:
WDVA Purple Heart
Sign Campaign
PO Box 41150
Olympia, WA 98504

Your donation will place signs at all WA highway entrances



Every donation counts towards the goal of placing Purple Heart Highway Signs at all 34 state entrances into Washington!

Purple Heart Medals are presented to Armed Forces members who are killed or wounded in combat.

Learn more: [Purple Heart Donation](#)

Working Families Tax Credit

A new tax credit for Washington workers. Get up to \$1200 back

From now through Dec. 31, 2023, individuals and families can [apply](#) for the Working Families Tax Credit. There are three ways to apply:

- Online using MyDOR, our secure filing system.
- Efile through federal tax preparation software or professional tax preparers.
- By mail using a paper application.



These visits also help to, improve residents' self-esteem, decrease social isolation & increase in social interaction, decrease anxiety, improve vital signs, contribute to faster recovery from injuries, tap into lifetime memories, and improve motor skills.

Thank you to Donna & Fluff for your contributions to residents' wellness at the WA Soldiers Home! [#WeLoveOurCommunity](#)

More Photos: [\(20+\) Facebook](#)

Suicide Prevention License Plate Emblem

You can pre-order your Suicide Prevention License Plate Emblem by sending a check/money order for the \$18 to Department of Licensing

Special Plate Unit Department of Licensing

PO Box 9909
Olympia, WA 98507-8500

More Info: [988 license plate emblems now available for Washington drivers | News | nbcrightnow.com](#)

If you aren't sure whether you'll qualify, use our quick [Eligibility Assistant](#).

[Apply Now](#)



Stay Updated with National News - Federal VA Press Releases

[VA offers \\$30M in grant funding to assist formerly homeless Veterans](#)

[VA housed more than 40,000 homeless Veterans in 2022](#)

[VA proposes rule that would waive copays for eligible Native American and Alaska Native Veterans](#)

[VA will begin processing PACT Act benefits claims for all Veterans and survivors on Jan. 1](#)

Alliance Northwest is the largest, most interactive government contracting conference in the Pacific Northwest. *Discounts available for Certified Owned Businesses!*

PURCHASE A SUICIDE PREVENTION LICENSE PLATE EMBLEM

SUICIDE PREVENTION LICENSE PLATE EMBLEM - \$18
 \$10 FROM EVERY PLATE GOES TO THE VETERAN AND MILITARY MEMBER SUICIDE PREVENTION ACCOUNT

Members of the public are invited to help raise awareness for suicide prevention programs by purchasing a new suicide prevention license plate emblem.

All Washington State vehicle owners are eligible to purchase the emblem displaying the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number and the message that "There is Hope!".

Emblems cost \$18 and can be placed on any passenger vehicle, truck, and large trailer license plate, including special and personalized plates.

To Purchase:
<https://rb.gy/lr2aun>

ALLIANCE NORTHWEST

Thank you to our Veterans Sponsor

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

MARCH 16 2023

Brought to you by

Please take a few moments and provide us with feedback to make us better in 2023 at Serving Those Who Served.

Your feedback is instrumental in the continued improvement of your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WDVA2022>

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