



*"Serving Those Who Served"*

# VETERAN VOICES

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## WDVA Hot JOBS:

[Nursing Assistant Residential Living \(WWVH\)](#)

[Registered Nurse 2 \(WWVH\)](#)

[Licensed Practical Nurse 2 \(0113\) \(WSH\)](#)

[Registered Nurse 2 Orting \(0181\)](#)

[Dietitian 2 Port Orchard](#)

More Info: [recruiters@dva.wa.gov](mailto:recruiters@dva.wa.gov)

## Legislative Update

**April 2017**

The Legislature reached another cut-off date and many bills are now waiting to be considered on the floor of the House or Senate.

Below are all of the **Veteran or Military related bills** that have met five of the six cut-off dates. You can find more information on our Legislative Updates Page at <http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/legislative-updates>:

Bill	Status	Brief Description
SHB 1055	S Rules 2	Concerning pro bono legal services for military service members, veterans, and their families.
HB 1056	S 2nd Reading	Concerning consumer protections for military service members on active duty.
HB 1204	S Passed 3rd	Requiring the display of the national league of families' POW/MIA flag on certain days.
HB 1278	S Passed 3rd	Enacting the physical therapy licensure compact.
SHB 1320	S Passed 3rd	Concerning certain gold star license plate qualified applicants.
SHB 1369	S Passed 3rd	Defining veteran for the purpose of receiving certain benefits.
E2SHB 1802	S Rules 2	Increasing the access of veterans, military service members, and military spouses to shared leave in state employment.
ESB 5008	H Rules R	Facilitating compliance with the federal REAL ID act by modifying driver's license and identocard design and fees.
SB 5359	H Rules R	Requiring annual reporting on the implementation of laws to streamline licensing processes for military service members and their spouses.
SB 5391	H 2nd Reading	Clarifying the powers, duties, and functions of the department of veterans affairs.
SB 5661	H Rules R	Addressing interruptive service credit for members of the law enforcement officers' and fire fighters' retirement system.
SB 5778	H Rules R	Modifying the definition of resident student to comply with the federal requirements established by the veterans access, choice, and accountability act of 2014.
SB 5826	H 2nd Reading	Concerning eligibility for veteran or national guard tuition waivers.
SB 5849	H Rules R	Addressing the need for veterans' services.

HB – House Bill \* SHB – Substitute House Bill \* E2SHB – Engrossed 2<sup>nd</sup> Substitute House Bill \* SB – Senate Bill \* SHJM – Substitute House Joint Memorial \* SJM – Senate Joint Memorial \* [Legislative Glossary](#)

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## A Message from the Director Lourdes "Alfie" E. Alvarado-Ramos [Alfie@dva.wa.gov](mailto:Alfie@dva.wa.gov)



The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is excited to announce the grand opening of the Regional Veterans Center in Spokane County.

The new Regional Veterans Center will continue to provide veteran relief services to eligible veterans needing financial assistance from the Spokane County Veterans Assistance Fund. In addition, all veterans are welcome to access the new Center where partners from other agencies, organizations, and non-profits will provide assistance with VA Claims, applications for VA Medical Care, employment, and connections to other resources.

The Regional Veterans Center is a partnership between Spokane County, the WestCare Foundation, and *your* Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. The Center will ensure services are provided to veterans in Spokane County, but also acts as a regional one-stop for any veteran in Eastern Washington who needs help connecting to benefits they earned by serving in the military.

"Awareness of the programs and services designed to help veterans and their families continues to be one of our biggest challenges," said WDVA director Alfie Alvarado-Ramos. "The Spokane County Regional Veterans Services Center will give all veterans in Eastern Washington the chance to learn what is available and how to get connected. Expanding services to Eastern Washington has been our focus and I'm excited to open this new resource in Eastern Washington!"

WDVA operates several specialized programs for veterans and their families; however, they have been underutilized in Eastern Washington. Programs such as PTSD Counseling, the Veterans Conservation Corps, homeless veterans services, and the Veterans Innovations Program, which provides financial assistance to veterans experiencing financial hardships due to recent deployments, are available to veterans statewide. In February, WDVA also cut the ribbon for a new Veterans Home in Walla Walla to serve eighty Eastern Washington Veterans in need of long-term care.

Cathrene Nichols, Strategic Operations Manager for Eastern Washington, will oversee the Regional Veterans Services Center and through a grant from the WestCare Foundation will develop a Second Chance Act Reentry Program. This program is the first to be developed in Washington and is funded by a three year Bureau of Justice Grant working in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Corrections with a goal of better integrating veterans into their communities to reduce the likelihood of them re-offending and going back to prison.

The Regional Veterans Center is hosted by Spokane County, working with partners including the federal VA, the City of Spokane, WorkSource, Goodwill, several Veteran Service Organizations, New Horizons, and Pioneer Human Services to provide a one-stop Veterans Center in Spokane.

***A grand opening reception is being held on April 10, from 9 – 11am, at 1101 W. College Ave, Suite 401 in Spokane.***

To contact the Spokane County Regional Veterans Services Center visit <http://www.spokanecounty.org/1122/Veteran-Services> ; <http://www.dva.wa.gov/>; or call 509-477-4486.

## WDVA Receives National Award of Excellence



**OLYMPIA** – Gov. Jay Inslee announced in March that YOUR Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has been awarded the Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This is WDVA’s fifth Pillars of Excellence Award.

The award recognizes outstanding state programs that support veterans within their states. This year’s award is for WDVA’s innovations in developing public-private partnerships to increase access to health care and other services for incarcerated and rural veterans.

“WDVA continues to be recognized nationally for what we already know in Washington, that we must provide support for our veterans who have sacrificed for our state and our country,” Inslee said. “WDVA is leading in finding ways to make sure that these brave men and women and their families have the resources they need, which benefits all our communities.”

In 2010, with authorization from the state Legislature, WDVA began developing a consortium of public-private partnerships to improve access to veterans’ services. Some examples include a unique public-private partnership with the WestCare Foundation to develop programs for veterans and their families at the Washington Soldiers Home, as well as the creation of a veterans service clinic, the Veterans Affairs Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot, re-entry support for incarcerated veterans at correctional facilities and the ability to renovate and provide permanent supportive housing for homeless women veterans.

WDVA has also partnered with Brigadoon Service Dogs and opened a therapeutic service dog training and care center at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting. VetBikes, a nonprofit 501c3 has also partnered with the WDVA to provide restored bicycles at no cost to Veterans, to facilitate their path to wellness.

“Congratulations to each partner in Washington state who helped us earn this award, especially the West-Care Foundation,” said WDVA director Alfie Alvarado-Ramos. “The strides our state has made in ensuring all veterans are connected to their earned benefits are possible only because of the work we do together.”

More information on the Pillars of Excellence Awards [can be found here](#).

## CTE Showcase Event Builds Homeless Shelters



Twenty-two teams of high school and college students from across the state competed in the first Career Technical Education Showcase of Skills for the Homeless Shelter Project.

Dozens of students came together on Monday, March 27 at the Capitol Campus in Olympia to apply their learned technical skills as they built energy efficient and portable homeless shelters.

Every team was given a \$2,500 stipend to buy supplies to build a portable, 8-by-12 foot energy-efficient shelter.



After the competition, the tiny homes were transported to Seattle, where they will be used as transitional homeless housing.

Several of these shelters will benefit homeless veterans and the transporting of the shelters back to Seattle was conducted by Washington National Guard volunteers.

This judged competition featured teams from Washington high schools, Skill Centers and colleges.

The Workforce Board put together this demonstration project to help showcase the many skills of various Career and Technical Education (CTE) students

throughout the state in a one-day competition (although lots of hard work was first completed at their five schools).

Your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, assisted with the judging of the shelters.

To learn more about the CTE Showcase, please visit

[www.wtb.wa.gov/CTEHomelessHouseProject.asp](http://www.wtb.wa.gov/CTEHomelessHouseProject.asp)



## Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Event—VERG



March 29/30 was Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran Day and we at the WDVA & VERG did not want that day to go by without recognizing our fellow state employees that served so honorably during the most difficult time in history.



We were honored to gather and show our appreciation and gratitude. We honor those that are present and we remember those that are not. Learn more about the WA Veterans Employee Resource Group [here](#).

## Join Us for the Commander's Call

WDVA and the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC)

Invite all VSO Commanders and VSO Leadership at the  
State, District and Post/Chapter Level to a

# COMMANDER'S CALL

9am-12pm,  
May 18, 2017

AMVETS Post 1, 5717 S Tyler St, Tacoma, WA 98409

Please RSVP by May 15 for planning purposes: [HeidiA@dva.wa.gov](mailto:HeidiA@dva.wa.gov)

-Hear from leaders of the VAAC. State VA, Federal VA and WAServes

-Network with VSO Counterparts

[www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov)



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# Save the Date: Memorial Day at Medical Lake

Please email your upcoming Memorial Day Events for us  
to share at [communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov)

## Memorial Day Ceremony



You are cordially invited to attend the  
*Washington Department of Veterans Affairs*  
*Memorial Day Ceremony*

*Monday, 29 May 2017*  
*A Musical Prelude will begin at 10:30am*  
*Ceremony begins promptly at 11am*

*State Veterans Cemetery*  
*21702 West Espanola Rd*  
*Medical Lake, Washington 99022*

*Parking is available at the cemetery with overflow available along Ritchey Road*  
*Those in need of ADA arrangements should call (509) 299-6280 by Mon. May 22, 2017*

*For additional information please contact the office at (509) 299-6280 or [cemetery@dva.wa.gov](mailto:cemetery@dva.wa.gov)*



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## VA Now Provides Online Daily Burial Schedules for National Cemeteries



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced a new online Daily Burial Schedule (DBS) for all VA national cemeteries, which will allow families and loved ones to retrieve time and location information for those being interred, via its [National Cemetery Administration](http://www.nca.gov) (NCA) website.

“We pride ourselves on continuously improving customer satisfaction and meeting the wishes of Veterans and their loved ones,” said interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs [Ronald E. Walters](#). “We want manageable information for anyone wishing to pay their respects.”

The new feature is available to anyone with a smartphone, tablet or computer. Families may also opt out of using this service.

Schedules of interments are posted online and updated hourly at: [www.cem.va.gov/dailyburialschedule](http://www.cem.va.gov/dailyburialschedule).

The public can search by national cemetery or last name. DBS will give the scheduled committal service date and time, location of the cemetery and funeral home providing services.

The location of the committal shelter will be provided at the cemetery. In addition, users may also navigate to the specific VA national cemetery website for directions and further information.

VA operates 135 national cemeteries and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 40 states and Puerto Rico. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. VA also provides funding to establish, expand, improve and maintain 105 Veterans cemeteries in 47 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan.

For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. In 2016, VA honored more than 345,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

# Register Now for the Tacoma Dome Resources Fair



**AT THE TACOMA DOME EXHIBITION HALL**

**13 MAY 2017**

**9AM-3PM**

**FREE**

**FREE**

**This event will provide**

- Community Services
- VA Benefits
- Legal Services
- Homeless Services/ At Risk
- Educational Benefits
- Medical Screenings and Dental Resources
- Justice Involved Reintegration Services
- Apprenticeship/Training and vocational opportunities/ Jobs
- Female Veterans Resources
- Financial Education/ Assistance
- Housing and home ownership
- Disability Claims/ Benefits
- Alternative Therapies
- Transition Services

## Reflective Art Program Comes to Veterans Home in Retsil



The Social Services and Recreation Therapy Department at the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil have implemented a brand new reflective art group for our veteran residents.

The goal of this program is to move beyond arts and crafts by providing art activities that provoke thoughts and emotions.

This event held on March 29th was the first of these continuing projects that will encourage our Veterans to think about things they are thankful for. All of the finished artwork will be a creative reminder of the things our residents are thankful for.



## 2017 Washington Soldiers Home St. Patrick's Day Event

Residents experienced the Luck o' the Irish during the St. Patrick's Day Luncheon. Residents noshed on delicious Irish fare while listening to lively Celtic music and engaging in the social scene. Thank you to Resident Council, D & Gs Snack Bar, volunteers and staff for supporting this festive and cultural event!



## NOW RECRUITING: VetCorps & AmeriCorps

Looking to Serve Veterans on your College Campus?



- ⇒ Veterans, spouses and dependents are eligible for positions
- ⇒ High School diploma required
- ⇒ Position starts 08/26 (Alumni/current students encouraged)
- ⇒ Full time 40-hours per week (with flexibility) total of 1,700 hours of national service at the end of 10 months
- ⇒ Volunteer stipend is \$1,343 a month
- ⇒ \$5,730 education benefit awarded upon completion



For more information: [www.dva.wa.gov/program/vet-corps](http://www.dva.wa.gov/program/vet-corps)

**APPLY NOW**  
April 1 – July 31

<https://my.americorps.gov>  
Search for Vet Corps listing ID 72480

[www.facebook.com/WSDVA](https://www.facebook.com/WSDVA) or [www.twitter.com/WDVA](https://www.twitter.com/WDVA)

## 100+ Veteran Owned Businesses Learn More at Alliance Northwest



The 2017 Alliance Northwest Training Event & Trade Show, held on March 9<sup>th</sup>, was the largest business-to-government connection in the Pacific Northwest. This event featured keynote speakers, high quality workshops, and matchmaking sessions with government agencies and prime contractors. Alliance Northwest was the perfect place for Veteran Owned Businesses to strengthen established relationships, explore other government contracting opportunities and teaming opportunities, and hear the marketplace's latest news and trends from expert workshop speakers.

Veteran Owned Small Businesses had an opportunity to hear from a panel of buyers on how to do business with their agency, upcoming contracting opportunities at the federal and state level, and what's new in certifications, as well as hearing from Governor Jay Inslee and YOUR Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Alfie Alvarado-Ramos.

**If interested in learning more about becoming a certified Veteran Owned Business (VOB), please visit our website at <http://www.dva.wa.gov/program/veteran-owned-business-certification> or email us at [vob@dva.wa.gov](mailto:vob@dva.wa.gov).**

### **Certification is free and requires only basic veteran discharge status and business information to complete.**

- ⇒ **Proof of Honorable Veteran Status** (copy of 1 of the following items\*)- DD214 member 4 copy, Retired VA ID Card, Retirement Certificate, Discharge Certificate - or if currently serving your military ID, badge, recent paystub, or letter on military letterhead. If you need to order a new copy of your DD214 you can do so at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) .
- ⇒ **Proof of 51% ownership** (copy of 1 of the following items\*)- Master Business application, business plan, operating agreement, meeting minutes, shares report, stock certificate breakdown, tax forms with ownership %, or if sole proprietorship your license. If a community property or 2 veteran 50/50 split you are eligible as long as the veteran maintains day to day operational control of the business.
- ⇒ **Proof the business is a Washington State Enterprise** which is defined as an enterprise which is incorporated in the state of Washington as a Washington domestic corporation, or an enterprise whose principal place of business is located within the state of Washington for enterprises which are not incorporated.

**You can send VOB certification documentation several ways .**

- Email documents to [vob@dva.wa.gov](mailto:vob@dva.wa.gov)
- Fax Attn: Communications 360-725-2197
- US Mail WDVA Business Registry  
PO Box 41150  
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

# Maintain a Strong Defense with Vaccines



## #VAX4VETS

**We owe it to veterans to make sure they get the care they deserve and protect them from illnesses, just like they protected us.**

As anyone in the military will tell you, the best way to stay safe in a dangerous world is to maintain a strong defense. Unfortunately, veterans are more likely to have chronic health problems than the general population, and they're less likely to seek help.

We owe it to veterans to make sure they are supported. Ensuring veterans are vaccinated from harmful diseases is one way we can serve them.

We encourage all those who have served to talk to their fellow service members about why vaccines are important and how to get them.

### Be sure you're protected from these diseases:

**Tetanus** is rare today, but can be deadly to those who are not vaccinated. It's contracted when the skin is punctured by, or open wounds make contact with, contaminated objects, and causes health problems like lockjaw, muscle spasms and seizures.

**Diphtheria** causes a thick buildup of mucus in the back of the throat, which makes breathing difficult and can even stop it altogether. Before a vaccine, diphtheria had a nearly 50% mortality rate. Even now, 10% of people who contract the disease die of it.

**Pertussis**, also called whooping cough, is extremely contagious and spreads mainly through the air. Early symptoms are similar to the common cold, but grow more severe and can result in fits of extreme coughing, respiratory distress, and even vomiting.

**Shingles** is a painful condition caused by the chickenpox virus. VA researchers helped develop a vaccine for the disease, which veterans are eligible for through VA insurance and works in just a single dose. The risk of shingles is high, and more than 95% of the population is at risk to get the disease – but only 2% of eligible veterans have received the vaccine through the VA.

*Learn more about these diseases and other available vaccines at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)*

### Did you know?

You can be immunized against all three of these deadly diseases with just one shot. Called Tdap, it's a vaccine that you only need to get once as an adult. It could be as easy as going to your local pharmacy – find your closest provider at [www.vaccines.gov/getting/where](http://www.vaccines.gov/getting/where)

**Get signed up. Get the benefits you've earned.  
Get the vaccines you need.**

The VA is a great resource for veterans. Learn more at their website: [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

# 2017 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Conference

7:45am-5pm, April 10 & 11

[DanielO@dva.wa.gov](mailto:DanielO@dva.wa.gov)

Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel

3201 S 176th St, Seattle, WA 98188

*\*Join us for this two-day conference in Seattle*

*\*Take advantage of numerous breakout sessions and TBI exhibitors*

Keep informed about upcoming Veteran events by checking our Calendar/Public Events Page often  
<http://www.dva.wa.gov/calendar>

Have an event of interest to Veterans you want others to know about?

Send fliers and information to

[communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov)

**WDVA Veteran Voices**  
PO Box 41150  
1102 Quince Street SE  
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*Veterans Voices is published every other month for Washington Veterans and all interested in news affecting veterans and their families.*

View previous editions here:  
<http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/brochures-and-newsletters>

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