

Cadence Call ODVA Newsletter - November 2020

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs sent this bulletin at 11/05/2020 11:36 AM PST

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November 2020

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Veterans Day: A Time to Pause as a Nation

Whether you served on the beaches of Europe or across the 38th parallel, the jungles of Asia, the deserts of the Middle East; whether you served here at home or overseas, in wartime or in peace; whether you served proudly in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard — you are part of an unbroken chain of patriots who have served this country with honor through the life of our nation.

America is known as the land of the free and the home of the brave, but this was never a given. This reputation was earned by the blood and sweat of patriots who, generation after generation, dedicated themselves to building and defending a nation that is stronger, freer, a little closer to the ideals our constitution affords us all.

- [Career Spotlight](#)

Oregon Veteran Initiatives and Programs

New Educational Bridge Grant

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs this year launched the Veterans Educational Bridge Grant Program, a new grant program aimed at helping Oregon veterans complete their educational goals.

The new program (funded by Oregon Lottery Funds made possible by voters' approval of Measure 96) provides financial assistance to veterans who are unable to complete their education due to the unavailability of one or more required courses.

The program offers one-time grants of up to \$5,000 to veterans who meet eligibility requirements, including that they are Oregon residents, are eligible for VA Benefits, enrollment in an Oregon community college, and are unable to complete their education due to unavailability of one or more required courses.

For more information, or to apply, visit the [Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program website](#).

Veteran Services Grants for Veteran Service Providers

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and the Oregon State Bar are reviewing proposals for a new round of Veteran Services Grant funding aimed at expanding and enhancing services available to veterans in Oregon communities. A total of up to \$570,900 will be awarded for these grants.

The Veteran Services Grant Program awards one-time grants to organizations and family members who answered the call and returned to live in the land they defended. Eligible proposals must provide direct services to veterans that help improve outcomes in areas such as health or behavioral health care, housing security, employment opportunities or stability, education and training opportunities, transportation accessibility and availability, or other critical services within a community.

Organizations eligible to apply for this grant must be designated as a veteran organization, or a tribal organization, or a local Oregonians Struggle to find local Veterans Service Offices that will help them through this unprecedented time in our nation's history. In Oregon, veterans and their families have access to a robust network of free and local veteran services in all 36 counties across the state, including the new expansion of the Oregon Veterans' Homes.

Oregon Veterans' Homes

The Oregon Veterans' Homes in The Dalles and Lebanon have continued to provide exceptional care to their honored veteran residents this year in the face of challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

The first priority has been to protect the health of the population living with staff and the greater community, from the spread of coronavirus and the homes have implemented rigorous infection prevention and control measures to help keep everyone safe.

For current information about the status of COVID-19, including restrictions on admissions and visitation at the Homes, visit [www.oregonveterans.org](#)

Legislative Update

Impact of COVID-19 on Veterans' Benefits and Funding

May 27 – [House Interim Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness](#) COVID-19 Response and Budget Impacts

September 21 – [Senate Interim Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness](#)

ODVA Update on Bridge Grant Program and Oregon Veteran Homes

September 25 – [House Interim Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness](#)

Veteran Benefit Updates

This year will be remembered as a year of tremendous initiatives and programs for our citizens. As we roll into November, for the first time in over a century, there will be no large ceremonies in big cities and small towns on Veterans Day and no parades down Main Street to properly express our gratitude and appreciation to the men and women who served our nation to preserve and defend our democracy.

Although how we celebrate our veterans and their families in 2020 must be demonstrated in untraditional ways, our intent is no less meaningful. Veterans Day is a day to honor and thank veterans for their service and sacrifice.

ODVA's Facebook page to honor our nation's veterans who have served their nation and returned home to Oregon.

Virtual Veterans Day Celebration

Invite all Oregonians to join the virtual Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11 at 11:00 a.m. on ODVA's Facebook page.

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To further aid veterans and their families at this time, ODVA has also developed a [COVID-19 Veteran Resource Navigator](#) resource to help veterans and their families find and fund their needs.

Impact of COVID-19 on Veterans' Benefits and Funding

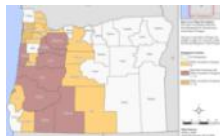
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As part of ODVA's continued work to support traditionally underserved veterans, this fall ODVA will host a special series of live virtual town halls focused on women and LGBTQ veteran issues. While in military service, veterans from all walks of life have risked their lives to oppose the repression of basic human rights around the globe. Many even worked to right wrongs within the military experienced by many Black, brown and indigenous Americans, women, and LGBTQ individuals who simply wanted to serve our



Apply for Disaster Assistance

FEMA registration is ongoing for Oregonians



Check Your VA Benefits

Blind before 12/31



Blue Water Navy

Claims now easier, even for those previously denied

Upcoming Engagements



Nov. 11: Virtual Statewide Veterans Day Celebration

Measure 96 Lottery Funds, ODVA has new grant opportunities to improve outcomes and services for student veterans and community-based veterans. The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs will celebrate its 100th statewide Veterans Day Celebration virtually this year. On behalf of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, we are pleased to announce our service starting and launching advocacy on behalf of Oregon veterans and their families.

Featuring the national anthem sung by Miss Oregon USA Katerina Villegas, remarks by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, Sen. Ron Merkley and other dignitaries, messages from Oregon veterans and archival footage from the end of World War II — 75 years ago.

ODVA Director Kelly Fitzpatrick

Nov. 12: AARP Tele-Town Hall

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with AARP for a virtual town hall from 2 to 3 p.m. Nov. 12. ODVA representatives will be on hand to discuss and answer questions about benefits and programs available to veterans. To register for the event or for more information, contact [Samuel Snyder](mailto:Samuel.Snyder@odva.org) at 503-825-8123 or email csnyder@aarp.org.



Kelly Fitzpatrick is the director of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and Governor Kate Brown's liaison on veterans' issues. She is a retired Army officer. Her military awards



Nov. 20: ODVA Women Veterans Tele-Town Hall

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs Director Kelly Fitzpatrick will host a live virtual town hall focusing on women veterans in Oregon from noon to 1 p.m. on Nov. 20. Join the conversation to learn more about women veteran services and overcoming barriers to your earned benefits. [Register to attend.](#)

Dec 4: ODVA LGBTQ Veterans Tele-Town Hall

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs Director Kelly Fitzpatrick will host a live virtual town hall focusing on LGBTQ veterans in Oregon from noon to 1 p.m. on December 4. Join the conversation to learn more about LGBTQ veteran services and overcoming barriers to your earned benefits. [Register to attend.](#)

See a complete list of Veterans Day virtual events at oregondva.com

Veteran Program Highlight

ODVA Hosts First Virtual Training Conference

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs' training team plays an important role with statewide impacts: They are responsible for training and accrediting Oregon's network of certified veteran service officers — at least one in every county — who provide direct services to veterans and their families.

Like so many, the coronavirus pandemic has provided numerous challenges to the training team's important work, not the least of which was transitioning the Annual Veteran Services Officer Training Conference — a mandatory four-and-a-half-day training event for the state's 100 certified VSOs — to a virtual event.

"A major challenge was redesigning our training plan to fit a shorter day," said ODVA Trainer Joe Bell. "We typically had four and a half days of training. But now we had to deliver a robust training schedule *and* avoid PowerPoint fatigue."

The three-person team of Bell, James Connolly, and Kendele Miyasaki also had to reinvent the testing and accreditation piece. They decided to put it on a PowerPoint to give the oral and visual test and manually mark in the answers.

"It is a one-on-one process with no paper and us hoping the connection holds up on each end," said Bell.

The preliminary evaluation of the conference had some surprising results. It was incredibly cost-effective, coming in at roughly 10% of the on-location conference budget.

The downside was a loss of networking opportunities.

"It's a very tight knit community and that's one of the things that we don't want to lose," said Bell.

The training team anticipates more of these types of events in the future, even after employees are back in the workplace.

To find the closest trained and certified veteran service officer in your area — and receive a completely free consultation on what benefits you and your family may qualify for — visit www.oregon.gov/odva/services/pages/county-services.aspx.

Career Spotlight



- [Program Analyst 3: Women Veterans Coordinator](#) (closes November 18)

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