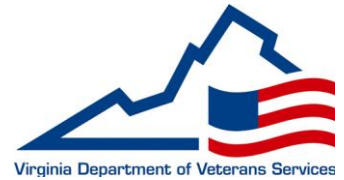


The Virginia Department of Veterans Services



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The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Benefits Conference Positions Veteran Service Representatives to Best Serve Virginia Veterans

DVS is pleased to announce the completion of ongoing vital training by Veteran Service Representatives from all 23 statewide benefit office team members at the 2015 Benefits Training Conference. “The conference was designed to train DVS service representatives to best serve our veteran population and to assist them in applying for Federal and State benefits they have earned through their service and sacrifice. Our emphasis this year was on ways to show our veterans how much we respect them and their service to the nation and Commonwealth. We focused on quality, community outreach, new electronic filing procedures, and providing the best customer service available” noted Thomas Herthel, the Director of Benefits for DVS.

DVS was honored to host Governor McAuliffe who served as Key Note Speaker. Governor McAuliffe kicked off the conference by extending thanks to DVS employees and stated “Last year alone, you submitted over 23,000 claims, collected over \$82.5 million in retroactive payments and brought \$238 million in new Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation and pension claims for Virginia’s veterans. In all, your hard work resulted in Virginia’s veterans receiving over \$2.2 BILLION in VA payments.”

In addition to Governor McAuliffe, Deputy Secretary Jamie Areizaga-Soto (Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs), Brigadier General (Ret) Belinda Pinkney, members of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and many others joined the event to share their thoughts on quality, outreach, and excellence in service.

“I can’t be more proud of the DVS Benefits Team and the dedication they provide to our veterans each and every day. We assisted over 135,000 veterans last year but want to work even harder to educate our veteran population of almost 800,000 and to assist them to receive the benefits they have earned” offered the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, John Newby.

Awards were presented to the following staff for their demonstrated ongoing commitment to excellence; Veteran Service Representative of the Year: Helen Pickard (Quantico Benefits Office); Veteran Service Administrator of the Year: Debra Sedr (Staunton Benefits Office); Benefits Office of the Year (Eastern Region): Hampton Benefits Office; Benefits Office of the Year (Western Region): Bristol Benefits

Serving those who served.

Office; and Outreach Office of the Year (tie): Accomac Benefits Office and Charlottesville Benefits Office. To view images of the conference follow us on [Flickr](#).

About Virginia's Department of Veterans Services (DVS):

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services operates 23 benefit services offices where representatives assist veterans and their family members in filing claims for federal veterans benefits. The agency operates three cemeteries for veterans: the [Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia](#), the [Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk](#) and the [Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin](#). DVS operates two long-term care facilities offering nursing and domiciliary care for veterans; [the Virginia Veterans Care Center \(VVCC\)](#) a facility which houses 240 beds in Roanoke and the 160-bed [Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center](#) in Richmond.

The agency also certifies that post-secondary educational institutions meet G.I. Bill funding and eligibility requirements, enabling veterans and family members to pursue educational opportunities. DVS also launched the [Virginia Values Veterans \(V3\) Program](#) in 2012. This program's mission is to educate and train employers throughout the Commonwealth on the Value of Virginia's Veterans, and to help employers connect with these personnel assets to maximize the productivity of their workforce.

DVS also operates the [Virginia Wounded Warrior Program \(VWWP\)](#). The VWWP provides: comprehensive assessment of individual and family needs; direct linkages to needed services including behavioral healthcare, veteran's benefits, housing, employment and other public and private assistance programs. Direct support is provided by veteran peer specialists, resource specialists, family support specialists and clinicians. VWWP also provides peer and family support groups; resilience-focused training and events for veteran couples and families; and specialized outreach and assistance to particularly vulnerable veterans including homeless (or at risk) and incarcerated veterans preparing for reentry from local jails and state prisons.

To learn more visit www.dvs.virginia.gov or download our free App [here](#) for Apple users and [here](#) for Android users.

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