



THE IDVA UPDATE

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

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Hoosier Women Veteran's Conference

Women veterans are invited to attend the Hoosier Women Veterans' Conference on Saturday, June 21 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds' Farm Bureau Building.

Topics of discussion at the conference will include information on federal and state benefits, coping with stress and crisis intervention, military

sexual trauma, employment resources, suicide prevention and homeless resources.

The event will begin at 9 a.m. and end at approximately 4 p.m.

For additional information, contact Najuma Austin at naustin@dva.in.gov. Register for the event online at www.in.gov/dva.

County Service Officer training this month

IDVA will host a five-day training program for Indiana county veteran service officers beginning on March 31 at the Marriot East near I-70 and I-465 in Indianapolis.

The program is sponsored by the National Association of County Service Officers, or NACVSO.

With the passing and signing of Indiana House Bill 1387 in 2013, county service officers are now required to obtain accreditation through the federal VA.

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Employers pair up with IDVA, OHHV to hire veterans

The state of Indiana and the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs use a variety of options to connect veterans with jobs and employers.

The eighth annual Operation Hire a Hoosier job fair will be held on April 16 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. The Operation Hire a Hoosier Vet's website said that the career fair "is an annual event produced by a

planning committee consisting of federal, state, and local organizations committed to assisting veterans, service members, and their spouses secure quality employment."

This year's career fair will be co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Indiana National Guard, the Employment Support of Guard and Reserves (ESGR), the

Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Operation Job Ready Vets, IndySHRM, Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University and the IDVA.

Over 700 job-seeking veterans participated in last year's job fair as well as over 200 companies, according to OHHV's website. Veterans interested in participating

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Linda Sharp, U.S. Army veteran and U.S. Army Reserves captain, named newest director of the Indiana Veterans' Home

Indiana Veterans' Home names Linda Sharp as new Director

The Indiana Veterans' Home in West Lafayette named Linda Sharp as the new superintendent of the Indiana Veterans' Home in late December of 2013.

Sharp was appointed to the position after working at the Veterans' Home for three years, most recently as the director of nursing.

Sharp is a veteran herself. She enlisted into the U.S. Army after high school and earned her nursing degree from Indiana University. Her

Army career includes two years as commander of the 801st Combat Support Hospital, where she was responsible for the leadership of more than 250 soldiers.

Sharp currently serves in the army reserves as a part of the 1/330th Infantry Battalion in Fort Wayne.

Sharp grew up in Logansport, Ind. She enlisted in the Army after graduation from high school and earned her nursing degree from

Indiana University.

"As a healthcare administrator, a nurse, and a veteran herself, Linda provides the unique blend of leadership and understanding that we want at the helm of the Indiana Veterans' Home," Jim Brown, director of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs said in a press release. "The residents here know her well, which will help create a smooth transition for everyone."



Photo courtesy of Valle Vista website

Golf Open is a "Salute to Veterans"

IDVA and USO Indiana have partnered to host the Indiana Salute to Veterans Golf Open at Valle Vista Golf and Conference Center in Greenwood, Ind. on Friday, May 30. Registration begins at 7 a.m. and tee time is 8 a.m.

The entry fee for the event is \$60 or

\$240 per team. The entry fee includes all green fees, a golf cart and all-you-can eat drinks and buffet after the outing. Prizes will be awarded to the top three placing teams, as well as for longest drive, closest to pin and longest put.

Those interested in participating

may RSVP to Matt Vincent at mavincent@dva.in.gov or Ray Baker at dva.in.gov. Entry form and fees must be in by Friday, May 16.

IDVA makes changes to reach veterans in-office and online

The Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs created a new center for veteran assistance within their office in the state government building downtown.

The Veterans Service Center is made of multiple offices and cubicles where veterans can sit down with representatives and get assistance with job searches, resume building and applying for jobs.

The center specializes in combating unemployment and underemployment, education assistance and helping veterans receive benefits through the G.I. Bill. Representatives are also trained to direct veterans to hospitals or counselors for physical or mental ailments as a result of war.

“The creation of the center was free,” IDVA Director Jim Brown said. “All it took was physical rearrangement of the office and our new employees are being paid through

the National Guard and federal government.”

Deanna Pugh is the director of the center and is funded through the Army National Guard. Pugh said she sees many veterans who have trouble deciding what to do upon returning home from war.

“Many of these veterans coming back now are married and may have children,” Pugh said. “So the decision between pursuing school or a job is not an easy one.”

Assistance with care and benefits is also a priority of the IDVA and the service center.

“We can be an honest broker,” Brown said. “We can hook them up. While we’re not a hospital or a school ourselves, we can get veterans where they need to be and get them on track to get the assistance and funding that they’ve earned.”

The IDVA has also revamped their website to be more user-friendly and accessible.

One feature to the new site is the

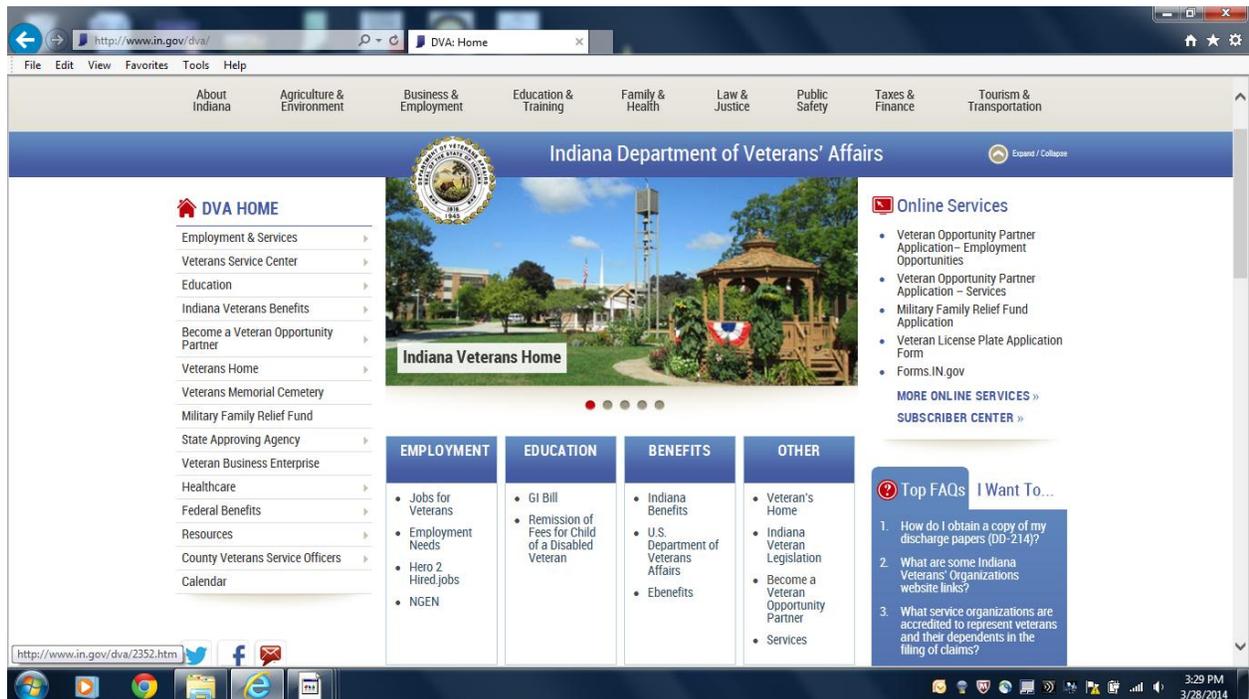
addition of the veterans’ service center, where veterans can find resources for providing care and benefits.

“The service center is designed to reach people through the website with a main focus on education and jobs,” Brown said. “Health and care information is also listed.”

A copy and description of the American Care Act as well as free VA care information is listed on the service center website. Veterans can also call a toll-free number for further assistance and also reference a list of health-based questions and answers.

Veteran Opportunity Partners are also listed on the veterans’ service center.

“We came together to try to give veterans a one-stop shop,” Brown said, “with the hope that accessibility to jobs, education and care will help reduce turbulence and get veterans the assistance that they deserve.”



A screenshot from the IDVA's newly updated website

Employers: many partner with IDVA to hire veterans | from page one

may find more information on the OHHV website.

Additionally, the IDVA recognizes many companies who have a history of hiring veterans, known as Veteran Opportunity Providers. The IDVA website currently has over 80 links that connect users to the human resources department of various companies who will know they are being contacted by a veteran through usage of the site.

"These companies know what skills these veterans have and know what they qualify for," IDVA Director Jim Brown said.

Brown compared the relationship between employers, veterans and the IDVA as three legs of a stool.

"The employers have jobs and the veterans are in search of jobs," Brown said. "We serve as the connected that matches employers with the veterans whose skills meet what the employer wants."

Employers can apply to become an official Veteran Opportunity Partner by filling out an application on the IDVA website.

Brown said he hopes to increase the number of VOPs to 300.

Veterans can also seek job placement assistance within

the IDVA.

Dee Pugh is the Director of the Veterans Service Center at the IDVA and works primarily to help veterans get hired or further their education. Pugh said the department has developed a good relationship with major employers in the state and can usually find a good match for veterans and employers based on job history and skills.

Pugh and her coworkers look at a large amount of data through their jobs to set up veterans with their best employer match. The IDVA also follows cases after the initial hiring.

"We always follow up after interviews and after a few weeks and months in the job," Pugh said. "We always want to make sure that both parties are doing what is expected—that the veteran and employer are both doing their job."

Pugh also helps put on Employment Engagement Events, which have replaced traditional job fairs. This is where Veteran friendly companies that are ready to hire are invited to the local armories along with other veteran services. We believe veterans are more likely to feel more confident and

"We serve as the connector that matches employers with the veterans whose skills meet what the employer wants."

-IDVA Director Jim Brown

comfortable.

"We've shifted from macro to micro," said Deanna Pugh, the Director of the Veterans Service Center. "We're going to communities across the state, working with employers who want to hire veterans, and introducing them to unemployed and underemployed veterans in their communities."

Pugh said that although not every veteran finds a job, and not every job is filled with a veteran, the small-scale approach has made for some good matches.

"I think the internet, where veterans tend to go job hunting, makes it difficult for them to find good prospects. They understand the concept of a target-rich environment and that's what we want to give them," said Pugh.

The Director's Corner

*A message from Indiana Department of Veterans
Affairs Director Jim Brown*



IDVA Director Jim Brown

Dear Hoosier veterans and families,

Hello, everyone. Wow! What an exciting first year it has been for me at the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs.

There are about a half a million veterans in the state of Indiana. My job is to help them find the benefits and care they've earned. This is a very patriotic state that has always answered the nation's call to arms. Even at the time of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln got more regiments for the union from Indiana than any other state, and this trend held true through both world wars as well.

Combating unemployment and underemployment have been of priority for me since taking office in February 2013. To battle this issue, the IDVA has developed the Veterans Service Center, where veterans can talk to IDVA employees to receive help with their job application process, resumes and how to market themselves as a qualified job candidate.

Additionally, veteran care reception is an issue in Indiana that we have taken a great interest in solving. Our service center also deals with helping veterans file claims and understand what benefits they qualify for.

Lastly, I would like to state the obvious, that veterans are not victims; they are returning warriors. We are here to help provide for these warriors and help them receive the benefits and assistance that they so bravely earned.

Sincerely,
Jim



Tentative Training Program Schedule

Monday, March 31

9:00 Welcome – Introductions Review Handouts
 9:45 Disability Compensation
 12:00 Lunch
 1:00 Disability Compensation
 2:30 Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
 3:45 Informal Claims

Tuesday, April 1

8:30 Disability Pension
 9:45 Death Pension
 10:15 Fully Developed Claims
 11:30 Understanding the Rating Process
 12:30 Lunch
 1:30 Reference Materials
 2:45 Medical Eligibility & Other VA Benefits
 4:00 Burial Benefits

Wednesday, April 2

8:30 Notice of Disagreement
 9:00 Appeal Process
 10:15 VA Home Loans
 11:00 Special Benefits
 12:00 Lunch
 1:00 Debt Management
 1:45 Obtaining Private Evidence
 2:45 Ethics
 3:45 “Homecoming”

Thursday, April 3

Host state programs

Friday, April 4

8:30 Test Preparation
 8:45 Accreditation Test
 11:45 NACVSO Accreditation
 Graduation

Training: necessary for improvement | from page one

Following the training session, county service officers can apply for accreditation.

“The goal of this training is to make sure that service officers are equipped to do many great things,” IDVA Director Jim Brown said. “Most importantly this will help them learn how to do a fully-developed claim. County service officers will be able to help relieve veterans of the stuff that’s troubling them.”

Brown and Deputy Director Russ Englin will be available to a question and answer session on Thursday, April 3 at the training event.

“We look forward to having the opportunity to update everyone on ‘the way ahead,’” Brown said.

IDVA plans to hold later sessions and training sessions to continue county service officer education that, if attended, will keep county service officers reaccredited.

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of Veterans Affairs

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*Since its establishment in
1945, the Indiana
Department of Veterans
Affairs (IDVA) has remained
focused on aiding and
assisting Hoosier veterans,
and qualified family members
or survivors, who are eligible
for benefits or advantages
provided by Indiana and the
U.S. government.*

Visit us on the web:
www.in.gov/dva

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