# **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

OPERATION WELCOME HOME POST OFFICE BOX 942895 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 94295-0001

Telephone: (916) 651-5038

December 13, 2010

Suprevisor Jim De Martini Stanislaus County 1010 10th Street, Suite 6700 Modesto, CA 95354

Dear Suprevisor De Martini:

If you visited our *Operation Welcome Home* booth at the CSAC annual meeting in Riverside and offered your support, thank you. If you missed that opportunity, allow me to introduce a program that directly benefits your county while helping returning California veterans successfully make the transition from the battle front to the home front.

There are 2.1 million veterans currently living in California. An additional 30,000 men and women separate from military service and return to California each year. *Operation Welcome Home* reaches out to returning veterans, assesses their needs, and provides the one-on-one assistance needed to get them connected with the employment, education, housing, and health benefits and services they have earned through their military service.

Although County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) provide invaluable service, many veterans remain unaware of their existence. Helping veterans tap into the local services available to them is just one of the many ways Operation Welcome Home helps veterans and their families.

Operation Welcome Home brings significant revenue into your county while helping veterans become happy, healthy, productive members of their communities. I have enclosed additional Operation Welcome Home information and encourage you to review it.

For more information about the program or to offer your support, please contact Dan Nelan, *Operation Welcome Home* Deputy Secretary, at 916-651-5038 or daniel.nelan@cdva.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Ballou

Operation Welcome Home

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# www.veterans.ca.gov

# Operation Welcome Home

There are 1.9 million veterans currently living in California. Approximately 30,000 more men and women separate from military service and return to California each year.

Operation Welcome Home is a program of the California Department of Veterans Affairs. The program reaches out to returning veterans, assesses their needs, and gets them connected with benefits and services they have earned. The goal of the program is to help veterans successfully transition from the battle front to the home front.

Operation Welcome Home helps provide veterans straightforward and easy access to:

- employment and job training assistance;
- unemployment benefits;
- education opportunities;
- housing assistance;
- · health care:
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits;
- support for families;

#### Successful Transition

Operation Welcome Home is critical to ability of many returning veterans to successfully move forward in life. Without help, many drift aimlessly or struggle with unemployment, homelessness, marital problems, depression, drug and alcohol issues, combat-related injuries, PTSD, and other debilitating health problems. Tragically, a rising number of veterans who do not get the services they need timely commit suicide.

Recognizing the challenges many returning veterans face, Operation Welcome Home shifts responsibility for veterans benefits from the veterans to the service providers. Operation Welcome Home reaches out to returning veterans, assesses their unique needs, educates them about the benefit and service options available to them, and then helps them navigate the often complicated and frustrating application processes to help ensure success.



#### A Collaborative Effort

Operation Welcome Home consolidates the efforts of federal, state, county, and community-based organizations. This unique network of Regional Outreach Teams throughout the state allows service providers, volunteers, and government entities to effectively and efficiently work together in meeting the individual needs of every veteran. Regional Outreach Teams include:

The California Department of Veterans Affairs; California Military Department; California Labor and Workforce Development Agency; California Employment Development Department; California Volunteers; California Department of Mental Health; California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs; County Veteran Service Officers; Veterans Service Organizations; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and a network of mental health professionals and community organizations.

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# Creating the CalVet Corps

To support this outreach effort, the California Labor Workforce and Development Agency and the Employment Development Department used 20 million dollars identified by Governor Schwarzenegger to hire over 300 veterans statewide. Trained as referral specialists, these CalVet Corps members contact returning veterans individually at least four times in the first six months of separation from active duty to ensure they are applying for and getting the benefits and services they need to successfully move forward in civilian life.

## Recruiting Volunteers

California Volunteers, a Cabinet agency, is utilizing a \$560,000 AmeriCorps grant to recruit 80 part-time AmeriCorps members. These AmeriCorps members work with County Veteran Service Officers in assisting veterans. California Volunteers is also coordinating a statewide volunteer recruiting effort and is matching those volunteers with organizations serving veterans for Operation Welcome Home.

#### **Operation Welcome Home Achievements**

As of December 6, 2010, Operation Welcome Home has:

- Collected 37,725 reintegration forms with contact information on each returning veteran.
- Made more than 122,114 referrals\* to services and benefits including:
  - o 25,714 to employment services
  - 24,901 to one stop services and training
  - 12,199 to unemployment insurance benefits
  - o 6,618 to VA compensation/disability claim
  - 16,921 to health care services
  - o 4,259 to Traumatic Brain Injury/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling and services
  - o 14,968 to education benefits
  - o 6,691 to housing services
  - o 7,544 to financial services and
  - o 2,749 to legal services and Source: 6

\*A veteran may have been given multiple referrals Source: CDVA – CalVet Corps System Database

# **Moving Forward**

Success of Operation Welcome Home will result in decreasing veteran homelessness numbers; decreasing veteran unemployment rates; increasing participation in federal VA programs, federal unemployment benefits and federal VA's compensation and pension programs; increasing the number of veterans in California colleges and universities; and increasing early detection of mental illness such as PTSD which can impact suicide rates, domestic violence, and homelessness.

Recent meetings with White House, members of Congress, Departments and Agencies about Operation Welcome Home reveal building momentum as we continue to seek support for the program. Ultimately, Operation Welcome Home could become the national model for veteran outreach.

#### **Honoring Those Who Served**

Governor Schwarzenegger has committed and targeted an unprecedented amount of resources and services to California's 1.9 million veterans and specifically the recently returning veterans. In addition to Operation Welcome Home, the Governor has:

- Expanded civil service preference points for veterans looking for jobs in state service;
- Increased higher education coordination with the "Troops to College" initiative;
- · Targeted millions of dollars in grants to help newly discharged veterans find jobs;
- Connected thousands of veterans to employers through the "Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet" job fairs:
- Kept the construction of five new state veteran homes on track; and
- Expanded home ownership opportunities through the CalVet Home Loan Program to all veterans.

#### Contact

Dan Nelan, Deputy Secretary Operation Welcome Home 916-651-5038 W - 916-208-3681 C daniel.nelan@cdva.ca.gov

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# **Benefits Your County**

- Over \$200 million in new federal dollars come into counties from County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) activity every year.
- Cost avoidance in the health care and MediCal areas by migrating veterans from county and state roles into the Federal VA system.
- VA Healthcare will pay private providers in the county through the fee-basis claim system by having the CSVO file claims for fee-basis activities.
- Educational benefits are facilitated by the CVSO through the GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and the College Fee Waiver for veterans and their dependents, saving the veterans many millions of dollars a year.
- CVSOs help veterans obtain employment by obtaining disabled veteran status for their clientele that givens them preference in hiring with most agencies.
- CVSOs greet the veteran who is incarcerated and released providing medical and financial care for these veterans who have legal problems through VA medical and veteran's pension.
- CVSOs support veteran courts.
- CVSOs file pension with aid and attendance claims taking the load off of the elderly housing and care facilities by providing free medical and prescription service to elderly veterans along with funding through the pension system.
- CVSOs aid veterans entrance into CDVA Veteran Homes thus providing shelter to elderly and infirm veterans at no expense to the county.
- CVSOs run and support Stand Downs for homeless veterans. This helps lower the counties homeless financial commitment.
- CVSOs provide burial services for all veterans and helps most County Public Guardians by relieving them of the task of indigent burial.
- Most CVSOs have developed a transportation system that takes veterans to and from their medical appointments at no cost to the county.
- CVSOs do fundraising and provide funds for indigent and needy veterans thus keeping them off county rolls.

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The California Department of Veterans Affairs *Operation Welcome Home* helps California veterans connect with the employment, education, housing, and health benefits and services they have earned.

# How You Can Help

# Take care of your own

Make sure your HR department is aware of *Operation Welcome Home* and offers the program as a resource to your veteran employees and their families.

# • Educate others

Include an *Operation Welcome Home* article in your newsletter, blog, Intranet, or Web site.

## Hang it high

Hang Operation Welcome Home posters in your offices.

#### Distribute brochures

Make Operation Welcome Home brochures available in your offices.

## Link up

Post an Operation Welcome Home link on your Web site.

### Share the App

Get the free *Operation Welcome Home* Smartphone App and share it with others.

#### Tweet ...

Send the *Operation Welcome Home* link to your Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and other social network followers and friends.

### Broker community partnerships

Introduce us to your contacts within other organizations that might be willing to support *Operation Welcome Home*.

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# Hook us up

Help us connect with high profile celebrities who might be willing to help us promote *Operation Welcome Home*.

# Brag

Talk to the media about how your organization is supporting Operation Welcome Home.

# Share job information

Contact *Operation Welcome Home* when you have a job opening within your organization. Veterans make great employees!

#### Make a donation

Donate money to VetFund, a nonprofit foundation that helps *Operation Welcome Home* serve veterans.

#### Volunteer

Volunteer your time or resources to help any of the following nonprofit veteran service organizations:

- Yellow Ribbon America
- American Gold Star Mothers
- o AmeriCorp
- USATogether
- o Give an Hour
- Gold Star Wives of America

#### Contact Us

Dan Nelan, Deputy Secretary Operation Welcome Home 1227 O Street Sacramento, CA 95814 916-651-5038 daniel.nelan!@cdva.ca.gov

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**Operation Welcome Home** is a program of the California Department of Veterans Affairs that contacts returning California veterans and connects them with the employment, education, housing, and health benefits they have earned through their military service.

I would like to request the following:				
[	]	Operation Welcome Home tri-fold brochures  [ ] Number requested		
[	]	Operation Welcome Home posters (11"x15")  [ ] Number requested		
[	]	Operation Welcome Home posters (24"x36")  [ ] Number requested		
[	]	2011 Edition of California Veteran Resource Book (available in January) [ ] Number requested (not to exceed 5)		
[	]	Operation Welcome Home graphic [ ] For print use [ ] For Web use		
[	]	Operation Welcome Home article for my newsletter		
[	]	An Operation Welcome Home speaker for my event		
		When/where is your event?		
		Who is your audience?		
		How many attendees to you anticipate?		
Na	me:			
Org	gani	zation:		
Ma	ilin	g Address:		
Pho	one	Number:		
E-n	nail	address:		

Please FAX completed form to Carolyn Ballou at 916-653-2456.



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# **BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1510 SACRAMENTO, CA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS SERVICES DIVISION PO BOX 942895 SACRAMENTO, CA 94299-9956 NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES



California's Operation Welcome Home 1227 O Street, Room 105 Sacramento, CA 95814

First Class Mail Presorted U.S. Postage PAID Sacramento, CA Permit No. 1421



# California's Operation Welcome Home

California's Operation Welcome Home is an Initiative to connect veterans and their families to their benefits and services using a statewide collaborative approach. This statewide collaborative includes CalVet Corps, local, state and Federal governmental, non-profit entities, faith community based organizations, and volunteer members, all assisting veterans to reintegrate back into their civilian lifestyles.

# Veterans Getting Connected to Their Benefits

Complete the Veterans Reintegration Form and you will receive instant information via email. Based on your selection you will be contacted by a CalVet Corps member, or appropriate service provider, that will assist you with your specific needs. You will also automatically receive a subscription to the Veterans Services newsletter that will keep you informed of new legislation and opportunities as they relate to the veterans community.

# **Employment Benefits**

Veterans who meet minimum qualifications are entitled to take promotional examinations for State of California positions and veterans are entitled to Veteran Preference Points for entry level positions in California.

Some veterans may be entitled to unemployment benefits. Veterans should apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits immediately after separation from the military.

Visit your local One-Stop center for veteran employment programs and training opportunities at www.veterans.ca.gov.

# **Education Benefits**

Education and training may play a vital role in the success of the veteran's career. Veterans may be entitled to one or more of the following educational benefits provided in California:

- -Post 9/11 GI Bill- Ch 33
- -Montgomery GI Bill- Ch 30
- -Vocational Rehabilitation & Education- Ch 31
- -Reserve Educational Assistance- Ch 1607
- -CNGEAP CA National Guard Educational Assistance

# Healthcare

Veterans may be entitled to free or low cost healthcare through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). All newly discharged veterans are encouraged to enroll for healthcare through the USDVA.

# **Housing Benefits**

The CalVet Home Loan Program may be able to meet veteran's housing needs with our competitive market interest rates with low or no down payment that increase your purchasing power and keep your payments low.

# Compensation and Pension Claims

Veterans may be entitled to monthly compensation or pension if they have a significant disability.

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STATE OF CALIF	STATE OF CALIFORNIA VETERANS REINTEGRATION FORM	VATION FORM	WWW.CAI	WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV/GETCONNECTED.ASPX
Welcomehome	First Name		MI Last Name	
CAI	Mailing Address after Separation	The state of the s	City	
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VITTRANK AFFAIRE				
	SSN (LAST 4) Telephone		Branch of Service Date	Date of Discharge (MM/DD/YYY)
j	I would like benefit information about:  State Benefits TBI / PTSD	Healthcare	CalVet Home Loans     Women Veterans Roser	OEF / OIF Veterans
	Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise     Veterans License Plate Program     Education / Training	Transportation Financial Assistance Legal Assistance	Compensation & Pension Benefits College Foe Waiver for Dependents DD 214	Agent Orange  Veterans Service Organizations  Volunteering
I request and authorize re	elease of the above information to the Californ	ia Department of Vererans Affairs and	I request and authorize release of the above information to the California Department of Veterans Affairs and the Employment Development Department I certify that this request has been made feeely	rrify rhat this request has been made freely