MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS
(MDVA)

COMMUNITY
PARTNER DIGITAL
COMMUNICATIONS
TOOLKIT

SEPTEMBER | 2022
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MDVA MISSION

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs was created by the State Legislature in 1999 as an executive agency with the mission of assisting veterans, active duty service members, their families and dependents, in securing benefits earned through military service. The Department's origin follows the history of the Maryland Veterans Commission back to 1924, when the Soldiers’ Relief Fund Commission was formed to administer a State relief fund for disabled veterans of World War I.
PURPOSE

Thank you for helping communicate about the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. Community partners who support and advocate for our programs as well as for VA benefits helps improve awareness of resources within our veteran and military connected community.

The purpose of this toolkit is to help you and your organization communicate to constituents the many resources, programs, and benefits available to veterans and their families.
INSTRUCTIONS

Read
Read the toolkit contents

Copy
Copy slides, social media posts, and graphics to use at events, on social media and websites

Share
Share the talking points and MDVA 101 Video with constituents in your community

Consistency
Please refrain from editing toolkit content or posts

Ask
Contact MDVA if you have questions about the toolkit or how to share content
KEY PARTNERS

Federal, state and local governments
Veteran commissions, collaboratives, councils, and networks, as well as federal, state, and local government agencies

Private sector and nonprofits
Community based nonprofit and faith based organizations, private sector businesses and employers, employee veteran affinity groups

Federal, state, and local officials
Elected officials at the federal, state, and local level, especially the Maryland General Assembly
## VETERAN POPULATION 2021

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Total Population*</th>
<th>Female Population*</th>
<th>Homeless Population**</th>
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<td>Anne Arundel County</td>
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<td>1,008</td>
<td>Southern Maryland***</td>
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<td>Charles County</td>
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<td>Somerset County</td>
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For more data on veterans in the United States and in Maryland please see:

US Department of Veterans Affairs
National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
[www.va.gov/vetdata/](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/)

*VetPop, 9/30/21 projected population
**2021 HUD Point in Time Count

Since 2016 the homeless veteran count has dropped from 520 to 462.
WHO IS THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (MDVA)

Communicating Who We Are To Your Community

Use these talking points to share information about our Department with your community, stakeholders, and constituents

- MDVA is a State Government Agency
- MDVA is responsible for five core programs: Service and Benefits, Cemeteries and Memorials, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, Outreach and Advocacy, and the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund
- MDVA partners with the US Department of Veterans Affairs but does not manage the VA Healthcare, Cemetery, or Benefits Administration
- MDVA distributes a lengthy bi-weekly electronic newsletter. All veterans, dependents, and interested community members are encouraged to sign up by visiting our website veterans.maryland.gov
- The Outreach and Advocacy Program also supervises the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program, Veteran Services Specialist Program, and the Women Veterans/Inclusion Program
- The Service and Benefits Program also serves as a repository for DD214s for veterans discharged after October 15, 1979 and who returned to Maryland at the time of separation or retirement
- Charlotte Hall Veterans Home is an assisted living and skilled nursing home for all veterans, male and female, and for eligible spouses
- Maryland is home to five state veteran cemeteries, Cheltenham, Crownsville, Eastern Shore, Garrison Forest, and Rocky Gap
- MDVA operates four veteran memorials, the WWII, Korean War, Vietnam Veterans, and Gold Star Families Monument. The fifth memorial, the War Memorial Building, is shared with Baltimore City
- The Maryland Veterans Trust Fund provides limited financial assistance to veterans. It is not an emergency fund, an application is required, and supporting documentation must be provided with the application

more information on MDVA can be found at: veterans.maryland.gov
TELL YOUR COMMUNITY HOW TO CONNECT WITH MDVA ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Join our newsletter distribution
Follow us on social media: like, share, comment, and retweet!
Tag us in your social media posts

**Website**
[veterans.maryland.gov](http://veterans.maryland.gov)

**Twitter**
[@MdVeterans](https://twitter.com/MdVeterans)

**Facebook**
[@MDVeterans](https://facebook.com/MDVeterans)

**Instagram**
[@mdveteransinfo](https://instagram.com/mdveteransinfo)

**YouTube**
[@MDVeterans](https://youtube.com/MDVeterans)

PLEASE SHARE:
"Visit the home page of the MDVA website to sign up for their bi-weekly newsletter."

"The MDVA electronic newsletter is distributed bi-weekly on Friday. Subscriber email addresses are not shared. The newsletter contains MDVA news, federal and state partner news and community partner updates. The newsletter is an excellent way to stay informed on veteran related issues."
SAMPLE LETTER OR EMAIL TO YOUR NETWORK OR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

See below for a draft letter or email to partner organizations. The sample letter is available for downloading within the Dropbox downloadable materials folder. The link to Dropbox can be found on the toolkit web page. Feel free to modify only as needed to fit the tone of your organization.

Greetings (insert name or organization here),

I hope this email finds you well. We would like to inform you of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA). As a state government agency, MDVA has a service mission to assist veterans, active duty service members, their families and dependents, in securing benefits earned through military service. MDVA manages five core programs: Service and Benefits, Cemeteries and Memorials, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, Outreach and Advocacy, and the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund. In addition the department has a dedicated women veterans/inclusion program manager and is represented on a number of statewide commissions, councils and workgroups.

The MDVA Service and Benefits Program represents veterans, dependents, and survivors throughout the VA benefits application process. Representation is offered at no cost and all benefits specialists are accredited by the VA.

Ways to help MDVA promote their programs:

Link to the MDVA website on your organization’s website as a resource: veterans.maryland.gov

Encourage veterans and family members to sign up for the MDVA bi-weekly electronic newsletter. Registration is available from the homepage of the MDVA website.

Follow MDVA on social media:
Facebook, @MDVeterans
Twitter, @MdVeterans
Instagram, @mdveteransinfo

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

(your name here)
DOWNLOADABLE MATERIALS

A Dropbox link to materials is located on the community partner toolkit webpage. You do not need a Dropbox account to view, download, or print materials. With the exception of the sample letter and email, please keep the material elements intact. Partners are asked to request permission in advance of sharing the MDVA logo. Check back often for new downloadable materials. Contact Dana Burl, MDVA Outreach Program Director with questions, 410-260-3842 or dana.burl@maryland.gov

 Dropbox folder contents:
- Social media graphics
- MDVA information postcards
- Memorial Day/Veterans Day posters
- Presentation slides
- Pocket cards
- Sample partner organization letter
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY &
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

A growing number of community partner organizations have inquired about the Maryland legislative process. To learn more and to share information on the General Assembly see the resources below.

Maryland General Assembly

Maryland Legislative Process
In Maryland, citizens must approach their legislators to introduce a bill. If legislation is sponsored, the bill is drafted by the Department of Legislative Services, reviewed by the legislator, and prepared for introduction. (source: dls.maryland.gov)

Find Your Representative
Use this interactive map to find your legislative and/or congressional representatives

Search Legislation
by session, number, sponsor, subject, and more

During the annual Maryland legislative session, MDVA posts a weekly legislative update to its website. The update can be found from the home page, right column, 'News & Announcements'. In addition, the update is shared in the MDVA bi-weekly electronic newsletter.
REQUESTED RESOURCES

The following information and links are provided at the request of community partner organizations. Please link to these resources as needed on websites or social media.

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**Housing**

Housing search, eviction prevention, homeless services, utility assistance

**Employment**

Resources for job seekers, veteran owned business owners, and employers

**VA Benefits**

MDVA Service and Benefits Program, Veterans Benefits Administration

**Women Veterans**

MDVA Women Veterans/Inclusion Program, VA Women's Health

**Transitioning Service Members**

VA Solid Start Program

**Suicide Prevention**

Veterans Crisis Line: 988, press 1
VA Mental Health Services
Maryland's Commitment to Veterans/
MD Department of Health
2022 SERVICE MEMBER, VETERAN AND FAMILIES AWARENESS DAYS AND MONTHS

March-
Women’s History Month
March 3, Navy Reserve Birthday
March 5, Seabee Birthday
March 13, K9 Veterans Day
March 15, American Legion Birthday
March 21, Rosie the Riveter Day
March 25, Medal of Honor Day
March 30, Welcome Home Vietnam War Veterans Day (Maryland)

April-
Month of the Military Child
April 5, Gold Star Spouses Day
April 9, National Former POW Recognition Day
April 14, Air Force Reserve Birthday
April 23, Army Reserve Birthday
April 30, National Military Brats Day

May-
National Military Appreciation Month
Month of the Military Caregiver
May 6, Military Spouse Appreciation Day
May 8, Victory in Europe Day
May 12, Military Spouse Appreciation Day
May 14-19, Armed Forces Week
May 21, Armed Forces Day
May 30, Memorial Day

June-
PTSD Awareness Month
June 6, D Day
June 12, Women Veterans Day
June 14, Army Birthday
June 14, Flag Day
June 27, National PTSD Awareness Day

July-
July 4, Independence Day
July 27, National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
July 28, National Buffalo Soldiers Day

August-
August 1, Air Force Day
August 4, Coast Guard Day
August 7, Purple Heart Day
August 10, Agent Orange Awareness Day
August 29, Marine Corps Reserve Birthday

September-
National Suicide Prevention Month
National Service Dog Month
September 2, Victory over Japan Day
September 11, Patriot Day
September 16, POW/MIA Day
September 18, Air Force Birthday
September 18, Air National Guard Birthday
September 25, Gold Star Mother’s Day
September 29, VFW Day

October-
Breast Cancer Awareness Month
October 13, US Navy Birthday

November-
National Veterans and Military Family Month
National Family Caregivers Month
November 10, Marine Corps Day/Birthday
November 11, Veterans Day

December-
December 7, Pearl Harbor Day
December 13, US National Guard Birthday
December 18, Wreaths Across America

*Source: militarybenefits.info/military.com
CONTACT THE MDVA OUTREACH PROGRAM

Outreach and Advocacy Program
Dana Burl
Director, 410-260-3842
dana.burl@maryland.gov
Denise Nooe
Deputy Director, 410-260-3840
denise.nooe@maryland.gov

MDVA Main Contacts
410-260-3838
mdveteransinfo@maryland.gov