



**OREGON DEPARTMENT**  
of **VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

# REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MARCH 6, 2024

The bottom section of the page features a dark background with a large, faint, circular seal of the State of Oregon on the left. On the right, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs logo is displayed, consisting of a red stylized 'V' with a star above it. Below the logo, the text "OREGON DEPARTMENT of VETERANS' AFFAIRS" is written in white. The main title "REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE" is centered in large white letters, and the date "MARCH 6, 2024" is at the bottom right.



## REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For the regularly scheduled quarterly virtual meeting on March 6, 2024.

This report can be downloaded at: [www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Advisory-Committee.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Advisory-Committee.aspx)

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**ON THE COVER:** In November 2023, Cow Creek Umpqua Chairman Carla Keene and ODVA Director Dr. Nakeia Council Daniels signed a formal agreement between the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide a Tribal Veterans Services within the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribal Government.



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Since the Advisory Committee was established in 1945, it has held a distinct and fundamental role in advising the Director and staff of ODVA. Advisory Committee members are military veterans who are appointed by the Governor and act as advocates for veteran issues and represent veteran concerns across Oregon. The Advisory Committee is fortunate to have volunteer members who bring diverse talents and experiences to the table from every generation of veterans and communities across this state. As an Advisory Committee, they are informed by the broader veterans' community that they serve. As such, all Oregon veterans, their families, and our partners are invited to attend and participate in the quarterly meetings held across the state.

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS** See member bios [here](#)

Robert "Bob" Van Voorhis, Vice Chair, USA.....	John Day
Christina Wood, Secretary, USAF.....	Portland
James Gardner, USA .....	Eugene
John Howard, USN.....	Medford
Reynold "Reyn" Leno, USMC.....	Grand Ronde
Christopher Waine, USA.....	Hermiston
Vacant Position.....	
Vacant Position .....	
Vacant Position .....	

### **COMMITTEE INFO AND CONTACT ONLINE**

Learn more about the committee, meetings, or learn how to apply to be appointed by the Governor to serve as a member of the Veterans Advisory Committee.

**Webpage:** [www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Advisory-Committee.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/odva/Connect/Pages/Advisory-Committee.aspx)

**Email:** [odva\\_vaac@odva.oregon.gov](mailto:odva_vaac@odva.oregon.gov)



## OREGON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP

Dr. Nakeia Daniels, USA .....Director  
Vacant..... Deputy Director  
Matthew Castleman .....Executive Assistant to the Director  
Jay DeFillipo, USA.....Legislative Director  
Nicole Hoeft.....Strategic Communications Director  
Donna Haole-Valenzuela.....Chief Financial Officer  
Derek Simmons.....Controller  
David Kampff, USAF.....Chief Information Officer  
Barb Maras.....Human Resources Director  
Kelly Breshears.....Aging Veteran Services Division Director  
Sheronne Blasi, USN..... Strategic Partnerships Director  
Joseph Glover, USN..... Appeals & Special Advocacy Director

### **CONTACT ODVA ONLINE**

Learn more about agency programs, access a staff directory, or learn about federal and state veteran benefits using the links below:

**Website:** [www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva)

**Blog:** [www.oregondva.com](http://www.oregondva.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/odvavet](http://www.facebook.com/odvavet)

**Subscribe:** <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDVA/subscriber/new>

**Order Veteran Benefit Magazines** for your organization or self:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VeteransBenefitMagazine>



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 | 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Held Virtually

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Robert VanVoorhis
  - Pledge of Allegiance
- II. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – Vice Chair Robert VanVoorhis
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Secretary Christina Wood
- IV. **ODVA DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Director Dr. Nakeia Daniels
- V. **ODVA REPORTS**
  - Legislative Briefing – Jay DeFillipo, Legislative Director
  - Aging Veteran Services – Kelly Breshears, Division Director
  - Appeals and Special Advocacy – Joe Glover, Division Director
  - Strategic Partnerships – Sheronne Blasi, Division Director
  - Home Loan Program – Cody Cox, Home Loan Program Manager
- VI. **OLD BUSINESS**
- VII. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - Next Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting – **ANNUAL MEETING**  
Date: June 5, 2024 | Time: 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM  
Location: Salem, Oregon
- VIII. **BUSINESS MEETING ADJOURNED**

### VETERAN TOWN HALL

Following every quarterly business meeting, the VAC holds a Town Hall which the public is invited to ask questions or share information with the committee and director. This time is set aside for individuals to bring up broader veteran community issues. Members of the community are also invited to submit written public comments to the committee by emailing [odva\\_vaac@odva.oregon.gov](mailto:odva_vaac@odva.oregon.gov).

### TOWN HALL PRESENTATIONS

- Cedar Hills Hospital S.T.A.R Military Program – Adam Khosroabadi, Veteran Liaison



# REPORT TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MARCH 6, 2024

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## MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR DR. NAKEIA DANIELS

### Agency Director Appointment

As the new Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, I am deeply honored to take the helm of an agency with a proud nearly 80-year legacy of serving Oregon's veterans. We stand at the threshold of a new era in veteran services, one that demands responsiveness to the evolving needs of today's veterans while upholding the esteemed tradition of care and service that defines ODVA.

Looking ahead, my vision for ODVA is one of unwavering excellence, guided by a steadfast commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. At the core of our mission are values such as stewardship, excellence, respect, vision, inclusivity, commitment, and equity. These values serve as the guiding principles that shape our every action, ensuring that every veteran is seen, heard, and supported.

In pursuit of this vision, ODVA will prioritize addressing urgent concerns such as veteran suicide, access to behavioral health services, and veteran homelessness. We will work tirelessly to address the underlying issues that can contribute to veteran suicide ideation, including statewide access to behavioral health services. Strengthening partnerships with executive branch agencies, the federal VA, and community stakeholders in Oregon's behavioral health system is crucial to creating a comprehensive system of care for veterans.

Furthermore, as Oregon veterans continue to experience some of the highest rates of homelessness in that nation, we remain steadfast in our commitment to addressing veteran homelessness, recognizing it as a complex issue that demands comprehensive solutions. In addition to investments in veteran transitional housing, we will continue to collaborate with community partners to provide needed wrap-around services that support long-term housing stability for veterans.

In the next few weeks, our Human Resources team will begin recruitment for the Deputy Director role. Once this position is filled, the agency's leadership team will be fully staffed and stabilized from the recent leadership changes. The Executive Staff has done a wonderful job of delivering program and operations continuity during this transition. Over the next six months, I plan to continue meeting with staff at all levels of responsibility to understand their perspectives, concerns, and ideas for improvement within the agency and programs. By conducting listening sessions with both internal staff and the broader veteran community, I aim to create an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and valued.

Additionally, I have prioritized strengthening partnerships, hosting meetings with partners and maintaining ongoing dialogue with legislative and congressional representatives to advocate for veterans' programs including the construction of a third veterans' home in Roseburg.

This work includes a concerted effort to strengthen partnerships with key veteran stakeholders, such as executive branch agencies, the County Veterans Service Officer Association, the federal VA, national service organizations and other service providers and non-profits that deliver services within the veteran community.

Moreover, we must strive to right-size and resource the agency. In addition to the mandates of Measure 96, which has created nine new veteran programs since 2017, under my leadership we will work to strategically align administrative, programmatic and technological funding to build a fully functioning agency capable of meeting the needs of both current and future veterans.

In essence, my vision for ODVA is rooted in a deep sense of duty and compassion for those who have served our nation. Together, we will honor the legacy of ODVA while embracing the challenges and opportunities of the future, ensuring that every Oregon veteran receives the care, support, and benefits they have earned through their military service to this nation.

I look forward to working alongside this committee to ensure Oregon delivers on those services and supports promised by a grateful nation.

#### **Veteran Advisory Committee Recruitment**

In February, ODVA launched recruitment efforts to announce Veteran Advisory Committee vacancies, seeking candidates for current and future positions on the committee. The recruitment will close on March 29th for consideration by the Governor's Executive Appointment Office to fill the current vacancies. To ensure the governor has a broad and diverse pool of candidates to consider for appointment, ODVA is seeking applications from interested members of the veteran community from both rural and urban areas, across diverse backgrounds and eras of service. Any veteran interested in applying to the advisory committee can find the application on the Governor's Boards and Commissions webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/board-list.aspx>.

#### **National Associations of State Directors of Veterans Affairs**

Legislative Director Jay DeFillipo and I traveled to Washington, D.C. for the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs annual conference which focuses on national VA perspectives, approaches and partnerships among leaders of state agencies that fosters a coordinated and informed national approach to veteran services. Through the work of NASDVA, Oregon was able to bring back information about opportunities and initiatives that will be shared with agency programs and leadership to further improve our effectiveness and available resources throughout Oregon.

## Agency Engagement Highlights



*Cow Creek Umpqua Chairman Carla Keene (left) and ODVA Director Dr. Nakeia Council Daniels (right) signed a formal agreement between the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide a Tribal Veterans Services within the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribal Government.*

*Dr. Daniels was honored to speak during the beautiful service celebrating Major Levet's life, meet his family members and share a personal letter to the Levet family from Oregon Governor Tina Kotek.*



### **COW CREEK BAND OF UMPQUA TRIBE OF INDIANS**

ODVA signed a formal agreement with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians on November 29, that will provide a framework for collaboration and increased resources dedicated to supporting the Tribe's veterans in accessing their earned federal and state veterans' benefits.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by ODVA Director Dr. Nakeia Council Daniels and Cow Creek Umpqua Chairman Carla Keene, with tribal government leaders and representatives, tribal veterans, and ODVA staff gathered to commemorate the historic partnership. The formal signing was hosted at the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribal Government Office in Roseburg.

### **MEL LEVET**

In December, Director Dr. Nakeia Daniels was honored to attend the memorial service of Major Melvin Newton Levet and present a personal letter to the Levet family from Oregon Governor Tina Kotek. Levet was a 106-year-old World War II Army Air Corps veteran, who was one of the oldest known WWII veterans in Oregon.

Major Levet served as a Weather Officer for the 13th Army Air Corps in the Pacific Theater, providing skilled weather forecasting to aid mission planning and protect B-17 pilots and crew members and aid in the Allied Forces' ultimate victory in WWII. After returning home, he and his wife, Perle, raised their two kids and continued a life of service, philanthropy, church volunteerism and education.





## LEGISLATIVE

Jay DeFillipo, Legislative Director

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As 2024 gears up to be a great year, so does the Oregon Legislature. On February 5th the Legislature started its short session. This session is only 35 days long and generally addresses adjustments to the biennial budget and emerging needs across the state. ODVA has two budget requests before the short session. One is the continuation of funding for the IT replacement of our Oregon Home Loan Servicing Platform. Our current platform is out of date and at the end of life this funding is to continue the project and add two positions to ODVA to manage the transition and prepare the agency for its new processes. ODVA is also asking for data positions to be added to our team. These positions will help ODVA get a better understanding of the veterans' data we currently receive and work with our partners to get more accurate data in other areas to help reach and advocate for underserved or marginalized veterans. We are also watching several bills that have statewide implications as the Legislature wrestles with homelessness, mental health, and a variety of tax issues.

On the other fronts, I am in the thoughts of preparing the Agency Legislative priorities. With the energy of our new director and the support of our Governor, ODVA is poised to make a lot of new proposals for the 25-27 biennium. We are working through some legislative concepts to change or adopt new statutes while also looking at our budget and processes to ensure we are doing our best to serve veterans. I have also been working on an agency-wide rules review. This commonly happens every five years in an agency to ensure its rules are still applicable and meet the needs of the public. We should have a full review and adjustment to current rules by this upcoming summer.

This is also the time of year that the legislature starts to receive a lot of constituent requests for help. Many of the requests are from veterans seeking help with medical benefits or housing support. I work with our ODVA team to ensure each veteran calling a legislator for assistance gets the support they requested or an answer on resources they have as a veteran.

In closing, I look forward to continuing to support Oregon Veterans and working with the legislature to get the best possible resources for our veterans.



## AGING VETERAN SERVICES DIVISION

Kelly Breshears, Aging Veteran Services Director

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**Oregon Veterans' Home - The Dalles** Over the past quarter, the Oregon Veterans' Home, The Dalles has been working tirelessly to increase admissions, decrease contract agency use, complete State and VA surveys, increase activities, improve quality measures and apply and achieve the American Health Care Associations Bronze level in the Quality Awards. While working on these items, OVH The Dalles has also won awards through local and state programs. Though the home was hit hard during COVID, through dedication, great leadership, and perseverance, OVHTD is performing at peak levels.

**Census Challenges:** Due to our rural location and lack of mental health resources, OVH The Dalles has struggled to keep the facility full. Mental health denials reached 91% in 2022 and 98% for 2023 and without a sharing agreement with the Veterans Administration, we will only see this number continue to play a large role in denial of admissions. While the facility continues to strive for a sharing agreement, other avenues of admissions are being reviewed.

In addition to mental health denials, OVH The Dalles is unable to accept Veterans for Rehabilitation (Skilled Care) who have Pacific Source insurance. The Home is working to establish an agreement with Pacific Source. Pacific Source is largely used among our local service area and would have a positive impact on our Rehabilitation admissions. Our current census is 91 residents, with 17 admissions and 23 discharges over the last quarter.

**Contract Agency Use:** OVH The Dalles utilized Agency staff during the COVID-19 pandemic due to staffing shortages. This trend has unfortunately continued post pandemic. Our current Agency numbers are 7 Certified Nursing Aides (CNA) and 4 Licensed Nurses. OVH The Dalles requires Agency staff for 16% of CNA hours to meet State Staffing Regulations. The home currently has an active 6-week Nursing Aide class every 2 months and have been seeing a higher caliber of applicants in the past few months. The hope is to be able to decrease the usage of Agency staff over the next two quarters.

**Nursing Home Surveys:** In Quarter 4, OVH The Dalles was surveyed by the State of Oregon and the Veterans Administration for compliance of state and federal Nursing Home Regulations. The Oregon State Survey was completed on November 3rd with three clinical citations and one life safety citation. The Home submitted and completed a plan of correction and are back in compliance. The Veterans Administration survey was finished on December 8th with six clinical citations and two life safety citations. The corrective action plan has been submitted and will be completed no later than April of 2024.

**Quality Improvement Projects:** In 2023, OVH The Dalles hired a new Quality Improvement RN to help target Quality Measures that need to be improved based on the CMS Casper Report. Each Quality Measure was prioritized, and Process Improvement Projects (PIPs) were created. OVH The Dalles has seen an improvements in our Fall Rate, Pressure Injuries, Antipsychotic Medication Gradual Dose Reduction, and Activity of Daily Living Help. We also received 5/5 stars in the Quality Metric from American Healthcare Association compared to 3.49 nationwide.

**Quality Award – Bronze Status:** Based on Baldrige Excellence Framework, the National Quality Award Program focuses on a system-based approach to quality improvement. There are three levels; Bronze, Silver, and Gold; and six areas address within each level; leadership, strategic planning, customer and workforce, operations, and knowledge management. OVH The Dalles has previously won all the way to Gold, but organizations must start from Bronze if they want to win Gold level again. The home has put in their 2024 application for the Bronze level and are hoping to hear a positive response back.

**Awards and Accolades:** Although some of these awards were not won within the last quarter, they are noteworthy none the less:

- Oregon Healthcare Association’s Administrator of the Year
- CSM Five-Star Rating – 5 Star Overall (3.88 Peer Comparison and 2.86 National Average)
- Pinnacle Resident Satisfaction Scores – 15/15 Categories were better than National Average in Q4
- 2024 Pinnacle Customer Experience Award for top 15% across the Nation
- Gold Award from Bicoastal Media for Best Place to Work in The Gorge
- Silver Award from Bicoastal Media for Best Nursing Home/Rehabilitation in The Gorge

Oregon Veterans’ Home The Dalles is very excited about the upcoming year and all the opportunities we have to continue to exceed expectations. If you would like to contact Sarah Reed, please email her at [sarah.e.reed@ODVA.oregon.gov](mailto:sarah.e.reed@ODVA.oregon.gov).

### **Oregon Veterans’ Home - Lebanon**

OVHL continues to provide care and support to Veterans in a manner that promotes healthy physical and mental aging. The OVHL Program Director, Sharlane Keener, works in partnership with the current care company contractor VCCO leadership and facility staff to promote consistent quality care in a safe and comfortable environment. Partnerships with the Veteran Volunteer Program and Aging Veteran Services staff, and attending or presenting at events enables the OVHL PD to provide VA claims assistance to residents and increase Veteran benefits awareness to the community.

**Census:** OVHL capacity is 154 residents. The OVHL admissions team is at half-staff but continues to work through applications to serve more Veterans. On December 31<sup>st</sup>, census was 144 residents. Average census by quarter is as follows: Q1 - 134.2; Q2 - 138.9; Q3 - 140.2; Q4 - 143.1

**Staffing:** A new Director of Nursing, Cheryl Walters, is scheduled to start at OVHL in January 2024.

Due to changes in required Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training hours, OVHL has been able to offer tuition-free CNA classes more frequently. CNA agency use last year was at its highest in January 2023 at 27%. In December agency CNA utilization was at 9%. This is financially beneficial and more importantly beneficial to our Veterans. Less agency staff use means higher consistency of regular staff on units with whom residents are familiar.

In 2023 agency nurse use averaged 12.5% with December usage being 14.4%. Two programs have been developed and are being fine tuned for use in 2024. There is a tuition assistance program for movement from CNA to LPN. There is also a student loan repayment assistance program for RNs and LPNs. This is expected to improve recruitment and retention of nurses.

OVHL's end of quarter direct care staff openings are: Licensed Nurse (LN) Openings Day Shift: 1; Licensed Nurse (LN) Openings Night Shift: 7; CNA Openings Day Shift: 5; CNA Openings Night Shift: 4

**Survey Compliance:** OVHL is currently survey compliant with both the State and Federal VA and has no outstanding citations. OVHL expects the next State survey to occur in January 2024 or shortly after. The next Federal VA survey is expected to occur in April 2024 or shortly after.

OVHL proactively reacts throughout the year to maintain a high level of care and facility maintenance. As concerns arise internally, Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) teams may be created. Current PIP teams include Falls Management, Wound Care, Transportation, and UTI.

A very successful Falls Management tool has been the Safely You program. These cameras are motion activated and capture footage of potential falls as they occur. The footage and alert allow staff to respond quickly and determine the extent of falls, contributing factors to falls, or if an incident was not a true fall. Metrics captured indicate more than number of falls. Information such as time of day or location helps identify trends. In the third quarter, it was noticed that falls increased. PIP team action contributed to the number of falls declining in the last quarter. There is also a Safety Committee that identifies concerns and inspects the different areas of the building to ensure environmental safety.

Safety Committee and PIP team actions create solutions to promote quality care, a safe and clean environment, and successful surveys.

**Facility Maintenance:** The OVHL maintenance team is quick to address issues that arise on the grounds and throughout the facility. The biggest current challenge is the maintenance of the HVAC system. The team has been able to address functional issues as they arise but conversation continues regarding the feasibility of performing repairs and replacing parts as needed or replacing the entire system.

## APPEALS AND SPECIAL ADVOCACY DIVISION

Joe Glover, Appeals and Special Advocacy Division Director

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### Women Veteran Advocacy

The Women Veteran Advocacy program (WVC) exists to help provide both direct and indirect support to the over 25,000 women veterans in Oregon. The program assists linking veterans with federal and state resources such as federal disability payments, needs-based Pension, and free or reduced health care. This program also assists veterans with applying for federal GI Bill education benefits and Vocational, Readiness, and Employment to allow veterans to pursue higher education and training.

The networking and resource benefits that are provided to veterans and their families through this program directly help eliminate or significantly reduce the number of veterans who are experiencing homelessness, it helps eliminate or significantly reduces the number of women veterans who are experiencing mental or behavioral health crises, and also helps support women veterans pursuing higher education goals. Outreach events such as exhibiting the "I am Not Invisible Campaign" help bring awareness to women veterans about resources and support available to them.

There are no tiered service levels for access to this program. The WVC works with veterans and families who served in the military and require support. This program work includes making sure that all women veterans are supported. Only two eligibility requirements exist for service support. Identify as a woman and have served in the United States Military. Eligibility requirements to access this program or service does not require honorable service, nor does it require eligibility under ORS 408.225.

In addition to applying for veteran related benefits, the WVC works with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to ensure that women veterans are receiving high-quality and gender appropriate health care. The WVC also works with those who are imminently houseless and are at risk of losing stable housing. These cases all require and receive urgent immediate attention.

There is a high risk associated with homelessness among the women veteran community, and there is a disproportionately higher Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - Military Sexual Trauma relating to military service which is a significant contributing factor to homelessness. To help overcome these challenges and barriers, the WVC regularly engages with multiple meetings and groups across Oregon, all designed to link different community partners and resources together to ensure that women veterans and their families are receiving care and support accessing earned benefits and resources. This also includes ensuring that veterans are housed in safe, inclusive, and supportive environments.

In FY24 to date ODVA has added on average 1.24 new women veterans every day. This is up from 1 new woman veteran every day in FY23.

If an individual wishes to reach out to Jessica Bradley, the agency's Women Veteran Program Coordinator, they are able to do so through a variety of different ways. ODVA has established a general

email for women veteran outreach and engagement: [ODVA\\_DL\\_ORWOMENVETS@odva.oregon.gov](mailto:ODVA_DL_ORWOMENVETS@odva.oregon.gov) or [Jessica.bradley@odva.oregon.gov](mailto:Jessica.bradley@odva.oregon.gov). Jessica can also be reached at 503-576-9603.

**Women Veteran Coordinator - Team Success Story:**

In 2007, a veteran reached out to ODVA and began working on their claim for service connected benefits.

This veteran had been discharged early from their enlistment and because of that, unfortunately had been denied access to benefits and care due to the length of time that they served.

The claim went through multiple caseworkers, and was argued in front of the Board of Veterans Appeals on several different occasions; all ending without success.

In December 2021, the veteran and Women Veteran Coordinator Jessica Bradley first connected. From that point forward, Jessica and the veteran developed a plan for how they could work together to help see this case to a successful outcome.

Jessica helped the veteran build a team and network, and after 20 years of work the efforts were successful. The veteran recently received the news that their service-connected benefits were awarded 100% Permanent and Total with a one-time retro payment of approximately a quarter million dollars.

With the benefits and rightful recognition of her status as a disabled veteran, the veteran is now enrolled in VA Health Care and is receiving full medical support.



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION

Sheronne Blasi, Strategic Partnerships Division Director

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### **Expansion of ODVA's Veterans Educational Bridge Grant**

The 2019 Oregon State Legislature passed House Bill 2201 (Chapter 527, Oregon Laws 2019), establishing a Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program (Grant Program) for the purpose of providing financial assistance to veterans who are unable to complete a degree program within the expected completion period due to the timing of course offerings.

The 2023 Oregon State Legislature passed House Bill 2271 (Chapter 303, Oregon Laws 2023) which expands applicant eligibility for the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program. The maximum grant award remains at \$5,000 lifetime but eligibility is expanded to include:

- Additional programs of study or training,
- Veterans who do not have entitlement to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits,
- And veterans who have a debt on a student account preventing them from registering for future terms.
- Language was also updated to be inclusive of eligible non-academic programs including apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT), and career schools.

ODVA has launched the expansion of eligibility for the Bridge grant as of January 31, 2024, having completed updates to the application and website, and begun an outreach campaign. The VEBG has already made one new award as of February 13th and fielded several inquiries. The agency will also be recruiting for a permanent Veterans Educational Bridge Grant Coordinator.

### **Oregon State University Veteran Named Student Veteran of the Year**

Angelina Trillo is a current student and soon-to-be-graduate of Oregon State University, a medic for the Oregon National Guard, and recently the Student Veterans of America's (SVA) 2023 Student Veteran of the Year! Angelina has been a major advocate for veterans on campus, she was recognized for her work as the OSU chapter resident as well as the veteran advocacy coordinator. She has also been credited in contributing to causes such as hiring a Veteran Mental Health Specialist on campus. Majoring in political science, she is interested in continuing her career championing for veterans through policy, post-graduation.

Oregon State University is a recipient of one of ODVA's Campus Veteran Resource Center grant awards for 2023-25.

### **The Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Grant**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG) provides free transportation to and from VA medical appointments to any veteran living in one of Oregon's participating highly rural counties (Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Wallowa, and Wheeler). Services include door-to-door pick-up and drop-off in ADA-compliant vehicles, with assistance in loading or unloading at no cost to the veteran.

Through this program, veterans were transported to VA medical centers and VA community-based outpatient clinics in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada and California.

In September 2023, ODVA was awarded its 10th HRTG grant to address the ongoing health care transportation needs of veterans. The USDVA HRTG award amount was \$500,000; each participating county received \$45,000 to fund transportation operations.

In the first quarter of the grant cycle (September-December 2023) the following metrics were reported:

- Counties spent 1,946 hours transporting 140 unique veterans on 824 trips; traveling over 58,000 miles.
- Counties work in collaboration with Transportation Coordinators in the VA Medical Centers; no federal funds in the form of transportation reimbursements are disbursed to veterans for these trips.
- Counties partner with County Veteran Service Offices (CVSO) for HRTG program promotion and provide veteran referrals to CVSO's for assistance filing for veteran benefit claims.

#### **Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians**

On November 29, The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians became the fourth Oregon federally recognized Tribe to sign an MOU with ODVA to provide pass-through funding for Tribal Veteran Services programming, including the employment of a Tribal Veteran Services Officer. ODVA will provide funding to support this culturally specific work.

Among other things, the Tribal Veteran Service Officer will assist veterans and their eligible dependents in applying for their earned state and federal veterans' benefits. Benefits may include education, healthcare/behavioral healthcare, pension, and disability compensation.



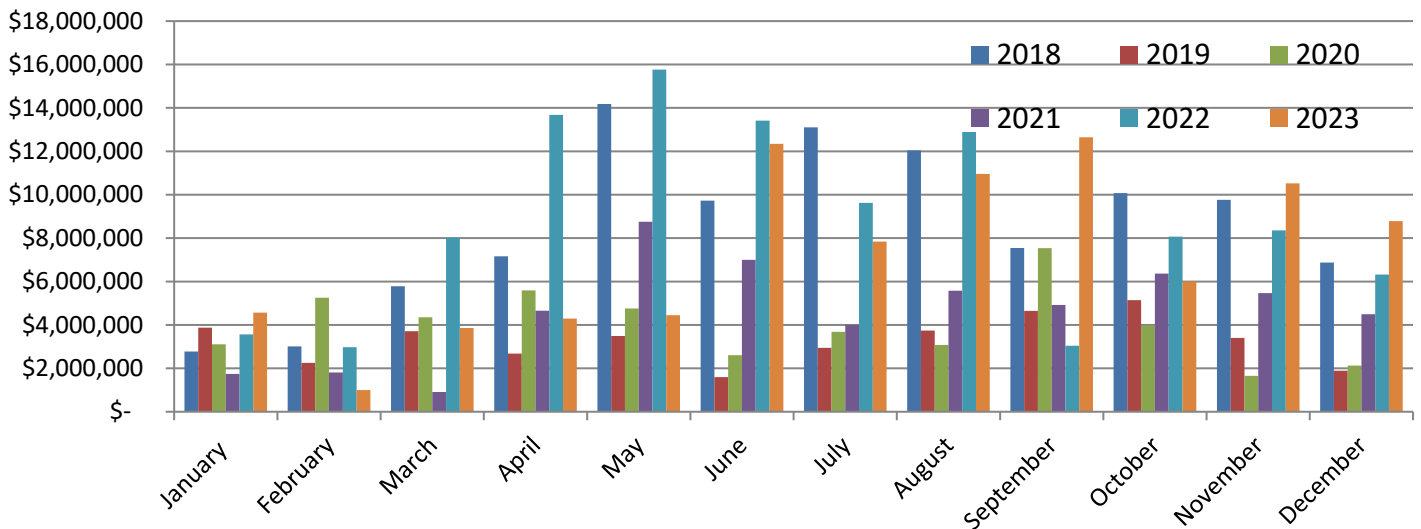


## HOME LOAN PROGRAM REPORT

Cody Cox, Home Loan Program Manager

### Home Loan Production Review

- Home Loan Program production for the 4th Quarter 2023 was 66 loans for \$25.3 million. For the same period in 2022, production volume was 661 loans for \$22.8 million. While 2023 did not reach the record volume enjoyed in 2022, we finished the year putting 224 Veterans in new homes with \$87.3 million in production.
- With the production levels from 2023, the ODVA Home Loan Program reach the 3rd highest level of production going back to 1997.
- The chart below shows a 2018 - 2023 monthly production comparison of dollar volume funded for the OrVet Home Loan program.



- At the end of the 4th Quarter 2023, ODVA has a total of 1,557 loans in portfolio, with a total dollar amount under servicing of \$381,993,503. Of these, 1,494 loans and \$378,025,968 are 'new' loans. 'Old' loans were at 63 units totaling \$3,967,536. At the end of the 4th Quarter 2022, the ODVA had a total of 1,439 for \$330,426,635 under servicing. Year over year, our servicing portfolio increased by \$51,566,868, which represents an increase of 15.61%.

### Loan Delinquency Review

- For the reporting period of 12/31/2023, there were no State-Owned Properties/Real Estate Owned (SOP/REO) in inventory. ODVA has not had any foreclosures for the past 4+ years.
- At the end of 4th Quarter 2023, there are no loans in a Foreclosure status. Our servicing portfolio remains strong as the rest of the industry is showing signs of increased delinquencies.
- At the end of 4th Quarter 2023, ODVA has no loans in a bankruptcy status.
- The total of all loans reporting in the 90-day or greater delinquency position was at 11 units, expressed as 0.7% in unit delinquency on a portfolio of 1,557.

- ODVA portfolio performance shows a continued reduced delinquency rate as compared to other Government Residential Loan Programs. The Mortgage Bankers Association publishes a quarterly National Delinquency Survey and the following represents Oregon specific comparative data from the most recently available Fourth Quarter 2023 report. The delinquency rate expressed as a percentage of total loans (units) past due for the Federal Veterans Affairs home loan program in Oregon was 3.41%. FHA home loans in Oregon were at 8.44%. Conventional Prime home loans Oregon was at 1.64%. All of these delinquency rates are slightly increased from the prior quarter. For this reporting period, the total delinquency for the ODVA home loan program was 1.20% at 18 units, which is slightly higher than the prior quarter.

**-END OF REPORT-**