



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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December 3, 2019

TO: Mitch Sparks, Executive Director of Legislative Commission on Indian Services
FROM: Kelly Fitzpatrick, Director of Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
RE: 2019 Government-to-Government Report

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) is pleased to submit this report to Governor Kate Brown and the Legislative Commission on Indian Services in accordance with ORS 182.162-182.168 (SB 770).

2019 Government-to-Government Efforts and Goals

ODVA has actively worked to establish collaborative partnerships with the nine federally recognized Native American Tribes across Oregon in the delivery of state and federal services for our Native American veterans. In 2019, ODVA continued this work to build and strengthen relations between tribal governments and key federal, state, county and other partner organizations to better serve Native American veterans across Oregon.

ODVA's continued efforts across the veteran services system have focused on three important outcome areas for Oregon's Native American veterans:

- Promote and participate in good government-to-government relationships to help shape veteran services available to tribal veterans
- Target advocacy and access to veteran services
- Increase access to health care and social services

Good Government-to-Government Relations

In October 2018, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and ODVA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that enabled the tribal government to establish the state's first-ever Tribal Veteran Service Office.

In 2019, Governor Kate Brown, the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation Tribal Chairman, Gary Burke, and ODVA Director Fitzpatrick signed the state's second MOU, between ODVA and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to establish a program. The tribe has since hired a Tribal Veteran Services Officer, who is currently working on federal VA accreditation in order to file VA claims and appeals on behalf of veterans and their dependents.

ODVA was invited to present to Tribal Chairpersons at the September 2019 Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services (LCIS) on the newly created Tribal Veteran program which was funded in the 2019-21 Legislatively Adopted Budget using Measure 96 Lottery Funds. Funding will help support and enhance Tribal Veteran Services and provides for the creation of a Tribal Veteran Coordinator position at ODVA. Tribal Chairpersons offered to support the development of the program's Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR), and the recruitment and hiring of a newly authorized ODVA Tribal Veterans Coordinator position.



ODVA director Kelly Fitzpatrick shakes hands with Gary Burke, chair of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation after signing the MOU earlier this year at the Oregon State Capitol Building. Also pictured is Sam Spino, the new Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) for the Umatilla tribes.

ODVA recently sent the advanced copy of the proposed OARs to all tribes for review and input prior to publishing the proposed rules for public comment. ODVA is in the process of preparing to launch the recruitment for the new Tribal Veterans Coordinator and intends to seek input on the recruiting announcement to ensure that the tribal veteran perspective is captured in a culturally accurate manner. ODVA will also request that tribal members participate in the candidate review and interview process.

Throughout 2019, ODVA leadership was invited to present additional information to Tribal Councils, including the Klamath Tribes, the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. ODVA's goal is to help tribal nations and tribal veterans increase access to state and federal veteran benefits and health services.

Advocacy and Access to Veteran Services

In May 2019, ODVA held its fourth annual Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) training conference at Chinook Winds Casino, sponsored in-part by the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. TVRs received training on federal VA benefits, and other state and federal benefits. Along with Oregon TVRs, also in attendance were TVRs from Oklahoma, California and Washington. ODVA also partnered with the federal VA Tribal Public Contact team and Oregon Congressman Kurt Schrader's office.

Additionally, ODVA's annual Veteran Service Officer training conference was held in October. More than 115 individuals attended the training conference including the Tribal Veteran Services Officer from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Access to Healthcare and Social Services

ODVA continued its involvement in the SB 770 Health and Human Services Cluster meetings, and the agency provided updates on the newly established Tribal Veteran Services Officer program and funding. In early 2019, ODVA assisted Oregon Health Authority with a consultation with tribal health clinics, Indian Health Services (IHS) and the federal VA to formalize a contract to provide general and mental health care for veterans provided by the tribal health clinics. This included an approved formulary for tribal health clinics pharmacies for veterans approved by VA health care and was part of a larger project by OHA with tribal health clinics that involved Medicare/Medicaid, Oregon health plan and CCO's.

In 2019, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde continued to implement an ODVA Veteran Services grant totaling \$8,688 to expand funding for two annual Veterans Summits as well as Native American Wellness Activities. Funds also partially funded a portable x-ray machine at the Summits.

Another grantee, the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest (NARA), continued to expend an ODVA Veteran Services grant of \$74,990 to provide salary and benefits for a position dedicated to identifying veterans and connecting them to services, as well as a laptop, phone, and transportation to support the position. Remaining funding has gone to client assistance needs such as housing deposits, identification document fees, etc. Outreach efforts include case management, assistance navigating VA benefits, access to health and mental health care, addiction treatment, housing placement, vocational services, and other

assistance outreach such as SNAP and Social Security. To date, 96 veterans have benefited from this grant, with 14 placed in housing and nearly all veterans connected to a network of other supportive services.

In conclusion, ODVA is proud of our efforts to serve and honor tribal veterans. We will continue to strive to build strong partnerships with the tribes in order to assist tribal veterans and their families in improving the quality of their lives – economically, socially and health-wise – by ensuring access to the veteran resources and benefits they have earned.

We look forward to continued collaboration across governments, agencies and other essential partners who serve all veterans in the delivery of state and federal veteran services and benefits.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kelly Fitzpatrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Kelly Fitzpatrick
Director