



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



**Department of Human Services**

*Office of the Director*

500 Summer St. NE, E-15

Salem, OR 97301

Voice: 503-945-5600

## **Department of Human Services Veteran Outreach Biennial Report**

**Period: July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020  
October 1, 2020**

### **Background**

In the 2011 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 241 passed, establishing Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 408.505. ORS 408.505 requires state agencies ask if a customer or client is a veteran and provide veterans with information from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) and the reintegration team within the Oregon Military Department (OMD). Additionally, state agencies must report to the legislature their efforts and their effectiveness of implementing ORS 408.505 in even-numbered years.

### **Overview of the Department of Human Services**

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) is Oregon's principal agency for helping Oregonians achieve wellbeing and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity for those we serve.

DHS primarily serves children, adults and families, elderly individuals, and individuals experiencing a disability. DHS provides access to supportive services such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) and Medicaid; along with case management for specific programs, licensing functions for various types of services in communities, employment-related services, and abuse investigations.

Benefits and services are delivered through more than 100 field offices throughout the state. Additionally, we provide information and referrals to community resources or other agencies that can meet specific needs as a regular part of our service delivery.

### **Outreach to Veterans**

ORS 408.505 requires agencies provide informational materials on veteran's benefits and services to individuals including contact information for the ODVA and the reintegration team within the OMD. DHS accomplishes this work through multiple avenues of service.

Website links. Oregon.gov websites are standardized in the information and home-page layout. The ODVA logo and web link appear at the bottom of each Oregon.gov website. Viewers of the DHS websites can, from any page, click on the ODVA link to inquire about benefits and services for veterans, their spouses, and their dependents. DHS's online application for food benefits also links customers who indicate they are a current military service member or veteran of military services to the ODVA website to explore services that might be available to them. Oregon's Medicaid online application (one.oregon.gov) also has a link to the ODVA website.

DHS engaged ODVA in the development of our new integrated eligibility platform in the upgraded ONE system. The ONE portal will be where Oregonians can apply for medical, food, cash and childcare benefits, starting in late 2020. The updates to questions and information through this engagement brings us into compliance with House Bill 2422 (2013) and refers veterans to ODVA.

DHS continues to participate and provide services to older adults through the Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon (ADRC). These services are run out of local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and have connections with County Veteran Service Offices to support Oregonians and older adults who are or may be eligible for Veteran Services make connections across our systems. There have been multiple pilots where ADRCs have brought in County Veteran Service Officers to coordinate referrals and increase outreach for families of and individuals potentially eligible for Veteran Services.

Materials. DHS stocks the ODVA Outreach Magazine (MSC 0407) in our Forms and Distribution center. These magazines are available for branch offices to place in their lobbies and for staff to give directly to applicable clients.

Applications for Benefits. The Aging and People with Disabilities Application form (SDS 0539A) contained a question to determine if the applicant or their spouse is or was a veteran. This application is no longer going to be used as Oregon moves to a single medical application through the ONE eligibility portal. This application has wording and language necessary to capture veteran information and provide details so we can make referrals to ODVA on individuals identifying as a veteran. The Self-Sufficiency Programs' Application for Assistance (DHS 0415F) contains similar questions to capture information about whether an applicant or family member is or was a veteran.

Where an individual is federally required to pursue all other assets, our DHS offices work closely with Oregonians and County Veteran Service Officers, to make referrals and receive confirmation of application of services, to move forward with eligibility.

DHS also continued implementation of HB 2422 (2013), which requires DHS to collect information on veterans and share this file with ODVA if the individual provides a release.

PARIS. DHS continues to utilize information coming from the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS). PARIS is a quarterly report from the federal government that takes files from the State on individuals receiving public assistance and runs them against data on three areas: individuals receiving benefits in other states, federal retirees, and Defense records on Veteran Benefits. These responses are provided back to states to review. The Office of Payment

Accuracy and Recovery (OPAR) coordinates this work for DHS. ODVA coordinated directly with DHS in reviewing the data, providing insight into what we were seeing and verifying the information with their database. DHS now has a system that can capture PARIS information on veterans for additional outreach. In future iterations of the ONE system, DHS may pursue building in additional referrals to ensure veterans understand what benefits they are eligible for and how it may impact other services they are receiving.

Internally, as DHS seeks to increase employment opportunities for veterans, we are seeing phenomenal growth of the Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG). In partnership with DHS, the VERG continues to focus its efforts on recruiting, supporting, advocating for and honoring veterans. These efforts have resulted in a doubling of the group's membership over the past year, making the VERG one of the largest employee resource groups in the state.

The VERG regularly collaborates with the ODVA, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as well as other local veteran support groups, agencies and programs. Through these collaborative efforts, the VERG gathers and distributes information to DHS veteran employees, both in-person and through email as well as by the distribution of other educational materials. A recent focus of the VERG has been to review and educate employees, hiring managers and new applicants for state service to ensure that required Veterans Preference Points are applied appropriately and that information on what is required to be eligible for this benefit is widely known. The DHS VERG continues to focus its mission on providing information and support for Veterans working within DHS and OHA, as well as those we serve.

## **Summary**

DHS proudly continues to identify applicants and clients who are veterans and not only provide them with our services, but also connect them to the ODVA and OMD. Through collaborations with the ODVA and the Veterans Employee Resource Group, we will continue our work to better assist veterans and their families.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Nicole Stapp**

Senior Legislative Policy Analyst

ODHS Central and Shared Services, Governor's Advocacy Office, Office of Equity and Multicultural Services, Tribal Affairs and Self-Sufficiency Programs

**Work:** 971-719-0123

**Email:** [nicole.stapp@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:nicole.stapp@dhsosha.state.or.us)

**Tristan Fernandez**

Senior Legislative Policy Analyst

ODHS Child Welfare and Vocational Rehabilitation

**Work:** 503-302-1479

**Email:** [tristan.fernandez@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:tristan.fernandez@dhsosha.state.or.us)

**Brooke Hall**

Senior Legislative Policy Analyst

ODHS Aging and People with Disabilities and Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

**Work:** 503-983-0445

**Email:** [brooke.m.hall@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:brooke.m.hall@dhsosha.state.or.us)