



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

Cultivating community connections – empowering Georgia’s veterans and their families to flourish.

October 2024

GDVS AWARDED VA SUICIDE MORTALITY GRANT

The Georgia Department of Veterans Service (GDVS) was recently awarded a grant of \$500,000 as part of the VA’s Fiscal Year 2024 Suicide Mortality Review Cooperative Agreement. The funding will support the development of a Suicide Mortality Review Committee in Georgia.

The committee will focus on identifying and analyzing suicide deaths statewide to better inform suicide prevention strategies and improve mental health outcomes for veterans. The committee will be composed of key stakeholders from the GDVS, the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Disabilities, and the Center for the Advancement of Military and Emergency Services Research at Kennesaw State University.

“Partnerships between the State, VA, Veterans Service Organizations, and our public health agencies are vital to continuing our work to understand and prevent veteran suicide,” said GDVS Commissioner Dr. Patricia Ross. “As a team, we can make a difference on these critical issues and provide support to our service members, veterans, and their families when they need it most.”

The new cooperative agreement will complement and enhance the department’s established suicide prevention and outreach initiatives.

The GDVS was recently awarded a third year of grant funding from the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program (SSG Fox SPGP), a three year pilot suicide prevention grant program funded by VA. The GDVS is one of only eight programs nationwide to receive all three years of SSG Fox SPGP funding.

The GDVS leads Georgia’s Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide in Servicemembers, Veterans, and Families task force, an initiative developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Georgia joined the initiative in 2020 and began to build a supportive network with a focus on veteran suicide prevention. The task force is a collaborative partnership between local, state, and federal resources to identify areas of need, organize and coordinate outreach efforts, and provide training to communities on suicide prevention techniques and resources.

If you’re a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don’t have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.

ATTENTION: DON’T MISS THIS FAIR!



3rd Annual

WE CARE VET FAIR™

Friday, 11/01/24 - 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday, 11/02/24 - 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM *VA Claims Only

Cobb Civic Center, 548 S. Marietta Pkwy, Marietta, 30060



- Over 100 Agencies & Organizations & Vendors (Local, State, Federal)
- Free Hair Cut, Health Check, Vision Exam, Flu Shot, Physical & Mental Health
- Aid & Attendance, Respite Care, War Veterans Homes, Hospice, Home Care
- Submit a VA Disability Claim. Check the Status, File Appeal and more.
- Free Legal assistance. **Register online for free legal help online at wecarevetfair.com
- Housing Assistance, VA Mortgages, Traditional Mortgages, Financial Asst.
- Burial Options, Financial Planning, Survivor Benefits, War Time Vet Income
- Enroll in VA Health Care, Get VA ID Card, DD214, Toxic Exposure Screening
- Free lunch and snacks in the canteen. Free groceries*** Sign up for SNAP, WIC.
- Adopt your new best friend. Service Animals.
- Employment Resume’, Volunteer Opportunities, Member Org.’s, Transition
- Military vehicles, 6888 BN, Montford Point Marines, ATL History Ctr, Rosie Riveter

100% FREE Admission, Services & Parking – Add'l Parking and Shuttle at Lockheed Martin North Lot B001

Bring with you:

- DD214
- Form of Identification
- Medical Documentation
- New and material evidence for reconsideration
- Power of Attorney (if representing Veteran)



info@unitedmilitarycare.org
wecarevetfair.com
770-973-0014

***Food and Beverage available first come first serve as supplies last.
**Legal request register online only.

A NATION’S GRATITUDE, WOVEN IN GREEN



On Saturday, December 14, 2024, the GDVS will once again join the nation in honoring Georgia’s heroes at our annual Wreaths Across America ceremonies.

If you are interested in sponsoring a wreath or attending a ceremony and placing wreaths, please visit the [GVMC Milledgeville](https://www.gvmc.org) or [GVMC Glennville](https://www.gvmc.org) listing pages for more information.



SHINING A LIGHT ON A TOP PERFORMER: DENORIS LANE



Valdosta Veteran Service Officer Denoris Lane was recently selected as the GDVS Employee of the Quarter.

Lane has been with GDVS for 3 years. In addition to his duties as a VSO, Lane is currently a member of the 2024 GDVS Leadership Institute.

A native of Quitman, Georgia, Lane served in the US Army for 3 years and attained the rank of E4 before a medical discharge in 2016.

Lane’s honesty and integrity have established him as a dependable and reliable VSO, not only within the GDVS, but also within the veteran community in Lowndes County. He also works well with his GDVS coworkers, often sharing information or tips on how to get through a tricky claim.

With these high accolades, it is not surprising what always makes him smile is seeing a satisfied veteran and their family members and hearing their testimonials.

Lane truly shines when helping others. He greets every visitor with a smile and is ready to help with their questions, no matter how complicated the situation. VA staff at the Valdosta CBOC are confident veterans will be in good hands when referring people to the GDVS Valdosta office for more help.

When Lane takes a break from helping Georgia veterans, he enjoys fishing, seasonal hunting, and spending time with his family.

His advice to current and future VSOs?

“Be confident in your work, be patient, calm, and you will be successful.”

SHIELD YOUR DIGITAL SELF

Cyber scams are on the rise, and with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence, VA urges the military community to stay aware of predatory tactics which could impact benefits veterans and their beneficiaries receive.

Examples of AI scams include creating fake identities that may result in access to secure information; developing convincing voice or video messages that could be used to make fraud changes to direct deposit information; and creating emails to trick Veterans into giving away sensitive information.

VA provides tools and resources to help protect your data at digital.va.gov.

If you find suspicious activity with your account, contact the VA immediately at 1-800- 827-1000.

Supporting Veterans and Families

Help is available
when you need it most.



If you or someone you know needs help,
scan the code or submit a request at:
<https://gaveteransfoundation.org/get-help/>

During and after a crisis or natural disaster, Unite Us has dedicated teams to respond to requests for assistance.

Help is available for a variety of needs: food, water, personal care, recovery assistance referrals, and more.

SCORE RESOURCES FOR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

Did you know there are over 1.7 million veteran owned businesses across the nation?

There are more than 97,000 in Georgia alone.

If you own or plan to open a business, there are resources available to help you start successfully.

Free mentors and workshops are just a few tools which can help you get ahead and achieve your business goals.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development has gathered these resources into one easy to search location on their website!

Visit <https://georgia.org/small-business/resources-for-veterans> to learn more.

TRAVEL KIOSKS RETURN

Veterans will once again be able to use kiosks to file for reimbursement for travel expenses to and from their health appointments at VA health facilities.

VA began removing the kiosks in 2020 and set up an online application program called the Beneficiary Travel Self Service System (BTSSS).

However, both veterans and VA staff encountered problems submitting successful claims.

VA plans to continue updating and streamlining the reimbursement process in the coming months.

Veterans will also have the option to submit a paper reimbursement form to their local VA medical center or by mail, in addition to the kiosks.