



SUMMIT 2011 National Training Summit
on Women Veterans



Serving Veterans – State Roles

Barbara Ward

*Speaker Title Deputy Secretary, Women and
Minority Veterans Affairs, California Department of
Veterans Affairs*

Mission

To serve veterans and their families

SUMMIT
2011

Role Clarification

- Educate veterans, public members, VSOs, state agencies, non-profit agencies and legislators on the role of the state versus the role of the VA and DOD when issues arise
- Develop a strategic plan to outline department's organizational structure, functions of units/divisions, identify established priorities and measurements of performance

Typical Organizational Structures

- Veterans Services
- Home Loans
- Veterans Homes
- Legislative
- Women Veterans
- Minority Veterans

Major Challenges

- Misperception of the roles of state departments
- Budgetary Constraints
- Maintaining an awareness of current issues of all veterans
- Bridging the service gap through collaboration and developing partnerships
- Legislative Focus

Dealing with Challenges

- Educate stakeholders
- Advocate based upon priorities
- Maintain ongoing communications with veterans
- Identify, maintain and expand partnerships at state, federal and local community levels
- Promote visibility via technology

Effective Strategies

- Town Hall meetings and Forums
- Conduct Surveys
- Meet with legislators, attend hearings
- Partner with Veteran Service Organizations
- Participate in stand downs, veterans programs, and community sponsored programs
- Use technology as much as possible
- Support County Veteran Service Offices

Strategies Continued

- Collaborate with VSOs, VA, state agencies, non-profits and interested parties in serving veterans and their families
- Consistently search out new opportunities to bring about change

Successful Programs/Outcomes

- Veterans Courts
- Annual Conferences
- Regional Collaboratives
- Operations Welcome Home/EDD
- Talbots Gift Card Program
- Veterans Service Representatives Training Academy
- Clothing Donations – Homeless Women Veterans

Outcomes Continued

- Native American Veterans Representatives Training Program
- New Veterans Homes
- Employment Partnerships

Future Challenges

- More budgetary Constraints
- Increasing number of veterans in need of services
- Need for new legislation
- Closer Scrutiny of use of resources

Conclusion

- State roles will continue to vary but their mission will remain the same
- Future state funding will be more volatile based upon the economic climate
- Our fight must continue to ensure that veterans and their families receive the services they have earned and deserves
- Remember their fight is our fight

Questions and Answers