



Serving Those Who Served

Lancaster County veteran News

Issue 51

March 2016

\$182 Billion VA Budget

Care and Benefits for Veterans Strengthened

WASHINGTON – In his [FY 2017 budget](#), President Obama is proposing \$182.3 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Funding will continue to support the largest transformation in VA history; expand access to timely, high-quality health care and benefits; and advance efforts to end homelessness among Veterans.

“VA has before it one of the greatest opportunities in its history to transform the way it cares for our Veterans who nobly served and sacrificed for our Nation,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “As we work to become a more efficient, effective and responsive, Veteran-centric Department, we can’t do it alone; we need the help of Congress. This year, VA submitted over 100 legislative proposals, including 40 new proposals to better serve Veterans. Our goal is provide the best care to our Veterans while removing obstacles or barriers that prevent them from getting the care they deserve.”

Highlights from the President’s 2017 Budget request for VA

The FY 2017 budget includes \$78.7 billion in discretionary funding, largely for health care and \$103.6 billion for mandatory benefit programs such as disability compensation and pensions. The \$78.7 billion for discretionary spending is \$3.6 billion (4.9 percent) above the 2016 enacted level, including over \$3.6 billion in medical care collections from health insurers and Veteran copayments. The budget also requests \$70.0 billion, including collections, for the 2018 advance appropriations for medical care, an increase of \$1.5 billion and 2.1 percent above the 2017 medical care budget request. The request includes \$103.9 billion in 2018 mandatory advance appropriations for Compensation and Pensions, Readjustment Benefits and Veterans Insurance and Indemnities benefits programs in the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Health Care

With a medical care budget of \$68.6 billion, including collections, VA is positioned to continue expanding health care services to its millions of Veteran patients. Health care is being provided to over 922,000 Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn/Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) and Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS). Major spending categories within the health care budget are:

- \$12.2 billion for care in the community;
- \$8.5 billion for long-term care;
- \$7.8 billion for mental health;
- \$1.6 billion for homeless Veterans;
- \$1.5 billion for Hepatitis-C treatments;
- \$725 million for Caregivers;
- \$601 million for spinal cord injuries;
- \$284 million for traumatic brain injuries.



Calendar of Events:

- Mar 1 — Fort Lawn Veteran Service Grp
- Mar 7 — American Legion meeting @ 7:00
- Mar 14 — DAV meeting @ 7:00pm
- Mar 26 — IL VFW meeting @9:30am
- Mar 28 — Office Closed for Easter
- Mar 29 — MCL meeting
- Mar 29 — Rock Hill Armory, VA Workshop and Vietnam Commemoration

We have on site every Wednesday a VetCenter Counselor and every Thursday a SCWorks representative.

Contact Us:

Lancaster County VA
1033 West Meeting St
PO Box 1809
Lancaster SC 29721
Phone: 803-283-2469
Phone: 803-416-9497
VAOffice@lancastercountysc.net

Lawyers 4 Vets

For low income veterans

Lawyers 4 Vets connects lower-income Veterans living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines with local attorneys who provide one-on-one pro bono legal advice or representation. Beginning May 15, 2014, Lawyers 4 Vets will assist Veterans by appointment only with:

- ◆ Obtaining identification (Social Security, South Carolina ID, birth certificates)
- ◆ Child support and visitation issues in South Carolina
- ◆ Expungements and pardons in South Carolina
- ◆ Consumer protection
- ◆ Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney

Veterans seeking information about the clinic should call 1-877-289-6000.

Free counseling for war time veterans VetCenter

A counselor from the Vet Center is available twice a month in Lancaster for war time veterans and their dependents. The Vet Center offers a wide range of services to help you make a successful transition from military to civilian life. You have earned these benefits and there is no cost to you or your family members.

- Individual & group Counseling
- Family Counseling for military related
- Bereavement counseling for families
- Military sexual trauma
- Outreach & education
- Substance abuse assessment & referral
- Employment assessment & referral
- VBA benefits explanation & referral
- Screening & referral for medical issues



Highlights from 2017 Budget request

Other issues this budget will touch—cont. from page 1

Expanding Access

The President's Budget ensures that care and other benefits are available to Veterans when and where they need them. Among the programs that will expand access under the proposed budget are:

- \$12.2 billion for care in the community compared to \$10.5 billion in 2015, a 16 percent increase;
- \$1.2 billion in telehealth funding, which helps patients monitor chronic health care conditions and increases access to care, especially in rural and remote locations;
- \$515 million for health care services specifically designed for women, an increase of 8.5 percent over the present level;
- \$836 million for the activation of new and enhanced health care facilities;
- \$900 million for major and minor construction projects, including funding for seismic corrections, two new cemeteries, and two gravesite expansions; and
- \$171 million for improved customer service by providing an integrated services delivery platform.

To read more about what all benefits for veterans will be affected, please visit: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2746>

Tuesday, March 29, 2016

Rock Hill Armory | 126 Airport Road, 29732

A Day to Recognize, Honor & Thank Our Vietnam Veterans



Military Career & Resource Fair

11:00-2:00 p.m.

Employment | VA Benefits | Behavioral Health | ID Cards | Education
Financial & Legal Guidance | Family Assistance | Health & Wellness



Vietnam Veterans Commemoration & Pin Ceremony

1:00-1:30 p.m.

Honoring Veterans of the Vietnam War with a special 50th Anniversary ceremony, Veteran Listening Forum and Town Hall session



VA Claims Workshop

1:30-4:00 p.m.

Offering individual assistance to Veterans and Family Members

Free Accessible Parking | Free Admission | All Branches Welcome
Thanks to the following sponsors for supporting our Veterans and making these events possible.

Presented by Department of Veterans Affairs – Columbia VA Regional Office
in conjunction with SCNG Service Member & Family Care Directorate

QUESTIONS?

Career & Resource Fair 803.487.5757

Vietnam Veterans Commemoration 803.647.2905

VA Claims Workshop 803.984.4795



LARS Program

Now available for Local Veterans

Our office has partnered with the following Veterans Service Organizations; The American Legion Post 31 and the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 14, to provide free transportation to veterans in need.

At this time these organizations have purchased prepaid tickets that can be used for local trips only (grocery store, bank, local private doctor, etc.).

How to use this benefit?

You will need to contact our office at 803.283.2469 to obtain a ticket or two depending on if you need a round trip. These tickets do not expire. You will then have to call LARS at 803.285.6956 to schedule your reservation on their vehicle.

We do have a limited quantity of tickets and they will be issued on a first come first serve basis.

Charlotte VA Health Care Clinic

Opens in April 2016

3506 W. Tyvola Rd, Charlotte NC 28208

Services that will be provided in April:

Audiology	Primary Care
Endoscopy	Rotating Medical and Surgical Clinics
Imaging	Pharmacy
Laboratory	Primary Care
Mental Health	Primary Care
Minor Procedures	
Optometry	

Future Services:

Day Surgery
Dental Clinic
Dialysis
Infusion Clinic
Rehab Medicine

Lancaster DAV Van Schedule for March 2016:

Columbia:

Wednesday, Mar 2
 Thursday, Mar 3
 Wednesday, Mar 9
 Wednesday, Mar 16
 Wednesday, Mar 23
 Thursday, Mar 24

Rock Hill:

Friday, Mar 4
 Friday, Mar 25

Please note that these dates may be subject to change due to volunteer driver availability.

SC Works - Veterans Services

Do you fall in one of the following categories?

- A veteran with a service connected disability (have a percentage from VA)
- A veteran that is homeless or feel that you may be homeless
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or GED
- A veteran who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months
- A recently separated service member who has been unemployed for 27 weeks or more in the last 12 months or 18 to 24 years old

One on One Case Management and Individual Employment Plan

- Career/job counseling, local labor market information on jobs and employers in the area
- One on one assistance in tailoring resumes for area jobs
- Help with expanding your job search area and how to search
- Providing referral for jobs, family support, social service, and other community programs

If you would like to make an appointment to meet with a member of the SC Works Staff just call 803-313-7385 or come into a SC Works Office.

Michael E O'Donnell

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representative
 SC Department of Employment and Workforce—Veteran Services SC Works
 803-313-7385—Lancaster
 803-328-3881 Ext 110 — Rock Hill
modonnell@dew.sc.gov

SC Works

Are you work ready? Contact Lynda!

Lynda Burke

Veterans Coordinator Catawba/LVER
 SCDEW/SCWORKS
 705 North White Street
 Lancaster SC 29720
 803-313-7388 (work)
 803-287-5930 (cell)
lburke@dew.sc.gov

SC National Guard

Service Member and Family Care

Brad M. Ware is the Employment Advisor with the SC National Guard.

You may contact him at:
 National Guard Armory
 126 Airport Road
 Rock Hill, SC 29732
 Cell—803-288-2635

Email—Brad.m.ware.ctr@mail.mil

Meet Wayne “Hoss” Knight

Highlighting Lancaster County Veterans—One at a time



Hoss Knight proudly served in the USMC from December 1968 to December 1970. He enlisted at 16 years old. He chose USMC because his brother-in-law at the time was in the Marines, lost his leg in Vietnam and they were close. He also had a cousin that was in the Marines. It was a family affair.

During his time in service his MOS was plumbing and water supply. He went through boot camp at Paris Island, SC. He was then stationed at Camp Geiger in NC outside of Camp Lejeune. He later moved and was in the Staging Battalion at Camp Pendleton, jungle training for Vietnam. After the training he was split from his battalion and came back to a small camp inside camp Pendleton, Camp Horno, second infantry training regimen, Regimental Maintenance. They kept up the facilities and living quarters for the troops in training. He spent his time there and made Private First Class. He

was also recommended for Lance Corporal several times.

During his time in service he was asked to be a body escort for his cousin, Michael Robinson, who had lost his life in Vietnam.

Hoss was 17 when this happened. Michael’s family had requested that he escort their son home. Hoss was stationed at Camp Pendleton and flew to Dover Air Force Base. He was there when they transferred his cousin on and off the plane. He escorted him all the way to the funeral

home here in Lancaster.

“Michael was out on patrol and was shot. He only lived 24 hours. We grew

up together, so at the age of 17, this was really hard on me.” Hoss said.

Since leaving the service Hoss got married to Shenell McDonald Knight. Together they raised 2 boys and 2 girls. He has 10 grandchildren and 1 great grand with another one on the way.

Hoss is very active within our community. He currently serves as the Commander for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 14. He has held that position for the past 4 years. For 5 years now he has been the coordinator for Toys for Tots with the MCL in Lancaster. He is an active member of Douglas Road Baptist Church. He was also a DAV Volunteer van driver for 8 years and in the past have served as Third Junior Vice with the American Legion.

Hoss’s words of wisdom; “Make the best of it. I’m like a lot of people I wish I would have stayed in. My brother-in-law told me to always wear my uniform for what it is worth and it was worth a lot to me, so I wore it proudly.”

Every month we will highlight one of our own county’s veterans. If you want to be highlighted in this section or if you want to nominate someone, please contact 803-283-2469 or email vaoffice@lanastercountysc.net.



Critical Home Repair Program

Habitat for Humanity of Lancaster County has now received a grant for critical home repair for veterans and the elderly. If you are interested in more information or want an application please contact our office.

You can also call 803-283-1203 to speak to someone with Habitat for Humanity of Lancaster County. There are certain eligibility criteria that will need to be met.

Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your routing and account number along with the amount that will be deposited. If you are changing direct deposit you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.

The American Legion

The American Legion meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00pm .

The Mission of the American Legion is to provide service to our Veterans and their families and the communities they serve in.

If you are interested in becoming a member of The American Legion please call 803-283.2394.

Disabled American Veterans

We are very active in helping local veterans. Since July 2015 the DAV has spent over \$2200.00 helping veterans ranging from motel rooms for homeless veterans, to picking up and delivering medications. We have donated wheel chairs, walkers, crutches and batteries for electric wheel chairs. We work closely with Lancaster VA office and have supplied LARS tickets for veterans to use that services. Please all members come to the meetings—there is no limit what we can accomplish. Hopefully we can be more productive in 2016! Next Meeting Mar. 14 at 7:00pm.

Fort Lawn Veteran Service Group

Open to all Veterans who want to attend. We meet at the Fort Lawn Community Center the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. The address is 5554 Main St, Fort Lawn, SC 29714.

If you need more information please contact Jim Gladden at 803-320-3537 or Lynda Burke at 803-287-5930.

Marine Corps League

The Lancaster County Leather-necks—Detachment 1169 — Marine Corps League meets the last Tuesday of each month in our building at 347 Brooklyn Ave at 7:00pm. We welcome all Marines and FMF Corpsmen to join with us.

Billy Helms, Commandant

Veterans of Foreign War

We meet the first Thursday of every month at The American Legion. This meeting is held at 7:00pm. We would love to see all members attend these meeting. If you are interested in becoming a member please contact Tim Catoe, Quartermaster for VFW Post 5936, at 803-285-7199 or 803-320-4675. You can also email him at tim.catoe@comporium.com

Veterans of Foreign War

Indian Land Post 12136

Next meeting is 4th Saturday of the month at 9:30am.
Location: 8083 Charlotte Hwy, Indian Land, SC 29707
Additional Information can be found on our following websites:
[Www.indianlandvfw.org](http://www.indianlandvfw.org) or www.facebook.com/indianlandvfw.com
Feel free to contact John Marker—Ph: 704.843.6930



The U.S. Department of Treasury, in partnership with the SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority and SC Housing Corp., has made over \$295 million available to help eligible South Carolina homeowners avoid serious first mortgage delinquency and foreclosures.

Qualifications

SC Help is intended to assist borrowers who are facing first mortgage delinquency or possible foreclosure. There is no household income limit, the property must be an owner-occupied primary residence, applicants must have a minimum 24 months homeownership history and applicants do NOT have to be delinquent.

How to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to apply electronically at: www.schelp.com. Applicants without the internet may call 1-855-435-7472, toll free number for assistance. There is NO FEE required at any point during the SC HELP process. Once you have made an appointment with a representative you can meet at the SC Works office on White St, Lancaster.

Check Your Rep

How can you check if your representative is accredited with the Office of General Counsel? Just follow these simple steps to check to make sure you are working with an accredited representative:

1. Go to <http://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>
2. You choose between attorney, claims agent or VSO representative
3. Enter in Last Name and State
4. Click Search
5. Click on your representatives name
6. A list will display showing all accreditations that person has.

*****If your representative is not listed then they are not accredited with a veterans service organization*****

About Our Office

This Office is employed by Lancaster County not the VA. The Lancaster County Veterans Affairs Office is an advocate for veterans and/or their surviving dependents to provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Hospitals. The Veterans Affairs Office assists former and present members of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: Service-Connected disability and Non-Service Connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits.

DAV Van

Due to low volunteer drivers we will only go 3 days a week.

If you need to schedule a ride on our DAV van please call 803-283-2469. Currently we are scheduled to go to Columbia on Wednesdays & Thursdays and Rock Hill on Fridays. Please note that we will need a 48 hour notice for you to be scheduled to ride this van. We only pick up veterans if you live on the way to Columbia or Rock Hill. We can only pick up riders that do not have any other way to meet here in the parking lot. We have to coordinate with volunteer drivers.

Want to receive this newsletter by email? Contact
VAOffice@lancastercountysc.net to
be put on the mailing list.



Office Staff

Robin Ghent

- Veteran Affairs Director, Lancaster County
- President, SCACVAO (South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers)
- Board member for South Carolina Veteran Advocacy Council
- Board member for South Carolina Veterans Trust Fund
- Legislative Committee member for National Association County Veterans Service Officers

Accredited with:

1. National Association of County Veteran Service Officers
2. South Carolina Division of Veteran Affairs
3. The American Legion
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
6. Vietnam Veterans of America
7. Retired Enlisted Association

**Received the appropriate training to be accredited and to have access to the Federal VA Claims system

Beth Raffaldt

- Deputy Director Veterans Affairs, Lancaster County
- Public Relations Chairperson, SCACVAO (South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers)

Accredited with:

1. National Association of County Veteran Service Officers
2. South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs
3. The American Legion
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Vietnam Veterans of America
6. Retired Enlisted Association
7. Military Order of the Purple Heart

**Received the appropriate training to be accredited and to have access to the Federal VA Claims system

Tiffany King

- Secretary/DAV Van Coordinator for Veterans Affairs, Lancaster County

