



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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October 19, 2010

Debbie Schuffenhauer  
Associate Director  
Washington Commission for National & Community Service  
P.O. Box 43113  
Olympia, Washington 98504-3113

Dear Debbie:

I would like to share with you an opportunity for veterans to continue their mission through a civilian national service experience that enables them to make a positive difference while supporting their reintegration back into the community following their military service assignments.

Authorized under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the legislation directed the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to increase service by and for veterans. In 2009, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs partnered with the Washington Commission for National and Community Service to launch the first federally-funded Vet Corps program in the nation to engage veterans in AmeriCorps national service positions.

In its first year of operation, 46 veterans were enrolled in Washington's Vet Corps program. As AmeriCorps members they helped more than 3,000 veterans understand and maximize their G.I. benefits and made referrals to other available resources; started 15 vet clubs on college campuses to create a safe and supportive community where veterans could learn how to navigate the higher education system and network with their fellow veterans; conducted in-takes and out-takes on 300 soldiers in the Warrior Transition Battalion to assess their needs and then follow-up upon discharge to assure connection to critical services; and assisted dozens of homeless veterans with referrals to housing and other social services. In year two, membership was expanded to include not only veterans, but military spouses and widows.

As you can see, our inaugural year yielded many accomplishments. But the numbers are not the only story. There is growing evidence that engagement in community is good for the mind, body and spirit. This holds true for all human beings – including our veterans. I hope you, too, will see the benefits of this program and embrace a partnership with Vet Corps in your own states.

For more information, please contact WDVA Program Manager, Mark Fischer at (360) 725-2224.

Sincerely,

John E. Lee