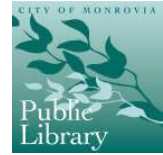




**CITY OF MONROVIA
LIBRARY BOARD
AGENDA REPORT**



DEPARTMENT: Community Services
Library Division

MEETING DATE: June 24 2021

PREPARED BY: Mabel Cross,
Adult Services Librarian/ Veterans Coordinator

AGENDA LOCATION: AR-1

TITLE: 2021 Veterans Resource Center Update

OBJECTIVE: To update the Library Board on the status of the Veterans Resource Center

BACKGROUND: *Veterans Connect @ the Library* is a federally funded program from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the California State Library. The Monrovia Public Library is one of over 63 libraries in California with a dedicated Veterans Resource Center. In partnership with the *California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)*, the Veterans Resource Center helps service members and their families learn about state and federal education, employment, housing, health, disability, and other benefits that may be available through their military service. Providing information to reintegrate veterans in to the local workforce and our communities in order to provide veterans the quality of life of other Americans, is a special focus. The goals for this project are to:

1. Provide veteran benefits and local service information to veterans and their family members, and links to other organizations serving veterans, especially local *County Veteran Service Offices, CalVet, and the Federal Veterans Affairs Office (VA)*.
2. Increase registered veterans in the *CalVet Reintegration System*.
3. Increase California veteran benefit claims.
4. Connect veterans and their families to library resources.

In order to meet these goals, the Veterans Resource Center is supported by a staff member and seven *CalVet*-trained volunteers who provide assistance to veterans, links to local veteran's resources, and access to technology, books and other library materials. Programming and materials are generously supported by the *Friends of the Monrovia Public Library*.

ANALYSIS: Currently in its fifth year of operation, the *Veterans Connect @ the Library* program continues to broaden outreach efforts and strengthen support to local service members and their families by partnering with veteran's service providers, organizations, agencies, elected officials and local groups serving veterans. In March 2020, the Veterans Resource Center office closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic so staff and volunteers transitioned to providing virtual services. Staff meets virtually with volunteers to provide support, networking opportunities, trainings, workshops, and updates on current resources. Staff promotes VetNow, an online platform which allows veterans to access resources and offers live veteran benefit navigators, live job coaching, a resume lab, job tools, and college skills resources. The local *Veterans Affairs (VA) Outreach Specialist and Veterans Service Officer*, normally onsite, also transitioned to virtual assistance. Staff is coordinating with the *County of Los Angeles Veterans Services Officer* to return to the Veterans Resource Center for onsite appointments.

AR-1

The pandemic, library closure, and social distancing requirements resulted in *Veterans Connect @ the Library* and *CalVet* transitioning to virtual conference workshops and training for staff and volunteers. Virtual conference meetings and trainings made for creative methods to learn, meet & work with veterans, veterans providers, agencies and organizations. This year staff increased online resources to women veterans, including *Women in Military Service for America Memorial*, *California Women Veterans Leadership Council*, *Service Women's Action Network*, and *Women's Social Justice Network*. Staff also helped connect local women veterans with larger support groups such as the *Women's Veterans Alliance*, which hosts an annual conference for women service members. In order to expand veterans resources, staff attended virtual monthly meetings of the *Los Angeles Veteran Collaborative* which is a network of private and government agencies working to improve the lives of veterans, service members and military families in Los Angeles County. Staff also networked with the *California Department of Veterans Affairs, Minority and Underrepresented Veterans Division* (MUVD). The library regularly partners with the local chapter of the *American Legion Women's Auxiliary*. Staff continued partnerships with Assemblymember Chris Holden, Senator Anthony Portantino, Congresswoman Judy Chu, and Congresswoman Grace Napolitano in providing veterans' resources in the San Gabriel Valley.

Outreach

- American Legion Women's Auxiliary Hanes sock drive project, March 10th 2020
- Foothill Workforce Veterans Career Expo, March 12 2020
- City of Monrovia's Field of Honor, November 9 - November 13, 2020
- Veterans Connect @ the Library Peer to Peer Panel, May 21, 2020
- California Library Association Conference Panel, May 13, 2021

Veteran Connections

- 698 veterans and their family members served
- 1,395 VetNow online sessions

Virtual Meetings/Trainings/Workshops

- 164 virtual workshops, meetings and trainings
- 266 hours of workshops, meetings and trainings

Volunteers

- 7 CalVet trained Benefit Coaches
- 484 volunteer service hours
- \$14,485.80 estimated value of volunteer hours

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Library Board move to receive and file AR-1 2021 Veterans Resource Center Update.

LIBRARY BOARD ACTION REQUIRED: If the Library Board concurs, the appropriate action would be a motion: ***Receive and file report AR-1 2021 Veterans Resource Center Update***

AR-1