



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES

600 Washington Street, 7<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02111

TEL: (617) 210-5480 FAX: (617) 210-5883 TTY: (617) 210-5883

[www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans)

**MAURA T. HEALEY**  
GOVERNOR

**JON SANTIAGO, MD, MPH**  
SECRETARY

**KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

December 2, 2024

Steven T. James  
House Clerk  
State House, Room 145  
Boston, MA 02133

Michael D. Hurley  
Senate Clerk  
State House, Room 335  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Clerk James and Clerk Hurley,

Pursuant to Section 115 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024, please find enclosed the annual report from the Women Veterans Network (WVN) within the Executive Office of Veterans Services (EOVS).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Santiago".

Jon Santiago

CC:

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Representative Aaron Michlewitz, House Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator John Velis, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs  
Representative Gerard Cassidy, House Chair, Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs

## **Legislative Mandate**

The following report is issued pursuant to Section 115 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024, summarized as follows:

*...Annually, not later than November 1, the office shall submit a report to the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs, which shall include, but not be limited to: (i) demographic information on women veterans in the commonwealth; (ii) summation of veteran outreach events designed to connect women veterans; (iii) women veteran benefits documents created by the network; and (iv) upcoming in-person events organized or identified by the network.*

## Contents

Overview of the WVN .....	3
(i) Massachusetts Women Veteran Demographics .....	4
(ii) Outreach Events Overview .....	5
(iii) WVN Benefits Documents.....	8
(iv) Upcoming In-Person Events.....	9
Addendums.....	10

## **Overview of the Massachusetts Women Veterans Network**

In recognition of the unique needs of women veterans, Congress established the Center for Women Veterans within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1994. This initiative aimed to ensure that female veterans would receive equal benefits and services comparable to their male counterparts. In 1997, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created the Women Veterans Network (WVN) to provide additional support to women veterans through programming, connections to resources, and advocacy. Under the state's Executive Office of Veterans Services, the WVN continues to collaborate with service organizations, veteran advocates, the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, and other organizations to raise awareness about women veteran issues in Massachusetts.

The mission of WVN is to empower women veterans by ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions acknowledged, and their wellbeing enhanced through education, advocacy, and collaboration. The vision is to foster an environment that promotes the success and wellbeing of women veterans in all aspects of their lives, including career development, personal growth, and overall fulfillment. The WVN's values are Advocacy, Support, Progressiveness, Inclusion, Respect, and Equity (ASPIRE).

The WVN offers programming to women veterans that includes an annual Women Veterans Network Conference, Women Veterans Recognition Day Luncheon, the Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony, a series for financial education and wellbeing, family events, and co-sponsored events with community partners such as film screenings and other social gatherings. These events allow for women veterans to build a sense of camaraderie with fellow women veterans as well as with community service providers.

Additionally, the WVN visits communities across the state to identify women veterans and share resources and support services with women veterans and their loved ones. Outreach would not be possible without continued partnerships with federal, state and local government stakeholders as well as community organizations. The partnerships and direct veteran outreach serve to inform the WVN and EOVS and have resulted in improved advocacy for resources and more programming.

In January of 2024, the WVN launched the Women Veterans Network Collaborative, an evolution of the former Women Veterans Network Steering Committee. This change resulted from feedback by women veteran leaders who sought for more opportunities to engage, share information, and network. The Collaborative meets quarterly to advocate for the needs of women veterans, support major programming, and provide guidance. The Collaborative is made up of fifteen (15) women veterans and allies and has met 4 times. Membership is diverse across ethnicity, military branch, and conflict era. In addition to providing advocacy and guidance, members volunteered at the annual Women Veteran Conference, the Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon, and the Deborah Sampson Award ceremony.

## Massachusetts Women Veteran Demographics

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Massachusetts has 17,383 female veterans, making up approximately 8% of the total veteran population of the state.<sup>1</sup> Women veterans are overwhelmingly white, making up 84% of the female veteran population. Women veterans also lag behind male veterans in median income.<sup>2</sup>

Massachusetts Female Veteran by Age	
18 to 34 years	2,715
35 to 54 years	5,360
55 to 64 years	3,996
65 to 74 years	3,260
75 years and over	2,052
<b>Total:</b>	<b>17,383</b>

(U.S. Census Bureau)

Massachusetts Female Veterans by Age and Race/Ethnicity							
	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	American Indian/Alaska Native	Other	Two or More Races
18 to 34 years	2051	255	122	0	0	205	156
35 to 54 years	4229	162	468	0	0	225	744
55 to 64 years	3470	176	299	32	0	74	244
65 to 74 years	2849	240	21	0	5	0	171
75 years and over	2052	0	0	0	0	0	0
	14651	833	910	32	5	504	1315

(U.S. Census Bureau)

Median Income	
Male Veterans	\$57,688.00
Female Veterans	\$53,337.00

(U.S. Census Bureau)

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.-a). *Sex by age by veteran status for the civilian population 18 Years and Over*. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B21001, 2023. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved October 16, 2024, from [https://data.census.gov/table/ACS1Y2023.B21001?q=veterans female massachusetts](https://data.census.gov/table/ACS1Y2023.B21001?q=veterans%20female%20massachusetts)

## Outreach Events Overview

Executive Office of Veterans Services Massachusetts Women Veterans Network	
<b>November 2023</b>	
November 2, 2023	Thursday Talks: Effective Saving Strategies with Hanscom Federal Credit Union (Dorchester, Massachusetts)
November 15, 2023	Giving Thanks to Our Female Veterans with Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center
November 16, 2023	Thursday Talks: Applying Lean Thinking and Problem-Solving to Your Personal Finances with Hanscom Federal Credit Union (Dorchester, Massachusetts and online)
November 18, 2023	Plymouth Thanksgiving Day Parade participation
<b>January 2024</b>	
January 18, 2024	Thursday Talks: Women and Investing with Hanscom Federal Credit Union (Littleton, Massachusetts and online)
<b>February 2024</b>	
February 29, 2024	Creating Calmness in Stressful Times with the American Red Cross (Online)
<b>March 2024</b>	
March 14, 2024	Moment by Moment: Mindfulness Explained with Fitchburg Veterans Services
March 20, 2024	Six Triple Eight Documentary Screening (Cambridge, Massachusetts)
March 28, 2024	Six Triple Eight Documentary Screening (Billerica, Massachusetts)
<b>April 2024</b>	
April 11, 2024	Connecting with Kids with the American Red Cross (Bedford, Massachusetts)
April 11, 2024	Bridging the Gap: Supporting Bay State Veterans' Transition, co-sponsored with the VA (Lincoln, Massachusetts)
April 27, 2024	Celebrating our Heroes: EOVS Family Open House with the YMCA (Charlestown, Massachusetts and online)
<b>May 2024</b>	
May 4, 2024	16 <sup>th</sup> Annual Women Veterans Network Conference (Leominster, Massachusetts)
<b>June 2024</b>	
June 12, 2024	Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon (Quincy, Massachusetts)
June 13, 2024	Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony (Boston, Massachusetts)
June 14, 2024	USS Constitution Turn Around for Women Veterans with the United States Navy and City of Boston (Charlestown, Massachusetts)
June 27, 2024	Stress Solutions with the American Red Cross (Online)
<b>September 2024</b>	
September 13, 2024	Healing Modalities: Options for Self-Care with Franklin Veterans Services (Franklin, Massachusetts)
September 18, 2024	OBTT Workshops: Marketing Yourself and Understanding Resume Essentials. With Tailored for Success (Cambridge, Massachusetts)
<b>October 2024</b>	
October 3, 2024	Spirituality: An Exploration (Online)
October 4, 2024	Hanscom Federal Credit Union: Escape Room with WVN Collaborative Members (Burlington, Massachusetts)
October 30, 2024	Wednesday Wellness: Defusing Anger with the American Red Cross (Online)

## Event Highlights

Since October of 2023, the WVN has hosted 18 events and attended 30 events. This reflects a 150% increase in the number of events hosted and attended by the WVN over 2023. The Women Veterans Network provides women veterans with information about programs and services through direct engagement, conversations, and brochures. These events have allowed the WVN to connect with a record number of women veterans. The WVN participates in several statewide collaboratives that share veteran information and advocate for veteran issues.

Each year, the WVN hosts its flagship event known as the Annual Women Veterans Network Conference. This year, the 16th annual conference occurred on May 4, 2024, in Leominster, Massachusetts. The theme of the conference was “Honoring our Journeys” to embrace the many unique military experiences and contributions of service. There were 117 in-person attendees, over 20 online participants, and over 20 volunteers. Forty exhibitors provided information about services and benefits available to women veterans. This year’s speaking program included Lieutenant Governor Kimberley Driscoll, Senator John Cronin, Representatives Natalie Higgins and Joan Meschino, Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella, Jooyi Ryan, USCG, Commander (Retired), and a keynote delivered by Rashaun Morris, USCG, Master Chief Petty Officer (Retired). The conference also featured twelve breakout sessions as follows:

- Session 1: Melting Back into Society with Micaila Britto
- Session 2: Women Veterans Advisory Committee Listening Session
- Session 3: Job Strategies and On-the-Spot Interviews with OBTT
- Session 4: Janette Negele and her Therapy Dog Asti
- Session 5: Financial Wellness Roundtable with Sue Katz, Hanscom Federal Credit Union
- Session 6: Mind and Body Workshop with the American Red Cross
- Session 7: Marketing Yourself with OBTT\* (Part 1)
- Session 8: Massages & Reiki Healing
- Session 9: Creating a Budget with Sue Katz, Hanscom Federal Credit Union
- Session 10: Mind and Body Workshop with the American Red Cross
- Session 11: Marketing Yourself with OBTT\* (Part 2)
- Session 12: Massages & Reiki Healing

The WVN also hosted the first ever Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon on June 12, 2024. This new event attracted over 80 women veterans and guests. The keynote speech was delivered by Lovelle Seymour, Coordinator of Veterans Resources with UMass Boston and United States Air Force veteran. This year’s theme was “Your Time” and focused on wellness and self-care.

Lastly, the WVN hosted the 19th Annual Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony on June 13, 2024. This year, 6 women veterans were nominated. The 2024 recipient of the Deborah Sampson Award was Mary-dith Tuitt, a Navy veteran and active member of the Massachusetts women veteran community. The ceremony featured remarks from Governor Maura Healey, Executive Office of Veterans Services Deputy Secretary Andrea Gayle-Bennett, and Dr. Jenny D’Olympia, the 2023 Deborah Sampson award recipient.

<b>Executive Office of Veterans Services Massachusetts Women Veterans Network</b>	
<b>February 2024</b>	
February 24, 2024	Stars and Stripes in Space (Billerica, Massachusetts)
February 24, 2024	Thunderbirds Hockey Game (Springfield, Massachusetts)
<b>April 2024</b>	
April 4, 2024	Veterans Resource Fair (Tewksbury, Massachusetts)
<b>May 2024</b>	
May 18, 2024	Sharing Kindness Suicide Awareness Walk (Hyannis, Massachusetts)
May 19, 2024	OCS of Massachusetts High School Enlistee Recognition Ceremony (Foxboro, Massachusetts)
<b>June 2024</b>	
June 15, 2024	Women Veterans Appreciation Meal (Billerica, Massachusetts)
June 29, 2024	Town of Bellingham PrideFest (Bellingham, Massachusetts)
<b>July 2024</b>	
July 13, 2024	Veterans Music Festival (Quincy, Massachusetts)
July 27, 2024	2024 Run to Home Base (Boston, Massachusetts)
July 30, 2024	Yankee Homecoming Veterans Resource Fair (Newburyport, Massachusetts)
<b>August 2024</b>	
August 17, 2024	Pride in Service: Worcester Expo (Worcester, Massachusetts and online)
<b>September 2024</b>	
September 4, 2024	Veterans 1:1 (Foxboro, Massachusetts)
September 7, 2024	Worcester Pride Festival (Worcester, Massachusetts)
September 10, 2024	HERO Act Open House (Marshfield, Massachusetts)
September 13, 2024	The Big E (Springfield, Massachusetts)
September 17, 2024	VNOC Veterans Stand Down (Haverhill, Massachusetts)
September 17, 2024	Pride in Service: Worcester Exploration (Worcester, Massachusetts)
September 20, 2024	Greater Boston Stand Down (Boston, Massachusetts)
September 21, 2024	Brockton Veterans Expo (Brockton, Massachusetts)
September 22, 2024	New Hampshire Women Veterans Conference (Rindge, New Hampshire)
September 25, 2024	Veterans Career Connection (Bridgewater, Massachusetts)
September 25, 2024	Senator Finegold's Grants Exp (North Andover, Massachusetts)
September 27, 2024	Cape Cod Stand Down (Hyannis, Massachusetts)
<b>October 2024</b>	
October 6, 2024	Falling for our Sheroes (Fall River, Massachusetts)
October 12, 2024	Monson Veterans Fall Festival (Monson, Massachusetts)
October 14, 2024	Indigenous Peoples Day Newton (Newton, Massachusetts)
October 19, 2024	Veterans Fishing Derby (North Attleboro, Massachusetts)
October 21–23, 2024	Annual Veterans Service Officer Training (Leominster, Massachusetts)
October 24, 2024	Springfield Technical Community College Resource, Career and Transfer Fair (Springfield, Massachusetts)
October 25, 2024	Billerica Veterans Services Halloween Party



## **Women Veterans Benefits Documents**

The WVN continues to engage women veterans throughout the Commonwealth. Multiple WVN documents have been created to outline benefits, increase knowledge of services, and offer opportunities to join WVN network. Below is a summation of the documents developed by the WVN with corresponding examples included in addendums.

The WVN produces a monthly electronic newsletter of upcoming events and resources that is emailed to all WVN members. Archives of past newsletters can be found on the WVN website (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-women-veterans-network>).

The WVN produced a brochure that shares the mission, vision, and history of the WVN, as well as information about how to join the network. The brochure includes contact information, including a phone number, email, QR code, and website (Addendum A).

The WVN launched an online application to join the network. This application is open to all women veterans and is accessible on the WVN website. (Addendum B)

The WVN created an application for the newly launched Women Veterans Network Collaborative. This collaborative is an advisory council of women veterans that provide guidance and leadership for the WVN. This application is available online for women veterans interested in serving a one-year term (Addendum C).

The WVN also manages the Deborah Sampson Award application. This application is for the annual Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony, an award honoring an exemplary woman veteran, held every June. This application is accessible online on the WVN's website (Addendum D).

The Massachusetts Women Veterans Network website is rich with information for women veterans, state and federal agencies, community partners and other stakeholders. In February 2024, the WVN website was revamped to include a robust resources section and improve the display of upcoming events, updates and the WVN Newsletter archives. Women Veterans Network website: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-women-veterans-network>

## **Upcoming In-person Events**

### *March 2025: Annual Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon*

This event provides a heartwarming tribute to the brave women of Massachusetts who have served and includes a keynote speaker and opening ceremony.

### *May 2025: WVN Annual Conference*

The annual conference provides women veterans with an opportunity to meet, network, and learn about updates from the Executive Office of Veterans Services. A typical conference includes an opening ceremony, afternoon guest speakers, multiple breakout sessions, and opportunities for women veterans to build community. The conference often hosts a large number of exhibitors from the veteran community, including the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, various state programs, non-profit organizations, and veteran community groups. The conference is staffed by EOVS employees and attracts a contingent of volunteers. The conference is accessible to all women veterans and includes a virtual option.

### *June 2025: Deborah Sampson Award Ceremony*

Hosted in Memorial Hall at the Massachusetts State House, this annual award ceremony pays homage to those who exemplify the spirit of Deborah Sampson. Named after the revolutionary war hero who disguised herself as a man to fight for her country, this ceremony celebrates individuals who embody her indomitable spirit, resilience, and dedication to service. The recipient of this esteemed award is recognized for their extraordinary contributions and selfless acts of service. From military heroes to community champions, these individuals inspire others with their unwavering commitment to making a difference. The ceremony includes the presentation of the Deborah Sampson Award, captivating stories of bravery and sacrifice, and the commemoration of the legacy of one of America's first female soldiers.

## Addendum A – Women Veterans Network Brochure



### Our History

In recognition of the unique needs of women veterans, Congress established the Center for Women Veterans within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1994. This initiative aimed to ensure that female veterans would receive equal benefits and services comparable to their male counterparts.

In 1997, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created Women Veterans Network (WVN) to provide additional support to women veterans through programming, connections to resources, and advocacy. Under the state's Executive Office of Veteran Services, the WVN continues to collaborate with service organizations, veterans' advocates, the VA and other organizations to raise awareness about women veterans' issues in Massachusetts.



### Our Mission

The Women's Veterans Network's (WVN) mission is to empower women veterans by ensuring their voices are heard, their contributions acknowledged, and their well-being enhanced through education, advocacy, and collaboration.



## Contact Us

- +1 (617) 210-5480
- EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov
- mass.gov/womenveterans
- @MAWomenVets

Ready to Join?  
Scan Our QR Code!



### Why Join?

- Receive the WVN monthly newsletter
- Network with other female veterans, including the annual WVN Conference
- Make connections to resources in your community
- Programming such as golf outings, wellness, town halls, and more!



# WOMEN VETERANS NETWORK



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE of VETERANS SERVICES**



### Our Vision

To foster an environment that promotes the success and well-being of women veterans in all aspects of their lives, including career development, personal growth, and overall fulfillment.

## Addendum B – Women Veterans Network Application

Be counted as a woman veteran in the Commonwealth! Join a network of fellow women veterans & learn about the things you're interested in like benefits, resources, upcoming events, & more!



Please provide us with some general information so we can best serve you.

Name\*

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
First Name	Initial (optional)	Last Name

Date of Birth\*

Email\*

Phone\*

City/Town\*

County

Mailing Address\*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
City	State	ZIP Code

Were/are you a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?\*

- Yes  
 No

Which branch did you serve with?

- Army  
 Air Force  
 Coast Guard  
 Navy  
 Marine Corps  
 National Guard/Reserve Component  
 Space Force

What are you interested in? Select all that apply.

- VA Women Health Clinics  
 VA Benefits  
 Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Support  
 WVN Monthly Newsletters  
 Meeting fellow Women Veterans  
 Upcoming WVN Events  
 Learning about the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans  
 Employment & Career Readiness  
 MASSVETS Financial Benefits  
 Housing Resources  
 Legal Resources  
 Education Benefits/Tuition Waivers  
 Food Resources  
 Other

**Submit Form**

Addendum C – Women Veterans Network Collaborative Application



Please complete the form to join the WVN Collaborative. All applications will be reviewed by EOVS Leadership.

\* Indicates required question

1. Name \*

First and last name

2. Preferred Pronouns

3. Email \*

4. Phone number \*

5. Address \*

Employment and Military Service

6. Current Employer \*

7. Job Title \*

8. Veteran

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

9. Retiree

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

10. Branch of Service

*Check all that apply.*

Air Force

Army

Coast Guard

Navy

Marine Corps

National Guard

Reserves

Space Force

11. Component

*Check all that apply.*

- Active
- Reserves
- National Guard

12. Dates of Service

13. Memberships of other Veterans Organizations


14. Additional Information (optional)


---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE of  
VETERANS SERVICES**

**2024  
MASSACHUSETTS  
WOMAN  
VETERAN OF THE  
YEAR**

The Deborah Sampson Award proudly recognizes a Female Veteran who has gone above and beyond to serve her fellow Women Veterans throughout the year. The Deborah Sampson Award is presented to the recipient at the annual Women Veterans Appreciation Day Ceremony.





## Deborah Sampson Award Official Nomination Form

Deadline for nominations is **April 26, 2024**

Any nominations received after this date will not be reviewed

### Name of Nominee:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Last Name

Click or tap here to enter text.

First Name

Nominee's Address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Nominee's Telephone:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Nominee's Email Address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Use the next page of this form to complete the questions below.  
Please note that the more information you provide the better we can evaluate your  
nominated candidate.**

The nominee must be a woman who resides in Massachusetts. The nominee must have served on active duty for the U.S. Military, Reserves or National Guard. It is essential to include answers to the following:

1. Provide an overview of the nominee's military service, awards and pioneering efforts for women in the military.
2. Describe any personal sacrifices or hardships the nominee endured in order to serve the military.
3. Please specify the nominee's accomplishments toward the enhancement of female veterans through community service and participation in veterans' organizations.
4. Why does this nominee merit special recognition as an Outstanding Woman Veteran? Please be specific.

Please provide a written explanation of why you nominated this person. You can enter this information on the next page of the nomination form, or in an attached document.

### Nominator's Information

Name:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Email Address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Return nomination form to Women Veterans Network

**Mail**

**Executive Office Veteran  
Services**

Women Veterans Network  
600 Washington Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02111

**Email**

EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov

For more information call 781-308-9682 or email: [EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov](mailto:EOVSWomenVets@mass.gov)

**Name of Nominee:**

**Reason for Nomination**