

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

July 12, 2023

Olympia: Washington Department of Veterans Affairs' Digital Navigator Program completes its grant cycle and exceeds expectations

The WDVA Digital Navigator Program is a grant-funded program through the Department of Commerce. It provides eligible Veterans or their families with the tools (a kit containing talk, text, and data through T-Mobile, a laptop, and a smartphone with a hotspot) and digital literacy training allowing them to connect to earned benefits such as disability compensation or pension, healthcare, and other services.

Veterans or their families in Washington received kits that included a cellphone, laptop, and internet connectivity. The program distributed 1,230 kits, exceeding the grant requirement of 1,000 kits by June 30.

"I am incredibly proud of our team's commitment and effort. The success of the program reflects their dedication to *Serving Those Who Served*. Veterans can now easily connect to their earned benefits and pursue personal or professional goals," said David Puentes, WDVA Director. "We are thankful for the opportunity this Department of Commerce grant provided which has already had a positive impact on the lives of veterans and their families."



Digital Navigators, Vet Corps members, and WDVA staff traveled to 38 locations to distribute kits since the first distribution in March. They also assisted with intake forms, equipment training and provided information to access additional resources based on their skill level, needs, and lifestyle.



Veterans who received Digital Navigator kits shared the following testimonials,

"Shortly after I received my phone, my primary phone service group plan was disconnected. The phone you gave me allowed me to stay in contact with my family and potential employers. I would be totally disconnected without it. As a matter of fact, I am using it to write this right now." – U.S. Navy Veteran

"The phone and internet access, and the Chromebook made an incredible difference in my life. I was able to send a secure message to my mental health provider to refill my medication and I'm able to check my bank account!" – U.S. Army Veteran.

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Currently, all new applications are being placed on a waitlist until renewed grant funding has been confirmed by the Department of Commerce. Veterans or their family members are still encouraged to continue applying. If additional funding for the program is acquired, kit distribution will resume to those already on the list.

"Access to the internet doesn't help if you aren't familiar with how to use the internet," said Washington State Broadband Office Director Mark Vasconi. "The WDVA and their digital navigator program have done incredible work to connect veterans and their families to the devices and training needed to meaningfully participate in the digital world."



For more information about the program or to apply, call 1-800-562-2308 or visit [Digital Navigator Program | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

To learn more about the Washington State Department of Commerce visit [Washington State Department of Commerce](#)

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