



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VetsGO helping local veterans overcome transportation challenges

Free online ride-search tool connects veterans to more than 70 transportation services in Central Puget Sound

Redmond, WA – Veterans and their families living in Central Puget Sound now have help when it comes to navigating a sometimes overwhelming combination of travel alternatives, thanks to a new Hopelink service called VetsGO. The veterans transportation website (www.vets-go.com) helps veterans, service members and their families discover the range of transportation options available to them in the Central Puget Sound, and includes access to more than 70 public and private transportation services in three Central Puget Sound counties: King, Pierce, and Snohomish.

Collectively, the three-county region – stretching from Everett to Seattle to Tacoma – is home to more than 264,000 veterans, which represents 45 percent of the veteran population in Washington state. And with an increasing number of veterans, transitioning service members and their families facing transportation challenges due to age, income, or disability, VetsGO is helping more veterans connect to healthcare, employment, education, and community services.

A key feature of the free VetsGO website is the Find-a-Ride tool. By selecting the trip's origin, destination, vehicle type preference, accessibility needs, age and rider eligibility status (veteran, Medicaid, Paratransit), site users receive a filtered list of transportation providers – including specialized transportation services – based on their particular needs.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the number of veterans with a service-connected disability has been on the rise; currently totaling more than 44,000 in the three-county Central Puget Sound region. While many of these veterans seek care from the Seattle and American Lake VA Medical Centers and clinics, capacity limitations of the VA transportation programs have made access to care more challenging.

Hopelink CEO Lauren Thomas said VetsGO will help veterans learn about which transportation services are available to them.

“In addition to providing a single online and mobile-friendly tool to simplify the search for transportation options, a key goal of the VetsGO website is to increase awareness and access to different transportation options, particularly for those with disabilities and lower incomes,” Thomas said.



Access to healthcare, employment, education and community services can be challenging for aging and transitioning veterans as well. Older veterans may no longer drive and transitioning service members may need to share a single car in their household.

“The primary thing that I see that our younger transitioning vets are interested in is having a job,” said David Waggoner, Vietnam-era veteran and Commander of VFW Post 3436. Having access to transportation options can often be a critical factor in obtaining employment.

Navigating the fragmented web of transportation services can be difficult and confusing. By providing a gateway to multiple transportation options on a single website – including community vans and shuttles, public transit, volunteer drivers, private rideshare and specialized transportation services – VetsGO simplifies the search for transportation so veterans can more easily access medical care, employment, education and vital community services.

VetsGO also connects veterans to a number of valuable travel tools and veterans resources. Popular travel tools include a real-time traffic map, VA transportation resources, travel training and instructional videos, trip planners and transit alerts.

ABOUT VETSGO

VetsGO is a free online resource to help veterans, service members and their families discover the range of transportation options available to them in the Central Puget Sound. VetsGO is a service of Hopelink and is made possible by a grant from the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative and local partnerships with Washington State Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, King County Metro, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, and other partners.

ABOUT HOPELINK

Since 1971, Hopelink has served homeless and low-income families, children, seniors and people with disabilities in north and east King County by promoting self-sufficiency for all members of our community and helping people make lasting change. Hopelink assists people with meeting their needs for food, shelter, homelessness prevention, family development and stabilization, transportation and adult literacy skills. The Hopelink Mobility Management team empowers people to change their lives by facilitating access to the community.

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