



For Immediate Release
November 11, 2014

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**211 LA County Honors and Thanks All Veterans for Their Service
By Launching the Los Angeles Military and Veteran Services Portal**

November 11, 2014, Los Angeles - In recognition of Veterans Day, 211 LA is excited to launch its Military and Veterans Services portal at www.211la.org/lacommunityveteransportal. The Los Angeles County Veterans Study¹ found significant barriers to care, including more than 50 percent of post-9/11 veterans reporting not knowing where to go to get help. As a response, the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative, working with 211 LA and Mayor Eric Garcetti, developed a resource portal that allows veterans to search for and access needed services on their own or with the help of a peer navigator.

“As Mayor, I’m committed to better serving those who have served our country,” said Mayor Garcetti. “The LA Veterans Portal is a useful tool in our work to reconnect our returning heroes to the services they so desperately need: VA benefits, job training, housing, and a supportive guide to get them there. Thanks to 211 LA, USC-CIR, the Weingart Center for the Homeless, Volunteers of America, and the peer network of veterans, we’re one step closer to our goals of connecting 10,000 veterans to jobs and ending veterans’ homelessness.”

Each day, members of the United States armed forces separate from active duty and return home to communities throughout the nation as Veterans. A disproportionate number of Veterans are settling not only in the state of California, but more specifically in Los Angeles County. With the largest Veteran population in the country, Los Angeles County is home to approximately 17 percent (328,000) of California’s Veterans. “Access to resources and coordinated response is urgent as our service men and women begin to transition back to civilian life, as many of them will have to overcome barriers of unemployment, housing instability and mental health and substance use issues” says Maribel Marin, 211 LA Executive Director and member of City of Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti’s Veterans Advisory Council.

Peer navigation support is provided by Weingart Center for the Homeless through their Veteran Resource Corps and Volunteers of America Los Angeles through their Battle Buddy Bridge

¹ September 30, 2014, the University of Southern California, School of Social Work - Center for Innovation and Research On on Veterans & Military Families (CIR) released the official findings of a study conducted last fall of more than 1,350 veterans living in Los Angeles County. Their report - The State of the American Veteran: The Los Angeles County Veterans Study - found that many service members leave the military unprepared for the transition home and have a range of needs that cannot be easily provided by a single organization. Information about the study can be found at: <http://cir.usc.edu/community-engagement/los-angeles-veterans-survey>

program (B3). Launched in 2012, B3 programs train, equip and supervise Veterans as personal advocates and community resource navigators ("battle buddies") who directly engage peers in need and connect them with critical services and opportunities. Research on peer-to-peer support models demonstrates the effectiveness of peer relationships both in reaching Veterans in crisis and in generating mutual benefit for participants. Studies show that Veterans suffering from PTSD responded more favorably to help from fellow Veterans than from other groups (including spouses, relatives, and non-Veteran peers).

The online directory for veterans services is powered by 211 LA's resource database, the most comprehensive and reliable on-line listing of services and programs available to Los Angeles County residents, containing over 50,000 programs and services. This database is maintained year-round by 211 LA, ensuring that information does not go out of date.

Additionally, veterans and their families can call **2-1-1**, 24/7 and be connected with a Community Resource Advisor who can walk them through the process of finding the best possible resources for them. 211 LA is committed to serving our veterans and their families and continues to work with the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative and the City of Los Angeles Military Veterans Advisory Council to create a coordinated entry system that ensures veterans successfully get connected to resource information and to service providers that can help.

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Project Partners

211 LA County, a non-profit organization currently serving over 500,000 individuals and families, is the free 24/7 resource line where Los Angeles County residents are connected with the services they need including basic needs like shelter, meals, health care and employment assistance.

The USC Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families administers the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative, which comprises community stakeholders and representatives from organizations serving veterans and military families in the Los Angeles area.

Volunteers of America Los Angeles is a non-profit human services organization committed to serving people in need, strengthening families, and building communities.

Weingart Center for the Homeless is a non-profit organization that empowers and transforms lives by delivering innovative solutions to combat poverty and break the cycle of homelessness.

