

Subject: FW: News from the IDVA - November 2014



Illinois Dept. of Veterans' Affairs

November 2014

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From the Acting Director

Rodrigo Garcia

**Veterans Cash Lottery
and Veterans Cash Grants:
Helping to fund state-wide Veterans programs!**



The **Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs** (IDVA) joined the **Illinois Lottery** and 23 grant recipients on Friday, Nov. 7, in launching the newest **Veterans Cash** instant lottery game at the Union League Club of Chicago. In just eight years we have awarded more than \$11.7 million in **Veterans' Cash Grant** statewide to organizations that provide vital services, including job training, housing assistance, and PTSD treatment. The new **Veterans Cash** game is expected to raise about \$2 million for Illinois veterans.



Veterans Cash has funded the **Veterans' Cash Grant** program since its 2006 creation by then-Lt. Governor Pat Quinn. Proceeds from Illinois lottery ticket sales are deposited into the **Illinois Veterans Assistance Fund**, making it the first Illinois Lottery ticket for which **100 percent of net proceeds** are dedicated to support Illinois veterans - **the IDVA does not take any of these funds** for operations or **Veterans' Cash Grant** administration.

To ensure equitable distribution of resources we welcome and encourage those organizations that have not previously sought a grant to do so. Our next quarterly cycle ends on **Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2014** and grant applications are available on the **Veterans Cash Grant** website.

Of course, you can also support the Veterans Cash Grants with a direct donation to the **Illinois Veterans Assistance Fund** - just click [here](#) to get started. Again, 100% of your donation goes to help our veterans and none is used for our operations or fund supervision. Donate today, or buy a **Veterans Cash** instant lottery game ticket (or two) and help our veterans! Thanks!

On another topic many veterans are concerned with the future. **Governor Pat Quinn** has a strong legacy of being a great friend to our veterans, and we are grateful to him for his leadership, focus and commitment. I too remain committed - as do the 1,332 great and professional employees of the **Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs** - to providing great services, support, and advocacy for our 744,710 Illinois veterans, plus their families. Much as sentries assigned to our posts, we will not falter or fail our comrades until properly relieved by the next watch. As fellow veterans, we owe that to you, and you should expect nothing less.

We wish you all a safe, very happy and fulfilling Thanksgiving!

Rodrigo
Rodrigo Garcia
Acting Director, IDVA

Veterans' Training and Education



The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, in cooperation with the **Illinois Community College Board**, several community colleges, the **Illinois Board of Higher Education** and **MyCreditsTransfer**, recently completed a collaborative project to grant veteran and military students appropriate academic credit for the education and training they gained in military service.

In a **Making Military Training Count** initiative, the **College of DuPage**, **College of Lake County**, **Heartland Community College**, **Kaskaskia Community College**, and **Southwestern Illinois College** reviewed military programs of instruction documents provided by the Department of Defense for the ten largest military career fields with the largest number of service members and developed articulated educational credit that applied directly to an educational major in Illinois.

As a result, servicemen and women can enter community college with earned course credits, useful credits that apply toward meeting degree requirements, simply by documenting their already-completed military training.

To find how your military education or training can be articulated into academic credits, visit **MyCreditsTransfer** and get started on making your training and education count. Getting credits for military experience can save time and money for veteran education!

[Read more](#)



Federal and State Agreement Will Maximize Educational Benefits for Illinois Veterans

On Nov. 7 we were proud to **announce** that the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** joined Illinois elected officials, veteran and student groups, and several state agencies in support of a rule change that will maximize educational benefits for Illinois veterans. The rule change will ultimately provide veterans with greater flexibility in meeting the costs of post-secondary education. This shows how all levels of government are working to keep Illinois as the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

"We are grateful to **Sen. Durbin** for his leadership and advocacy on this important issue for our Illinois student-veterans," said Illinois **Governor Pat Quinn**. "This effort has brought the voices of others to the conversation, and we are grateful that we have a positive outcome and way ahead for our veterans using state and federal education benefits they earned through service."

This change, which is expected to be in place by the summer of 2015, will potentially help thousands of Illinois student-veterans with less than 100% eligibility for the **Post 9/11 GI Bill**, but 100% eligibility for either the **Illinois Veterans Grant** or the **Illinois National Guard Grant**, to optimize the education benefit and save thousands of dollars during their college careers. State-wide this represents annual savings and better use of **millions of dollars in veterans education benefits** earned through service. Also, this means federal monies are spent first on veterans education, making the state programs more beneficial for the student-veterans and their schools.

[Read more](#)



Interested in a position with the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs?

The State of Illinois and the **IDVA** provide job opportunities in a wide range of occupations and titles, with special preference to qualified veterans who apply. We also have a variety of resources to assist job seekers to evaluate and pursue career opportunities. Please the **available job postings** listed below to learn more about opportunities to join our team of hard-working professionals dedicated to serving Illinois' veterans and their families.

For more information, please **click here** and to apply for available IDVA positions, please visit **<http://www.work.illinois.gov>**.



Looking for a New Career? Consider Illinois Tollways

Illinois Tollways has many important positions that they are seeking to fill - and welcome applications from qualified veterans. The Tollway has introduced a NEW update to their application process.



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE
MERIT BOARD

The Illinois State Police has opened their application process online and are looking for great veteran candidates to become law enforcement officers. There are additional fire, safety and law enforcement positions available and posted - state-wide on that site. If anyone has questions or needs help with processing their ISP application, please contact Special Agent Melissa Uhles or 618-779-9668.

Veterans!
Opportunities available for
Utility Worker Training to Placement

Applications being accepted NOW for the
2015 Utility Workers Local 18007 Veterans, Reserve, & Guard Training Program



Earn College Credit

NO COST FOR TRAINING

Paid Internship

Job Placement Opportunities with local Major Utility Employer in partnership with

Chicago Federation of Labor

Questions? Contact Amanda Tischina atischina@power4america.org or 708-581-6478

To Apply, Click Here

*Some eligibility Requirements may apply



Urban Warrior is looking for Recent Combat Veterans

To Mentor At-Risk Youths

The Facts:

- Chicago had 415 murders and 1,864 shootings in 2013
- The victims were disproportionately **young**, and African-American or Hispanic
- Chicago's Youth population, ages 15-24, are a small portion of the overall, but are **more than 40%** of its homicide victims

So What? The numbers do not lie. Many Chicago youth are growing up in environments similar to **war zones**. Surviving attacks and losing friends to violence are far too commonplace for these young people. In response to this challenge, the YMCA of Metro Chicago's Youth Safety and Violence Prevention program and the Adler School of Professional Psychology recently launched **Urban Warriors**, a dynamic peer support group that brings together recent military veterans and youth with high levels of trauma exposure.

How can you help? Be like **Jose L. Campos**, Marine veteran, Abraham Lincoln Veteran Champion Award recipient:

- Urban Warriors is now seeking **recent military combat veterans** to volunteer as mentors to young people with high levels of personal exposure to violence and trauma - just like **Jose**.
- Working together through a 12 week curriculum, youth in this program learn positive strategies, including peace circles and art making, for coping with loss and trauma and are given key tools for improving their physical, mental and emotional health.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer veteran for **Urban Warriors**, please contact us at 708-250-3756 or 708-724-5601. csergeant@ymcachicago.org

November 2014 Abraham Lincoln Veteran Champion Award



Ernest Collins has been a constant and calming presence in the veterans' community in and around Mount Vernon, Illinois for over 22 years, building on his experience in the Air Force and his service as a Trooper in the Illinois State Police. In addition to his veteran

and law enforcement efforts, Collins has been a volunteer fireman, EMT, speaker and teacher on a wide range of community interest topics, fundraiser, Honor Guard member, Chaplain, and working in a local soup kitchen. He was honored as **Senior Saint in Jefferson County** (2008) and one of the Southern Illinois' **Leaders Among Us** in 2009, and was honored on Tuesday, Nov. 18 at the Illinois' **Abraham Lincoln Veteran Champion Award** recipient for November, 2014.

Collins is a leader in the Mount Vernon veteran community, providing services as the American Legion Post 141 Chaplain, transporting fellow veterans to medical appointments, delivering meals, and offering support to those in crisis. In this role he's been recognized with the American Legion's **Chaplain Cross Medal** and was honored as the Post 141 "**2011 Legionnaire of the Year**", while serving with the Honor Guard and ministering to a great number of services, memorials and funerals each year. IDVA was represented at this event Harry Sawyer, Manager of Field Services, who presented Collins the award which includes a framed proclamation as well as a State Flag on behalf of Governor Pat Quinn. The ceremony was held at the American Legion Post-141, American Legion Post 141; 816 Main St., Mt. Vernon, IL.

The **Abraham Lincoln Veteran Champion Award** (ALVCA) highlights and honors Illinois veterans whose contributions in service to the veteran community and their local communities are truly above and beyond. Nominees are evaluated on the basis of their leadership, dedication, innovation, and impact in serving these communities. To learn more or nominate a great veteran, [click here](#).

Your IDVA Calendar

Dec. 1	"Warm Our Heroes" Collection Drive Begins - thru Dec. 19	State-wide
	Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony	JRTC, Chicago, IL
	Gold Star Family event	
Dec. 4-5	Lucas Group: Military Hiring Conferences	Chicago, IL
Dec. 7	National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	Springfield, IL
Dec. 9	Hiring Our Heroes: Recovering Warrior & Caregiver Virtual Job Fair	Online
Dec. 16	Hanukkah begins	
Dec. 17	Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council Meeting	IDVA Offices, Chicago and Springfield
Dec. 18	Illinois Discharged Servicemember Task Force (DSTF) Meeting	Chicago, IL
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve / Hanukkah ends	State Offices Closed
Dec. 25	Christmas	State Offices Closed
Dec. 26	Kwanzaa begins	
Jan. 1	New Year's Day / Kwanzaa ends	State Offices Closed