



# Veterans Upward Bound

## *A Commemorative Publication*

### Letter from the Director

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Greetings,

It is with great pleasure that we share with you this special, commemorative publication of the Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) Program. Inside, you will find information on the program's history and purpose, as well as a wealth of student and project success stories submitted by grantees across the country. It is our intention that this publication will, first and foremost, celebrate the success of the VUB Program in connecting our nation's veterans with the educational supports needed for acceptance and success in a program of postsecondary education. We also hope that the information and stories shared in the following pages will serve as a tool for stakeholders and grantees in the larger Student Service and U.S. Department of Education communities to learn more about the important work of VUB, as well as how to access other veterans resources.

Student Service staff conducted significant outreach in developing this publication, in order to ensure that the information presented is relevant, timely, and representative of the diverse work of VUB projects. We corresponded with grantees via countless email and telephone conversations, and even visited one project to obtain an on-site perspective (see page 8). We extend our sincere appreciation, to all of you who collaborated with us, for the responsiveness and hospitality we've been shown and hope that you are pleased with the final result.

Finally, we would like to note that we hope to develop other program-specific publications in the future, highlighting the important work of other Student Service programs and grantees. If you have any thoughts on this or future publications, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Thank you again for all that you do to provide students with hope and opportunity.

Sincerely,

/signed/  
Linda Byrd-Johnson, Ph.D.  
Acting Chief of Staff  
Higher Education Programs

/signed/  
Eileen S. Bland  
Acting Senior Director  
Student Service

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# Commemorating Veterans Upward Bound



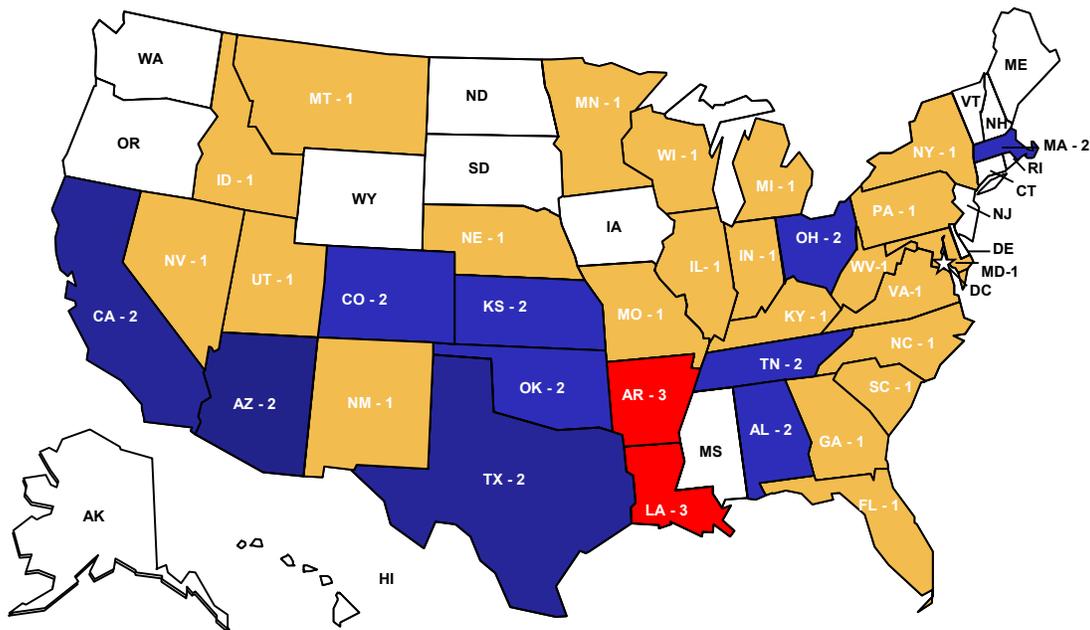
On behalf of the Office of Postsecondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education, I extend my support and appreciation to the entire Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) community. Through the tireless efforts of each VUB staff member, in the last year alone, over 6,500 low-income and first-generation veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces received critical academic assistance to help them access college and succeed while there. In this publication, we commemorate the program's remarkable history and celebrate VUB's continued success in helping those who have sacrificed so much for America.

Sincerely,

James T. Minor, Ph.D.  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Higher Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education

## 2014-15 Veterans Upward Bound Project Map

In 1972, the Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) was created as an offshoot of the regular Upward Bound (UB) program to assist returning veterans from Vietnam. Since then, VUB has risen across the nation with **49** projects and **6,566** participants. The following 2014-15 Veterans Upward Bound Project map presents the number of awards distributed in each State. If you are interested in locating specific projects in your area, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triooub/awards.html> for further information.



### Others Not on the Map

Puerto Rico – 1 award    Guam – 0 awards  
Federated States of Micronesia – 0 awards  
Palau – 0 awards

None    3-5 Awards  
1 Award  
2 Awards

## Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) Overview

**Veterans Upward Bound (VUB)** is a federal TRIO program that implements activities to motivate and assist veterans in developing all the skills necessary for postsecondary education. In addition, VUB provides several activities from tutorial services in mathematics, laboratory science, and literature, to short-term remedial/refresher courses for veterans who have delayed pursuing postsecondary education. Below is a list of additional services that the program offers:

- Intensive basic skills development in academic subjects required for the successful completion of a high school equivalency program and for admission to postsecondary programs
- Special services, including mathematics and science preparation, to enable veterans to make the transition to postsecondary education
- Assistance in securing support services from other available resources such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, state veterans agencies, and other associations or agencies that serve veterans
- Assistance in preparing for college entrance examinations
- Information on the full range of Federal student financial aid programs and resources for locating public and private scholarships
- Assistance in completing financial aid applications
- Guidance and assistance in alternative education programs, entry into general educational development programs or postsecondary education

**In order to be eligible for VUB**, participants should have met military service requirements recognized by the authorizing statute, be low-income and/or first-generation. The program requires that at least two-thirds of the participants in a project be both low-income and first-generation. The remaining participants must be either low-income or first-generation military veterans who:

- Served in active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for more than 180 days and received other than a dishonorable discharge
- Was discharged because of a service connected disability
- Was a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces called to active duty for a period of more than 30 days
- Was a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation on or after September 11, 2001
- Have a high risk for academic failure

**In order to apply for VUB Grants**, applicants must be:

- Institutions of higher education
- Public and private agencies and organizations including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth
- Combinations of such institutions, agencies and organizations, and as appropriate to the purpose of the program, secondary schools

**For further information on the program, please contact:**

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## In Memory of Wardsey Gates



It is with deep respect and empathy that we recognize the passing of Mr. Wardsey Gates, Director of Cuyahoga Community College (CCC)'s Veterans Upward Bound Program. Wardsey proudly served in the program for many years, with the addition of having served our country as an army veteran. At this time, we honor Mr. Wardsey Gates for his hard work, courage and commitment to veterans' academic success.

*Photo accessed via: <http://dd214chronicle.com/tri-cs-veterans-upward-bound-director-wardsey-gates-dies/>*

*“Now, on this day, we honor every man and woman who has ever worn the uniform of the United States of America. We salute fallen heroes, and keep in our prayers those who are still in harm’s way.” -President Barack Obama, 2010*

## Veteran Success Stories

We are pleased to share the following stories of VUB project and participant successes. We identified these stories through submissions from grantees, through staff outreach and travel, as well as through publicly-available sources, such as press releases and news stories. We have highlighted several recent submissions below.



**Kevin Evans** is no stranger to homelessness, nor is he a stranger to academic deficiencies and the problems associated with having low basic skills knowledge and low self-esteem. Discharged from the military with very few employable job skills and a dire outlook on job prospects, Kevin found himself knocking on the doors of Vets Place Central in Milwaukee, a transitional living facility for homeless vets, with comprehensive support services. One of those services was the availability of a Veterans Upward

Bound program with classroom instruction on basic skills taking place right beneath his bunk. Kevin was able to take advantage of the services offered by VUB, so much so that he was able to complete the VUB program and enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, completing both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in social work. Since becoming a member of the VUB staff in October of 2014, Kevin has enrolled over sixty veterans that are either low income, homeless, or first generation college bound veterans. As explained by Mr. Evans, *“I am about changing people's lives.....TRIO works.”*

*We would love to hear about the success stories, alumni accomplishments and notable project activities of all Student Service programs! Submit your story to [Catherine.StClair@ed.gov](mailto:Catherine.StClair@ed.gov) today!*

For **Tyrell McCurbin**, the second time is the charm, thanks to the support of the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) TRIO Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) project. Tyrell first enrolled at Penn a decade ago, but due to a fear of seeking help and a lack of motivation, he found himself on academic probation and did not return for a second year. He went on to join the U.S. Army and served as an intelligence analyst. *“My goal in enlisting was to regain my focus, rebuild my credentials and hopefully get back into Penn,”* he says. As hoped, his life after discharge did ultimately lead him back to Penn and to VUB, where he received support in his study habits and preparing to re-enter academia. Tyrell is now a junior studying mechanical engineering at the Penn School of Engineering and Applied Science and has served as a VUB peer tutor. *“It’s not often in life that we get a second chance to fix our biggest mistake,”* he says. *“This was that rare second chance, and I wasn’t going to pass it up. I was more motivated than ever before... Without going through the [VUB] program, I would have likely had a more difficult transition back to Penn. I would highly recommend it for any veterans who have been out of college for a while and would like to further their education. They have earned it.”* Tyrell plans to graduate in the spring of 2017 with both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree, thanks to VUB.



### Did You Know?

**March 4th, 2016 will mark the 20th annual “Hug A G.I./Soldier Day!” So if you come across men and women in the armed forces, show appreciation by giving them a hug!**



**Nicole Crean** joined VUB at Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) after 6 years in the Navy as a Third Class Officer. After meeting her husband and settling in Fernley, Nevada with their five-year-old son, Nicole found it difficult transitioning from constant work to school. Nicole was then introduced to the VUB program where she was able to transition much more easily to an academic routine. *“My experience with Veterans Upward Bound has been nothing but positive. All the people who work with the group are so welcoming and understanding. I didn’t believe in myself that I would do well with school, but they all did and that helped so much. It is nice to be surrounded with people who have been through the same type of lifestyle that you have, and I find myself doing a lot of my work at VUB because of the atmosphere. Everyone there is willing to help in any way possible.*

*I appreciate them all more than they will ever know, and I can’t say enough great things about everyone of them. I will forever be grateful for all they have done for me personally”* said Nicole. Nicole plans on transferring to UNR and major in Speech Pathology. She also hopes to work with children and better their lives, either in a school or medical setting.

**Want to become involved?** Listed below are organizations where you can learn more about veteran services:

- U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, <http://www.va.gov/>
- United War Veterans Council, <http://uwvc.org/>
- Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, <http://www.vfw.org>
- Disabled American Veterans, <http://www.dav.org/>
- Vets Helping Heroes, <http://www.vetshelpingheroes.org/>



The Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) (NC) TRIO Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) project and **Mr. Isaac Phillips**, a CCCC VUB alumnus, were featured in the March 22, 2015 edition of *The Sanford Herald* newspaper. Mr. Phillips, a former sergeant in the United States Army, joined VUB in March 2014, four months after leaving the service. Through the pre-college services of VUB and subsequent CCCC support, Mr. Phillips states, *"I have turned many of my educational deficiencies into academic strengths, thanks to a little hard work and the wonderful students and staff that make up Central Carolina Community College."*



**Barry Fitzhugh** became involved with Metropolitan Community College - Penn Valley's VUB in January of 2013. At that time, Mr. Fitzhugh was a homeless, unemployed Air Force Veteran who was hoping to fulfill a lifelong dream of earning a degree. Barry took full advantage of the VUB program by utilizing the myriad of services they provided such as help with FAFSA, college admissions, VA education benefits, placement testing, tutoring, and connections to community resources. Barry began his journey towards a Business Management degree in March of 2013 and has been on the Dean's Honor Roll every semester. He

became a member of Phi Theta Kappa the spring semester of 2014 as well. Because of his tenacity and unwavering commitment to obtaining a degree, Barry has been granted a full-ride scholarship to attend Rockhurst University in Kansas City, MO.

**Jim Anschultz's** unlikely path from journeyman construction worker to college honors student and national scholarship winner began in February 2009 at a Kansas City, KS, job fair. At the time, Mr. Anschultz was a 53-year-old, unemployed Air Force veteran residing in one of the local homeless shelters. He'd never attended a postsecondary education course and his computer skills were non-existent. But on that same day, Mr. Anschultz met Lisa Schley, the academic advisor from the University of Kansas TRIO Veterans Upward Bound. Thanks to VUB's academic refresher courses and the financial assistance of a Pell Grant, Mr. Anschultz enrolled in classes at Kansas City, Kansas Community College (KCKCC) and earned a 3.67 GPA. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Social Welfare.

**D'artangan Reid** struggled with substance abuse for four decades before completing rehab in 2013. He found Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) (OH) TRIO Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) project and gained the confidence and support he needed to re-enter the educational pipeline and seek a brighter future. *"I never imagined I would go to college,"* he said. (Next Page)

"I did not even finish high school. Although I did get my GED, I was not a very good student. With [Veterans Upward Bound], their encouragement, their support, made me believe I could do it." Mr. Reid is now working toward his Associate of Applied Science degree in Human Services. "I'd like to work with people with alcohol or substance abuse issues," Mr. Reid said. "I know for me the encouragement that I got from others really helped me see I could make positive changes in my life."

***"Program success as an art is an on-going process and the practice of being creative and flexible in designing services that are meaningful and effective for veteran student success."*** -Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC)

VUB Project director Robert Hernandez.

**Aspira Inc. of Puerto Rico** has been serving veterans through a VUB project for several decades, and recently celebrated its 45th anniversary last February. Interestingly, the average age of Aspira VUB participants is 64 years old. Although many of these individuals have experienced health difficulties or remained out of school for almost 30 years, each and every one of them remains in high spirits to continue their education. In commemoration of their 45th Anniversary, Aspira VUB recognized many former participants who expressed great effort in their paths of remaining active and productive citizens. One of these participants included Jose T. Armstrong (right), who was recognized for his success as a doctorate student at InterAmerican University of San German, PR.



Mr. Jose T. Armstrong (far right)



**Don Parks** experienced significant physical and emotional challenges as a result of his service to our country. But he, like many veterans, is strong and is working hard to overcome these issues and accomplish the goal of a college degree. Don was a Master Sergeant in the Air Force Reserves for 26 years. He's been to Baghdad twice and says while it was hard and scary, he'd do it again if asked. Don's diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) surprised him since he had been home from the war for quite some time, but he has learned that PTSD can strike any time after returning home, and some people do not exhibit any symptoms immediately. Though Don has undergone many obstacles in his life, he wanted to be doing something constructive. Don started in Veterans Upward Bound last summer and worked to improve his computer skills as well as his English. Now Don has overcome his obstacles and is enrolled full-time at Weber State University-Davis – a student for the first time in 40 years. Don is truly an inspiration and proof that with determination, no goal is ever out of reach.

*The next competition for new VUB awards is scheduled for FY 2017. Interested applicants are advised to check the VUB homepage at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triovub/index.html> in the summer and fall of 2016 for updates on pre-application technical assistance workshops and the publication of the Notice Inviting Applications.*

## Prince George's Community College Visit



On July 14th, 2015, members from the U.S. Department of Education (ED)'s Student Service area visited the VUB project at Prince George's Community College (PGCC). The VUB staff provided a tour of the institutional facilities that the program can utilize such as computer labs and rooms for studying. The staff also shared with ED their exquisite veterans center (left), funded through a grant from the United Way, where participants can quietly work on assignments and have access to laptops and additional resources for homeless veterans. ED thanks PGCC VUB for its hospitality during the visit, and commends the project for its collaboration with institutional and community partners to provide effective academic and social supports to veteran participants.

*(Left to right) Nicholas B. Anderson, PGCC VUB Project Director; Catherine St. Clair, Management and Program Analyst, ED; Tonja Lark, Grants Management Specialist, ED; Luxie Vang, ED Intern, Michigan State University; A'Lelianne Warren, PGCC VUB Academic Coordinator; Sharon Soulé, PGCC Veterans Services Advisor; Alexandria Warren, PGCC VUB Instructional Technologist, and Kenneth Foushee (in rear), Education Program Specialist, ED.*

### Check Out What's Happening This Veterans Day 2015

Veterans Day, also known as Armistice Day, is observed on the 11th of November each year and commemorates America's veterans for all their hard work, patriotism and sacrifice for the country. ([http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetday\\_faq.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetday_faq.asp)). Check out the listing below to view some of the events happening this Veterans Day 2015:

- **2015 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival** presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary on Sunday, October 18th, 2015 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC at 12:00 PM
- **Run To Honor Veterans 5K** hosted by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization on Saturday, November 7th, 2015 at Sawyer Point in Cincinnati, OH -or- at NTC Park Liberty Station (Point Loma) in San Diego, CA at 8:30 AM
- **National Veterans Day Ceremony** on Wednesday, November 11th, 2015 at the Arlington Cemetery in Washington DC at 11:00 AM
- **2015 America's Parade** produced by the United War Veterans Council (UWVC) on Wednesday, November 11th, 2015 at the Eternal Light Monument in New York City, NY at 11:15 AM
- **Drop In Coffee House** sponsored by Rochester Blue Star Mothers and Veterans Outreach Center - Woman's Veterans Initiative (VOCWVI): An opportunity for women veterans to connect, share resources, and network in a safe environment on Friday, November 13th, 2015 at 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM, Address: 1010 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607