



# *E-BRIDGE*

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## *Executive Director's Message*

**WRITTEN BY KORY AMARAL**

This year is flying by, and we have so much to be grateful for with the new year ahead of us. Bay Area PVA members, on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 we will be hosting our PVA Palo Alto Membership Meeting at 12:00 PM at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Although this may seem to be for SCI/D inpatients, it is open to all PVA members, so feel free to stop by if you are in town. More information is available on Page 6.

On the last Friday of the month, the Chapter and the SCI/D Center in Palo Alto will be continuing our SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch. Each month we have an education topic pertaining to spinal cord injuries or diseases. The next meeting will be on Friday, February 23, 2024 and the topic will be Social Work. This is also a great way to interact with your fellow veterans. Please refer to Page 2 for more information. Outpatients can join us via Zoom. The link is on the flyer.

The masking mandate has come back to VA Palo Alto Health Care System due to the flu season. Please expect to wear a mask when you enter the buildings on campus. I cannot do anything to change the policy, this mandate came from the recommendations of the county and VA leadership. The office at VA Palo Alto Health Care System's SCI/D Center is now open to visitors. If you need to speak with us in person, let me know. We are not always in the office so please contact me first to make sure we do not miss each other. Also, if you need anything, do not hesitate to reach out. We are here for you, email Kory Amaral at [amaral@bawpva.org](mailto:amaral@bawpva.org) or call (650) 399-5296 with any questions or concerns.

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**NATIONAL PVA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WASHINGTON UPDATE**

**NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER (NSO) MONTHLY CHAT**

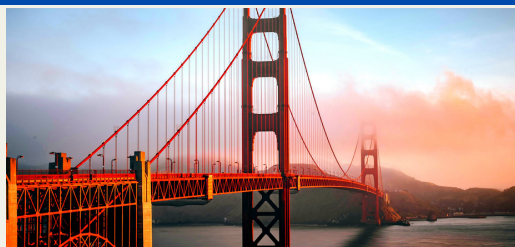
**PVA PALO ALTO MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**NATIONAL PVA'S VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM**

**ABOUT US**

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## SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch

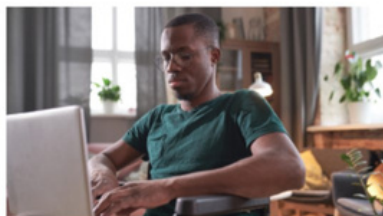
SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND SCI/D CENTER AT VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



Please join us the **LAST FRIDAY** of the month in the **SCI Dining Room** at 11:30 AM for a catered lunch and **F-125 Conference Room** at 12:00 PM for education and a peer support activity. This is a monthly program designed for SCI Veterans to gather together and connect in a social and relaxed environment, socially distanced of course!

If you cannot attend in person, or if group is at capacity, you can call into ZOOM from your room or home.

MEETING ID: 835 1426 6166  
PHONE: +1 669 900 9128  
ONLINE: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83514266166>



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### February Calendar

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC  
FEBRUARY 8

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER (NSO) MONTHLY CHAT (VIRTUAL)  
FEBRUARY 13

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING  
FEBRUARY 13

BINGO & PIZZA NIGHT  
FEBRUARY 15

PRESIDENTS DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)  
FEBRUARY 19

SCI PEER MENTORING PROGRAM - EDUCATION & LUNCH  
FEBRUARY 23

PVA PALO ALTO MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
FEBRUARY 27

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## *Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere (GIVE) Program*

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

The Chapter is hosting a Clothing Drive in the Palo Alto, CA Office. The Chapter is looking to the community to donate lightly used clothing and other items that will directly benefit a veteran. Through the GIVE Program, we would love to expand the program by bringing in more funds for our veterans.

Clothing Donation Program - GIVE  
<https://www.pva.org/ways-to-give/g-i-v-e-clothing-donation/>

## *Car Donation Program*

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

Are you tired of having too many cars or is your car getting old and you are looking to donate it? The Car Donation Program is a program in which we accept vehicles and the proceeds go to our veterans. The process is very simple and veterans from Northern California will benefit from the donation.

Car Donation Program  
<https://pva.careasy.org/HOME.html>

**GIVE**

Generosity can be found anywhere.  
Even the back of your closet.

Donating clothes and other household goods can help improve the lives of injured veterans.

Give **GIVE** a try and schedule your **FREE** pickup today.  
[www.org/givegoods](http://www.org/givegoods)

**PVA**  
Paralyzed Veterans of America

VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Especially now,  
we need your support.

Donate a car, truck or other vehicle. The process is easy, the pick-up is free, and your gift is tax-deductible.

**Give Today**

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## *National PVA's Washington Update*

**WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**



### **HVAC Holds Hearing on Rural Veterans**

On January 11, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a full committee hearing on rural veterans. During the hearing, committee members grilled VA about benefits and services available for rural veterans. Testifying on behalf of VA was Dr. Shereef Elnahal, Under Secretary for Health; Joshua Jacobs, Under Secretary for Benefits; and John Boerstler, Chief of the Veteran Experience Office. Joining them on the first panel was Alyssa Hundrup, Director of Health Care, Government Accountability Office.

Several members of the committee represent rural districts and it was clear in the questions presented to the witnesses that the topic of the hearing was personal for them and their constituents. In particular, several of the committee members highlighted the need to improve access to health care on tribal lands. It is often extremely difficult to access health care on these lands.

At the beginning of his questioning, HVAC Chairman Mike Bost (R-IL) asked Dr. Elnahal if the increased budget to the Office of Rural Health was showing tangible improvements for rural veterans. Dr. Elnahal explained that the office funds research and operational initiatives that help VA extend care to rural veterans, as well as coordinate where the funding goes. It also ensures that deficiencies in care are addressed by VA, so no veteran is left behind.

Another popular topic was a recent pilot program that created women's health "mini-residencies." VA has held more than 200 events and trained more than 500 doctors as a refresher course for gender-specific care for women veterans.

Based on the hearing, it appears that the Office of Rural Health is working hard to meet veterans where they are, trying to make appointments more convenient for rural veterans, and making sure the standard of care offered throughout the VA is meeting the needs of rural veterans across the country. The VA knows, however, that there is still more work to do but they are being pragmatic about the solutions they propose. The VA wants to ensure veterans can trust their care, no matter where a veteran lives.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

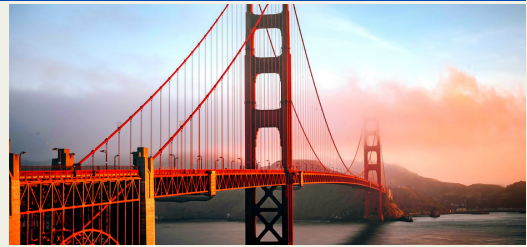
### **Upcoming Veterans' Committee Activities**

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on upcoming hearings and markups.



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## National Service Officer (NSO) Monthly Chat

IN SPONSORSHIP WITH THE  
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA'S BAY AREA AND WESTERN  
CHAPTER, INC. AND NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF  
AMERICA

### Monthly Chat with your National Service Officer (NSO)

**Who:** PVA Members &  
SCI/D Veterans

**When:** Second Tuesday of the  
Month  
11:30am

(Will only stay on the call for 15 mins if no one calls in)

**Where:** Virtual (Zoom)  
Meeting ID: 867 9150 1025  
Passcode: 370759  
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86791501025?  
pwd=OHJ1KzNoVi9XR0FoSHNvVHRkcFRUZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86791501025?pwd=OHJ1KzNoVi9XR0FoSHNvVHRkcFRUZz09)

**Why:** To receive benefit updates  
and to ask questions



### Important Links

[AIR ACCESS 30  
SHARE STORIES ABOUT  
YOUR AIR TRAVEL  
EXPERIENCES AS A  
PASSENGER WITH A  
DISABILITY](#)

[PUBLICATIONS  
VIEW CHAPTER  
NEWSLETTERS,  
ANNUAL REPORTS, PVA  
PUBLICATIONS](#)

[COVID-19 RESOURCES  
VIEW NATIONAL  
PVA'S RESOURCES AND  
UPDATES ON COVID-19](#)

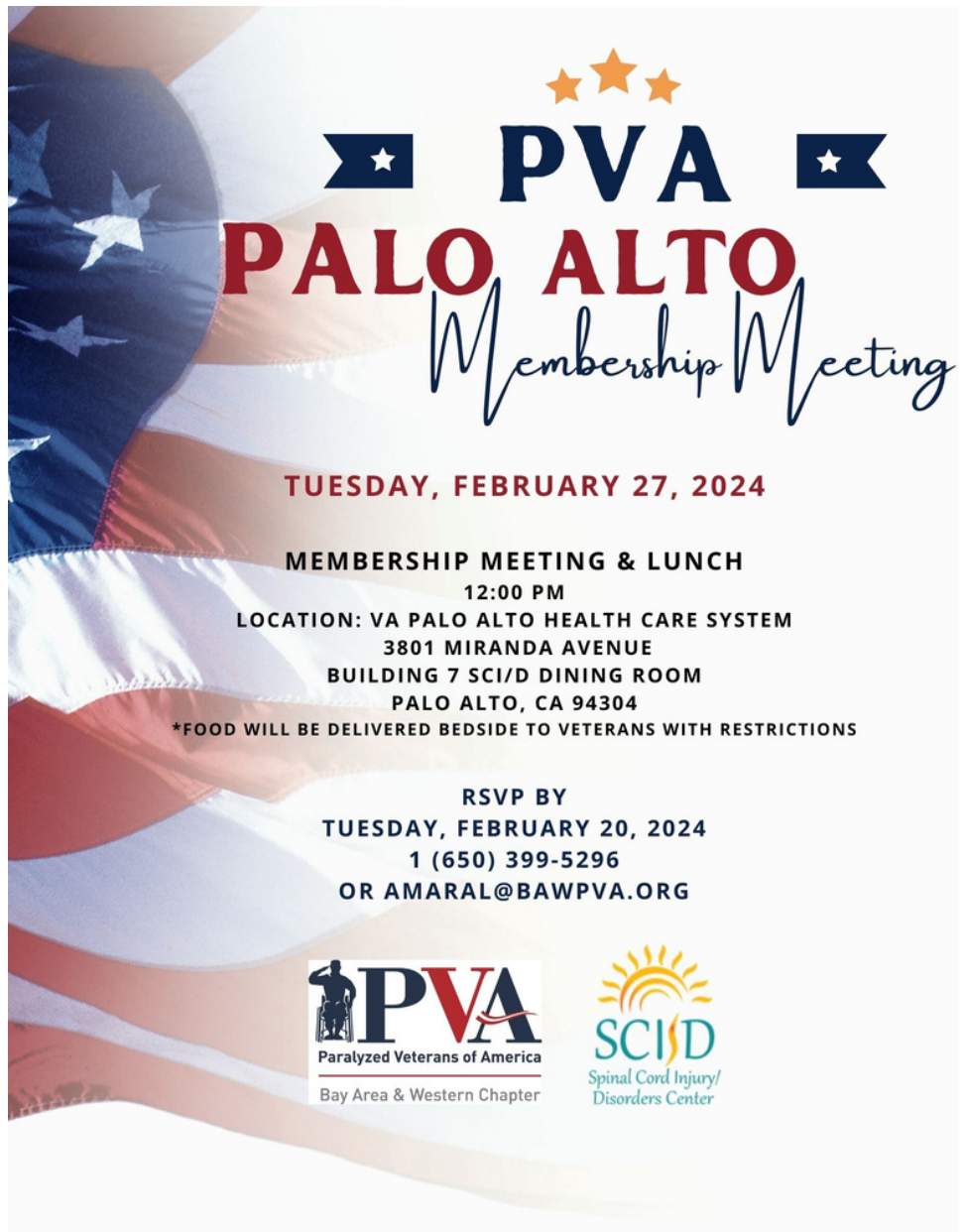
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## *PVA Palo Alto Membership Meeting*

SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND THE VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM'S SCI/D CENTER

  
  
**PALO ALTO**  
*Membership Meeting*



**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING & LUNCH**  
12:00 PM

LOCATION: VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
3801 MIRANDA AVENUE  
BUILDING 7 SCI/D DINING ROOM  
PALO ALTO, CA 94304

\*FOOD WILL BE DELIVERED BEDSIDE TO VETERANS WITH RESTRICTIONS

RSVP BY  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024  
1 (650) 399-5296  
OR [AMARAL@BAWPVA.ORG](mailto:AMARAL@BAWPVA.ORG)



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## Veterans Career Program

WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM TEAM  
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

### Member Column

THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. (BAWPVA) MISSION IS AS FOLLOWS:

THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. IS DEDICATED TO THE TASK OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF VETERANS WITH PARALYSIS DUE TO SPINAL CORD DYSFUNCTION AND TO THE PROTECTION OF THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS. WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE DUTY OF ASSISTING PARALYZED VETERANS BY ADVOCATING FOR UNFETTERED ACCESS TO VA HEALTH CARE AND BARRIER-FREE ACCESS TO THE COMMUNITY.

OUR GOAL IS TO ENSURE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE NEED FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR MEMBERS, AND ALL PARALYZED VETERANS, THROUGH EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, MEDICAL RESEARCH, AND PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND RECREATIONAL THERAPY.

## PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

December 2023

### OPTIONS FOR RETRAINING



Rose Lopez is an Army veteran. She contacted the Veterans Career Program after a Veterans Career Live session on Federal hiring procedures. Her degrees and experience were in IT, but she didn't know if that was the field she wanted to be in as a career. Rose and Jim Arndt, our counselor in Minneapolis, MN, began exploring alternative careers while continuing to consider IT positions.

Rose continued to participate in our weekly career webinars; and one session that turned her career outlook around was with the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM). ATDM is a Department of Defense program designed to quickly train qualified candidates in essential manufacturing skills and trades to establish a steady and sustainable flow of qualified workers for the naval shipbuilding and repair sector of the submarine industrial base (<https://atdm.org/>). Rose applied for and was accepted into the program in late 2023. She will relocate to Virginia for training, and will be assisted with finding a career after the program is completed.

*From Rose: "Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) has profoundly impacted my life. Their exceptional vocational rehabilitation counseling and unwavering commitment to empowering disabled veterans is unparalleled. Thanks to their support and dedication, I discovered the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) program, paving my way toward a fulfilling career as a CNC machinist in defense manufacturing. I am deeply grateful for PVA and ATDM's support, confident that their guidance will help me achieve my goals and make a meaningful impact in the industry."*

### MONTHLY IMPACT

#### 11 Client Placements

- 6 Paid Employment
- 2 Education/Training
- 3 Volunteer
  - 10 Veterans
  - 1 Family Member
  - 1 Caregiver
  - 1 PVA Member
- The average salary for the 6 clients in full time employment was \$69,600.



### 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

It was another busy year for the Veterans Career Program staff as we assisted transitioning service members, veterans of all eras, their families and caregivers with finding meaningful careers.

In 2023, the Veterans Career Program placed 223 clients: 209 veterans, 14 family members, and 4 caregivers. The average salary for clients in full-time employment was \$71,062 (40% higher than the national average for veteran employment).

Our counselors maintained an active client list of 550+ veterans, military family members and caregivers; including 360 new clients.

Also in 2023, we held 88 Veterans Career Lives sessions covering Career Skills (43), Employer Sessions (20), Education (11), Small Business (10), Health & Wellness (3) and Financial Planning (1).

And lastly, we launched our Disabled Veterans Self-Employment program with the goal of offering training and counseling to PVA members and spouses interested in self-employment/small business start-up. We hosted two 10-week sessions for 30 PVA members and spouses (111 applications). We awarded \$10,000 in start-up grants (thanks to the Wells Fargo Foundation) to four participants as part of "Pitch Night" competitions.



PVA.org/VeteransCareerProgram

POWERED BY:



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## *About Us*

### **THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) is a nonprofit, veterans service organization located in Palo Alto, CA. BAWPVA serves spinal cord injured and/or dysfunction veterans located in Northern California, Northern Nevada and the Pacific Islands. BAWPVA is one of 33 chapters of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) located across the United States. Currently, BAWPVA has 533 members, but sees over 1,000 paralyzed veterans at the SCI/D Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) services provide direct support to the Chapter's programs. BAWPVA sponsors various events and adaptive sports clinics at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System in Palo Alto, CA, VA Northern California Health Care System, VA Central California Health Care System, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System and VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.

If you are interested in membership, volunteering, or donating please contact us today.

Our office is located at:

3801 Miranda Ave.  
Building 7 Rm. E-118  
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Our Mailing Address is:

P.O. Box 27  
Palo Alto, CA 94304-0027

Phone:

(650) 858-3936 - Office  
(650) 399-5296 - Mobile

Email:

administration@bawpva.org

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