**Practical Strategies for Engaging Veteran and Military-Affiliated Patrons at Your Library**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/engaging-veteran-and-military-affiliated-patrons.html>

Virtually every library has patrons who are veterans, military service members, or military family members. Join us for this webinar as library staff with experience developing programming for the veteran and military communities share best practices and practical ideas for engaging veteran and military-affiliated patrons. The presenters will also share the [Libraries & Veterans Toolkit](https://veterans.libguides.com/home), a new resource to help workers at all types of libraries garner new ideas for veteran-related exhibits, book clubs, events, collections, celebrations and more.

Presented by: **Sarah LeMire**, Associate Professor, Texas A&M University; **Dawn LaValle**, Director, Division of Library Development, Connecticut State Library; **Christy Billings**, Program Coordinator, Russell Library (CT); and **Lee Ann Amend**, Library Director, Sharon Public Library (MA)

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Know Your Audience** |
| Learning more about military culture can be a way to build understanding of the experiences of Veterans in your community. **Review the information shared about military culture** in the webinar, and consider or discuss with others, those facets of the culture that are new to you. Remember that your knowledge about their experience can help to build trust and confidence in the library and the services you provide. Then consider ways you might more deliberately **assess the interests and needs of this community**. For years, libraries have relied mainly on surveys to collect information about their community’s interests and needs. But tuning into *the community as the expert* requires new and fresh approaches. There is a wide selection of tools that support open-ended inquiries, elicit out-of-the-box feedback, and foster genuine listening. Explore some alternate strategies in the [Basket of Discovery Tools](https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/Topics/smart-spaces/basket-of-community-discovery-tools.pdf)(pdf), part of WebJunction’s [Toolkit for Creating Smart Spaces](https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/toolkit-creating-smart-spaces.html), and consider ways you could more intentionally assess the interests and needs of veterans and their families, to inform library responses. |

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| **Explore Partnership Opportunities** |
| Using the [Libraries & Veterans Toolkit](https://veterans.libguides.com/home), **explore resources that emphasize Community Partnerships** (filter by Resource Type) and look at the Partnerships & Stakeholders section for examples. For an additional list of options, review potential partners for library collaboration in WebJunction’s [Community Partnership and Collaboration Guide](http://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Community_Partner_Collaboration_Guide.html). List some of the partners you would like to connect with to identify veteran and military family needs, and to collaborate with on potential programming and resource responses. Note when **partners may also be funders** for your library’s responses, and begin the steps to securing that funding, if possible. 1.
2.

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| **Selecting Programs and Resources for Veterans** |
| The [Libraries & Veterans Toolkit](https://veterans.libguides.com/home) is filled with examples from libraries who have implemented programming and resource collections for their veteran communities. Based on the information you’ve gathered in assessing needs and interests, and in identifying potential partners, **use the Toolkit to search for program outlines, lesson plans, and exhibit or collection development ideas that can help you take the next steps in implementing your library’s response**. Select all the ideas that have potential, and then prioritize, based on your library’s overall goals for the coming year, and on staff capacity or funding available to implement. Remember to start small, especially if you’re new to serving this community, to ensure you build the trust and connections needed to take on more. 1.
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| **Promote and Publicize** |
| As was mentioned in the webinar, your usual channels for program promotion may not reach veterans and their families. Identify the channels and methods that would work best to **promote and publicize your programming or resources**. Remember to include schools, parent teacher organizations, churches, and, of course, local veteran’s organizations in your communications. Use your new contacts to help review messaging to ensure you’re connecting effectively with your intended audience. Brainstorm strategies for promoting your new offering:1.
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| **Action Plan: (include next steps, when, who, etc.)** |

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