

Veterans Career & Resource Fair



Megan Anderson of Clark's Veterans Center of Excellence holds one of the 88 backpacks with school supplies given to students at the event.

Clark College's Veterans Center of Excellence partnered with Congresswoman Marie Gluesenkamp Perez for the VCOE's first Veterans Career and Resource Fair on November 7. The VCOE plans to make this an annual event open to students and the community.

Gaiser Student Center was filled with 56 tables of participating agencies, nonprofits and businesses that provided veterans and veteran students information about employment opportunities and community resources. The event also included free lunch, coffee drinks and giveaways.

"We are thrilled with the number of student and community participants who attended this first annual event," said Donna

Larson, Associate Director of the Veterans Center of Excellence. “We are grateful to the community-based organizations for their strong support for veterans at this event. When we started planning this event, we planned for 40 organizations to come to the event, but never imagined that we would have 56 organizations wanting to partner with us. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event happen.”



Representatives from the office of Congresswoman Marie Gluesenkamp Perez participated in the Veterans Resource and Job Fair.

Although Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez could not attend the event due to her legislative duties in Washington, D.C., her staff members Cameron Kockritz, Peter Sandifer, and Tony Sprague attended on her behalf and spoke with veterans about helping them connect with federal agencies.

Sprague conveyed this message: “While the Congresswoman was disappointed to have missed the event due to her legislative duties in the other Washington, she wanted me to share the

below message with all of you.”

“It’s our responsibility to ensure our nation’s heroes are well-supported after returning home. I’m so glad we could help connect Southwest Washington veterans and their families to the resources, jobs, and benefits they deserve. I sincerely appreciate all the veterans who stopped by this event, as well as Clark College and community organizations who joined together to support our local heroes.”

Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez

View a video greeting from Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez [here](#)

Many businesses and organizations reached out to veterans about specific jobs they are trying to fill. These included ilani Casino Resort, SEH America, and Silicon Forest Electronics.

“A lot of our jobs are tailored to what vets learn in the military,” said a representative of SEH America who also is a Clark College alum. “We also offer educational reimbursement for employees who are college students.”



Volunteer John Chapman, above, was at the Veteran Administration's My Health eVet table helping veterans sign up for healthcare accounts. He said, "We also are encouraging college students to do work-study at the VA. It's a great opportunity."

Here is a sampling of organizations that provided resource information at the event:

- *1st Choice Advisory Service*: Provided resources about affordable in-home care, memory care, connecting people with elder law attorneys, movers, real estate agents, and more
- *Area Agency on Aging & Disability of Southwest Washington*: Hiring for various positions; also direct families to resources for loved ones who need in-home care

- *Clark County Food Bank*: Offered an extensive list of local food pantries
- *Fort Vancouver Regional Library*: Offers use of computers; people can check out books, laptops, graphing calculators, scientific calculators, and more
- *Fourth Plain Forward*: Provided information about community microgrants and starting a business
- *Free Clinic of Southwest Washington*: Offers free medical and dental care for uninsured people; also has volunteer opportunities in its clinics, excellent experience for Clark students in dental hygiene and medical programs
- *NAMI Southwest Washington (National Alliance on Mental Illness)*: Offered information about mental health crisis counseling and local support groups
- *Pier 360 (formerly CVAB)*: Hiring for various positions, offers recovery support groups and many other connection opportunities
- *U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs*: Offered information about its crisis line and mental health programs
- *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs-Portland VA Medical Center*: Offered information about employment services including vocational rehabilitation, finding and keeping a job, teaching about disability rights and reasonable accommodations
- *Veterans Administration-My Healthy Vet*: Providing information about veterans signing up for healthcare accounts and the VA's work-study program
- *Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs*: Connected veterans with resources and helped them apply for benefits











Event by the numbers:

- 56 tables offering resources
- 120 registered attendees
- 300 lunches provided
- 131 coffee/smoothies
- 88 backpacks with school supplies distributed to students

Photos: Clark College/Susan Parrish