



THE STATE OF THE

AMERICAN VETERAN  
IN CALIFORNIA

CONFERENCE 2016

**15-16**  
**SEPTEMBER**

CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER  
LOS ANGELES, CA

**#SAVC2016**

**USC** School  
of Social Work

*Center for Innovation and Research  
on Veterans & Military Families*

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# WELCOME

## Welcome to the 2016 State of the American Veteran in California conference!

This conference will focus on developing the capacity of our communities to care for those who have served in our Armed Forces. Despite their dedicated service to our nation, as well as recent increases in federal, state and local funding for veteran services, veterans in California still face enormous challenges in areas of economic security, educational attainment, housing, and behavioral health. The foundations of these problems lie in complex systems that cannot be addressed by a single agency or a single intervention alone.

Instead, leaders in the veteran space must work together to address the upstream factors that cause the entrenched challenges our veterans face. This mission calls for innovative, adaptive and collaborative responses, and the State of the American Veteran in California conference will provide you with the opportunity to interact with national leaders in veteran service, collaborate with peers, and share insights and novel perspectives on veteran service. Thank you for taking this important step to develop cutting-edge practices in veteran service.



# AGENDA

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	<b>Breakfast and Registration</b>
9:00 AM - 10:15 AM	<b>State of the American Veteran in California</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» <b>Welcome</b> Nathan Graeser, Community Program Administrator, University of Southern California Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans &amp; Military Families (CIR)</li><li>» Carl Castro, Director, University of Southern California Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans &amp; Military Families (CIR)   Colonel, US Army (Retired)</li></ul>
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	<b>Break</b>
10:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>Breakout Session #1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Advancing Veteran Well-Being Through Policy (Policy)</li><li>» Cultivating Innovation to Strengthen Communities (Innovation)</li><li>» Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration (Collaboration)</li></ul>
12:15 PM - 2:15 PM	<b>Lunch</b>
2:15 PM - 3:45 PM	<b>Breakout Session #2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Intervention to Prevention: Promoting Sustainable Veteran Health &amp; Wellness (Policy)</li><li>» Transforming Veteran Outreach (Innovation)</li><li>» Building a Veterans Collaborative in Your Community (Collaboration)</li></ul>
3:45 PM - 4:00 PM	<b>Break</b>
4:00 PM - 5:45 PM	<b>California Transition Assistance Program: Building Strong Communities Statewide</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Keith Boylan, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Services, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVET)</li><li>» Nathan Graeser, Community Program Administrator, University of Southern California Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans &amp; Military Families (CIR)</li></ul>
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	<b>Reception in the Samuel Oschin Pavilion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Networking and Entertainment under the Space Shuttle Endeavour</li><li>» <b>Remarks</b> Vito Imbasciani, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVET)</li></ul>



Please bring your name badge back with you on Friday.

# AGENDA

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

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**8:00 AM - 9:00 AM**      **Breakfast and Networking**

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**9:00 AM - 9:45 AM**      **A Statewide Strategy**

- » **Welcome** Nathan Graeser, Community Program Administrator, University of Southern California Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families (CIR)
  - » Phillip Brozenick, Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP
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**9:45 AM - 10:00 AM**      **Break**

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**10:00 AM - 11:30 AM**      **Breakout Session #3**

- » Mission Accomplished, Now What? Transforming Post-Service Transitions (Policy)
  - » Optimizing Technology to Strengthen Veteran Relationships (Innovation)
  - » Harnessing Local Data to Drive Collaboration & Measure Impact (Collaboration)
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**11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**      **Lunch**

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**1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**      **Breakout Session #4**

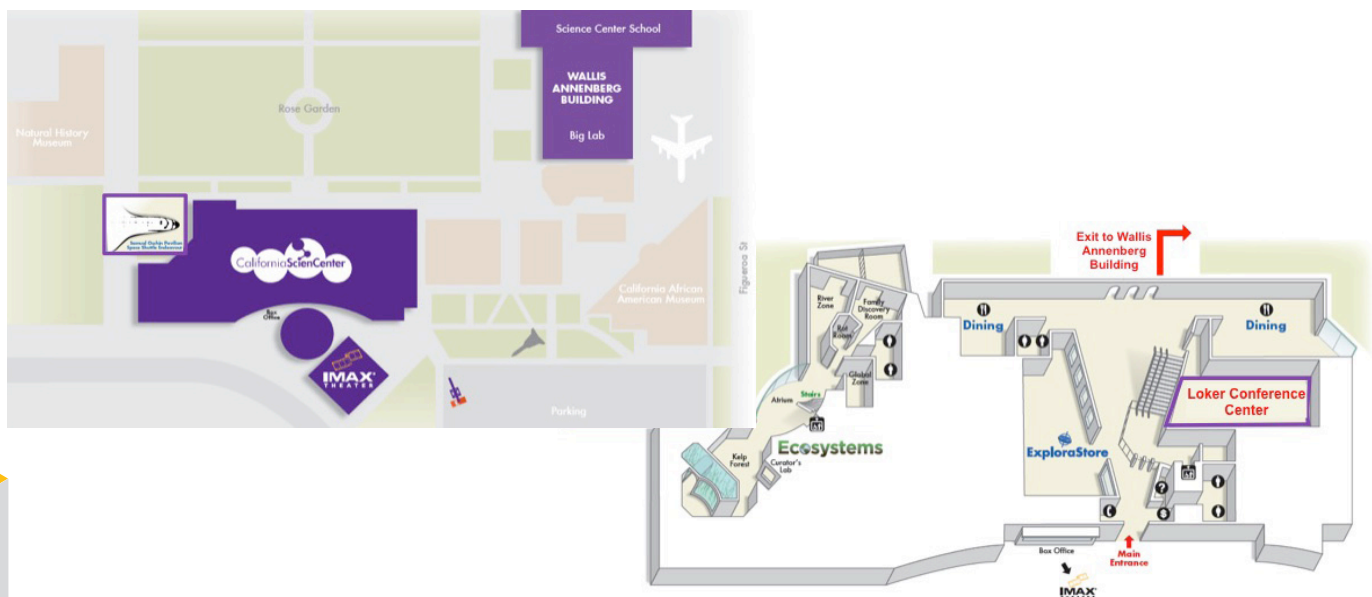
- » Thank You for Your Service: Increasing Veteran Access and Utilization of Benefits & Disability Programs (Policy)
  - » Innovations on the Home Front (Innovation)
  - » Collaborative Leadership: Successful Practices for Sharing Responsibility (Collaboration)
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**2:30 PM - 2:40 PM**      **Break**

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**2:40 PM - 3:00 PM**      **Closing Plenary: Working Together to Advance the State of the American Veteran in CA**

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# THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN VETERAN STUDIES

CIR is committed to strengthening the transition of veterans and military families into civilian life by increasing their resiliency, their access to care and the community's capacity to serve them. Through its groundbreaking research, leadership and relationships with some of the most active participants in the veteran sphere, CIR is working to make Los Angeles the most veteran-friendly city in the nation, along with providing best practices that can be replicated and adapted in other communities across the country.

In 2014, CIR released the results of the first comprehensive needs assessment of a large urban military population. The State of the American Veteran: The Los Angeles County Veterans Study polled more than 2,000 active service members and veterans in Los Angeles County, gathering invaluable insight into some of the most pressing needs and challenges facing the local military population. The results of the study ignited change in how policymakers and veteran-serving organizations help veterans and military families, and the data has continued to drive collective efforts among L.A.'s government, nonprofit and private sectors to aid in the transition home.

The study painted a daunting picture of the stumbling blocks that veterans face accessing and utilizing community-based support programs. More than two-thirds of all veterans surveyed reported difficulties adjusting to civilian life, and more than half of post-9/11 veterans reported not knowing where to go or who to contact for help. The study also showed that more than a third of all veterans were unemployed. Almost two-thirds of post-9/11 veterans reported that civilian employers do not understand veterans or are insensitive to their needs, and more than half thought employers didn't value their skills.

Citing our studies, many programs have been created to help meet the needs identified—including the launch of Text2Vet, an innovative text-messaging platform that connects veterans to resources in the city. This innovative, data-driven approach to harnessing local goodwill for effective solutions is a model that has been lauded by the U.S. departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. Further, CIR's expertise has been sought after by communities across the nation wishing to replicate the local-data approach.

In 2015, CIR replicated the study in neighboring Orange County, California. Philanthropic organizations there have used the resulting data to develop strategic funding efforts that will target the biggest challenges identified.

Earlier this year, CIR, in partnership with Loyola University Chicago, released the Chicagoland Veterans Study, which polled nearly 1,300 veterans living in Cook, DuPage, Lake and Will counties. As in other locations, veterans in the Chicago area were returning home unprepared for the transition out of the military and with numerous challenges that cannot be easily addressed by a single organization. While unique to their area, similarities among the findings point to a need for a larger, nationwide transition effort. Chicago-area partners are already planning to use the data to target future research efforts and better understand the issues facing Chicago veterans.

Currently, CIR is conducting data collection for the San Francisco Veterans Study that will poll veterans in the Bay Area. Not only will the data help paint a fuller picture of the needs and challenges facing California veterans, but it will also highlight the specific issues facing LGBT veterans. Each study has given CIR the opportunity to delve deeper into specific populations and subject matters.





# CONFERENCE TRACKS OVERVIEW

LOKER  
CONFERENCE  
CENTER  
MAIN HALL

## POLICY

California veterans are affected by local, state and federal policies. Of the thousands that make California their home each year, most will transition home to find information that can often be overwhelming, challenging to navigate and hard to access. As a thought leader and home to more veterans than any other state in the nation, California has an unparalleled responsibility to use data-driven policies to support those who have worn the uniform and ensure they transition back to prepared and supportive communities. The policy track is dedicated to exploring the veteran policy landscape in California, and to enabling leaders, policymakers and influencers to identify and prioritize the most impactful policy changes. The notes and discussions from this track will help craft a veteran policy agenda for California for the next five years.

### **SESSION #1: ADVANCING VETERAN WELL-BEING THROUGH POLICY**

The first session will provide an overview of federal and state resources for veteran services. There is currently no streamlined system for veteran services; there is a major disconnect between the state and federal level, and the VA and everyone else. Implementing policies at the state level will cover the state and local levels. This will strengthen the process of sending information to the federal level, and create a positive and sustainable change for California veterans, and all U.S. veterans at large.

### **SESSION #2: INTERVENTION TO PREVENTION: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE VETERAN HEALTH & WELLNESS**

The second session will focus on veterans' mental health issues. In recent years, they have received significant attention nationally and throughout the state, particularly given the high rate of suicide in our veteran population. This session will provide an overview of federal, state and local mental health resources and focus on increasing awareness and access to health care services for veterans, developing policies that address gaps in mental and behavioral health services.

### **SESSION #3: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, NOW WHAT? TRANSFORMING POST-SERVICE TRANSITIONS**

The third session will focus on transition from active-duty service member to veteran. California has made a major policy and financial commitment to build housing for the state's chronically homeless veteran population, and to identify manners to address transition through employment services. However, there are continued gaps within housing and employment services. This session will focus on establishing a clear definition of "transition" and developing policy ideas that amend existing legislation; address gaps within veteran homelessness, employment, the definition of military family; and create prevention measures to better prepare communities that are receiving veterans.

### **SESSION #4: THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE: INCREASING VETERAN ACCESS AND UTILIZATION OF BENEFITS & DISABILITY PROGRAMS**

This last session will identify the disconnect between various levels of government and the implications on benefits and disability processing for veterans. The Little Hoover Commission has initiated a review of the CDVA Veteran Homes Program to create a more efficient system for benefits and disability processing within the state of California. The session will examine the Little Hoover Commission's platform, the tax effects of a veteran's disability rating in California, and alternate emerging methods to address benefits and disability, such as tele-health care.



# CONFERENCE TRACKS OVERVIEW

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## INNOVATION

You cannot create innovation, but you can create the conditions for it.

Innovation is a California tradition. The entertainment, tech and healthcare industries were transformed by breakthroughs from local California communities.

Today's veterans need this same adventurous spirit to resolve the issues they face. Despite significant government and philanthropic funding, nonprofit spending and an enormous reservoir of goodwill toward veterans, significant challenges remain. Veterans largely do not know where to turn for help; they are not adequately prepared for the cultural transition from military to civilian life; and the government alone cannot be the only solution.

New innovative approaches are needed. This track is dedicated to extending our state's innovation-oriented mindset to our veteran community—specifically focused on how innovations in technology, outreach, healthcare and grassroots efforts can change the lives of California veterans. The notes and discussion from these sessions will be developed into an agenda for innovation across the state.

### **SESSION #1: CULTIVATING INNOVATION TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES**

The opening session of this track will set the precedent for the leaders across the state of California to invest in innovation in the veteran space. It will explore a working definition of innovation and the need for it in the veteran space.

### **SESSION #2: TRANSFORMING VETERAN OUTREACH**

The second session will establish the need for incubators of innovation. Given the restrictive nature of government programs and the intense competition for traditional funding among veteran-serving organizations, new mechanisms are needed to foster and incubate ideas and projects that may not be feasible under current models. Within the veteran space, outreach continues to be a problem. With exciting new modes of communication (e.g., zero8hundred and Text2Vet), we have learned that models that reach beyond their immediate circles are the most sustainable within the veteran space. This session will examine the successes of such models and identify gaps upon which to build.

### **SESSION #3: OPTIMIZING TECHNOLOGY TO STRENGTHEN VETERAN RELATIONSHIPS**

The third session will focus on technology as one of the biggest assets to innovation. This session will explore the strengths and limitations of applying technology to innovations within the veteran space, and at large.

### **SESSION #4: INNOVATIONS ON THE HOME FRONT**

Innovation is important across all sectors affecting veterans and their families. The final session will examine current innovations across all sectors—identifying promising practices, trends and the important characteristics for seeding innovation within the veteran space.





# CONFERENCE TRACKS OVERVIEW

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ROOM A

## COLLABORATION

In many ways, the challenges that communities face in providing care and support for transitioning veterans are not unlike the complexities associated with dealing with public health or safety. In these cases, communities that successfully collaborate avoid information overload and coordinate to work toward a common outcome (e.g., decrease child obesity, decrease crime rates). These efforts require engaging the entire citizenry to take on a part of the solution. This approach streamlines best practices, decreases competition for resources, and allows for information-sharing and feedback. The scale and difficulty that military and civilian communities face when attempting to transition veterans require a comprehensive approach that addresses the unique challenges facing them when they return home.

Veterans and families out of the military need access to a holistic system that seamlessly works together to comprehensively address their needs. Employment problems quickly become housing problems. Mental health problems quickly become legal or marital problems. No single agency can do it alone. In order for our communities to meet the growing need, we must carefully construct a web of support—a collaboration that is both locally based and connected statewide. Collaboration is more than just networking, it is about building strategic alliances and working toward a common vision. At its best, it is guided by principles that shape how the community engages and performs. The notes and discussions from this track will help craft a collaboration agenda for California.

### **SESSION #1: FOSTERING CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION**

This session will provide an overview of the theme of collaboration and its application in the veteran space. The session will define collaboration, while emphasizing that collaboration is a strategic way to meet and engage with community partners to see how individuals can create and work together.

### **SESSION #2: BUILDING A VETERANS COLLABORATIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

The second session will focus on collaboration as a requisite to successful community engagement and sustainability. An essential component of this collaboration is trust. This session will engage thought leaders to examine key components that promote collaboration in a community, and those that detract from it with the goal of outlining what efforts can be made to foster better collaboration across the veteran landscape.

### **SESSION #3: HARNESSING LOCAL DATA TO DRIVE COLLABORATION & MEASURE IMPACT**

As veteran collaboratives have grown over the last few years, it has become increasingly important to measuring their impact. The third session will explore what type of data is important for measuring collaboration, what types are not and how to apply these to promote sustainable efforts that can inform leaders and lead to better decision-making.

### **SESSION #4: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES FOR SHARING RESPONSIBILITY**

The final collaboration session will examine the characteristics of both traditional and engaging models of leadership. It will also identify key components of each type that are beneficial to the veteran space.



# PLENARY SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



## Keith Boylan

**Deputy Secretary Veterans Services, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)**

Keith Boylan was appointed February 11, 2013 by Governor Brown as Deputy Secretary for the Veterans Services Division at the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Boylan served in the U.S. Army from 1989 to 1992 as a tactical fire specialist and was deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in support of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Desert Calm. After graduating from San Francisco State University, Boylan began working with Swords to Plowshares, a nonprofit veteran service agency in San Francisco, as their Gulf War outreach coordinator. During this time, he was tasked with oversight of the Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illness which included providing testimony to the Presidential Special

Oversight Board on an array of issues, including the hazards associated with depleted uranium munitions, anthrax vaccinations, pyridostigmine bromide tablets, and various other toxins identified by the National Academy of Sciences to be present during the Gulf War.

He later served as the government relations and community education director for the Institute for Veteran Policy where he worked to expand their Combat to Community (C2C) program, a curriculum-based program for community partners who interact directly with recently returned veterans. The C2C program included training for law enforcement, human resource professionals, clinicians and legal advocates.

Boylan most recently served as the government relations liaison for the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies. CAVSA is a consortium of nonprofit veteran service agencies throughout the state that provide housing, employment, training, and mental health services to more than 20,000 veterans a year.

Boylan has served on the Board of Directors for the National Gulf War Resource Center and Veterans For Peace. He is currently a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and AMVETS.



## Philip Brozenick

**Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP**

Philip Brozenick is a Principal with Deloitte and serves as the Western United States lead relationship partner for the public sector practice. He partners with key clients to create and provide innovative, efficient, and effective business solutions while helping them achieve their program goals. His key specialties include business performance improvement, program management, financial management, government operations, systems integration and planning, and client executive development. He has more than 25 years of internal and external consulting experience and has worked extensively with state, county, and city organizations.

Throughout his career, he has served a number of clients with many of their most critical issues including the states of California, Nevada, Alaska, Montana, Idaho, as well as Los Angeles County, the City and County of San Francisco, the City of Portland, Kaiser Permanente, the University of California, NASA, and Microsoft.

Brozenick is active in the community, and in May 2013, was elected to serve as Chairman of the California VetFund Foundation. VetFund promotes the interests and raises money to support the California veterans and active service members, the Veterans Homes of California, veterans' services, and operates in conjunction with the programs of the California Department of Veterans Affairs. He also serves as Deloitte lead partner and sponsor for veterans issues throughout the greater Bay Area and has been a strong proponent and mentor for the American Corporate Partner's Veteran's Program.

Brozenick is a former Captain and proud veteran of the United States Air Force. His education includes Carnegie Mellon University, MPM and the University of Pittsburgh, BA. He is also a Certified Management Consultant and Project Management Professional. He was appointed to USC CIR's Leadership Council in spring 2016.



## Carl Castro, PhD

**Associate Professor, USC School of Social Work**

**Director, Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families**

Carl Castro is an Associate Professor at the USC School of Social Work, also serving as the Director of the Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families. Castro joined the faculty in 2013 after serving 33 years in the U.S. Army, where he obtained the rank of colonel. Castro began his military career as an infantryman in 1981. He served in a variety of research and leadership positions, including as director of the Military Operational Medicine Research Program, Headquarters, U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, Fort Detrick, Maryland. Castro has completed two tours in Iraq, as well as peacekeeping missions to Saudi Arabia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

He is currently chair of a NATO research group on military veteran transitions, a Fulbright Scholar and member of several Department of Defense research advisory panels focused on psychological health. He is the current editor of *Military Behavioral Health*, the flagship academic journal about the biopsychosocial health and well-being of service members, veterans and military families. Castro has authored more than 150 scientific articles and reports in numerous research areas. His current research efforts focus on assessing the effects of combat and operations tempo (OPTEMPO) on soldier, family and unit readiness, and evaluating the process of service members' transitions from military to civilian life.



## Nathan Graeser, MDiv, MSW

**Community Program Administrator**

**Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans & Military Families**

Nathan Graeser is a Community Program Administrator for the Center for Innovation and Research on Veteran and Military Families (CIR) at the USC School of Social Work, where he directs the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative and Innovation Fund—a collective-impact group that consists of more than 2,000 different service providers throughout Los Angeles County with over 250 regularly attending monthly meetings. Graeser has served in the U.S. Army National Guard for nearly 17 years, including as a chaplain for combat arms battalion the last five years.

Graeser has educated hundreds of service providers on military culture and supporting transition out of the military, and developing better community policies as people return home from war. He obtained a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary and then a Master of Social Work focusing on military populations at the University of Southern California. Graeser has been recognized for his innovative inclusion of ceremonies for transitioning veterans, as well as his creative and realistic approach to building capacity for communities and mental health providers treating veterans. He was recently recognized by USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture and the Interreligious Council of Southern California as one of 50 leaders working in the intersection of faith and social change.



## Vito Imbasciani, MD

**Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)**

Vito Imbasciani was sworn in as Secretary at the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) on September 28, 2015. Imbasciani was director of government relations at the Southern California Permanente Medical Group since 2004, where he has been a urologic surgeon since 1997. He served as state surgeon for the California Army National Guard from 2006 to 2014 and as a colonel in the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1986 to 2014. Imbasciani is now president of the Los Angeles County Medical Association and a member of the California Medical Association. He earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Vermont College of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Arts degrees from Cornell University.



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