

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Francheska Atchison



Francheska Atchison, an active duty US Army veteran, serves military service members, veterans, and their families in her current role as the National Office Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Program lead at the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). The JVSG provides federal funding to 54 State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to hire dedicated staff who provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment and assist employers in filling their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans.

Ms. Atchison has over ten years of professional federal experience working for the Departments of Defense and Labor providing employment programs and services directly to veterans, transitioning service members, and their families. As a Program Manager for the Department of Defense's Employment Readiness Program, she led program initiatives for an Army installation to address the unique employment challenges of military spouses.

Ms. Atchison has a deep passion and commitment to continue to advance the JVSG program for the greater benefit of the veterans served.

Shurhonda Love



Shurhonda Love, a service-connected disabled veteran, was appointed Assistant National Legislative Director of the nearly 1.3 million-member Disabled American Veterans (DAV) in 2015. In this capacity, Ms. Love works to support and advance federal legislative goals and policies of the DAV to assist disabled veterans and their families, and to guard current benefits and services for veterans from legislative erosion.

Ms. Love joined DAV's professional staff as a national service officer trainee in 2008 at the Montgomery, Alabama National Service Office. In 2011, she was promoted to assistant supervisor of the National Service Office in Salt Lake City, Utah. The following year in October, she was appointed supervisor of the New Orleans, Louisiana National Service Office, where she served until her appointment to the national legislative staff.

A native of Dallas, Texas, Ms. Love enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard in 1990. She joined the Regular Army in 1995 and served as a medic until she was discharged as a result of service-connected disabilities in December 2002.

Melissa Bryant



Melissa Bryant is the Chief Policy Officer for IAVA. She leads IAVA's policy division, overseeing the legislative, research, and intergovernmental affairs departments. Ms. Bryant spearheads the development of IAVA's policy agenda and advocacy campaigns in collaboration with IAVA leadership, and leads IAVA's engagement with the White House, government departments and agencies, particularly the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, Veteran and Military Service Organizations, and advocacy organizations.

A former Army Captain and Operation Iraqi Freedom combat veteran, Ms. Bryant has an extensive record of public service, having served on both active duty and in the civil service as an intelligence officer prior to joining IAVA. A plans, policy, and operations expert with 15 combined years of experience in the federal government, she has served in key leadership positions with the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Joint Staff, the United States Military Academy, and Army Intelligence. She was successful in building "coalitions of the willing" to advance operational and strategic objectives while developing and implementing plans and policy for the defense and intelligence communities.

Ms. Bryant is an ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science, *cum laude*, from Hampton University, is a graduate of the Howard University School of Law, and holds a Master of Arts in policy management from Georgetown University.