



## **Department of Veterans Affairs Outreach Assistant Director Biography**



**Detra Giles**

**Assistant Director, Outreach, Transition and Economic Development**

Ms. Detra Giles is an accomplished Assistant Director with more than a decade of expertise in critical operational management, project management and leadership roles supporting our nation's Veterans. In April 2021, Ms. Giles joined Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED), as the Assistant Director of Outreach and Economic Development. In this role, Ms. Giles serves as the executive over 14 Veteran special emphasis outreach programs, including, Elderly, Faith-Based, Foreign, Former Prisoners of War, Homeless, Justice-Involved, Minority, Military Sexual Trauma, Suicide Prevention, Women, Rural, Native American, Tribal and Overseas Military Services Coordinators. In addition, Ms. Giles serves as the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) Co-Chair on the Sexual Trauma Working Group (STWG) and as the executive official for the VBA Homeless Advisory Committee. Prior to taking on this position, Ms. Giles served as the Assistant Director of the Office of Transition and Economic Development (TED) for two years.

During her tenure with TED, Ms. Giles served as the Assistant Director over VA TAP (Transition Assistance Program) Operations at 110 permanent military installations and 220 itinerant sites, within and outside the Continental U.S. Organized into nine operational regions, these operations use a regional hub-and-spoke model to deploy VA Benefits Advisors globally to engage Service members, Veterans, their families and caregivers. Through its VA Benefits and Services course and other TAP events, operations support approximately 250,000 transitioning Service members (TSMs) worldwide every year. In addition, she served as the Assistant Director over VA SkillBridge and the VA TAP Curriculum. Under Ms. Giles's leadership, the VA Benefits and Services Participant Guide was recognized with two platinum industry awards from the Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals.

When VA Benefits and Services' in-person service delivery to TSMs was impacted at the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Giles led a Pilot on a virtual instructor-led TAP VA Benefits and Services briefing, which eliminated the need for face-to-face interaction during the pandemic and allowed critical services to continue uninterrupted. She also led the successful resumption of in-person VA Benefits and Services briefings at military installations and served as the executive lead over the VA TAP Safe Return to Work plan. In collaboration with the Veterans Health Administration and Department of Defense, Ms. Giles also served as the executive lead on the successful transfer of Women's Health Transition Training to TED.

Prior to coming to TED, Ms. Giles served as a Division Chief in VBA's Pension and Fiduciary Service program. As Division Chief, she was responsible for maintaining policy and procedures, national quality management, national training, field site visits, and misuse. In this role, she successfully supervised the implementation of the first major fiduciary regulation update since 1975, and she prepared advisory opinions on the interpretation of fiduciary laws, regulations, and procedures. She also oversaw quality assurance for audits and validation of compliance with statutory, regulatory, and VBA policies.

Ms. Giles began her VA federal service in 2009 at the Milwaukee VA Regional Office. For over a decade, she held several positions of increasing responsibility, including Veterans Service Representative and Authorizer. She also served as a Management Analyst within the Milwaukee Fiduciary Hub, where she coordinated program initiatives, oversaw local Director's dashboards and assisted with the establishment of division goals.

In 2013, Ms. Giles relocated from Milwaukee to accept a position in VBA's headquarters as a Program Analyst on the Policy and Regulations staff in Pension and Fiduciary Service in Washington, D.C. In that capacity, she successfully served as VBA's project manager on the Fiduciary Program Manual rewrite, and project lead for

the first successful fiduciary program work measurement study. In addition, she served as the Program Manager for several large contracts within VBA in excess of \$300M.

Currently working on her Doctorate in Business Administration, Ms. Giles holds a Master of Business Administration, a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, and an Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement.

As the spouse of a Navy Veteran, Ms. Giles is passionate about working with Veterans and assisting them in obtaining the benefits they have earned through service to their country. Using well-informed, efficient and effective decision-making, she is always focused on achieving optimal outcomes that will best serve our nation's Veterans.



# Department of Veterans Affairs

## Senior Executive Biography

### **Ronald S. Burke Jr.**

#### **Deputy Under Secretary, Office of Policy & Oversight Veterans Benefits Administration**



Ronald S. Burke, Jr. was appointed as the Deputy Under Secretary (DUS) for Policy & Oversight on April 26, 2021. Mr. Burke is responsible for ensuring the effective operation and oversight for ten Business Lines and Program Offices. These services and programs provide guidance and oversight for over 24k employees and are responsible for over \$123B in benefit payments to Veterans, Service Members, their family members, and survivors. Mr. Burke leads the coordination of enterprise-level initiatives, projects, and procedural changes that provide Veterans and claimants access to disability compensation, pension, education, vocational readiness, employment, transition assistance, insurance, and home ownership.

Prior to this appointment, he served as the Executive Director for Pension & Fiduciary Service and was responsible for the administration of VBA's pension program, which, in fiscal year 2020, paid more than \$4.2B to over 378k of our most financially challenged wartime Veterans or their survivors. Mr. Burke was also responsible for the administration of VBA's fiduciary program, which protects our most vulnerable beneficiaries who are unable to manage their financial affairs. In fiscal year 2020, this program provided oversight of fiduciaries managing more than \$3.4B for more than 162k beneficiaries.

Mr. Burke previously served as the Assistant DUS for Field Operations and was responsible for the effective operation and oversight of 56 regional offices and five district offices. He has also served in numerous leadership positions in VBA and led key modernization efforts, such as the development and implementation of the National Work Queue and the automated processing of eligible pension and survivor claims. Mr. Burke was a member of an accredited Veterans Service Organization for five years prior to joining VA.

Mr. Burke was born and raised in Maryland and served his country honorably in the United States Marine Corps. Married with two children and three grandchildren, he enjoys spending time with his family and friends.

#### **CAREER CHRONOLOGY:**

2021-Present	Deputy Under Secretary, Office of Policy & Oversight, Washington, DC
2019-2021	Executive Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service, Washington, DC
2015-2019	Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Washington, DC
2009-2015	Director, Appeals Management Center & National Capital Region Benefits Office, Washington, DC
2006-2009	Veterans Service Center Manager, Winston-Salem VA Regional Office
2004-2006	Veterans Service Center Manager, Baltimore VA Regional Office
2003-2004	Supervisory Veterans Service Representative, Baltimore VA Regional Office
2002-2003	Rating Veterans Service Representative, Baltimore VA Regional

#### **MAJOR MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS/AWARDS/DECORATIONS:**

Recipient, Navy Achievement Medal

#### **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS:**

Executive Level Operational Management Training – The George Washington University, November 2016  
VA Senior Executive Strategic Leadership Course – UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, February 2013  
Graduate, Senior Executive Service Career Development Program, January 2012  
Leadership Coaching, 2008  
Division Leadership and Management Training, February 2006  
Introduction to Leadership, April 2004

#### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS:**

Lifetime Member, Disabled American Veterans.



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***Jennifer MacDonald, MD***  
***Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Health***  
***U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs***

Jennifer MacDonald, M.D., is the Senior Advisor for Health to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Dr. MacDonald works to advance progress on critical priorities of the Department, collaborating with leaders across the enterprise and interagency to implement strategic initiatives and policies that benefit Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors.



Prior to her appointment as Senior Advisor, she served as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. She also previously served as Chief Consultant to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Lead Executive for implementation of the MISSION Act, and as Director of Clinical Innovation and Education.

Dr. MacDonald is a practicing Family Medicine physician and U.S. Army Veteran. Prior to joining VA, she served as a White House Fellow and Advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. She served 11 years in the Minnesota Army National Guard and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, earning a Bronze Star for high profile mission achievement and volunteer humanitarian medical work. She completed her Family Medicine training at the University of California, Los Angeles and medical school at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. MacDonald is experienced in leading complex system transformation and is dedicated to the equitable empowerment of Veterans and communities to achieve health and fulfillment through engagement, effective policy, and service delivery.

**Dr. Tanya Banchs**  
**Senior Victim Assistance Advisor**  
**Department of Defense, Sexual Assault Prevention**  
**and Response Office (DoD-SAPRO)**

Dr. Tanya Banchs is the Senior Victim Assistance Advisor for the Department of Defense, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. She is a subject matter expert on sexual assault victim care and advocacy in the military and has over 15 years' experience serving military sexual assault victims and over 25 years' experience in social work and human services. She holds a Doctor of Social Work from Capella University, a Master of Social Work from Saint Leo University, Florida, a Master of Science, in Human and Community Services from Capella University, and a Bachelor of Science, in Psychology from University of Maryland University College. Dr. Banchs is a Licensed Master Social Worker in the State of Maryland and credentialed as Level IV D-SAACP Sexual Assault Advocate through NOVA.



Prior to joining the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office in 2020, Dr. Banchs served as the Commander, Navy Installations Command Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program Manager, where she was responsible for overseeing the Navy SAPR program execution across 10 regions and 71 installations, which involved management of 107 Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC), 67 civilian SAPR Victim Advocates (VA), and over 4,000 Unit SAPR VAs for the entire Navy. From 2008-2012 she served as a SARC and a SARC Supervisor at multiple Navy bases in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Dr. Banchs is an expert in sexual assault response, victim care in the military, and military culture. She is currently an adjunct professor for Saint Leo University's Master of Social Work graduate program, where the majority of her coursework focuses on military social work, trauma, and research. Her technical expertise and analysis of victim advocacy and response policy facilitated multiple improvements and standardizations of SAPR program victim advocacy, prevention, and response initiatives for the Navy.

## **Rachel M. Thanos**

Victim Assistance Analyst and D-SAACP Operations Manager  
Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office



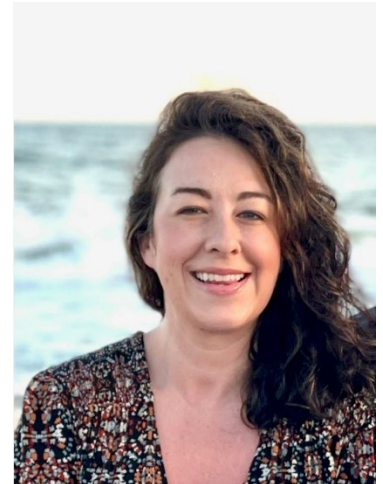
Ms. Thanos serves as the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DoD SAPRO) Victim Assistance Analyst and DoD Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP) Operations Manager. In her current roles, Ms. Thanos provides subject matter expertise on military victim assistance, ensuring victim's voices inform comprehensive sexual assault prevention and response policies and programs. Ms. Thanos also collaborates with internal and external agencies to ensure continuity of care for military sexual assault survivors. Most recently, Ms. Thanos was requested to assist with the 'DoD Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force (SAITF)' and the 'Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military' to identify, evaluate, and recommend immediate and significant actions to improve the accountability process, specific to the investigation and disposition of cases in which members of the

Armed Forces are either victims or alleged offenders of sexual assault, while ensuring due process for both.

Prior to joining DoD SAPRO, Ms. Thanos was an active duty Air Force officer; during her active duty time, she served as an Assistant Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) at Langley Air Force Base, VA and then as Chief SARC at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. She then managed a Sexual Assault Medical Forensics program for the European Regional Medical Center based out of Landstuhl, Germany. Ms. Thanos earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Florida and her Master's degree in Public Administration from Strayer University.

***Megan Davis***  
***Program Analyst***  
***Office of Field Operations - National Contact Centers***  
***(OFO-NCC)***

Megan Ezell Davis has worked with the Department of Veterans Affairs since July 2002. Since joining the Nashville National Call Center in its opening year as a Legal Administrative Specialist. Ms. Davis has also served as a Training Coordinator and Coach in the NCC in Nashville. She is currently a Program Analyst with the OFO-NCC Training Team.





## Department of Veterans Affairs

### **James Dyer, M.Ed**

**Training Manager, Compensation Service  
Veterans Benefits Administration**

James Dyer reported to duty as the Training Manager for Compensation Service in March 2014. His main objective is to improve human capital through employee development, training opportunities, and resources allocation thereby adding value to the organization. On an annual basis he manages an extensive budget in federal expenditures while maintaining internal controls through fiscal responsibility, risk management, and accountability which promote operational efficiency. His responsibility creates a conduit for providing customer focused training services, which are accessible, timely, cost-effective, and responsive to organizational objectives and strategic initiatives.



James began his VA career in August 2004 as a Veterans Service Representative at the Los Angeles Regional office. He held this position for 7 years until he transitioned to a leadership role as an Assistant Coach. He supervised Veterans Service Representatives while promoting efficient workload management, proper decision making, and judgment, which resulted in quality service to Veterans.

Prior to joining Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), James served as a Correctional Officer at the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons Penitentiary in Lompoc, CA. He established and built a rewarding career while successfully maintaining custody and control of over 12,000 inmates with poise and professionalism. James spent the majority of his 5-tenure working in the Special Housing Unit as the Property Officer.

As a Military Policeman in the United States Navy, he held a wide variety of assignments and locations. He received numerous awards to include; Good Conduct, National Defense, Southwest Asia, Battle E, and a Navy Achievement Medal as well as citations and commendatory recognitions; he was promoted on several occasions and ended his military career as a Second Class Petty Officer. James also holds a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree from Capella University and a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Oakland City University.

James enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, and working out. His commitment to serving Veterans and their families does not stop at work. He continues his passion to help Veterans and beneficiaries through his position as the Veterans Service Officer for the Glenarden American Legion Post.





## Department of Veterans Affairs

### Charlene Small

#### **Program Analyst Interagency Data Sharing and Military Operations Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration**



Charlene Small joined Compensation Service in July 2020 as a Program Analyst. In her role, she performs a myriad of duties which includes coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, maintaining continuity of interagency data sharing agreements, and ensuring effective oversight of operational and business activities. Her diligence and consistency in maintaining Computer Matching Agreements (CMA) which result in cost savings and the reduction of improper payments. Her decisiveness, tactfulness and quick judgment is efficiently utilized to formulate highly effective policies and procedures which streamline communications within the agency and improve efficiency of the claims process.

Prior to joining Compensation Service, Charlene served as a Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR) at the Decision Review Operations Center (DROC) in Washington, DC. She was instrumental in reducing the legacy appeals backlog by adjudicating compensation claims in an efficient and timely manner. As she excelled in her performance, she was eventually assigned to the training team and was responsible for identifying training deficiencies, creating new and modified operational instructions, developing VA benefit training materials, and onboarding new hires.

In March 2015, Charlene started her VBA career at the New York Regional Office as a Claims Assistant. In this role she informed beneficiaries about their basic eligibility requirements for compensation and other benefits. She was quickly promoted to a Veterans Service Representative (VSR) where she developed and reviewed evidence to substantiate VA disability compensation claims. After two years, she transitioned to a Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR), assisting Veterans with various compensation related claims.

Charlene began her federal career with the Social Security Administration (SSA) in September 2009 where she served as a Claims Authorizer in Queens, NY. Her duties included but were not limited to interviewing and assisting beneficiaries with making informed financial decisions, analyzing claims related information, and adjudicating claims. During her tenure, she acquired a wealth of knowledge that was instrumental in applying procedural guidance and making initial and post entitlement decisions related to social insurance programs.

Charlene consistently demonstrates her commitment to serving our nation's Veterans and their beneficiaries. She continually focuses her efforts and resources on process improvement, strategic planning, leading transformational efforts, which translate to efficient services. Her vast knowledge and ability to understand and manage the complex challenges facing our Veterans solidifies her as an asset to VBA.

In 2008 Charlene earned a Master of Business Administration (MBA), and in 2007 she earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from State University of New York at New Paltz. In her free time, she enjoys creative writing, photography, traveling, and spending quality time with loved ones.

**Dr. LeAnn Bruce**  
**Director**  
***Intimate Partner Violence Assistance (IPV) Program Office (VHA)***

Dr. LeAnn Bruce has been serving as the National Program Manager for the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Assistance Program under the National Care Management and Social Work Office, Department of Veterans Affairs since December 2016. The IPVAP is a national program that provides a comprehensive array of services and programs for Veterans, their partners and VA staff who experience and/or use IPV. Working from a public health model, the IPVAP offers education, prevention and intervention to promote healthy relationships while mitigating risk for unhealthy or at-risk behaviors.



For over 25 years, Dr. Bruce has been involved in the prevention and intervention of Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence across a variety of settings serving active-duty military, Veterans, and their families. Dr. Bruce has served on several national committees and organizations dedicated to social work and ending violence. She is also an adjunct professor at Western Kentucky University School of Social Work. Dr. Bruce received her PhD in Social Work in December 2016 upon completion of her dissertation entitled, *Assessing Moral Injury and Existential Well-Being in Returning Servicemembers*.

***Dr. Chris Skidmore***  
***Associate Director MST Support Team***  
***Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention***  
***Veterans Health Administration (VHA)***

Chris Skidmore, PhD, is the Associate Director of the national Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Support Team in the VHA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. The MST Support Team works at a national level in VHA to promote best practices in the care of Veterans who experienced MST, provide training for staff, and enhance outreach to Veterans. In his work on the MST Support Team, he regularly collaborates with VBA staff and other key stakeholders. He is also the lead content expert for, and a co-developer of, the Beyond MST mobile app. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University and an affiliate of the Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD. His clinical and education interests include treatment for PTSD and substance use disorders and promoting equity in health care and mental health professional training.

