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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ventura College Offers New Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program
Program helps COVID-impacted veterans become employed in high-demand industries

(VENTURA, Calif.) August 2, 2021—Veterans experiencing unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic are among the country's hardest-hit populations. To help veterans who have been impacted, Ventura College's Veterans Resource Center (VRC) is now offering the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP). Eligible veterans will receive up to one year of U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs-paid training for high-demand occupations and a monthly housing allowance.

To qualify for the Veteran Affairs (VA) program, veterans need to be between the ages of 22 and 66, unemployed due to COVID, not totally disabled and have no other VA benefits remaining.

The VRC will assist eligible veterans in applying for VRRAP and then getting enrolled at Ventura College for the fall 2021 semester with classes starting Aug. 16. Ventura College also offers classes beginning January 2022 to accommodate students' schedules.

The college's VRRAP students will have a choice of 23 certificate of achievement programs, including accounting, automotive technician, construction management and the new veterinary assistant program.

VRRAP veteran students and all military-connected students—including active duty and dependents of veterans—are supported by the VRC. The Center helps students navigate the college's enrollment process, links them with educational benefits, and connects students with academic counselors and financial aid specialists. As an advocate for military students, the VRC provides information, holds special events and offers a location for students to work, study and mingle.

"It's rare that the VA introduces new educational funding programs. Having Ventura College be a VRRAP provider is important because it specifically addresses the needs of our veterans who have been so greatly impacted," said Jordana Ybarra-Telias, VRC program coordinator. "I hope to see more VA programs like VRRAP that provide a housing allowance to make it easier for veteran students to focus on school without worrying about how they will pay rent as they invest in their futures."

"Ventura College is honored to support our veterans, and this new program will help them gain knowledge and skills to increase their employability," added Ventura College President Kim Hoffmans.

“Veterans and their families have made great sacrifices for our country, and this is one way for us to demonstrate our gratitude.”

In March, the VA enacted VRRAP as part of the American Rescue Plan of 2021, a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus package designed to help individuals and businesses recover from the effects of the pandemic.

“As a member of the California Community Colleges Veterans Caucus, I appreciate how VRRAP will not only help Ventura College students, it will also help our community’s economic recovery,” said Chancellor Greg Gillespie.

Ventura College offers several VA programs and other educational funding resources from federal, state and local entities. Students can access the college’s Zero Textbook Cost program and other resources to help with educational expenses.

For more information about VRRAP at Ventura College, contact Ybarra-Telias at (805) 289-6060 or vcvets@vcccd.edu, or visit venturacollege.edu/departments/student-services/veterans-resource-center

About Ventura College

Ventura College, the first institution of higher education in Ventura County, has provided quality education to the community since 1925. A designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, the college enrolls over 13,000 students each semester at two campuses. VC offers over 70 disciplines of study in STEM fields, business, the arts, education, social/behavioral sciences, liberal arts and the health sciences. Named one of the nation’s top 150 community colleges by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, it is the largest provider of workforce participants in the county in manufacturing, automotive technology and nursing. To learn more, visit VenturaCollege.edu.

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