



MEDIA RELEASE

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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MVA Partners with Inner City Law Center

Partnership to help facilitate character of discharge upgrades

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) is partnering with the Inner City Law Center (ICLC) to help facilitate character of service discharge upgrades for eligible veterans, as well as representing veterans on higher-level reviews of benefits that involve a character of discharge upgrade.

Under the terms of this arrangement, MVA Veterans Service Officers will refer any veteran interested in exploring a potential upgrade to ICLC. They will then help the veteran assess their case, accumulate evidence and advocate on their behalf.

Character of discharge upgrades have no effect on the veteran's former status with the Department of Defense but are instead designed to update and clarify regulatory barriers to benefits and services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, specifically the Veterans Benefits Administration.

According to the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#), those veterans who can demonstrate their discharge from the service was connected to one of the following categories may have a strong case for an upgrade:

- Mental health conditions, including posttraumatic stress disorder
- Traumatic brain injury
- Military sexual assault or harassment during military service
- Sexual orientation (including under the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy)

A well-documented case with supporting evidence, such as military records, medical documentation, witness testimonies, and character statements significantly increases the chance of an upgrade approval.

ICLC can also represent the veteran in a [U.S. Department of Defense discharge upgrade](#). Per the DoD, "individuals who left the military with a discharge that's less than fully honorable retain the right to upgrade that discharge even years later through their own military department's Discharge Review Board or through their military department's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records."



[ICLC](#) is a nonprofit firm providing pro bono legal services, advocating “for housing and justice for low-income tenants, working-poor families, immigrants, people who are disabled or living with HIV/AIDS, and homeless veterans.”

Veterans interested in pursuing a potential upgrade to their character of service discharge or a higher-level review of a benefits claim should contact MVA at **1-877-4LA-VETS**.

Press inquiries should be directed to W. Regen Wilson, 323.823.6896, wwilson@mva.lacounty.gov or Irantzu Pujadas 213.803.0899, ipujadasaguirre@mva.lacounty.gov

The LA County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) provides assistance to L.A. County veterans, active service members and their families with resources, programs, services and state and federal benefits, including: compensation and pension claims, burial benefits and services, medical and mental health referral, education and vocational rehabilitation, home loans and grant applications, employment and job placement assistance, DMV veteran designation, legal service referrals, appeal processes, programs for incarcerated veterans, as well as aid and attendance.

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