

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2024**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on September 26, 2024 at the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, 1601 Broad Rock Blvd, Richmond VA 23224.

Members Present

1. Victor Angry
2. Carl Bedell
3. Jennifer Carroll Foy
4. Scott Davidson
5. Tara Durant
6. Robert Eisiminger (Zoom)
7. Michael Feggans (Zoom)
8. Malcolm Frost (Zoom)
9. Jackie Glass
10. Vincent Griffith
11. Joyce Henderson
12. Kevin Hoffman
13. Carlton Kent
14. Matthew Miller
15. Russet Perry
16. Joshua Thomas (Zoom)
17. Wendall Warner
18. Bill Aramony Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
19. Brad Williamson, representing the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation
20. Pam Seay, representing the Virginia War Memorial Foundation
21. Chuck Zingler, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

1. David Ashe
2. Jason Ballard
3. Joe Campa
4. Terence McKnight
5. Melissa Watts

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

1. Terry Durkin, Office of Delegate Jason Ballard (virtual)
2. Jordan Stewart, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
3. Kayla Arestivo, Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF)
4. Darius McKenny, VVSF
5. Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)

6. Montwrace Cunningham, DVS
7. James Darragh, DVS
8. Guy Dinkins, DVS
9. Kendra Ellison, DVS
10. Donna Harrison, DVS
11. Dara Hechter, DVS
12. Niquita Hubbard, DVS
13. Robyn Jennings, DVS
14. Eric Johnson, DVS
15. Patrice Jones, DVS
16. Ravi Padma, DVS
17. Jamall Swaim, DVS
18. Tiffany Woody-Wiggins, DVS

Members of the Public

1. None

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet

1. Draft Agenda
2. Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Services Report to the BVS
3. Virginia Veterans Services Foundation Report to the BVS
4. Virginia War Memorial Foundation – Fall 2024 Newsletter
5. Virginia Department of Veterans Services Update for BVS
6. DVS Operations Report – Housing and Homelessness
7. DVS Operations Report – Education
8. BVS 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan (proposed revisions 09.26.2024)
9. 2024-2025 Budget and Legislative Dates; Helpful Website – Information for BVS Members
10. DVS One Pager
11. Upcoming DVS Events
12. BVS 2025 Notional Meeting Schedule

Item I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Carl Bedell called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Vice Chairman Scott Davidson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item II. Roll Call, Introduction of Members, and Quorum Determination

The roll was called, and with 14 of 26 members physically present a quorum was established. Three members were present via Zoom. There was no objection to these members participating virtually, so there were 17 of 26 members present. Three members (Senator Carroll Foy, Ms. Henderson, and Senator Perry) arrived in person shortly after the meeting started, and one member (Mr. Frost) joined virtually after the meeting started, bringing the total number of members physical assembled to 17 of 26 members present, with four members virtually present, for a total of 21 of 26 members present.

Item III. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Victor Angry made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Jackie Glass, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously. The approved Agenda is attached to these minutes.

Item IV. Approval of the Minutes of the June 20, 2024 meeting

Mr. Brad Williamson made a **motion, seconded** by Vice Chair Scott Davidson, to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2024 meeting as presented. There were no changes. The motion carried unanimously.

Item V. Introduction of DVS Staff and Guests

Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Jordan Stewart was recognized. The Department of Veterans Services (DVS) team members and the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF) team members present stood and introduce themselves. No members of the public were present.

Item VI. Reports

- a. Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Chair Bill Aramony presented the JLC update.
- b. Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF) Chair Brad Williamson presented the VVSF update.
- c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) President Pam Seay presented an update on the VWMF.

Item VII. Operations Update

- a. DVS Commissioner Chuck Zingler presented the DVS Operational report. He provided expanding remarks, as follows:

“Several months ago, at a JLC meeting, Delegate Jackie Glass stated that we need to settle on a few priorities; because if we set too many, then we really have no priorities.

Last year, before I arrived a team made up from our Legislature, both parties, members of this board, and leaders from across DVS spent several months collaborating on a Veterans Strategic Plan. That plan articulated Priorities and Objectives for each.

My review of previous strategy postings was organizational:

- Ensure Virginia’s veterans & family members receive timely assistance
- Deliver long term skilled nursing care, memory care and assisted living care at our care centers.
- Connect our veterans, Guard & Reserve personnel and their families to a network of services and programs that can aid and assist....

This latest effort was definitely a different effort. It was strategically consequential, and directive in regard to setting Goals, but also laying out action plans and key performance indicators.

Perhaps the most noteworthy strategic piece, is that it wasn't solely Veteran/Family Member centric, it also portrayed goals and a necessary impact that was not only consequential to the Veteran/Family Member community but also a similarly consequential and positive impact for our Commonwealth. We need their help, amidst a growing decline in our population, to use this community to directly impact our economy and our community.

As we've discussed in previous meetings, those top three Priorities are:

1. Increase the Labor force participation rate for TSMs, Veterans and Family Members to maximize economic outcomes.
2. Make Virginia the easiest state to live, work & raise a family.
3. Attract more service members, veterans and their families to move to Virginia.

Ways to do this include reaching veterans sooner, expanding our reach, attracting & retaining more transitioning service members, coaching and mentoring, using new technology and the reach of the Virginia's Department of Labor and Industry, the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement and our educational institutions to make intuitive the reskilling and upskilling opportunities, by industry. Other ways include credentialing teachers, home schoolers, even childcare providers.

We can grow and improve the V3 program. We meet next week with V3 leaders to work on V3 2.0

And launch a digital hub to scale our services and reach well beyond what could do even with the most remarkable grow in time, talent and treasure.

On November 11th, we will launch the Virginia Veterans Network. We have developed a network of services, programs and resource providers – National and State providers – that can be directly accessed by veterans and their families quickly. In a year, we have developed something that has taken Texas and South Carolina the better part of 8 and 4 years respectively. At this juncture, it will not replace our brick and mortar Veteran Service offices or personnel, but it will clearly grow our capacity to reach more than then the number of Veterans that we currently can.

More importantly, this effort will continue develop and grow, to deliver community specific services, connect business opportunities to veterans and spouses, training, coaching and mentoring, and become a support system throughout the life cycle of a veteran and his/her family.

VNN needs to be a Program of Record, funded and fenced with a small team of leaders, with unique skills to leverage the right technology that delivers service support that veterans need daily. The new veterans those 26 – 40 year olds that are not at all like the Korea-Vietnam era veterans that want to drive 45 minutes to an office to review their benefits claim procedures, or access peer counseling services or sensitive personnel issues that have disrupted their families.

Our last year of testing and prototyping the digital technologies with have veterans and families has clearly shown and aptitude for these types of connections.

A year from now we will be able to have career counseling and market aware for families when they want it. And hopefully well before they go thru a DoD TAP Class (last couple of weeks before the transition....which almost always leads to not a career, but a bad first experience.

And reach those out of state service members that are thinking about Virginia, and what could be to them and their families...at a time when new businesses are coming to Virginia, with great educational programs, advanced technologies, AI, Cyber, Autonomous vehicles, great shipyards, logistics, transportation, and more.

DVS wants you to be active supporters on this VVN effort, and a commitment to a sustained effort to continue to develop and create this. IT is critical for us, to do this now. And I believe it will become the gold standard for other states to follow for their Veterans, Service Members and families.”

- b. Desiree Taylor, DVS Criminal Justice Coordinator, delivered a presentation on DVS Housing and Homeless programs.
- c. Montwrace Cunningham, DVS Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) delivered an update on VMSDEP.

Item VIII. New Business

- a. Chairman Bedell presented the revisions to the BVS 2024 Work Plan, which includes shifting the December meeting from the 13th to the 6th. Senator Terry Durant made a **motion, seconded** by Senator Russet Perry, to accept the changed work plan. The motion carried unanimously.
- b. Chairman Bedell directed the Board members’ attention to the list of upcoming budget and legislative dates leading to the 2025 session and helpful websites.
- c. Chairman Bedell directed the members’ attention to the DVS “One Pager” and list of upcoming DVS events/ceremonies. He encouraged the members to attend DVS ceremonies and visit DVS offices but asked that they coordinate in advance with DVS Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs to ensure a successful visit and to deconflict with direct services to/appointments with veterans. Chairman Bedell presented the

proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule. Senator Russett Perry made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Victor Angry, to accept the proposed schedule. The motion carried unanimously.

Item IX. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

DVS Director of Research and Program Evaluation Eric Johnson provided a short update on the Virginia Veterans Network.

Item X. SBVCC Tour

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center Administrator (SBVCC) Robyn Jennings, Assistant Administrator James Darragh, and members of the SBVCC team led members on a tour of the facility.

Item XI. Wrap Up & Adjournment

There being no further business before the BVS, Chairman Carl Bedell adjourned the meeting at 1:27. p.m.

Approved Agenda

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

September 26, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center

1601 Broad Rock Blvd

Richmond VA 23224

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call, Introduction of Members, and Quorum Determination – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (10:02 – 10:05)
- III. Approval of Agenda – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (10:05 – 10:06)
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the June 20, 2024 meeting– *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (10:06 – 10:07)
- V. Introduction of DVS staff and guests – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (10:07 – 10:08)
- VI. Reports (10:08 – 10:28)
 - a. Joint Leadership Council – *Bill Aramony, JLC Chair*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Brad Williamson, VSF Chair*
 - c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation Update – *Pam Seay, VWMF Executive Director*
- VII. Operations Updates (10:28 – 11:03)
 - a. DVS Operations, Priorities, and Updates – *Chuck Zingler, DVS Commissioner*
 - b. Homelessness & Housing Services – *Donna Harrison, Housing & Criminal Justice Director and Desiree Taylor, Criminal Justice Coordinator*
 - c. Education – *Patrice Jones, Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment VETE) Director; Tramaine Carroll-Payne, VETE Deputy Director, Education; and Montwrace Cunningham, VMSDEP Program Manager*
- VIII. New Business (11:03 – 11:23)
 - a. Revisions to BVS 2024 Work Plan – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman*
 - b. 2024-2025 Budget and Legislative Dates; Helpful Websites – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman and Steven Combs, DVS Deputy Commissioner*
 - c. BVS way forward – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman*
 - 1) DVS “One Pager”
 - 2) Upcoming DVS events – 2024

3) Notional 2025 Meeting Schedule

- IX. Public Comment - *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (11:23 – 11:28)
- X. SBVCC Tour (11:28 – 12:28)
- XI. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Carl Bedell, BVS Chairman* (12:28)
- XII. Lunch (12:30)



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF
VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

101 N. 14TH ST., 17TH FLOOR
RICHMOND VA 23219

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United States Army
Disabled American Veterans
Fifth Baptist Veterans Ministry
Fleet Reserve Association
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Military Order of the World Wars
National Vet Court Alliance
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Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
Virginia National Guard Association
Women Marines Association
Wounded Warrior Project

**JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES
September 26, 2024**

The Joint Leadership Council (JLC) met June 27 and September 19. Both meetings were held in person at the Virginia War Memorial.

At the June 27 meeting, I was elected JLC Chair and Katherine Martinez, who represents the Student Veterans of America, was elected JLC Vice Chair. We bid farewell to Kevin Hoffman, who did an estimable job as JLC Chair this past year. We thank him for his six years of service on the JLC and for his continued service as a new member of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS).

At the September 19 meeting with reviewed, discussed, adopted, and prioritized our 2025 Initiatives.

Each year, the JLC adopts a set of budget, legislative, and/or policy recommendations (we refer to them as initiatives) for consideration by the Department of Veterans Services, the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Governor, and the General Assembly in the upcoming General Assembly session.

The JLC functions as a “bottoms up” organization, meaning that one of our 25 veterans service organizations (VSOs) puts the proposed initiative forward for consideration by the JLC. We vote on whether the proposal will be part of our initiative package for the upcoming session, then we prioritize them.

This year we started with ten proposals, of which five were approved and prioritized at the September 19 meeting. The supporting JLC position papers are attached to this report.

The JLC meets next on Thursday, December 12. We will also hold a short virtual meeting on Friday, December 20 to hear about the military/veterans items in the Governor’s Introduced Budget. Our 2025 “Day on the Hill” is planned for Thursday, January 9, 2025, where we’ll advocate for our initiatives. We invite the BVS to join us – coordinating instructions will come out after our December 12 meeting.

I will submit the JLC Chairman’s 2024 Annual Report to you by November 30.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Aramony
Chair

Atch: Approved/Prioritized JLC 2025 Indicatives



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Wounded Warrior Project

Adopted 09.19.2024

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JLC Initiative 2025-01 **Verification of Veteran Status – Arrest, Jails, and Prisons**

OBJECTIVE: To identify arrested and incarcerated veterans in Virginia so to better connect them to U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (USDVA), Virginia Department of Veterans Services, and community employment, education, and other resources to help lower their recidivism rate and connect them with federal and local court and community resources.

BACKGROUND: Some Virginia local and regional jails use the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Veterans Reentry Search Service* (VRSS) to identify justice involved veterans, but many do not. Veteran self-identification and the *Status Query and Response Exchange System* (SQUARES) also may be utilized by law enforcement for veteran status identification.

DISCUSSION: If veterans within the criminal justice process can be identified, they can be steered to federal, state, and local community veteran services, benefits, and other resources. Virginia should address the specialized needs of veterans criminally charged, at the time they are charged, and while incarcerated.

Doing so will enable connecting veterans to veterans benefits, mental health counseling, and other services, as well as enable connecting these veterans to local community and local Court veteran resources including veteran courts, community education, employment, and other resources so to lower recidivism.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly require that the Virginia Department of Veterans Services assist local and regional jails, sheriffs, and law enforcement officials to enable veteran self-identification and enable deploying and using the USDVA's *Veterans Reentry Search Service* and other services to record an individual's veteran status at the time of arrest, intake, and during incarceration to enable connecting these veterans to USDVA and community employment, education, and other resources to lower their recidivism rate.



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Wounded Warrior Project*

Adopted 09.19.2024

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JLC Initiative 2025-02

Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans

OBJECTIVE: Prohibit ‘Claim Shark’ companies from preying on veterans seeking to obtain or modify their VA entitlements.

BACKGROUND:

- The Commonwealth of Virginia adopted an amended version of HB736 in the 2024 Legislation Session to study the impact of predatory practices by companies taking advantage of veterans seeking to obtain or improve their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits.
- These companies propose contracts beyond the scope of what the VA allows under federal law and do not file powers of attorney or fee agreements with the VA like is required for those accredited agencies who may charge allowed fees.
- Marketing practices of these companies are considered predatory by regulatory and consumer protection entities because promises of no-cost consultations or guarantees of increased benefits are hollow and do, in fact, come with fees attached – often in the form of a percentage of the veteran’s monthly disability compensation.
- Many of these companies often ask veterans for sensitive usernames and passwords for their eBenefits or VA.gov accounts. Such access allow these companies to circumvent VA policies and cybersecurity access controls, permit access to veterans’ sensitive and restricted information, expose personal identifying information (PII) and protected health information (PHI) to unauthorized users and criminal elements, and potentially violate numerous federal consumer protection statutes.

DISCUSSION:

Veterans who believe they have been scammed have little recourse. Many of these contracts include binding arbitration clauses designed to compel payment. Some contracts go so far as to include clauses that prohibit veterans from disclosing terms of the agreements or even speaking negatively about a company or their experiences without risking defamation litigation.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly propose and pass language banning the predatory practices used by these ‘Claim Shark’ companies preying on our veterans seeking to obtain or improve their VA benefits.



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JLC Initiative 2025-03 **Virginia National Guard Tuition**

OBJECTIVE: Transition the Virginia National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) from its current reimbursement model back to an upfront payment model.

BACKGROUND:

1. The Virginia National State Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) is a long standing benefit for the National Guard Members which provides tuition assistance for members of the Virginia National Guard.
2. In 2021 the STAP program shifted to a reimbursement model, leading to confusion and frustration as substantial costs were transferred to service members, requiring them to pay upfront and seek reimbursement at the end of the semester.

DISCUSSION:

1. The National Guard performs a critical and essential role in both service to the Commonwealth and to the Nation.
2. Virginia competes with neighboring states to attract and retain talented individuals in its National Guard.
3. The competitive landscape also includes civilian employers, many of whom offer substantial educational assistance benefits, making it imperative for the Virginia National Guard to provide equally competitive incentives.
4. The National Guard is an exceptional net-positive contributor to the Commonwealth, leveraging a 26-to-1 federal-to-state dollar ratio. Every state dollar allocated to the Guard results in a 26X return in federal funds, underscoring the Guard's significant economic impact on the state.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly revert the STAP program to an upfront payment model, eliminating the current reimbursement requirement and restoring the program's effectiveness as a key benefit for Virginia National Guard members.

Adopted 09.19.2024

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Adopted 09.19.2024

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JLC Initiative 2025-04
Suffolk State Veterans Cemetery Expansion

OBJECTIVE: Secure the necessary funds to expand the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of our veterans and their families.

BACKGROUND:

1. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk is the second most heavily utilized veterans cemetery in Virginia (after Arlington) and the third most heavily utilized state veterans cemetery in the United States.
2. It provides a dignified final resting place for those who have served our country.
3. Due to its high usage, the cemetery is approaching its maximum capacity, and without proactive efforts to identify and acquire additional land for expansion, it will soon run out of space.

DISCUSSION:

1. Our nation owes a profound debt of gratitude to its veterans, and providing a respectful and enduring resting place is a fundamental obligation.
2. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk serves a large and growing veteran population in the region, making it an essential resource for veterans' families. The anticipated space shortage poses a significant risk to maintaining this vital service.
3. Expanding the cemetery would not only ensure that future generations of veterans are honored with the same dignity as those who have come before them but would also demonstrate the Commonwealth's commitment to veterans' care.
4. Identifying and acquiring additional land for the cemetery's expansion is both a practical and moral imperative. The cost of inaction is significant, as the cemetery could soon be unable to accommodate new burials, leading to a crisis in veterans' services in the region.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly allocate the necessary funds to secure land and expand the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. This expansion is critical to continuing to honor our veterans with the respect and care they deserve.



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Adopted 09.19.2024

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JLC Initiative 2025-05 **Women Veterans Day**

OBJECTIVE: to establish June 12th as Women Veterans Day in Virginia, recognizing the contributions and sacrifices of women veterans and commemorating the historic signing of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act.

BACKGROUND:

- **Historic Milestone:** on June 12, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed into law the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, allowing women to serve as regular members of the U.S. military.
- **Recent Recognition:** on May 5, 2017, Representative Victoria Neave filed House Bill 2698, which led to the establishment of Women Veterans Day in Texas.
- **Virginia's Commitment:** Virginia has a significant population of women veterans who have served honorably in various capacities across all branches of the military.

DISCUSSION: Virginia should:

- Designate June 12th as Women Veterans Day in Virginia to commemorate the signing of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act.
- Recognize Women Veterans Day annually with official proclamations and events.
- This will:
 - **Recognize Contributions:** Honor the service and sacrifices of women veterans in Virginia.
 - **Increase Awareness:** Raise public awareness about the historical and ongoing contributions of women in the military.
 - **Provide Support:** Highlight and promote resources available to women veterans.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly establish June 12 as Women Veterans Day in Virginia to honor the significant contributions and sacrifices of women veterans, increase public awareness of their roles in the military, and provide additional support tailored to their unique needs. This initiative will foster greater recognition and appreciation for women veterans throughout the Commonwealth.



VIRGINIA VETERANS
SERVICES FOUNDATION
Virginia is for Every Veteran

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

Status of the Board: The Board currently sits at 15 of 16 positions filled with one of those Trustees awaiting replacement. This is by far the largest number of Trustees we have had in place in the last several years, and with so many with long service times in front of them, this will allow us to better assign Committee positions and better leverage the talents of everyone on the Board.

New Trustees: I am pleased to welcome Mr. Raul "Danny" Vargas to the Board of Trustees. We look forward to adding his passion and experience to our efforts.

Committee Assignments: Many of the Trustees will be or are moving into new positions of leadership and/or have recently been assigned to serve on one of our Foundation's Committees.

Recent Events & Fundraising/Donations: On July 16th, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) donated four specially equipped vans - one for each DVS Veterans Care Center. The Van donation is one of the largest donations we have received, and it was great to have Secretary Crenshaw, Commissioner Zingler, and many others on hand to be a part of this important donation.

Upcoming Events:

- 9/12- VSF Board Meeting at the Virginia War Memorial 10-2
- 9/13 MOAA George C. Marshall Chapter Golf outing (flyer attached)
- 9/19 JLC Meeting, Virginia War Memorial
- 9/26 BVS Meeting, Sitter Barfoot
- 11/09 The Frieden Agency & Wealth Management Veteran's Hit-a-Thon on November 9th, 2024 (qgiv.com)

Brad Williamson

Brad Williamson

Chair, Board of Trustees



The Commonwealth's Pearl Harbor Day Remembrance Ceremony

Friday, December 6 — 11 a.m.
Shrine of Memory



Blue Star Families
Hero Tree

Now on View

AND THE WINNER IS ...



One Week in October, Our Latest Documentary, Wins an Emmy® Award

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation and Blue Ridge PBS (headquartered in Roanoke, Virginia) are proud to announce that the 2023 documentary *One Week in October* was awarded an Emmy® Award for Outstanding Military Documentary Film – Long Form Content by the Capital Emmys (The National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences) at the 66th Annual Emmy Awards in June. The Capital Emmys oversees The Emmy® Awards regionally, including all media outlets in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.

The *One Week in October* film is the 26th in the Foundation's award-winning documentary series, *Virginians at War*. The film examines two significant military events that occurred the same week of October 1983 through personal recollections of Virginia veterans. The 40th anniversary of the bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon on October 23, 1983, was the deadliest single-day death toll for the United States Marine Corps since the Battle of Iwo Jima. That same week, citing danger to U.S. citizens in Grenada, then President Ronald Reagan ordered nearly 2,000 troops to launch a military intervention, occupation, and evacuation. Operation Urgent Fury launched at dawn on October 25, 1983.

During these two events, 13 Virginians lost their lives. Their names are carved on the wall of the Shrine of Memory – Global War on Terrorism at the Virginia War Memorial.

The co-production is the first film in the partnership of the VWMF with Blue Ridge PBS. It was created in the spirit of all the Foundation's *Virginians at War* films, to share the first-hand stories of Virginians who witnessed and participated in critical moments in U.S. military history. Watch the film at VaWarMemorial.org/learn/resources/.

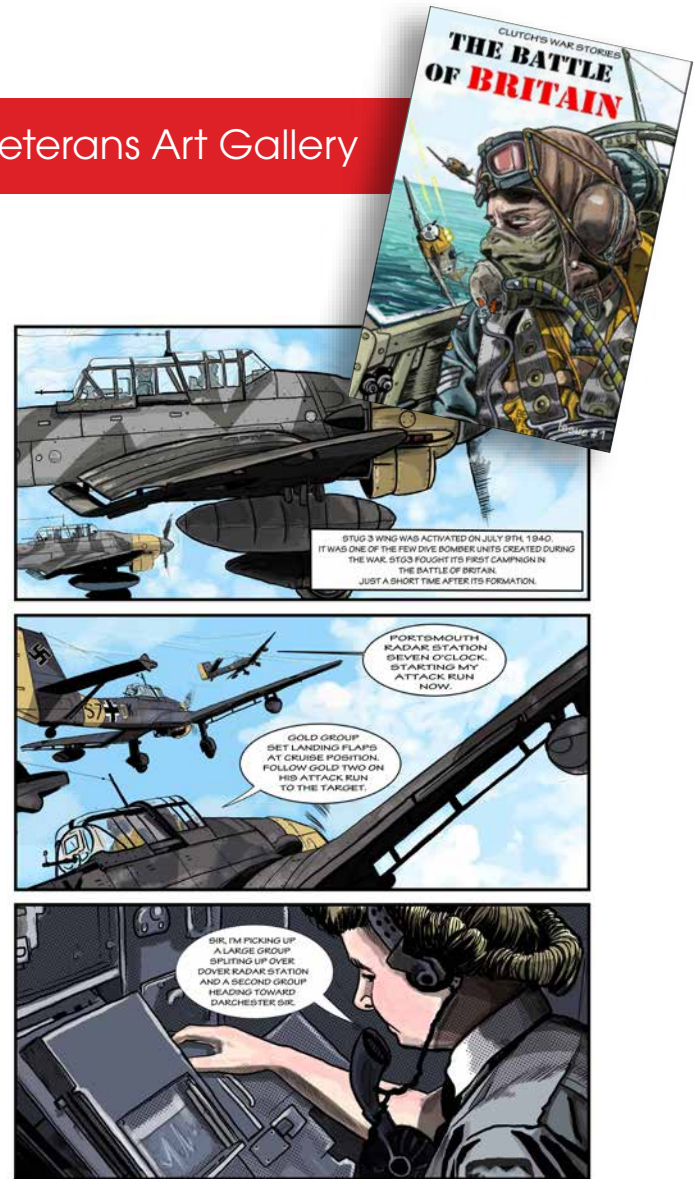
Now Open in the Veterans Art Gallery

Clutch's War Stories: The Artwork of Willie Grimes

Clutch (Willie Grimes) a Richmond native, is a combat-wounded Army veteran and multimedia creator who has developed a career spanning two decades, as a photographer, illustrator, and soon-to-be graphic novelist.

Since April 2008, Clutch has been healing from and dealing with multiple wounds suffered when a 500-pound bomb exploded in the street below the building rooftop where Clutch was positioned. The building was reduced to rubble, and Clutch suffered a traumatic brain injury, hearing loss, and other internal injuries. His art, in all its shapes and forms, is his therapy.

The Virginia War Memorial Veterans Art Gallery is showcasing some of Clutch's latest work — artwork he has created for a graphic novel on the Battle of Britain, the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces. The campaign, from July until the end of October 1940 overlapped the Germans' Blitz air raids over London.

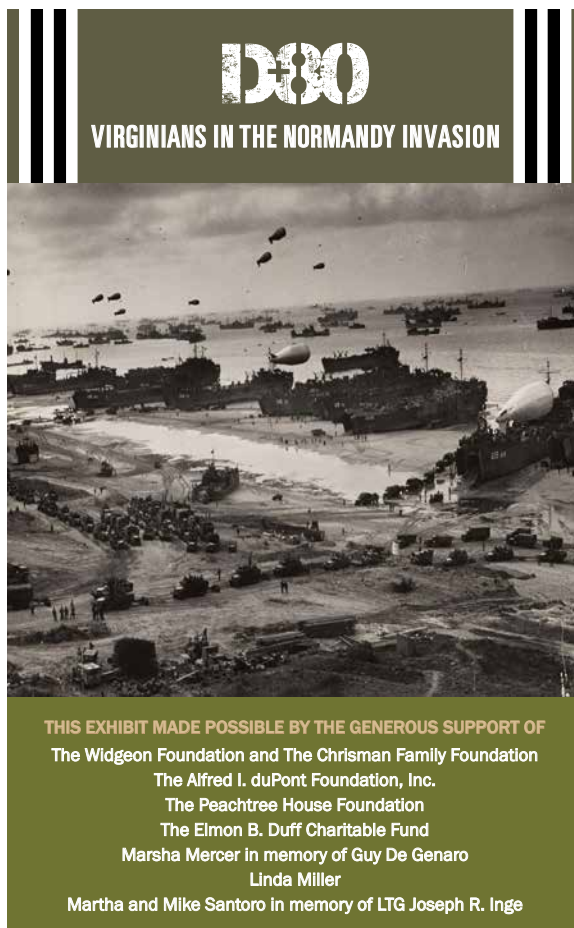


Visit Now



VIRGINIANS IN THE NORMANDY INVASION

Thousands of people have visited this remarkable exhibition since its opening on June 6, 2024, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the invasion. The first-person accounts of Virginians who were there, but who are no longer with us, have only recently been made available to the public. Their voices create a poignant narrative throughout the five gallery sections.



"There's a graveyard in northern France where all the dead boys from D-Day are buried. The white crosses reach from one horizon to the other. I remember looking it over and thinking it was a forest of graves. But the rows were like this, dizzying, diagonal, perfectly straight, so after all it wasn't a forest but an orchard of graves. Nothing to do with nature, unless you count human nature."

—Barbara Kingsolver, Pulitzer Prize-winning author



Whether their remains rest in a hometown graveyard or in a military cemetery overseas, the stories of the Virginians who gave their lives at Normandy are preserved at the Virginia War Memorial.

Please Help Us Finish Strong



Your enthusiasm for the work we do, your attendance at events, and your financial support make the Virginia War Memorial the best memorial of its type in the country. The nearly 800,000 veterans who call Virginia home

deserve no less. The nation pauses twice a year to recognize the armed services — on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. At the Virginia War Memorial, we honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans every day.

Our goal is to give a grateful community a variety of ways to show their appreciation, by learning more about our country's history, by coming together in celebration, by coming together in remembrance, by offering exhibitions that encourage reflection and understanding.

Thanks to you, we enter these last weeks of 2024 from a position of strength. As is the case with any nonprofit, fourth quarter contributions are key to meeting revenue goals. If you stand with us, we will meet those goals and exceed them.

Pamela R. Seay
PRESIDENT
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

The Virginia War Memorial is many things to many people. First and foremost, we are a place where we gather in recognition of our fallen. We are also a place of learning, sponsoring lectures and exhibitions about our military history. And we are also a place where we can gather to celebrate the American spirit that binds us together.



Our Patriot Day commemoration on September 11.



Author Alex Kershaw spoke at the Memorial on September 11 about his latest book, *Patton's Prayer*, enjoyed by Ralph Lett, WWII veteran (inset above).



Our annual Sips on the Skyline reception, September 13.



Welcome to the Foundation Board

Maj. Thomas A. Gibson is the Director of Special Projects for Community Preservation Partner, a WNC Company. Gibson is a veteran and current artillery officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves. As such, he has served in various leadership positions in the U.S., Morocco, and Japan.

After returning to civilian life, he consulted for the Housing Authority of Prince George's County and was formerly vice president of development for Stratford Capital Group where he managed new construction and complex acquisition rehabilitation projects in Northern Virginia. He received an undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia. Gibson received his M.B.A. from Cornell University, an M.P.S. in real estate from Georgetown University, and he is currently pursuing a Master of Liberal Arts from Harvard University. Tom lives in Northern Virginia.



Col. Charles (Charlie) Martin is the Manager of Community Impact for Altria Client Services in Richmond. Martin joined the Virginia Army National Guard in 1994, serving first as an infantryman, before graduating from Virginia Officer Candidate School and being commissioned as an Engineer Officer in 1996. During his 29 years of military service, Martin served in key command and staff positions. Martin is a graduate of the Engineer Officer Basic Course, Engineer Officer Advanced Course, Combined Arms and Service Staff School, Intermediate Level Education Course and the Joint Combined Warfare School. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from Longwood College and a Masters in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College in 2018. He

completed the NORTHCOM Dual Status Commander Course in 2022, and is a recent graduate of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government program in Leadership in Homeland Security. In November 2023, Col. Martin was named the Virginia National Guard's Assistant Adjutant General - Army.

Dr. Rebecca Kaiser is a dermatologist who recently transitioned from private practice to working full time at the Richmond Veterans Administration Medical Center to help support those who have served. She attended William and Mary and participated in the ROTC program before moving back to her home state of Illinois, where she graduated from the University of Chicago Division of Biological Sciences Pritzker School of Medicine in 2014.



HERE TO SERVE

Ben Lovelace Joins the Team as Engagement and Outreach Manager

Ben comes from a long line of U.S. service members. His great grandfather, 1st Lt. Harold L. Eck Sr., USAF, was a Bombardier on a B17 during WWII, and was shot down and captured by the Germans on his second combat mission. His grandfather, father, and stepfather all served in the Marine Corps. His brother currently serves in the Army National Guard. Ben's nonprofit experience includes archives, education, grants, events, and museum operations. Contact Ben at blovelace@vawarmemorial.org for help with facility rentals, Walkway of Honor purchases, the Joseph A. Weinberg Memorial Store, Bus Trips, and the Mighty Pen Project.



Amanda Burton is our Foundation Operations Director

Amanda Burton, who joined us in 2022 as a part-time contract bookkeeper, began her new full-time role as Foundation Operations Director in May 2024. With degrees in music from James Madison University and Virginia Commonwealth University, she established a career in arts administration serving as the Executive Director for the International Conductors Guild for ten years. There she developed a passion for finance which led her to create a bookkeeping business serving many area nonprofits and businesses. She continues to play French horn as an active freelance musician and she runs her own online vintage shop.



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Volunteers: Our Heart and Soul



I received an email the other day that truly made my week. A longtime friend and supporter of the Virginia War Memorial wrote to share his experience on a recent tour of the Memorial with his lifelong

learning group. I was pleased to hear how well the group's tour had gone, and even more pleased to hear how the group really enjoyed spending time with one of our volunteer docents. It's something I hear time and time again, but it never grows old.

I have long said that our volunteers are the true heart and soul of the Virginia War Memorial. They are the first face that a

visitor sees when they arrive at the Memorial and they are the wealth of knowledge about the exhibits, displays, and stories that fill the facility. They explain the sacred significance of the Shrine of Memory, they educate young learners, and they offer a sense of understanding and camaraderie to our visitors filled with love of country, our military, and its history. The Virginia War Memorial is the best in the nation for several reasons, but perhaps none more important than our terrific volunteers.

We are always looking to grow our happy army of volunteers, and we celebrate each new individual who contacts us looking to join. We know that times are busy, and schedules are tight, so we greatly appreciate any time that people can commit to helping at the War Memorial. Greeting visitors, giving tours, assisting our archivist and curator with special projects, or simply being here to help with the daily operation of the Memorial, every bit of volunteer assistance is vital to our success and is greatly appreciated.

Please consider volunteering at the Virginia War Memorial and helping us in our march forward. Veterans or civilians, young or old (or seasoned, as my mom would say), all are welcome. It's a wonderful place to be a part of largely because of the wonderful people who have made themselves a part of it!

Dr. Clay Mountcastle
DIRECTOR
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL



"Please consider volunteering at the Virginia War Memorial and helping us in our march forward."

Questions about volunteering can be directed to Catherine Allen at catherine.allen@dvs.virginia.gov or 804.786.2020.



Leadership in America

Our *Leadership in America* lectures feature a wide array of speakers addressing topics such as military readiness, economic strength, medical advances, history, and cultural influence.

Add these lectures to your 2025 calendar

MOLLY GUPTILL MANNING

When Books Went to War

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025 – 6 p.m.

Molly Guptill Manning is an author, historian, curator, and associate professor of law at New York Law School. She is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *When Books Went to War*. She has spoken across the country about the power of the written word, and has curated the exhibit, "The Best-Read Army in the World". The exhibit showcases the essential role that books, magazines, and newspapers played in World War II. Before she became a professor, Molly worked in the New York federal courts for thirteen years. She earned a B.A. and M.A. in American History, a J.D. at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, and an M.A. in Museum Studies from NYU.

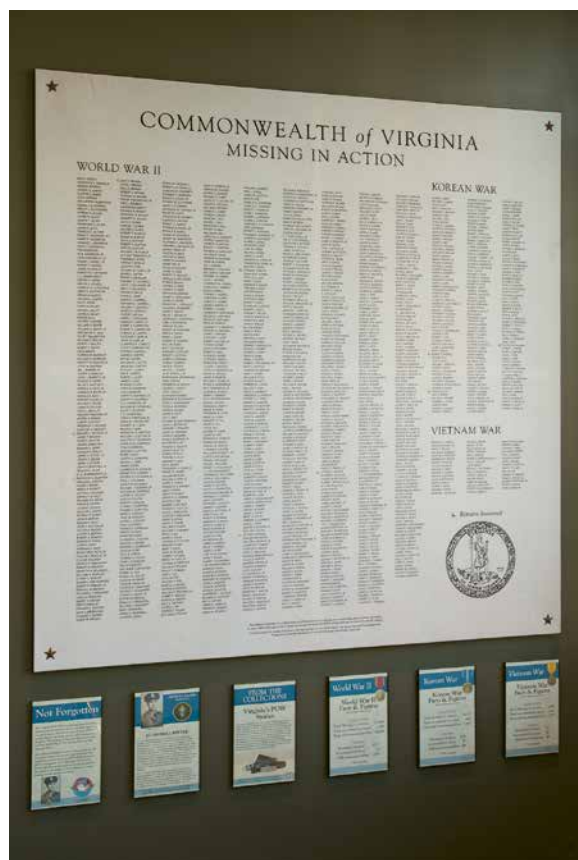


KELLY McKEAGUE

MIA: The Search Continues

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025 – 6 p.m.

Mr. Kelly McKeague began service as the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) on September 5, 2017. He is responsible for policy and oversight of all aspects of the Department's program to account for our nation's missing personnel from past conflicts. He leads DoD's worldwide enterprise of research, investigation, recovery, and identification operations, and supporting functions, in order to provide the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel to their families and to the nation. In December 2015, Mr. McKeague culminated a 34-year career in the U.S. Air Force, retiring at the rank of major general. His talk will be the opening event for our next exhibition: *Virginia's Missing in Action: The Search Continues*.



One of the more poignant charges of the Virginia War Memorial in the Code of Virginia is to honor the memory of those missing in action and, as remains are officially identified, to accord them the Gold Star designation.

Virginia's Missing In Action: The Search Continues

Exhibition opens September 19, 2025, to mark National POW/MIA Recognition Day

This exhibit is presented on behalf of the surviving family members of the more than 1,200 Virginia veterans who are still missing in action (MIA) and on behalf of the more than 700,000 veterans who call Virginia home.

Nationally, 72,103 Americans are still unaccounted for from World War II; 7,480 from the Korean War; 1,577 from the Vietnam War; 126 from the Cold War; and 6 from other conflicts. Out of the more than 81,000 still missing, 75% of the losses are in the Indo-Pacific, and more than 41,000 of the missing are presumed lost at sea.

This exhibit will feature photos, letters, and other archival materials related to those Virginians still MIA. Additionally, the exhibit will explore the scientific process behind searching for and recovering the remains of those individuals by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). The sacrifices made by those who never came home will be forgotten without the efforts of organizations like the Virginia War Memorial and DPAA, to keep their stories in the public consciousness.



The Walkway of Honor

There are heroes among us worthy of recognition. There are people we have lost who should be remembered. There are dates that should be commemorated. You can purchase a brick to be placed on our Walkway of Honor for any of these (or other) reasons. Your brick purchase directly benefits our core mission programs.

To order a memorial brick, contact Ben Lovelace at blovelace@vawarmemorial.org or 804.786.1482 (o), 910.330.0241 (c).



OUR MISSION

To preserve the stories of veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, to honor all veterans and active-duty military, and to inspire love of country through education.

OUR VISION

A global audience will recognize the valor and sacrifice of Virginia's military veterans in the pursuit of liberty, democracy, justice, and peace for all.



COMING SOON

The First Definitive History of the Virginia War Memorial

The Virginia War Memorial is one of Virginia's most important and cherished landmarks — a place for pilgrimage, remembering, and learning. It began as a vision and desire to honor Virginians who had nobly left family, friends, jobs, and school to fight fascism and tyranny during World War II. Over the past seven decades, the Memorial has evolved and expanded. This book documents the creation and evolution of the Memorial against the backdrop of post-World War II America. It highlights the ongoing struggle between historic preservation and development; relevance and public art; political partisanship and public opinion.

Construction of the original Shrine of Memory at the Memorial, one of scores of historical images included in the book, along with striking new images of the Memorial today.



A History of the First 75 Years:
1950–2025

Two-Book Volume, large format (16" x 10"), 200 pages, 150 archival and contemporary photographs

Written by Phillip Bigler, a former Arlington National Cemetery historian and the author of *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: A Century of Honor, 1921–2021*, as well as 12 other books

Principal Photography by John Henley, U.S. Army veteran, well-known Virginia artist

Design by Tim Priddy, a former principal and co-owner of Communication Design

Limited first edition

Order your copy now for early 2025 delivery at the special insider price of \$85.

(Price after Jan. 1, 2025: \$105)

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Shrine of Memory:
Open 5 a.m. to midnight daily

CLOSED:

New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day
VaWarMemorial.org

PHOTOGRAPHY:

John Henley, Mark Mitchell, Jay Paul,
Virginia War Memorial,
Virginia War Memorial Foundation

COPY EDITING:

Jenny M. Abel Editorial Services

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Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing

The Importance of Local History

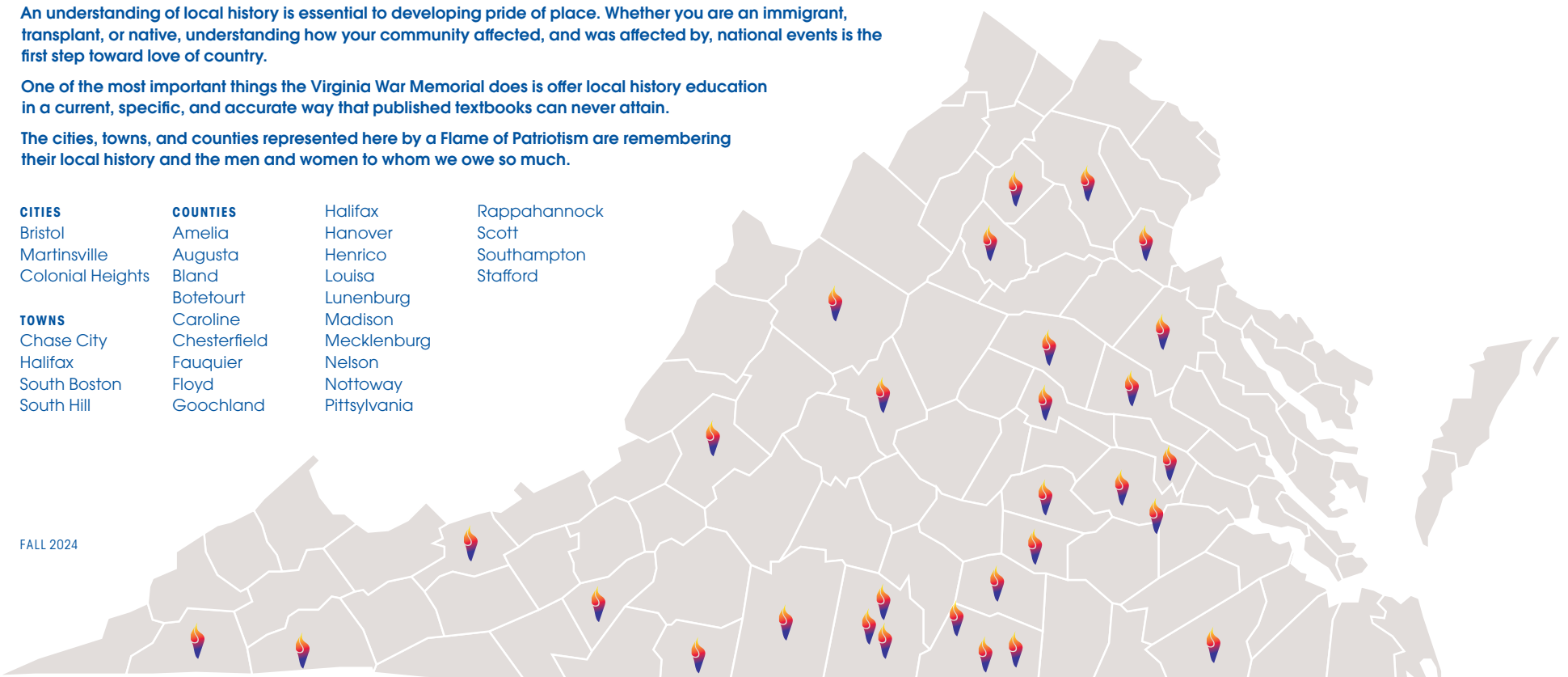
An understanding of local history is essential to developing pride of place. Whether you are an immigrant, transplant, or native, understanding how your community affected, and was affected by, national events is the first step toward love of country.

One of the most important things the Virginia War Memorial does is offer local history education in a current, specific, and accurate way that published textbooks can never attain.

The cities, towns, and counties represented here by a Flame of Patriotism are remembering their local history and the men and women to whom we owe so much.

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| CITIES | COUNTIES | Halifax | Rappahannock |
| Bristol | Amelia | Hanover | Scott |
| Martinsville | Augusta | Henrico | Southampton |
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FALL 2024



If your city or county would like to support our efforts, please contact us at mmwachur@vawarmemorial.org or (301) 580-1488. Or visit VaWarMemorial.org/support/whotheywere.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

Charles A. Zingler
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0220
Fax: (804) 786-0302

Department of Veterans Services Update for the Board of Veterans Services September 26, 2024

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Thank you for all you do on behalf of our Veterans and their families.

Today, I can assure you that Virginia's Veterans and Families are well served by your Department of Veterans Services (DVS). Last week, I shared with Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Craig Crenshaw some of our recent successes, including:

- 5,377 V3 (Virginia Values Veterans) program hires and 98 new V3 companies in Q2.
- 2,024 disability claims were submitted to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) in July – 30% over 2023 and the highest in three years. Approved claim = monthly payment and eligibility for USDVA medical care.
- The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin) earned the USDVA "Operational Excellence Award" for superior performance on its triennial inspection (only 1-2 cemeteries, out of 40 inspected each year, earn this award).
- The Virginia War Memorial opened the *D+80, Virginians in the Normandy Invasion* exhibit. While researching, the VWM team discovered the name of a Virginia soldier killed in Normandy – Charles T. Lewin – was left off Wall of Honor when it built in 1956; his name was added for Memorial Day.
- On September 20 at the Virginia War Memorial, gold stars were affixed next to the names of six Virginians on the MIA Wall – four from World War II and two from the Korean War – whose remains were identified in the past year and returned to their families.
- The Davis & McDaniel Veterans Care Center (Roanoke) was rated in the "Top 11" among all nursing homes in Virginia by *Newsweek*.
- Virginia was the first state to achieve Gold Status (500 new registrations) in the Military Women's Memorial's 2024 *Strive for 500* campaign. Florida is the only other Gold State so far.
- Benefits and VVFS created Career Development Plans to attract, retain, and grow talent; goal is to prevent highly skilled Veterans Service Representatives, Resource Specialists, and Peer Specialists from jumping ship to USDVA, private sector, etc.

Thanks to the direct, heartfelt testimony of our military and veterans families, the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) was saved for the 2024-2025 school year, with the Commonwealth making a historic investment - \$65M/fiscal year in FY25 and FY26. Funding beyond FY26, however, remains to be seen, as do potential changes to eligibility and benefits. DVS continues to work closely with the Governor's Preserve VMSDEP task force and to provide information to the Senate Finance and Appropriation Committee's VMSDEP Select Work Group and the study being conducted by the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC) – scheduled to be presented on October 7. Other states are feeling similar pressures to reduce programs and benefits to veterans and families. I urge you to stay engaged with this process and to ensure your voice, and those of your communities, continues to be heard.

DVS is connected to only a fraction of our service members, veterans, and their families (SMVF). The new Virginia Veterans Network (VVN), launching state-wide on 11 November, will change that, allowing our SMVF population to connect to:

- Thousands of vet-friendly businesses, healthcare providers, and services;
- Programs that honor our history, servicemen and women;
- Veteran directed community programs across the Commonwealth;
- How to navigate the challenge of transition from uniform to “civilian life” and career opportunities for service members and spouses;
- Podcasts that explain our programs how you can leverage them for your benefit; and
- Upcoming events at our memorials, cemeteries, and museums.

We want our SMVF to know specifics on the new services we are working on, and the new laws and policies our Governor and our General Assembly are working to help our entire military and veteran community. Registering in this new portal will give us the opportunity to do just that while connecting our SMVF to additional statewide resources.

We are working to make VVN a “program of record” with a specific budget line in the FY26 budget for dollars, people, sustainment costs, and continual improvement. This is critical to building awareness to our Service members and families, well before their transition or retirement, as well as our veterans and their families and survivors. Far too few are aware of their “earned benefits” and supporting programs that continue to address issues that affect our community. Awareness early, and accessing our support before the stresses become desperate, can help stem the rising epidemic of addiction, homelessness, suicide, and lost relationships that is affecting our communities across the nation. The launch of VVN will be a significant augmentation to the “best in class” services that DVS currently delivers through our 50 statewide operating locations. But, over the next several years of continual program development and adding to the growing list of community, state and national resource partners, this can become a transformational resource for our service members, veterans and their families, and help us scale our support far beyond what we could achieve without unrealistic personnel and funding increases.

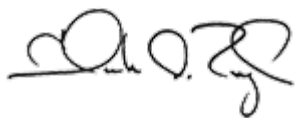
We are using the Strategic Plan developed last year as the “North Star” under this Administration – we are working on budget and legislative recommendations for the 2025 Session to operationalize the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. The challenge to do as well as we want seems almost endless. Good ideas, likewise, are endless. So, determining “impact” has been a guide for me: and our strategic plan has been one useful product in that guide.

I would therefore offer the following areas for your consideration and request your support:

- Reaching more veterans through a digital initiative (VVN) and establishing it as a “program of record”. As we continue to grow in service to our Veterans our ability to do better will be constrained by money and numbers of personnel (talent/time).
 - The digital technology becomes our only avenue to scale, especially as our younger (tech savvy) service members separate and join the general workforce. It will also allow us to deliver services (benefits, despair, homeless, health and behavioral/wellness counsel and care) in new and increasingly effective and efficient ways.
 - Consider support to a budget line that adequately prioritizes and funds a “fenced program” to develop, man, and operate the Virginia Veterans Network.
- Support to Career Transition & Employment has been a huge area for improvement across the country for service members, veterans, and families. Their needs do not sound as compelling as those in distress or those being aggrieved, but not serving this need grows into every problem of those communities of despair and underserved. Moreover, the return on investment in this area – young talented veterans and spouses – pays back “100 fold” in decades of contributors to our businesses, our revenue, our communities, and our security. Our executive branch is strongly considering improving on the current \$40K tax break on retirement pay. The retention of younger veterans, not those fully retired, should also be strongly considered.
- A DVS unique Transition Assistance Program would address the needs of all transitioning service members and spouse, as well as those Veterans and Spouse seeking better employment and careers. Coaching/Mentoring, tools for connecting our people, regardless of background, to quality opportunities in all regions and across all industries, services, and markets. Virginia wins, Veterans win, families win.
- Consider incentives to attract and retain more than retirees (e.g., younger men and women as they consider leaving service). A one-time tax break or incentive for transitioning service members (in-state that “stay” and out-of-state that come to VA) would cost some, but potentially return much more to our industry, our revenue, and our communities for decades.
- Funding to attract, train, and retain top talent in DVS – Benefits veterans service representatives, VVFS resource and peer specialists, and nursing staff at our veterans care centers. These are highly needed professionals, and we are losing more than our share to both public and private sector businesses. The General Assembly asked for us to identify a competitive salary solution. We have delivered our recommendations; I solicit your endorsement and strong voice of support.

My commitment to you is that we will work every day to serve our SMVF. We will listen to understand them and their experience, and especially their frustrations. We will listen to them to measure our successes, but also our areas for improvement. For those who have not been served well, we will work to re-earn their trust. And we will never fail to give our best.

Thank you for your significant service to our Nation and our Commonwealth. Yours is an impressively talented board with relevant experience to the challenges we face. I look forward to working with you to serve our service members, veterans, and their families. Your ideas, vision, and efforts are solicited and important to me, our leadership, and those that we aim to serve!



Charles A. (Chuck) Zingler
Commissioner

DVS OPERATIONS BRIEFING – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

1. **Date of Report:** September 26, 2026
2. **Service Area/Program:** Housing and Homelessness
3. **DVS Director/Program Manager:** Housing and Criminal Justice Director-Donna Harrison; Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator-Desiree Taylor
4. **Mission of service area/program:** the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program operated by the Department of Veterans Services in conjunction with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. VVFS provides OUTREACH, CONNECTION and SUPPORT to veterans and their families as they address the challenges of military service, transition, deployments, Post Traumatic Stress, and other behavioral health concerns, as well as Traumatic Brain Injuries and other physical injuries.
5. **Services Provided:** VVFS provides peer and family support, care coordination, and resource linkages to Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF). Referrals are coordinated with Community Services Boards, community nonprofits, brain injury service providers, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) medical facilities and other public and private agencies. VVFS also provides outreach and support to justice-involved service members and veterans interfacing with courts, diversion/veteran treatment docket programs, during incarceration in jails and prisons, and while on probation and/or parole supervision. In addition, the program also provides specialized outreach and support to homeless services and housing grantees and community providers.
6. **Who does the service area/program serve?** Veterans of any era (regardless of discharge status) who are Virginia residents; members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves; and family members and caregivers of those veterans and service members. They work hard to provide a "no wrong door approach", meaning if they can't provide that service within the program, they'll do their best to connect them to a resource/provider that can.
7. **What are the service line's primary objectives?** Provide care coordination, peer and family support services to Service Members, Veterans, and their families (SMVF). Facilitate access to behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services at the Federal, State, and local levels for SMVF.
8. **What are the key results/accomplishments from the past fiscal year in support of the primary objectives?** In FY24 (thru June 12, 2024), VVFS served an average of 411 total clients (new and existing clients) each week. Of these clients, 1,919 were new clients. This included connecting veterans and their family members for resources to approximately

4,220 service needs. These include housing needs (41%), behavioral health support (12%), benefits assistance (11%), employment (9%), and homeless assistance (7%).

9. What trends are you seeing from data pertaining to your service line?

FY24 Data Overview (thru June 12th 2024):

- 90% of all new VVFS clients will have a needs assessment completed in 7 days of initial client contact for the purpose of creating a coordinated resource plan **(95% out of 1,302)**
- 90% of veterans with an identified behavioral health need will be connected to an appropriate resource **(100% out of 218)**
- 90% of veterans experiencing literal homelessness will be connected to a shelter/housing resource **(98% out of 195)**
- VVFS and Benefits will screen 95% of new SMVF for suicide risk **(94% out of 17,733)**

Housing/homeless sub fund: The homeless sub fund is provided by Veterans Service Foundation (VSF) funds. The fund assists Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and other community providers with rental assistance and homeless prevention funds for veterans and families. In FY24, the program partnered with eight housing providers in conjunction with other community providers and four VA Medical Centers to provide \$279,309 in funding for 270 veterans needing gap rental assistance and eviction prevention. The highest needs were for rental arrears, security deposits, and utility assistance. The VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator manages the homeless sub fund with the assistance of the VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Director.

Corporation for Supportive Housing -Housing and Justice Workgroup:

In addition, the VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Director and VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator joined the Justice and Housing workgroup which is a group based on a grant received by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). The Justice and Housing workgroup is a national project with a geographic focus area to explore the need and address challenges for justice-involved individuals to secure housing. In FY23, the group created a Learning Collaborative for property managers and landlords to examine tenant selection plans and help increase housing access for justice-involved individuals. In FY24, the Learning Collaborative convened over five sessions led by CSH to discuss tenant selection plans, low barrier housing provider examples, a lived experience panel, and tools and resources. CSH provided a model tenant background screening tool for Learning Collaborative participants to use to help guide their criminal history screening practices.

Virginia held the **2023 Point-in-Time Count** on the night of January 2023. Based on the PIT count the veterans experiencing homelessness was 386 (284 sheltered, 102 unsheltered). The unsheltered number of veterans increased from 47 (in 2022) to 102 (2023). The PIT count in January 2022 accounted for 395 total homeless veterans. The 2023 count is 2.3% lower than the 2022 count, but there is a substantial increase in unsheltered veterans this year. This is likely due to rising housing costs and increasing inflation rates.

- **Additional 2023 Virginia PIT count demographic data-**

Gender:

- 46 female veterans (32 sheltered, 14 unsheltered)
- 334 male veterans (247 sheltered, 87 unsheltered)
- 6 Transgender veterans (5 sheltered, 1 unsheltered)

Race:

- 6 American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous
- 1 Asian, Asian American
- 199 Black, African American, or African
- 1 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 156 White
- 23 Multiple races

Chronically homeless (as defined by HUD- “an individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions is at least 12 months”):

- 90 chronically homeless veterans (63 sheltered, 27 unsheltered)

Note: As HUD noted in the 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR), there continues to be an overrepresentation of veterans who identify as Black, African American, or African, as well as Indigenous people (including Native Americans and Pacific Islanders) among the population experiencing homelessness compared to the U.S. Population. In Virginia, Black, African American, or African veterans represented 52% of the homeless veteran population in the January 2023 PIT count, but only makeup 21% of Black veterans of the veteran population overall.

VVFS continues to support housing and homelessness initiatives statewide as well as provide support for direct services to veterans in need.

10. What type of outreach did the service line conduct and what are the results? VVFS

continues to outreach and collaborate with Homeless Continua of Care, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center Homeless Programs, Supportive Services for Veterans Families providers, and other housing/homelessness providers to serve veterans experiencing homelessness or unstably housed. VVFS also represents the agency on several statewide housing workgroups.

In FY24, the VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator, Housing and Criminal Justice Director, along with the Central Region Regional Coordinator met with a housing provider that is working with Virginia Housing on a housing project specifically for homeless veterans. Their goal is to work with the VA’s HUD-VASH voucher program. Mr. Rutherford wanted additional information on housing considerations for veterans. The group discussed housing accommodation needs for veterans.

In FY24, the VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator provided housing information sessions for justice-involved veterans.

In FY24, the VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Director participated with the Joint Recovery Housing Committee in their site visit with the Fletcher group. The group is working on a housing project for specialty docket participants in South Hill.

The VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator is conducting outreach to the Continuum of Care (CoC) Leads to assess housing needs, obtain housing updates, and coordinate information and services related to housing needs for veterans.

The VVFS Housing and Criminal Justice Director is on the Balance of State (BoS) steering committee. The committee is comprised of Local Planning Groups (LPGs) in the BoS CoC. The group discusses best practices, grant opportunities, and participates in housing-related training events.

11. What, if any, new initiatives / innovative solutions were launched during the past year?

The Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator started the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and VDVS Statewide Quarterly Meeting. This meeting includes participants from all SSVF community partners statewide, including the SSVF Regional Coordinator. This provides an opportunity for both programs to discuss their status, updates and program changes. It also allows time for case conferencing on difficult cases and a space for SSVF providers to discuss concerns, challenges, clarification points on policy/procedures, successes and helpful problem-solving techniques.

The Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator assisted John Maxwell, the Chair of the Veteran Community Network of Central Virginia, with coordinating and establishing the Housing Roundtable Workgroup for Richmond and CACH (Petersburg) Continuum of Care (CoC). Participants in the workgroup include community partners on a local, state and federal level. The workgroup identifies barriers to housing Veterans experiencing homelessness and provides a forum to discuss and establish creative solutions and resources.

12. What are the biggest challenges facing the service area / program at present? Affordable housing continues to be a challenge as well as the impact on inflation to our clients. Since COVID funding has ended, there have been increases in evictions which is putting a strain on staff and clients. **Statewide rents have increased on average about 24% throughout Virginia and production issues have slowed the development of affordable housing. More than 60% of Virginia's renters have experienced an increase in rent this fiscal year.** Stable housing is a key protective factor for behavioral health and in-turn suicide prevention.

['Slow yet competitive': In Virginia, housing prices remain high and supply tight - Virginia Mercury](#)

13. How does delivering the service/program help Virginia's veterans? VVFS helps Service Members, Veterans, and their families access care and support for behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services needs. Often this can prevent a crisis and/or suicide. VVFS staff strive to help SMVF link to services and benefits in federal, state and local systems. In addition, leadership team members serve on statewide advisory committees (on justice, housing, peer support, behavioral health and suicide prevention services) and form strategic partnerships that enhance systems of care for SMVF.

14. By helping the veteran, how does it help the Commonwealth? By helping the veteran, it helps the Commonwealth by continuing to ensure Virginia is the most military and veteran friendly state and provides comprehensive and wrap-around services for those residing in Virginia. Ready access to care and supportive services helps veterans and families Stay, Work, and Thrive in Virginia.

15. What strategic opportunities are there for the future? The view of housing as healthcare is a continued focus nationally. There are healthcare organizations finding creative ways to address the full wellbeing of individuals by incorporating staff (e.g. patient/community navigators) to help connect their members to housing and other supportive services. Virginia agencies should leverage opportunities to partner with and provide support for healthcare agencies that are focusing on access to healthcare and housing services.

VVFS will continue to collaborate with veteran specific and non-veteran housing and homelessness programs. Housing is the largest need for clients that access VVFS support. This is an important area and as the administration builds out its housing priorities, VVFS is ready to assist.

16. What else do you want the Board to know about this service area?

- There continues to be a shortage of affordable housing and an eviction crisis (due to the ending of the eviction moratorium) that is affecting housing sustainability.
- Rental increases are placing additional burdens on veterans and families to acquire and maintain housing.
- Some programs that provided supportive services are no longer operating or have not received continued funding (depletion of CARES Act funding).
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families(SSVF), one of the main housing providers statewide, had to pause services throughout the FY due to funding or staff shortages. DVS provides GAP assistance during these periods and requests can be higher than normal in cost and numbers.
- VVFS assists a range of veterans and their family members with complex needs including criminal justice involvement, caregiver support, homelessness and other housing issues, and behavioral health needs. VVFS staff are a crucial touchpoint and provide support to navigate through complex systems of care. Housing is a critical component of well-being, is a protective factor for suicide risk, and is essential for veterans and their families to Stay, Work, and Thrive in Virginia.

Housing and Homelessness

Donna Harrison

Director of Housing and Criminal Justice

Desiree L. Taylor, M.S.

Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator

Veteran Services Foundation (VSF)

Assists Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), and other community providers with **rental assistance** and **homeless prevention funds** for **veterans** and **families**.

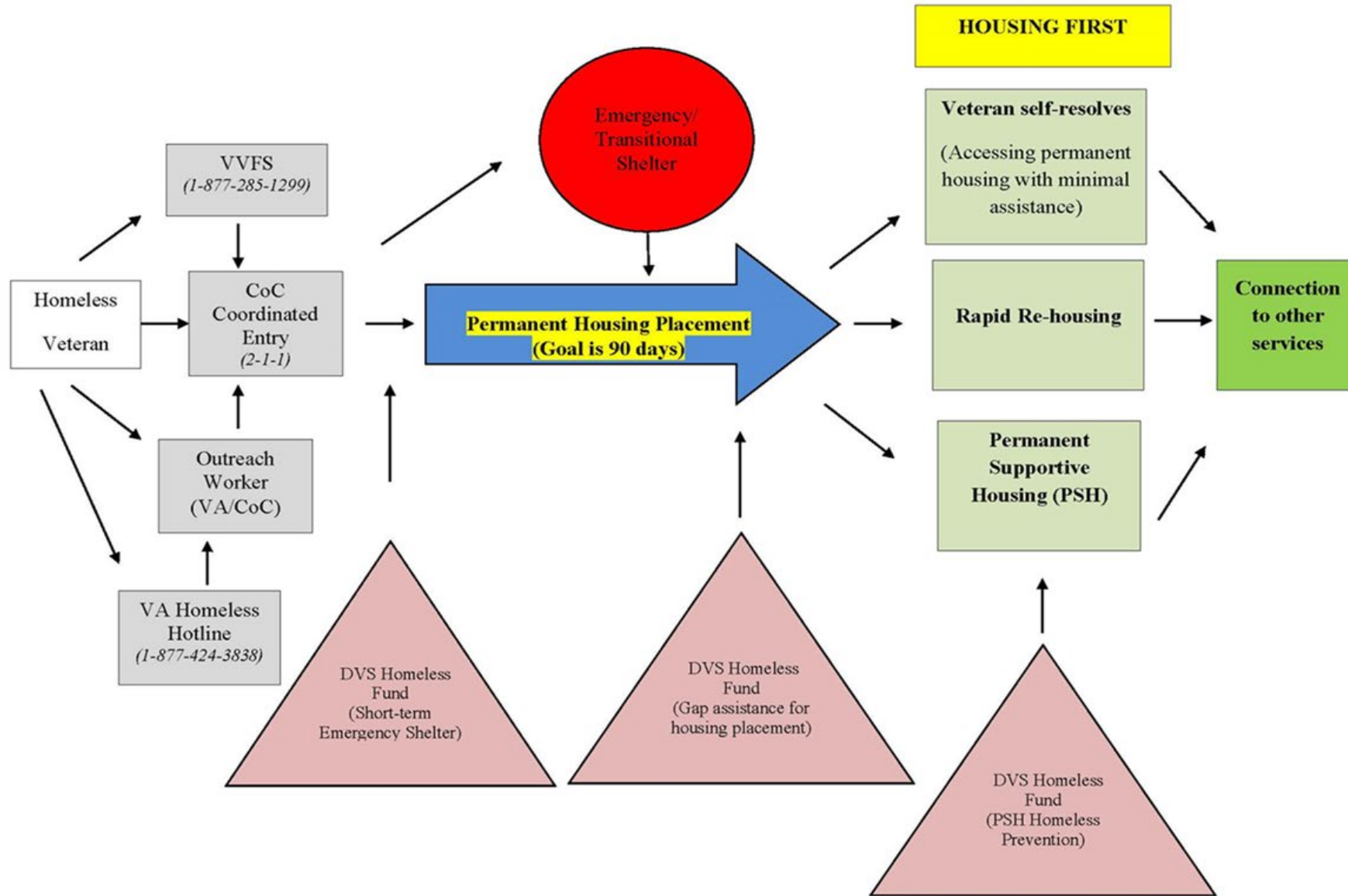
Managed by the Housing and Criminal Justice Coordinator

Desiree L. Taylor, M.S.

Veteran Services Foundation (VSF) FY24

- Total Funds Utilized
 - \$279,309.30
- Total Veterans Served
 - 270
- Top Resources Requested
 - Rental Arrears/Judgements for Eviction
 - Security Deposits and First Month Rent
 - Utility Assistance

Veteran Homeless System Flowchart and Funding



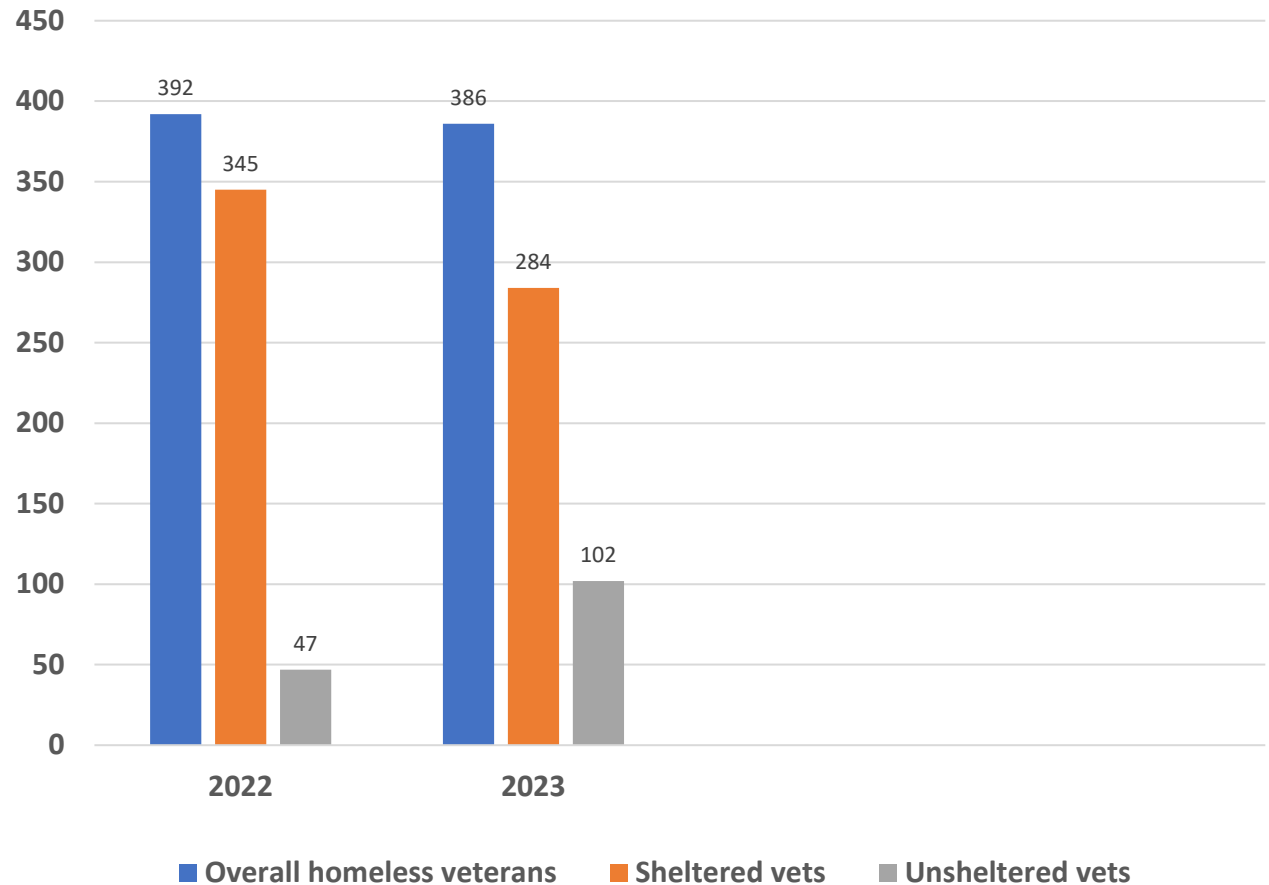
Point in Time Count(PIT) FY22 v. FY23

- **FY22 Total of 395 Homeless Veterans**
 - 345 Sheltered
 - 47 Unsheltered
- **FY23 Total 386 Homeless Veterans**
 - 284 Sheltered
 - 102 Unsheltered

****2.3 % drop in total number of homeless Veterans from FY22 to FY23.***

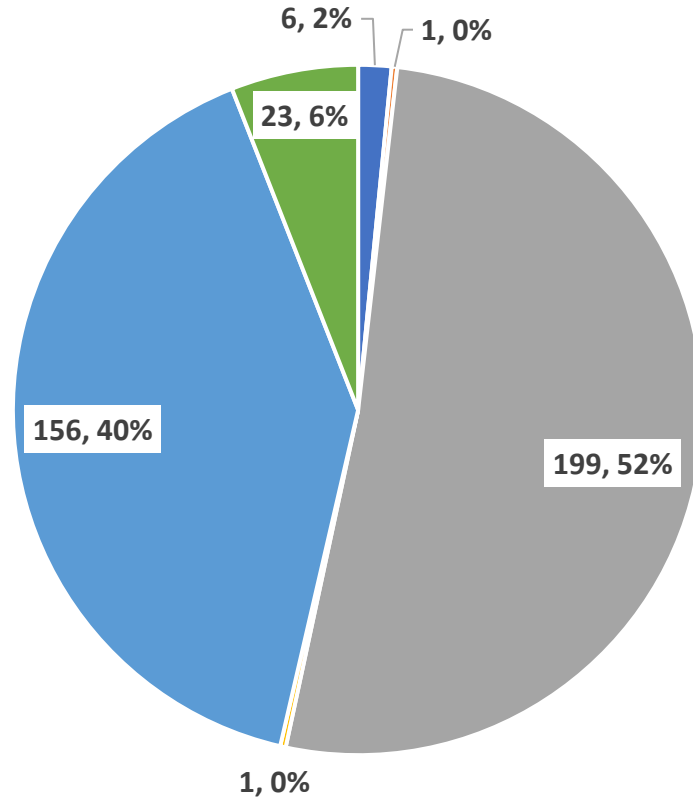
****Increase number in unsheltered Veterans from FY22 to FY23. Likely due to rising housing costs and increasing inflation rates.***

2022 and 2023 PIT Count Data -Veterans

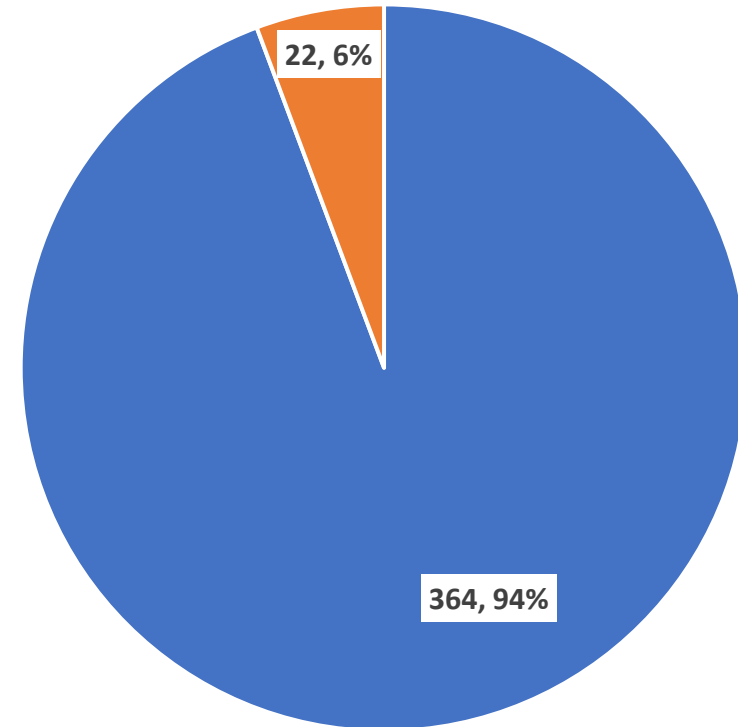


2023 PIT Count Data-Veterans

2023 PIT count Veterans-Race



PIT Count-Veterans-Ethnicity



- AI, AN, Indigenous
- Black, AA, or African
- White
- Asian or Asian American
- Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander
- Multiple Races

- Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino
- Hispanic/Latino

Challenges in Housing

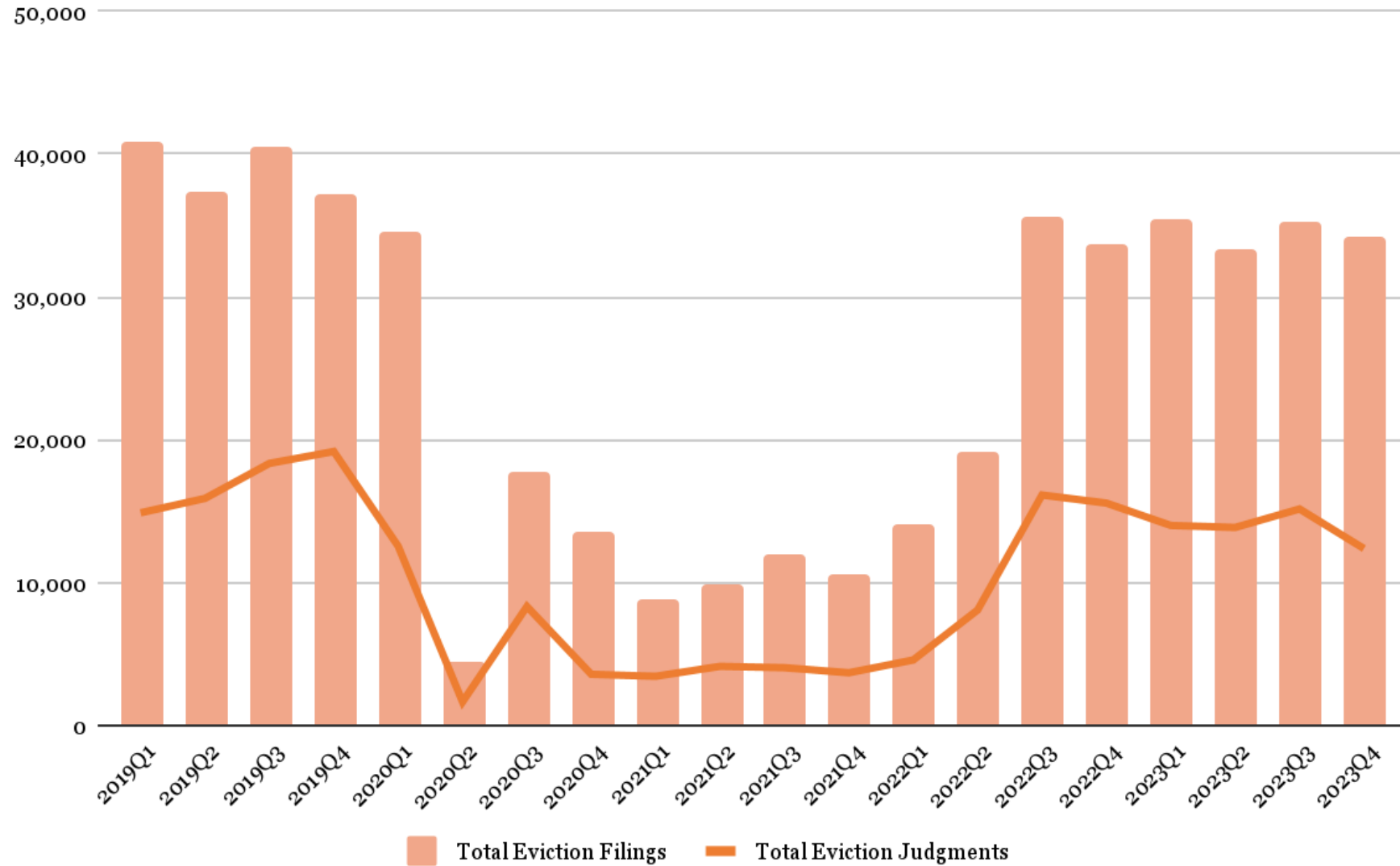
- **Affordable Housing**

- Average rent increase of 24% for Virginians in 2019
- 60% of Virginians have had their rent increased in 2019

**Richmond region has a shortage of 33,206 units available & affordable to households earning 30% or less Area Median Income(AMI). For every 100 Extremely Low Income (ELI) renters only 31 units are available.*

**Richmond region has a shortage of 28,626 units available and affordable for those earning 50% or less Area Median Income(AMI). For every 100 Very Low Income (VLI) renters, only 63 units are available.*

Challenges in Housing



Eviction filings and judgments by quarter in Virginia, Q1 2019 - Q4 2023

Source: Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Civil Court Data Initiative, RVA Eviction Lab Analysis

Challenges in Housing

- Impact of Inflation (*Richmond as an example*)
 - Cost Burden (When residents pay more than 30% of their income)

Richmond AMI Chart 2021-2022				
AMI	2021		2022	
	1 Person	Family of 4	1 Person	Family of 4
Low 80-50%	\$50,400	\$72,000	\$56,400	\$80,550
Very Low 50-30%	\$31,500	\$45,000	\$35,250	\$50,350
Extremely Low 30%-below	\$18,900	\$27,000	\$21,150	\$30,200

87% of the state's cost burden renters fall in the ELI category.

72% of ELI renters pay 50% or more of their income.

Additional Information

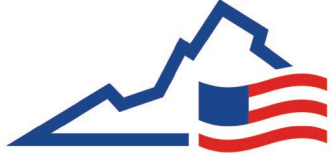
- There continues to be a shortage of affordable housing and an eviction crisis
- Rental increases are placing additional burdens on veterans and families to acquire and maintain housing.
- Programs that provided supportive services are no longer operating or have not received continued funding (depletion of CARES Act funding).
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families(SSVF), one of the main housing providers statewide, have to pause services throughout the FY due to funding or staff shortages. DVS provides GAP assistance during these periods and requests can be higher than normal in cost and numbers.

Housing is a critical component of well-being, is a protective factor for suicide risk, and is essential for veterans and their families to Stay, Work, and Thrive in Virginia.

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program

Montwrace Cunningham
Program Manager

September 26, 2024



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Education Transition and Employment
**Virginia Military Survivors and
Dependents Education Program**

Virginia Department of Veterans Services



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Area of Focus

Virginia Department of Veterans Services' (DVS) process for:

- Determining and monitoring program eligibility; and
- Enrolling individuals in the program, addressing all aspects of the eligibility determination and enrollment process for which DVS is responsible.

Available data related to:

- The eligible population of the VMSDEP, including the current number of enrolled individuals; and
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or other sources related to how many Veterans/families are eligible.

Eligibility Requirements and Responsibilities

Eligibility requirements and benefits are outlined in the Code of Virginia [§2.2-2004](#), [§23.1-608](#), and [§23.1-608.1](#).

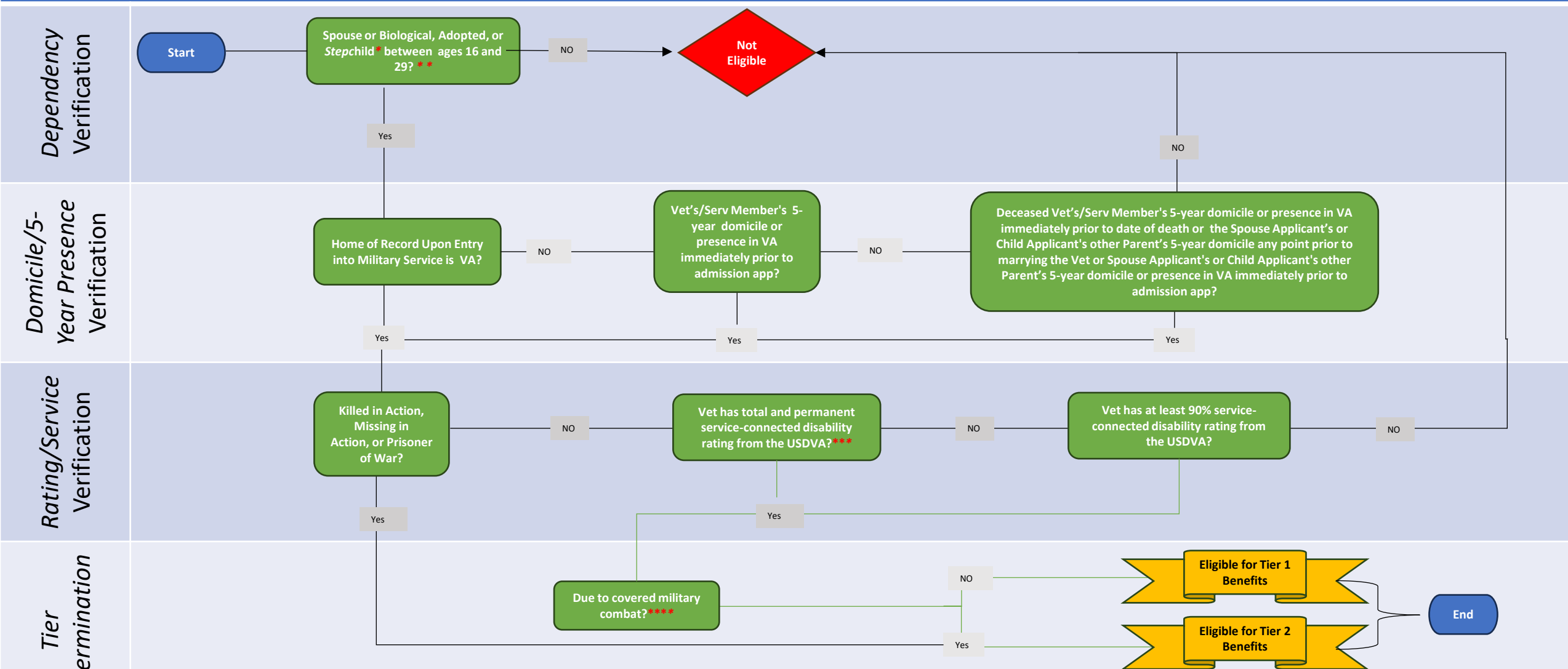
Per the Code:

- DVS determines eligibility.
- Virginia Public Colleges and Universities (VPCU) confirm enrollment/benefits usage and apply tuition/fee waiver.
- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) controls the stipend funding and makes allocations to VPCU.

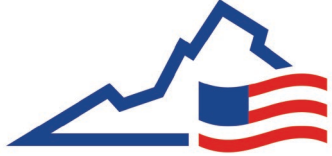
Two tiers of VMSDEP benefits:

- Tier 1 = not combat related. Tuition/fee waiver, but no stipend
- Tier 2 = combat related. Tuition/fee waiver and stipend

VMSDEP Eligibility Flow Chart



*Stepchild of deceased Tier 2 qualifying military Service Member. ** The Code authorizes the DVS Commissioner to approve children 30 and older under extenuating circumstances. *** USDVA = U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. **** Combat – is considered a military operation against terrorism, a peacekeeping mission, a terrorist act, or an armed conflict.



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Education Transition and Employment
**Virginia Military Survivors and
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Dependency Verification

Question: Is the applicant the Spouse or the Biological/Adopted/Stepchild (ages 16-29)* of a qualifying Veteran or Military Service Member?

- Yes: Proceed to Domicile/Five-Year Presence Verification.
- No: Not eligible.

* NOTE: the Code grants the DVS Commissioner the authority to “*certify dependents above the age of 29 in those cases in which extenuating circumstances prevented the dependent child from using his benefits before the age of 30.*”

Information Reviewed:

- Spouse: Marriage License/Certificate
- Biological or Adopted Child: Birth Certificate or Adoption Decree/Court Order
- Stepchild: Birth Certificate, Marriage License/Certificate of the biological parent to the deceased qualifying military service member, and evidence showing the service member claimed the stepchild as a dependent on his or her tax return or on his or her Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) while serving on active duty.

NOTE: Not available to the stepchild of a Tier 1 qualifying veteran.

Domicile/Five-Year Presence Verification

Question: Is the qualifying veteran's or service member's Home of Record Upon Entry into military service listed as "Virginia"?

- Yes: Proceed to Rating/Service Verification.
- No: Not eligible unless:
 - The qualifying veteran or service member was domiciled or had physical presence in Virginia for at least five years immediately preceding the of application for admission; or,
 - The qualifying veteran or service member is deceased and established domiciled or had physical presence in Virginia for at least five years immediately preceding the date of death or the Spouse Applicant or Child Applicant's other parent was domiciled in Virginia for at least five years at any point prior to marrying the deceased veteran or service member or the Spouse Applicant or Child Applicant's other parent was domiciled or had physical presence in Virginia for at least five years immediately preceding the date of application for admission.

Domicile/Five-Year Presence Verification *continued*



Information Reviewed, but not limited to:

- DD Form 214, DD Form 256, DD Form 1300, or NGB Form 22
- State Income Tax Records
- Real Estate Tax Records
- Personal Property Tax Records
- Voter Registration Records
- Mortgage Monthly Statement or Residential Rental/Lease Agreement
- Payroll or Check Stubs Issued with Virginia Address
- Leave and Earning Statement Form
- Annual Social Security Statement
- Utility Bills
- Letter from commanding officer on official letterhead with an original signature stating that the Veteran currently lives in Virginia and specifying the length of time resided in Virginia.

Rating/Service Verification

Question: Does the qualifying Veteran have a total and permanent or at least 90 percent permanent service-connected disability rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA)?

- Yes: Applicant is eligible for Tier 1 benefits.
- No: Not eligible.

Information Reviewed:

- USDVA Benefits Summary Narrative only if the qualifying Veteran considered as totally and permanently disabled; or,
- USDVA Rating Decision Narrative (Complete Copy) if the qualifying Veteran is not considered as totally and permanently disabled. IMPORTANT NOTE: The USDVA Rating Decision Narrative must include all service-connected conditions and percentage of such conditions for the combined USDVA rating equating to at least 90 percent.

Rating/Service Verification *continued*

Question: Due to a military operation against terrorism, a peacekeeping mission, a terrorist act, or an armed conflict, was the qualifying service member killed, missing in action, a prisoner of war, or rated by the USDVA at totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled?

- Yes: Applicant is eligible for Tier 2 benefits.
- No: Not eligible.

Information Reviewed:

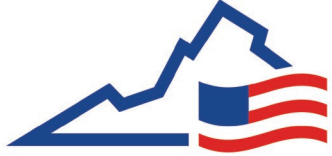
- Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) Eligibility Information that includes the qualifying military service member's Combat-Related Percentage (Determined by the DoD)
- USDVA Rating Decision Narrative **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The USDVA Rating Decision Narrative must include all service-connected conditions and percentage of such conditions for the combined USDVA rating equating to at least 90 percent.
- Relevant Service Medical Records (Military records accessible from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC))
- Relevant Military Personnel File Extracts (Military records accessible from the NPRC)
- Prior Military Disability Board Decisions (Military records accessible from the NPRC)
- Line of Duty Determinations (Military records accessible from the NPRC)

The VMSDEP Portal

The DVS partnered with the SCHEV and VPCUs to create a portal to carry out the listed responsibilities:

- Determining eligibility and benefits balance (number of semesters used/remaining) (DVS);
- Confirming enrollment/benefits usage (VPCU); and
- Confirming funds for the stipend (SCHEV).

The referenced Portal also enables the student to apply and update enrollment information.



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Education Transition and Employment
Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program



Responsibilities

Process within the VMSDEP Portal:

Step 1: Student applies;

Step 2: DVS determines eligibility and benefits balance (i.e. number of semesters used/remaining);

Step 3: If approved, the Student updates enrollment information each semester;

Step 4: School receives authorization and confirms enrollment/benefit usage;

Step 5: For Tier 2 only, School requests the VMSDEP stipend;

Step 6: SCHEV confirms the stipend;

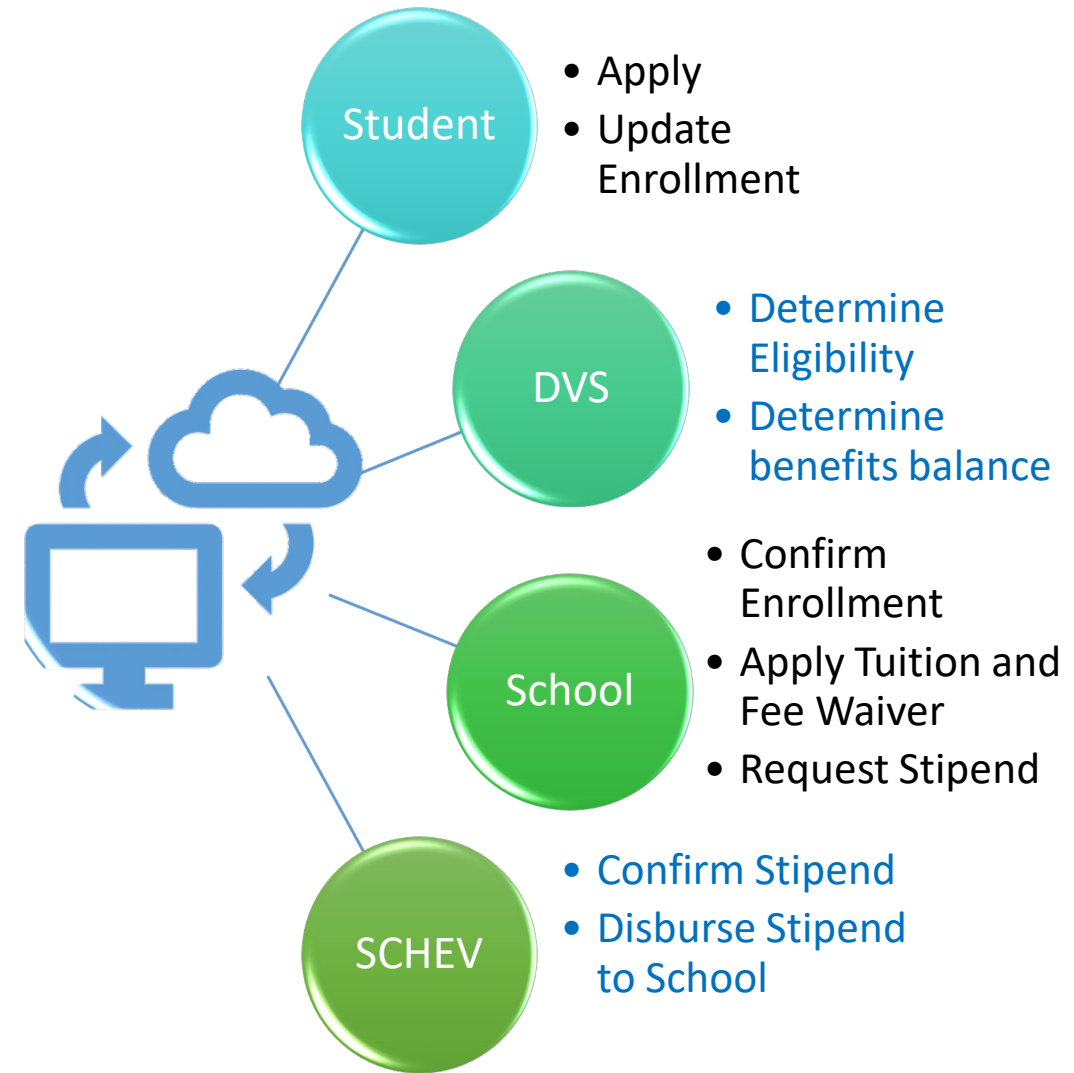
Step 7: The Portal tracks the benefit balance;

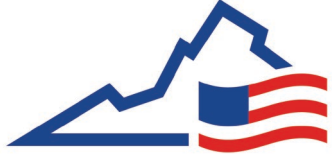
Process outside the VMSDEP Portal:

Step 8: School applies tuition/fee waiver;

Step 9: SCHEV releases the VMSDEP stipend to the School; then,

Step 10: School disburses the VMSDEP stipend to the Student.





Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Education Transition and Employment
Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program



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Population Data

VMSDEP Participants		
Academic Year	Registered/ Approved in VMSDEP Portal*	Active Participants**
2023-24	10,537	8,091

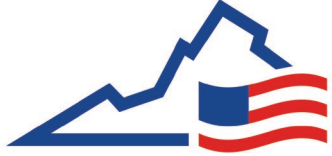
* As of August 14, 2023.

** Active Participants = used benefits during 2023-24 academic year.

Veterans Living in Virginia; Veterans with at least 90% USDVA SCD Rating			
Year	Total Veterans	Number of Veterans at least 90% SCD	Number of Veterans at least 90% SCD due to combat
FFY 23	684,043	100,541	66,689

Numbers as of September 30, 2023

- USDVA = U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- SCD = Service-Connected Disabled, as determined by the USDVA. Ratings are in 10% increments from 0% to 100% SCD
- FFY = Federal Fiscal Year (Oct 1, 2022 – Sep 30, 2023)



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Education Transition and Employment
**Virginia Military Survivors and
Dependents Education Program**

Virginia Department of Veterans Services



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Questions?



BVS 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan

General Assembly (begins January 10)

- Attend meetings of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus
- Attend “JLC Day at the General Assembly” – January 17

Meeting 1 (May 3):

- 2024 General Assembly Session Review
- Overview of work group process
- Discussion of BVS elections at June meeting
- VSF Financial Process Briefing

Meeting 2 (June 20):

- POC Reports
 - Benefits Services
 - Behavioral Health, Suicide Prevention, and Rehabilitative Services
 - Transition & Employment
 - Justice-Involved Veterans and Veteran Treatment Dockets
- Establish Working Groups as necessary
- Initial review/discussion – legislation/budget

Meeting 3 (September 26):

- Review JLC 2025 Initiatives and provide feedback
- DVS Programs/Services Reports
 - Homelessness & Housing Services
 - Education
- Review 2024-2025 Budget and Legislative Dates

Meeting 4 (December 6):

- DVS Programs/Services Reports
 - Communications & Marketing, Outreach
 - Virginia War Memorial
 - Virginia Care Centers
- Working Group Reports (as needed)
- Adopt 2025 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan

2024-2025 Budget and Legislative Dates; Helpful Websites

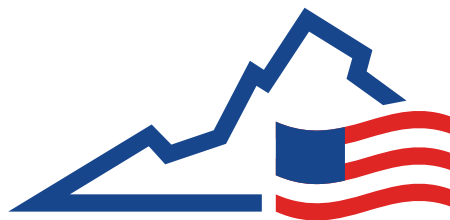
Information for BVS members

Important Dates

- November 25, 2024: All requests for drafts of legislation to be prefiled to General Assembly, Division of Legislative Services (DLS) by 5:00 p.m.
- December 18, 2024, 9:30 a.m. Joint Meeting of Senate Finance & Appropriations, House Appropriations, and House Finance Committees. Governor's Introduced Budget released.
- January 8, 2025, Prefiling ends at 10:00 a.m.
- January 8, 2025, General Assembly convenes at noon.
- January 9, 2025, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) "Day on the Hill" (details TBD).
- Session dates: January 8, 2025 - February 22, 2025 (short session).
- January 10, 2025 (notional, based on past "short session" calendars): Budget amendments due to House Appropriations and Senate Finance by 5:00 p.m.; All requests for drafts, redrafts, and corrections to DLS by 5:00 p.m.
- January 15, 2025 (notional, based on past years): first meeting of the General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus (GAMVC), 8 a.m., location TBD (details forthcoming). GAMVC meets Wednesdays at 8 a.m., so tentative 2025 schedule would be January 15, 22, and 29; February 5, 12, and 19, 2025. GAMVC meetings are open to all.

Helpful websites

- Governor Glenn Youngkin's website: <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/>
- Department of Planning & Budget website: <https://dpb.virginia.gov/>
- Frequently Asked Questions about Virginia's Budget: <https://dpb.virginia.gov/budget/faq.cfm>
- General Assembly website: <https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/>
- How a Bill Becomes a Law in the Virginia General Assembly: <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Portal/Resources/HowaBillBL.pdf>
- Who's My Legislator: <https://whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/>
- Legislative Information System: <https://lis.virginia.gov/>
- Department of Veterans Services (DVS) website: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/>
- Board of Veterans Services website: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/board-of-veterans-services>
- DVS Strategic Plan (updated 09/03/2024): https://publicreports.dpb.virginia.gov/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=vp_Agency&Agency=912&rdAgReset=True&LinkHref=True



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES (DVS) is organized into six service delivery sections: benefits; veteran and family support; education, transition, and employment; care centers; cemeteries; and the Virginia War Memorial.

BENEFITS SERVICES

The DVS Benefits Services division advocates for Virginia veterans and connects them to benefits and services they have earned. Information on current federal, state and local veterans' programs, entitlements and referral services is available in Virginia through a network of 38 State Veterans Offices. All services are provided free of charge. Make an appointment through the Virginia Veterans Network at <https://vesa.dvs.virginia.gov/>

VIRGINIA VETERAN AND FAMILY SUPPORT (VVFS)

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services through an integrated, and responsive system of care including Federal, State, and local service providers. VVFS provides peer and family support and care coordination services to Transitioning Service Members, Veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves, and their caregivers and families. The VVFS team also includes the Suicide Prevention and Opioid Addiction (SOS) program which provides training, education, and grant funding to enhance prevention, treatment, and recovery support services across the Commonwealth. To request VVFS services, fill out the request form at <https://vesa.dvs.virginia.gov> or call (877) 285-1299. Services are available in person, by phone and virtually statewide.

EDUCATION, TRANSITION, AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

The VETE directorate promotes Virginia's economic development by supporting veterans and their families with increased access to and attainment of education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. VETE programs ensure that every veteran or eligible person has a full and fair opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential through access to G.I. Bill® approved post-secondary education, training/licensure/certification, entrepreneurial institutions, V3 certified employers, and Virginia Colleges and Universities.

The State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training (GI Bill programs) ensures access and quality instruction, appropriate administration, and fair and equitable practices for every veteran (and eligible person) who enters a Virginia SAA-approved educational or training program. The Virginia SAA has over 900 facilities approved for G.I. Bill® benefits. These schools include colleges, universities, vocational and technical schools, preparatory programs, and on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs. Contact (804) 225-2298 or saa@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) waives tuition and mandatory fees at Virginia's public colleges and universities for spouses and children of a qualified military service member who, during direct involvement in covered military combat, was killed, missing in action, or became a prisoner of war, or of a qualified veteran who, as a direct result of such service, has been rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Contact (804) 225-2083 or vmsdep@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.

The Virginia Military and Education Workforce Initiative (MEWI) uses a three-pronged approach to assist transitioning veterans that have chosen educational institutions as their preferred path to employment. Identifying and promoting employment pipelines, creating internship and fellowship opportunities, and highlighting community service initiatives are three methods used by MEWI to support Virginia's veterans on their path to employment. Contact MEWI@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.

The Virginia SkillBridge Program provides transitioning service members the opportunity to network with veteran Certified employers offering 6-12 week internships to eligible applicants, with commander approval, up to six months prior to separation. Participation in a fellowship program while still serving in the military allows service members the opportunity to gain marketable skills and experience to enhance their civilian career opportunities. Contact VASkillbridge@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.

The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program educates and trains employers on why it is a strong business decision to recruit, hire, and retain veterans, and helps those committed companies meet their hiring goals. The program assesses, coordinates, and disseminates V3 opportunities for members of the armed forces, dependents, and their spouses transitioning from military to civilian life by providing a pathway to employment, education, and entrepreneurship. If you are an employer looking for veteran talent in the Commonwealth, join the V3 Programs network of employers by registering online at: www.dvsV3.com or contacting (804) 371-2683 for more information. If you are a transitioning service member, spouse, or dependent seeking employment opportunities, contact (804) 786-8060 or V3Transition@dvs.virginia.gov.

The Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Program provides healthcare employment opportunities to TSMs, Veterans, and military spouses who are trained and educated in the healthcare field. These employment opportunities are provided by all Virginia healthcare systems around the Commonwealth. *Contact (804) 357-3664 or mmac@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.*

The Virginia Women Veterans Program (VWVP) provides access to community resources to educate, unify, and empower Virginia's women veterans, who have served in the military in all eras; by ensuring they receive timely yet appropriate transition and benefits support/employment and education outreach; health and community advocacy. *Contact womenvet@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.*

The Virginia Military Spouse Liaison serves as the Commonwealth's military spouse advocate. The liaison conducts outreach and provides advocacy for military spouses and their families. The liaison also works with key stakeholders within federal, state, local government, military installations, and the private sector to develop and implement a resource system to provide access to education, employment, benefits, and community resources. *Contact milspouse@dvs.virginia.gov for more information.*

CARE CENTERS

DVS Veterans Care Centers provide affordable, long-term nursing, memory care and short-term rehabilitation for Virginia's veterans. Conveniently located in Richmond (Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center), Roanoke (Davis & McDaniel Veterans Care Center), Virginia Beach (Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center), and Fauquier County (Puller Veterans Care Center – opening 2025), each first-class facility is designed to enhance quality of life with a clean, caring and dignified setting appropriate for those men and women who have served our country with honor.

CEMETERIES

Virginia's three veterans cemeteries provide a final resting place for veterans and eligible dependents—a place of honor, dignity, respect, and remembrance. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery is in Suffolk, the Virginia Veterans Cemetery is in Amelia, and the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery is in Dublin.

VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL

The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth of Virginia's monument to honor the memory of Virginia's men and women who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight to defend our way of life from World War II to the present. It is heralded by many as the preeminent state memorial in the United States. The Virginia War Memorial honors our fallen heroes by passing their extraordinary stories of sacrifice forward to future generations through many outreach and on-site educational programs.

CONTACT US

BENEFITS SERVICES To find your local DVS Benefits Services office, visit www.dvs.virginia.gov/benefits | (804) 786-0595

VIRGINIA VETERAN AND FAMILY SUPPORT (VVFS) (804) 371-4675, (877) 285-1299 (toll free)

VETERANS EDUCATION, TRANSITION, AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

G.I. Bill Programs - State Approving Agency (804) 225-2298

Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program (804) 371-2683

Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Transition Program (804) 786-8060

Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Program (804) 482-8528

Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) (804) 225-2083

CARE CENTERS

Davis & McDaniel Veterans Care Center 4550 Shenandoah Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24017 | (540) 982-2860, (800) 220-8387 (toll free)

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center 1601 Broad Rock Boulevard, Richmond, VA 23224 | (804) 371-8000

Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center 2641 Nimmo Pkwy, Virginia Beach, VA 23456 | (757) 263-3100

Puller Veterans Care Center 6951 Vint Hill Pkwy, Warrenton, VA 20187 | (703) 859-2343

CEMETERIES

Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery 5310 Milners Road, Suffolk, VA 23434 | (855) 4VA-VETS

Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery 5550 Bagging Plant Road, Dublin, VA 24084 | (855) 4VA-VETS

Virginia Veterans Cemetery 10300 Pridesville Road, Amelia, VA 23002 | (855) 4VA-VETS

VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL 621 S. Belvidere Street, Richmond, VA 23220 | (804) 786-2060

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES HEADQUARTERS (804) 786-0286 | info@dvs.virginia.gov



Revised, 09/2024

- 11 Nov: Commonwealth's Veterans Day Ceremony @ VWM (1100 – 1200)
- 11 Nov: Virginia Veterans Network (VVN) Launch (time/location TBD)
- 6 Dec: Commonwealth's Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Ceremony @ VWM (1100-1200)
- 14 Dec: Wreath ceremonies at three State Veterans Cemeteries (times vary)

BVS 2025 Notional Meeting Schedule

General Assembly (begins January 8)

- Attend meetings of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (starting January 15, 0800)
- Attend “JLC Day at the General Assembly” – January 9

Thursday, March 20

Thursday, June 5

Thursday, September 11 (in conjunction with Commonwealth’s Patriot Day Ceremony @ VWM)

Thursday, December 4