



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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RICHMOND, VA 23219

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Virginia National Guard  
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Women Marines Association*

Adopted  
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## **Position Paper 2015-01 Hiring, Training, and Retention of DVS Claims Agents**

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Provide funds to fully staff, train, and retain Department of Veterans Services (DVS) claims agents to ensure the timely development and submission of accurate veterans claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
2. **BACKGROUND:**
  - a. Veterans are entitled to disability compensation from the federal government for injuries or illnesses resulting from military service. To obtain this compensation, veterans must file claims with the VA.
  - b. Filing a claim is a long, complex process – most veterans seek assistance to file a claim.
  - c. To assist Virginia veterans, DVS operates 23 Benefits Field Offices that provide free assistance to Virginia veterans in developing and filing claims for compensation and pension benefits with the VA.
  - d. Virginia receives a considerable return on investment for helping Virginia veterans.
    - In FY2010, DVS filed 26,431 claims on behalf of Virginia veterans, resulting in an estimated \$122 million in new disability compensation payments.
    - In FY2011 the number of claims increased to 28,541 with an estimated in new payments impact of \$154 million.
  - e. DVS Benefit Field Offices are staffed by trained claims agents, particularly in using the automatic claims processing system, who provide direct, one-on-one assistance to veterans in developing and filing claims with the VA.
  - f. Knowledgeable, trained, and experienced claims agents are in high demand and many DVS agents leave for higher paying jobs that DVS cannot match.
  - g. DVS has had a 70 percent claims agent turnover during the past five years.
  - h. DVS does not have the financial resources to recruit and retain trained and experienced claims agents by being able to offer them competitive salaries based on their operational base.
3. **DISCUSSION:** The solution is to provide sufficient funding so that DVS can offer competitive salaries based on each agent's operational base and qualifications.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly support the hiring, training, and retention of DVS claims agents by approving additional funding in FY16.