# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

## VIRGINIA BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

# MEMBER HANDBOOK

**JUNE 4, 2020**

*Serving those who served*

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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome Aboard! Thank you for stepping forward to serve as a member of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS). We work closely with the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to ensure that quality services are delivered to Virginia's veterans and their families.

I am proud to report that the BVS has fulfilled its mission since the Board's establishment in 2003, due in no small part to the energy, dedication, experience, and engagement of our Board members. We advise the DVS on matters of policy, assist in strategic planning, and support DVS staff in the areas of education, employment initiatives, behavioral health support services, benefits, cemeteries, care centers, and the Virginia War Memorial.

The Board's focus is to provide recommendations to the DVS on veterans-related policy issues and to ensure that DVS has the resources needed to provide the very best state-level support and services to Virginia's veterans and their families. Even in these times of constrained resources, DVS must continue to hire, train, and retain skilled, motivated, and dedicated team members. The BVS has a vital role in supporting these activities.

The members of the Board also support the work of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC), the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) and the Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF). We look forward to continuing our combined and complementary efforts to support these organizations.

Over the past decade, we have built and sustained outstanding partnerships with the Governor and the Virginia General Assembly. We are proud to be members of the Board of Veterans Services, and look forward to your involvement and commitment.

Respectfully,

Michael Dick
Chairman

# COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

Thank you for serving Virginia's veterans and their families as a member of the Virginia Board of Veterans Services.

In our shared mission of serving Virginia and Virginia's veterans and their families, we are charged with making Virginia the most veteran friendly state in the nation through the delivery of results-oriented and cost-effective services. To meet this objective, the Board of Veterans Services and the Virginia Department of Veterans Services must continue to strengthen its relationship through collaboration, transparency, and teamwork.

The Board plays an integral role in developing policy initiatives and strategic planning that enhance and improve the Department's services to Virginia's veterans. As you monitor the welfare of Virginia's veterans, we will rely on you and your expertise, skills and knowledge to further our mission in new and innovative ways. This is especially vital during this period of considerable upheaval across Virginia and the Nation.

The team at the Virginia Department of Veterans Services is committed to providing full spectrum services, support and opportunities to the more than 700,000 veterans who call the Commonwealth home. We look forward to partnering with the Board to improve our outreach and services to Virginia's veterans and their families.

John Maxwell
Commissioner

## MISSION

*The Board of Veterans Services provides advice and policy recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services on matters related to services provided by the Department of Veterans Services to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents.*

## CODE AUTHORITY

**§ 2.2-2454. Powers and Duties of the Board**

1. Advise and make recommendations to the Commissioner of Veterans Services upon such matters as may arise in the performance of his duties;
2. Investigate issues related to the provision of care and services to veterans, upon request of the Commissioner of Veterans Services or the Governor;
3. Study all matters affecting the welfare of Virginia citizens who are veterans or dependents or survivors of such veterans, and make recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services;
4. Develop recommendations for policies and procedures related to the efficient and effective delivery of the services provided by the Department of Veterans Services;
5. Establish policies related to the coordinated delivery of veterans services, in consultation with those agencies, entities, and organizations, including counties, cities, towns or other political subdivisions of the Commonwealth capable of providing such services;
6. Monitor the administration of all laws concerning veterans and their dependents;
7. Review and advise the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services on the Department's strategic plan;
8. Based on rigorous cost-benefit-value analysis, provide recommendations to the Department of Veterans Services regarding future projects and the acquisition of facilities that may benefit the State's veterans, including but not limited to veterans cemeteries and veterans care centers; and
9. Provide recommendations to the Department of Veterans Services and the Veterans Services Foundation created in § 2.2-2715 regarding gifts, grants, and other resources from public and private entities and organizations to support veterans services.

**(2003, cc. 657, 670.)**

## COMPACT WITH VIRGINIA'S VETERANS

Virginia's commitment to being the most veteran-friendly state in the nation is reflected in the **Compact with Virginia's Veterans**. The Board of Veterans Services plays an active role throughout the year on the goals set forth in this Compact.

The "Compact with Virginia's Veterans," established by the Code of Virginia, §2.2-2004(17), directs the Commissioner of Veterans Services to: "*Establish and implement a compact with Virginia's veterans, which shall have a goal of making Virginia America's most veteran-friendly state. The compact shall be established in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services and supported by the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations and shall (i) include specific provisions for technology advances, workforce development, outreach, quality of life enhancement, and other services for veterans and (ii) provide service standards and goals to be attained for each specific provision in clause...*"

## BOARD STRUCTURE

### Membership

The BVS is comprised of 26 members:

- 7 legislative members (four House, three Senate)
- 15 non-legislative citizen members
- 4 *ex-officio* members

Four members of the House of Delegates are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates for terms coincident with their terms in office (6 two-year terms). Three members of the Senate are appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules for terms coincident with their terms in office (3 four-year terms).

The 15 non-legislative citizen members are appointed by the Governor for four-year terms, with the ability to serve two full terms, plus an unexpired term, if applicable.

The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Veterans Services Foundation, the Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, and the Chairman of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation Board serve as *ex-officio* with full voting privileges.

### Board Officers

Officer positions are: Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by popular vote every two years.

## Administrator/Primary Contact

The DVS Chief Deputy Commissioner serves as the point of contact and administrator for the Board.

Steven J. Combs, Chief Deputy Commissioner
804-221-3602
Steven.Combs@dvs.virginia.gov

## Mailing address for the Board

Board of Veterans Services
101 N. 14th St., 17th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

## Expenses and Compensation

All board members are reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. This includes mileage reimbursement for travel associated with Board meetings and when a Board member attends the meeting of another DVS-related board in his/her official capacity as a Board member. DVS will also reimburse mileage when a Board member attends a DVS-related ceremony or event (such as the opening of a new office) in his/her official capacity as a Board member and when a Board member is visiting a DVS facility, meeting with DVS staff, or otherwise conducting Board-related business in an official capacity. Travel reimbursement is made directly to Board members by DVS through direct deposit.

General Assembly members receive compensation for the performance of their duties as a member of the Board. Compensation is paid through the House Clerk's and Senate Clerk's offices. DVS will notify the appropriate staff in the Clerks' offices when a legislative member attends a Board meeting or DVS-related ceremony, visits a DVS office, etc. so that compensation can be provided through the House or Senate.

Funding for the costs of compensation and expenses of the members is provided by the Department of Veterans Services.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

The Board of Veterans Services is an active board with specific duties laid out in the Code of Virginia. DVS relies on the expertise, insight, and experience of Board members who work with DVS to serve Virginia's veterans and their families.

BVS members also have three administrative responsibilities while part of the Board: all Board members must have a basic knowledge of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Board members must complete online Conflict of Interest training every two years, and citizen members of the Board must fill out an annual Financial Disclosure Statement (Statement of Economic Interest).

## Conflict of Interest Training

Online Conflict of Interest training is required every two years, with specific modules for citizen members of state boards and for members of the Virginia General Assembly.

To access the online training, go to http://ethics.dls.virginia.gov/index.asp. From this page, click on the link to the training module that pertains to your role on the Board (i.e. citizen member of General Assembly member).

As noted on the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council website, "You are required to view the training module in its entirety in order to satisfy the training requirement. The system will not credit your attendance if you fast forward through any portion of the training."

## Financial Disclosure Statements (Statements of Economic Interest)

Pursuant to subsection B of § 2.2-3114 of the Code of Virginia:

> "*nonsalaried citizen members of all policy and supervisory boards, commissions and councils in the executive branch of state government, other than the Commonwealth Transportation Board, members of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Retirement System, members of the Board of the Virginia College Savings Plan, and the Virginia Lottery Board, shall file with the Council, as a condition to assuming office, a disclosure form of their personal interests and such other information as is required on the form prescribed by the Council pursuant to § 2.2-3118 and thereafter shall file such form annually on or before February 1*."

DVS will notify citizen members of the Boards of upcoming Conflict of Interest training and Financial Disclosure Statement submission dates. Members will receive an e-mail directly from the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council with instructions on completing the conflicts of interest training and submitting the required form electronically.

Financial Disclosure Statements are open for public inspection.

For more information: http://ethics.dls.virginia.gov/

## Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

It is your responsibility as a member of a state board with reporting duties and public notice requirements to be familiar with the FOIA regulations here in Virginia. The full law can be found online at: http://foiacouncil.dls.virginia.gov/2019law.pdf

The Virginia Freedom of Information Act ensures that the people of the Commonwealth have ready access to public records in the custody of a public body or its officers and employees, and free entry to meetings of public bodies wherein the business of the people is being conducted. Unless an exemption provided by the Act or any other statute is properly invoked, every meeting is be open to the public and all public records are be available for inspection and copying upon request.

The provisions of the FOIA are liberally construed to promote an increased awareness by all persons of governmental activities and afford every opportunity to citizens to witness the operations of government. Any exemption from public access to records or meetings is narrowly construed and no record shall be withheld or meeting closed to the public unless specifically made exempt pursuant to the FOIA or other specific provision of law. The FOIA shall not be construed to discourage the free discussion by government officials or employees of public matters with the citizens of the Commonwealth.

## § 2.2-3701. Definitions. (FOIA) [EXCERPT]

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Closed meeting" means a meeting from which the public is excluded.

"Electronic communication" means the use of technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities to transmit or receive information.

"Emergency" means an unforeseen circumstance rendering the notice required by this chapter impossible or impracticable and which circumstance requires immediate action.

"Information" as used in the exclusions established by §§ 2.2-3705.1 through 2.2-3705.7, means the content within a public record that references a specifically identified subject matter, and shall not be interpreted to require the production of information that is not embodied in a public record.

"Meeting" or "meetings" means the meetings including work sessions, when sitting physically, or through electronic communication means pursuant to § 2.2-3708.2, as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of (i) as many as three members or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership, wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, of any public body. Neither the gathering of employees of a public body nor the gathering or attendance of two or more members of a public body (a) at any place or function where no part of the purpose of such gathering or attendance is the discussion or transaction of any public business, and such gathering or attendance was not called or prearranged with any purpose of discussing or transacting any business of the public body, or (b) at a public forum, candidate appearance, or debate, the purpose of which is to inform the electorate and not to transact public business or to hold discussions relating to the transaction of public business, even though the performance of the members individually or collectively in the conduct of public business may be a topic of discussion or debate at such public meeting, shall be deemed a "meeting" subject to the provisions of this chapter.

"Open meeting" or "public meeting" means a meeting at which the public may be present.

"Public body" means any legislative body, authority, board, bureau, commission, district or agency of the Commonwealth or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth, including cities, towns and counties, municipal councils, governing bodies of counties, school boards and planning commissions; governing boards of public institutions of higher education; and other organizations, corporations or agencies in the Commonwealth supported wholly or principally by public funds. It shall include (i) the Virginia Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Program and its board of directors established pursuant to Chapter 50 (§ 38.2-5000 et seq.) of Title 38.2 and (ii) any committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated, of the public body created to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body. It shall not exclude any such committee, subcommittee or entity because it has private sector or citizen members. Corporations organized by the Virginia Retirement System are "public bodies" for purposes of this chapter.

For the purposes of the provisions of this chapter applicable to access to public records, constitutional officers and private police departments as defined in § 9.1-101 shall be considered public bodies and, except as otherwise expressly provided by law, shall have the same obligations to disclose public records as other custodians of public records.

"Public records" means all writings and recordings that consist of letters, words or numbers, or their equivalent, set down by handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostatting, photography, magnetic impulse, optical or magneto-optical form, mechanical or electronic recording or other form of data compilation, however stored, and regardless of physical form or characteristics, prepared or owned by, or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees or agents in the transaction of public business.

## Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is one of the main focuses of the Board.

The Code of Virginia specifically charges the Board of Veterans Services to "*Review and advise the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services on the Department's strategic plan*."

We accomplish this responsibility by having each Board member annually review the parts of the DVS Strategic Plan that align with their area of responsibility. Board members should provide feedback, help DVS establish or adjust goals, objectives, and measurement criteria, and monitor progress towards those goals and objectives. Board members should understand how the availability of resources (people, time, money, etc.) can put constraints on agency operations. Board members should "check in" with the DVS leader(s) for their assigned area on a regular basis.

Another way we assist DVS is to be actively engaged in our communities – listening to what veterans, local governments, front-line service providers and others in the community need and

identifying ways to improve existing programs. In every conversation, we must be cognizant of budgetary reality, i.e., the need to balance requirements with resources.

## Annual & Meeting Responsibilities

As with most things in life, how much you get out of your experience as a Board member is directly proportional to how much effort you put into it. There is a way for every member to be engaged. Board members will have responsibilities to prepare for each meeting – normally three during the year – as well as annual tasks to be completed as a group and responsibilities specific to the General Assembly Session.

**Meeting Responsibilities:**

1. Be prepared.
   - Attendance is important – there are usually only three regular meetings per year.
   - Read the agenda, minutes of the past meeting and other "read ahead" documents
   - Come prepared with questions/ideas
2. If you are a "Point of Contact" person for one of the DVS Service Lines, be prepared to deliver an "annual report" to the full board.
3. All members are encouraged to come prepared to share a "Good of the Order" Report
   - These are <u>1 minute reports</u> (and no more than 1 minute) at end of meetings where each member can give a quick report on an upcoming or past event, program they are involved in, special project, etc. in "the real world" that would be of interest to the other board members.
4. **Be engaged!** When the Chairman or DVS staff ask for your assistance, please try to take on the assignment.
5. **Points of Contact (POC)**
   - POCs are Board members appointed to work with DVS program managers, service line directors, and deputy commissioners.
   - They serve as a sounding board, information resource, and give assistance.
   - They work with their DVS team members throughout the year on potential budget or legislative issues, and
   - Keep in contact with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners.

**Annual Responsibilities:**

1. Assist DVS with the development of budgetary goals and related procedural matters
   - POCs will maintain communication with the DVS team member(s) on budget, staff, or services issues.
   - Build and maintain good relationships with Delegates and Senators – you may be asked by the Chair or DVS staff to reach out to a legislator on a particular request.
   - Board members are asked to check with the Chairman and DVS before reaching out to a General Assembly member regarding budget requests. It is possible someone else has already reached out.

2. Become a subject matter expert on a DVS service line or program - some of the best programs and initiatives DVS has enacted have come from our board members.
   - Learn about the state Executive and Legislative branches –
     a. How they are structured and work throughout the year
     b. Budget and legislative processes
     c. Who the legislators are
   - Points of Contact (POCs) will be a sounding board for their DVS team members throughout the year, checking in by phone, email and in person.
   - POCs should also visit facilities to meet the staff working directly with the veterans.
   - All board members have the ability to request an ad hoc working group for more extensive research or work on a budget or policy initiative. Board members should make a recommendation to the Chair, who will then bring the request to the full board for a vote.
   - POCs will make reports to the full board on their interactions with their DVS program area/service line POC. These annual reports should be 10-15 minutes long and include a 1-page, written "Executive Summary" to be emailed out to the board members before the meeting with the agenda packet.

3. Read the DVS Annual Report
   - Even if you are not currently a POC for one of the service lines, you should have a familiarity with what DVS is doing and what they are reporting on to the Governor, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and the General Assembly each year to be a better advocate for them.

## The Annual Calendar

The calendar year is divided into two sections:

1. Legislative Time: This runs from roughly October 1 through the end of the General Assembly Session.
   - In even years, the Session is 60 days long, with an emphasis on crafting and passing a biennial budget.
   - In odd years, the Session is 45 days long, and while budget amendments are offered, the main focus (usually) is on legislation.
   - Session begins on the second Wednesday in January and runs through February or March depending on the year.
2. Non-Legislative Time: March – September is just as important as Session. The government calendar is July 1 – June 30. Budget discussions begin in the summer, and legislative/policy planning and drafting begin in the summer, but pick up pace in the fall around October.

   This is the time for the Board to:
   - Work with DVS on strategic goals and plans
   - Work with DVS on budget needs and goals
   - Research what other states are doing
   - Engage with your local communities

## Legislative Time & During Session

You were appointed to the Board because of skills, knowledge and abilities you possess. You are to be an advocate for the Board, DVS and Virginia's veterans. You advocate by meeting with key stakeholders – legislators, their legislative assistants, other organizations working with veterans, groups in your communities and local government officials.

**Responsibilities:**

1. **Be an advocate for Board and DVS priorities**
   - DVS will help you prepare talking points and other materials.
   - Use all methods: phone, emails, letters, social media, attend community meetings.
   - Please work with DVS and BVS Chair on any letters to the editor or editorials and do not submit anything for publication as a member of the board without coordination with the Chair and DVS.
2. **Connect with legislators on policy and budget priorities** that the Board has set and voted on for the Session.

- One of the key groups to be an advocate for the Board and DVS is the legislature. Primarily, you should be building relationships with your Delegate and Senator, and if you are in an urban area, the members in the surrounding districts.
- If your county Board of Supervisors, City Council, Delegate and Senator, or other groups hold a pre-legislative session meeting, you are encouraged to attend.
  - You do not need to get up in the meeting or prepare remarks
  - Should you plan to provide remarks, please let DVS staff know you will be attending so they can help you with talking points.
  - Introduce yourself to the elected officials and let them know you are a member of BVS.
  - Feel free to get up during the Q&A and ask a question related to veterans
  - Talk with the people who attend; feel free to hand out your BVS business cards.
- Try to schedule a meeting with your Delegate and Senator before Session starts to brief them on the Board's initiatives for the Session and any proposed legislative initiatives approved by BVS.
- Definitely call/email the Legislative Assistants for your Delegate and Senator and make sure they know what BVS policy and budget initiatives are for the Session. Ask they have questions and if their boss is carrying any veteran-friendly legislation.

3. **Keep in communication with DVS** on policy, budget and strategic planning initiatives regarding your subject area. We're all on the same team with the same goal.

**Goals for Session:**

1. Attendance at least one meeting of the General Assembly **Military & Veterans Caucus**

   The meetings are every Wednesday morning at 8am from the 2nd week of Session through the end of Session. They involve presentations from agency and cabinet officials and other organizations working with military service members, veterans, and their families in Virginia. They also allow legislators to give updates on their legislation. They are very informative and a great way to get to know what is going on in Virginia and those working on veterans issues. DVS will notify Board members in advance with the meeting location and scheduled speakers.

2. **Visiting legislators to advocate for DVS** during Session

   The Board of Veteran Services needs to be in the GAB promoting DVS, their budget and policy priorities. We are their advocate.

## DVS MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

**Mission**
*To serve Virginia's veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard, Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves, and their family members, by ensuring they receive timely transition, employment and education assistance, benefits, health care and long-term care and recognition they have earned through service to our country and Commonwealth.*

**Vision**
*To be the most veteran-friendly state in the nation by setting the national benchmark for the delivery of results-oriented and cost-effective veterans services.*

**Values**

- **Excellence:** *Provide exemplary service to Virginia's veterans and their families.*
- **Commitment:** *An enduring commitment to helping Virginia's veterans and their families receive all earned federal and state benefits; and create an economic environment that promotes veteran-owned businesses and Virginia companies hiring veterans.*
- **Innovation:** *Continually find new methods to reach and serve Virginia's veterans and their families.*

## DVS SERVICE LINES

### Benefits Services

The mission of Benefits Services is to provide Virginia's veterans and their family members with accurate, timely and ethical education and assistance in obtaining the federal and state benefits they have earned through service and sacrifice to our Commonwealth and Nation.

The DVS Benefits Services section assists Virginia's veterans in gaining access to federal and state benefits they are entitled to, including: compensation for service-connected disabilities or death, income-based pensions, medical care, home purchase assistance, education, and burial benefits.

In addition to direct contact at one of our 34 offices, our employees assist veterans at dozens of itinerant service points, in effect satellite Benefits Offices. These satellite offices are often in the more rural parts of Virginia. Space is provided by federal, state or local government agencies, or private organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion, always at no charge to DVS or the veterans. The itinerant service points allow DVS to reach and serve a greater number of veterans, many of whom face significant challenges like the lack of adequate transportation, without incurring the cost of fixed operating facilities. These satellite offices create a cost-effective win-win for the state and the veterans.

## Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program

VVFS provides hands on assistance navigating supportive services, peer and family support, and services to the most vulnerable veterans, including justice-involved veterans and those at risk for, or experiencing homelessness.

VVFS focuses supportive services in six areas:

1. Case coordination and management;
2. Housing and Homeless Services;
3. Justice Involved Services program (JIS);
4. Mission: Healthy Relationships and Mission: Healthy Families (MHR, MHF); and
5. Veteran Peer Support (VPS) Services

Through an integrated and responsive system of care, VVFS monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative services, and supportive services.

The **Housing Development Team**, within VVFS, provides statewide coordination and leadership for the Commonwealth's continued commitment to functionally ending veteran homelessness.

The **Justice-Involved Veterans** team offers resource connections, care coordination, and support to Virginia's veterans and service members across the justice spectrum, including diversion, incarceration and reentry to the communities. JIS offers direct assistance to veterans and service members of any era, regardless of discharge status. When an active military service members violate both military and civilian laws, the individual can be tried in military court, civilian court or both, but most crimes violate both military and civilian laws, landing the active duty member in civilian court and, hopefully, eligible for the veterans treatment docket and JIS. The program is involved with veterans treatment dockets, in local jails and state prisons, and serving those veterans out on bail, on probation and/or parole supervision. JIS includes a formalized referral process, an electronic mailbox for justice-involved referrals (VVFS Justice mailbox: justice.vvfs@dvs.virginia.gov), and VVFS Veteran Justice Specialists (VJS) in each region to work with justice-involved veterans pre- and post-release.

The **Family Services** team, within VVFS, provides individualized and group support, and wrap-around care services to family members of veterans. VVFS offers "*Mission: Healthy Relationships*" and "*Mission: Healthy Families*" relationship and family resiliency skills building programs.

The **Veteran Peer Support** program is a blend of professional training and personal experience. VPS staff provide veterans support in his/her pursuit of improvements in health, wellness and quality of life, as they relate to behavioral and rehabilitative needs resulting from or exacerbated by military service. Veteran clients are matched with a Veteran Peer Specialist who is like-minded and has similar or familiar military and post-military experiences, to be relatable to the client. The veteran peer support program also facilitates veteran support groups, providing

structure to promote personal growth, self-awareness, coping strategies, and the unique opportunity to interact with other like-minded veterans.

## Veterans Education, Training & Employment (VETE)

The Veterans Education and Training & Employment (VETE) Sections of the Department of Veterans Services ensure that every veteran or eligible person has a full and fair opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential through access to the G.I. Bill approved post-secondary educational, training/ licensure/certification, and Virginia colleges and universities, as well as V3 certified employers. We provide these opportunities in a timely manner via:

1. State Approving Agency for Veterans Education & Training (SAA)
   *Enable access to post-secondary education opportunities for veterans and eligible family members.*

2. Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program
   *Provides education, training, and connectivity resources to assist employers recruit, hire, and retain a highly-skilled, well-educated, and easily-trained talent pool: Virginia's Veterans.*

3. Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP)
   *Assists military service members and veterans in their transition to post-military education, training, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities.*

4. Military Medics & Corpsmen Program (MMAC)
   *The Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Program provides service members with specialized medical training an opportunity for employment at Virginia health care providers, a pathway to licensure and long-term medical careers, and a solution to acute health care staffing shortages in Virginia's health care industry.*

5. Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)
   *Provides education benefits to spouses and children of military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became at least 90 percent disabled as a result of military service in an armed conflict.*

6. Virginia Women Veterans Program (VWVP)
   *Provides provide full time support to Virginia's women veterans and their unique and diverse needs at the state level. With partners, hosts the annual Virginia Women Veterans Summit.*

## Veteran Care Centers

The mission of the veteran care centers is to provide affordable, high quality, and comprehensive care to Commonwealth of Virginia veterans residing in Virginia's state-operated veterans care centers.

Virginia's veterans care centers are "revenue neutral," receiving no operating monies from the General Fund, and operating entirely on revenues generated through services provided to residents. Revenue sources include: Medicaid, Medicare, per diem payments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and private funding sources. All beds are certified for both Medicare and Medicaid.

The **Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC)** is located adjacent to the Salem Veterans Affairs Medical Center, is a 224-bed facility, with 120 beds dedicated to skilled nursing care, 60 beds to Alzheimer's/memory care, 16 beds to short-term rehabilitative care, and 24 assisted-living (domiciliary care) beds.

The **Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC)**, located on the campus of the McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Richmond, is a 200-bed, single-occupancy facility, with 160 beds dedicated to skilled nursing care/short-term rehabilitative care and 40 to Alzheimer's/memory care.

Two new VCCs are under construction: the 128-bed ***Puller Veterans Care Center*** in Vint Hill (Fauquier County) and the 128-bed ***Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center*** in Virginia Beach.

## State Veterans Cemeteries

The mission of our Virginia Veterans Cemeteries is to provide a dignified final resting place for veterans and eligible dependents. The DVS Cemetery Services section operates and lovingly maintains Virginia's three state veterans cemeteries: the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia, the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, and the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin.

We are honored that Virginia veterans and their families choose our cemeteries for their final resting place.

## Virginia War Memorial

The mission of the Virginia War Memorial is to *Honor Veterans, Preserve History, Educate Youth and Inspire Patriotism in All.* Dedicated in 1956, the Memorial includes the names of the nearly 12,000 Virginia heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and the Global War on Terrorism. Through its Education Center, the Virginia War Memorial serves as the Center of Excellence for education of Virginians' experience of war from the birth of our nation to the present by offering a variety of programs, artifacts, research materials, the "Virginians at War" documentaries, exhibitions, seminars, and ceremonies.

## DVS CODE-MANDATED RESPONSIBILITIES

**(Excerpted from the Code of Virginia)**

Benefits Services, Veterans Care Centers, and Veterans Cemeteries

The Department shall be responsible to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs on behalf of the Governor for the establishment, operation, administration, and maintenance of offices and programs related to services for Virginia-domiciled veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents. Such services shall include, but not be limited to, benefits claims processing and all medical care centers and cemeteries for veterans owned and operated by the Commonwealth. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.A)

The Commissioner shall ensure that benefit claims assistance is provided on a regular basis at locations other than established service offices. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2002)

Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program

The Department, in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, shall establish a program to monitor and coordinate mental health and rehabilitative services support for Virginia veterans and members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service. The program shall also support family members affected by covered military members' service and deployments. The purpose of the program is to, in a cost-effective manner, refer veterans to mental health, physical rehabilitation, and other services as needed to help them achieve individually identified goals and to periodically monitor their progress toward achieving those goals.(Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.1)

Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program

The Department shall develop a comprehensive program to reduce unemployment among veterans by assisting businesses to attract, hire, train, and retain veterans. Such program shall promote strategies for connecting employers to qualified veterans and include (i) a workforce assessment and training program for participating employers and (ii) a certification process for participating employers with the objective of setting measurable goals for hiring and retaining veterans. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.2)

Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Pilot Program

The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Health Professions, shall establish a program in which military medical personnel may practice and perform certain delegated acts that constitute the practice of medicine or nursing in accordance with subsection B of § 54.1-2901 or subsection B of § 54.1-3001. Such activities shall reflect the level of training and experience of the military medical personnel. The supervising physician or podiatrist shall retain responsibility for the care of the patient. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.4)

State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training (SAA)
(The Commissioner shall have the general power to) Enter into all contracts and agreements necessary or incidental to the performance of the Department's duties and the execution of its powers under this chapter, including, but not limited to, contracts with the United States, other states, and agencies and governmental subdivisions of the Commonwealth. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2003)

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)
(The Commissioner shall have the following powers and duties related to veterans services) Certify eligibility for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program and perform other duties related to such Program as outlined in §23.1-608. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2004.16)

Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP)
(The Commissioner shall have the following powers and duties related to veterans services) Integrate veterans services activities into the framework of economic development activities in general. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2004.12)

(The Commissioner shall have the following powers and duties related to veterans services) Establish and implement a compact with Virginia's veterans, which shall have a goal of making Virginia America's most veteran-friendly state. The compact shall be established in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services and supported by the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations and shall (i) include specific provisions for technology advances, workforce development, outreach, quality of life enhancement, and other services for veterans. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2004.17)

Virginia War Memorial
The Virginia War Memorial is established as a division within the Department of Veterans Services. The Commissioner shall maintain administrative and financial control of the Virginia War Memorial and its subsidiaries, including adopting regulations for the use of and visitation to the Memorial. The mission of the Virginia War Memorial shall be to honor patriotic Virginians who rendered faithful service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom and liberty for the Commonwealth and the nation in time of war, honor all of Virginia's veterans, preserve their history, educate the public, and inspire patriotism in all Virginians. (Code of Virginia, §2.2-2001.3)

## ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE REPRESENTED *EX-OFFICIO* ON THE BVS

### Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC)

The JLC's powers and duties are laid out in the Code **§ 2.2-2682.**

**Mission:** *The JLC is an advisory council in the executive branch of state government. The JLC provides advice and assistance to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Department of Veterans Services on matters of concern to the veterans community and provides a conduit of information to and from the veterans service organizations on policy and legislation, pending and enacted, as well as information on existing services.*

### Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)

The authority of the foundation is laid out in the Code **§ 2.2-2715.**

**Mission:** *The Veterans Services Foundation (the Foundation) is as an independent body politic and corporate agency of the Commonwealth supporting the interests of veterans and their families and contributors through the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and the programs and services of the Department of Veterans Services. The Foundation is governed and administered by a board of trustees. The Foundation (i) administers the Veterans Services Fund (the Fund), (ii) provides funding for veterans services and programs in the Commonwealth through the Fund, and (iii) accepts and raises revenue from all sources, including private source fundraising, to support the Fund.*

### Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF)

*Chartered in 2000, the Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) is the non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that financially supports the educational and patriotic programs, museum exhibits, documentary films, and student-teacher outreach of the Virginia War Memorial as well as various capital projects and expenses. The Foundation's Board of Directors is a diverse team of community leaders, veterans, and patriots who dedicate their time, energy, and expertise to ensure the Virginia War Memorial's financial stability. Each director has his or her own personal connection to the Memorial and its work.*

Code **§ 2.2-2001.3** provides that:
*The Commissioner (of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services) shall provide supervision of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation and any other nonprofit corporation established as an instrumentality to provide fundraising for the Memorial and assist in the details of administering the affairs of the Memorial.*

## WEBSITES FOR REFERENCE

Board of Veterans Services: http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/board-of-veterans-services/

Virginia Department of Veterans Services:
- Web: http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaVeteransServices
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/@VaVeteransSvcs
- Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/130477507@N05/
- YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2vL99mKIV4wKnLGPSqSXLw
- Instagram: http://instagram.com/virginiaveterans
- DVS App (Apple): https://apps.apple.com/us/app/dvs-virginia/id943913297
- DVS App (Android): https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.virginia.dvs

Also see Facebook pages for: Virginia War Memorial, Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, Virginia Veterans Care Center, Virginia Veteran and Family Support, VETE Services, Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Virginia National Guard, and Virginia Veterans Services Foundation

Virginia War Memorial Foundation: https://vawarmemorial.org/

Virginia Veterans Services Foundation: https://virginiaveteransservicesfoundation.org/

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations:
https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2

Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs: https://www.vada.virginia.gov/

Governor of Virginia: https://www.governor.virginia.gov/

Virginia General Assembly: https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/

General Assembly's Legislative Information Service (LIS): https://lis.virginia.gov/

The Code of Virginia: http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode

Commonwealth Calendar: https://commonwealthcalendar.virginia.gov/

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: http://www.va.gov/

U.S. Department of Labor – Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS):
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets

# Board of Veterans Services By-Laws

## Article I – Authority and Statement of Purpose

1. Authority: The authority for the Board of Veterans Services is found in § 2.2-2452 of the Code of Virginia (the Code).

2. Statement of Purpose: The Board of Veterans Services (the Board) is a policy board within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The Board is responsible for monitoring the welfare of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and setting policies to enhance veteran services across the Commonwealth.

## Article II – Membership

1. Composition and Appointment of Members: The Board consists of 26 members, including seven legislative members, 15 nonlegislative citizen members and four *ex officio* members. Three members from the Senate are appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Four members from the House of Delegates are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates. Nonlegislative members are appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), the Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation, Chairman of the War Memorial Foundation Board, and the Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations serve *ex officio*.

2. Terms: Legislative members, the DVS Commissioner, the JLC Chairman, and the VSF Chairman serve Board terms coincide with their terms of office. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, are for the unexpired terms. All members may be reappointed. However, no House member can serve more than six consecutive two-year terms, no Senate member can serve more than three consecutive four-year terms. Non-legislative citizen members appointed to serve an unexpired term is eligible to serve two consecutive four-year terms immediately succeeding such unexpired term.

**3.** Qualifications: Board members are appointed for the expertise they have regarding the various service lines and programs administered by DVS. This should include at least one board member with experience in best practices in each of the following: benefits claim service; budgets and strategic planning; cemetery operations; education; employment, training, and entrepreneurship, medical and health care management; mental and behavioral health, justice involved veterans and the legal system.

## Article III – Officers

1. General: DVS shall provide staff to assist the Board in their administrative, planning and procedural duties.

   The Board will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership. The DVS Commissioner is not eligible to serve as Chair.

2. Primary Duties of the Chair: Preside over all meetings and perform the duties required before, during and after to ensure a smooth, well-run meeting. The Chair will serve as an *ex officio* member of the Veterans Services Foundation (with voting privileges), the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (with no voting privileges), and the Virginia War Memorial Board (with voting privileges). The Chair may designate a Board member to represent him/her at these meetings. The Chair shall appoint work groups, as needed, and in such a way as to allow the Board to fulfill its' powers and duties.

3. Additional Duties of the Chair: The Chair shall work closely with DVS staff and Board members on pre-meeting planning and preparations. Shall maintain communication with the Commissioner, and other DVS staff, on all budget, policy and strategic planning initiatives put forward by the Board. Shall meet with legislators, as needed, and represent the Board before the Virginia General Assembly. Shall coordinate with the DVS Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Director of Policy and Planning on long-term strategic planning and budgetary issues to maintain strong programs and services within DVS for Virginia's veterans. Shall maintain communication with each Board member and assign projects and duties as needed. Upon request of the Commissioner, the Chair shall write letters to communicate policy and budget initiatives affecting DVS and Virginia's veterans to legislators.

4. Primary Duties of the Vice Chair: In the absence of the Chair, preside at Board meetings; perform duties as assigned by the Chair; assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the event the Chair can no longer fulfill them; and assume the role of Chair for the remainder of the elected Chair's term, if necessary.

5. Term of Service: The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve a two-year term of office. The Chair and Vice-Chair are eligible for re-election, but can serve no more than two consecutive terms. In the event the office of Chair or Vice-Chair is vacated prior to the scheduled completion of that officer's term of office, a Chair or Vice-Chair shall be elected to serve the remainder of the term of office, in which case an election to fill an unexpired term greater than one year shall count as one term toward the two consecutive term limit.

6. Elections: Candidates for office may either put their own name forward, or may be nominated by another member. Nominations will be made to the Chair, verbally or in writing, so that the nominees can be conveyed to the full Board at least 14 days prior to the

meeting when elections will be held. Elections will be by voice vote during the first regularly scheduled meeting following July 1.

## Article IV – Powers and Duties of Board

1. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise in the performance of his/her duties.

2. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise, upon request of the Commissioner of Veterans Services, or the Governor, related to the provision of care and services to veterans.

3. Advise the DVS Commissioner upon such matters as may arise affecting the welfare of Virginia citizens who are veterans or dependents or survivors of such veterans.

4. Review polices related to the coordinated delivery of veterans services and develop recommendations for policies and procedures related to the efficient and effective delivery of services provided by DVS.

5. Review and advise the DVS Commissioner on the Department's strategic plan and annual report.

6. Provide recommendations to DVS regarding the acquisition of facilities that may benefit the Commonwealth's veterans, including, but not limited to, veterans cemeteries and veterans care centers.

## Article V – Work Groups

1. The Board shall organize itself in such a way as to allow it to fulfill its powers and duties, including work groups, created at the discretion of the Chair.

2. Work groups, on behalf of the entire Board, will perform detailed analytical and investigative work on a specific issue. Work groups will be formed only to deal with policy or procedural issues related the DVS service lines; policy initiatives regarding veterans; researching programs and initiatives currently in place in other states and the possibility of pursuing and implementing similar programs in Virginia; or other projects as requested by the Board Chair and/or DVS Commissioner.

3. Work groups shall form upon the call and discretion of the Chair, and complete their work within 12 consecutive months from the time the Chair nominates and the Board members approve the formation and membership of the work group. Committee members will be selected for their subject matter expertise. The Chair shall name a Committee Chair and at least two additional members. The work group shall work with DVS staff to compile a final

report, which they will present to the Chair and Commissioner, and then present to the Board at the first regularly scheduled meeting following the completion of their work.

4. Any Board member may make a request for a work group to the Board Chair.

## Article VI – Service Line Points of Contact (POCs)

1. The Chair shall appoint Points of Contact (POC) from the membership of the Board with the specific qualifications and experience to best serve each of the DVS Service Line Directors, providing support in developing effective policy recommendations related to the services provided to Virginia's veterans.

2. Each POC shall provide oversight, counsel and develop recommendations for the Service Line Director and Commissioner on the administration, organization, fiscal operation, expansion and policies for the function of the service line, procedures to ensure compliance with all state and federal requirements, and when applicable, assist in the development of professional competency testing and performance reviews to ensure the highest quality of expertise.

3. When applicable, POCs shall ensure that all relevant policies and hiring and training practices are followed through on by the Director, and Supervisors, if relevant.

4. For Service Line Directors with more than two POCs, all work and meetings shall be in compliance with FOIA and other state regulations regarding Virginia Boards and Commissions.

5. Each POC shall be available to the DVS staff and Commissioner for assistance with the annual review of the operational, financial and organizational policies.

6. The Service Line POCs shall be:
    - Benefits Services
    - Behavioral Health & Housing
    - Cemeteries
    - Communications
    - Education
    - Employment
    - Entrepreneurship
    - Legal & Criminal Justice
    - Policy & Budget
    - Strategic Planning
    - Veterans Care Centers

## Article VII – Meetings and Compensation

1. Meetings: The Board will meet at least three times a year, or on the call of the Chair.

2. Attendance: Board members shall attend all or the majority of meetings in each year. If a member is unable to attend due to an emergency or personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the emergency or personal matter to the Chair within 3 days of the meeting, the member shall be allowed to attend the meeting remotely, following all procedures and guidelines laid out in the Code of Virginia, Chapter 37 – Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) § 2.2-3708.1 "Participation in meetings in event of emergency or personal matter; certain disabilities; distance from meeting location for certain public bodies." A copy of the code section is in the member handbook distributed to each member upon appointment to the board. It is the responsibility of each member to read, understand and follow the procedures.

3. Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenses: Board members shall be reimbursed for expenses and compensated for Board service as provided for in the Code of Virginia and the current Appropriations Act.

## Article VIII –Miscellaneous

1. Quorum: A majority of the voting members of the Board constitutes a quorum.

2. Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws: These Bylaws can be amended by a two-thirds vote cast from voting Board members, if prior notice of the vote has been given.

3. Parliamentary Authority: The adopted parliamentary authority for Board meetings is the current version of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.