

BVS POC REPORT – Virginia Women Veterans Program (VWVP)

1. Date of Report:
 - August 25, 2022
2. BVS POC(s):
 - Delegate Kathleen Murphy
 - Joyce Henderson
3. Service Area/Program:
 - Virginia Women Veterans Program (VWVP)
4. VDVS Deputy Commissioner/ Director / Program Manager(s):
 - Deputy Commissioner Annie Walker
 - Director Phillip Trezza
 - Beverly VanTull (VWVP Program Manager)
 - Jasmine Scott (VWVP Assistant Program Manager)
5. Mission of service area/program (i.e. what does it do?):
 - Virginia's Women Veterans Program (VWVP) provides a port of entry for referrals and 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.
6. Who does the service area/program serve (i.e. who are the customers)?
 - All Virginia women veterans and women service members that are within their transition period and plan on making Virginia their home.
7. What are the service line's primary objectives?
 - VWVP provides referrals and access to community resources to educate, unify, and empower Virginia's women veterans. We coordinate and monitor access to a wide array of local, state, and federal veteran benefits tailored to meet women's needs, develop objectives to support strategic focus on women veterans, and maintain a continued focus through the annual Virginia Women Veterans Summit.
8. What are the key results that support the objective(s)?
 - The amount of women veterans reached with information about VDVS services / resources.
 - The amount of women veterans referred to local, state, and community resources.

9. What specific objectives (end of FY2022, end of FY2025) has the service line established and what progress has the service line/program made toward achieving the objective(s).

- **Establishing Strategic Partnerships:** Strategic partnerships amplify VWVPs' reach and impact, helping ensure that more women veterans receive information about and access to local, state, and federal resources
 - **Progress Made:** The program has solidified partnerships with several veteran and women veteran-centric organizations to include the Central Virginia Women Veteran Program, Women Veteran Alliance, and the Military Women's Memorial.
- **Streamlining the Referral Process:** VWVP has utilized technology to streamline the referral process.
 - **Progress Made:** As a result, we have generated over 200 women veteran referrals to sister programs within the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and external partners since December 2021.
- **Increasing Program Reach:** VWVP has utilized technology, partnerships, and innovation to increase the amount of women veterans reached.
 - **Progress Made:**
 - a. In the past year we have doubled our Virginia women veteran newsletter to reach 5k women veterans and women veteran advocates.
 - b. Through our established partnerships, VWVP has been featured in numerous earned media opportunities including social media marketing, veteran-centric newsletters, and women veteran-centric magazines.
 - c. Our new strategy has increased our women veteran engagement from 5k reached to almost 20k reached within the past year.

10. What are some operational highlights from the past year?

- **2022 Virginia Women Veteran Pinning Ceremony and Roundtable**
During March was the fifth annual celebration with our community partners, V3 employers, Virginia legislators, and local veteran service organizations. Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears joined Senator Jen Kiggans, Delegate Kathleen Murphy, and Delegate Jackie Glass to honor over 70 women veterans with the "Virginia Women Veterans Lead The Way" gold pin. In addition, Delegate Kathleen Murphy and Delegate Jackie Glass held a women veteran roundtable discussion with over 40 women veterans in attendance. The 2022 Virginia Women Veterans Week Proclamation was released on the Governor's website:
<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/proclamations/proclamation-list/women-veterans-week.html>.
- **2022 Virginia Women Veteran Summit**

The Virginia Women Veteran Program, in partnership with The Virginia Employment Commission, held our 9th annual summit on June 15, 2022, at the Richmond Convention Center. The event theme is "Empowered: Sisters in Arms Inspiring Generations." The focus of the effort in 2022 is to expand networks and connect women veterans to services, both internal to VDVS and external community resources. The event hosted over 200 live attendees and reached 250 viewers virtually. The 2022 Summit Livestream is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyfZLkfsuks>.

- VWVP Virtual resource information sessions
We held multiple virtual resource sessions focusing on women veterans and financial literacy classes during holidays, tax season, and VDVS resource updates.

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

- Virginia Women Veteran Pinning Ceremony and Roundtable: held annual ceremony and hosted over 100 live attendees. This event was livestreamed.
- Vietnam Veteran special pinning Ceremony: honoring National Vietnam War Veteran Day and those who served. This event was livestreamed.
- Virginia Women Veteran Summit: held annual summit and hosted over 200 live attendees and reached 250 viewers virtually.
- Joint Women's Leadership Symposium and Transitioning seminar: provided VDVS services information to over 100 active and reserve women in military service.

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

- VWVP Virtual Offerings
 - Virtual Resource Hours: VWVP Virtual Resource Hours aims to address the unique challenges faced by women veterans including, but not limited to, financial literacy, homelessness, MST, access to benefits, and employment. These virtual offerings enable Virginia women veterans to access pertinent resources from the comfort of their own homes or local communities.
 - Event Live streaming: This initiative meets the needs of some women veterans who do not have access to transportation as well as others who have limiting factors that prevent them from attending live events (i.e. access to childcare and health concerns). Having it virtually enables participation of our women veterans even if their schedules do not allow for live attendance.

13. What are the biggest challenges facing the service area / program at present?

- Limited amount of local community veteran resources specifically designed for women needed to enhance the range of referral support. Our women veterans have needs that our state agency cannot address alone such as childcare services or gender specific healthcare / mental health partners to enhance women wellness support.
- Expanding outreach to connect with younger demographic of women veterans (under 35 years old), as well as, reaching a larger percentage of women veterans within the Virginia community.

14. How does delivering the service/program help Virginia's veterans?

- By providing focused support to educate our women veterans of the services, resources, and benefits to which they are entitled, we will increase a sense of belonging, as well as utilization of services and resources. As we empower our women veterans to achieve their full potential and enhance their health and wellness, they can build stability in their lives and Virginia communities.

15. By helping the veteran, how does it help the Commonwealth?

- This support has positive effects such as enhancing the Virginia economy with new women veterans owned businesses with employment opportunities. By enlightening Virginia communities about the issues and challenges that women veterans face, we will not only increase awareness, but enhance perspectives on how to improve local collaboration. Virginia will see results in a stronger workforce within connected communities leading to a more resilient Virginia. This will continue to encourage women veterans to stay work and thrive in Virginia, as well as, spotlight Virginia as the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

16. What strategic opportunities are there for the future?

- Building coaching or mentorship projects within employment / education/ entrepreneurship with federal partners or national groups like:
 - Women's Bureau under the Department of Labor
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb>
 - Women Veteran-Owned Small Business Initiative (WVOSBI)
<https://www.va.gov/osdbu/wvosbi.asp>
 - Women Veteran Network (WoVeN)
<https://www.wovenwomenvets.org/>
 - Veteran Women Igniting Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE)
<https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/entrepreneurship/start-up/v-wise/>
- Community impact through volunteerism has a great ability to present a multi-tiered "benefit to the Commonwealth". These projects encourage more women veterans to self-identify and get connected to serve Virginia communities. This will enrich the next generation of Virginians by increasing community collaboration and awareness through with groups like:

- Girl Scouts
<https://www.girlscouts.org/>
- Big Brothers and Big Sister of America
<https://www.bbbs.org/>

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

- The VWVP program is working towards collaborating on opportunities to form partnerships with a more groups of Virginia based resources/ partners who offer services focusing on women veteran needs. We are also targeting opportunities to connect with national associations and federal partners who could expand support services within or into Virginia.
- License Plate: Looking into the process and possible partners to assist with honoring Virginia women veterans with a license plate