# Board of Veterans Services
# DRAFT Meeting Minutes
# August 25, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on August 25, 2022 at 10 a.m. at the Virginia War Memorial.

**Members Present**

- Victor Angry
- David Ashe
- John Bell (via Zoom)
- Joe Campa
- Mike Cherry
- Michael Dick
- Buddy Fowler
- Joyce Henderson
- Jamie Inman
- Carlton Kent
- Thurraya Kent
- John Lesinski
- Mamie Locke
- Kathy Owens
- Bryce Reeves
- Susan Riveland
- Melissa Watts
- Monti Zimmerman, Vice-Chair, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
- Paul Haughton, Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
- Daniel Gade, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
- Pam Seay, President, Virginia War Memorial Foundation

**Members Absent**

- Carl Bedell
- Mario Flores
- Kathleen Murphy

**Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present**

- Deputy Secretary Pak, VADA
- Assistant Secretary Jordan, VADA
- Steven Combs, VDVS
- Claudia Flores, VDVS
- Glendalynn Glover, VDVS
- Jayla Plymoth, VDVS
- Ravi Padma, VDVS
- Montwrace Cunningham, VDVS
- Matt Leslie, VDVS
- Anthony Swann, VDVS
- John Hall, VDVS

- Jorian Tinsley, VDVS
- Phil Trezza, VDVS
- William Hewitt, VDVS
- Annie Walker, VDVS

**Members of the Public**

- Carrie Ann Alford, Hill Vets Foundation
- Karla Boughey, Veteran Services Foundation
- Caitlin Goodale-Porter

**Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet (sent via e-mail and posted on BVS webpage)**

- Draft Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the December 16, 2021 meeting
- VDVS Operational Update
- JLC Report
- VSF Report
- Point of Contact Reports
- VDVS Draft Strategic Plan

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Michael Dick called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Chairman Dick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call, Introduction of Members, and Quorum Determination**

The roll call determined that there were 21 of 25 members present at the meeting site, and a quorum was established. Two members were present online via Zoom, bringing the total to 23 of 25 members present. The members introduced themselves to the Board.

**Approval of Agenda and Approval of Minutes of the December 16, 2021 Meeting** *(See Attachment 1)*

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to approve both the draft meeting agenda and the minutes from the December 16, 2021 meeting through one motion. Delegate Mike Cherry made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Buddy Fowler, to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

**Recognition of Outgoing Members and New Members**

Chairman Dick recognized outgoing members who completed their terms of service on the Board of Veterans Services. Mr. James Icenhour was present to accept a Certificate of Recognition. Chairman Dick then asked each member of the Board to introduce themselves, to include newly appointed members.

**Introduction of VDVS staff and guests**

VDVS staff and guests introduced themselves. The names are recorded above.

**Update on current VDVS operational status** *(See Attachment 2)*

VDVS Commissioner Gade gave an update on VDVS Operations.

**Point of Contact Reports (POC)** – written reports attached as noted below

**Benefit Services (**See *Attachment 3*)
Carl Bedell (BVS), David Ashe

Mr. Ashe presented the POC report for Benefits, providing information on the number of claims filed by Veteran Service Representatives (VSR) across 34 offices. Mr. Ashe noted the planned hiring of additional VSRs and Appeal Attorneys to service high demand areas.

**Behavioral Health** (*See Attachment 4*)
Mike cherry, David Ashe, and Carl Bess

Mr. Ashe presented the POC report on Behavioral Health and noted VDVS efforts screening veteran clients for suicide risk. Mr. Ashe also noted the planed establishment of the VDVS Suicide Prevention Program.

**Virginia War Memorial** (*See Attachment 5*)
Kathy Owns and Buddy Fowler

Kathy Owens presented the POC report on the Virginia War Memorial and War Memorial Foundation and noted events hosted by the War Memorial to honor Virginia's Veterans.

**Cemeteries** (*See Attachment 6*)
Melissa Watts

Melissa Watts presented the POC report on Cemeteries and noted challenges with current funding and increased workload. Ms. Watts also noted the need for an in-house honor squad for military honors during ceremonies.

**Communications and Marketing** *(See Attachment 7)*
Susan Vervaet Riveland

Susan Vervaet Riveland presented the POC report on Communications and Marketing the VDVS Communications Director serves many functions to include speech writing, branding on social media, and eNews letters.

**Transition and Employment** *(See Attachment 8)*
Victor Angry and Mario Flores

Victor Angry presented the POC report for Transition and Employment and noted the Military Spouse Liaison Program within VDVS

**Rural Veterans** *(See Attachment 9)*
John Lesinski and Jason Ballard

John Lesinski presented the POC report on Rural Veterans and noted partnership collaboration with local groups. He also noted challenges rural veterans face to include broadband service and transportation.

**Justice Involved Veterans** *(See Attachment 10)*
David Ashe and Bryce Reeves

Bryce Reeves noted veteran treatment dockets, the success of the program and the need for

additional resources.

**Housing and Homelessness** *(See Attachment 11)*
Mamie Locke and David Ashe

David Ashe presented the POC report on Housing and Homelessness

**Veterans in the Arts** *(See Attachment 12)*
Susan Vervaet Riveland

Susan Vervaet Riveland presented the POC report on Veterans in the Arts and noted this is not a dedicated program or service area and therefore art can be a resource included within service lines.

Chairman Dick noted the time remaining for the BVS meeting and postponed the remaining POC reports, per the agenda, for a future meeting.

**Reports** *(See Attachments 13, 14, 15)*
Chairman Dick asked the Joint Leadership Council and the Veterans Services Foundation to report by exception.

Monti Zimmerman noted the JLC's legislative proposals for the 2023 session.

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to the legislative members for comment on the upcoming session. The legislative members noted opportunities for the upcoming session.

In response to a question from the Chair, Senator Reeves confirmed that the exemption on military retirement income as passed by the General Assembly only applied to military service members who retired from the military.

**Good of the Order Reports**
Chairman Dick proposed a BVS meeting on September 22 at William and Mary.

**Public Comment**
Carrie Ann Alford commented on HillVets Foundation
Caitlin Goodale-Porter provided public comments

**Wrap Up & Adjournment**
The motion to adjourn the meeting carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned.

# ATTACHMENT 1

**BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES**
**DRAFT AGENDA**
**August 25, 2022**
**10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)

II. Roll Call and Quorum Determination – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:02 – 10:10)

III. Approval of Agenda – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)

IV. Approval of Minutes of the December 16, 2021 meeting – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:15 – 10:20)

V. Introduction of VDVS staff and guests – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:20 – 10:25)

VI. Recognition of outgoing BVS Members – Michael Dick, *BVS Chairman* (10:25 – 10:30)

VII. Welcome to new BVS Members – Michael Dick, *BVS Chairman* (10:30 – 10:35)

VIII. VDVS Strategic Plan and Operational Update – *Daniel Gade, VDVS Commissioner* (10:35 – 10:55)

IX. Point of Contact Reports – *BVS Members* (10:55 – 11:55)
   a. Benefits – *Carl Bedell, David Ashe*
   b. Behavioral Health and Rehabilitative Services –*David Ashe, Mike Cherry*
   c. Virginia War Memorial – *Kathy Owens, Buddy Fowler*
   d. Cemeteries- *Melissa Watts*
   e. Communications & Marketing– *Susan Riveland*
   f. Transition and Employment – *Victor Angry, Mario Flores*
   g. Rural Veterans – *John Lesinski, Jason Ballard*
   h. Justice Involved Veterans /Veterans Treatment Dockets **–** *David Ashe, Bryce Reeves*
   i. Housing and Homelessness – *David Ashe, Mamie Locke*
   j. Veterans in the Arts – *Susan Riveland*
   k. Women Veterans – *Joyce Henderson, Kathleen Murphy*
   l. Veteran Care Centers – *Thurraya Kent, Kathy Owens, John Bell*
   m. Education – *Michael Dick*
   n. Employment – *Joyce Henderson, John Lesinski*

X. Reports (11:55 – 12:15)
   a. Joint Leadership Council – *Monti Zimmerman, JLC Vice-Chair*
   b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Paul Haughton, VSF Chairman*
   c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation – *Pam Seay, VWMF President*
   d. Legislative Report – *BVS Legislative Members*

XI. New Business: (12:15– 12:25)
   a. "Good of the Order" Reports – *all members*
   b. Other new business – *as requested by members*

XII. Public comment (12:25 – 12:30) – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*

XIII. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (12:30)

# ATTACHMENT 2
## VDVS OPERATIONAL UPDATE

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Department of Veterans Services*

Daniel M. Gade, PhD
Commissioner

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## Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS)
## Operations Update for the Board of Veterans Services

August 25, 2022

I am deeply grateful for the long and productive partnership between the BVS and VDVS, and am committed to making this relationship even more successful. In July 2022 VDVS established the Director of Research Development and Partnerships. The Director, William (Bill) Hewitt will lead the agency's mission critical activities in areas of research, data analysis, new program development, partnership building, process improvement, business process transformation, and program evaluation through metrics. Initial efforts will develop a focused approach to partnerships throughout the agency and identifying business processes to address constituent needs.

Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) is hiring the new Suicide Prevention Director. This new leadership position will enhance internal and community staff training (i.e. suicide prevention/risk screening and lethal means safety) and direct services delivery; Federal, State, and local stakeholder engagement; and research and data coordination. VVFS will also recruit for a new Housing and Criminal Justice Services Coordinator position to increase internal agency and community capacity to serve vulnerable veterans and families coping with housing instability and homelessness and navigating the criminal justice services system.

We hired the Administrator for the Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center in Virginia Beach and the Puller Veterans Care Center in Fauquier County, with targeted "Month 1" (first residents) in the October/November timeframe. We will be holding community open houses prior to opening, and invite you all to join us.

The Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act was signed into law on March 15, 2022. The new law authorizes state veterans cemeteries to provide an honored final resting place to former Guardsmen and Reservists who may not have previously qualified for interment at a

veteran cemetery because they did not meet the minimum active duty service time. With the interment of CMCN Corona on April 25, Virginia became the first state in the Nation to bury a former reserve component service member under the new eligibility standards.

The Governor proclaimed August as Hidden Heroes Month. Hidden Heroes Month is a partnership with VDVS and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to bring awareness and support to Virginia's military and veteran caregiver community.

The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) and V3 Transition Programs, working closely with the Virginia Chamber, embarked on a robust Hire Vets Now (HVN) Networking Event calendar in 2022. We had 1,196 service member and military spouse attendees over 15 networking events, spanning five different military installations. The attendees were able to network with a total of 333 Virginia Values Veterans Certified employers as well as other strategic partners and resource providers. V3 Transition Coordinators and V3 Regional Program Managers attend all events to ensure quality customer service to service members and military spouses as well as our V3 Certified Employers.

VVFS program staff continues to expand in-person outreach and community training opportunities to reach Service Members, Veterans, and families in need of behavioral health, rehabilitative and supportive services. In July 2022, staff assisted 131 new clients compared to 99 new clients in July 2021. This was also a 31% increase from June 2022. The total number of clients (including new and existing clients) served was also higher in July 2022 (398) compared to July 2021 (301). VVFS has seen an increase in complex cases particularly impacted by rising rents and inflation.

VVFS and Benefits staff screened 850 service members, veterans and family members (SMVF) for suicide risk. Among those screened, 8 individuals screened at medium or high risk for suicide and received critical behavioral health support. Since January 2022, a total of 6379 SMVF have been screened for suicide risk.

Benefits continue to work with Military installation transitions offices to increase VDVS awareness for transitioning service members. The Veteran Service Representatives (VSR) developed and submitted 308 Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) Claims in June, which totaled 1,722 for FY22. BDD Workshops increased on Dahlgren in the month of June. Benefits continue to grow and is preparing to meet the increased number of veterans and family members.

The Military Medics and Corpsmen Program (MMAC) assisted 179 Veterans and 5 military spouses obtain healthcare related employment in the Commonwealth in FY22, setting a new fiscal year hiring record for MMAC. The program also added three new MMAC Partner Health Systems – The National Neuropathy Center, Kaiser Permanente and Velocity Health.

The Military Education & Workforce Initiative (MEWI) partnered with the Veterans Services Foundation, the Community College Workforce Alliance, and Altria Group to provide free certifications and credentialing opportunities to 27 service members, veterans, and/or their spouses since January 1st, 2022.

MEWI will host the Virginia Military Student Veteran Manufacturing Summit, its first sector strategy event on November 4, 2022, at the William H Tally Workforce Center, located at Brightpoint Community College. The Virginia Chamber Foundation, Community College Workforce Alliance, and Virginia Employment Commission are partners for the event.

A newly-created private 502(c)3 is actively working on the establishment of the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Honor Squad (AGHMHS) to provide rifle volleys for all Veterans. The AGHMHS will be dedicated on Memorial Day 2023.

Sincerely,

Daniel Gade, PhD.

# ATTACHMENT 3

**Point of Contact Report - Benefits**

1. **Date of Report:** August 25, 2022

2. **BVS POC(s):** Carl Bedell and David Ashe

3. **Service Area/Program:** Benefits Services

4. **DVS Director/Program Manager**: Donna Williams

5. **Mission of service area/program (i.e., what does it do?)**:
   Advocate for Virginia veterans and their families by connecting them to the benefits and services they have earned by providing accurate, timely and ethical education and assistance. Primarily develop claims to be submitted to the Department of Veteran Affairs.

6. **Who does the service area/program serve (i.e., who are the customers)?** Virginia Veterans and their family members who are seeking federal, state or local benefits and services.

7. **What are the service line's primary objectives?**
   a. Increase veteran population served by 20% over a one-year period
   b. 100% Transition Assistance Program participation on all Military Installations (Veteran Service Representatives and V3 team) - Provide service to transitioning service members
   c. Submit 20,000 Compensation and Pension Claims to the VA - increase from 18,000-20,000 this FY.

8. **What are the key results that support the objective(s)?**
   a. Contact 1,200 new Veterans per month; Identify four target locations to establish new presence; Create four Facebook pages (one per Region); increased outreach
   b. Increase Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims filed by DVS from 1600 to 2000 annually; Refer 100% to VDVS Services
   c. Submit 1,667 C&P claims on a monthly basis

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).**
   a. As of the end of FY22, Benefits served 13,360 **new** veterans. This established a baseline of 1,200 new veterans served per month. The annual target will be 18,000 (increase of 20%+); Created four separate Facebook pages beginning in July - have not captured results yet; Established new itinerant sites at the Farmville American Legion, Hopewell American Legion and City of Hopewell
   b. Filed 1,722 BDD claims since 12/1/2021. Established a baseline with a goal of 2,000 annually. Will adjust to the average of 300 monthly to 3,600 annually; Benefits refer to other VDVS service lines as well as other state and partner agencies. Currently track referrals to VVFS, VMSDEP and Suicide prevention screening, which we screen an average of 95% of all veteran clients in FY22.

c. Although Benefits offices were hybrid until January, the FY22 total claims submitted was 19,726. The stretch goal was 2,000. Benefits could meet a calendar year goal now that we are back in the offices 100%.

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

a. 86,847 total submittals to the VA in FY22, which is an increase from 65,175 in FY21
b. 'In-person' contacts in the 34 offices totaled 36,439 in FY22, in contrast to 13,893 in FY21. We were slowly returning to an "in-person" posture.

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

a. Benefits partnered with the Veterans Administration in Veteran Experience Action Center Community (VEAC) Event. 22 VSRs were the focal point ensuring this event was a tremendous success for our Virginia Veterans. During this three-day event we served 587 veterans with immediate responses from the VA and community partners. This is the most of the eight states participating in this event thus far! We also served 29.1% women veterans. This is "by far" the largest number of women veterans served by population in any other participating state. DVS set many "firsts" in this event. We have 204 new veteran clients as a result of this partnership.
b. Yellow Ribbon Events - met with returning service members to educate on benefits available
c. Nursing Home information sessions - VSRs brief and assist with applying for benefits
d. Partnership - VSR set up an outreach table to educate attendees at DAV Convention in Roanoke
e. DVS awareness in the community - Central Region Director attended the Richmond, Crater Community Engagement Board planning meeting and the North Region Director attended the CVEB at Shenandoah University
f. Partnered with the Attorney Generals (AG) Office – Wills Clinic in the East Region- Benefits Attorneys worked closely with the AG's team to plan and schedule the event. Scheduled appointments with Veterans to complete Wills, Power of Attorneys and Advance Directives were completed successfully. Veteran Service Representatives were on hand to assist as well as provide claims development assistance and referral to other services.

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

a. Technology: Created a QR Code for customer service survey- once a veteran and VSR have completed the appointment, the veteran is asked to scan the QR code and answer the short survey. This information is gathered from the survey monkey tool-Review comments and scores. This is the first month-no report at this time.
b. Technology: QR Code posted in a variety of locations (office doors, website, local Veteran Service Organizations) to scan for an online appointment
c. Increased awareness on Military installations: Fort Lee- Partnering with V3 to facilitate an all DVS day once per month as a tap participant- Provide transitioning service members with a DVS overview, detailed VA disability briefing, Resume writing instruction followed by V3 employers visiting to discuss their company and hiring practices. Dahlgreen- Increased visits from twice a month to every Thursday with a result of increased BDD claims and TAP participation.

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

a. The transition from the current Claims Development Software (VetraSpec) to a new, more modern platform, Tyler Veteran Benefits program. This program enables us to

have more advanced reporting. Customized reporting is available. To name a few enhancements:

i. Drop down menu to capture referrals to internal and external partners
ii. Claims success rates
iii. Access to VA program within the system

Challenge: Training hours required for the new program result in office closure and down time from completing claims. Prepping the system for the migration to minimize loss of files and duplicate tracking during the migration are time consuming. All is going well as we have begun training and customizing reports. Migration scheduled for October 1st pending contractual obligations and preparation completion.

b. Change Management—As DVS move forward with more advanced technology, leadership must ensure clear and concise directions and explanations are provided to the team. As Benefits is a large service line that is geographically separated, it is important that supervision monitors and solicit feedback. Communication is the key element to successful changes in an organization.

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

Financially and emotionally

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

With Benefits assistance, transitioning service members will obtain the information needed to decide to "stay" in Virginia - While briefing during TAP sessions and being a part of presentations and events in and around military installations, transitioning service members learn valuable information about Virginia and the benefits offered. In completing a successful claim with our VSRs, the service member will know the financial impact before or shortly after separation. Working with them early and often increases the chance of them staying in Virginia because they will know and understand what Virginia has to offer.

Once veterans receive the disability rating and monetary monthly payment, they will spend the new income in Virginia, which will in-turn help the Commonwealth's economy. The Veteran will 'thrive' in Virginia.

**16. What strategic opportunities are there for the future?**

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

a. The FY23/24 budget increase (approximately $2,488,149) will be a tremendous help to increase VSRs and supporting staff to reach more veterans and provide much needed training. It will al
   i. Benefits will be hiring a total of 13 VSR positions, 2 Appeals Attorneys and 3 VSA positions. 8 of the VSR positions will be additions to high demand offices, which are high traffic offices -Ft. Lee, Quantico, Ft Eustis, Norfolk, McGuire, Salem, and Hampton.
   ii. Funding for an in-person training conference
   iii. Funding for increased technology- Gold Standard Digital Hub
   iv. NOVA salary differential (COLA).
   v. Funding to support rent increase in Petersburg, Chesapeake, Front Royal, Virginia Beach and Danville

# ATTACHMENT 4

**Point of Contact Report – Behavioral Health & Rehabilitative Services**

1. **Date of Report:** July 2022

2. **BVS POC(s):** Del. Mike Cherry, David Ashe, and Carl Bess

3. **Service Area/Program:** Behavioral Health & Rehabilitative Services

4. **VDVS Director/Program Manager:** Director - Brandi Jancaitis

5. **Mission of service area/program:**

   The Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program (VVFS) is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and 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.

   SERVICES THEY PROVIDE: 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, VA 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.

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 that support the objectives?**

   In FY22, VVFS served 2180 clients. Of these clients, 1223 were new clients. This included connecting veterans and their family members for resources to approximately 2,700 service needs. These include housing needs (37%), behavioral health support (14%), benefits assistance (10%), employment (8%), and homeless assistance (8%). In addition, VVFS provided 76 trainings (e.g. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Military Cultural Competency, Crisis Intervention Training, Mental Health First Aid) to approximately 2,700 participants (community partners and providers).

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 objectives?**

**<u>FY22 Data Overview</u>**

- 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 (98% out of 1392)
- 90% of veterans with a identified behavioral health need will be connected to an appropriate resource (98% out of 331)
- 90% of veterans experiencing literal homelessness will be connected to a shelter/housing resource (94% out 187)
- VVFS and Benefits will screen 95% of new SMVF for suicide risk (93% out of 6,809)

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

    VVFS continued both virtual and in-person services despite challenges with COVID in the past year. Creating this flexibility has greatly increased the number of clients the program is working with and in some months exceeding pre-pandemic levels. VVFS also has been screening clients for suicide risk and has been integral in training and supporting DVS Benefits staff in these efforts. Over 1000 veterans monthly are now being screened for suicide risk.

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

    VVFS continues outreaching to state and community partners and building resource connections to assist clients. The outreach consists of both in-person and virtual events as well as training on Military Cultural Competency and resources for veterans. VVFS trained more community providers in FY22 than in any year previously. VVFS also regularly participants in state workgroups for behavioral health and suicide prevention, housing/homelessness, peer support, and criminal justice.

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

    In FY22 VVFS started screening all clients for suicide risk and trained Benefits staff to screen as well. Since January 2022, VVFS and Benefits staff screened approximately 6350 veterans and family members (93% of total new clients). If screened positive, VVFS develops a safety plan with the client and connects them to the appropriate behavioral health services. Of the total clients screened, 11% screened positive for suicide risk and less than 1% were at high risk.

    For FY23, VVFS received funding to hire a new Suicide Prevention Director who will oversee new funding ($5 million) to develop a Suicide and Opioid Addiction Prevention Program within DVS. This senior leader position will have a five million dollar operating budget, a team of 3-4 staff, and build a behavioral health grant program for community services providers. This position is currently in the process of being hired and expect to on-board in September 2022.

    Another important highlight is the roll out of the new 988 crisis and suicide lifeline number. This will replace the previous suicide crisis hotlines and will streamline access to those needing behavioral health support. VVFS will be working with 988 to increase military cultural competency and resource connections. The Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) is still operational, and veterans can dial 1 after dialing 988 (or the full 1-800-273-8255) to access the VCL. Here's more information on the connection between 988 and the VCL: https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/about/what-is-988

13. **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. As COVID funding is ending, particularly in eviction prevention, this is putting a strain on staff and clients. Statewide rents have increased on average about 15% and production issues have slowed the development of affordable housing. Stable housing is a key protective factor for behavioral health and in-turn suicide prevention. VVFS has also experienced significant direct services staff turnover (~40% since 2020) so will have a decent amount of new staff onboarding in the next few months.

14. **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.

15. **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.

16. **What strategic opportunities are there for the future?**

VVFS has expanded efforts on preventing veteran suicide through supporting other programs (community partners, DVS Benefits, etc.) to screen for suicide risk.

In the coming months, VVFS will be working with DVS Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment (VETE) programs to increase the number of veterans screened for suicide risk and connect them to resources. With the passage of the state budget, VVFS is anticipating adding a new Suicide Prevention Director position in FY23 and $5 million in additional funding for suicide prevention and opioid addiction services, which will assist in supporting and expanding these efforts.

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

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.

Prepared by:

Brandi Jancaitis - Director, and Matthew Leslie - Deputy Director, VVFS

# ATTACHMENT 5

**Point of Contact Report - Virginia War Memorial**

**Date of Report:** August 2, 2022

**BVS POC(s):** Kathy Owens, John Bell

**Service Area/Program:** Virginia War Memorial

**Mission of service area/program (i.e. what does it do?):**

"The Virginia War Memorial honors Virginia's veterans, preserves their history, educates, and inspires patriotism in all ". This was out Mission Statement for years which has been recently updated through our Long Term Planning process.

**Who does the service area/program serve (i.e. who are the customers)?**

- All Virginians (Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, National Guard Members, family members and all Virginians)

**What are the service line's primary objectives?**

- Honor Veterans
- Preserve History
- Educate
- Inspire Patriotism

**What are the key results that support the objective(s)?**

- Outreach to inform Virginians, veterans and families of the VWM and programs
- Recognize, thank, and honor our Vietnam Era veterans
- Maintain a robust oral history program
- Provide varied educational programs for all ages
- Connect with educators throughout the state
- Host patriotic events throughout the year

**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).**

- Increase visitation to 50,000 (FY23) and 100,000 (FY26) – Visitation has increased with the return of tour groups and some student groups. On track for 50,000+ visitors for FY23. Achieved nearly 40,000 in FY22.
- Capture 50 oral histories in FY22 and 100/yr in FY25.
- Engage with 50,000 learners per/year in education programming by FY25. Achieved 10,000 in FY22.
- Increased media presence

**What are some operational highlights from the past year?**

- Opened Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing Exhibit. It has been a huge success and very well received.

- Released new welcome film highlighting the purpose and impact of the Virginia War Memorial. Will be instrumental in getting the word out to the community.
- Hosted Commonwealth's Patriot Day (9/11), Veterans Day, and Memorial Day services with a combined attendance of over 5,000.
- Showcased two exhibits of Veteran artwork in the Veterans Art Gallery: Sacred Scenes: America's Battlefields and Parks. The Photography of
- Began massive Vietnam-Era veterans outreach for 50 Years Beyond Project. Collected over 1,000 photos submitted by Virginian Vietnam Veterans

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

- Established new partnership program – Military Partnership Program with active duty and guard units in Virginia for assistance with VWM programming. This has greatly improved uniformed presence at our events.
- Continued outreach to Vietnam Veterans which has resulted in a tremendous digital archive of Vietnam photos for preservation
- Connected with the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) and local retirement communities for education programs, boosting attendance by 25%

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

- 50 Years Beyond Project
- Mighty Pen Project (MPP)
- 1 Act play festival with local theater
- Oral History Project /Transcription production

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

- Staff Transition – (Facility manager, admin assistant open)
- Lingering COVID hesitancy (tour groups)
- Limited communication resources (ability to get the word out). VWMF recently approved and formed a Marketing Committee to assist with this.

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

- The Virginia War Memorial builds support for veterans and the military community as a whole. Connects the general public with the military community and provides veterans with educational opportunities. Our programs and events make veterans feel valued and the Shrine of Memory provides a solemn location where friends and family can find and honor their loved ones.

**By helping the veteran, how does it help the Commonwealth?**

- The benefits that the venue and programming provide create a desire for Virginia veterans to stay in Virginia after they separate and also a sense of pride for all Virginians knowing that Virginia Values Veterans.

**What strategic opportunities are there for the future?**

- Connecting with museums at the national level (Women's Memorial, USMC, NMUSA) for enhanced education programming.
- International programs facilitated via the National Battlefields and Monuments Commission

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

- The Virginia War Memorial needs to be known in all regions of Virginia. Staff needs are paramount as we attempt to extend our influence and impact and yet we have fewer staff members on hand now than in previous years. DVS is working to find funds for the admin assistant position. The VWMF has provided a wealth of oversight, direction and assistance in establishing and achieving our goals.

# ATTACHMENT 6

**Point of Contact Report – Cemeteries**

1. Date of Report: July 5, 2022

2. BVS POC(s): Melissa Watts

3. Service Area/Program: Cemeteries Services

4. VDVS Director/Program Manager: Michael H. Henshaw

5. Mission of service area/program (i.e. what does it do?): The Cemeteries Service Line provides dignified burials in national shrines for veterans and their eligible family members in perpetuity.

6. Who does the service area/program serve (i.e. who are the customers)? Any veteran with an other-than-dishonorable discharge who completed 24 months of active duty service in a regular component of the US Armed Forces, Reserve and Guard retirees and those ordered to active duty under a presidential order and their eligible family members, ROTC and service academy cadets who die while undergoing training, and certain other individuals such as Hmong veterans, Philippine Army veterans from WW2 who assisted the US Army, Merchant Marines with WW2 service, NOAA commissioned officers, etc.

Guard, Reserve and current ROTC members can be interred for certain fees as of 25 April 2022 under the new Special Category Interment Program (SCIP). Current fees are $1,700 for cremations and $2,000 for caskets. SCIP dependents also eligible for same fees.

7. How is the service/program delivered? VDVS operates three state Veterans cemeteries. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk; the Virginia State Veterans Cemetery in Amelia, and; the Southwest Virginia State Veterans Cemetery in Dublin.

8. How does delivering the service/program help Virginia's veterans? We provide a grave space, opening and closing of the grave, a government-furnished headstone or marker, an outer burial receptacle, a place to conduct a committal service and perpetual care at no cost to the veteran and a fee of $400 for spouses and other eligible dependents.

9. By helping the veteran, how does it help the Commonwealth? Choosing interment in a Virginia State Veterans Cemetery saves an average of $8-10K than being interred in a private cemetery.

10. What is the statutory authority for the service area/program?

**State:** Code of Virginia, Title 2.2. Administration of Government, Chapter 20

**Federal:** 38USC, Sections 501a, 2408 and 2303.

11. Where do the resources for the service area/program come from (general fund, non-general fund, donations, etc.?)

Virginia State Veterans Cemeteries receive $1.5M in annual appropriated state funds and appx. $2.1M from plot allowance reimbursements (currently $828) and the $400 spousal/dependent burial fees ($3.6M annual budget).

12. How has COVID-19 impacted the delivery of services? What service adaptations have been made or are planned? COVID reduced the amount of attendees allowed at the committal services, required appointments for in-person services and resulted in staff shortages. Since January 2022, all cemeteries are operating normally with no issues or restrictions.

13. What are the biggest challenges facing the service area/program at present? Our interment rates increased by 24% in FY21 over FY20 and is 6% higher at this point in FY22. We increased FTE by six employees and purchased additional equipment, but our level of appropriated funding has remained the same since FY21 and there is no increase for FY23/24 budget cycles. We began interments of formerly ineligible Guardsmen, Reservists and their dependents on 25 April 2022 due to the passage of the Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act which authorizes us to inter these individuals without losing federal grant funding. We have interred two former Reservists and have approved three pre-applications.

14. What strategic opportunities are there for the future?

We desperately need an in-house honor squad in Suffolk. Currently, appx. 10% of the veterans interred receive the rifle salute (21-gun salute) due to the lack of VSO support in the local area and the high number of interments. A dedicated 501 (c) (3) organization (non-VSO) has been applied for and awaiting IRS approval. This non-profit will manage donations, fundraising, etc. The primary needs are a van for transportation for volunteers, a pre-fab building for equipment and uniforms. There is tremendous interest in volunteering, however, the equipment and funding is lacking.

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

We are awaiting the results of an ongoing salaries study to ensure our salaries are comparable to the same work as positions in the National Cemetery Administration

# ATTACHMENT 7

**Point of Contact Report - Communications**

POC: Susan Vervaet Riveland
Service Area: Communications & Marketing, Outreach
DVS Director: Tina Parlett-Calhoun

The **mission** of *Communications & Marketing, Outreach* is to spread awareness of DVS services and programs, as well as Virginia veterans' current issues.

*Communications* is unique among DVS service lines in that its customer base is both internal and external. It serves all Virginia veterans, but also serves all DVS service lines and programs, the Virginia War Memorial (VWM), The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF), the Office of the Secretary of Veterans & Defense Affairs, and the Office of the Governor.

The **objectives of this service area** are many and varied:

- To coordinate social media content from all service-lines on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Linked-In
- To design and maintain consistent branding of the DVS
- To write press releases (several each month)
- To promote earned media partnerships and placement coverage for DVS activities
- To publish the E-newsletter monthly
- To promote special events
- To sensitively and skillfully manage information concerning veterans during times of crisis (such as the pandemic) and during transitional periods of governance
- To develop veterans-related talking points and write speeches for the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Secretary of Veterans & Defense Affairs, and Governor
- To develop and analyze metrics for engagement rate on social media and earned media
- To promote veteran engagement with services and resources as offered by DVS

Some **key results in attaining these objectives** have been in the following outreach initiatives:

- Subsequent to the development and publication of the first agency e-newsletter, there has been an approximate 20% rise in overall appointment requests after each e-news distribution.
- Virginia's Veteran Resource Guide, proposed and developed by Communications, is now heavily used and requested.
- Commenced and sustained an aggressive earned media plan by cultivating media contacts at state, regional and national levels with editorial and field reporters who focus on veteran and military affairs. These efforts have resulted in EMV (earned media value) for

DVS exceeding $300,000 annually for the past five years – more than any other state agency.

- Developed a unique media partnership with CBS6 television, which has for the past two years produced and aired the DVS sponsored Veterans and Memorial Day ceremonies live on CBS6 and statewide affiliates. Average reach is now more than 50,000 per ceremony, vs. previous in-person reach of approximately 200-500.
- Developed data sharing agreements with both Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR).
- Collaborated on Welcome Home Letter Initiative for transitioning service members (TSM's); receive quarterly TSM list from DMV.
- Initiated a Direct Mail Campaign on July 18 to all Virginia veterans who may be eligible for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). Reach for this campaign is 5.500. Response rate will be tracked and evaluated accordingly.

In addition to these accomplishments from the past several years, **this past year has seen a noteworthy operational highlight** from *Communications* in its efforts to mitigate or eradicate negative coverage due to COVID outbreaks at DVS veterans care centers. The Sitter and Barfoot Center (Richmond) earned ranking in *Newsweek's Best Nursing Homes 2022* of #2 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Some **key initiatives that have recently been launched**:

- After nine years of advocating for the hiring of an additional full-time *Communications* manager to handle Benefits /Team VETE (Veterans Education Transition and Employment), the position has been approved and funding has been allocated. Authorization has been given to commence the hiring process, which will begin in the next few weeks.
- The **Gold Standard Database** is an initiative launched by Commissioner Gade that will ultimately hold veteran-centric data in one database. This will facilitate a more comprehensive, expedient approach to providing services for both DVS agencies and external state agencies. Once established, the database will also provide *Communications* with consistent contact details, enabling more effective outreach. Funding for this new initiative was approved in the recently passed budget. *Comms* director has confirmed the RFP for the pilot component of this initiative is on the street.
- **Virginia is for Veterans Campaign**: *Comms* director helped Policy Director, Claudia Flores, obtain a meeting with Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) regarding the potential use of a Virginia is for Veterans logo and tagline, to which VTC currently holds the rights. After many months of collaboration, DVS secured approval to use a specific version of the logo, without visual elements. Commissioner Gade reached out to VTC executives to consider a version that has a flag component. That design work is underway and will be subject to VTC final approval. Conversation continues in a positive direction. Once approved, the campaign will incorporate wide use of this tagline and potential logo.

As identified by *Communications*, the **key challenges** for the continued success and enhanced productivity of this service line are a lack of both fiscal and human resources to address, specifically:

- Lack of awareness (resources available to veterans, public knowledge of needs of veterans)
- The need for strategic and consistent paid media placement (earned media placement not able to solve the gap in awareness)
- Need for more consistent in-person community outreach by all divisions
- Brand confusion between DVS and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

<u>These challenges are difficult to overcome without the actual allocation of a specific budget for *Communications*, which does not exist at present.</u>

According to the director, *Communications* has been turned down many times for specific budget requests that are intended to support outreach. Historically, funds that have been needed for the development of much-needed *Communications* initiatives have had to be redirected from surplus in other service lines or via other agency channels. The director has indicated that besides the funds that *have* been allocated for the hiring of the new full-time employee, Commissioner Gade has noted that he will be closely monitoring funds in each programmatic area that should be dedicated to outreach so that some of those funds can be allocated for use by *Communications* for marketing and research.

In moving forward, some of the **strategic opportunities** for *Communications* are:

- In the hiring of a V3 program manager, focus on recruiting a person with a business development background
- Need to formalize a V3 marketing plan; network with groups such as Virginia Manufacturers Association, Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, American Public Power Association (to name a few) to become brand ambassadors for the V3 program
- Continue to target veteran-centric data
- Continue to further build and refine the *Communications* service line, as budget allows

**Final thoughts:**

It is my observation that the *Communications & Marketing, Outreach* service line has evolved through several administrations to become a strong, efficient, and creative force in supporting and furthering the success of the DVS. The foundation has been built, and it is strong. All service lines and programs of DVS benefit from a highly functioning and progressive communications team; therefore, the serious consideration of dedicated funding for *Communications* in future budget proposals should be a priority.

Respectfully submitted,  Susan

Vervaet Riveland,

# ATTACHMENT 8

**Point of Contact Report – Transition and Employment**

1. **Date of Report:** June 29, 2022
2. **BVS POC(s):** Mr. Victor Angry, BVS and Mr. Mario A. Flores, BVS
3. **Service Area/Program:** Transition and Employment
4. **VDVS Deputy Commissioner/ VDVS Transition and Employment Director:** Ms. Annie Walker, Deputy Commissioner and Mr. Phillip Trezza, Transition and Employment Director
5. **Mission of service area/program (i.e. what does it do?):**

**Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program:**

The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program provides support to Virginia's employers by educating companies as to why a Veteran is their best investment and providing training to recruit, hire, and retain veterans and Military Spouse talent in Virginia. In doing so, the V3 Program collaborates with organizations of all types to support military workforce development. This includes non-profits, localities, boards/commissions, legislative offices, educational institutions, associations, and more to become V3 Certified.

The V3 Program provides education, training, and connectivity to the Virginia military community and Veteran and military spouse talent. The V3 Program provides nationally recognized best practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining a highly-skilled well-educated and easily trainable talent pool. V3 Certified Employers will join a highly respected field of private/public sector organizations, municipalities and localities that have committed to hiring Veterans. Any employer completing the training and certification requirements are recognized as official V3-Certified Employers and are awarded a certificate from the Governor of Virginia.

Certified employers can proudly display their V3 Certified Seal and V3 Program logo to highlight their commitment to Military Employment. Once Certified, V3 and the Transition and Employment Directorate assist the employers to set up Skillbridge fellowships, internships, and provide guidance and assistance with DOL and GI Bill approved on the job training and apprenticeships. VDVS is a DoD approved third party Skillbridge provider.

Benefits of the V3 Certification:

- V3 Grant – Receive up to $10,000 in grant funding yearly, with $1,000 being awarded per eligible Veteran hired and retained for 12 months. (Employers with fewer than 300 employees, at time of grant application may qualify)
- Social Media and Marketing – Get listed on the official V3 website. In addition, employers are eligible to receive an Employer Spotlight in the agency newsletter, social media platforms and other partnerships.

- Hire Vets Now Fellowship Program – Establish a SkillBridge program that provides transitioning service members with the ability to work in a civilian job for 6-12 weeks,

prior from separation from the military. The V3 Certified Employer's location serves as the service member's duty station and the Department of Defense continues to pay for the service member's salary during program participation.

- Military Medics and Corpsman (MMAC) Program – Collaborate with the MMAC Program as they support your organization with recruiting and vetting military medical personnel for job opportunities with MMAC healthcare partners.
- Transition Connection Newsletter – Share current job opportunities with over 10,000 military job seekers and military spouses bi-weekly. Employers may also highlight their organization with newsletter highlights.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)/Apprenticeships – Establish a G.I. Bill approved OJT and Apprenticeships programs in partnership with the State Approving Agency (SAA), which affords Veterans with the ability to apply for housing, tuition, and/or education financial stipends to supplement pay while in training.
- Hire Vets Now Networking Events and other employment related events – Participate in events within their community and on military installations so that employers can engage with military affiliated job seekers.
- V3 Transition Support - The V3 Transition Program (formally known as the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) has regionally based V3 Transition Coordinators who connect veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses to V3 Certified employers with immediate hiring needs.
- V3 Awards – Receive complimentary tickets to statewide military/workforce conference and annual V3 Awards Summit, to receive V3 Award recognition from state leadership.
- Social Media and Marketing – V3 Certified employers are listed on the official V3 website and are eligible to receive an Employer Spotlight in the agency newsletter, social media platforms and through other strategic partnerships.
- Veteran-Friendly Branding – Promote the V3 Certification Seal and other V3 Program promotional material to identify them as a member of a statewide brand that is qualified to support Veteran and military spouse workforce development.
- Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) – Awareness of and connection to the various VDVS service lines in order to provide internal support for veteran and military spouse employees. VDVS is here to ensure that your Veteran and military spouse talent are taken care of and have the benefits and resources they need and deserve.
- Supplemental Training – Continued learning through supplemental training to support military cultural competency and further awareness and connection to VDVS services as well as other community partners.
- Community Impact – V3 partners can provide support to the Virginia Veterans Foundation to further the mission of the V3 Program and/ or donate goods/services to make a community impact.

Total number of V3 Certified Employers as of March 2022 – 1,589

Total number of reported hires from V3 Certified Companies as of March 2022 – 92,611

**V3 Transition Program:**

The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Transition Program, formally known as "VTAP," Transition Program offers transitioning service members and their spouses the best Virginia has to offer. By providing peer-to-peer support through the transition process, V3 Transition works alongside the transitioning service member or spouse to make referrals that address specific needs. The referral services could include, but are not limited to resume review, introduction to the Virginia Labor Market index, connection with the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) certified companies for employment, and other VDVS programs as applicable. The V3 Transition core areas of focus are those seeking employment, education, and entrepreneurship, but we will also assist those with needs outside of those three core areas. We make a commitment to customer service, and always ensure that referrals are completed with follow up from the V3 Transition staff.

**Types of Services –**

- Career Support
- Resume Writing Assistance
- Job Search & Networking
- Interview Preparation
- Referral to the DoD Skillbridge Program– Fellowships/Internships
- GIBill ® Education and Training Information – State Approving Agency
- Introduction to V3 Employers
- Introduction to State & Federal Benefits for Veterans
- "Port of Entry" for all programs – VVFS/Benefits/VMSDEP/SAA

The Virginia Values Veterans Transition Program in conjunction with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce is able to provide Skillbridge internships for active-duty service members through 49 employers as of March 2022.

**V3 Transition Partnerships**

- ✓ Boots to Suits - Boots to Suits is a clothing program for male and female Virginia veterans transitioning from military life to civilian careers. The program provides veterans with two complimentary career outfits, enabling them to look and feel their best for job interviews and non-military work environments.
- ✓ Onward to Opportunity (O2O-VCTP) - A free, comprehensive career training, certification and employment program designed to veterans with their next career in over 30 industry-recognized learning paths.
- ✓ Hire Vets Now Networking Events – Strategic partnership with the Virginia Chamber that provides networking events on Virginia military installations. HVN Networking Events provide tremendous value to both our service members and our V3 Certified Employers. 25

employers per event are able to network with service members and military spouses and VDVS staff are on hand to help facilitate networking and assist both employers and service members with growing their network as well as connection with all of the benefits and resources available with VDVS and other strategic partners and resources.

- ✓ Hire Vets Now Skillbridge - The Hire Vets Now Fellowship Program provides transitioning service members Skillbridge opportunities with V3 Certified employers offering 6-12 week internships to eligible applicants, with commander approval, up to six months prior to separation. Participation in a Skillbridge fellowship program while still serving in the military allows service members to gain marketable skills and experience and gives V3 Employers a chance to bring Veterans into their organization and train them even before they separate from service. DoD continues to pay the service member and this program is of no cost to the employer or service member.

**Military Medics and Corpsman (MMAC) Program:** The Military Medics and Corpsmen Program (MMAC) provides four career pathways to careers and credentialing in civilian healthcare for veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses with healthcare-related training and experience.

An innovative and award-winning program, MMAC is changing the way healthcare hires veterans in Virginia. After medically trained service members leave the military and transition to the civilian workforce, many face the challenge of their military healthcare experience and training not translating into civilian healthcare credentials and employment. Many are now unemployed, underemployed, or not working in the healthcare field. On a daily basis, the MMAC Program staff directly address this challenge via effective and efficient operations, legislation, and healthcare regulatory approval - and ultimately veterans hired in healthcare.

**Services offered**

Program staff review participants' scope of practice to match to potential employers and send participants' resumes to those employers. Though the program does not directly provide licensure, they can assist MMAC participants by guiding them through the credentialing processes via the Virginia Board of Nursing at the Virginia Department of Health Professions. The MMAC program provides medically trained veterans with four pathways for success.

**Path One: MMAC Qualified**

Veterans and transitioning U.S. Army Combat Medics, U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard Corpsmen, and U.S. Air Force Medical Technicians who have performed the majority of the MMAC General Scope of Practice skills within the last twelve months will be eligible to continue practicing those medical skills in a civilian healthcare setting while they gain civilian healthcare credentials and licensure. Participants are under supervision of a physician or registered nurse.

**Path Two: No Veteran Left Behind**

Veterans with military medical experience who do not meet MMAC qualification standards are assisted by the MMAC "No Medic or Corpsmen Left Behind" pathway. The MMAC program assists all medically trained veterans with resume writing, mentorship, and connection with healthcare and non-healthcare companies that have been certified by Virginia Values Veterans (V3). Virginia-based companies can become V3-certified by following certain veteran-friendly standards of practice.

**Path Three: Healthcare Leadership**

Some veterans spend many years in the military and gain management experience or complete advanced degrees. The MMAC program helps veterans find civilian healthcare employment in areas such as safety, supply chain, infrastructure, and information technology.

**Path Four: Military Spouses**

The MMAC program helps military spouses find employment at MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems and V3-certified healthcare employers.

**As the first and only program of its type in the nation**, one element that makes the MMAC program unique and effective is the MMAC-Qualified career pathway. This pathway focuses on recently discharged veterans who served as Army Medics, Navy/Coast Guard Corpsmen, or Air Force Medical Technicians. Memos of Agreement are in place with **17 major healthcare systems across the Commonwealth of Virginia.** The agreements allow the non-credentialed MMAC Qualified applicants to deliver patient care under the supervision of a physician or designated Registered Nurse. The MMAC-Qualified applicants are expected continue their medical education and obtain civilian healthcare credentials while employed at the MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems.

**The MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems:**

- ✓ Bon Secours Virginia Health System
- ✓ Capital Area Pediatrics
- ✓ Centra Health
- ✓ Chesapeake Regional Healthcare
- ✓ Carilion Clinic
- ✓ Eastern Virginia Medical Scholl
- ✓ Fort Norfolk Medical Plaza
- ✓ INOVA
- ✓ Health Corporation of America
- ✓ VCU Health
- ✓ NOVANT Health/UVA Health
- ✓ ORTHO Virginia
- ✓ Mary Washington Healthcare
- ✓ Riverside Health System
- ✓ Sentara Health System
- ✓ Virginia Department of Corrections
- ✓ Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (4 Facilities)

**6. Who does the service area/program serve (i.e. who are the customers)?**

**V3:** Serves Virginia employers, Veterans and military families.

**V3 Transition:** Serves all service members, Veterans and their families to stay, work and thrive in Virginia. The V3 Transition Program has a primary focus on service members that are 24 months pre/post-military separation but will serve any military community member seeking assistance to include military spouses, National Guard members, and Reservists from all service branches.

**MMAC**: Active duty transitioning service members, veterans, and their spouses with medical training and backgrounds. For the MMAC Qualified Pathway, the primary target group is Army Medics, Navy Corpsmen, and Air Force Medical Technicians no longer than 12 months post-discharge.

7. **How is the service/program delivered**?

**V3:** The Virginia Values Veterans Program delivers core curriculum training both in person and virtually at least once per month. Regional Program Managers maintain employer engagement, support and interface with employers in order to understand their business needs as it relates to Virginia's military community. V3 Regional Program Managers provide connection to the Virginia military community and the V3 Transition Program who work directly with transitioning service members on a daily basis. The V3 Program also assists employers to connect with Skillbridge and navigate GI Bill approval for on the job training and apprenticeships in conjunction with VDVS Education directorate.

**V3 Transition:** Services are delivered individually to transitioning service members and their spouses, through workshops and professional development events in collaboration with military installation transition offices and regional partners, and participation within regional and statewide workgroups and committees with a military affairs focus. The V3 Transition Program has developed a refined network of employers and other resources that have made a commitment to our transitioning service members and their spouses. Through that network, V3 Transition partners offer multiple connection points with those seeking employment through networking events, job fairs, hiring events, and electronic communications promoting jobs and events.

**MMAC:** The MMAC Program taps a worldwide pool of Veterans and Transitioning Service Members with direct healthcare experience or those wishing to apply their military experience and education in the healthcare field. Essentially, the MMAC Program serves as a worldwide extension of a healthcare system's HR talent acquisition team.

Potential employment opportunities for MMAC Program applicants are curated by MMAC staff from the on-line career portals at the MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems and V3 healthcare employers. The applicant is matched by MMAC staff to identified job opportunities and the residential region requested by the applicant. An employment application is then submitted by the MMAC Applicant. The MMAC team then connects with the established HR point of contact at the MMAC Partner Healthcare System/V3 Employer to advocate and share the applicant's background and resume. The employers determine the hiring decisions, the scope of practice, and the education and credentialing timeline. Weekly messages are sent via Constant Contact to MMAC Applicants and Partner Healthcare System to follow up on applicant hiring status.

**Total Hires in The Four MMAC Pathways Since First Veteran Hired in February 2017**

- Total Hires: 403
- MMAC-Qualified: 154
- No Veteran Left Behind: 169
- Leadership: 72
- Military Spouses: 8

**Cumulative Hires as of March 16, 2022**

*The bottom line*: Almost anywhere in the Commonwealth an MMAC Applicant would like to live or work, thanks to the MMAC Program there is likely an employment opportunity waiting.

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

**Transition and Employment Directorate (V3, V3T, MMAC):** Virginia's veterans and their families face a myriad of challenges as they make the transition from military to civilian life. Navigating the "sea of goodwill," adjusting culturally from military to civilian life, translating military skills and experience to civilian workforce demand, the perceived loss of stature and/or identity, developing professional networks, and identifying community support to address their unique situations are among them.

Over 200,000 service members and their families make the transition from military to civilian life annually. Fiscal Year 2019 military separations data projections from the Department of Defense places the number of transitioning military in Virginia at over 21,000 service members*. Conservative estimates point to, at a minimum, a solid one-third of these service members remaining in Virginia. VTAP's and MMAC's holistic approach to providing transition assistance provides transitioning service members clarity, a sense of direction, renewed purpose, confidence, and a strategic plan to pursue career goals and effectively manage the quality of life concerns.

By providing direct services to transitioning military, recently separated veterans, and military spouses, Virginia's veterans and their families are better educated, equipped, and empowered to pursue and achieve success as they define it. Direct services provided include conducting referrals to vetted resource and direct assistance providers, planning and executing events focused on workforce development, and building and maintaining both pre-existing and new relationships with the public and private sectors. Military installation commanders within Virginia can be assured that a port of entry into Virginia's unique suite of programs, services, and resources exists to assist military families with firmly anchoring themselves for the next leg of their life journeys. ***Data provided by the Military-Civilian Transition Office of the Defense Human Resources Activity – U.S. Department of Defense** (https://skillbridge.osd.mil/separation-map.htm)

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

**Transition and Employment Directorate (V3, V3T, MMAC):** Both teams are actively managing on-going efforts to increase the number of veterans connected to their earned benefits,

hired by Virginia employers, credentialed or certified in high demand industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing and IT. Virginia as the best destination for military families once their service to our country is complete. Gainfully employed veterans and military spouses positively impact Virginia's economy by expanding the Commonwealth's tax base, purchasing homes, participating in leisure and tourism activities, and attending community colleges and universities. Support of veteran entrepreneurs also creates additional employment opportunities for Virginia's residents as the state is heavily concentrated in defense-base industries.

With incidents of veteran suicide, anxiety, and depression on the rise, gainful and meaningful employment, connections to statewide, regional, and community resources to address these challenges lessen the probability of these occurrences and provides a foundation for affected veterans to move forward. These functions of V3 and MMAC all work together to produce the effect of stabilizing military families, strengthening the communities in which they live, and increasing the safety and prosperity of all Virginia residents.

With V3 and MMAC's ability to provide direct referrals of employment-ready veterans to employers, facilitate free recruitment events, and market employment vacancies in all regions of the state, Virginia's employers reduce recruiting costs and commit resources to develop their employees and growing their businesses.

**MMAC:** The unique and measurable aspect of the MMAC Program is that it not only keeps veterans in Virginia but it draws veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses from across the globe to come to live and work in the Commonwealth. No other state in the nation offers Medics and Corpsmen the opportunity to temporarily waive the civilian healthcare credentials required for employment while in school to receive those credentials. The veterans hired in healthcare via MMAC directly contribute to the state and local tax base, economy, and community as a whole.

The MMAC Program has actively developed new relationships with major hospital systems to provide an additional solution to their staffing needs. The MMAC Program fosters a new awareness and appreciation of veterans and what they offer the healthcare workplace. It has established a positive reputation, strong public-private relationships, and tangible employment results. These current and future outcomes are built on a solid foundation of relationships, responsiveness, and robust veteran and healthcare employer support.

Each MMAC Applicant hired is estimated to generate at least:

| | |
|---|---|
| State: | $2,275 in state tax revenue |
| State/Local: | $467 in sales tax revenue |
| Local: | $1,928 in local tax revenue |
| Total: | $4,670 |

*Data Source:* JLARC 2018 Report: *"Virginia Compared to Other States"*

**As of 3 March 2022 – 392 MMAC hires generated $1,830,640 in total revenue.**

**47% of those hired came from out of state, which means $860,400 was generated by new Virginia residents that may not have come to Virginia had it not been for the MMAC Program.**

On average, Healthcare Systems spend $4,129 in recruitment costs per hire. MMAC assists to cut down on this cost by performing essential talent acquisition functions such as pre-employment screening, assessment, position matching and referral, professional resume design, employer marketing, promotion and co-branding. Feedback from MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems suggested that partnering with MMAC reduced their cost for MMAC Hires by 50%.

50% of their cost per hire of $4,129 = $2,064.
$2,064 x 392 MMAC hires =
**An estimated $809,284 cost savings to MMAC Partner Health Systems**

Documented Gaps within Existing Military Transition and Suicide Prevention Programs:

**"Local companies supporting the veteran workforce."**
**https://www.wsls.com/features/2020/11/12/local-companies-supporting-the-veteran-workforce/**

**"Service to civilian: Local program forges new career path for veterans."**
**https://www.wtkr.com/news/military/service-to-civilian-local-program-forges-new-career-path-for-veterans**

**"Majority of military families say they lack support upon transitioning out, survey finds."**
**https://www.militarytimes.com/education-transition/2020/06/30/majority-of-military-familiessay-they-lack-support-upon-transitioning-out-survey-finds/**

**"After years of failure to end the crisis, veteran suicide takes center stage on Capitol Hill"**
**https://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/after-years-of-failure-to-end-the-crisis-veteran-suicidetakes-center-stage-on-capitol-hill-1.621428**

**"Bill to help reduce and prevent veteran suicides heads to President's desk for signature"**
**https://www.whsv.com/2020/09/24/bill-to-help-reduce-and-prevent-veteran-suicides-heads-topresidents-desk-for-signature/**

**Documented Benefits of Veteran Employment and Entrepreneurship:**

**"As The Economy Reopens, Look To Veteran-Owned Companies"**
**https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesnonprofitcouncil/2020/08/03/as-the-economy-reopens-lookto-veteran-owned-companies/#4ef038c94728**

**"Study Shows Morale and Profits Improve by Hiring Veterans"**

**https://blog.seattlepi.com/militarywire/2019/05/14/study-shows-morale-and-profits-improve-byhiring-veterans/**

**10. What is the statutory authority for the service area/program?**

**V3 and V3 Transition:** VDVS proposals for the 2022 Virginia state legislative sessions support the inclusion of the V3 Transition program's statutory authority is derived from the Code of Virginia, under *§ 2.2-2001.2. Initiatives to reduce unemployment among veterans.*

*"A. 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.*

*B. All agencies in the executive branch of state government and all public institutions of higher education shall, to the maximum extent possible, be certified in accordance with this section. Such agencies and institutions may request a certification waiver from the Governor if they can demonstrate that (i) the certification is in conflict with the organization's operating directives or (ii) they have in place an alternative program that meets the requirements of this section.*

*C. The Department shall take steps to promote awareness among veterans of the acceptance by the regulatory boards within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, the Department of Health Professions, or any board named in Title 54.1 pursuant to § 54.1-118 of the military training, education, or experience of a service member honorably discharged from active military service in the Armed Forces of the United States, to the extent that such training, education, or experience is substantially equivalent to the requirements established by law and regulations of the respective board for the issuance of any license, permit, certificate, or other document, however styled or denominated, required for the practice of any business, profession, or occupation in the Commonwealth.*

*D. The Department shall develop a comprehensive program to assist military service members, veterans, and their spouses in making a successful transition from military to civilian life in Virginia. The program shall promote strategies and services for connecting transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses to local, regional, state, and federal employment resources in Virginia, including (i) skills and workforce assessments and (ii) internship and apprenticeship programs. Such program shall prioritize assistance to military service members, veterans, and their spouses who (a) have not sought services under any program authorized under the federal Wagner-Peyser Act, 29 U.S.C. § 49 et seq., and available through the Virginia Employment Commission and (b) are not eligible for job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans and spouses under 38 U.S.C. § 4101 et seq."*

**MMAC:** *Code of Virginia § 2.2-2001.4. C. "Military medical personnel may practice and perform certain delegated acts that constitute the practice of medicine or nursing under the supervision of a physician or podiatrist, a Chief Medical Officer/Director or their designee who holds an active, unrestricted license in Virginia. 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."*

**11. Where do the resources for the service area/program come from (general fund, nongeneral fund, donations, etc.?)**

V3/MMAC: General Funds, appropriated for the Veterans Education, Training, and Employment (VETE) directorate, provides all funding for costs related to V3 and MMAC and their respective staff.

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

**V3 and V3 Transition:** Outreach is key to our success. Being able to articulate the Value of the V3 program to employers and the ability to connect early and often with transitioning service members and their families is paramount. This can be challenging as there are many Veteran organization and being the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, we are often confused with the VA.

A common pain point for all programs is maintaining up to date point of contacts. We manage the relationships of over 1,500 V3 Certified employers, and thousands of other key points of contact throughout the Commonwealth and across the country. We operate in small teams which makes it challenging to keep up with ever changing POCs. We are formalizing partnerships with other organizations that have the same issue in hopes that we will be able to assist one another to keep up to date contacts.

**13. What strategic opportunities are there for the future?**

**V3 and V3 Transition *2022 Priorities, Goals and Strategy*:**

- **Hire Vets Now Networking Events** – Continuing and building. 23 total in CY 2022 held on 5 different installations with direct engagement to our target TSM audience and direct engagement with our most active V3 Certified Employers
- **Transition Connection Newsletter** – Continuing and building. Outreach and open communication with Virginia's military community, nearly 10,000 on email list
- **Boots 2 Suits** – Continuing and building – streamlining process, increased promotion, improving data collection
- **Hire Vets Now Fellowship/Skillbridge** – Continuing and building. Expand Skillbridge with V3 Certified employers and to allocate resources and administrative efforts to build out the initiative and fulfil its potential – create a central Virginia hub for all things

Skillbridge so that the information can be easily accessed by both employers and service members

- **Welcome Home Letters** – Continuing welcome home letter delivery based on DMDC data and expanding use of data to deliver more value to service members and stakeholders
- **Consolidating Data Streams** – to get a complete, combined, comprehensive list of Veterans, TSMs, military families. List of data streams that need to be combined and cleaned
    - DMDC data
    - DMV data
    - Existing contact information on eNEWS and Transition Connection
    - Existing client data in ZOHO (client management system)
    - Boots 2 Suits data
    - Strategic partner data
- **Exploring Industry Sector Events** – working with the education directorate to bring industry experts, education experts and service members and families together in one place to focus on entry into specific industries and career and education pathways. First event of this nature scheduled for May, 2022 and will focus on Manufacturing. If successful, could serve as a model for future industry focused events
- **Aggressively Grow Number of New V3 Certified Employers** – focus on partners and employer target lists –
    - Virginia Chamber
    - Small Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses that are not V3C – merging applications for SDVOB and V3 enrollment
    - Employers that have GI Bill Approved OJT/Apprentice that are not yet V3 Certified
    - Local Chambers and Workforce Boards – certifying them and then using as an outreach force multiplier
- **Building and Formalizing Strategic Partners and Force Multipliers**
    - Identify and formalize partnerships that will expand VDVS reach and services in order to provide greater support to Virginia Veterans and military families.
    - Identify any areas that are not well covered by VDVS or areas where VDVS is not able to provide high level direct service or needs supplemental partner support.

- Review and identify commonalities in current partner MOUs, create a standard for formal partnerships, identify VDVS needs from partners and value it can offer, and streamline the partnership development process.
- Entering formal partnerships and agreements with the Chamber and other organizations in order to strengthen our value proposal.
- Ensure all partnerships result in tracking and providing service and referral client outcome data

**MMAC:** is able to expand to new types of healthcare facilities based on a recent change in legislative language. This will allow more healthcare related employers to participate in MMAC and enter into an MMAC MOA to become an MMAC Partner Healthcare System.

A larger pool of MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems offers a wider range of veteran employment opportunities and augments healthcare staffing in a greater number and type of healthcare facilities. This is especially helpful with the DVS/MMAC/healthcare system response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

With this change the program can expand the MMAC Program to Urgent Care Centers, Dialysis Centers, specialty surgical practices, and non-profit community clinics. This change will also expand the number of available employment locations where the MMAC applicant lives or may potentially wish to reside.

This legislation would help boost employment among veterans, generate tax revenue, and offset healthcare staffing costs, all while supporting healthcare staffing needs throughout the Commonwealth.

MMAC has also created additional pathways to employment for former military medical personnel. Not everyone who applies to be part of the MMAC program meets the legislative and regulatory requirements to be considered "MMAC-Qualified" and practice advanced clinical skills without civilian credentials. MMAC is now permitted to assist all veterans who apply to the MMAC program to find pathways to employment in the Virginia healthcare sector regardless of their backgrounds or experience. The proposed legislation will more fully utilize the relationships and network of healthcare employers that the MMAC program has built over the past four years.

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

Though the Transition and Employment Directorate does not have much in the way of legislative asks at the moment, assistance with promoting our V3, V3 Transition and MMAC Programs would be most helpful.

**V3:** We want to drive employers to enroll, train, and become V3 Certified. They can do those things here - https://dvsv3.com/

**V3 Transition:** We want transitioning service members and their families to know that we have dedicated, regionally based transition coordinators that are subject matter experts in employment

services, ready to assist and connect service members with VDVS benefits and resources as well as employment and education opportunities. Transition Coordinators are certified resume writers and career coaches and can connect service members with our growing list of over 1,500 V3 Certified Employers. Veterans and military families can set up an appointment with the V3 Transition team and any of the VDVS service lines by requesting an appointment here - https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/request-an-appointment

The V3 Transition team conducts the majority of the community outreach that occurs in the Transition and Employment Directorate as they are changed with connecting with transitioning service members and bringing them into VDVS benefits and services. They provide outreach in a variety of ways.

The members of V3T utilize their personal networks of professionals, transition specialists, recruiters, hiring manager, VSO representatives, veterans, military spouses, and mentors to increase the reach of the V3T program. The utilization of social media, specifically LinkedIn, affords the Transition Coordinator the opportunity to immediately connect the Transitioning Service Member, military spouse, or veteran with resources and powerful connections that will help the client during their transition.

V3T Transition Coordinators routinely engage in virtual and in-person engagement with regional and nationwide organizations, receive invitations to be the keynote speaker or subject matter expert on issues such as resume writing and tailoring, networking and relationship-building, preparing for civilian interviews, navigating the "sea of goodwill", and understanding civilian pay and salary negotiation. Additionally, V3T creates new initiatives aimed at maximizing the TSMs', veterans' or military spouses' exposure to individuals in the civilian workforce that can help them be successful in their career pivot. For all of the following initiatives, clients are encouraged to connect with each other to provide support during the stressful transition process. Some examples of these initiatives include:

1. Talent Tuesday- this initiative by the V3T NOVA team, highlights clients from the previous week, those who are available to start work immediately or those who have successfully found civilian employment. For each client, their clearance level, military-affiliation, location, date of availability, degree and certifications and desired roles are listed. Additionally, "dream" companies to work for are listed and "tagged". Finally, an average of 200 recruiters, hiring managers, veteran advocates, and mentors are tagged in the post for maximum reach.

An average of 7 clients are highlighted each week, with an average of 3000 views in 24- hours. LinkedIn provides a breakdown of the views by company, occupation, and location. The top results include (each in descending order):

a. Location: Washington DC Baltimore Metro Area, Hampton Roads, Dallas Ft Worth, TX

b. Occupation: Recruiter, Military Officer, Human Resource Specialist

    c. Company: US Army, Air Force, Navy

2. Coffee Hour- this virtual initiative, started by the Central V3T Transition Coordinator invites transitioning service members, military spouses, and veterans to engage in a candid discussion about transition. The event is structured in a way that attendees can "break-off" into private rooms for discussions on employment, VA claims, resource identification, relationship-building, Skillbridge and training opportunities, and self-care issues.

3. The Transition Debacle- this audio-only initiative, started by the Central V3T Transition Assistance Coordinator, is focused on a single topic relevant to transition. The host invites experts as well as novice attendees to "come on stage" to discuss their questions, concerns, hurdles, and accomplishments with the topic at hand. In the most recent event, focused on the value of Skillbridge and the Hire Vets Now Fellowship Program, had an average of 65 attendees.

4. Making LinkedIn Work for You workshop- this initiative, started by a V3T Transition Assistance Coordinator in NOVA, is a virtual workshop designed to help the attendees understand networking and the career-pivot tools available to them. The curriculum and presentation was created with input from Recruiting Sourcers, Recruiters, transitioning service members and spouses as well as Transition Specialists to address the most common issues with networking and the civilian career pivot. An average of 15 attendees receive training on the following topics, live, real-time advice from a networking expert, a follow-up email with additional tools to help the attendee implement new skills, as well as any additional transition-related information they requested and any referrals to sister service lines, within VDVS the client requested.

    a. Profile optimization (how to use each section of the professional networking platform to the attendees' advantage).

    b. Understanding networking and how to build relationships.

    c. Creating a personal brand.

    d. Using tools such as Resume Builder, Interview preparation, LinkedIn Learning, Skills Assessment, Salary and Keyword check to create a career-pivot strategy that is intentional and will reduce the stress of the job search by bringing the recruiters to the attendee.

    e. Using the LinkedIn Algorithm to the attendees' advantage.

Using creativity to set the attendee apart, make a great impression, and "humanize" the resume.

**Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Program:** We want service members across the country to know that we provide employment pathways to medically trained transitioning service members here in Virginia with a unique and innovative program. Learn about the MMAC

Program and apply to the program here - https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/education- employment/military-medics-corpsmen-mmac-program

# ATTACHMENT 9

**Point of Contact Report - Rural Veterans/Broadband**

1. Date of Report: 7.18.22

2. BVS POC(s): John Lesinski and Delegate Jason Ballard

3. Service Area/Program: Rural veterans (including broadband)

4. DVS Director/Program Manager: Brandi Jancaitis

5. Mission of service area/program (i.e. what does it do?):

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program (VVFS) is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and 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.

SERVICES THEY PROVIDE: 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, VA 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.

6. Who does the service area/program serve (i.e. who are the customers)?

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 that support the objective(s)?

In FY22, VVFS served 2180 clients. Of these clients, 1223 were new clients. This included connecting veterans and their family members for resources to approximately 2,700 service needs. These include housing needs (37%), behavioral health support (14%), benefits assistance (10%), employment (8%), and homeless assistance (8%). In addition, VVFS provided 76 trainings (e.g. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Military Cultural Competency, Crisis Intervention Training, and Mental Health First Aid) to approximately 2,700 participants (community partners and providers).

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).

**FY22 Data Overview:**

- 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 (98% out of 1392)
- 90% of veterans with a identified behavioral health need will be connected to an appropriate resource (98% out of 331)
- 90% of veterans experiencing literal homelessness will be connected to a shelter/housing resource (94% out 187)
- VVFS and Benefits will screen 95% of new SMVF for suicide risk (93% out of 6,809)

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

Key partnerships and initiatives focusing on rural veterans and access to services include the SWVA Crisis Intercept Mapping Collaborative, SWVA Together With Veterans (TWV), Community Services Boards across the Commonwealth (including 12 in SWVA), the CSB's region SMVF Navigators, the Highlands CSB Veteran Recovery Coordinator, Crisis Intervention Teams and Training (CIT), VEC, Virginia Department of Health, Hospice organizations, Virginia Army National Guard, US Armed Forces Reserves and many other key stakeholders. These initiatives included Military Culture Competency and Crisis Intervention Training, implementing suicide screenings and lethal means safety planning for the SMVF population with partners in the region and bridging gaps in services through coordinated referrals.

VVFS have staff trained to facilitate and provide education to the Commonwealth and the local communities consisting of Talk Saves Lives, Question Persuade and Refer (QPR), Trauma Informed Care/Adverse Childhood Experiences (TIC/ACEs), Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

VVFS was able to provide Mission: Healthy Relationships (a longstanding couples communication workshop) this year. The workshop was held in Roanoke, VA with 15 couples attending. Having the workshops throughout the Commonwealth enables veterans from rural areas to attend. The workshops have been held for several years and provides a unique and valuable experience for the SMVF population and often provides an avenue to enter DVS and other community services.

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

VVFS is involved in multiple stakeholder collaborations and continues to participate in outreach across the Commonwealth. This includes several suicide prevention, housing and community committees and coalitions that address barriers to services specific to the SMVF population and rural areas. This also bolsters partnerships with multiple VAMC's.

VVFS continues to participate in local monthly and quarterly statewide Community Veteran Engagement Board (CVEB) meetings to enhance access to services for veterans and their families.

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

SWVA Together With Veterans continues promoting best practices from the Veterans Health Administration and the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide, designed to bolster grass roots, veteran-led, suicide prevention in rural communities. The SWVA TWV program is currently in phase five of the community development process to perform the suicide prevention and awareness action plan and measure results. SWVA TWV and the Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) completed the third and final Community Assessment. This process surveys key stakeholders from across SWVA to measure collaboration among people and organizations in our communities.

VVFS has a statewide Caregiver team that provides subject matter expertise and trainings throughout all regions. The West region also facilitates Caregiver Focus Groups to better understand the unique needs of SMVF caregivers in rural areas and provide training and resource connections for the SMVF population.

There are several peer support groups across VVFS and one of the West Region Veteran Peer Specialist (VPS) launched and facilitated the first VDVS VVFS statewide Female Veteran Peer Group in a virtual model providing access to female veterans across the Commonwealth.

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

In many rural areas there is limited broadband access that directly impacts the ability to seamlessly work in a virtual environment. VVFS has continued to provide very important in person service. The lack of technology in rural areas not only affects clients/customers but VVFS staff as well. In many areas where telehealth is an option, broadband access would be a key addition for streamlined services and connections. Some veterans are not comfortable with virtual and some touchpoints are harder to make when you aren't in the community and collaborating with partners on a more frequent basis. Transportation is also a key issue in the rural areas. There is a lack of public transportation, especially transportation modalities that cover vast geographical distances, funding for transportation and families do not have reliable methods of mobility. While there are "pockets" of providers in certain catchment areas in rural areas, there isn't a streamlined system and we often times puzzle piece things together for transportation by utilizing different funding streams and modalities (i.e. public, Medicaid eligible, senior citizens and volunteers). This can take a vast amount of time to figure out.

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

We work hard to meet the client/customer "where they are" by traveling to communities when transportation isn't available and providing itinerant sites throughout the communities and counties in rural areas. Delivering these services assists Virginia's veterans by providing resources, services and benefits they were not aware of. It also assists by bridging barriers and gaps in services and providing a smooth avenue around many federal, state and local systems. This prevents isolation for vets and combats behavioral health issues compounded by feeling alone.

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

By helping the veteran it helps the Commonwealth by continuing to ensure Virginia is a veteran friendly state and provides comprehensive and wrap-around services for those residing in Virginia, whether in rural, suburban, or urban locations.

16. What strategic opportunities are there for the future?

We will work to broaden accessibility throughout the state in rural areas and bridge gaps in many of these services by continuously working with community partners at the federal, state and local levels. The continuance of strategy planning around a virtual environment, growing our resource pool for those providing services for behavioral health/rehabilitative and continuously receiving partner updates on these for cross systems referrals. Continuing to strategy planning ways to reach those in the community that might not reach out to us first. A consistent effort to implement virtual and telehealth services where possible is in place, along with the consistent need for broadband technology across rural areas. Often times connectivity issues in areas without broadband cause additional distress for veterans accessing services, especially the elderly and most vulnerable population. This creates additional barriers for crossing bridges and implementing help seeking strategies. Streamlined and steady transportation modalities are continuously strategized and discussed. Currently we utilize pockets of services such as VSO

volunteers, Medicaid/senior citizen transportation, MCAPP, multiple catchment areas internal systems, Salem VAMC systems when they are operating and the Martinsville/Danville Miles 4 Vets. These systems are dependent upon the veteran's eligibility, availability and service availability.

**Broadband Services:**

Technical/Statistics for Southwest Virginia:
Commonwealth Connection (see link below) helps visualize where high-speed internet service is available, and will help determine where the most reliable broadband points are, as well as where they're lacking.

https://commonwealth-connection.com/#about_top

Information on Broadband in parts of the rural area surrounding counties:

https://www.fireflyva.com/

**Increased affordable housing opportunities:**

The community lacks quality, affordable units. Older homes tend to need more upkeep and can be more costly than newer units. The rising costs of construction materials, the shortage of skilled laborers and the limited resources of owners leads to a decline in homes. This can then lead to a decrease in property values, less desirable neighborhoods and a decrease in interest of industries evaluating the area for possible business placement. Since the ending of the Mortgage Relief and Rent Relief programs, many veterans, especially those in rural areas have limited access to affordable housing and financial resources.

**Caregivers and Child Care:**

The communities do not house enough providers to meet the needs of parents or caregivers. There are limited options in rural areas and with the scale down of the VAMC caregiver programming in the future, VVFS is working to stay apprised of rural community needs.

**Transportation:**

The lack of public transportation and families do not have reliable methods of mobility

**Medical Care:**

With some of the rural communities still uninsured, respondents have poor or fair health. There is also a need to continue looking at insurance costs and limited transportation to medical care. With an aging community, about 15% of the local population under the age of 65 having a disability (US Census), accessibility and affordability of medical care is a major concern.

**Food and Nutrition:**

In a recent rural community Member Survey, 31% of respondents had income of less than $20,000 annually. A total of 18% noted that they had gone hungry in the last 12 months due to not being able to get enough food. Food scarcity was very evident in 2020 during the height of the pandemic due to COVID-19. The accessibility, education and costs for healthy foods is a great need in rural communities.

**Telehealth**

In providing an update on telehealth, many are utilizing telehealth options but there isn't a streamlined or one size fits all approach, it seems to be as it fits each organization's needs. Consumers utilizing telehealth ebbs and flows, it's not a preference for some but they will use it if there is no other option. It's important for the agency to stay engaged where we can and in the future could blend different options nicely with transportation and broadband initiatives.

Salem VAMC is still working on their initiative of providing tablets to veterans for utilization if they are enrolled and qualify. Some veterans seem unaware this is available. Salem VAMC also is partnering with local CSB's and the Dept. of Health to provide the "telehealth in a suitcase" model where they have itinerant sites in the communities to service the SMVF population. This currently serves several catchment areas and DVS, local Dept. of Health, CSB's and other key stakeholders have continuously been able to bolster partnerships with federal systems to create a continuity of care.

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

We have been extremely successful in training Community Service Board (CSB) staff and other providers in Military Cultural Competency (MCC) virtually. We have trained over well over 1600 individuals since 2020 as part of the Governor's Challenge for Suicide Prevention for Service Members, Veterans, and Family Members (SMVF). This training helps other providers be "force extenders" in connecting veterans to behavioral health and other needed services.

Oftentimes the work we do in VVFS around behavioral health and rehabilitative services can be complex. We are a touchpoint and ongoing support for the veteran in a very complex world of multiple resources at the federal, state and local level. It's hard to capture all we do, or what it might take to see successful outcomes, we try to bridge any gap and barrier to services and work endlessly to ensure connection needs are met. We greatly appreciate the support of the Commonwealth and Leadership for the continuous belief in our program.

Transportation: we discussed this as an ongoing challenge on our call last week and think it should receive more emphasis. It should appear in paragraph 13 (challenges) along with broadband. Additionally, it only received passing attention in paragraph 16 (strategic opportunity) where we think a mention of local partnerships would have merit. If there are any specific transportation solutions at a local level, it would be good to mention them as an example that can be emulated elsewhere in Southside and Southwest.

Broadband and Telehealth:  Is it possible to link these two challenges in the report.  Both are called out individually as areas of concern but are linked for obvious reasons: You can't have telehealth without reliable broadband! Perhaps identify both as separate challenges but focus on how they are especially intertwined in rural areas.

Veterans Administration: In paragraph 16 is it worth citing a specific community partnership program involving the VA?  We know the Commissioner has called for greater collaboration at the federal level but is there anything more we can cite in addition to "telehealth in a suitcase?" That's a good example; anything more?

# ATTACHMENT 10

**Point of Contact Report – Justice Involved Veterans**
**Justice Involved Veterans Program and Veterans Treatment Dockets Update**

1. Date of Report: August 2022

2. BVS POC: David Ashe and Senator Bryce Reeves

3. Service Area/Program: Justice Involved Veterans/Justice Involved Services and Veterans Treatment Dockets

4. VDVS Director/Program Manager: Donna Harrison

5. Mission of service area/program:
   The Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program (VVFS) is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and 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.
   SERVICES THEY PROVIDE: 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, VA 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.

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 that support the objectives?

In FY22, VVFS served 2180 clients. Of these clients, 1223 were new clients. This included connecting veterans and their family members for resources to approximately 2,700 service needs. These include housing needs (37%), behavioral health support (14%), benefits assistance (10%), employment (8%), and homeless assistance (8%). In addition, VVFS provided 76 trainings (e.g. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Military Cultural Competency, Crisis Intervention Training, Mental Health First Aid) to approximately 2,700 participants (community partners and providers).

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 objectives?

**FY22 Data Overview:**

- 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 (98% out of 1392)
- 90% of veterans with a identified behavioral health need will be connected to an appropriate resource (98% out of 331)
- 90% of veterans experiencing literal homelessness will be connected to a shelter/housing resource (94% out 187)
- VVFS and Benefits will screen 95% of new SMVF for suicide risk (93% out of 6,809)

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

The VVFS Veteran Justice Specialists (VJS) are members of the eight Veteran Treatment Dockets in Virginia. There are three new pending veteran treatment dockets in Virginia- Chesterfield, Loudoun, and Pulaski. The VVFS VJS continue to participate in the planning for veterans treatment dockets. The VDVS Criminal Justice Director provides technical assistance to jurisdictions interested in starting veterans treatment dockets.

In FY22, Virginia rolled out the new Virginia Veteran Treatment Docket Implementation Curriculum training. This training is required for all new veteran treatment dockets in Virginia. The Chesterfield County veteran treatment docket team was the first team to complete this training. Loudoun and Pulaski are scheduled to attend the training in FY23.

In FY22, the VVFS Veteran Justice Specialists participated in the quarterly collaborative meetings with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialists and Healthcare for Reentry Veterans (HCRV) team. The group

discusses program updates, issues related to the justice-involved veteran population, and training opportunities.

In collaboration with the Supreme Court of Virginia Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) and the VA, the VVFS Veteran Justice Specialists and VVFS Criminal Justice Director conducted statewide training to local and regional jails on the VA's *Veterans Reentry Search Services* (VRSS) system in order to increase veteran identification in the local jails.

In addition, the VVFS Criminal Justice Director 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. The group is conducting environmental scans to address barriers to accessing housing for justice-involved individuals, reviewing tenant selection plans, holding focus group meetings, and examining background screening criteria in housing.

11. What type of outreach did the service line conduct and what are the results?
    Incarcerated veterans outreach-Due to COVID-19 restrictions, VADOC suspended in-person visits for individuals in state prisons for most of the FY22. For incarcerated veterans in state prisons (VADOC), the VVFS VJS staff have been conducting intake appointments via phone for needs assessments and re-entry planning. VADOC facility counselors are still available for service coordination and re-entry planning. Phone appointments are coordinated through the VADOC facility counselors.
    Intake phone appointments have been more difficult for veterans incarcerated in local and regional jails due to the lack of staff available in the local jails. Most local jails do not have counselors or discharge planning staff to assist with re-entry efforts.

    Outreach has been conducted to the jails by providing JIS program information to the Virginia Sheriffs' Association's list serv. The VVFS VJS have also maintained virtual contact with their jail staff contacts about the JIS program and referral process.

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

    Incarcerated veterans outreach-Due to COVID-19 restrictions, VADOC suspended all in-person visits for individuals in state prisons. For incarcerated veterans in state prisons (VADOC), the VVFS VJS staff conducted intake appointments via phone for needs assessments and re-entry planning. VADOC facility counselors are still available for service coordination and re-entry planning. Phone appointments were coordinated through the VADOC facility counselors.

JIS program information was provided to the Virginia Sheriffs' Association's list serv. The VVFS VJS also maintained virtual contact with jail staff contacts about the JIS program and referral process.

C&P exams for incarcerated veterans- In-person Compensation & Pension (C&P) exams for incarcerated veterans have resumed in VADOC facilities. In addition, virtual C&P exams were conducted for individuals with behavioral health claims. Virtual C&P exams for behavioral health claims continue to be an option. The CJ Director is tracking on all C&P exams for incarcerated veterans in VADOC.

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

- **Housing** continues to be the biggest barrier for this population due to criminal history and lack of financial resources. This need has been exacerbated due to the rise in housing costs and the lack of housing resources in the community. Housing is the number one service request for the JIS program.
- Recently released individuals from jail and prison continue to have challenges **securing IDs** for housing, employment, and benefits/financial assistance due to stringent DMV ID requirements and delays in receiving supporting identity documents (birth certificates and Social Security cards).
- **Re-entry** for veterans being released from incarceration has been especially challenging due to the lack of housing options, program closures, and limited availability of resources.
- **Local and regional jail discharge planning gaps and veteran identification**. Jails continue to struggle with discharge planning due to limited reentry staff. Most referrals received from the jails are self-referrals from veterans recently released who normally need connections to housing, benefits, and employment. Local jails also have issues with **veteran identification.** Most jails are not using the VA's *Veterans Reentry Search Services* (VRSS) system.

**14. 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.

15. **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.

16. **What strategic opportunities are there for the future?**

JIS program-specific strategic opportunities are centered around veteran identification in local and regional jails by marketing and training jail staff on using the VA's Veterans Reentry Search Services (VRSS) system. In addition, the program will be assisting the Virginia Supreme Court Office of the Executive staff on expanding veterans treatment dockets in Virginia and provide the Virginia Veteran Treatment Docket Implementation Curriculum training to interested jurisdictions.

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

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.

# ATTACHMENT 11

**Point of Contact Report – Housing and Homelessness**

1. **Date of Report:** July 2022

2. **BVS POC(s):** Senator Mamie Locke and David Ashe

3. **Service Area/Program:** Housing and Homelessness

4. **VDVS Director/Program Manager:** Deputy Director – Matt Leslie

5. **Mission of service area/program:**

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program (VVFS) is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and 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.

SERVICES THEY PROVIDE: 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, VA 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.

**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 that support the objectives?**

In FY22, VVFS served 2180 clients. Of these clients, 1223 were new clients. This included connecting veterans and their family members for resources to approximately 2,700 service needs. These include housing needs (37%), behavioral health support (14%), benefits assistance (10%), employment (8%), and homeless assistance (8%). In addition, VVFS provided 76 trainings (e.g. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Military Cultural Competency, Crisis Intervention Training, Mental Health First Aid) to approximately 2,700 participants (community partners and providers).

**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 objectives.**

**FY22 Data Overview:**

- 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 (98% out of 1392)
- 90% of veterans with a identified behavioral health need will be connected to an appropriate resource (98% out of 331)
- 90% of veterans experiencing literal homelessness will be connected to a shelter/housing resource (94% out 187)
- VVFS and Benefits will screen 95% of new SMVF for suicide risk (93% out of 6,809)

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

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

VVFS worked closely with the Dept. of Housing and Community Development Rent Relief Program to make sure veterans who qualified had access to the program. This was an Emergency Relief Assistance (ERA) Program that assisted those facing evictions and help keep landlords whole during the pandemic. The DVS Homeless Fund partnered with homeless Continua of Care and veteran homeless providers to assisted 228 veterans experiencing homelessness gap assistance for permanent housing (Deposits, first month rent, etc) and previously chronically homeless veterans with maintaining permanent supportive housing (rent arrears) when not eligible for other federal , state or local resources.

The 2022 January annual Point in Time (PIT) count for veterans accounted for 392 homeless veterans (345 veterans in shelter, 47 unsheltered). This increased from 350 from 2021

(unsheltered count did not occur that year due to COVID). The PIT count in January 2022 was 395. The 2022 count is 58% lower than the 2011 count that had 931 veterans. However, with housing costs and inflation increasing, these numbers could increase in future years.

**11. 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.

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

The VVFS Deputy Director has chaired the state Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Steering Committee (members include 7 state agencies and Virginia Housing). This committee is assisting with increasing coordination among PSH funding opportunities and increasing PSH for a range of populations including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, serious mental illness, the chronically homeless, and older adults. This includes veterans and their family members that fall within these populations. One of the key goals is leveraging Virginia Housing Low Income Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program set aside to increase the number of newly developed affordable housing units targeting those in need of PSH.

**13. 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. As COVID funding is ending, particularly in eviction prevention, this is putting a strain on staff and clients. Statewide rents have increased on average about 15% and production issues have slowed the development of affordable housing. Stable housing is a key protective factor for behavioral health and in-turn suicide prevention.

https://www.virginiamercury.com/2022/07/13/a-shortage-of-single-family-homes-is-casting-doubt-on-virginias-future-growth/

**14. 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.

**15. 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.

**16. What strategic opportunities are there for the future?**

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

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

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.

Prepared by:

Matthew Leslie - Deputy Director, VVFS

# ATTACHMENT 12

**Point of Contact Report – Veterans in the Arts**

25 July 2022
POC: Susan Vervaet Riveland
Service Area: Veterans in the Arts
DVS Program Managers: Brandi Jancaitis, VVFS; Dr. Clay Mountcastle, VWM

**At the outset, it is important to note that *Veterans in the Arts* does not exist as a dedicated program or service area**; therefore, the program managers designated above seek to include the arts as resources through their respective service lines. The report that follows defines mission, objectives, highlights and initiatives, challenges, and strategic opportunities both from practices that have been reported or observed, but also in potential or proposed terms.

The **mission of the *Veterans in the Arts*** service area is to connect interested veterans and their families with arts programs, both in the public and private sector, in an effort to promote vitality and wellness. The term 'arts' can be considered here to apply to the visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography, graphic arts), the performing arts (music, dance, theater, comedy), film-making, video production and conceptual art, creative writing, fashion design, and the culinary arts. An extended definition of the mission is to engage public support and interest in the veteran community through dedicated arts events or events that include an arts component.

*Veterans in the Arts* serves all interested Virginia veterans and their families. As an outreach tool, it has the potential to serve the DVS as well as the Office of the Secretary of Veterans & Defense Affairs and the Office of the Governor.

**The objectives of *Veterans in the Arts* are:**

- To provide an alternative type of therapy for veterans in an effort to improve behavioral health and foster rehabilitation
- To provide DVS staff with a database of active arts opportunities for veterans, enabling them to connect the veterans to an appropriate program in a timely, meaningful way
- To foster community and connectivity between veterans and like-minded individuals
- To offer opportunities for individual expression
- To facilitate entrepreneurial or vocational possibilities for veterans in the arts field
- To use the arts as a communications tool to build the public image of DVS
- As outreach to inspire organizations, both public and private, to offer additional arts programs for veterans

**Operational overview:**

There are a number of programs offered by veteran-related organizations as well as dedicated arts programs at the regional, state and national levels that have benefited Virginia veterans during the past year. These include, but are not limited to:

The Virginia War Memorial; DVS Veteran Care Centers; The Hylton Center's Veterans and the Arts Initiative (at George Mason University); The Virginia Arts Commission; the Virginia Film Institute; Richmond Film Festival (RIFF); SWVA Together With Veterans; Brain Injury Services of SW Virginia; The Warrior's Canvas and & Veterans Art Center

Some **operational highlights of the past year** include:

- At the Virginia War Memorial (VWM): Art gallery exhibits featuring work created by Virginia veterans; Navy Band concert; Incorporation of recorded musical elements in the Who They Were: Lives Worth Living exhibit; The Mighty Pen Project (Creative writing workshops for veterans sponsored by the VWMF)
- Together With Veterans (a veteran-driven non-profit sponsored by the Veterans Health Administration and the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide): The SW Virginia TWV program has provided very popular monthly art therapy and blacksmithing therapy events for veterans and their spouses.

**Challenges facing *Veterans in the Arts:***

- VVFS staff in regional offices report that when they feel a veteran may benefit from participation in a particular kind of arts program – or veterans themselves request information - they would like to have more comprehensive, up-to-date information at hand to give them. They do not have a point of contact focused on the arts, so each individual staff member has to research and link veterans to their area of interest.
- There is a lack of personnel and funding available at the DVS regional level to develop dedicated opportunities in the arts for veterans.
- When veterans don't want to attend peer support groups, preferring instead to participate in an arts-type event, an opportunity is lost if there is not ready information to connect the veteran to his or her specified need.

**Strategic opportunities and recommendations:**

- Create a database listing ongoing arts opportunities for veterans that will be accessible to DVS staff statewide. (*Note*: VVFS West Region has developed and maintains an updated resource directory for all staff to access when a resource is needed. This should be done on a statewide basis, for all to benefit from.)
- Hire a full or part-time coordinator to collate information on arts resources for veterans and maintain the database (described above).The coordinator would a point of contact for arts-related resources needed by VVFS, VETE, VWM, and Communications & Marketing, and could also conduct outreach to develop new arts opportunities.
- Much like the SWVA Together With Veterans program, which is veteran-driven, there is the potential for *Veterans in the Arts* to pilot a similar project. The scenario envisioned here – where veterans make their art to benefit other veterans and/or their communities – is a form of continued service that enriches the veteran artist, fosters self-reliance, and can inspire other veterans to do the same. With support for this kind of project from DVS, veterans themselves become a key resource and Virginia could lead the way.

**Why is an arts program vital to Virginia veterans?**

In their own words, here is what our VVFS staff have shared:

"Many veterans and their families separate from the service and lose their sense of belonging; this is especially true in SW Virginia, due to it being so rural. This often leads to isolation. These programs are beneficial because they give the participants something to look forward to, which also creates a sense of accomplishment. Veterans often say they have no friends or family. These

programs give veterans the opportunity to develop relationships and camaraderie, which leads to communication among people in/from similar situations. I have been told on MANY occasions that 'if it weren't for programs like these I wouldn't be here.'" - *Dan Judd, VVFS Senior Resources Specialist, West Region*
"VVFS's main goal is to assist veterans in recovery with the understanding that recovery is different for each individual. The arts allow veterans to explore another pathway to resilience, bond with others, and grow in self-confidence." - *Anthony Swann, VVFS Peer Services Director, Central Region*

**Final Thoughts:**
Art is made to be consumed. Put another way, it is designed to connect human beings. A painting needs someone to view it. A jazz concert needs an audience, no matter how small, to listen. A novelist needs someone to read his book. People are moved and often changed by experiencing the art that others create. The artist feels whole and inspired to continue creating. That is when the circle is complete. That sense of connectivity is what many service members lack after they transition to veteran status. With the arts, which are so often the last priority when decisions are made about allocating funds, there are many unexplored possibilities for enhancing the veteran experience, not the least of which is in rediscovering a sense of purpose and feeling connected again. The arts are important enough to be acknowledged as a resource for DVS – but if they are to be used to their full potential, there needs to be a real investment made.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Vervaet Riveland, POC

# ATTACHMENT 13
**Joint Leadership Council Report**

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*
*Fleet Reserve Association*
*Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.*
*Marine Corps League*
*Military Order of the Purple Heart*
*Military Officers Association of America*
*Military Order of the World Wars*
*Navy Mutual Aid Association*
*Paralyzed Veterans of America*
*Reserve Officers Association*
*Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*
*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**
**August 25, 2022**

The Joint Leadership Council (JLC) met on July 14, 2022. Members of the JLC presented their Veteran Service Organization's (VSO) proposed initiatives for the 2023 General Assembly Session. Adoption and prioritization of the 2023 JLC initiatives is planned for our September meeting. Additionally, the JLC Legislative Officer, Mr. John Clickener, formed a team of JLC members to assist with legislative engagement and strategic planning for the 2023 JLC Day on the Hill.

The top three priorities of our seven 2022 initiatives passed both chambers of the General Assembly. These include a VDVS Suicide Prevention Coordinator, expanded real property tax relief for surviving spouses of military members killed in the line of duty, and an amendment to the Code of Virginia to grant an exemption from paramilitary activities to Veteran Service Organizations performing honor guard duties. We held a JLC 'hotwash' in April to discuss lessons learned from the last session and set the stage for our 2023 strategy of initiatives.

The JLC welcomes two new Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) which includes the Air Force Sergeants Association and its member representative Mr. Rich Mansfield. We also welcomed the Wounded Warrior Project and its member representative Mr. Jose Ramos. Additionally, the JLC welcomes Ann Crittenden as the newly appointed representative for the Women Marine Association.

As we finalize our 2023 legislative priorities, we look forward to an opportunity to present them to the Board of Veterans Services. We value the Board's review and feedback as we work to advocate for Virginia's veterans and their families. Our next meeting is planned for September 15 at the Virginia War Memorial.

Respectfully submitted,

Denice Williams
Chair

THE 22 ORGANIZATIONS OF THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL HAVE MORE THAN 250,000 MEMBERS

# ATTACHMENT 14

**Veteran Services Foundation Report**

## VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION

**Report to the Board of Veterans Services**
**August 25, 2022**

The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting on June 9, 2022, at the Varina Library in Henrico County.

The Board welcomed Secretary Crenshaw along with the Deputy and Assistant Secretaries to the meeting. Secretary Crenshaw expressed his appreciation to have the opportunity to meet everyone. He shared that as he started to look at the portfolio of the secretary's position, he recognized the value of entities on all fronts – veterans, DVS, Military Affairs, National Guard and the uniqueness provided by VSF. He is interested in bringing the level of visibility up in a dedicated, yet collective way.

Reginald Thompson, Senior Budget Analyst from DPB provided an overview of what the General Budget process entails and specifically how it impacts the VSF. It was an informative presentation that was well received by the board.

Commissioner Gade reported that as the Commissioner and Karla as the Executive Director of VSF are fully aligned on making sure both organizations are working together and being committed to teamwork. There are some things DVS owes VSF to help make wise decisions on the budget side as well as the fundraising side. DVS plans to develop a 'menu' for VSF to pick from, regarding fundraising and specificity to accommodate the wishes of donors. Commissioner Gade expressed thanks and appreciation for all of the hard work the foundation is doing.

A joint Finance and Procedures & Policies committee meeting took place on June 6, 2022. Committee Chairs, Jack Lanier and Walter Stosch worked together to combine the efforts of each committee to discuss and finalize the FY23 DVS/VSF MOU along with the FY23 DVS Program budget for recommendation to the Board.

VSF was notified that the trust of a donor had been finalized and that VSF would be receiving a check for $1.3 million designated for the Virginia Veteran Care Center in Roanoke. This is the largest donation received in the history of VSF.

FY23 Elections were held and VSF welcomed new leadership on July 1st; Paul Haughton (Chair), Nicole Carry (1st Vice Chair) and Laura Schmiegel (2nd Vice Chair). VSF also welcomes new trustees, Tim Pillion and Brad Williamson to the Board. The terms of Lettie Bien, John Lesinski and Walter Stosch concluded on June 30th.

VSF received the 1.3 million donation on June 30, 2022, and closed out FY22 with donations totaling $1,963,423.26. VSF's FY22 support for all DVS Service Lines totaled $784,391.85.

The next VSF Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2022 at 11:00 AM at the Virginia War Memorial.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul Haughton
Chairman
Virginia Veterans Services Foundation

# ATTACHMENT 15

## Virginia War Memorial Foundation Report

VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

**Calendar of upcoming events through December 2022**

**LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA: SPEAKER SERIES**

This lecture series features a wide array of speakers addressing topics of military readiness, economic strength, history, and cultural influence — those things that have positioned the United States as a world superpower.

**RUSH LOVING, JR.: FAT BOY AND THE CHAMPAGNE SALESMAN**
**OCTOBER 19**

Rush Loving's new book offers a compelling behind-the- scenes exploration of the road to World War II and the invasion of Poland by Hitler's Third Reich. Focusing on the personal power plays within Hitler's inner circle, Loving details the struggle for Hitler's approval, long before the battle for Poland had begun. Loving, a former newspaper journalist and writer for Fortune magazine, is a leading American railroad historian.

**ROSEMARY GIBSON: CHINA RX: EXPOSING THE RISKS OF AMERICA'S DEPENDENCE ON CHINA FOR MEDICINE**
**NOVEMBER 9**

This probing book examines the implications of our reliance on China for the quality and availability of vital medicines. Several decades ago, penicillin, vitamin C, and many other prescription and over-the-counter products were manufactured in the United States. But today, our most essential drugs are made in China. Gibson's enlightening talk will shed light on the factors leading to our dependence on China for medicine and possible solutions.

**THE COMMONWEALTH'S PATRIOT DAY CEREMONY**
**SEPTEMBER 12**

This year marks the 21st anniversary of the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil that occurred on September 11, 2001. An outdoor ceremony will be held in the E. Bruce Heilman Amphitheater.

**POW/MIA DAY**
**SEPTEMBER 16**

As in years past, we observe this day by placing a traditional "Missing Man Table" in the Anne Carter and Walter R. Robins, Jr. Lobby. All of the elements of the place setting, the tablecloth, the slice of lemon, the salt on the bread plate, the red ribbon, and red rose are symbolic of the different aspects of the grief endured by those who mourn the missing.

**2022 SIPS ON THE SKYLINE**
**SEPTEMBER 23**

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation is proud to host the 4th Annual Sips on the Skyline, a fun-filled evening celebration featuring delicious food, great music, creative craft cocktails designed by Virginia's best distillers, and of course, the skyline views of downtown Richmond and the James River that you can

only get at the Virginia War Memorial. This social and educational event offers supporters and friends a special opportunity to gather with like-minded friends, educators, and veterans who all share a passion for the Memorial and its mission.

**COMMONWEALTH'S VETERANS DAY CEREMONY**
**NOVEMBER 11**
We will honor veterans with remembrances of those who were lost; those who returned but have since died, those who served and are still with us, along with those who still serve and guard our freedoms.

**COMMONWEALTH'S PEARL HARBOR DAY**
**DECEMBER 7**
This year marks the 81st anniversary of the attack on the Naval base at Pearl Harbor, an event that propelled the United States into the Second World War. The ship's bell from the USS *Virginia* will be rung as the names of those Virginians who perished that day are read aloud.

**Attendance and Participation Report January – June 2022**

The Virginia War Memorial is situated on five rolling acres affording a beautiful view of the James River and the dramatic skyline of downtown Richmond. The names of the nearly 12,000 Virginia men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars, and those killed in the Global War on Terror are engraved on the breathtaking Shrine of Memory. People, especially veterans, come here for events, programs, and lectures, but many also come for reflection and contemplation. The quiet space architecture of the Shrine is open every day until midnight. Our attendance report attempts to capture the number of people who visit the Shrine only, as well as those entering the building.

On-site attendance from January – June 2022 is roughly 54,000 with an increase during the warmer weather months and our patriotic commemorations.

- Public Livestreams: 29 programs, 609 participants
- Private Livestreams for Schools: 1 program, 104 participants
- Student Programs: 12 programs with 2,978 students, 68 teachers
- Programs with Life-Long Learners: 17 programs, 585 participants
- On-site Programs: 8 programs, 149 participants

**Total Programs: 67 programs, 4,480 participants**

**Special guest speakers and partnering organizations:**

- Professor Andy Waskie, President of the 8th Armored Division Association (Educator)
- Dr. Clay Mountcastle, Director of the Virginia War Memorial (Historian & Educator)
- Author Andy Adkins III (Writer)
- Krystina Diman, Army's Mortuary Affairs
- MG Robert M. Dyess, Jr., USA (Ret.) (U.S. Army Veteran, Grenada)
- Howard and Richard Baugh (Howard Baugh Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.)
- LTG Joseph R. Inge, USA (Ret.) (U.S. Army Veteran, 30+ years of service)
- Military Women's Memorial (Amy Poe, Britta Granrud, Alexandra Silva)
- U.S. Army Women's Museum, Tracy Bradford (Curator), Micaela Procopio (Educator)
- National Museum of the United States Army, Jen Dubina (Educator)
- Monthaven Arts & Cultural Center (John Pitcher)
- Mighty Pen Project Professor David Robbins (Spring and Summer 2022)