



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

101 N. 14<sup>TH</sup> ST., 17<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
RICHMOND VA 23219

*Air Force Association*  
*Air Force Sergeants Association*  
*American Legion*  
*AMVETS*  
*Association of the United States Army*  
*Disabled American Veterans*  
*Fifth Baptist Church Veterans Ministry*  
*Fleet Reserve Association*  
*Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America*  
*Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.*  
*Marine Corps League*  
*Military Officers Association of America*  
*Military Order of the Purple Heart*  
*Military Order of the World Wars*  
*National Vet Court Alliance*  
*Navy Mutual Aid Association*  
*Paralyzed Veterans of America*  
*Reserve Organization of America*  
*Student Veterans of America*  
*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*

Adopted 09.19.2024

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

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

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

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

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

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