



Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

“The natural spokesman for the disabled veteran, his first friend and advocate, is his veterans organization.”

- Richard Seeyle Jones, “A History of The American Legion,” 1946



Objectives

Mission and History of the VA&R Pillar of the American Legion

National Commissions operating under VA&R Pillar

Department of Ohio VA&R Programs

Department Service Officers

Post Service Officers

What to do when a Veteran transfers to Post Everlasting

Review



History of VA&R Pillar

- The Legion has been the nation's leading advocate for proper health care and earned benefits for America's veterans. The Legion was instrumental in creating the Veterans Administration in 1930, and an ardent supporter of its rise to Cabinet status when it became the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1989.
 - As it has for decades, the Legion continues to aggressively lobby for adequate funding of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), to provide timely access to quality health care. Additionally, the Legion seeks to ensure fair rulings on claims and other earned veterans benefits for those who have service-connected injuries and illnesses. American Legion accredited service officers and other professional staff works diligently to assist veterans in obtaining the benefits and care they have earned and deserve through VHA, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the National Cemetery Administration.
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Mission & Top Priorities



Protect VA from Budget Reductions

Boost VA Construction Projects

Improve access to health care in rural areas

Address Environmental exposure issues

Increase staffing levels to reduce VA Claims backlog

Expand Veterans Treatment Courts

Increase funding for National Cemetery Administration

System Worth Saving Program

Research various treatments for treating Traumatic Brain Injury & Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder not currently being employed by DOD or VA.

Regional Office Action Review Program: Conducts site visits to VA regional offices to evaluate the quality of disability claims ..recommend strategies for improvement

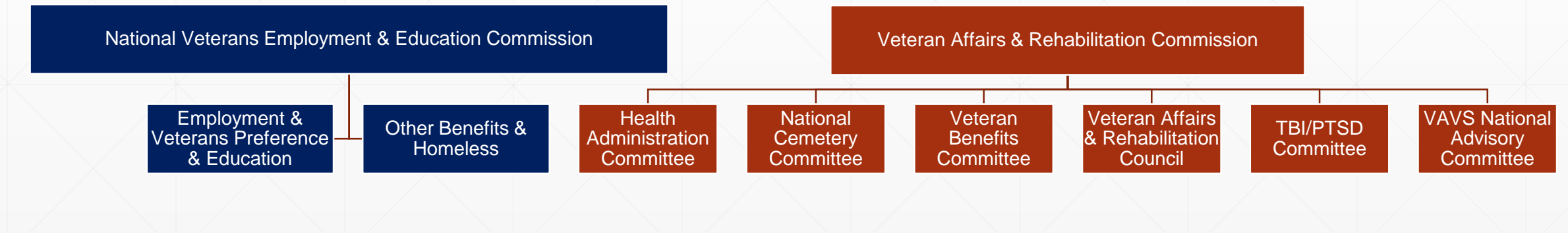
Mains an extensive network of more than 2,500 professionally accredited department service officers, and National appeals representatives.



National Commissions & Committees

Purpose of VA&R Commission: formulates and recommends to the NEC policies, plans, and programs on direct assistance, outreach and support for veterans and their families with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims and benefits, health care, memorial affairs, and women veterans' programs. To ensure they receive the highest quality of care from VA...coordinates the activities of the national organization...oversees the effectiveness of The American Legions programs of service to war veterans.

Purpose of Employment & Education Commission: to provide veterans with comprehensive education benefits, new employment & business opportunities, and to end homelessness among veterans.



Department of Ohio VA&R Programs & Committees



- **Post Service Officers**
- **VA Voluntary Services**
 - **Gifts for Yanks**
- **Employment & Education**
- **Temporary Financial Assistance**

****These will be discussed further in the following slides**

Department of Ohio VA&R Programs & Committees

Post Service Officers



- **Post Service Officers:** Volunteer position within an individual post. A PSO serves as a link between the veteran or dependent and a representative holding American Legion accreditation. PSO should be knowledgeable about local resources available to Veterans and their dependents. PSO are trained annually by the Department Service Officers on the basics of VA Forms, Presumptive conditions, Service Connection, Pension, widows' pension and burial benefits.
 - To Get involved see if your Post has an acting PSO. If they do not speak with the Commander and executive board for appointment. This is an appointed position not elected.
 - Guidance and training can be obtained by the VBA Coordinator William Genochio at Genochio@ohiolegion.com
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Department of Ohio VA&R Programs & Committees

VA Voluntary Services



- The connecting link between the medical facility and the American Legion Post. VAVS Volunteer serves at the VA medical facility.
 - Is informed about the VA medical facility they represent, its policies, procedures, and patient treatment programs.
 - Is to inform the Post of VA Medical Facility's policies & programs
 - Is to inform the VA Medical Facility of the American Legion Programs.
 - Works with the Gifts for Yanks Program to support VAVS programs, events, or to provide resources that supports the Veteran.
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Department of Ohio VA&R Programs & Committees

Gifts for Yanks



- Supports veterans in Ohio VA facilities and Veteran homes
- Supports VAVS volunteers
- Supports VA Homeless Veteran Shutdowns
- Supports Military & Veterans Treatment Courts
- Provides gifts to veterans at Ohio VAMCs and Veterans homes during the holiday Season

Being a Partner: The Gifts for Yanks program is completely dependent on the Legion Family fundraising efforts. All contributions to the Gifts for Yanks program directly impacts our Veterans' receiving care in our VA facilities and Ohio Veterans Homes. For further information contact Robert Steggemann, 3rd District, Gifts For Yanks Commission Chairman or Andrew Klingler, Gifts For Yanks Coordinator at aklinger@ohiolegion.com or 740-513-1787.

Department of Ohio VA&R Programs & Committees

Employment & Education



Recognizes Veteran friendly businesses in the State of Ohio. Promotes Career Readiness among the Veteran Community.

How to be involved

- Notify department of Veteran owned businesses in your area / Districts
 - Engage veteran owned businesses and host career fair at post. Put veterans in community looking for jobs in touch with these veteran owned businesses.
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Department of Ohio VA&R Programs & Committees

Temporary Financial Assistance



Through the American Veteran & Children Foundation, Veterans with minor children are able to apply for a one-time grant upwards of \$1500. This grant is designed to prevent children of Veterans from experiencing homelessness and/or lack of utilities such as heat, water, and electric. Applicants must first exhaust all local and State resources.

General Eligibility Guidelines

- Applicant must possess an up-to-date membership in The American Legion **OR**
 - Active-duty servicemember or serving on active-duty orders
 - The application must be completed in its' entirety and include the necessary documents including **current** statements, bills, leases, foreclosures, eviction notices to be considered
 - Include a written narrative of your ask and your action plan that indicated your need is temporary in nature.
 - All forms of possible assistance must be applied for, documented, and exhausted at the local level.
 - Remember to apply for TFA at your local County Veterans Service Commission
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Department Commander Visits VA Facilities

Each year, the Department Commander meets with the Executive Staff of every VA Medical Center in Ohio and Ohio Veterans Home to be presented with an update of current staffing, policies, lines of service, and programs that affect or are offered to local Veterans. At the end of each meeting, the Commander asks, “How can the American Legion support you?”

VA Medical Locations in Ohio

Outpatient Clinic

- Canton
- Gallipolis
- Toledo
- Youngstown

VA Medical Centers

- Chillicothe VAMC
- Cincinnati VAMC
- Louis Stokes Cleveland VAMC
- Chalmers P. Wylie Ambulatory Care Center
- Dayton VAMC

Community Base Outpatient Clinic

- Akron CBOC
- Athens CBOC
- Ashtabula CBOC
- East Liverpool CBOC
- Cambridge CBOC
- Clermont County CBOC
- Georgetown CBOC
- Grove City CBOC
- Hamilton CBOC
- Lancaster CBOC
- Lima CBOC
- Mansfield CBOC
- Marietta CBOC
- Marion CBOC
- Middletown CBOC
- New Philadelphia CBOC
- Newark CBOC
- Parma CBOC
- Portsmouth CBOC
- Ravenna CBOC
- Sandusky CBOC
- Lorain County CBOC
- Springfield CBOC
- Belmont County CBOC
- Toledo CBOC
- Warren CBOC
- Lake County CBOC
- Wilmington CBOC
- Zanesville CBOC

Ohio Veteran Homes

- Georgetown
- Sandusky



Department Service Officer

- The American Legion Department of Ohio Currently employees 6 full time DSO's and 1 part time DSO. They are located at the Cleveland Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO) Cleveland Ohio, The Dayton VAMC, Cincinnati VAMC and the Columbus VAMC. The Cleveland VARO Team also covers Wade Park VAMC.
 - All appeals are conducted by the 3 DSO's located at the Cleveland VARO office via in person hearings referred as video conference hearings and Virtual Hearings. The 4th DSO is currently being trained.
 - The purpose of the DSO is to provide expert knowledge in the field of veteran's benefits and benefits available to the veteran's spouse and dependents. DSOs are highly trained to handle applications for benefits, Pre-Determination (Proposed Reduction) Hearings and Board of Veterans Appeals Hearings as well as other various needs pertaining to the veteran's needs.
 - POC for the DSO's is William Genochio, VBA Coordinator William.genochio@va.gov / genochio@ohiolegion.com / 216-522-3504 or 740-816-7589
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Post Service Officers



Post Service Officer Training is conducted annually at Department Headquarters by the Department Service Officers

Basic Forms for Post Service Officers to know

- VA Form 21-22, Selection of Service Organization (needed to rep the veteran)
 - VA Form 21-526EZ Application for Benefits
 - VA Form 21-534EZ Application for Death Benefits
 - VA Form 21-530 Application for Burial Benefits
 - VA Form 10182 Notice of Disagreement (this starts the appeal process)
 - VA Form 20-0996 Higher Level Review
 - VA Form 20-0995 Supplemental Claim and used to Reopen previously denied claims.
 - Assistance with these forms can be obtained by contacting the DSO's or CVSO within your respected county. <https://ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/site/residents/resources/county-veterans-services-offices>
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Veteran transfers to Post Everlasting



Family Preparation List

- Location of DD-214 & VA Award Letter
- Know the veterans POA (Service Organization that represents the claim or appeal).
- Know the veterans Branch of Service, Service dates, and deployments.
- Know if the veteran is service connected or have a claim filed with VA.

When a Veteran transfers to Post Everlasting

- Notify VA of the veteran's death by submitting a copy of the death certificate
File a 21P-530 Application for Burial Benefits (if veteran is married and spouse is on the VA award letter, no need to file burial benefits)
- File a 21-22 for the surviving spouse to elect a Service organization to represent surviving spouse or claimant on behalf of deceased veteran
- If veteran has an existing claim or appeal with the VA, file a 21P-0847 within one year of death to allow the surviving spouse to continue the claim
- File a 21-534EZ application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued benefits



VA&R Review

“Veterans Serving Veterans”
