

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Congressionally Mandated Report  
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans**

**Biennial Report 2022**

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## Letter from the Advisory Committee Chair

The Honorable Denis McDonough  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

I am appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV).

Reflecting on the unique circumstances placed upon the Advisory Committee due to COVID-19, we were compelled to search and navigate a different way to communicate and complete our committee responsibilities.


The Director and staff of the Center for Minority Veterans provided excellent leadership and positive guidance, along with enormous efforts to support our commitment to our Veterans. We conducted national meetings and off-site visits using virtual platforms. Our virtual visits to Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida (2021) and Phoenix, Arizona (2022) provided opportunities to hear new and ongoing concerns from minority Veterans as well as VA staff.

The enclosed 2022 Biennial report includes specific recommendations for your consideration.

The ACMV is very thankful for your leadership and guidance. We are encouraged with the positive direction and ongoing progress to enhance access to VA services for all Veterans.

On behalf of the ACMV, please allow me to express my sincere appreciation for allowing me and my Cohorts to serve the VA and our minority Veterans. Our research, our dedication and our collective abilities will help all Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert V. McDonald", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert V. "Bobby" McDonald  
Chair, Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans

## **Part I. Executive Summary**

The 2022 Biennial Report of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV) provides the Committee's observations, recommendations and rationales that address the effectiveness of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) delivery of benefits and services to minority Veterans.

The ACMV fulfilled its requirement to conduct a minimum of two meetings during fiscal year (FY) 2022 in accordance with P.L. 103-446 and the ACMV charter dated March 25, 2022. The ACMV also fulfilled its requirement to conduct a minimum of two meetings during FY 2021. In FY 2021, ACMV met virtually on December 8 - 10, 2020, at VA Central Office (VACO) in Washington, DC and conducted a virtual site visit in Tampa/Saint Petersburg, Florida on April 20 - 22, 2021. Specifically in FY 2022, ACMV met virtually on December 7 - 9, 2021, at VACO in Washington, DC and conducted a virtual site visit in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 3 – 5, 2022.

The meetings at VACO, included briefings from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) and select Staff Offices. Ex Officio members from the Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Labor (DOL) also provided briefings on their respective missions and services provided to minority Veterans at these meetings.

During the Tampa/Saint Petersburg virtual site visit, the ACMV received briefings from VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), James A. Haley VA Medical Center (VAMC), Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (HCS), Saint Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery. On the afternoon of April 21, 2021, the ACMV and representatives from the James A. Haley VAMC, Bay Pines HCS, Saint Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery, responded to questions from minority Veterans and provided updates on current VA initiatives during a virtual town hall meeting.

During the Phoenix virtual site visit, the ACMV received briefings from the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 22), Phoenix HCS, Phoenix Regional Office, National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona and Vet Center. On the afternoon of May 5, 2022, ACMV and representatives from the Phoenix HCS, Phoenix Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona responded to questions from minority Veterans and provided updates on current VA initiatives during a virtual town hall meeting.

## **Part II. Summary of 2022 Recommendations**

The ACMV reviewed information received during meetings with VA officials through document reviews and from direct communications with minority Veterans. The Committee strongly believes that if implemented, the three 2022 recommendations will significantly enhance VA's ability to strategically address the needs of minority Veterans as the Veterans population become more diverse. These recommendations and rationales address the following issues:

- Recommend that VA capture race/ethnic and service branch metrics in all Military Sexual Trauma (MST) tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders. By 2nd quarter FY 2025.
- Improve diversity within the VA workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS, 13, 14, 15 and Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. By 2nd quarter FY 2025.
- Require VA to expand the Veteran Legacy Memorial to include Veterans of the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery. By 2nd quarter FY 2025.

**Part III. ACMV 2022 Recommendations, Rationales and VA Responses**

**Recommendation 1:** That VA capture race/ethnic and service branch metrics in all MST tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders.

**Rationale:** Current data are only broken down by gender. Additional metrics would provide data to track minority trends/experiences and allow VA to adapt as needed to better serve and support Veterans more accurately.

**VA Reponses:** Concur in principle.

Regarding the first part of this recommendation, VHA strongly agrees with the value of examining MST related data by race/ethnicity and will take steps to expand its work in this area including potentially including data aggregated by race/ethnicity in annual reporting. Examining data by service branch may have less value for program planning and improvement and thus be a lower priority; however, VHA sees potential value in examining data by reserve component former Service member versus active-duty former Service member and will explore this possibility further. Availability and quality of data may be an issue for these latter efforts, however and constrain the work.

Regarding the second part of this recommendation, VHA already requires that all former Service members seen for care are screened for MST and, as a best practice, recommends that questions about MST are included in all mental health intakes. VHA will explore the value and feasibility of strengthening the latter recommendation to a requirement.

**VHA Action Plan:**

**Recommendation 1:** That VA capture race/ethnicity and service branch metrics in all MST tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

<b>Steps to Implement</b>	<b>Lead Office</b>	<b>Other Offices</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Current Status as of June 2022</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
- Convene internal discussions to determine pros/cons and feasibility. -Identify and implement appropriate action steps.	11 Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (MHSP)	11MHSP will consult with VHA Office of Health Equity (OHE) and other	-Convene internal discussions to determine pros/cons and feasibility. -Identify and implement appropriate action steps	End of 1st Quarter FY 2025	Initiated	11MHSP Action Group

		offices as needed				
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<b>Office of Health Equity (OHE) Action Plan:</b>						
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> That VA capture race/ethnicity and service branch metrics in all MST tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.						
Steps to Implement	Lead Office	Other Offices	Tasks	Due Date	Current Status as of June 2022	Contact Person
Per discussion, deferred to 11MSHP						

**Recommendation 2:** That VA improve diversity within the Department’s workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS 13,14,15 and SES positions by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

**Rationale:** Increasing diversity within these positions of responsibility aligns with Executive Order 14035 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce and other Federal Government initiatives and programs.

**VA Reponses:** Concur.

Enhancing the diversity reflected within the GS 13, 14, 15 and SES positions would require two pathways: (1) creating and supporting new VHA-wide resources that any VHA employee could access to gain career experiences in their journey to higher-grade GS positions such as access to experiential development opportunities, career pathing and supervisor career conversations and (2) enhancing current practices around VHA leadership pool development (GS 13 to SES), including talent entry/identification/selection and expectations of talent skill/work experiences at higher leadership levels.

For all VHA employees, movement through one’s career or leadership pathway requires the ability to access, discuss and build more complex career skills and work experiences, such as through committee/project work, stretch assignments, detail/acting opportunities, mentorship and career conversations. Access to these experience-based opportunities lacks transparency and supportive resources in VHA, as well as equity by relying on interpersonal connections to locally accessible activities. Collating experience-based activities through a unified, VHA-wide, online system would enhance equity. Success of this tool is dependent on local-to-national leader support to submit contributions and system-wide marketing. Additional options include local-to-national

investment in career pathing resources to assist employees in exploring future growth options, which could be coupled with the soon-to-pilot Supervisor Coordinator Program directed at equipping supervisors to have career and development discussions with staff.

For VHA leadership talent pools (GS 13 to SES), this group is also dependent on access to experiential opportunities to build their leadership skills, but further limiting factors may be the equity in how these talent pools are identified or selected into leadership paths and leadership programming. To address this inequity, VHA uses a Universal Application with standard items for its competitive leadership programming. Rating/selection is then customized by grouped grade levels and program audience (supervisor versus senior leader) to ensure competitive selection is equitable across grades since leaders are needed at all organizational levels. VHA also uses career aspiration surveys and broad marketing systems to identify aspiring leaders for its leadership programming; practices that enhance equity and minimize unconscious bias associated with nomination processes. A new practice expected in FY 2024 will include a leadership potential assessment tool open to any VHA employee that can be mined to identify talent with previously untapped leadership skills or interest. Also, in progress is a checklist of general leadership traits, skills and experiences that VHA Hiring Officials seek of VHA manager and senior leader talent. This checklist allows greater transparency in the selection process and provides a benchmark for talent to inform their leadership development journey.

<b>VHA Action Plan:</b>						
<b>Recommendation 2:</b> That VA improve diversity within the Department’s workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS 13,14, 15 and SES positions by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.						
<b>Steps to Implement</b>	<b>Lead Office</b>	<b>Other Offices</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Current Status as of June 2022</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Online Experience-Based Resource System	Institute for Learning Education and Development (ILEAD)	Workforce Management and Consulting Office (WMC) VISNs	Build platform and work with WMC and VISNs to submit experience-based opportunities	FY 2024 - 2025	N/A – New Program	Kelley Caramelli
Career Pathing	ILEAD	Human Resources	Design Road Maps for Career Growth Market Road Maps for Transparent and Broad Access	FY 2024 - 2025	N/A – New Service Area	Kelley Caramelli



Supervisor Coordinator Development Pilot	ILEAD		Pilot program in Nine Facilities and VACO	FY 2023 - 2024	N/A – New Program	Kelley Caramelli
Universal Application	ILEAD		Revise current version	FY 2023 - 2024	Implemented and used for Healthcare Leadership Development Program	Kelley Caramelli
Career Aspiration Survey	ILEAD		Explore expansion and access to survey at lower grade levels	FY 2023 - 2024	Ongoing; used to identify aspiring leader talent pools	Kelley Caramelli
Leadership Potential Assessment Tool	ILEAD	National Center for Organization Development	Build and pilot a VHA-owned leadership potential tool	FY 2024	Ongoing	Kelley Caramelli
Leadership Attribute Checklist	ILEAD	WMC VISNs	Identify leadership traits sought by VHA Hiring Officials	FY 2023 - 2024	N/A – New Resource	Kelley Caramelli

**ORMDI Action Plan:** Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) will conduct a barrier analysis to identify specific policies, procedures or practices that could be causing this lack of diversity.

**Recommendation 2:** That VA improve diversity within the Department’s workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS 13,14, 15 and SES positions by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

Steps to Implement	Lead Office	Other Offices	Tasks	Due Date	Current Status as of June 2022	Contact Person
VA will conduct a thorough investigation of relevant policies, procedures and practices to determine the causes of this lack of diversity.	ORMDI	VHA VBA NCA Office of Chief Human Capital Officer	- Conduct data analysis on workforce and applicant data - Review and analyze various VA policies and procedures	June 30, 2022	Completed	Ryan Pugh, Director of Workforce Analysis

		(OCHCO) Corporate Senior Executive Management Office  (CSEMO)	- Conduct a survey, interviews and focus groups and analyze results - Develop a list of potential barriers			
VA will create an action plan to eliminate identified barriers.	ORMDI	VHA VBA NCA OCHCO CSEMO	- Work with VHA, VBA, NCA, OCHCO, CSEMO to create an action plan to eliminate identified barriers derived from the investigation	September 30, 2022	A draft action plan has been completed and is going through the approval process.	Ryan Pugh, Director of Workforce Analysis

**Recommendation 3:** Require VA to expand the Veteran Legacy Memorial to include Veterans of the COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery.

**Rationale:** To ensure that Veterans interred outside the United States are included.

**VA Responses:** Concur.

As part of the VLM Strategic Roadmap, NCA plans to bring these Veterans and others similarly situated Veterans into VLM by 4th Quarter FY 2026. Office of Information Technology (OIT), Memorial Benefits Services (MBS) is communicating with NCA to expand VLM to include COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands. NCA will be responsible for communicating its Action Plan and business requirements to OIT. Upon receipt OIT/MBS will review and implement NCA's outlined requirements.

**NCA Action Plan:**

**Recommendation 3:** That VA expand the VLM to include Veterans of COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

Steps to Implement	Lead Office	Other Offices	Tasks	Due Date	Current Status as of July 2022	Contact Person
1.	NCA Business Transformation and Requirement Service	NCA Office of Engagement and Memorial Affairs(OEMI)	Research digital requirements for interments records	September 30, 2025	Not Started	Ginger Wilson Bill Barnes
2.	NCA (OEMI)	OIT Benefits Appeals and Memorials	IT development work to add interment records to VLM	September 30, 2026	Not Started	James LaPaglia William Rodgers

**OIT Action Plan:** There has been no research to date from OIT concerning this subset of Veteran data, or if any data resides in any database. Once an NCA Business Requirement has been communicated, MBS/OIT will be the team to implement the change.

**Recommendation 3:** That VA expand the VLM to include Veterans of the COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

Steps to Implement	Lead Office	Other Offices	Tasks	Due Date	Current Status as of July 2022	Contact Person
Determine location of data. Determine proper method of ingesting data into VLM, such as through use of an Application Programming Interface (API).	OIT/ MBS	NCA	Add Veterans to VLM database	Under NCA Review	Not Implemented	William Rodgers

**Part IV. Agenda: 2020 Virtual Washington, DC Departmental Briefings**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)  
December 8 - 10, 2020**

Adobe Connect: <https://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/acmv/>

**AGENDA**

**Tuesday - December 8, 2020 (Virtual)**

11:00 a.m. - 1:10 a.m.	Opening Remarks/Review Agenda	Stephen B. Dillard, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
		Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:10 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.	VA Advisory Committee Management	Jeffrey Moragne Advisory Committee Management Officer
11:25 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.	Center for Minority Veterans	Dennis May, Deputy Director
11:40 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	VA Remarks (5-minute Video)	The Honorable Robert Wilkie Secretary
11:50 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.	National Cemetery Administration	Glenn Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations

**Topics:**

- Native American Cemetery Grant Program Review
- Update on Outreach Activities
- Update on state/territory flag installations

12:20 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.	Veterans Experience Office	Dr. Lynda Davis, Chief, Veterans Experience Officer
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**Topics:**

- Roles & Responsibilities of VEO
- Brief on the Veterans' Family, Caregiver and Survivor Advisory Committee
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys - minority Veterans

12:50 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Break

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics  
Melissa Chiu,  
Director, Statistics and Analytics Service  
Tamara Denise Lee  
Statistician

**Topics:**

- Provide an update on latest Minority Veterans Report

1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Office of Tribal Government Relations  
Stephanie Birdwell,  
Director

**Topics:**

- Update on OTGR's Outreach Activities
- Update on OTGR's Government to Government Consultation Initiatives

2:00 p.m. - 2:55 p.m. Veterans Benefits Administration  
Cheryl Rawls,  
Assistant Deputy Under Secretary,  
Office of Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement, Office of Field Operations

**Topics:**

- Update on Transformation Initiatives
- Review/update on the Native American Direct Home Loan Program
- Update on Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans
- Provide an update on the Annual Benefits Report by State

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Wrap Up/Adjourn  
Robert McDonald,  
Chairman

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)  
December 8 - 10, 2020**

Adobe Connect: <https://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/acmv/>  
VANTS: 800-767-1750, Moderator Code: 45228#

**AGENDA**

**Wednesday - December 9, 2020 (Virtual)**

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.	Opening & Review Agenda	Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.	Board of Veterans' Appeals	Cheryl Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals

**Topics:**

- Provide the status of the Veterans Appeals Improvement & Modernization Act
- Provide data, broken down by race/ethnicity on minority Veterans

11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.	Veterans' Health Administration.	Dr. Kameron Matthews, VHA Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services
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**Topics:**

- 15-minute prepared video "VHA: Responding to COVID-19"
- 5-minute Remarks

12:10 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.	Center for Women Veterans	Jacquelyn Hayes- Byrd, Executive Director
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**Topic:**

- Provide an Overview/Update on the Center for Women Veterans

12:40 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Mental Health	Dr. Clifford Smith, Director Field Support & Analytics, Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
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Gayle Iwamasa, Ph.D.  
HSPP, National Director of  
Inpatient Mental Health

**Topics**

- Provide an update on mental health initiatives
- Provide a brief on staffing & recruitment
- Provide a brief on any trends noted when treating minority Veterans

1:15 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.            Break

1:25 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.            Office of Telehealth

Dr. Leonie Heyworth  
Director, Synchronous  
Telehealth

**Topics**

- Provide an update on current legislation
- Provide an update on Telehealth/Telemedicine

1:55 p.m. - 2:25 p.m.            Office of Rural Health

Dr. Thomas Klobucar  
Executive Director

**Topics:**

- Provide an update on access to insular areas
- Provide an update on outreach efforts in tribal areas

2:25 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.            Office of Health Equity

Dr. Ernest M. Moy  
Executive Director

**Topics:**

- Provide introductions of new office staff
- Provide informational OHE's Mission Act
- Provide an update on the Electronic Health Record
- Provide a brief on the Patient Advocate Office

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.            Wrap-up/Adjourn

Robert McDonald,  
Chairman

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)  
December 8 - 10, 2020**

Adobe Connect: <https://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/acmv/>  
VANTS: 800-767-1750, Moderator Code: 45228#

**AGENDA**

**Thursday - December 10, 2020 (Virtual)**

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.	Opening Remarks/Review Agenda	Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.	Office of Diversity & Inclusion	Ryan Pugh Management Analyst, HRA

**Topics:**

- Provide a review of minorities in Senior Grades
- Provide VA Employee Demographics
- Applicant Flow Analysis

11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.	Women's Health Services	Dr. Donna L. Washington, MPH, Attending Physician VHA
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**Topic:**

- Provide an Overview of Racial/Ethnic Minority Women's Health in VA

12:10 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.	Million Veteran Program	Dr. Jennifer Moser, MVP Scientific Program Manager
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**Topics:**

- Provide an overview and goal of the program
- Provide an update on the data collection results

12:40 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Ex-Officio Update
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**Topics:**

- Update on departmental initiatives effecting minority Veterans

1:00 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.	Break	
1:10 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.	Public Comments	Open to the public
1:25 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Leadership Exit Briefing	VHA—Ms. Law, DCOS VBA—Ms. Rawls NCA—Glenn Powers
2:15 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.	Committee After Action	Robert McDonald, Chairman
2:50 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.	Administrative Paperwork	Juanita Mullen, CMV
2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Wrap Up/Adjourn	Robert McDonald, Chairman

**Part V. Agenda: 2021 Tampa/Saint Petersburg Virtual Site Visit**

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans  
Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida, Site Visit 2021**

WebEx Events Link:

<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/onstage/g.php?PRID=722998c44b7a890eb0272d75c1107023>

Event Password: 1baypines!

Or call USA Toll Number: 1-404-397-1596, Access Code: 199 424 8659

**AGENDA**

**Tuesday - April 20, 2021**

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Opening remarks & Prepare for Tampa/St. Petersburg area Briefings	Dennis May, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	VISN 8: VA Sunshine Briefing	Dr. Miguel H. LaPuz, Healthcare Network Director

140 Fountain Parkway, Ste. 600  
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

**Topic:**

- Network Director Introduction

11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	James A. Haley VAMC Briefing	David VanMeter, Interim Director Paul Murray, MVPC
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**Topics:**

- Provide Overview VAMC
- Outreach to Minority Veterans (MVPC)

12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Bay Pines VA HCS Briefing	Paul Russo Director, Obad Muniz, MVPC
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**Topics:**

- Suicide Prevention
- Outreach to Minority Veterans (MVPC)
- Women & Homeless Veterans
- Leadership Training Programs
- Mission Act/Rural Health Initiatives

1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Break

1:45 p.m. - 2: 45 p.m.

Bay Pines VA HCS Briefing

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans  
Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida, Site Visit 2021**

WebEx Events Link:

<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/onstage/g.php?PRID=722998c44b7a890eb0272d75c1107023>

**AGENDA**

**Wednesday - April 21, 2021**

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Opening remarks & Prepare for Tampa/St. Petersburg area Briefings	Dennis May, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	St. Petersburg Regional Office Briefing	Julianna Boor, Director Gregory Gales, MVPC

**Topics:**

- Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans (MVPC)
- Women & Homeless/Incarcerated Veterans
- Leadership Training Programs
- Intake Sites
- Claims Processing
- Home Loan Program/NA Direct Home Loan Program

12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Break	
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	St. Petersburg Regional Office Briefing continued	
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Break	
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Bay Pines National Cemetery Briefing	Douglas Maddox, Assistant Director

**Topics:**

- Provide an overview
- Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn	Robert McDonald, Chairman
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**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans  
Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida Site Visit 2021**

WebEx Events Link:

<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/onstage/g.php?PRID=722998c44b7a890eb0272d75c1107023>

**AGENDA**

**Thursday - April 22, 2021**

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Opening remarks & Prepare for Tampa/St. Petersburg area Virtual Townhall	Dennis May, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Virtual Townhall	ACMV Committee
1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Break	
1:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Committee after Action Review & Sub-committee Notes	Dennis May, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
	Prepare for Exit Briefing	
1:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Public Comments	
2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Conduct Exit Briefing	
	VBA Leadership - Julianna Boor, Director VHA Leadership - Paul Russo, VA HCS Director/CEO NCA Leadership - Douglas R. Maddox, Assistant Director	
2:45 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.	Administrative Paperwork	
2:50 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Committee Wrap-Up	Robert McDonald, Chairman
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn Meeting	

## **Part VI. Town Hall Meeting – Tampa/Saint Petersburg, Florida**

ACMV hosted a virtual Veterans town hall meeting. The meeting provided Veterans a forum to share issues of concern and to obtain answers to questions from ACMV members related to VA benefits and services. There were approximately 41 attendees. Local VA officials from the James A. Haley VAMC, Bay Pines HCS, St. Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery served as panel members during the meeting. Numerous questions were raised regarding the following issues:

- Data on MST for underserved populations especially for African American women Veterans.
- Data on rejection rates for posttraumatic stress disorder/MST for Black and Hispanic Women Veterans.
- Lack of shelters for women Veterans with families in Pinellas and Hillsborough.
- Veteran utilization rate among minority Veterans specific mental health reference suicides among the Asian/Pacific Islander populations.

During the town hall, the ACMV heard from Veterans who had great experiences with VA.

**Part VII. Exit Briefing with St. Petersburg Regional Office, Bay Pines Healthcare System, James A. Haley VA Medical Center and Bay Pines National Cemetery**

Julianna Boor, Director, St. Petersburg Regional Office:

- Seminole Tribe of Florida has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VA.
- VBA understands that there has to be trust building.
- VBA does not have a Native American Liaison on their staff.
- Data is collected by the claims.

Paul Russo, Director Bay Pines VA Healthcare System:

- VHA has a Strategic Plan – COVID19 is a priority/main focus, and their focus has moved to vaccinations.
  - Since the pandemic, VHA hasn't really looked at their Strategic Plan since their efforts is focused on the pandemic.
- Reference COVID-19, a question was asked on VHA having a specific targeted message.
  - It's a moving target and they work with Public Affairs/VACO Public Affairs.
  - It's a case-by-case situation and they are constantly adjusting

Dr. Elamin M. Elamin, Chief of Staff, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System:

- Reference MST tracking and asking Veterans coming into the facility – do not have specific numbers.
- Reference vaccines started with restrictions – asked Veterans if they received a vaccine – primarily use the Moderna vaccine.
- Do what the customer wants (via telephone, face-to-face, video) – do what it takes to maximize the distribution of the vaccine.
- Purchased a mobile trailer to hit areas – to target hard to get to Veterans.
  - Working with Lowes in their parking areas.
  - 50% homeless Veterans.
- Waiting for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to be cleared.
- Making phone calls to Veterans.
- Don't have access to Florida shots database.
- COVID-19 – need to take the vaccine.

David VanMeter, Interim Director, James A. Haley VA Medical Center:

- The James Haley has a Welcome Space for women Veterans.

Douglas Maddox, Assistant Director, Bay Pines National Cemetery:

- Planning Your Legacy tool used at cemeteries.

**Part VIII. Agenda: 2021 Washington, District of Columbia Departmental Briefings**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)  
December 7 - 9, 2021**

Adobe Connect: [http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/cm\\_v\\_admin/](http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/cm_v_admin/)

**AGENDA**

**Tuesday - December 7, 2021 (Virtual)**

11:00 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.	Opening Remarks/Review Agenda	James Albino, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:05 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.	VA Advisory Committee Management	Jeffrey Moragne, Advisory Committee Management Officer
11:25 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Center for Minority Veterans	Dennis May, Deputy Director
11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	VA Remarks	The Honorable Donald M. Remy, Deputy Secretary
12:15 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.	National Cemetery Administration	Glenn R. Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations
<b><u>Topics:</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Native American Cemetery Grant Program Review.</li><li>• Update on Outreach Activities.</li><li>• Update on state/territory flag installations.</li></ul>		
12:35 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.	Lunch Break	
1:05 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.	Veterans Experience Office	John Boerstler Chief Veterans Experience Officer

**Topics:**

- Roles & Responsibilities of VEO.



- Brief on the Veterans' Family, Caregiver and Survivor Advisory Committee.
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys – minority Veterans.

1:25 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.      National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics      Eddie Thomas, Director, National Center for Veterans Analysis & Statistics  
 Tamara Denise Lee, Team Lead, Analytic, National Center for Veterans Analysis & Statistics

**Topic:**

- Provide an update on latest Minority Veterans Report

1:45 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.      Break

1:55 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.      Office of Tribal Government Relations      Stephanie Birdwell Director

**Topics:**

- Update on OTGR's Outreach Activities
- Update on OTGR's Government to Government Consultation Initiatives

2:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.      Veterans Benefits Administration      Thomas Murphy, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits

**Topics:**

- Update on Transformation Initiatives
- Review/update on the Native American Direct Home Loan Program
- Update on Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans
- Provide an update on the Annual Benefits Report by State

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.      Wrap Up/Adjourn      Robert McDonald, Chairman

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)  
December 7 - 9, 2021**

Adobe Connect: [http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/cm\\_v\\_admin/](http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/cm_v_admin/)

**AGENDA**

**Wednesday - December 8, 2021 (Virtual)**

11:00 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.	Opening & Review Agenda	Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:05 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.	Board of Veterans Appeals	Cheryl Mason, Chairman Board of Veterans Appeals

**Topics:**

- Provide the status of the Veterans Appeals Improvement & Modernization Act
- Provide data, broken down by race/ethnicity on minority Veterans

11:35 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.	Veterans Health Administration	Dr. Jane Kim, NCP Chief Consultant for Preventive Medicine
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**Topics:**

- Provide the status of the VHA response to COVID-19
- Provide VA COVID-19 vaccine data broken down by race/ethnicity on minority Veterans

12:05 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.	Center for Women Veterans	Lourdes Tiglao, Director
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**Topic:**

- Provide an Overview/Update on the Center for Women Veterans

12:35 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.	Lunch Break	
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1:05 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.	Mental Health	Dr. David Carroll, Executive Director,
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Office of Mental  
Health & Suicide  
Prevention  
Dr. Matthew Miller,  
Director,  
Suicide Prevention  
Program, Office of  
Mental Health and  
Suicide Prevention

**Topics**

- Provide an update on mental health initiatives
- Provide a brief on staffing & recruitment
- Provide a brief on any trends noted when treating minority Veterans

1:35 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.

IDEA Task Force

James L. Anderson  
Special  
Assistant/Deputy  
White House  
Liaison, Office of  
the Secretary

**Topics**

- Provide an Overview/Update on the IDEA Taskforce Program

1:55 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.

Break

2:05 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Office of Rural Health

Dr. Thomas  
Klobucar  
Executive Director

**Topics:**

- Provide an update on access to insular areas
- Provide an update on outreach efforts in tribal areas
- Provide an update on VHA/IHS MOU and Programs

2:30 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.

Office of Health Equity

Dr. Ernest M. Moy  
Executive Director

**Topics:**

- Provide introductions of new office staff
- Provide informational OHE's Mission Act

- Provide an update on the Electronic Health Record
- Provide a brief on the Patient Advocate Office

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.      Wrap-up/Adjourn

Robert McDonald,  
Chairman

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)  
December 7 - 9, 2021**

Adobe Connect: [http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/cm\\_v\\_admin/](http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/cm_v_admin/)

**AGENDA**

**Thursday - December 9, 2021 (Virtual)**

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.	Opening Remarks/Review Agenda	Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.	Office of Diversity & Inclusion	Ryan Pugh, Director, Workforce Analysis, ORMDI Harvey Johnson, DAS ORMDI

**Topics:**

- Provide a review of minorities in Senior Grades
- Provide VA Employee Demographics
- Applicant Flow Analysis.

11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.	Asian/Pacific Islander Initiatives	Vivian Hutson, FACHE Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy
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**Topic:**

- Provide an Overview/Update.

12:10 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.	Lunch Break	
12:40 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Ex-Officio Update	DOL – Mr. Kwok HHS – Captain Wu

**Topics:**

- Update on departmental initiatives effecting minority Veterans

1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Public Comments	Open to the public
1:15 p.m.- 2:05 p.m.	Leadership Exit Briefing	VHA – Dr. Kim, VBA – Ms. Rawls

NCA – Mr. Powers

2:05 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.	Committee After Action	Robert McDonald, Chairman
2:50 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.	Administrative Paperwork	Dwayne Campbell, CMV
2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Wrap Up/Adjourn	Robert McDonald Chairman

**Part IX. Agenda: Phoenix Virtual Site Visit**

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans  
Phoenix, AZ Virtual Site Visit 2022  
MS Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#)  
Eastern Standard Time**

**Tuesday - May 3, 2022**

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Opening remarks & prepare for Phoenix Area Briefing	James Albino, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	VISN 22: Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Briefing	Pamela Westbrook, Acting Deputy Network Director

**Topics:**

- Network Director Overview

11:30 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	Phoenix Health Care System Overview	Alyshia W. Smith, Director
11:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Outreach to Minority Veterans (MVPC)	Shawndin Tracy, MVPC
12:00 p.m. - 12:10 p.m.	COVID-19	Diana Dybal
12:10 p.m. - 12:20 p.m.	Military Sexual Trauma (MST)	Nadejda Alexandrova
12:20 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Women Health	Kristen Nordquist
12:30 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.	Homeless Veterans	Melody Boyet
12:40 p.m. - 12:55 p.m.	Break	
12:55 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.	Telehealth	Maricel Bobadilla

1:05 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Rural Health Initiatives	Shawndin Tracy
1:15 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.	Community Care	Ann Wilford
1:25 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.	Leadership Development	Daniel Blackman
1:35 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Vet Center	Dr. James Sardo
2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn	



**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans  
Phoenix, AZ, Virtual Site Visit 2022  
MS Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#)  
Eastern Standard Time**

**Wednesday - May 4, 2022**

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Opening remarks & Prepare for Phoenix Area Briefing	James Albino, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Phoenix Regional Office Briefing Overview	Chris Norton, Director
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Veterans Service Center/Special Missions/Intake Sites Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans (MVPC)	Austin Steveson Michael Watson
12:00 p.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Veteran Readiness & Employment (VRE)	Walter Strong
12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Break	
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Loan Guaranty/Native American Direct Loan Program	Amy Berumen
1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Regional Contact Center	Jill Rufener
1:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Question and Answers	
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Break	
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona Briefing Overview	Randy L. Heard, Director, Marco Cortez MVPC

**Topics:**

- Provide Overview of Cemetery
- Overview of Catchment Area Demographics
- Veterans Legacy Memorial

- Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans (MVPC)

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn

Robert McDonald,  
Chairman

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
 Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans  
 Phoenix, AZ Virtual Site Visit 2022  
 MS Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#)  
 Eastern Standard Time**

**Thursday - May 5, 2022**

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Chairman	Opening Remarks & Prepare for Phoenix Virtual Townhall	James Albino, DFO Robert McDonald,
11:15 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. Chairman	Committee After Action Review & Sub-committee Notes	James Albino, DFO Robert McDonald,
12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Public Comments	
12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Virtual Townhall	ACMV Committee
2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Conduct Exit Briefing	
	VHA Leadership - Alyshia W. Smith, Director VBA Leadership - Chris Norton, Director NCA Leadership - Randy L. Heard, Director	
2:45 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.	Administrative Paperwork	
2:50 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Committee Wrap-Up	Robert McDonald, Chairman
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn Meeting	

## **Part X. Phoenix Virtual Town Hall Meeting Summary**

ACMV hosted a virtual Veterans town hall meeting. The meeting provided Veterans a forum to share issues of concern and to obtain answers to questions from ACMV members related to VA benefits and services. There were approximately 40 attendees. Local VA officials from the Phoenix Healthcare System, Phoenix Regional Office and the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona served as panel members during the meeting. Numerous questions were raised regarding the following issues:

- How does the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona determine its Veterans utilization rate?
- The early stages of the COVID -19 pandemic resulted in funerals being conducted without families' presences. Is there a discussion to allow families impacted to hold memorial services?
- A question was asked how families and friends would be informed of memorial services?
- A question was asked regarding increasing participation of minority Veterans in the VA home loan program?
- An attendee asked a question regarding Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.
- A question was asked on what VA's efforts in creating a resource that enhance service animals available to Veterans and ensuring Veterans know how to access this resource.
- An attendee asked a question regarding Arlington National Cemetery

During the town hall, the ACMV heard from Veterans who had great experiences with VA. An attendee commended VISN 22 for being among the Top 5 networks in the Nation.

**Part XI. Exit Briefing: Phoenix Healthcare System, Phoenix Regional Office, and National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona**

Alyshia W. Smith, Director, Phoenix Healthcare System (PVAHCS) and Michael Welsh, Deputy Director:

- Renaming ceremony of VA's Southeast Clinic in Gilbert, AZ, to the Staff Sergeant Alexander Conrad Community Based Outpatient Clinic.
- Reference MST, tracking and asking Veterans coming into the facility – do not have specific numbers.
- Reference Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures coming into PVAHCS staff is working with a VHA team tasked with developing an enterprise-wide tool to better screen Burn Pit Veterans.
- Reference Fisher House – PVAHCS has been approved by the Fisher House Foundation for a Fisher House.
- Reference Fisher House – PVAHCS currently working with Fisher House Foundation to acquire land for the project.
- Reference Travel Reimbursement – are Veterans able to process at their primary care clinic? – Veterans will now use a new VA online portal known as the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System to process travel reimbursement

Chris Norton, Director, Phoenix Regional Benefits Office:

- Reference Phoenix Regional Office leadership race/ethnicity demographics.
- Reference does the Regional Office have the correct number of full-time employees at its intake sites.
- Reference VBA current reliance on technology, is it going to sustain itself post pandemic?
- Reference older Veteran's familiarity with VBA various technology platforms
- Reference VA partnering with the private sector to provide internet access to rural and Native American Veterans.
- Reference Regional Office compensation claims processing production rate.
- Reference to Regional Office workload.
- Reference Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program.

Randy L. Heard, Director, National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona (NMCAZ):

- Reference to outreach efforts to African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander Veterans.
- Reference lag time in scheduling services.

**APPENDIX A: Action Plan Follow Up**

**Roll Up of Open ACMV Reports Action Plans 2020 Update Spreadsheets**

**Recommendation 2:** That VA track and report on the impact of COVID-19 on minority Veterans. Specifically identify and address racial/ethnic health disparities and will further categorize the impact of COVID-19 on minority Veterans by the era served.

<b>VHA Action Plan Recommendation 2</b>						
<b>Steps to Implement</b>	<b>Lead Office</b>	<b>Other Offices</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Current Status as of June 2022</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Add race and ethnicity to VA COVID-19 National Summary, by known cases, convalescent cases and known deaths nationally. (State-level reporting of minority status will not be included for privacy reasons, due to low counts.)	VHA API	VA OIT Business Intelligence Service Line VHA OHE	1. Align race and ethnicity categories with VHA OHE reporting. 2. Harmonize data for race and ethnicity into near-real time data feeds. 3. Approvals for public facing reporting changes from VA and VHA leadership.	Ongoing Begin 1st Quarter FY 2021	Race and ethnicity data available internally.	Joseph Francis, MD, MPH; Executive Director, VHA API

Develop quarterly report for the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) on race and ethnicity of Veterans COVID-19 cases and deaths with breakdowns by military era.	VHA OHE	VA Center for Minority Veterans VA Office of Enterprise Integration	Obtain and analyze data and develop quarterly report.	December 2020	Quarterly reports on COVID-19 cases and deaths by race / ethnicity available since 12/2020. Data visualization with breakdowns by race / ethnicity and military era are available at: COVID-19 Monthly Report - Power BI (powerbigov.us)	Ernest Moy, MD, Executive Director, VHA OHE
Add risk factors as they relate to race and ethnicity in the next version of the Response Plan.	Office of the Under Secretary for Health	OEM	The next version of the response plan will language to include reference to minority Veterans having increased risk.	December 2020		Christine Bader, PhD, RN, Senior Advisor, Under Secretary for Health
Develop more intense and deliberate messaging to minority Veteran populations in a culturally sensitive	VHA OHE	VHA Population Health (10P) VHA Office of Communications (10B2)	Develop and disseminate culturally specific messaging	January 2021	Targeted messaging for minority Veterans developed, made available	Ernest Moy, MD, Executive Director, VHA OHE

manner regarding the risks of COVID19 on their health.			for COVID-19.		widely and disseminated through OHE newsletter	
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**Recommendation 3:** That VA require NCA to establish a minimum of four working agreements among institutions that serve the minority Veteran population. NCA should complete this recommendation by December 31, 2021, with annual reports starting December 31, 2022. NCA should publish results annually starting January 1, 2023.

**VA Response:** Concur in principle.

NCA’s Office of Engagement and Memorial Innovation (OEMI) manages the Veterans Legacy Grant Program. On November 26, 2021, the final rule went into effect allowing NCA to issue grants that encourage students and teachers around the country at the University and K-12 levels to immerse themselves in the rich historical resources found within VA’s National Cemeteries and VA Grant funded cemeteries. This first round of grants will specifically fund research and provide a tangible report using the stories of those interred in VA’s National Cemeteries and VA Grant Funded cemeteries with a focus on underrepresented Veterans and Service Members to include and not limited to race, gender, ethnicity, identity and Veterans from LGBTQ+ communities. The final reports or products produced can include, books, films, graphic novels, educational manuals, as well as electronic database resource materials. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in particular, are well suited to respond to this call for grant proposals. Here are examples:

1) Langston University is the only HBCU in Oklahoma. Fort Gibson National Cemetery (NC) plans to implement a Historical Legacy program based on the university’s input and direction regarding any potential areas of emphasis. Examples include but are not limited to: African American Veteran’s contributions and history of the Civil War to present; Choctaw and Cherokee Freedmen and Freedmen Veteran burial sites; and U.S. Colored Troops Veterans' burial sites at National, State or Tribal cemeteries.

2) Long Island NC plans on building a partnership with the local HBCU Reserve Officer' Training Corps (ROTC) program. This may involve the ROTC in ceremonies for Memorial Day, National Wreaths Across America Day and the National Day of Volunteerism. Building this partnership will open the door for additional opportunities to work on professional and career programs as well as outreach opportunities with HBCUs.



3) Texas Southern University & Prairie View A&M University Offices of Veterans Affairs have outreach events and activities scheduled throughout the year with Houston NC.

4) Alabama NC is planning at least one event this fiscal year with a local HBCU to promote career opportunities and VA benefits.

The mission of the Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) is to memorialize Veterans interred in NCA cemeteries through educational outreach. To that end, VLP has executed its mission successfully, which includes actively producing educational outreach materials that celebrate the service and sacrifice of the fullest diversity of the Veterans community. Examples of this can be found on NCA's Page 11 of 44 internet website under the History, Education and Legacy tab. NCA has performed outreach to various institutions that serve the minority Veteran population. Annually, the NCA VLP posts public solicitations for institutions and non-profit organizations to submit proposals to share our mission via a contract, wholly in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR). The FAR specifically prohibits us from targeting specific institutions or vendors for contract award. The OEMI and VLP staff work to build awareness amongst all institutions of higher learning of VLP contract solicitations, including in person visits to HBCUs such as Howard University. To date, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPSI) have applied (as noted below), but no HBCUs. NCA is not able to control who submits proposals or to target specific groups to respond to a public solicitation. NCA regularly reports to the Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials (ACCM) on outreach efforts to institutions of higher learning through VLP. NCA further reports to the ACCM on outreach efforts to minority and underserved communities.

During FY 2020, VLP has awarded contracts with institutions in the following categories:

- AANAPISI: San Francisco State University and University of Hawaii-Manoa.
- HSI: Texas A&M University; University of California-Riverside and San Francisco State University.

While NCA does not currently have any working group agreements with any specific Native American Serving Institutions, NCA is a member of a consortium with the National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian) and the National Indian Education Association that is creating educational outreach materials in support of the dedication of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

<b>NCA Action Plan Recommendation 3</b>						
<b>Steps to Implement</b>	<b>Lead Office</b>	<b>Other Office</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Current Status as of June 2022</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Expand partnerships through Legacy Program.	OEMI		Contracts with HSI; AANAPSI; Native American Serving Institutions; and HBCUs.		Completed six contracts awarded for FY 2020; Four with minority serving institutions.	Timothy Nosal, Deputy Director, OEMI

All the products created by other institutions that work with VLP have memorialized the service of Veterans from diverse backgrounds. Information on VLP can be found at <https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/>.

Expanding engagement with minority communities is in the long-term interests of NCA. For example, the Public Affairs and Outreach Team has been collaborating with other program offices in NCA to expand NCA’s tribal outreach. NCA regularly participates with other offices in VA (e.g., the Office of Tribal Government Relations, the Center for Minority Veterans and the Office of Rural Health) toward accomplishing this goal.

OEMI’s Public Affairs staff regularly publishes social media content telling the story of minority Veterans. All social media posts can be found by the public on Facebook and Twitter. Social media content is often pulled from VLP for social media posts, or the content is developed by NCA historians working with the public affairs team. (e.g., NCA has profiled the stories on stories associated with Navajo Code Talkers, Buffalo Soldiers and other Veterans).

Last year, NCA released the VLM, which is an online memorial space. VLM serves as a portal to celebrate and remember those Veterans interred VA’s national cemeteries. Recently, NCA enhanced the capability of the VLM platform with the capability of allowing families and friends to leave tributes to Veterans.

An example of such tribute can be found at the following link: <https://www.vlm.cem.va.gov/1234/ROBERTEUGENEGARTZKE/011B2A2/>. Since NCA has four working agreements with institutions that serve the minority Veteran population through fiscal years 2020 and 2021, NCA suggests closure of this recommendation.

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
October 2022**

## **APPENDIX B: Advisory Committee Biographies**

### **Charles E. Allen, M.D., CFI, Major, U.S. Air Force (Retired) African American**

Dr. Charles E. Allen is a retired Air Force Officer, (Major, KC 135 Tanker Pilot, 23 combat flights during the Gulf War), a retired family practice physician and former project director for University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) Veterans Upward Bound. He currently is an associate lecturer of chemistry-biochemistry at UWM and national director of education, training and mental health for the National Association for Black Veterans.

Dr. Allen earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry/Biochemistry from Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Montana; his Master of Science in Health Services administration from Central Michigan University and his MD from Maria Dehostos School of Medicine, Dominican Republic.

### **Salvador J. Castillo, U.S. Air Force Hispanic**

Mr. Salvador J. Castillo is an U.S. Air Force Veteran. He was assigned to the 43 SFS Squadron in Pope Airfield, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina in support of the 82nd Airborne Division from 1998-2002 as Security Forces Member. In July of 2006-2008, he joined the 36 Infantry Division unit as an Intel Analyst. Mr. Castillo has been involved in various intergovernmental projects such as the development of the Cameron County Veteran's Court and have been the President of the South Texas Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Association.

Mr. Castillo earned his master's in Public Administration from the University of Texas Pan-American.

### **Irma Hagans Cooper, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired) African American**

Colonel Irma Hagans Cooper is a 30-year Veteran of the U.S. Army. She has held three Commands ranging from Company to a Medical Group including one command in Iraq. Colonel Cooper has distinguished herself by exceptional meritorious conduct in a myriad of assignments with the Army Nurse Corps. In all her positions, she has demonstrated inspiring leadership, tireless energy and total dedication to the spirit and mission of the Army Nurse Corps and the U.S. Army Reserves.

She is a graduate of the Army War College with a Master of Science in Strategic Studies.

**William “Bill” Cundiff, Chief Master Sergeant,  
U.S. Air Force (Retired)  
Pacific Islander**

Chief Master Sergeant Bill Cundiff is a proud Chamorro son from the southern village of Agat. In 1991, after 24 years of service with the U.S. Air Force, his military career culminated with his retirement at the rank of Chief Master Sergeant (E-9). His diverse career experiences include Supply Computer Systems Analyst, Professional Military Education Instructor and Manager, First Sergeant (Resource Management Superintendent), Family Support Center Deputy Director and Director. Mr. Cundiff was awarded the Civilian Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding service.

He earned college degrees from both Guam Community College and University of Guam.

**Lisa Carrington Firmin, Colonel,  
U.S. Air Force (Retired)  
Hispanic**

Colonel Lisa Carrington Firmin is the Military Liaison and Associate Vice President for Veteran and Military Affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio. As the founding leader for Veteran and Military Affairs, she oversaw the consolidation and realignment of all Veteran support services on campus and the creation of the Center for Military Affiliated Students to better support and serve Veterans and military affiliated students.

During her military service, Colonel Carrington Firmin held a multitude of leadership roles and received numerous awards including, but not limited to, the Legion of Merit Medal with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

**Ronald Garcia,  
U.S. Navy  
Hispanic**

Mr. Ronald Garcia is a Veteran of the U.S. Navy, where he completed two tours of duty in Vietnam. He is retired from Fannie Mae where he held the position of Senior Deputy Director. Mr. Garcia is a past member of the Orange County Division, League of California Cities Advocacy Committee and has previously held positions that include serving as Chair & Vice Chair of the Brea Planning Commission and Chair of the Brea Investment Advisory Committee and Board of Directors for the Neighborhood Housing Services of Orange County.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with a minor in Finance, from the University of Redlands.

**Margaret G. “Muggs” Garvin,  
U.S. Navy  
Native American**

Ms. Margaret G. “Muggs” Garvin is the Veterans Service Officer for the Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN) and serves as the Division Manager of HCN Veterans Affairs. She was previously the County Veterans Service Officer for Monroe and Jackson Counties in Wisconsin. She has served three terms as Secretary of the County Veterans Service Officer Association of Wisconsin. Ms. Garvin is a member of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Ms. Garvin has education within Supervisory Management and Human Services.

**Warren A. Jones, M.D., FAAFP, Captain,  
U.S. Navy (Retired)  
African American**

Dr. Warren A. Jones, FAAFP retired as a Captain in the US Navy after serving 22 years of service. Dr. Jones also has over 30 years’ experience in health care. Notably, he founded and established the Mississippi Institute for Improvement of Geographic Minority Health and Health Disparities (MIGMH) at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Over the course of his tenure there, Dr. Jones secured approximately \$38 million for MIGMH and its constituent programs. Dr. Jones’ other professional experience includes directing the State of Mississippi’s Medicaid Program. He was recognized as Outstanding Minority Educator in the State of Mississippi and was elected the first and only African American President of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Dr. Jones is a 1978 graduate of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans.

**Robert V. “Bobby” McDonald,  
U.S. Navy  
African American**

Mr. McDonald serves as President and Executive Director of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Orange County. Under his leadership, the Black Chamber has consistently partnered with minority business associations, local chambers and legislators to provide support and advocate for the county’s many small-business owners. Mr. McDonald developed the chamber’s educational outreach programs and has established the chamber’s Veteran’s business network programs. He has served as member of PBS Southern California board of Trustees, California Cultural Historical Endowment Board and the 17-member State Board of Governors of the California Community College System. He is a member of the 9th and 10th (Horse) Calvary Association-Buffalo Soldiers.

He earned his degrees from Los Angeles Harbor College and California State University, Fullerton.

**Rebecca C. Samson, Colonel,  
U.S. Army (Retired)  
Asian American**

Colonel Samson immigrated from the Philippines to the United States at the age of 13. Upon college graduation she enlisted in the U.S. Army, and went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia where she was commissioned as an Ordnance Officer in 1982. She served on active duty for 27 years both as an officer in the Regular Army and in the Active Guard Reserve. Committed to serve her community, she is a founding member of the Pan Pacific American Leaders and Mentors, a non-profit mentorship program connecting mentees (active and reserve military, Veterans and Department of Defense Civilians) with experienced professionals who have achieved personal, professional and career success.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from San Diego State University and a Master's in Public Administration with emphasis in Human Resource Management from National University.

**Major General Linda Lee Singh,  
U.S. Army Reserve National Guard  
African American**

Major General Linda Lee Singh was Maryland's first African American and first woman Adjutant General. She is a senior advisor to the governor. She was responsible for the readiness, administration and training of more than 6,700 members of the military department with an annual budget of more than \$314 million. As the adjutant general, she served as the official channel of communication between the governor and the National Guard Bureau and serves as a governor's cabinet member, according to her biography in the Maryland Archives.

Major General Singh is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College, where she received a master's degree in Strategic Studies. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Columbia Union College, a master's degree in business administration, military management from Touro International University.

**Nathan A. Tilton, Sergeant First Class,  
U.S. Army (Retired)  
Pacific Islander**

Mr. Tilton, a disabled Veteran, serves as an independent researcher. He was responsible for collecting, organizing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to explore current issues, predict trends and develop solutions. These projects draw on

different disciplines such as sociology, medicine, psychology and other fields. In addition to his work as an independent researcher, Nathan works with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, by advocating for people with disabilities to receive disability benefits while acting as a part of congressional briefing team. He addressed systemic barriers facing people with disabilities by building and implementing innovative and high-impact advocacy plans.

His education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology, and he is working to complete his Master of Arts in Medical Anthropology in 2022.

**Beth A. Townsend, Lieutenant Colonel,  
U.S. Air Force Reserve (Retired)  
Native American**

Lieutenant Colonel Beth A. Townsend was appointed by Governor Terry Branstad and confirmed by Iowa Senate unanimously as director of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) in 2015. She has general supervision over the various services IWD provides to Iowans. Lieutenant Colonel. Townsend also serves as the chair of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies Veterans Affairs Committee. She previously served as the Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

She is a graduate of Kearney State College, Kearney, Nebraska, and the University of Nebraska Law School. She is a member of the Nebraska and Iowa State Bar.

**Michael J. Yaguchi, Lieutenant Colonel,  
U.S. Air Force (Retired)  
Asian American**

Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Yaguchi is an Air Force Veteran; the former Director of VA Programs for CSRA International, Inc., and Managing Director of Yaguchi & Associates, LLC. He retired from the USAF in 2006. In 2009, he assumed duties as the Director, Nuclear Policy in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. In 2018, he started Yaguchi & Associates, LLC and launched his inaugural project in late 2018. He also served on the Board of Directors for many non-profit organizations, including, but not limited to, The Alzheimer Association (Northeast); the Go for Broke National Education Center; and serves on the advisory board with the National Veterans Network.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Washington, and a Master of Arts in Air and Space Operations, Air Command and Staff College.