

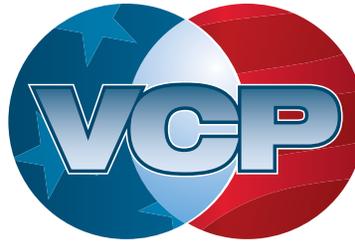


VETERAN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS

T O O L K I T

*“Serving those who served us”*

*“Serving those who served us”*



## VETERAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### Vision

All Veterans and their caregivers will have access to, and choices among, the services that allow our Veterans to stay in the places they call home.

### Mission

To foster Veterans' seamless access to, and transitions among, the full continuum of care and support services in VA and the community.

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*“We have humanized VA in this area and torn down many walls and built bridges because of our Veteran Community Partnership. I have more people calling from community organizations to refer Veterans who have never enrolled and accessed their VA benefits. And I have more information about community organizations that can provide quality services for our Veterans and caregivers if not available at VA.”*

—VCP Coordinator

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For more information about Veteran Community Partnerships and hosting a VCP training through your VA, contact [VCP@va.gov](mailto:VCP@va.gov).

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## Introduction

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) recognizes that collaboration is essential between federal, state and local agencies, academic institutions, private health care providers, non-profits and others in our communities to effectively meet the needs of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

True partnerships go beyond just outreach activities that encourage utilization of VA’s services.

- Partners share aligned goals and work collaboratively to achieve them.
- Partners are equally committed to the positive outcomes of their endeavors.
- Partners seek to improve the quality of care and services by selflessly combining resources.
- Partners understand and value the importance of each other’s contributions.

Through partnerships we can add depth and breadth to our community impact and better support our nation’s Veterans and their families.

Navigating the VA and other healthcare systems can be overwhelming for many Veterans and their families. This often produces multiple myriad coordination issues and uncertain benefits, changing providers, numerous duplicative agencies and endless choices. Knowing whom to contact, what is available, how to apply, and where to go can take a toll on any person and his or her family or other support system. The stories illustrated on this page are snapshots of two very different scenarios that underscore the complexities and uniqueness of Veterans’ and their caregivers’ needs.

Even though the VHA is the largest integrated healthcare system in the United States, streamlined coordination and access of healthcare services for Veterans can still be a challenge. Consider these facts:

- Currently, there are approximately 20.78 million Veterans in the United States, about 9 million Veterans are enrolled in VA, and over 6 million of these access and utilize VA services and supports.
- Most enrolled Veterans are “dual-users,” meaning that they access both VA and non-VA services and programs in order to meet their needs.
- In addition to accessing their VA health benefits, 79% of Veterans who get care from VA obtain health care services from a non-VA community provider.

*Sam T. is a 67 year old Veteran who served in the Army during Vietnam. After leaving the service Sam did not want any connection to the government and never applied for benefits. He has suffered from PTSD for much of his adult life. Sam recently was admitted to a Skilled Nursing Facility in his community due to failing health. The social service designee is unfamiliar with VA services and wants to learn more about PTSD and VA benefits but doesn’t know where to begin navigating the VA system on Sam’s behalf.*

*John G. is a 23 year old Veteran who sustained a traumatic brain injury during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He and his young wife had their first child during the last year of his deployment. They have only been married for 2 years, and he was away for most of that time. His wife is overwhelmed with worry and concerned she won’t be able to care for him at home, take care of their daughter, and work. John now requires constant supervision and has multiple medical appointments at that he must be transported to.*

*“Serving those who served us”*

From these statistics alone, it is clear that strong and healthy partnerships need to be developed and nurtured among VA and community providers, agencies and service organizations in order to provide the coordinated quality healthcare that Veterans and their families deserve.

Veteran Community Partnerships (VCP) provide an effective, adaptable and useful initiative that can help VA facilities establish and nurture community partnerships to address the broad spectrum of healthcare needs of Veterans and their families.

## Purpose of the VCP Toolkit

This VCP Toolkit is designed to provide direction, strategy, resources, and practical tools to build and strengthen partnerships among Veterans and their caregivers, VA and community partners. Although the initiative of these efforts is being driven by the VA, this toolkit approaches the development of VCP from two standpoints: that of being a VA employee, and that of a community partner.

The Toolkit aims to provide helpful information and resources to build a successful VCP. Each section offers guidance and a step-by-step approach for creating a successful initiative. The content provided covers:

- Overview of VCP
- 15 Steps to Form a VCP
- Tips to Build a Strong Foundation
- Suggested VCP Projects
- VCP Activities and Resources

Community partners as well as Veterans and their caregivers may also find the section on “Veterans Needs, VHA and Eligibility” especially useful to better understand the structure and functions of VA. In addition, guides, worksheets, sample communication tools and other valuable resources are included in the Appendices.

It is the hope that your VCP will generate a sustainable initiative and network that will enhance the quality of care and services for Veterans and their families as well as enlighten your community about their unique needs - just as VCPs have already done in dozens of communities around the country.

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*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

—Margaret Mead

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## Overview of Veteran Community Partnerships

### What is a Partnership?

A partnership is a collaborative working relationship. A VCP exists between VA and external organizations or individuals in which the goals, structure, governance, and roles and responsibilities are mutually determined to deliver the best possible services.

Partnerships are a valuable way for VA and the community to:

1. Advance a shared objective;
2. Enhance impact by creating opportunities to share resources and expertise;
3. Achieve mutual goals to help improve and expand services; and
4. Raise awareness, visibility, and knowledge about programs and services.

### What is a VCP?

VCP is a national initiative developed by Veterans Health Administration’s (VHA) Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) to assist Veterans’ seamless access to, and transitions among, the full continuum of care and support services available in VA and the community. Veterans and their caregivers are the primary stakeholders and targets of VCP efforts. Although originally developed to foster enhanced continuity of care for elderly Veterans, the VCP model is fully applicable to the entire range of Veteran populations, and is readily tailored to address specific issues, populations, topics or programs, including homelessness, community reintegration, mental health, end-of-life care, caregivers, dementia and countless others.

At its core, a VCP is a coalition of Veterans and their caregivers, VA health facilities, community health providers, non-governmental organizations, individuals, and non-VA agencies working together to support Veterans, their caregivers, and families. The VCP model of collaboration provides a mechanism to integrate knowledge and action for the combined mutual benefit of all those involved. It is a low-tech, high-touch, uniquely Veteran-centric, easily replicated and readily adapted approach to optimizing civilian services on behalf of the men and women who have put their lives on the line for all their fellow Americans.

The goal of VCP is to create a network of support in order to:

- **Increase choice and awareness** of quality programs and services available for Veterans and their caregivers;
- **Educate** participants and the community regarding services and supports available to Veterans and their caregivers within and beyond VA;
- **Strengthen relationships** among VA and local communities and provide support for achieving common goals;
- **Promote seamless transitions and coordination of care** for Veterans, regardless of the site or source of delivery; and ultimately
- **Enhance and improve the quality of care for Veterans.**

**VCP is a model focused on local communities.** Although the VCP model is a national initiative, each VCP is community-based and functions independently at the local level. Each VCP therefore is unique and reflects the diversity of resources within its community and its VA, and is developed and sustained on its local resources and strengths.

VCP is a formalized partnership that utilizes a committee structure with shared leadership. Each VCP is co-chaired by a point of contact (POC) from the local VAMC and a representative from a community organization. VCP members can include VA staff, members of community/state organizations that share in the vision of supporting Veterans, and their caregivers. The goals and agenda of VCP are mutually agreed upon between VA- and non-VA participants, and leadership is shared between the partners.

(The VCP Fact Sheet - located in [Appendix A](#) - provides a one-page overview of Veteran Community Partnerships that can be easily copied and distributed.)

## History and Background

The concept of community collaboration and partnership is neither radical nor new. Expanding on the successful Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP) initiative, VA’s Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) established the VCP initiative as part of its GEC strategic plan (approved by the Acting Under Secretary in 2009) to focus on promoting seamless access to and transitions among the full continuum of non-institutional extended care and support services available in VA and the community. In addition, because family caregivers play an indispensable role that is essential to the care and lives of Veterans, caregivers have always been and remain a primary target of VCP efforts.

During the initial development of the VCP initiative (Fiscal Years [FY] 2010 and 2011), three pilot sites were selected - from VA facilities in Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) 1, 2, and 11 - to assess and develop the concept’s feasibility and outcomes. Within one year of their initiations, each of the three VCP pilots reported overwhelming support from their communities. Each created a unique, viable model meriting broader dissemination. Each VCP had set up a steering committee comprised of VA staff and leaders from nearby community/state organizations. Each had established its own unique structure, focus and functions according to the needs identified by its respective community and VA partners.

To continue with the development of the VCP initiative, the [National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#) (NHPCO) was contracted to work with VA GEC because of NHPCO’s long term experience with developing the national Hospice Veteran Partnership (HVP) initiative and community coalitions across the country. As the VCP initiative has continued to expand, it is now a joint project of VHA [Offices of Geriatrics and Extended Care](#), [Community Engagement/Center for Compassionate Innovation](#), and [Caregiver Support](#).

For more information on the specific accomplishments of VCP, be sure to read the VCP FY Summary Reports located at the VCP webpage - [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp).

## VHA Resources for VCPs

**VA Medical Centers (VAMCs)** are hospital systems that serve Veterans. Although the exact makeup of each system will vary, they always include ambulatory care and outpatient clinics, home care programs, and, at most sites nursing home programs (termed “community living centers” in VA). VAMCs are organized under VISNs (Veterans Integrated Service Networks) that provide administrative services for 5-10 medical center-based health systems, usually over a multi-state area. For a VISN map, visit [www.va.gov/directory/guide/division\\_flash.asp?dnum=1](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flash.asp?dnum=1).

To locate VAMCs in your area, visit the VA website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). Enter the Health Benefits & Services section and click on ‘VHA Facilities Locator.’

### VA Long Term Services and Supports:

- Include a wide range of services that can help Veterans remain as independent as possible when facing ongoing challenges with everyday tasks;
- Are usually provided at home, and may also be provided at community sites, or in residential settings, or nursing homes; and
- Are provided based on clinical need for services. Not all services are available in all locations.

For more information, visit [www.va.gov/Geriatics](http://www.va.gov/Geriatics).

### VA Policy Questions?

At your local VAMC, look to your Director, your Public Affairs Officer, Voluntary Service Chief and/or legal counsel for guidance on policy surrounding community partnerships.

If you or your leadership have any questions about VA policies regarding community partnerships such as:

- What due diligence to conduct before developing partnerships
- Whether you need a Memorandum of Understanding and/or how to structure one
- Sharing of space and/or resources
- Endorsement policy
- Use of VA and partner logos
- And, other policy questions

Please contact VHA Office of Community Engagement at the VA Central Office at [VHACommunityEngagement@va.gov](mailto:VHACommunityEngagement@va.gov).

### VA Caregiver Online Support

VA's Caregiver Support Program offers information, stories and resources for family caregivers at [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov).



## 15 Steps to Form a VCP

To a great extent the impact and resilience of any partnership is dependent on the commitment, experience, and involvement of your leadership and its members. Having a diverse group of partners from the beginning will ensure your partnership represents the best combination of organizations and people to meet the needs of Veterans in your community.

The following steps can help guide you through forming and developing a VCP. Your VCP may choose to modify the following 15 steps or approach them in a different order to meet the unique needs of your facility and or local community – you do not have to follow this particular sequence. However, experience has found that most VCPs who have achieved success and sustainability have usually implemented all or most of the steps below, and usually in the order presented.

### **Step 1. Create a Planning Group**

The first step in starting a VCP is to find others within the VA who are working at the interface of the VA and the community and are interested in the goal that can help you in the initial phases. Communicate your plans to your supervisor and top VAMC leadership to seek their buy-in early on. Your leadership may wish to designate your VCP as a key liaison with the community for the VAMC as a whole. Your leadership may also be able to provide you with guidance on groups or individuals within the VAMC that have a history of relationships or partnerships with the community. For example, your VAMC Director is likely involved with a ‘Community Veterans Experience Board (CVEB)’ consisting of varying community leaders with the intent of supporting Veterans. Often CVEBs don’t go by that name, however your Director will hopefully recognize your intentions as being complementary, and may be able to put you in touch with the local CVEB.

Discuss with other stakeholders in your VAMC and your leadership whether you should create a “Planning Group” to help you widen your access to potential VCP members, deepen your initial resource pool, and demonstrate to the community the shared interest in Veteran’s issues.

If you decide to create a Planning Group, the membership should include at least several non-VA representatives from different Veterans’ programs, representatives from caregiver organizations, and representatives from community agencies, providers and organizations. Think of your professional and personal contacts, those working in Veterans’ care, those whom the issue affects, and “people who know people.” You should contact these individuals personally, and as a small distinct group begin the process of creating your VCP in the following subsequent steps. (See [Appendix B](#) for an example of an informational letter/email you may consider sending to potential members of the Planning Group.)

### **Step 2. Develop a list of Potential Partners**

The next step in forming a VCP is to identify potential community partners and other vested partners from your VAMC. Make this a collaborative process and seek ideas from your planning group, leadership and other stakeholders in your VAMC who have experience working with community partners. Ideally, the representatives of community agencies, providers and organizations invited should directly or indirectly have information about, influence over, or be consumers of the focus and goals of your VCP. Also, it is important to think about other groups that have contact with Veterans. *Most importantly, be sure to include Veterans and family caregivers of Veterans.*

The following types of questions can assist you in this process:

- *Who influences the services Veterans receive in our community (both direct and peripheral involvement)?*
- *What organizations and key people should we partner with to ensure “buy-in” and a demographically representative cross-section of our community?*
- *What other organizations in our community are providing services to Veterans (or come into contact with Veterans)?*
- *Where do people learn about Veteran issues in our community?*
- *What are the biggest barriers to increasing access to Veteran services and who can help break down those barriers?*
- *What resources will our VCP need to be effective in promoting change?*

For additional guidance on which organizations make good partners, you can seek direction and support from [VHA Office of Community Engagement](#) or reference VHA policy directives concerning public-private partnerships. Again, it is a good idea to involve your leadership when reaching out to the community to ensure that your efforts are coordinated with others at your VAMC.

**For VA involvement consider the following services or programs:**

- |                                |                                   |   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| ■ Care Management/Social Work  | ■ Home-based Primary Care         | ■ Rural Health  |
| ■ Caregiver Support            | ■ Homelessness                    | ■ Seamless Transition Program (OIF/OEF/OND)                 |
| ■ Chaplain Service             | ■ Hospice and Palliative Care     | ■ Suicide Prevention  |
| ■ Community Health Nursing     | ■ Medical Foster Home             | ■ Vocational Rehab  |
| ■ Community Relations          | ■ Mental Health/Behavioral Health | ■ Voluntary Services  |
| ■ Customer Service             | ■ Outreach                        | ■ Women’s Health  |
| ■ Decedent Affairs             | ■ PACT                            | ■ And others (depending on the mission and strategic focus) |
| ■ Enrollment/Eligibility       | ■ Patient Advocate                |   |
| ■ Geriatrics and Extended Care | ■ Pharmacy                        |   |
|                                | ■ Public Affairs                  |   |

**For community involvement consider the following organizations:**

- AARP
- Adult Day Care programs
- Alzheimer’s Association
- American Cancer Society
- American Legion
- American Red Cross
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Brain Injury Association
- Cancer Charities
- Caregiver Services
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Division of Aging (state/regional)
- Easter Seals
- Faith-based organizations
- Funeral Homes
- Home health care agencies
- Hospice providers
- Hospitals
- Individual Veterans
- LGBTQ organizations
- Legal Aid Services
- Local and state government representatives
- Local Counseling Centers (county and private)
- Long term care facilities
- Military Moms
- Nursing & Rehabilitation Centers
- Senior Centers
- Senior Services/Centers
- State Veteran’s Homes
- Universities/colleges
- Veteran Service Organizations
- Veteran Service Organizations (e.g., Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, VFW, Wounded Warriors)
- Veterans Council
- Women’s Health Clinics
- YMCA/YWCA
- And others (depending on the mission and strategic focus)

*Remember, each VCP is unique, so you are encouraged to be creative in identifying partners that can best reach Veterans in **your** community.*

**Step 3. Plan an Informational Meeting**

An informational meeting provides the setting to present the purpose and value of a VCP. This meeting will also allow you to gauge the level of interest in creating a VCP in your community, and assist you in identifying potential VCP leaders. You will probably want to invite at least 10-15 participants to the first informational meeting.

While planning this meeting, your Planning Group should be sure to consider the following items:

- **Plan a place, date, and time.** Since most potential members will have work obligations during business hours, you may want to consider having the meeting at the beginning, or near the end, of the business day (or even after hours or weekends). It is highly recommended that the initial meeting be held face to face. However, if people are geographically distant, or face to face is not possible for everyone, consider having the option to dial-in on a phone conference or video conferencing (note: VA users have either Skype or Lync, depending on their location). For those who are unable to attend, ensure that you can offer a prompt summary report of the meeting minutes.

Although much of the initial contact may be initiated by the VAMC point of contact, remember you should utilize resources from the Planning Group as well. For example, a Planning Group partner may have a better available space for the informational meeting.

- **Invite all identified potential partners to the informational meeting.** (See [Appendix C](#) for an example of a VCP informational meeting invitation/email.)
- **Develop an agenda for the meeting.** (See [Appendix D](#) for an example of a VCP informational meeting agenda.)
- **Create a handout** with meeting objectives, VCP mission, vision and purpose, potential leadership duties, potential workgroups, and membership responsibilities. (See [Appendix E](#) for an example of a VCP meeting handout.)
- **Invite information from participants.** Consider asking participants to submit a paragraph about their own organization that can be compiled and shared with the other participants.
- **Provide an interest form** to be completed during the meeting to assess each attendee’s interest in VCP, as well as their areas of expertise, knowledge, and interest in specific projects/issues that affect Veterans and caregivers. This form is crucial for setting the direction and fostering a successful implementation of your VCP. (See [Appendix F](#) for an example of an interest form.)

#### **Step 4. Facilitate the Informational Meeting**

The first meeting of the VCP is very important to set the tone and allow time for the relationship building and networking. This is needed to engage the group to complete future projects aimed at improving the availability of community services to Veterans. It is likely that attendees will have varying degrees of expertise regarding the local, state and national services available to Veterans. You may opt to provide background materials to attendees to offer individuals a common set of information and to give them a context for understanding the need for the establishment of a VCP. (See resources available at [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp).)

You are urged to devote time during the first VCP meeting to group members sharing their professional and/or personal experiences with providing services to Veterans/caregivers, creating partnerships, or forming coalitions. This will help VCP members to learn more about each other and the unique expertise each brings to the group, and to identify shared experiences and interests.

When facilitating the meeting, consider the following:

- Distribute the agenda to participants and stick to it.
- Before the meeting, ensure you have all the materials you will need for the group (e.g., paper, markers, pens, handouts).
- Ensure you have a sign-in sheet.
- Have nametags or place cards to facilitate interpersonal interaction.
- Don’t forget to give basic logistical information at the beginning of the meeting, such as the location of the restrooms.
- While facilitating, someone from the Planning Group should take notes and ensure that the process proceeds according to the timeline on the agenda.

At the first meeting, make sure to set a date, time, and place for the next meeting and identify the topic(s) to be addressed. Following each meeting but prior to the beginning of the next one, minutes of the prior meeting should be distributed to remind all participants of progress and plans to date. Members may leave each meeting with tasks or projects to work on, and can report on their progress at future gatherings.

Meetings are most productive when the leader or a designated member plays an active role in facilitating the process but does not monopolize the dialog or unilaterally set the agenda. Long lecture-style presentations or the presentation of information only from VA or any single provider or individual will work counter to the development of a true partnership. Remember, active dialogue and engagement requires both the VA and the participants to share information, and the agenda should provide participants with ample opportunities to share information among all participants.

### **Step 5. Establish a VCP Leadership Committee**

The reason the VCP has elected to come together may influence whom is chosen to be on the Leadership Committee. If a single organization has put forth the effort to form partnerships with others and convene a VCP, a representative from that organization might be on the Leadership Committee. Regardless of the reason for starting the VCP, it is important to identify a Leadership Committee that will be responsible for organizing the structure and functions of the group, speak on behalf of the VCP and support the co-chairs of the VCP.

Ideally, the Leadership Committee needs to identify co-chairs: one representative from VA and one from a community partner organization. The co-chairs and leadership committee need to have the vision and possess the communication and leadership skills to be able to articulate a broader perspective of Veteran issues and to inspire active participation in the VCP. In addition, leadership is needed to manage the following responsibilities:

- Facilitate VCP meetings
- Develop meeting agendas (with input from members)
- Ensure that follow up meetings are scheduled and any action items addressed
- Welcome new members to the VCP
- Maintain the membership roster
- Participate in developing and maintaining an operating budget

VCP leaders also need to have an understanding of group process and dynamics to help the coalition evolve through the normal stages of group development. As new members are added and structure evolves, leadership may need to change to continue to best meet the maturing needs of the VCP as a founding leader may not necessarily be the right leader as the partnership evolves.

The Leadership Committee is tasked with determining how the VCP will initially be governed and who will facilitate communication within the VCP. Some ideas to consider when defining responsibilities of the Leadership Committee:

- How many people should be on the committee, and for what length of time?
- How frequently will this committee meet? (Will it be bi-monthly phone calls with quarterly face to face?)
- When and where will the VCP meetings take place?
- Who is responsible for creating the agendas, and taking notes?
- What are the expectations of the project leaders?
- How will project leaders and workgroups communicate with one another?

Also, the information you received from each member via the interest form including experience and areas of interest, should be helpful in determining the goals and direction of the VCP.

Once the information from the interest form is compiled the Planning Group can determine:

- Which members to invite to the Leadership Committee (these members may or may not include members from the Planning Group); and
- The identification and prioritization of projects based on interest and ability.

It is recommended that invitations to the Leadership Committee and subsequent workgroups be made via telephone and accompanied by a confirmation email/letter. If an individual is unable to accept the invitation, thank them for their interest, and ask if there might be an alternative representative of their organization that could be involved and/or if you may keep them on your contact list. Remember that although some individuals may not be able to participate regularly, they could be a very valuable resources in the future for special issues and events.

It is recommended that the Leadership Committee convene a conference call as soon as possible to discuss the potential projects, workgroups, and meeting times. (See [Appendix G](#) for a Sample Agreement to Serve on the VCP Leadership Committee.)

Moving forward, it is best for the leadership to take responsibility to document in writing specific information and agreements from each meeting to ensure that all participating members are informed and in agreement. This will help to ensure that the plans made are followed through.

### **Step 6. Identify Resources from VCP Members**

Members of your VCP (from VA and the community) will have resources – some more easy to recognize than others. Resources can be anything from available funds to extra time. Access to office machines, networking contacts, the ability to cover printing costs, a volunteer pool and internet-savvy individuals are all useful resources. It is important to determine what resources you have available in the initial stages of starting a VCP.

During one of your initial meetings, consider having participating members complete the “interest form” provided in the [Appendix F](#) that includes a question to determine available resources among the members. You can continue to use this form to identify potential members who can add to your resource pool, and determine the methods by which your group can address some of the steps in the VCP development process.

## Step 7. Brainstorm and Select an Area of Focus

It is best to gain input from all participating members as to the focus and direction of your VCP. Take time during one of your initial meetings to brainstorm the kind of enhancements the VCP can bring to bear on the alignment and coordination of cares and services for Veterans and their caregivers. Your members will likely be aware of the community's assets as well as unmet needs through their personal and professional experience. It may help to consider questions such as the following:

- Who are community providers, agencies and organizations that you are currently working with?
- What do you know about Veteran services in your community?
- Who in your community cares and provides services for your Veterans?
- What Veteran resources are you aware of in your community?
- What are the barriers to accessing Veteran services in your community?
- What positive and negative experiences with VA have members had?
- What gaps in Veteran services are you aware of in your community?
- What new information about Veteran legislation is available?

**In identifying the focus of your VCP, it is important to develop broad initial goals aimed at achieving seamlessness among VA and non-VA services.** These initial goals can be used to identify stakeholders (or people with a vested interest) and potential VCP members and invite them to participate in the process.

*For example, if your VCP's focus is on professional education, you may want to recruit representatives from the professional development and education departments of local hospital and nursing facilities. If your VCP's focus is on identifying gaps in health care service provision, you may want to recruit people from service organizations and those who represent the underserved.*

One of the primary reasons for identifying an area of focus is that coalition development is enhanced when members agree on goals and measures of success. **Remember that your group's focus may change as your VCP grows and matures, and as you learn about and work with your community.**

## Step 8. Assess Your Community's Needs

In Step 7, your VCP identified an area of focus based on the member's experience and knowledge. Since your members represent a small portion of the community, it is important to perform an assessment of needs related to your VCP's area of focus as perceived by a diverse cross section of the community.

There are multiple ways to begin the community assessment process, many of which are not complicated or expensive.

- **Review Existing Data.** Your VCP can gather existing information about the community from various sources. There are many free sources of service utilization, demographic and other information available on the internet and from governmental agencies. A great resource is the VA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics ([www.va.gov/vetdata](http://www.va.gov/vetdata)).
- **Create and Distribute a Voluntary Community Needs Assessment.** Your VCP can create a simple written or online voluntary assessment with a few key questions to assess your community's attitudes, expectations and needs related to Veteran services.

In [Appendix H](#), there is a sample letter from the VCP contact introducing your VCP and requesting completion of the assessment. In [Appendix I](#), there is a sample community needs assessment designed to distribute to organizations. You can use the assessment as it is or modify to reflect the needs of your VCP.

Distribute the assessment to partners and potential VCP members in your area, requesting them to complete and return the voluntary assessment to you by a specific date. You may also want to develop additional assessments—or modify this one—for other types of partners. In addition, you can conduct a web-based assessment rather than mailing out paper questionnaires or e-mailing electronic versions.

Once your VCP has completed the assessment process, then compile and analyze the responses, draft a report summarizing your conclusions and share the report with members of the VCP.

- **Conduct focus groups or feedback sessions.** Informal focus groups or feedback sessions provide opportunities to hear community members discuss Veteran issues and identify needs in their own words. This process can take many forms. Consider different methods your VCP might use to invite community members, possible locations for your session and the kind of agenda that would best suit your purposes.

*Please Note: VA staff may need to inquire about any required processes and/or protocols to conduct an assessment and/or focus groups in their VA Medical Centers.*

## Step 9. Develop a Vision/Mission

Based on all the information gained from initial meetings, partner feedback, community assessments and other information you gather, it is recommended to develop a clear vision and mission for your VCP.

The process of refining clear, locally-relevant vision and mission statements can ignite your efforts and clarify the beliefs and principles of your VCP for the greater community and VCP members.

- **A Vision Statement** is the picture or dream of what you want to achieve. Visions typically focus on long-range goals.
- **A Mission Statement** spells out the “what and why” action steps to reach your vision. Mission statements are more concrete, short-term objectives and strategies.

VCPs striving to improve access to Veteran services must have broad visions and missions in order to encompass the broad range of Veteran issues. To accomplish this, be sure to take time to have your draft vision/mission reviewed by a broad range of constituencies.

Your VCP can also choose to use the following national VCP vision and mission statements, or start with this wording and modify it to be more applicable to your VCP.

- **Vision:** All Veterans and their caregivers have access to, and choices among, the services that allow our Veterans to stay in the places they call home.
- **Mission:** To foster Veterans’ seamless access to, and transitions among, the full continuum of care and support services in VA and the community.

**Step 10. Set Goals, Identify Objectives & Create an Action Plan**

Once your VCP has developed its vision and mission statements, it should set goals and objectives. These in turn will lead to development of an action plan. Each goal and objective should be linked with the vision and mission statement of your VCP. The focus of your VCP may change over time as new members are added, community needs assessment data are analyzed and you learn more about the availability and quality of services currently accessible to Veterans in your community.

A **goal** provides general purpose and direction, and describes a desired outcome. For example, goals of your VCP may be:

- Provide education to Veterans and their families about VA health care benefits.
- Strengthen communication between VA and community providers/service organizations.
- Promote awareness of the distinct health care needs of Veterans, and needs of their caregivers.

An **objective** provides specific, usually measurable information reflecting progress toward achieving a goal within a certain timeframe. For example, VCP objectives might be:

- Distribute 500 Veteran informational packets by year’s end.
- Conduct twenty community forums on Veterans’ and caregivers’ needs by year end.
- In year XXXX, there will be an increase of XX% of community agencies, providers and organizations recording the numbers of Veterans they serve.

Once the vision, mission, goals and objectives are developed, the final steps in creating a strategic plan are to develop the **strategies** by which your VCP will achieve the objectives, and an **action plan** to implement them.

A **strategy** is a way of describing how you are going to get things done. For example, strategies related to the objectives above include:

**Sample Vision Statements:**

- Every Veteran has timely access to seamlessly coordinated community and VA services.
- The community and the VA collaborates to care for and support Veteran caregivers.

**Sample Mission Statements:**

- To promote conversations about Veterans’ needs through community education, outreach and dialogue.
- To create a community network for caregivers of Veterans.
- To increase Veteran awareness of, and access to, available support services through education and outreach.



The Community Tool-Box Center is a global resource for free information on essential skills for building healthy communities.

The Community Tool-Box Center’s mission is promoting community health and development by connecting people, ideas and resources.

For more information and to access many valuable resources and tools, visit <http://ctb.ku.edu>.

*“Serving those who served us”*

- Distribute Veteran informational packets at all Speaker’s Bureau presentations, health fairs, libraries and other public events/venues.
- Conduct the community forums at easily accessible locations in the community, develop an agenda for the forums and determine the options for publicizing the events.
- Provide education for hospital admissions staff regarding the Military History Checklist.

As a final and very important step, organize your goals, objectives, and strategies into an **action plan**. An action plan outlines the activities the VCP will undertake to implement the strategies. According to the **Community Tool-Box Center**, an action plan documents:

- Action Steps (what will be accomplished)
- Person/s Responsible (who will carry out these actions)
- Date Completed (by when)
- Resources Required (at what costs)
- Collaborators (who else should know about this)
- Outcome Measures (how success will be measured)

Once the action plan is developed, your VCP is well on its way to implementing strategies to improve Veteran access to services in your community. Refer to the Community Tool-Box Center (see sidebar) for more information about the elements of developing an effective action plan.

See [Appendix K](#) for an Action Plan template. Below is an example.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	KEY ACTIVITIES	PERSON/S RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE/S OF SUCCESS	DATE OF COMPLETION
Provide education for Veterans and their families about VA health care benefits.	Host a VA benefits seminar at three community agencies that serve Veterans within six months.	Identify three community agencies to host seminar.  Develop VA benefits PPT presentation.	VCP education workgroup members	Speakers Marketing Food/drinks Computer Projector Screen Microphone Name tags Handouts Evaluation	#Attendees  Participant evaluation outcomes  #Veterans enrolled	Within six months

**Step 11. Develop Consistent Messages and Communicate Often**

What do you want people in your community to know about your VCP? When you give a presentation or talk to members of the community, what do you want them to take away from the conversation? The answers to these questions will shape the messages your VCP will deliver.

Simply stated, messages are those key points you want to convey to your partners and to your community. Whether you are writing a press release, speaking to the Rotary Club and other service organizations, meeting with a potential partner or talking to Veterans and their caregivers – you need to have determined in advance the message you want to deliver.

Over time, when people see or hear your messages they should recognize them as belonging to your VCP, which will help to build momentum and support for your efforts. Effective messages should ideally:

- Recount real experiences (“tell stories”)
- Communicate the issue -- who, what, why, when, how
- Motivate people to join your efforts, learn more or otherwise get involved
- Use language that speaks to your target audience
- Be and remain consistent over time

Once you’ve developed your message and how you want to convey it, you’ll need to empower your VCP members to deliver it. Provide them with information on:

- Suitable audiences (i.e., Veterans and their caregivers)
- Vision, mission and goals of your VCP
- Details about available Veteran resources, services and/or benefits
- How, when and where to refer Veterans for health care services and support
- Call to action messages and the importance of communicating what people can do to become involved with your VCP

The messages about your VCP can be communicated through a PowerPoint presentation, brochure, website/online, social media, and other venues. To assist with your communication efforts, a VCP brochure and PowerPoint presentation is provided on the VCP webpage - [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp).

## **Step 12. Track Your Success**

Tracking the accomplishments of your VCP will help to establish credibility and validity with your VA and community partner organizations. Although the real success of your VCP is how much Veterans and their caregivers in your community are benefitted, tracking these sorts of outcomes systematically and demonstrating how they are linked to VCP actions needs to be feasible and realistic.

To achieve this, consider creating a practical system to document and track the following data (so that you can communicate with your leadership and the community about the tangible outcomes of your VCP and how your VCP is doing presently compared to times in the past or times yet to come):

- Membership
  - VA departments/programs
  - Non-VA/community organizations
- Meetings
  - Date/time
  - Purpose of meeting
  - Total number of attendees (also, total number of VA and community partner representatives, and Veterans)
- Education/Outreach Events
  - Date
  - Title
  - Total Attendance (include number of Veterans in attendance)

- Participant evaluation summary
- Anecdotes/Stories
- **From members:** Any statement that describes a ‘change in practice’ from a VA or Non-VA/community member based on your VCP meetings, events, or networking.
- **From Veterans and/or caregivers:** Any statement that describes how a specific Veteran’s experience was improved based on your VCP education/outreach activities.

Although you may never know the long term outcomes of your efforts, you can determine whether any change occurred after an event or activity by collecting participant evaluations. This information will help your VCP to develop and improve your future activities, plus provide substantial information regarding your successes to potential partners, the media and possible funders. (See [Appendix J](#) for a Sample Participant Feedback Form.)

In addition, have the VCP members periodically complete a self-evaluation of your VCP to assess the outcomes of specific VCP activities and goals.

### **Step 13. Celebrate Accomplishments**

Plan celebrations with your VCP after completing any major event or activity to acknowledge the efforts of individual members and the successes achieved. This will serve to build relationships among your partners, generate team spirit and motivate your members to plan and accomplish future activities and events.

Celebrations can also be a good venue to remind and inspire members of why you are doing this work together plus to reinforce the ongoing needs of Veterans and their caregivers.

### **Step 14. Review and Refresh Annually**

Each year, take time to review and refresh your VCP’s focus, goals and objectives to assess if they are still relevant and if they should continue or change. Also, assess whether the leadership and any committees/workgroups should be modified and any other roles and responsibilities need to be changed. This will assist in keeping your VCP active and members engaged.

### **Step 15. Above ALL Steps, Focus on Relationships!**

- The best guarantee for success with your VCP development is to focus on the relationships among your members.
- Meaningful relationships most always provide the best results.
- Be careful not to become so project-driven that you lose sight of why it is that you came together in the first place.
- Take time to enjoy your new (or established) friends and let the process of developing your VCP unfold from the expertise and creativity among all your members.
- Engaging with the community is a positive opportunity for VA regardless of whether tangible outcomes can be identified. The relationships formed in the VCP will assist VA, the community, Veterans, and caregivers to develop trust, awareness, and understanding – which is a necessary foundation for meeting the future needs of Veterans and their families.

## Tips for Building a Strong Foundation

Each VCP will be unique and will develop in ways that depend on many different factors, including the community in which you work and the leaders who take on various tasks of your VCP. In this section, you will be provided suggestions for how your VCP may grow and develop most effectively.

Building a strong and sustainable foundation begins with creating healthy relationships - each member respecting other members, listening to others' opinions and making a commitment to work with one another.

Other tips for building a strong foundation include:

- 1. First and foremost, be inclusive!** Invite agencies, providers, organizations and champions who value and care for Veterans and their families to become involved.
- 2. Recognize the goals of potential partners and encourage every partner to establish common ground within the partnership.** Know that some partners may come to the table looking for ways that VCP will benefit their mission and vision. Therefore, promote each partner to think about how VCP will help them reach their desired goals, and identify VCP as a benefit.
- 3. Identify and resolve any potential “turf” issues.** It is worth noting, that some partners may have differing or extremely similar interests and could create tension within your group. Work towards developing a strong unified voice from your members - they will be essential to your success.
- 4. Achieve consensus on goals and outcomes from the beginning of your VCP development.** Develop a process to reach consensus. Be clear and in agreement about vision, mission, and goals of your VCP. Take time for members to discuss the goals and outcomes and reach consensus.
- 5. Be patient.** Each member needs to be educated about the mission, options, and services of other members. Respect the expertise and points of view of all partners. Starting the VCP is the most time consuming part of the process. Once the VCP is formed, it will nurture and sustain itself with much less resources and time needed from the initial VA partners.
- 6. Communicate VA’s Boundaries.** VA has policies, rules, and regulations regarding endorsements, accepting gifts, protecting patient privacy, ethical considerations, etc. Explain to organizations and individuals on the VCP the boundaries that will apply.
- 7. Invite Veterans in your community to periodically tell their stories at VCP meetings.** This can serve to remind members why you are doing this work and highlight the specific needs of Veterans and their families in your community.
- 8. Build trust.** One of the most important things that any partnership must do is to build trust among it’s members and, subsequently, it’s respective community. This needs to be your main goal above and beyond any projects or activities.

## Suggested VCP Projects

The following are suggestions for your VCP projects and activities. This is not an exhaustive list and it is suggested that you engage your members to creatively develop, adapt and customize your projects and activities according to the unique needs of Veterans and their caregivers within your community. Select one or more to start that are feasible and will accomplish your goals.

### 1. Share Information at VCP Meetings

- Plan time each meeting (or on a regular basis) for representatives from member organizations to share information about their services for Veterans.
- Hold a ‘resource sharing’ event for staff from VA and community organizations to showcase the information each has available for Veterans and their families.
- Create and share a list of community and VA contacts along with their related areas of expertise.

### 2. Community Outreach

- Plan educational programs for the community to raise awareness about the need to improve Veterans’ access to, and choices among, quality care.
- Distribute printed materials with information on VCP and the unique needs of Veterans and their caregivers.
- Convene town hall meetings to engage the community and provide awareness, support, and information. Provide presentations and educational events for VA and non-VA organizations regarding local services and supports.
- Participate in Veteran ‘Stand-downs.’

### 3. Education

- Develop a speakers bureau to educate VA staff and volunteers regarding community partners and services, and to educate community partners and Veteran organizations about VA services and benefits.
- Use the free online courses available through the PsychArmor Institute (<https://psycharmor.org>) to provide education to your partners and community about the unique needs of Veterans. (See ‘15 Things Veterans Want You to Know’ course - and others.)
- Distribute information about your VCP at local, state and regional education conferences.

### 4. Communication

- Create a communication portal (i.e., email group list or other venue) that through which VCP members can easily communicate with each other about issues/questions concerning Veterans and their families.
- Develop a web site to showcase your VCP membership and activities.
- Adapt the flyer and brochure templates provided by the national VCP program to provide more specific information about your VCP.

**5. Assessment and Evaluation**

- Create and distribute a voluntary community needs assessment. (See Community Needs Assessment template, [Appendix I](#).)
- Participate in the VCP national evaluation project to gain specific feedback about the effectiveness of your VCP.

**6. Member Recruitment**

- Identify potential VCP members and conduct a campaign for recruitment.
- Announce new projects to the local community and request volunteers to participate in the efforts.
- Include information about joining or becoming involved with your VCP in all outreach activities. Develop a postcard that individuals can fill out with their information if they desire to join.

**5. Legal/Regulatory Issues**

- Identify and address any legal, regulatory and/or policy barriers that exist between the community and VA. If you have questions that your local resources cannot answer, feel free to contact the VHA Office of Community Engagement to discuss any issues you have identified at [VHACommunityEngagement@va.gov](mailto:VHACommunityEngagement@va.gov).

**6. Fundraising**

- Identify potential sources of funding/donations to facilitate any VCP activities.
- Work with VA Voluntary Service on fundraising efforts.
- Write proposals or grants for conferences and events.
- Explore state and local funding sources for specific projects.
- Partner with other organizations to share projects and costs.
- Work with the VAMC Director or Chief of Staff’s office to ensure compliance of VA rules and regulations.

*Partnerships build capacity, leverage resources, address new and emerging needs, and build on the experiences and knowledge of each other.*

*NO single office, organization, or agency owns the expertise and resources to deliver ALL of the benefits, services and resources necessary to meet the needs and expectations of every Veteran.*

“Serving those who served us”

# VCP Activities and Resources

Below is a sampling of activities VCPs across the country are doing to optimize the range and scope of support mechanisms for Veterans and their families/caregivers.

Also, view and download the additional resources available at the VCP webpage - [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp) - including VCP Annual Summary Reports that provide current information about individual VCPs.

**Deborah Grassman, author of Peace at Last and The Hero Within Presents A FREE Workshop Let "Warrior Wisdom" show you how the heart can be disarmed through love, forgiveness, and self-compassion, starting a process that "restores the soul."**

**Are you a Veteran's Caregiver or a Military Veteran/Family?**

Conference designed for anyone working with people who have experienced trauma: veterans, hospice workers, doctors and nurses, educators, first responders, social workers, counselors, pastors, marriage, family, and adoption therapists, hospital administrators, therapists, financial issue directors, and those fighting on the battlefield. Attendees will learn how "soldier's" rest is all from the energy of our deepest self, making us of the center of our being.

**Session 1:** will educate caregivers on:  
 • Identifying appropriate assessment and intervention for combat and non-combat veterans  
 • Describing the emotional, social, spiritual, moral injuries sustained by combat veterans and their families and how these impact their quality of life.  
 • Verbalization of influences that a military culture exerts on veterans and their families.

**Session 2:**  
 • Identify the impact that soul injuries have on family, personal caregivers, and professional caregivers  
 • Describe how attitudes, bias, or emotional pain, unthought loss, and unforgiveness/guilt/innocence contribute to the creation and perpetuation of soul injuries.  
 • Learn how to support others in the cultivation of honesty, courage, and humility to claim the fearful heart through love, forgiveness, and self-compassion so that personal intimacy can be achieved

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12**  
 Manheim Township Library  
 585 Granite Run Drive  
 Lancaster, PA 17601  
 Registration 9:30 AM  
**SESSION 1: 10:00 AM - 12:00 AM**  
**LUNCH: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**  
**SESSION 2: 1:00PM - 3:00 PM**  
**SPACE IS LIMITED - Register required by October 3, 2016.**

Online: <https://www.sureynetworking.com/#/GEN21W>  
 OR  
 Call 717.285.2039

Sponsored by:  
 AsesraCare Hospice Foundation  
 And  
 The Veteran Community Partnership of South Central PA

**Please Join Us!**

## 5th Annual Conference

**"OOPS, I WISH I HADN'T SAID THAT!" ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN PALLIATIVE CARE**

Friday, November 13  
 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Denbigh Community Center  
 15198 Warwick Boulevard  
 Newport News, VA 23608

We Honor Veterans - a program of the NHPICO and VA ([www.honoringvets.org](http://www.honoringvets.org)), designed to engage health care professionals to meet the unique needs of a veteran's hospice care. Come learn the important role of hospice programs and how effective partnerships can have a positive impact on a veteran's care.

Registration: Continental Breakfast, Networking begins at 8:30  
 Keynote Address and Introduction: VCP and "We Honor Veterans" at 9:00

**TOPICS OF DISCUSSION**

- Reframing: "We Are in a Different Place"
- Medical Futility: "Your Definition of Futility is Not Mine!"
- Spiritual Situations: "Please Pray the Hell Mary With Me"
- Truth Telling: "Don't Tell Daddy He's Got Cancer!"

Questions and Answers Session will follow.

Target Audience: Hospital Administrators, Physicians, Social Workers, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, Home Health Agencies, Hospices, Pharmacists, Chaplains and All Health Care Providers.

\*\*\*  
**Please RSVP by November 6 to reserve your seat!**  
 Cheryl Lassetter at [cheryl.lassetter@cchn.net](mailto:cheryl.lassetter@cchn.net) or  
 Yvonne Bailey at [yvonne.bailey@va.gov](mailto:yvonne.bailey@va.gov)  
 Seating is limited

## Get in the Know

### Dynamic Networking Event and VCP Quarterly Meeting

**Thursday, March 3**  
**8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**  
**Battle Creek VA Medical Center**  
**Building 6, Auditorium**

[Please click to register!](#)

- Have you ever been confused by the various acronyms, abbreviations, and general language of the Veterans Administration?
- Have you struggled to determine the right department, person, or program to call for help within the VA for your clients?
- Do you want to know how to better help Veterans in our community?
- Does the idea of navigating the Veteran system make your palms sweat?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, you are invited to join colleagues from throughout the region for a fast paced and educational morning focused on networking and information sharing. This dynamic networking session will feature a unique method for interacting with one another that has been used in other areas to help increase understanding, make meaningful connections, and support improved communication among providers of services.

The goals for this session include:

- Address common goals and concerns related to serving the needs of Veterans in our region
- Increase dialogue and understanding between Veteran organizations and services and community service providers

Who should attend? Anyone whose programs or services are available to Veterans of any age  
 What do I need to bring? At least 25 business cards and program brochures

## Veteran Community Partnership Opportunity

Are you or your organization interested in learning more about the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Administration?

Do you work with Veterans and want to provide them current information?

Are you curious about the VA and what services are offered?

### THE BOB MICHEL PEORIA VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC HAS AN EVENT FOR YOU!

Let us help you take the mystery out of working with the VA.

**WHEN: April 12 from 10am-noon**

**WHERE: 7717 N. Orange Prairie Rd. Peoria, Illinois-Main Conference Room**

**WHY: To increase collaboration between the VA and the Community**

**For More Information Call Kelly Belinger-Sahr at (309)589-6800 ext. 47375**

**Monday November 16**  
**9:00 a.m. — Noon**

## Wilmington VA Medical Center Veterans & Families Resource Fair

In celebration of National Family Caregivers Month

VA and Community Resource tables located in the Education Building (Building 5), Auditorium, and Patient Lounge.

For more information, please contact  
 (302) 994-2511 ext. 4727 or 4589

## VA Eligibility and Access

### Brown Bag Lunch and Learn

Wondering how to assist Veterans to access services through the Battle Creek VA Medical Center? Want to understand the eligibility criteria for the various resources provided through the Battle Creek VCP? Bring your questions and your lunch to this event and ask an expert from the Battle Creek VA. Seats are limited, so please RSVP through the link in this flyer.

**Tuesday, August 2**  
**11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services**  
 Conference Room D  
 3299 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, 49048

[Please register, click here](#)

Presented by the Veteran Community Partnership and the Battle Creek VA Medical Center.

For more information on this event contact Kirsten Dzialo, Veteran Community Partnerships Coordinator at (269) 966-5600 ext. 31644 or [Kirsten.Dzialo@va.gov](mailto:Kirsten.Dzialo@va.gov).

## WOMEN VETERANS OF THE OLYMPIC & KITSAP PENINSULAS CONFERENCE

Whether in Recognition of Service, Support, or Sisterhood

Are you a woman of any age who served in the US military at any time, are you interested in meeting women veterans, creating opportunities for future networking, and hearing about local, State, & Federal resources which may enhance your well-being now and in the future?

Don't miss this unique opportunity to join us for a day of camaraderie, inspiration, renewal & information-sharing!

Date: June 10  
 Place: Fort Worden State Park Commons Conference Center  
 210 Battery Way  
 Port Townsend, Washington  
 Time: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Register Today!**  
 Free Admission • ample free parking • ADA accessible • Free Lunch • Battle Prizes • CD40 Case  
 \*Reference County Transit #2 (local transport)

Schedule of Events	Registration
Register & Visit Resource Tables	8:30
Welcome & Networking Introduction	9:15
Keynote Address by Alisa Sakrands	9:30
Alisa needs: The Veterans Health, Veterans benefits & private sector benefits applies to meet the needs of a growing female veteran population.	
Focus on Wellness: Meeting the Needs of Women Who Served	11:00
Alisa needs: The Veterans Health, Veterans benefits & private sector benefits applies to meet the needs of a growing female veteran population.	
Network & Visit Resource Tables	12:00
Lunch	12:30
Keynote Address by Colleen McKeer	1:00
Alisa needs: The Veterans Health, Veterans benefits & private sector benefits applies to meet the needs of a growing female veteran population.	
Alisa needs: Breakout Sessions: Making Decisions for Future Visit-Being	2:00
Evaluations & Closing Remarks	3:15

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED TO ENSURE SPACE:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please indicate 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices for preferred break-out session:  
 \_\_\_ Meditative Mindfulness Activity  
 \_\_\_ Navigating Systems Successfully Across the Lifespan  
 \_\_\_ Employment After Service  
 Need Child Care? Advance Registration required and copies of child-care forms are needed by phone.

Need Transportation? Check Locations: Park-201 or Ft. Stevens-Signals 1 - Kitap-1

RSVP to register by Monday 6/10/16 by noon to: Yvonne Bailey, Registration 1660 S. Columbus Way Seattle WA, 98108  
 By Phone: 800-451-1010 Contact: 360-344-0940  
 Email: [yvonne.bailey@va.gov](mailto:yvonne.bailey@va.gov)

## Veterans Needs, VHA, and Eligibility

This section can help you educate non-VA partners about Veterans’ unique needs as well as the VA health care system. Additional suggested resources are also included.

Many Veterans are covered by Medicare or private insurance and choose to receive care solely through the private sector. The majority of Veterans receiving some or much of their health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health system also receive care from non-VA sources. For this reason, it’s important for everyone who has contact with Veterans to be familiar with issues of special concern to Veterans.

### Military Health History Pocket Card for Clinicians

The Military Health History Pocket Card for Clinicians was developed by the VA Office of Academic Affiliations. Its purpose is to help people who care for Veterans develop a better rapport with them and understand their unique experiences. The card suggests several questions that invite Veterans to share their stories. Additional insight into special Veterans’ needs and the card can be found at [www.va.gov/oa/pocketcard](http://www.va.gov/oa/pocketcard).

### Veterans and Their Needs

The VA Veteran Data and Information Web Site ([www.va.gov/vetdata](http://www.va.gov/vetdata)) is managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Policy and Planning and is designed to provide a variety of data and information about Veterans. It includes socio-economic data, the demographic characteristics of Veterans, the geographical distribution of the Veteran population, and other statistical data and information. The Office of Policy and Planning continually updates this site based on the most recent data from Veteran surveys and other research.

Information about the specific needs of Veterans can be accessed at [www.wehonorveterans.org](http://www.wehonorveterans.org). At this site you will find information according to Veterans’ needs as they vary by the conflict era, by a history of trauma, or by specific Veterans’ populations such as homeless Veterans or Veterans who live in rural areas.

### Veteran Health Administration: An Overview

The VA provides health services for Veterans through the VHA. VHA health services are delivered through VISNs that are organized geographically. A VISN’s purpose is to pool and align resources to better meet local health care needs and provide greater access to care. A VISN map and a list of all VHA facilities by state are available at [www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1).

Each VISN contains 5-10 VA medical centers (VAMCs), which are hospital systems and their community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) that serve Veterans. These VAMCs and their CBOCs include some or all of the following services: inpatient hospital care, ambulatory care and out-patient clinics, nursing home care programs, home care programs; and long-term care domiciliaries.

The VA also provides Vet Centers that offer psychological counseling for war-related trauma, counseling for Veterans sexually assaulted or harassed while on active duty, case management services, and social services for Veterans and family members.

## Eligibility for Medical Services

### Who is eligible for VA medical benefits and how is it determined?

The Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 established the [Medical Benefits Package](#) for enrolled Veterans. An enrolled Veteran is someone who has successfully completed the application process, has had eligibility verified, and has been assigned to a VA facility.

Veterans can initiate the enrollment process by completing VA form 10-10EZ. The 10-10EZ may be obtained by visiting, calling, or writing to any VA health care facility or Veterans’ benefits office. Veterans can also call toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) or access the form on the internet at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez). Hospice staff at VA facilities may also be available to facilitate the enrollment process.

In general, Veterans who have been honorably discharged from active service are eligible for benefits. Active service is defined as full-time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer in the Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Additional special groups and those dishonorably discharged, imprisoned, or paroled may be eligible for benefits and should contact a VA regional office to verify eligibility.

Although most Veterans must enroll to receive health care benefits, some Veterans under specific circumstances are exempt from enrollment. The exceptions are as follows:

- Veterans who have a service-connected (one incurred while on active duty) disability of 50 percent or more;
- Veterans who want care for a disability (determined by the military) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty that has not been rated by the VA within one year of discharge; and
- Veterans who want care for a service-connected disability only.

### Are there any costs associated with receiving health care benefits from the VA?

Once eligibility has been determined and enrollment complete, Veterans are assigned a priority group. Services are provided to enrolled Veterans regardless of priority group, but some Veterans may be charged a co-payment for services depending on their annual household income. Veterans in priority groups four, six, and seven may be required to pay a co-pay, as they did not have a service-connected disability or their disability did not qualify for compensation. (See ‘priority groups’ listed below.)

*The VA utilizes a Geographic Means Test to determine whether or not Veterans will be charged a co-payment for services received. The annually adjusted Geographic Means Test performed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is used in combination with figures for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs), which is adjusted periodically to reflect changes in local economies. This combination is used to adjust the federal standard for maximum household income for benefits to reflect local cost of living for Veterans.*

**What are the Priority Groups?**

The priority groups range from one to eight, with one being the highest priority for enrollment. Under the Medical Benefits Package, the same services are generally available to all enrolled Veterans. To learn more about the priority groups, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/priority\\_groups.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/priority_groups.asp).

**What benefits are contained within the Medical Benefits Package?**

The following basic care services are available through VA:

- Hospital or outpatient medical, surgical, or mental health care, and care for substance abuse
- Prescription coverage under the VA national formulary
- Emergency care in a VA medical center
- Emergency care in a non-VA facility (with specific requirements)
- Bereavement counseling
- Rehabilitative services (not vocational services)
- Consultation, counseling, training, and mental health services for family members or legal guardian
- Durable medical equipment, prosthetic and orthotic devices (including eyeglasses and hearing aids)
- Home health services
- Reconstructive plastic surgery and/or facial prosthesis, required as a result of disease or trauma
- Respite, hospice, and palliative care
- Payment of travel expenses for care (with specific requirements)
- Pregnancy and delivery
- Completion of forms

Preventive care services provided include periodic medical exams, health education, drug use monitoring and education, and mental health and substance abuse services.

**What services are not provided under the Medical Benefits Package?**

Services NOT provided include:

- Abortion/abortion counseling
- In vitro fertilization
- Medications and medical devices not approved by the FDA (unless the facility is conducting clinical trials)
- Gender alterations
- In-patient or out-patient care for a Veteran with services provided by another federal agency's institution
- Membership in spas and health clubs

Please note that eligibility and services available change based on legislation, etc., so it is important for Veterans to determine their eligibility by contacting their local VA Eligibility office directly. For a detailed list of all services and specific requirements, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits). In addition, information about VA and DoD benefits is available at [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits).

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for the development of the VCP initiative and Toolkit. Most of all, thank you to the coordinators of each VCP for their tireless efforts and inspiration that continues to fuel this movement. A roster of VCPs is located at the VCP webpage - [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp).

### **Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**

- Dr. Kenneth Shay, VHA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care
- Sherri DeLoof, VHA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care
- Lelia Jackson, VHA Office of Community Engagement
- Dr. Jamie Davis, VHA Office of Community Engagement
- Meg Kabat, VHA Family Caregiver Support Program
- Nicole Johnson, VHA Family Caregiver Support Program

### **VCP National Advisory Council:**

- Adrian Atizado, Disabled American Veterans\*
- Mary Davidson, VHA Hospice and Palliative Care Program
- Bret Hicken, VHA Office of Rural Health, Western Resource Center
- Gail Hunt, National Alliance for Caregiving\*
- Lelia Jackson, VHA Office of Community Engagement
- Nicole Johnson, VHA Office of Care Management and Social Work
- Meg Kabat, VHA Office of Care Management and Social Work
- Greg Link, Administration on Aging\*
- Sandy Markwood, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging\*
- Peter Notarstefano, Leading Age\*
- Joanne Shear, VHA Office of Primary Care
- Brenda Shaffer, VHA Office of Nursing Services
- Kenneth Shay, VHA Geriatrics and Extended Care Services
- Gwynn Sullivan, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization\*

\*ex officio member

### **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization**

- Gwynn Sullivan
- Sarah Meltzer
- Katherine Kemp
- Hope Fost
- Melissa Mills

## Appendices

The following Appendix items are also available as Word documents at [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp) in addition to other helpful resources.

- Appendix A: VCP Fact Sheet
- Appendix B: Sample Email to Prospective Planning Group Members
- Appendix C: Sample Invitation Letter/Email to VCP Informational Meeting
- Appendix D: Sample VCP Informational Meeting Agenda
- Appendix E: Sample Handout for Informational Meeting
- Appendix F: Sample Interest Form for VCP Members
- Appendix G: Sample Agreement to Serve on the VCP Leadership Committee
- Appendix H: Sample Letter to Needs Assessment Participants
- Appendix I: Sample Community Needs Assessment
- Appendix J: Action Plan Template
- Appendix K: Sample Participant Feedback Form

## Appendix A: VCP Fact Sheet



### *“Serving those who served for us”*

The Veterans Health Administration’s Veteran-Community Partnership (VCP) national program serves to foster seamless access to the full continuum of care and support services for Veterans and their families.

#### **Why VCP?**

Veterans deserve ready access and choice of the widest range of services available. However, most Veterans are not enrolled in VA, and exclusively access community resources for their health and support care needs. Additionally, Veterans who do receive VA health services also access non-VA services. Therefore, it is imperative that VA and non-VA providers and agencies establish and nurture these partnerships. VCP provides a mechanism to integrate knowledge and action for the combined mutual benefit of all those involved, and for those for whom they care.

#### **What is VCP?**

Specifically, VCP is a partnership between VA facilities and regional/local organizations in an effort to:

- Enhance and improve the quality of care for Veterans
- Identify programs and services to support family caregivers
- Promote seamless transitions within the continuum of care
- Increase awareness in the community re: the unique needs of Veterans, VA benefits and programs
- Educate VA on programs and services in the community
- Strengthen VA and community relationships

#### **What does a VCP look like?**

- Each local VCP is unique according to the diversity of resources within its community
- Partners are representatives from VA facilities and community organizations, agencies and coalitions
- Leadership is equal between VA and community; and facilitates collaboration and involvement of all partners
- VCP is developed and sustained on its local resources and strengths

**What activities can a VCP do?**

- Conduct assessments to determine the unique needs of Veterans within communities
- Exchange information between VA and community agencies in an effort to keep both informed of local and VA resources, strengths, and potential growth areas
- Educate community agencies about specific Veteran-related issues and benefits
- Provide community outreach educational programs for Veterans’ groups/community agencies to provide information on the VA continuum of care, available resources, and options
- Host educational events for both community and VA stakeholders to provide information on the continuum of care options and VA healthcare system
- Create educational tools and resources that partners can access for the most current and complete information on resources for Veterans, in VA and in the community...and more!

For more information, visit the VCP webpage at [www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp](http://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/vcp.asp).

## Appendix B: Sample Email to Prospective Planning Group Members



**VETERAN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

Hi [Name],

I wanted to let you know about a new program that our local VA is embarking on called **Veteran-Community Partnerships (VCP)**. The goal of this partnership initiative is to foster seamless VA/community transitions for the full continuum of care and services for our Veterans and their caregivers.

As you are well aware, many Veterans are not enrolled in the VA and instead receive support and services from community providers. And most Veterans enrolled in VA also access health services from the local community. Therefore, involvement and partnerships with other agencies is essential to VA's mission of supporting Veterans, because of level of coordination of services is essential for quality care.

VCP intends to build on community resources and strengths, while facilitating collaboration and integration of knowledge to benefit all those involved. In addition, we hope this will become a sustainable vehicle for disseminating information and creating the ability to identify long-term changes in local services and best practices. VCP also works to identify gaps and changes in services for Veterans.

Currently, I am putting together a committee to guide our local VCP. I would be grateful if you, or someone from [list organization], would participate on this committee, as we feel strongly that your input into the early development of our local VCP will be essential.

Please let me know a convenient time that I may call you and discuss this further. You can reach me via email [your [email@va.gov](mailto:email@va.gov)] or by phone [555-555-5555]. Thank you for your interest and I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

**[Your signature]**

## Appendix C: Sample Invitation Letter/Email to VCP Informational Meeting



### VETERAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Dear [Name]:

On behalf of (your organization), I would like to invite you to join us for an informational meeting to explore the possibility of developing a **Veteran-Community Partnership (VCP)** in our area. The focus of VCP is to create seamless access to and transitions among the full continuum of non-institutional extended care and support services in VA and the community.

By establishing a VCP in our area, we believe we will be able to:

- **Increase choice and awareness** to the best quality care and services available to Veterans and their caregivers,
- **Educate one another in the community** about services and supports available to Veterans and their caregivers, and
- **Strengthen relationships** among VA and local community partners, providing support for shared goals on behalf of Veterans.

The VCP we form will become part of a national network of other VCPs established through the Department of Veterans Affairs and national/state/local agencies.

**The informational meeting will be held at [time] on [day and date] at [location].**

If you are unable to attend this meeting, we would appreciate your forwarding this letter to a colleague who might be willing to represent your organization.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. Thank you for your interest and I look forward to hopefully meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Phone]

[Email]

**Attachment: VCP Fact Sheet**

## Appendix D: Sample VCP Informational Meeting Agenda



VETERAN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS

### Informational Meeting Agenda

Location

Date & Time

**[Use agenda items below that are relevant and appropriate for you meeting and provide a time frame for each topic to keep meeting on track.]**

- I. Welcome
- II. Introductions
- III. Objectives of the meeting
- IV. Purpose of a VCP
- V. Components of a VCP
- VI. Structure and Leadership
- VII. Importance of Veteran Caregivers
- VIII. Questions and Answers
- IX. Interest forms to facilitators
- X. Next Steps and Closure
  - a. Meeting schedule

Handouts: VCP Fact Sheet, VCP Vision/Mission, Interest Form

## Appendix E: Sample Handout for Informational Meeting



### VETERAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

#### **Vision:** [insert your VCP's vision statement]

Example: All Veterans and their caregivers will have access to, and choices among, the services that allow our Veterans to stay in the places they call home

#### **Mission:** [insert your VCP's mission statement]

Example: To foster Veterans' seamless access to, and transitions among, the full continuum of care and support services in VA and the community.

#### **Meeting Objectives:**

1. To describe the purpose and value of a VCP
2. To assess the level of interest in a VCP among meeting attendees
3. To identify which areas meeting attendees would like to work on/pursue in collaboration

#### **Goals:**

1. **Increase choice and awareness** of the best quality care and services available to Veterans and their caregivers,
2. **Educate** one another and the community regarding services and supports available to Veterans and their caregivers, and
3. **Strengthen relationships** with VA and local communities and provide support for common goals.

#### **Components of a VCP**

- Leadership
- (Potential) Project Workgroups
- Community Outreach
- Legal/regulatory issues
- Education
- Research and Evaluation
- Member Recruitment
- Resources Development

**Appendix F: Sample Interest Form for VCP Members**



**VETERAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Please complete this form and return to **[name, contact info]**.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Please check all that apply. I am a:**

- Service Provider
- Veteran
- Caregiver
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Please check ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for the following questions.**

I have experience working with Veterans.

- Yes
- No

I would like to serve on the VCP Leadership Committee.

- Yes
- No

**4. Please check the following workgroups/topics that you are interested in:**

- Community Outreach
- Legal/Regulatory Issues
- Education
- Research and Evaluation
- Member Recruitment
- Resource Development
- Other/s: \_\_\_\_\_

*“Serving those who served us”*

**5. Please identify the dates and times that are the best for future meetings.**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-10 am					
10-12 noon					
12-2 pm					
2-4 pm					
4-6 pm					
After 6 pm					

**6. What resources are you or your organization able to provide for VCP?**

- Meeting space
- Financial donations
- Mailing lists
- AV equipment
- Event space
- Volunteers
- Contact hour provider (CEUs)
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

**7. What other groups/organizations do you suggest should be considered to join the VCP?**

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**8. What are some of your personal experiences or expertise that you think may be beneficial to our need VCP?**

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**9. Additional comments or suggestions:**

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**Appendix G: Sample Agreement to Serve on the VCP Leadership Committee****VETERAN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

Dear [Name]:

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Leadership Committee of the newly forming **Veteran-Community Partnership (VCP)**. The purpose of the VCP is to:

1. **Increase choice and awareness** regarding the best quality care and services available to Veterans and their caregivers,
2. **Educate** one another and the community regarding services and supports available to Veterans and their caregivers, and
3. **Strengthen relationships** with VA and local communities and provide support for common goals.

As a member of the Leadership Committee your role will include providing leadership to, and governing of the VCP.

Please complete the information below with your contact information and add your signature to agree to serve on the Leadership Committee.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

E-mail:

Phone:

Fax:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for your support!***

## Appendix H: Sample Letter to Needs Assessment Participants



VETERAN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS

Dear [Name]:

We are writing to you on behalf of the **Veteran Community Partnerships (VCP)**, a partnership of community organizations and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) personnel dedicated to improving Veterans' access to and choices for their health care needs and services.

As part of our efforts, we are trying to learn more about how community organizations and VA facilities work together in our area. We would like to request that you complete the attached needs assessment.

If you choose to participate, please return the assessment to **[name & contact info]** by **[date]**. Your participation is voluntary and your answers will be confidential.

If you have any questions about the assessment or want to learn more about VCP, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your interest and support and we hope you will participate in our survey.

Sincerely,

**Attachment: Needs Assessment**

## Appendix I: Sample Community Needs Assessment



### VETERAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

#### Community Needs Assessment

The following needs assessment is part of a national effort to learn more about the existing relationships between VA facilities and your organization and to determine how best a **Veteran-Community Partnerships (VCP)** initiative might serve our community.

Your participation is voluntary and your answers will be confidential. After completing the survey, please return to: [Name], [email], [fax].

- 1. What population does your organization serve?**
- 2. Are there certain eligibility requirements (e.g. area, income) for your services? If so, what are they?**
- 3. Do you ask every client/patient/consumer what his or her Veteran/military status is?**
  - Yes
  - No
- 4. Do you receive referrals from VA facilities?**
  - Yes
  - No
- 5. If the answer to question # 4 is yes, how many Veterans referred from VA facilities did you serve in the last calendar year? (Estimates are fine if you don't track this.)**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Number referred
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Number served
  - \_\_\_\_\_ We don't track referrals from VA facilities

**6. How is your organization paid for services it provides to Veterans referred to them by VA providers. Please indicate any of the payers listed below that your organization receives reimbursement from.**

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- TRICARE/Champus
- HMO
- Private Insurances
- Private pay
- Per Diem arrangement
- Charity Organization
- Other (list)\_\_\_\_\_

**7. What are some barriers to partnering with VA organizations that you have experienced:**

- We have no knowledge about VA policies and regulations.
- We have no knowledge of how to contact VA facilities.
- We lack the knowledge about VA benefits, services, and programs.
- There is a lack of knowledge regarding certain needs that may be more common in the Veteran population (PTSD, combat history, exposure to chemical weapons etc.)
- VA staff does not have knowledge about our programs/services.
- VA does not have knowledge of non-VA benefits (Medicaid, Medicare, OAA programs, etc)

**8. Do you target outreach activities towards Veterans?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, please check the following outreach activities your agency has completed with VA providers in the past year.**

- Veteran education and training
- Veteran family support groups
- Veteran targeted publications
- Outreach to VSOs
- Media use
- Other (list)\_\_\_\_\_

**9. What are the most difficult and challenging issues in referring and coordinating care for Veterans?**

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*“Serving those who served us”*

**10. What has worked in referring and coordinating care for Veterans?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**11. In your opinion, what specific resources would be helpful to you in providing quality care for Veterans in your area?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**12. Would your organization be interested in joining the Veteran-Community Partnerships initiative to improve access, and choice for Veterans and their caregivers?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, who would be interested in representing your organization?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and role of individual completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for completing this assessment and your support with our national effort to improve care, access, and choice for our Veterans!*

Appendix J: Action Plan Template



VETERAN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Date:

Goal:

Objective	Key Activities	Person/s Responsible	Existing/Needed Resources	Measure of Success	Date of Completion

**Appendix K: Sample Participant Feedback Form**

**VETERAN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**Participant Feedback Form**

[Insert name of your group and/or the event]

[date of event]

**1. What was your main reason for attending this event? [Choose all that apply.]**

- I am a Veteran and want to learn more about accessing health care
- I am a caregiver of a Veteran and want to learn more about caregiver issues
- I am a health care professional and want to learn more about how to better care for Veterans and their families
- I thought it sounded interesting
- I was invited by a friend, family member, or colleague
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What was your overall impression of the information provided?**

(Check the statement that best applies)

- I learned many new things that will be useful to me
- I learned a few new things that will be useful to me
- I learned new things, but nothing of use to me
- I did not learn anything new, but it was a good review
- I did not learn anything new
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. After attending this event, which of the following are you likely to do within the next month or two? (Check all that apply)**

- More thinking and/or reading about this topic
- Talk to family members and/or close friends about this topic
- Talk with my doctor about this topic
- Talk with someone in my faith community about this topic
- Get involved in efforts to improve care for Veterans and their families
- Join a Veteran-Community Partnership
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*“Serving those who served us”*

**4. Are there things you expected or hoped to hear about that did not come up in the discussion?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, what were they?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Additional comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Please provide some demographic information: [Check all that apply.]**

- Male     Female
- 35 or younger     36-50     50-65     66 or older
- Veteran     Caregiver



VETERAN COMMUNITY  
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T O O L K I T