

VA NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

VA's National Partnership Council (NPC) was established in 1993 in accordance with Executive Order 12871, which directed the head of each Executive Branch agency to create labor-management partnerships by forming labor-management committees or councils at appropriate levels to help reform government and to involve employees and their union representatives as full partners with management representatives to identify problems and craft solutions to better serve the agency's customers and mission. When Executive Order 12871 was revoked in 2001, then Secretary Anthony J. Principi decided to retain the NPC as an advisory body to the Secretary and his leadership team, and the NPC has remained active and operational since that time.

In December 2009, Executive Order 13522 was issued. Subsequently, the labor and management partners who comprise the NPC met to revise a strategic plan that would articulate the goals, objectives, strategies and performance measures that define how NPC carries out its advisory function to the Secretary. The goals and objectives contained in the plan define the NPC's areas of focus and the results that can be expected by the managers and employees who are the NPC's stakeholders. The strategies and performance measures define how the results will be achieved and assessed.

Several of the key highlights of the plan are as follows:

- **Promoting a positive work environment** – The NPC will promote a positive work environment for all employees to enhance their satisfaction and service to veterans.
- **Supporting new policies and programs** – The NPC members will work collaboratively to develop statements of support and/or recommendations, as appropriate, on policies, programs and processes that impact employees.
- **Sharing information and exchanging views** – The NPC will share information and exchange views on national initiatives with the intent of expediting and/or reducing the need for traditional bargaining.
- **Promote collaborative labor-management relations**– The NPC will promote collaborative labor-management relations at all levels and encourage joint and third-party training and support that.

This Strategic Plan was created by the NPC members, who represent VA's five national unions (AFGE, NAGE, NFFE, SEIU and UAN), all three Administrations (VHA, VBA and NCA), the Office of General Counsel, Office of Information and Technology and the Office of Labor-Management Relations. It is intended to guide the NPC's activities and to inform stakeholders about the important role the NPC plays in the Department.

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Mission statement for the NPC– *to promote cooperative labor-management relationships throughout the Department to support the overall mission of the VA.*

NPC has developed a strategic plan designed to achieve four overarching goals:

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| <i>Promoting a positive work environment:</i> | The NPC will promote a positive work environment for all employees to enhance their satisfaction and service to veterans. |
| <i>Supporting new policies and programs:</i> | As appropriate, the NPC will collaboratively develop statement of support and/or recommendations on policies, programs and processes that impact employees. |
| <i>Sharing information and exchanging views:</i> | The NPC will share information and exchange views on national initiatives with the intent of expediting and/or reducing the need for traditional bargaining. |
| <i>Promote collaborative Labor Management: Relations</i> | The NPC will promote collaborative labor-management relations at all levels and encourage joint and third-party training. |

The NPC Strategic Plan is in direct support of the four enabling goals identified in VA's Strategic Plan to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) into a high performing 21st century organization focused on our Nation's veterans as clients. The 21st century VA will be built around three guiding principles: 1) People-Centric; 2) Results Driven; 3) Forward-Looking.

The NPC believes our strategic plan will assist the Department in achieving: 1) Better labor management relations; 2) Improved quality of employee work-life; 3) Improvements in ability to accomplish mission and deliver high quality products and services.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1. PROMOTING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The NPC will promote a positive work environment for all employees to enhance their satisfaction and service to veterans.

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| Objective 1.1 | Promote a safe and healthy work environment through prevention and training. |
| Objective 1.2 | Support succession planning. |
| Objective 1.3 | Promote VA as an employer of choice to increase retention of existing employees and recruitment of new employees. |
| Objective 1.4 | Promote ADR to resolve workplace issues and disputes. |
| Objective 1.5 | Support the All-Employee Survey. |
| Objective 1.6 | Support employees' return to work after illness or injury. |
| Objective 1.7 | Increase recognition of labor-management successes. |

Goal 2. SUPPORTING NEW POLICIES AND PROGRAMS:

The NPC will collaboratively develop statements of support and/or recommendations, as appropriate, on policies, programs and processes that impact employees.

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| Objective 2.1 | Respond to presentations from program or staff offices regarding new policies, programs or processes with a written statement of support and/or recommendations, as appropriate. |
| Objective 2.2 | Establish a subgroup on oversight to track the presentations that are endorsed. |

Goal 3. INFORMATION SHARING:

The NPC will share information and exchange views on national initiatives with the intent of expediting and/or reducing the need for traditional bargaining.

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| Objective 3.1 | Plan and conduct NPC meetings in a structured manner that allows for meaningful and productive information sharing. |
| Objective 3.2 | Solicit information from Administrations, staff offices, and unions about topics that are meaningful to the NPC. |

Objective 3.3 Ensure NPC is provided adequate administrative support.

Objective 3.4 Circulate draft minutes to NPC members for comments and distribute final minutes to stakeholders in a timely manner.

Goal 4. PROMOTE COLLABORATIVE LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS:

The NPC will encourage joint and third party training and support collaborative labor-management relations at all levels.

Objective 4. 1 Provide joint training for new and existing supervisors, managers, and union officials.

Objective 4. 2 Identify best practices and share results.

Objective 4.3 Assist in the implementation of EO 13522.

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Goal 1. PROMOTING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The NPC will promote a positive work environment for all employees to enhance their satisfaction and service to veterans.

The NPC promotes a positive work environment through its focus on the areas of safety, succession planning, recruitment and retention, ADR, the All-Employee Survey, workers' compensation, and recognition of labor-management successes.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Safer, healthier work environment
- Improved succession planning
- Improved recruitment/retention
- More efficient and effective resolution of workplace issues and disputes
- More employees return to work after workplace injury or illness
- Increased awareness of successful labor-management initiative

Objective 1.1 Promote a safe and healthy work environment

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
1.1.a Promote initiatives that prevent workplace injuries and/or illnesses	Increase NPC activities that promote safety and health initiatives.
1.1.b Promote training on safety and health initiatives	Increase NPC activities that promote safety and health initiatives.
1.1.c Re-introduce Secretary's Safety Award	The Secretary's Safety Award is reintroduced and granted annually.

Objective 1.2 Support workforce and succession planning

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
1.2.a Solicit presentations from Administrations and staff offices regarding their workforce and succession plans and best practices	• Monitor reports to check results annually.
1.2.b Solicit presentations from other Departments and Agencies regarding workforce and succession planning	• Monitor reports to check results annually.

Objective 1.3 Promote VA as an employer of choice to increase retention of existing employees and recruitment of new employees

Strategy	Measures
1.3.a Identify recruitment and retention best practices	• Monitor reports to check results annually.
1.3.b Obtain information from Administrations and staff offices regarding problem areas	• Monitor reports to check results annually.
1.3.c Obtain information from Office of Diversity Management & Inclusion recruitment issues	• Monitor reports to check results annually.
1.3.d Share best practices from the field	• Monitor reports to check results annually.

Objective 1.4 Promote ADR to assist in resolving workplace issues and disputes

Strategy	Measures
1.4.a Promote awareness of the availability of ADR in both the grievance and EEO complaint process	• Increase percentage of informal cases that use ADR.
1.4.b Obtain information from ADR Council	• Increase percentage of informal cases that use ADR.
1.4.c Promote ADR training and participation through multiple communications mechanisms including newsletters, conferences, and statements of support	• Increase percentage of informal cases that use ADR.

Objective 1.5 Support the All-Employee Survey

Strategy	Measures
1.5.a Communicate when survey will be issued	• Increase percentage of employees who respond.
1.5.b Support communication of survey results	• Increase percentage of employees who receive notice of survey results.
1.5.c Support communication of successful initiatives that address the result of the survey	• Increase percentage of employees who receive notice of successful initiatives that address survey results.

Objective 1.6 Promote improved Workers Compensation (WC) outcomes

Strategy	Measures
1.6.a Promote timely return to work through education and awareness	• Increase percentage of employees on WC who return to work within 1 year of injury/illness.
1.6.b Encourage more effective interaction with Department of Labor (DOL).	• Track the time from injury/illness to approval of treatment.

1.6.c Encourage filing of injury claims transmittal to DOL in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the time from injury/illness to approval of treatment.
1.6.d Increase interaction with Worker's Compensation Steering Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of briefings to the NPC. • Attend annual OWCP training.

Objective 1.7 Increase recognition of labor-management successes

Strategy	Measures
1.7.a Promote Secretary's Labor-Management Award program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of nominations for award.
1.7.b Promote the awareness of NPC to field facilities and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop vehicles to provide information to the field about the NPC. Some examples are: Hey VA, "Have You Heard", NPC newsletter, development of an NPC web-site, VANGUARD article.

Goal 1: Performance Measures

Outcome Measures	Current Baseline	FY2011 Target	FY2012 Target	Strategic Target
Increase NPC activities that promote safety and health initiatives	X	X	X	X
Increase # of nominations for Secretary's LMR award	X	X	X	X
Increase # of requests for NPC assistance	X	X	X	X
Increase NPC visits to VA facilities	X	X	X	X

**Ideally, requests for NPC assistance should decrease over time to zero as other NPC activities increase awareness of collaborative labor-management techniques and decrease labor-management discord at the local level.*

Goal 2. PROMOTING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The NPC will collaboratively develop statements of support and/or recommendations, as appropriate, on policies, programs, and processes that impact employees.

The NPC supports new policies and procedures by preparing written statements and/recommendations, as appropriate, on policies and procedures that impact VA employees.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Written statement of support if NPC generally agrees with new policies programs, or processes
- Written recommendations if NPC believes changes should be made to new policies, programs or processes
- Establishment of subcommittees to provide oversight of endorsed presentations

Objective 2.1 Respond to presentations from program or staff offices regarding new policies, programs or processes with a written statement of support and/or recommendations, as appropriate

Strategy	Measures
2.1.a Develop recommendations or statements of support, as appropriate, in response to presentations regarding new policies, programs or processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● number of statements and recommendation provided by NPC.
2.1.b Follow up to determine whether NPC recommendations were adopted and if not, why not	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop a template for recommendations and follow-up or request for response.● Response received.
2.1.c Allow time on NPC meeting agendas for NPC to determine whether a statement of support or recommendations, as appropriate, should be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Track the number of presentations denied.● Track the number of new presentations.
2.1.d Develop a process of prioritization of NPC requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tool for prioritization developed.

Goal 2: Performance Measures

<i>Outcome Measures</i>	Current Baseline	FY2011 Target	FY2012 Target	Strategic Target
# of statements/recommendations provided	X	X	X	X
Develop mechanism to track follow-up and track progress	X	X	X	X

Goal 3. SHARING INFORMATION AND EXCHANGING VIEWS

The NPC will share information and exchange views on national initiatives with the intent of expediting and/or reducing the need for traditional bargaining.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Meetings conducted in a structured manner
- Agendas contain meaningful items
- Information solicited from field and staff offices
- Adequate administrative support provided

Objective 3.1 Plan and conduct NPC meetings in a structured manner that allows for meaningful and productive information sharing

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
3.1.a Finalize agenda 2 weeks prior to meeting	● Agenda finalized within two week timeframe 75% of the time.
3.1.b Distribute agenda with pre-read material 2 weeks prior to meeting	● Agenda distributed within two week timeframe 75% of the time.
3.1.c Identify items from minutes that require follow-up (old business)	● Old business items identified and posted on the agenda 75% of the time.
3.1.d Follow-up on old business	● Follow-up on old business completed 75% of the time.

Objective 3.2. Solicit information from Administrations, staff offices, and unions about topics that are meaningful to the NPC

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
3.2.a Solicit agenda items from staff offices 4 weeks prior to meeting	● Number of items received from staff offices.
3.2.b Solicit agenda items from NPC members 4 weeks prior meeting	● Agenda items solicited within a four week timeframe.

Objective 3.3 **Circulate draft minutes to NPC members for comments and distribute final minutes to stakeholders in a timely manner**

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
3.3.a Distribute draft minutes from meetings to NPC members no later than two weeks after NPC meeting concludes	• Minutes distributed within two week timeframe.
3.3.b Receive comments on draft minutes from NPC members within one week of receipt of draft minutes	• Comments returned within one week timeframe.
3.3.c. Approved minutes made available to stakeholders	• Minutes posted on website within two week timeframe of final approval of draft minutes.

Goal 3: Performance Measures

<i>Outcome Measures</i>	Current Baseline	FY2011 Target	FY2012 Target	Strategic Target
% of time agenda time frames met	75%	N/A	XX%	XX%
Old business action items identified and follow-up done	75%	N/A	XX%	XX%
Admin support requirements identified	75%	N/A	XX%	XX%

Goal 4. PROMOTE COLLOBARATIVE LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS:

The NPC will support collaborative labor-management relations at all levels and encourage joint and third party training.

The NPC supports collaborative labor-management relations at all levels and models collaborative behavior for local and intermediate level partnerships to observe and follow. The NPC also encourages joint and third party training for new and existing supervisors, managers, and union officials on all appropriate topics.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Provide joint training for new and existing supervisors, managers and union officials at all levels and all facilities, including VACO.
- Joint training and/or support provided on local/regional/national issues.
- Identify and share best practices for collaborative labor-management relations.

Objective 4.1 Provide joint training for new and existing supervisors, managers and union officials

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
4.1.a Collaborate with union officials, employees and third parties on appropriate training topics and identify existing training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of participants receiving identified training.
4.1.b Develop a labor management relations training module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employees who completed the training.
4.1.c. Identify existing VA and third party training to which NPC is invited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events NPC attended.
4.1.d Add labor management relations module to management conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of conferences where a labor management relations module is added.

Objective 4.2 Assist in the implementation of Executive Order 13522

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Measures</i>
4.2.a Develop a mechanism for NPC members to bring issues to NPC to facilitate the resolution of local labor management forum challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanism developed.
4.2.b Identify, assess and share best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of best practices documented and shared via NPC website and/or union newsletters.
4.2.c Develop guidance for implementation of EO 13522	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance developed.
4.2.d Distribute the guidance and tools to the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance and tools distributed.
4.2.e Analyze the results of the NPC survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the consistency of response between management and labor.
4.2.f Develop NPC website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website developed.

Goal 4: Performance Measures

<i>Outcome Measures</i>	Current Baseline	FY2011 Target	FY2012 Target	Strategic Target
Increase the number of participants receiving identified training	X	X	X	X
Number of employees who completed the training	X	X	X	X
Number of events NPC attended	X	X	X	X
Number of conferences where a labor management relations module is added	X	X	X	X
Increase the number of best practices shared via website and/or newsletter	X	X	X	X
Increase the consistency of responses between management and labor	X	X	X	X