

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE  
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1947, and became a federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975.

The Committee provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, through the Under Secretary for Health, on the coordination and promotion of volunteer activities within VA health care facilities, and on other matters relating to volunteerism; and keeps the officers and members of participating organizations informed of volunteer needs and accomplishments.

All recommendations approved by the NAC at its Annual Meeting are responded to in writing by the Under Secretary for Health. A majority vote of the NAC Service Member organizations constitutes the recommendations of the Committee. A member may file a minority report of the Committee's recommendations.

The NAC Executive Committee monitors and performs oversight of the NAC membership policies and procedures. Voluntary Service Office is responsible for implementation, recruitment and membership application processing.

The National Advisory Committee has five (5) categories of membership:

- a. Service Member organizations are those which maintain the provision of volunteers and participation on local VAVS facility committees at a minimum of thirty (30) VA facilities. Service Member organizations shall be the only category of NAC members having voting rights. Participation on a local VAVS facility committee is defined as having VA recognized representation on that committee. This definition relies upon the policy that any organization whose VA recognized representation misses three (3) consecutive local VAVS facility committee meetings will cause its removal from the committee.
- b. Associate Service Member organizations are those which maintain the provision of volunteers and participation on local VAVS facility committees at a minimum of fifteen (15) VA facilities.
- c. Donor Member organizations are those which donate significant funds

or materials to assist or benefit veterans at/to a minimum of thirty (30) VA facilities. Donor Members are expected to maintain such support at or above the thirty (30) VA facility minimum.

- d. Associate Donor Member organizations are those which donate significant funds or materials to assist or benefit veterans at/to a minimum of fifteen (15) facilities.
- e. Adjunct Member youth organizations are those which maintain the provision of volunteers and participation on local VAVS facility committees at less than fifteen (15) VA facilities. These organizations (e.g. Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; the 4-H; National Honor Society; Boys and Girls Clubs; etc.) must be sponsored by an NAC member organization which will mentor the youth organization in increasing its participation in the VAVS program. NAC Adjunct Member youth organizations may later apply for any other NAC membership category within criteria current at the time of application.

Members must continue their activity at or above the qualifying level for each category in order to remain on the NAC.

All NAC members are appointed on a two (2) year basis to coincide with the NAC Charter renewal process (i.e. odd numbered years).

The NAC has an additional non-voting membership category known as Honorary Member. The purpose of this membership category is to recognize past VAVS NAC service of those NAC member organizations no longer able to meet current minimum criteria for active membership. NAC member organizations with at least ten (10) consecutive years of NAC membership are eligible to apply for Honorary Membership. NAC Honorary Member organizations may later apply for any other NAC membership category within criteria current at the time of application.

Each member organization may appoint one (1) National Representative and up to two (2) Deputy National Representatives. Additional deputies, up to a maximum of eight (8) may be appointed when the need is justified and approved by the Director, Voluntary Service Office.

The NAC Chairperson is the Chief Communications Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Central Office, Washington, D.C. The Director, Voluntary Service Office will be the Deputy Chairperson.

The National Advisory Committee holds one (1) meeting a year, attended by members at their own organizations' expense. The Executive Committee meets prior to the NAC Annual Meeting and one (1) time a year other than at the Annual Meeting. NAC and Executive Committee meetings are open to the public.

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Notice of the purpose, date, time and location of each Annual Meeting is published in advance in the Federal Register.

As described in a 1992 NAC adopted motion, if an NAC member organization (other than Honorary) does not have VA recognized representation at three (3) consecutive Annual Meetings, that NAC organization will be removed from NAC membership and is then eligible to apply for membership under the criteria existing at the time of application.

All NAC meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

CHARTER OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS) NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee.

B. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: The VAVS National Advisory Committee provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, through the Under Secretary for Health, on the coordination and promotion of volunteer activities within VA health care facilities, and on other matters relating to volunteerism.

C. PERIOD OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE COMMITTEE TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE: Since the voluntary services meet an ongoing demand at VA health care facilities, the Committee's advice will be needed for the foreseeable future.

D. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COMMITTEE REPORTS: The Committee reports to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Health.

E. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE: Support is provided by the Veterans Health Administration, through the offices of the Chief Communications Officer and the Voluntary Service Office.

F. DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE: The Committee serves in an advisory capacity by making recommendations to the Under Secretary for Health for the improvement of voluntary services to veteran-patients by means of coordination on a national level of the established plans and policies for community volunteer participation.

With the exception of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, all members of the Committee are named by the national organizations represented. Those members are designated either VAVS National Representative or VAVS Deputy National Representative. Organizational membership on the Committee includes four categories: Service (voting); Associate Service; Donor; and Associate Donor. Most of the Committee's members serve as representatives of the various organizations involved in VA volunteer activities.

G. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF-YEARS: Annual operating costs of the Committee is estimated at \$141,000 and 2 staff years.

H. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Committee meetings are held annually, and subcommittees meet on an as needed basis. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Committee meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all meetings, and each meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda approved

by the DFO. The DFO is authorized to adjourn any meeting when he or she determines it is in the public interest to do so.

I. COMMITTEE'S TERMINATION: None.

J. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved:



R. James Nicholson  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date:

2/28/07

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee (EC) of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) shall be a working group selected from among Service Member organizations of the VAVS National Advisory Committee.

The Executive Committee shall make recommendations to the VAVS National Advisory Committee in all areas of VAVS National Advisory Committee business and activities. The Executive Committee is designated as the governing body between Annual Meetings of the National Advisory Committee, and is entrusted with the responsibility of fulfilling the National Advisory Committee charter. It shall also be available to the Director, Voluntary Service Office, for discussion, consultation, planning and coordination of VAVS National Advisory Committee programs and activities.

The Executive Committee is charged with the Annual Meeting site selection. Voluntary Service Office presents to the Executive Committee those site nominations to be considered, with the concurrence of the local Voluntary Service Program Manager and the Medical Center Director. Upon selection by the Executive Committee, Voluntary Service Office will then negotiate the hotel contract in the approved city for the VAVS NAC Annual Meeting.

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of not more than twenty (20) members. Committee officers will be a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson appointed for two (2) year terms (effective immediately following the Annual Meeting in odd numbered years) by the Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee. VAVS National Advisory Committee Service Member organizations shall not serve consecutive terms in the position of either Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

All Service Member organizations of the VAVS National Advisory Committee represented on one hundred and fifty (150) or more local VA facility VAVS committees shall be represented on the Executive Committee for a one (1) year term. Service Member organizations represented on less than one hundred and fifty (150) but at least thirty (30) or more local VA facility VAVS committees shall comprise the balance of the Executive Committee and will be selected by the Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee for a two (2) year term. All qualifying Service Member organizations will be given fair consideration.

The EC Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee; assist the VAVS National Advisory Committee Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson as requested in conducting the meetings of the NAC; appoint members of the EC to serve as Chairperson of the Recommendations, and other

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Subcommittees of the EC as deemed necessary; and shall serve as ex officio member of all Subcommittees. Subcommittee members will be appointed by the respective Subcommittee Chairperson from Service Member organizations participating in thirty (30) or more local VA facility VAVS committees. All Subcommittees shall have mission statements approved by the Executive Committee. All Subcommittees shall report to the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee Chairperson shall notify all VAVS National Representatives by letter, on VAVS letterhead, to submit organization reports for the upcoming VAVS NAC Annual Meeting.

Membership on the Executive Committee will be contingent upon the member organizations' support and concurrence.

The Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee, and the Director, Voluntary Service Office will be ex officio members of the Executive Committee and its Subcommittees.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Mission Statement**

The Recommendations Subcommittee shall be a working group reporting to the Executive Committee and at other times as required by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The Recommendations Subcommittee is responsible to the VAVS National Advisory Committee for obtaining and processing recommendations for improvements in the VAVS program on the national level.

The Recommendations Subcommittee shall consist of three (3) members, one (1) of whom shall have recent experience on the Subcommittee to provide knowledge and continuity of the process. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee shall appoint the Subcommittee Chairperson, who shall be a National Representative or Deputy Representative from an NAC Service Member organization. The Subcommittee Chairperson's term of office will be for one (1) year, from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting, and may serve consecutive terms. Upon completion of the term of office, the Chairperson shall provide all Subcommittee documents and files to his/her successor.

The Chairperson of the Recommendations Subcommittee shall appoint two (2) members to serve on this Subcommittee. Members will begin service at the end of the Annual Meeting at which they are appointed.

### **Standard Operating Procedures**

#### Responsibilities:

The Subcommittee is responsible to notify all the VAVS National Representatives, by letter, on VAVS letterhead, immediately after the Annual Meeting that recommendations for the next VAVS National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting are due, with a deadline of August 31<sup>st</sup>. The letter will include submission instructions. Format is to be in narrative style. Corrections will be made for grammar and punctuation in order to present a professional product. Recommendations for changes should include any and all references to source documents and should be submitted to VA Voluntary Service Office on the national letterhead of the sponsoring organization. Voluntary Service Office will then forward the submissions to the Subcommittee and arrange a conference call for its review and action on the recommendations (for EC approval/disapproval).

The Subcommittee shall monitor the implementation of VA approved recommendations, in text and practice; and shall periodically review recommendation submissions, tracking trends and/or repetitive topics, advising the EC and originating organizations of developing patterns, redundancies, etc.



The Subcommittee may generate recommendations originating from EC standing subcommittees, task forces, pilot studies, etc; Voluntary Service staff surveys; and the Subcommittee's own research initiatives. To accommodate real-time issues, this category of recommendations may be processed by the Subcommittee in the interval between the Fall EC Meeting and the NAC Annual Meeting, for consideration at that Annual Meeting.

Reporting:

The Subcommittee will review each organization recommendation in August and September and then present same to the Executive Committee at the fall meeting, who will act on these recommendations (for NAC approval/disapproval). The Subcommittee will then take these recommendations, with Executive Committee action statements, and prepare them for submission at the VAVS National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting, as well as any recommendations the Subcommittee may generate between the Fall EC Meeting and the NAC Annual Meeting. The Subcommittee shall also report to the NAC the VA's response to all recommendations approved by the NAC; and all matters pertaining to the recommendations' process.

## **SELECTION SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR NAC VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR (MALE AND FEMALE)**

### **Mission Statement**

The NAC Volunteer of the Year (Male and Female) Selection Subcommittee shall be a working group reporting to the Executive Committee (EC). It is responsible to the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) for obtaining the appropriate nominations for volunteer recognition on the national level.

The Selection Subcommittee shall consist of three (3) members: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Immediate Past Chairperson of the Executive Committee; and one (1) staff person, Voluntary Service Office.

### **Standard Operating Procedures**

#### Responsibilities:

Each fall, the Executive Committee Chairperson shall notify all VAVS National Representatives by letter, on VAVS letterhead, that nominations for the next VAVS National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting are due, with a deadline of February 15<sup>th</sup>. The format for submissions is to be letter style, between 300-500 words. Letters of support from local VA facilities are allowed to accompany each submission. All local nominations must be submitted to the affiliated volunteer's VAVS National Representative who will select the organization's candidate to be forwarded to Voluntary Service Office on the national letterhead of the nominating organization. Voluntary Service Office shall distribute the nominations to the Subcommittee by March 15<sup>th</sup>; then arrange a conference call for the Subcommittee to review the submissions. Awards for winners shall be ordered by Voluntary Service Office. Criteria for the award can be found in VHA Handbook 1620.1.8.e (pages 24-25), and the National Representative and Deputy National Representative Guidelines, 4.e (page 22).

#### Reporting:

The Subcommittee shall review each nomination in March. Following selection of the male and female award recipients, the Executive Committee Chairperson shall immediately notify the sponsoring organization of each, followed by notification in writing to each NAC member organization. The awards shall be presented at the VAVS National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting.

## **RECRUITMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Mission Statement**

The Recruitment Subcommittee shall be a working group reporting to the Executive Committee (EC). It is responsible to the VAVS National Advisory Committee for providing recruitment strategies for the NAC member organizations.

The Recruitment Subcommittee shall consist of a maximum of four (4) members, one (1) of whom shall have recent experience on the Subcommittee to provide knowledge and continuity of the process. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee shall appoint the Subcommittee Chairperson, who shall be a National Representative or Deputy Representative from an NAC Service Member organization. The Subcommittee Chairperson's term of office will be for one (1) year, from Fall EC Meeting to Fall EC Meeting, and may serve consecutive terms. Upon completion of the term of office, the Chairperson shall provide all Subcommittee documents and files to his/her successor.

The Chairperson of the Recruitment Subcommittee shall appoint the additional members to serve on this Subcommittee. Members will begin service at the end of the Fall EC Meeting at which they are appointed.

### **Standard Operating Procedures**

#### Responsibilities:

The Subcommittee is responsible for researching and submitting volunteer recruitment strategies that can be adapted by large or small organizations. These strategies should reposition VAVS as a dynamic, community-based organization that people want to join and support; increase the number of people who volunteer their time and energy for VAVS; and increase the racial, ethnic, lifestyle and age diversity among VAVS volunteers.

#### Reporting:

The Subcommittee will present a report at Executive Committee meetings; and to the NAC at the VAVS National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting.

## **MEMBERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Mission Statement**

The Membership Subcommittee shall be a working group reporting to the Executive Committee (EC). It is responsible to the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) for the implementation and monitoring of all NAC membership policies and procedures.

The Membership Subcommittee shall consist of a maximum of four (4) members, one (1) of whom shall have recent experience on the Subcommittee to provide knowledge and continuity of the process. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee shall appoint the Subcommittee Chairperson, who shall be a National Representative or Deputy Representative from an NAC Service Member organization. The Subcommittee Chairperson's term of office will be for one (1) year, from Fall EC Meeting to Fall EC Meeting, and may serve consecutive terms. Upon completion of the term of office, the Chairperson shall provide all Subcommittee documents and files to his/her successor.

The Chairperson of the Membership Subcommittee shall appoint the additional members to serve on this Subcommittee. Members will begin service at the end of the Fall EC Meeting at which they are appointed.

### **Standard Operating Procedures**

#### Responsibilities:

The Subcommittee is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of all NAC membership policies and procedures. NAC members are appointed on a two (2) year basis to coincide with the NAC Charter renewal process (i.e. odd numbered years). When an organization submits its application to become a member of the NAC, or to change its status, the application will be referred by Voluntary Service Office to the Membership Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will review both the application and the data provided by Voluntary Service Office to determine if the organization meets the membership criteria for the category specified on the application. If so, the Subcommittee will recommend approval.

The Subcommittee may nominate for NAC Honorary Membership any organization having served at least ten (10) consecutive years on the NAC, but currently unable to meet criteria for any other category of membership. NAC Honorary Member organizations may later apply for any other membership category within criteria current at the time of application.

Voluntary Service Office will notify the Subcommittee of any organization nearing membership eligibility, as well as verification that current members are

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maintaining the minimum membership qualifying requirements for their assigned category. The Subcommittee will send letters of encouragement, on VAVS letterhead, to potential new member organizations, as well as letters of caution to those organizations in danger of losing their membership status, thereby adversely impacting their reappointment to the NAC at their current, or any membership level.

The Subcommittee will be provided the NAC Annual Meeting attendance records so as to verify that NAC member organizations are complying with the attendance requirement. If an organization, other than Honorary, does not have VA recognized representation at three (3) consecutive NAC Annual Meetings, that organization will be removed from NAC membership, and will have to reapply for membership within criteria current at the time of application. The Subcommittee will send a letter, on VAVS letterhead, to any and all organizations that have missed two (2) consecutive NAC Annual Meetings, citing the attendance requirement, and urging the organization to have VA recognized representation at the next NAC Annual Meeting.

Reporting:

The Subcommittee shall report to the Executive Committee and the NAC on the status of outreach initiatives to potential new member organizations; organizations whose membership is in transition; those eligible for Honorary Membership; and organizations' attendance at NAC Annual Meetings.