

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between the
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)
and
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS (NACVSO)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to *recognize and enhance the partnership* between the United States Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO). Both organizations share in a common mission to serve American's Veterans, their family members, and survivors.

VBA and NACVSO seek a stronger relationship that will deliver improved quality of care and services of America's Veterans. The hallmarks of this relationship will be *effective communications, exchange of ideas and information, identification of emerging needs, and continuous reevaluation of existing programs*. Our shared goal is more uniform, efficient, and effective programs that assure a seamless continuum of care and services at the Federal and state and county levels.

2. Background

The tradition of caring for the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States dates back to the beginning of our Nation's struggle for independence. However, the beginning of formalized services and care for the wounded and disabled and their widows and orphans was codified during the Civil War. At that time, Congress, state and county governments began to realize Veterans required more than pensions and began to create programs and services for these men, and later women, to meet the ever-changing tasks of healing the wounds of war. VBA traces its timeless mission to the Civil War to fulfill President Lincoln's promise—"to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan...". Some counties began providing services right after the civil war and several formalized their offices in the 1920's and 1930's.

In the aftermath of World War II, many Veterans earned both Federal and state benefits requiring coordinated efforts to assure authorized entitlements were received. Thus, states and territories developed a Department of Agency designed as the "Office of Prime Responsibility" for Veterans' services and programs. NACVSO was established in 1990 to formalize and coordinate efforts among the counties, and is comprised of County Veteran Service Officers appointed by the supervisors, commissioners of the counties and the District of Columbia.

3. Goals

Collaboration and coordination between VBA and NACVSO can encourage a seamless approach and greater awareness of the quality of care and accessibility of services for the Veterans they both serve. It can enhance Veterans/client satisfaction as well. NACVSO is right there with the

veterans on a daily basis and is the best feedback to the VBA on veteran needs because of our proximity to the veteran, their families and survivors.

The parties acknowledge and agree to the following:

NACVSO will:

- Promote and develop and support VBA outreach initiatives and to provide feedback to help identify emerging and/or unmet needs of the veterans, their families and survivors;
- Improve the quality and accessibility of benefits, while optimizing value;
- Adopt and support VA's core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence (I CARE);
- NACVSO will work with State Directors of Veterans Affairs and member State Legislators to promote effective legislation that shall insure VA Core Values

VBA will:

- Participate in NACVSO Annual Training Conference;
- Conduct quarterly meetings/conference calls with NACVSO leadership to:
 - ◆ Exchange information, share expertise and knowledge, and discuss issues of mutual concern to enrich the lives of Veterans;
 - ◆ Seek methods to ensure the most effective use of existing resources;
 - ◆ Exchange information on VBA and County resources that could be shared under current legislative authority;
 - ◆ Identify emerging and/or unmet needs of Veterans and their families and engage in reciprocal discussions and deliberations on potential responses and solutions;
 - ◆ Identify and share best practices, which could be adopted by counties to improve programs and the delivery of care for Veterans; and
 - ◆ Work together to identify and formally recognize outstanding county programs that support or exemplify VBA's strategic goals and priorities.

- ◆ Partner with NACVSO in communicating with State Directors of Veterans Affairs to provide effective solutions that insure the delivery of veteran benefits and services.

4. Review and Termination

This MOU shall be reviewed annually. The parties reserve the right to update, change, or terminate this agreement at any time as deemed necessary with thirty (30) days written notice to the other party.

5. Authorized Representatives

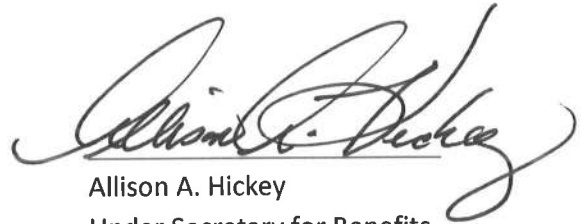
Therefore, in the spirit of this partnership, the undersigned are authorized to act in their respective areas related to this agreement and agree to designate appropriate representatives to establish objectives with strategies to meet the goals of this MOU; and the undersigned hereby endorse this MOU in the City of Washington, DC, on the 14th day of February 2012.

National Association of County
Veterans Service Officers



Tom Splitgerber
President

U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs



Allison A. Hickey
Under Secretary for Benefits,