

MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Handbook revises procedures for the implementation of Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC) operations within each VA medical center, regional office, and national cemetery.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENT/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook sets forth the procedures, duties, and responsibilities of the Administrations, facility Directors, and the Director of the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) as they relate to VA's Minority Veterans Program Coordinators Program.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Director of the Center for Minority Veterans (OOM) is responsible for the contents of this handbook.
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 0801, Minority Veterans Program Coordinator.
5. **RESCISSIONS:** VA Handbook 0801, Minority Veterans Program Coordinator, dated April 15, 2005.

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MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATORS

CONTENTS

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. PURPOSE	5
2. SCOPE/OVERVIEW	5
3. PROCEDURES	
a. VA Central Office (VACO) MVPC Liaison	6
b. Administrations (VHA/VBA/NCA)	6
c. Director, Center for Minority Veterans (CMV)	7
d. Facility Director	7
4. RESPONSIBILITIES/FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS	
a. VA Central Office MVPC Liaison	8
b. Facility Minority Veterans Program Coordinator (FMVPC)	9
c. FMVPC Critical Elements	10
5. REFERENCES	11

MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATORS

1. PURPOSE

a. This handbook describes the procedures, duties, and responsibilities of individuals appointed as Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office (VACO) Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC) and Facility Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (FMVPC). It also describes the duties and responsibilities relating to VA's Minority Veterans Program Coordinators Program for the Administrations, facility Directors, and the Director of the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV).

b. This handbook is the primary resource for VACO MVPC and for FMVPC and is designed to increase program effectiveness and efficiency.

2. SCOPE/OVERVIEW

a. Public Law 102-218, Department of Veterans Affairs Chief Minority Affairs Officer Act, was enacted in December 1991 to ensure that VA benefits and services are provided to all minority Veterans with dignity and respect, regardless of race. This legislation also created the position of Chief Minority Affairs Officer (CMAO) within VA.

b. Public Law 103-446, Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1994, was enacted in November 1994 establishing the CMV to recognize and respond to segments of the minority Veteran population who, for one reason or another, have special needs, are underserved, or alienated from mainstream society.

c. VA is committed to ensuring that minority Veterans and their families are able to utilize all benefits and service programs of the Department. The term "Veterans who are minorities" means Veterans who are identified as Asian American, Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic and Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian.

d. The Director of the CMV is appointed by the Secretary to a 6-year term. The Director of the CMV advises the Secretary on the adoption and implementation of policies and programs affecting Veterans who are minorities. CMV promotes the use of VA benefits, programs, and services by minorities, conducts outreach activities to minorities, provides support to the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, and performs other duties consistent with the law and as the Secretary prescribes.

e. In 1995, VA established field-based Minority Affairs Officer (MAO) positions to strengthen, support, and enhance VA's minority outreach and to assist the Administrations in providing outreach. MAOs also served as ombudspersons for minority Veteran communities. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) appoints MAOs in all of their facilities. This position is currently referred to as the FMVPC.

f. FMVPCs' duties may be assigned as a collateral or full-time position. The appointment is made by the facility Director. The designated FMVPCs ensure that VA's commitment to minority Veterans is maintained. This is done through education and awareness of available VA services and benefits for eligible minority Veterans.

3. PROCEDURES

a. The number of VACO MVPCs will be determined by each Administration. Appointments of MVPCs as collateral or full time will be determined by each Administration. Typically, a collateral duty assignment is less than or equal to twenty-five percent. Each VACO MVPC shall be responsible for the following:

(1) Coordinating and managing the Minority Veterans Program (MVP) in his/her Administration.

(2) Working directly with his/her FMVPC and the CMV on initiatives having regional or national scope and impact.

(3) Analyzing, evaluating, advising, and implementing programs to improve the entire MVP.

b. Designation of appointments of FMVPC at facilities as collateral or full time will be determined by the facility Director. In addition, each facility must have a designated MVPC to serve as liaison and advocate on the behalf of minority Veterans with Veteran Service Organizations; federal, state, and local agencies; and other local community stakeholders and service providers to identify the unique needs of minority Veterans. Each FMVPC in his/her respective facility shall do the following:

(1) **VHA.** Collaborate with other VA staff to identify gaps in service delivery and ensure minority Veterans are afforded equal access to all VA health care and benefits.

(2) **VBA.** Collaborate with other VA staff to identify gaps in benefit delivery and ensure minority Veterans are afforded equal access to and knowledge of all VA benefits (disability benefits, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, insurance, survivors benefits, and home loans).

(3) **NCA.** Collaborate with other VA staff to identify gaps in benefits delivery and ensure minority Veterans are afforded equal access to and knowledge of all VA burial/memorial benefits provided in honor of our Nation's deceased Veterans.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES/REQUIREMENTS

a. Director of the CMV shall:

(1) Serve as the Secretary's senior advisor for establishing MVPC program policies and procedures and for monitoring program implementation.

(2) Provide direction, oversight, assistance, and information to the Administration, facility Directors, and VACO MVPC to promote and support activities.

(3) Advocate on behalf of the VACO MVPC and FMVPC for resources and other support, when required and justified, for effective and efficient program operation and management.

(4) Conduct training forums and perform other educational and instructional activities that assist the VACO MVPC and FMVPC in promoting the use of VA benefits by minority Veterans.

(5) Supervise the management of the MVPC quarterly web based activity report system.

b. Each Administration shall:

(1) Implement MVP policies and procedures and provide the necessary resources for national initiatives.

(2) Monitor and assess the successful implementation of their program.

c. Facility Directors shall:

(1) Support the FMVPC and ensure he/she is provided the necessary resources to effectively perform the functions inherent in this position (e.g. allow sufficient time to perform the duties, provide computer access/e-mail, and fund project and/or special programs, as required).

(2) Meet with the FMVPC periodically (at a minimum, twice per year) to discuss the operation plan, initiatives and issues of interest and concern.

(3) List the FMVPC name, location, and telephone number in the facility directory and/or publicly displayed photo.

(4) Ensure outreach to minority groups, by supporting the FMVPC in conducting town hall/stakeholders/Veterans service organizations/Veterans meeting (at a minimum, two per year) to discuss issues and concern.

(5) Support FMVPC to the fullest extent possible with available resources for training and education (e.g. MVPC biennial training conference, cultural competency training, and VHA employment opportunity special emphasis conference).

(6) Ensure that their facility MVPC quarterly web based activity report is submitted in a timely manner.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES/REQUIREMENTS:

a. The VACO MVPC (collateral duty or full time) shall perform the following duties:

(1) Serve as an expert analyst on program implementation and advise senior management officials on issues affecting minority Veterans.

(2) Ensure that all FMVPC's are appropriately trained in the areas of outreach.

(3) Review and evaluate statistical and narrative information to determine utilization rates of benefits and services by minority Veterans.

(4) Serve as the principal liaison between the CMV and FMVPC.

(5) Participate in monthly conference calls with the CMV and FMVPC.

(6) Communicate frequently with and provide guidance and support to the FMVPC.

(7) Facilitate collaboration by FMVPC on outreach efforts in their geographic area.

(8) Prepare periodic statistical and narrative reports for the Director of the CMV and other VACO staff.

(9) Support the top management team; attend meetings and/or presentations as appropriate, where changes in benefits and services are discussed that may impact minority Veterans (e.g. staff reductions, streamlining, and budget reductions).

(10) Analyze trends and patterns and work with the facility management officials to alter perceptions and/or to maximize benefits to minority Veterans.

(11) Provide management officials with timely, comprehensive information that reflects the effectiveness of the MVPC.

(12) Conduct meetings with FMVPC within their jurisdiction as appropriate to disseminate program direction and information.

(13) Assist the CMV by facilitating the submission of his/her facility MVPC Quarterly Reports.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES/REQUIREMENTS:

b. Individuals **appointed as VACO MVPC must have the following skills and abilities:**

- (1) Knowledge and comprehension of Veterans benefit programs and current policies and procedures.
- (2) Ability to be sensitive to the needs, concerns, and issues of minority Veterans.
- (3) Effective verbal, written, and interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate effectively with senior management.
- (4) Strong analytical and problem solving skills.
- (5) Sound administrative skills and judgment and an ability to work independently and manage time effectively.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES/REQUIREMENTS:

a. **FMVPC (collateral duty or full time) shall perform the following duties:**

- (1) Establish and maintain contact with minority organizations within the local area(s) served by the facility to present information concerning benefits, to hear their concerns, and to answer questions.
- (2) Work with the facility staff to formulate and communicate program objectives that raise the consciousness and awareness of the minority Veteran program.
- (3) Support and initiate activities that inform and sensitize facility staff to the unique needs of minority Veterans.
- (4) Provide appropriate educational and outreach materials to targeted outreach groups.
- (5) Serve as a consultant and ombudsperson on issues pertaining to minority Veterans.
- (6) Keep abreast of VA policies, laws, and regulations and their impact on minority Veterans.
- (7) Review and evaluate statistical and narrative information to determine the utilization of the benefits and services by minority Veterans.
- (8) Advocate on behalf of minority Veterans by making recommendations to improve service delivery within their facilities. Participate as appropriate on local

advisory committees related to Veterans to ensure that minority Veterans' concerns are adequately addressed in decision-making processes.

(9) Inform VACO MVPC of all related activities performed in the facility's catchment area.

(10) Submit their web based quarterly activity report in a timely manner.

b. FMVPCs shall complete the following CRITICAL ELEMENTS:

(1) Participate in monthly conference calls with CMV and VACO MVPC.

(2) Develop a written Operation Plan outlining outreach and activities to be conducted targeting minority Veterans.

(3) Conduct trend analyses of minority Veterans' concerns or issues and recommend proactive initiatives and corrective actions to resolve recurrent challenges to the facility Director.

(4) Prepare and submit web based quarterly activity report to the CMV and VACO MVPC highlighting outreach activities conducted and issues identified through tracking and trending analysis.

(5) Conduct a minimum of two town hall meetings annually and/or Veterans' forums annually and meet with a minimum of three different stakeholders quarterly to promote the use of VA programs and services.

(6) Distribute and use culturally sensitive materials to inform minority Veterans and their families of the availability of VA services and benefits.

c. Individuals appointed as FMVPC must have the following skills and abilities:

(1) Knowledge and comprehension of Veterans benefit programs, current policies, and procedures.

(2) Ability to be sensitive to the needs, concerns, and issues of minority Veterans.

(3) Effective verbal written and interpersonal skills.

(4) Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

(5) Sound administrative skills and judgment and an ability to work independently and manage time effectively.

7. REFERENCES

- a. Secretary Memorandum of April 25, 1995
- b. Secretary Memorandum of March 12, 1999
- c. 38 U.S.C, Part 1, Chapter 3, Section 317, Center for Minority Veterans
- d. (MVPC) Appointment Form can found at:
<http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA0875a.pdf>
- e. Example (MVPC) Quarterly Report can be found at:
<http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA0875.pdf>