

WASHINGTON OFFICE



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Introduction

VFW Washington Office Mission

To prevail upon Congress and the Administration to fulfill our nation's commitment to care and provide for her defenders and their families, and to ensure that the United States of America remains forever vigilant and secure.

Philosophy

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was founded in 1899 by Soldiers, Sailors and Marines from the Spanish-American War and later, the Philippine Insurrection, who returned home to a government that provided virtually no healthcare or rehabilitation programs for their service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries. Our forefathers banded together to create an organization to change the way our nation treats those she sends to war, and in 1919, the VFW Washington Office was opened to ensure the veterans' voice was clearly heard on Capitol Hill.

Today, your VFW works with Congress, the Administration, and its agencies and departments to protect and create legislation and programs to enhance the quality of life of 22 million American veterans, 2.2 million active-duty military, Guard and Reserve members, and all their families.

To the VFW, a nation that creates veterans has a sacred obligation to care for them when they return home. Using that as our guiding principle, the VFW Washington Office's philosophy is to:

- Directly assist and help ensure veterans are provided all the care, support and compensation they earned through their honorable service in a prompt and compassionate manner by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal organizations.
- Promote legislation in Congress to create and enhance the VFW's pro-veteran, pro-military and national security goals, and to defeat those proposals we deem detrimental to our veteran and military communities.
- Help ensure veteran and military spouse employment opportunities are supported by lawmakers, the private sector, and all concerned government entities through the enhancement of veterans' preference legislation, training, education, and interstate licensing and certification portability programs.
- And to strongly advocate for national security and foreign affairs policies that guarantee our security as a nation, promotes our democratic ideals and interests abroad, seeks the fullest possible accounting of our missing comrades, and backs a strong military that provides for the wellbeing of military service members, retirees and their families.

Continuing Commitment

Since our founding the VFW has helped to create, protect and enhance virtually every quality of life program provided by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs—from improved healthcare and benefits to disability compensation and pensions, military pay raises, new GI Bills, traumatic injury insurance, hazardous substance exposure compensation, family caregiver support, and better services for women veterans, among many others. But more still needs to be done, especially in this era of serious federal budget reductions and cost-shifting proposals.

Of tremendous assistance to our national legislative effort is the grassroots support provided by tens of thousands of VFW Action Corps members who reside in the home states and districts of all 535 members of Congress. So, too, is a strong membership, because on Capitol Hill, membership is the measure of influence and organizational strength.

When the VFW Commander-in-Chief testifies before Congress or meets with the president or other federal officials, it is well understood that he represents the largest organization of combat veterans in the nation, an organization and its Auxiliary with a total membership of more than 1.5 million. And with such influence comes responsibility, and your VFW Washington Office—consisting of National Legislative Service, National Veterans Service, and an Action Corps—is committed to the VFW’s principles of serving the nation and those who serve her in uniform, and to help ensure that “No One Does More for Veterans” than our VFW.

National Legislative Service

The VFW National Legislative Service represents the organization before the United States Congress to advance legislation that is beneficial to veterans, our military, and their families and to work toward the defeat of legislation that would harm them.

In our mission we:

- Testify before congressional committees and subcommittees.
- Educate Congress on VFW Priority Goals to advance veteran-friendly policies.
- Secure the introduction and passage of legislation favorable to our membership.

The issues we advance are derived from the resolutions passed at our National Convention. The members of the National Legislative Committee take these resolutions and establish our Priority Goals. These Priority Goals, in turn, become our key issues and let Congress know what we most strongly support. They are our mandates for action.

For the 118th Congress, our Priority Goals focus on:

- Budget
- Veteran's Health Care
- Toxic Exposure
- Concurrent Receipt
- Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance
- Among many others, for a complete list visit: www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service.

We encourage all of our members, and ask you to encourage all of your fellow members to become educated on these issues. **You have a strong influence in Washington, and you should to use it.**

VFW Action Corps

Action Corps is the grassroots network of the VFW. Our members and non-member advocates are encouraged to contact their legislators on a wide variety of VFW-supported issues, working hand in hand with National Legislative Service.

Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill famously said, "All politics is local." Your legislators truly care about what you think. They depend upon us for support and votes. It is up to us to educate our legislators so they know what we believe in and what we expect from them.

What Can We Do For You?

- Action Corps members receive the VFW Action Corps Weekly and Action Alerts to keep advocates up to date on federal legislation.
- We assist you, as a VFW leader, by providing materials to help educate your members on the important issues and how to play a larger, more active role in the political process.
- We provide information and resources on how to effectively communicate the VFW's message to those in Congress.

How You Can Help Us?

- Stay Informed. Know the Issues.
- Participate by responding to action alerts and surveys.
- Be an instructor to your members. Let all your members know about the issues and Action Corps.
- Be an educator to your legislators. Let Congress know our Priority Goals and what we want them to do.
- Encourage others to help. Sign up to be a veterans' advocate and join Action Corps. If every veterans' advocate could email, write or call their legislators, we would be an unstoppable force.
- Anyone who cares about veterans can join Action Corps for free. You do not need to be a VFW member. The more advocates we have, the stronger our voice will be on Capitol Hill. Sign up new advocates for Action Corps any chance you get (see next section To Get Involved).

To Get Involved:

Sign up for the Action Corps: visit **<https://votervoice.net/VFW/register>**

Through Action Corps, you will be able to directly email your legislators. Please be reminded that the majority of information – Action Alerts, email updates and other breaking news – are sent via email. The speed with which legislation now moves requires the kind of instant action that only email can provide.

What's the Best Way to Communicate with Your Legislators?

- ***Personal Visits-*** This is the most effective way to communicate our message. Legislators make frequent visits to their district offices. Call their local office and ask for an appointment. When meeting, be organized and concise. Feel free to leave a fact sheet or a copy of the VFW Priority Goals for their future reference, which can be found at: vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service.
- ***Town Hall Meetings -*** Organizing a town hall meeting is an excellent way to get our issues in the forefront and discussed. Congressional leaders and candidates are always looking for places to host events and audiences to speak to. Local VFW Posts are perfect for this type of event. For more information about hosting/planning a town hall event, contact Action Corps at 202.608.8368.
- ***Telephone Calls-*** A short phone call, especially to the local district office, gives a clear indication of what our members think. Ask to speak to the person who handles veterans' issues and let them know what issue you are calling about, how you feel about it and how it would affect you personally. Five minutes of your time can lead to big results down the road. You can find phone numbers by visiting: <https://votervoice.net/VFW/Address>.
- ***Email Messages-*** Through Action Corps you can send letters and other information directly to your legislators with just a click of the mouse from your computer. We provide sample letters that you can customize and personalize, and because you are sending from our website, the information sent to the congressional offices identifies you as a constituent – critical in today's high tech world of spam and viruses.
- ***Personal Letters-*** A brief, clearly organized letter that focuses on one issue and why it's important to you lets them know how their constituents feel. Always be polite and professional. Be sure to specifically ask for a reply in your letter. Custom letterheads, envelopes and business cards with the VFW Logo are available from the VFW Store at 833.VFW.VETS (833.839.8387) or www.vfwstore.org.

When Writing Your Representatives Use This Form:

The Honorable Joe Smith
United States House of Representatives (or Senate)
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515 (or 20510)

Dear Representative Smith: (or Dear Senator Smith:)

Working with Congressional Staff

When you contact a legislator's office, you will most frequently be working with their staff. Convincing the staff to support our legislative priorities is often as, if not more, important as convincing your legislators themselves. Working and developing a personal relationship with the staff member is the key to accomplishing great things in Washington.

We're Here to Help

As always, we're happy to help you with whatever you need. If you have questions, need information, or need any assistance, just contact us. We'll help you in any way we can. You can call the Action Corps at 202.608.8362 or email us at vfwac@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

Philosophy

The founding principle of the VFW is to ensure the provision of needed services to veterans by a grateful nation. For more than a century our organization has worked tirelessly to ensure that veterans are provided all the health care and benefits they have earned through their service and sacrifice in defense of our nation in a prompt and compassionate manner by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal departments and agencies.

The contents of this section are organized as follows:

- ***VA Health Care***
- ***VA Benefits Delivery***
 - A. VFW Department Service Officers
 - B. VFW “Guide for Post Service Officers”
 - C. VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Program
 - D. VFW Training and Quality Assurance
- ***Post/District Service Officers***
- ***VAVS & Community Volunteer Programs***
 - A. Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program (VAVS)
 - B. VFW Community Health Care Volunteer Program

VA Health Care

You may have the opportunity to attend high-level briefings or meetings with VA network or hospital directors and their staff during your year as Commander. We are available to help. At your request, NVS Health Team members are prepared to brief you directly about VA health care issues or provide written issue summaries that meet your needs. We can also prepare a list of customized questions for you if you know what topics will be discussed. Questions pertaining to the VFW position on VA health care issues or questions pertaining to a problem or other matters at a VA medical facility should be addressed to James Moss, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy, at 202.608.8371 or via email at jmoss@vfw.org.

VA Benefits Delivery

The VFW is dedicated to assisting veterans, their dependents, family members and survivors at the community and national level to ensure that our nation never forgets the sacrifices made by its citizen soldiers. The VFW has played a major role in every legislative measure to establish veterans’ benefits which have been enacted into law in the last century and that continues today with landmark legislation like the PACT Act, GI Bill adjustments and others. However, the most tangible way in which we demonstrate this commitment to service is through the daily efforts of your Department Service Officers (DSO).

A. **Department Service Officers:** A VFW DSO is located either in or near every VA regional office or other VA property. In many departments, Assistant DSOs and Claims Consultants are found at VA medical centers and other out-based locations. These dedicated individuals are VFW-certified and VA- accredited to ensure veterans, their families and survivors receive FREE, professional representation in the submission of VA claims and appeals. These highly trained individuals stand ready and willing to provide whatever assistance is required. Those in leadership positions are encouraged to meet with their Department Service Officer to demonstrate interest and support. Get to know what the DSO does for you. More importantly, get to know what they do for others. Spend time in their offices and observe the first-class services they provide. The National Veterans Service provides support through a comprehensive training program and a communication system that enables the DSOs to provide world-class assistance and representation to those who place their trust in them.

Department Service Officers and their staff assist any veteran or eligible family member or survivor who seeks help, regardless of whether they are members of the VFW or not and always FREE of cost. Consequently, DSOs are often the first contact veterans have with our great organization. Once a DSO has provided a veteran with assistance in applying for VA benefits and entitlements, they should consider asking the veteran to join and provide the individual with the benefits of membership in the VFW.

(Actively soliciting VFW membership in a VA building is not permitted. However, we will work with your DSO to provide acceptable methods for obtaining consent from veterans to allow for membership recruitment.)

While many service officers are remarkably busy, there may be opportunities to conduct focused outreach to their local military installations, Guard and Reserve units, colleges and universities, community organizations, civic or religious groups, etc., to ensure that they are aware of the benefits and services to which they are entitled. Outreach enhances the Department Service Officer's recruiting efforts.

The DSO is further supported by a cadre of National Veterans Service (NVS) staff at the VA Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) who assist in representing individual veterans and other claimants who appeal their VA rating decisions.

NVS has an Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Training, a Special Assistant and two Regional Quality Assurance Specialists responsible for training, technical support, and mentorship for your DSOs. Their primary responsibility is to review VFW service office operations and best practices regularly, to assist new service officers in the weeks or months before they come to NVS training, and to help resolve issues at the Regional Office (local) level. The ultimate goal of these positions is to ensure VFW is providing quality claims representation in all aspects of the claims process by supporting the needs of your DSOs and staff. The Quality Assurance team visits Department Service Offices to review service office operations, provide technical training and mentorship, and both share and gather best practices. Department leaders should contact the Director, NVS, to arrange for a service office site visit.

The John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year, established in 2015, is designed to provide annual VFW National recognition to an individual accredited by VA to represent claimants on behalf of the VFW before the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include VFW-accredited employees of State and County veterans' agencies. Guidelines for this award can be found at the end of this section.

B. **VFW “Guide for Post Service Officers”**: Every VFW member involved in service work, at all levels from Post through Department, should have the latest edition of the VFW “Guide for Post Service Officers.” This handbook is published electronically on the NVS web page, www.vfw.org/nvs, and comprehensively summarizes veteran's benefits and entitlement programs provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies. It is a handy reference useful in assisting and informing veterans of their entitlements under existing law. Questions pertaining to VA benefits should be directed to Mike Figlioli, Director, National Veterans Service, at 202.608.8373 or via email at mfiglioli@vfw.org.

C. **VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Program**: The VFW plays a critical role in the military's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) alongside our partners in the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. TAP is designed to ensure that separating service members – to include members of the Guard and Reserve – and their families receive information and assistance in qualifying for and obtaining VA benefits, VA health care, education, and post-military employment. The VFW's cadre of highly trained National Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives offers personal counseling and assistance to service members to submit complete VA claims prior to separation from active duty.

We consistently update the skills of our Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives by providing more than 80 hours of training each year and giving special attention to emerging issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI), military sexual trauma, and toxic exposure. Our presence on military installations continues to be well received as indicated by our BDD Client Satisfaction Survey, through which more than 99 percent of the VFW's Pre-Discharge clients report that they would recommend the VFW to a fellow service member. As a result, we have become the service organization of choice by officers and enlisted at the military facilities we cover. It is our goal to increase interest in membership by demonstrating excellence in service work. Currently, NVS has 24 National Pre-Discharge staff located at:

Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, CA	Ft. Liberty, NC (<i>formerly known as Ft. Bragg</i>)
Naval Base San Diego, CA	Ft. Bliss, TX
Ft. Carson, CO	Ft. Cavazos, TX (<i>formerly known as Ft. Hood</i>)
Ft. Stewart, GA	VA Regional Office, Salt Lake City, UT
Ft. Riley, KS	Ft. Belvoir, VA
Ft. Campbell, KY	Joint Base Meyer-Henderson Hall, VA
Joint Base Andrews, MD	Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD	Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA
Nellis AFB, NV	Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, DC
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC	Ft. Drum, NY
VA Regional Office, Winston-Salem, NC	Naval Station Norfolk, VA
NSA Washington DC	NSA Annapolis, MD
Pentagon, VA (Upon Request)	VFW Washington Office (National Capitol Region)

Additional information on the Pre-Discharge program can be found at www.vfw.org/pre-discharge. Questions regarding our participation in the Pre-Discharge program should be directed to Gregg Orto, Deputy Director, at 202.608.8375 or via email at gorto@vfw.org.

D. **VFW Training:** The National Veterans Service focuses on expanding training initiatives and assessing the true quality and level of skill of VFW accredited service officers. We are responsible for the design and delivery of all training to VFW- accredited representatives who are assigned to a VA regional office or other VA facility. We also perform quality assurance by interacting with your Department Service Office staff and offering advice on more complicated claims issues. NVS periodically reviews the quality of the VA regional office decisions and the level of advocacy provided by VFW. A system has been put in place to evaluate and validate the skill level and quality of advocacy for VFW accredited service officers. Testing is a vital element in that system.

VFW-accredited Department Service Officers are required to attend NVS training as prescribed in the NVS Policy and Procedure. All other VFW-accredited staff assigned to a VA regional office are required to attend at least once annually. To ensure that training is effective, we test all students at the conclusion of training. You will be notified of your service office staff's test scores. We maintain a database of all scores so that we can determine an average grade. This is used to determine progress and/or difficulty in understanding the work. This is vital information we use in the mandatory five-year reaccreditation process. Our commitment to professionalism and quality has produced a higher standard of quality in the work of your service offices.

To enhance our training resources, VFW has partnered with PsychArmor, Inc. to deploy an online learning platform for VFW's accredited service officers. Each of your DSOs and other accredited department staff has a seat assigned on the learning platform. NVS also extends seats on the platform to cross-accredited County Service Officers and State Service Officers so that we can reach more VFW-accredited representatives around the country with the training and resources they need to effectively assist veterans and their loved ones.

Questions regarding NVS training and quality assurance should be directed to Christopher Macinkowicz, Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance, at 202.608.8360 or via email at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org.

Post/District Service Officers

VA is making extensive outreach efforts to veterans. Indeed, veterans can now file a claim for disability compensation directly from their home through the Internet. As a result, it is not unusual for veterans to visit local VFW posts asking for information on veteran's benefits from anyone at the post. That "anyone," of course, should be the Post Service Officer (PSO).

The Post Service Officer is integral to our mission of veterans' representation. Indicative of this is the mandate in the National Veterans Service *Policy and Procedure* that Department Service Officers must provide at least one annual training session for the PSOs in the Department. The "Guide for Post Service Officers" is focused toward educating and providing a handy reference for the Post Service Officer. PSOs should always make a report at every official Post meeting. Department Service Officers should report to their supervisor or Department service committee and the National Veterans Service (NVS) when Post Service Officer training is completed.

It is important to note that VFW Post and District Service Officers *are not* accredited by the VA. Consequently, their ability to assist veterans and other claimants prepare claims for submission to VA is limited. Post/District Service Officers should be familiar with the basics of the compensation (for service-connected disabilities) and pension (for non-service-connected disabilities) program, as well as understanding VA letters and correspondence. PSOs should be the conveners in the Post, capable of linking veterans in our communities with quality, verified resources that will meet their needs. Primarily, PSOs should know your accredited Department Service Officers and the ways in which veterans can receive assistance.

However, the PSO should not assist veterans in filling out forms except in extreme circumstances and at the explicit request of the veteran. In this capacity, the PSO is not a claims preparer but rather someone who merely assists in recording information provided by the claimant. The application should be immediately returned to the veteran to submit through proper channels such as the DSO or a VFW-accredited state or county service officer or direct transmittal to the VA. Under no circumstances should a PSO retain any veteran's personal information for any length of time, as this is a violation of the law. Further, under no circumstances should the PSO provide any personally identifiable information concerning a claimant to any member of the VFW who is not a VFW accredited service officer (e.g., DSO, Assistant DSO or Claims Consultant). As a preferred practice, many Departments have implemented formal PSO referrals, allowing PSOs to record certain demographic information about veterans seeking claims assistance, which is then formally transmitted to the accredited DSO for appropriate follow-up.

Over the years, NVS has sought ways to make Post Service Officer training more accessible, to include hosting virtual Post Service Officer training and adding a Post Service Officer training seminar to the VFW National Convention.

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) and Community Health Care Volunteer Programs

The VFW conducts a multifaceted volunteer program which includes the Department of Veterans Affairs VAVS Program and our Community Health Care Volunteer Program. Our network of more than 2,406 regularly scheduled and 4,879 Occasional VFW VAVS volunteers provides more than 238,200 hours of service each year to our nation's veterans in federal, state and community hospitals and nursing homes.

A. Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program (VAVS): The VAVS program is locally managed by the VFW VAVS Representative who is appointed by the Department Commander for each VA health care facility in your state. They are the cornerstone of our organization's efforts to serve our nation's hospitalized veterans.

Volunteer services are recognized in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins presented to those who have completed the number of hours prescribed for such awards (see the VFW Volunteer Program manual for further details). VFW members who want to volunteer at a VA health care facility should contact the Department Chairperson, local VFW Representative or VA Volunteer Service Program Manager at the VA health care facility of their choice.

VA has an extensive network of Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's). Members interested in volunteering at their local CBOC should contact the VAVS Program Manager at the VA hospital which manages the local CBOC.

The VAVS program is not only a critical link for the VFW to what happens at our medical centers across the country, but also an excellent opportunity to allow veterans to see first-hand what VA offers to the veterans' community.

We urge Department Commanders and their leadership team to encourage their members to recruit new volunteers, and we are developing resources on the VFW national website to better promote the program, such as our web page located at www.vfw.org/VolunteerService.

A volunteer can be nominated for the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) Volunteer of the Year Award. This award recognizes volunteers who have given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans. Two award recipients, one male and one female, are selected each year by the Executive Committee of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee.

Questions and appointments pertaining to the VAVS program should be addressed to James Moss, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy, at 202.608.8371 or via email at jmoss@vfw.org.

B. VFW Community Health Care Volunteer Program: This program was designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time at state, military, or community-based medical care facilities but who are not on official VAVS assignments.

The local coordinator of this program, the Post Hospital Chairman, is responsible for the recruitment and placement of volunteers, maintaining records of hours served by each post volunteer and requesting awards from the Director, NVS, through the State Hospital Chairman. This program should not be confused with the VAVS volunteer program. For more information pertaining to awards, see your VFW Volunteer Program manual.

Questions pertaining to VAVS and Volunteer Programs should be directed to James Moss, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy, National Veterans Service, at 202.608.8371 or via email at jmoss@vfw.org.

GUIDELINES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (NAC) VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

OBJECTIVE: The NAC Volunteer of the Year Award Program allows the NAC to honor members who have given extraordinary service to our Nation's veterans.

SELECTION CRITERIA: Nominees for this award must participate in established VAVS assignments, serve as a volunteer, and meet one of the following criteria:

- a. Volunteer with hospitalized veterans
- b. Volunteer with veterans at outpatient clinics
- c. Volunteer with veterans in nursing homes
- d. Volunteer with homeless veterans
- e. Volunteer with veterans and veterans groups in the community
- f. Host veterans' functions in the lodge, post, chapter, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4th and Veterans Day observances, etc. that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- g. Host veterans' functions outside the lodge, post, chapter, i.e., fishing trips, day at the races, sporting events, etc. that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- h. Visit veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment
- i. Adopt-A-Veteran

Those eligible for the award are: NAC member organizations (such as the VFW) with emphasis on VAVS Representatives, Deputy Representatives, members who visit the VA medical centers, nursing homes, etc., or work at the lodge, post, or chapter veterans' functions either within or outside the lodge, post or chapter.

Nominees must participate in established VAVS assignments and serve as a regularly scheduled volunteer. There will be two recipients per year; one male and one female.

Nominations must be submitted in narrative format with name and NAC organization in the upper left-hand corner.

The narrative is not to exceed 500 words and must be submitted to the Director, National Veterans Service by November 30 of each year. VA staff making recommendations for this award must send the nomination for preliminary judging to the National Representative of the organization to which the nominee is a member. Failure to do so will invalidate the nomination.

The selection committee, with the assistance of the Executive Committee, will select the winners. The awards will be presented at the annual meeting of the NAC.

The male and female winner of the NAC Volunteer of the Year Award each receive an all-expense paid trip to the Annual VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting where they will be given an award.

GUIDELINES
VFW JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE:

This program is designed to provide annual VFW National recognition to an individual who is accredited by VA to represent claimants on behalf of the VFW before the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include employees of State and County veteran agencies, who meets the below criteria.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- VFW Department Service Officers
- VFW Assistant Department Service Officers
- VFW Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewers
- Any State or County VFW accredited representative
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- Previous recipients of the Accredited Representative of the Year Award

SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30, deadline.
2. A brief summary of no more than 2 pages is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee's efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to)
 - Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted
 - Community outreach conducted
 - Examples of excellent customer service provided
 - Meticulous use of TVB (Tyler's Veterans Benefits) or another electronic claims processing system used by the candidate (specify system)
 - Submission of TIMELY monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office)
 - Number of VFW members recruited (if any)

AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this prestigious award. The individual chosen as the recipient will be furnished round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two nights' hotel accommodation to attend the VFW National Convention where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

Please note that the selection committee will review NVS databases to understand how candidates served clients. Additionally, NVS training test scores, the results of any site visits, and other criteria may be considered in making the final decision.

Nominations should be sent to the Director, VFW National Veterans Service, either by email to taldana@vfw.org, or by fax to 202-547-3196 (ATTN: Service Officer Award) and **must be received not later than April 30.**