



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
Virginia National Guard Association
Women Marines Association

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Position Paper 2017-01

Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program

1. **Objective:** To put in place a new program goal and service delivery structure for the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program, revise the governing statute, and provide the necessary funding and positions to convert the program to an all-state employee program delivery structure.
2. **Background:**
 - a. VVFS was established in 2008 to ensure that Virginia veterans, Guardsmen, Reservists, and their families were connected to behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services. It was the first state-level program of its kind in the nation.
 - b. A December 2015 report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) identified problems with the VVFS program's design and service implementation. The JLARC report recommended that a working group be formed to review VVFS and submit recommendations to JLARC.
 - c. The VVFS Working Group, comprised of the Secretaries of Veterans and Defense Affairs and Health and Human Resources, and the JLARC Director, presented its recommendations to JLARC on November 14, 2016.
 - d. The VVFS Working Group recommended that:
 - 1) A new goal/purpose for VVFS be adopted to address the issues identified in the JLARC report, set clear expectations for VVFS, avoid duplication, and make clear that VVFS does not provide direct clinical case management;
 - 2) The four key activities of VVFS should be awareness (general outreach, training, and standard data capture), intake ("triage" and identification of issues), planning & referral (development of a coordinated services plan, or CSP), and monitoring (of progress towards the CSP and potential service gaps);
 - 3) The Code of Virginia be revised to: clearly define the goal of VVFS and its key activities; reflect lessons learned since the program was created in 2008; incorporate the work of the 2015 JLARC study and the VVFS Working Group; and reflect the evolving nature of veterans needs and services;
 - 4) An additional \$700,000 (GF) be appropriated in FY18 to implement an all-state employee service delivery structure; and
 - 5) \$393,494 (GF) be transferred to DVS in FY17 for expenses associated with implementing the new program structure.
3. **Discussion:**
 - a. VVFS plays a crucial role in helping Virginia veterans, Guardsmen, Reservists, and family members identify the issues that impact their physical or mental health and well-being, developing a coordinated services plan to navigate the complex web of services they require, and monitoring them on their journey to resilience and recovery.
 - b. The JLC fully endorses the report of the VVFS Working Group that identifies changes required for VVFS to continue its vital mission.
4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly change the Code of Virginia to revise the charter of the VVFS; release \$393,494 to DVS in FY17; authorize 21 additional positions in FY17 and FY18; and appropriate an additional \$700,000 (GF) in FY18 to convert VVFS to an all-state employee service delivery structure.