



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Veterans Services Foundation

November 30, 2017

Via Electronic Mail

TO: The Honorable Carlos Hopkins
Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
Commonwealth of Virginia
The Capitol
3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Members of the General Assembly
The Capitol

**The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation Annual Report
to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and the General Assembly.**
§2.2-2715(b) of the Code of Virginia

Executive Summary

On July 1, 2017 the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (the Foundation) was established as an independent body politic and corporate agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia supporting the interests of veterans and their families and contributors through the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and the programs and services of the Department of Veterans Services. The Foundation is governed and administered by a board of trustees. The Board may hire an Executive Director of the Foundation to direct the day-to-day operations and activities of the Foundation and carry out the powers and duties conferred upon the Executive Director by the trustees.

About the Veterans Services Foundation

The Foundation is required to (i) administer the Veterans Services Fund (the Fund), (ii) provide funding for veteran services and programs in the Commonwealth through the Fund, and (iii) accept and raise revenue from all sources, including private source fundraising, to support the Fund.

The board of trustees of the Foundation consists of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Chairman of both the Board of Veterans Services and the Joint Leadership Council, along with eight non-legislative citizens appointed by the Governor; five non-legislative citizens appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and three non-legislative citizens appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

From Our Chairman

As Chairman of the Virginia Services Foundation Board of Trustees, I am pleased to provide an annual report required by §2.2.2715(b) of the Code of Virginia regarding the support provided by the Foundation to Virginia veterans and their families through the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and the programs and services offered by the Department of Veterans Services (DVS).

On July 1, 2017 the Foundation was established as a separate state agency under *the Code of Virginia §2.2-2715(a)*. The trustees are pleased with the many accomplishments the Foundation has made despite the necessary time devoted to establishing a new agency, along with building a new relationship with DVS as a separate agency. The transition work continues between the Foundation and DVS to recognize and adapt to the changes that have occurred as of July 1, 2017.

One significant change relates to the makeup of the board of trustees. The Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs now serves as an ex officio, voting member of the Foundation board of Trustees, replacing the DVS Commissioner. It was intended for the Secretary to serve as a liaison between the Foundation and DVS, creating a direct link to maintain a balance between the two organizations along with an added opportunity for the Secretary to work with both agencies in the mutual work they do for Virginia veterans.

For FY 2017, the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Homeless Veteran Fund was a top priority for the Foundation. Started as a pilot program in FY 2017, the program provided \$135,154.52 of funding to assist 178 Virginia veterans.

Overall donations totaling \$232,995.52 were received for the VVFS program. The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program ended FY 2017 with a total of \$285,012.00 donations received. The Foundation also was active in supporting other DVS programs, including over \$85,000.00 primarily for the care centers, cemeteries, and the Women Veterans Summit. This equates to a total of over \$600,000.00. While individual donations continued to decline in FY 2017, support from the corporate community, grants and civic organizations remained steady and will be the focus for increased revenue sources in FY 2018.

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As a result of the success of the Homeless Veteran Fund there was a substantial increase in spending in the first quarter of FY 2018. The trustees see this as an opportunity to better serve veterans who may need it most, while facing the funding challenges to sustain the current programs and the increased projected requirements submitted by DVS. Discussions to develop a robust fundraising plan are currently underway and the Foundation remains committed to continue to explore all possibilities to meet the direct needs of Virginia veterans and their families.

Also, the trustees fully understand that executing a successful fundraising strategy will strongly depend on the cooperation and collaboration between the Foundation and DVS. With both agencies working toward a common goal, Virginia veterans and their families will benefit greatly.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation, we have administered the Fund, maintained Fund integrity, ensured accountability transparency, and provided funding for DVS veterans services and programs. We look forward to meeting the new challenges as a separate state agency while fulfilling our fiduciary responsibilities to donors by providing support and assistance to Virginia veterans and their families when other funding sources are not available. It is an honor and a privilege to serve our veterans.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Schollmann
Chairman
Virginia Veterans Services Foundation