



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Department of Veterans Services*

John L. Newby II  
Commissioner

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November 1, 2018

### *Via Electronic Mail and U.S. Post*

The Honorable Carlos Hopkins  
Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs  
PO Box 1475  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.  
Co-Chairman  
Senate Finance Committee  
Post Office Box 396  
General Assembly Building  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable S. Chris Jones  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Post Office Box 406  
General Assembly Building  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Emmet W. Hanger, Jr.  
Co-Chairman  
Senate Finance Committee  
Post Office Box 396  
General Assembly Building  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Re: Virginia Values Veterans ("V3") Program

Dear Secretary Hopkins, Delegate Jones, Senator Norment and Senator Hanger:

This report provides the information pursuant to Chapter 2, 2018 Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1, Item 466(D), with respect to the Virginia Values Veterans ("V3") Program.

### **Background**

The V3 Program began in 2012 as a pilot program to educate employers why hiring veterans is a good business decision. The Virginia General Assembly passed legislation in 2013 (SB829/HB1906) to make the V3 Program permanent, with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) overseeing the execution of this program. To date, over 38,000 veterans have been hired by the more than 1,100 V3 employers.

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**Chapter 2, 2018 Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1, Item 466(D), directs DVS to measure the following:**

**Item (i), “The program’s specific effect on the employers’ knowledge of how to appropriately recruit and retain veterans as civilian sector employees.”**

Since FY2014, V3 has required participating members to complete an assessment of their respective veteran talent acquisition and retention knowledge before receiving training, as well as a post-assessment after receiving training to be completed the same day. This simple test to measure learning and a positive delta between these assessment scores evinces an increase in the participating member’s knowledge. V3 is looking at a future RFP to conduct a survey with all the employers in the program to gain better understanding, and concrete data to substantiate this assessment.

**Item (ii), “The program’s specific effect on employers’ decisions to hire more veterans than if employers did not participate in the program.”**

An employer’s membership in the V3 Program, itself, is indicative of the Program’s positive effect on an employer’s decision to hire more veterans. Whether it is an employer who already hires veterans and desires to become more proficient at veteran talent acquisition, or an employer who knows absolutely nothing about veteran talent acquisition and is looking for assistance, their membership in V3 pushes their veteran talent acquisition to the “next level,” which is exactly why those employers joined the Program.

The V3 curriculum addresses the hiring of veterans, a process that is relatively simple, recruiting veterans more efficiently, and most importantly – structuring the workforce to better retain veterans. The curriculum now includes key conversations on the following topics: building a military- and veteran-spouse talent pipeline; defining what a veteran is; and establishing best practices to make a member/agency stand out to veterans and their spouses.

Not all members that join the V3 Program lack previous experience or expertise regarding veteran hiring. However, even those members with experience in veteran hiring still find value in the sharing of best practices for hiring veterans, and DVS has found that even if they come to the Program with experience, nearly all members continue to struggle with military/veteran cultural competency to the point of rapid turnover among their highly qualified veterans. By providing such continuing and updated training on this and myriad other topics, the V3 members are better able to hire, train and retain veterans.

Another benefit to the employers goes beyond their decision to hire veterans. (Indeed, membership in V3 reflects a member employer’s affirmative decision to get better at hiring veterans.) This benefit is exposure to more touch points for potential veteran candidates, which ultimately is what employers are looking for. A tangible and observed manifestation of this benefit is the fact that V3 membership increases cross sharing of veteran employee candidates; if

there is not a fit with one V3 member, V3 member HR departments routinely cross-refer candidates to other V3 members. Further, by being a part of Virginia's Veteran Employment Ecosystem, V3 employers gain access to the large pool of veteran employee candidates who are served by the Virginia Transition Assistance Program, Military Medics and Corpsmen Program and Women Veterans programs.

The V3 Program recognizes that increasing opportunities for employers to attract both in-state and out-of-state veteran talent into the New Virginia Economy is also helped when we highlight V3 employers' commitment to making Virginia the most veteran friendly state in the nation. Some ways that the V3 program and DVS highlights these opportunities include:

- (a) Designating and highlighting V3-certified members on the state labor exchange, ([www.vawc.virginia.gov](http://www.vawc.virginia.gov));
- (b) Advertising in the "Corporate Gray Military to Civilian Transition Guide," a publication that reaches every transitioning service member in the world – highlighting V3 employment opportunities and Virginia as a veteran-friendly state;
- (c) Collaborating with the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) to promote V3 members' current and future openings through the Transition Connection Newsletter. This newsletter goes out to over 5,000 transitioning veterans twice a week to help employers bring in more quality veteran applicants and in turn bring more quality employees to their respective business;
- (d) Virginia Chamber of Commerce's HIREVETSNOW Networking Events: Since 2017, V3 has collaborated with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce to execute free networking events on Virginia military installations, each having approximately 40-50 transitioning service members and 20-25 V3 certified employers. These events are mutually beneficial, giving transitioning service members a head start on their future job prospects and V3 certified organizations first-in-line exposure to highly sought out and skilled candidates; and
- (e) The Governor's V3 Awards presented annually at the Virginia Chamber/V3 Workforce Summit and Luncheon. In six years, attendance has grown every year, with the 2018 attendance setting a record 600 businesses and 800 people at the Richmond Convention Center.

**Item (iii), "The time and effort required by employers to participate in the program."**

Since program inception, the V3 Program has continually self-evaluated how it could be more user friendly to V3 members. Most recently, in 2017, V3 staff discovered that some employers were not completing their organization's veteran hiring plan. This issue was keeping a substantial number of registered employers from completing certification. Realizing the possibility that an internal process may have hindered the ease employer certification, we converted this requirement from mandatory to an optional value add. During that review we also noted that the Program lacked the tools and resources to fully support some of the training

requirements placed upon our V3 members. Adding free online training and only requiring the core curriculum to be completed for certification has had a positive effect upon our V3 certification processes, both in terms of speed and ease of use.

For example, the following are the steps that the employer was taking for certification, prior to January 1, 2018:

1. Register/Enroll Online
2. Take the Core Curriculum Course (2-3 hours)
3. Take five (30) minute webinars on various topics (2.5 hours)
4. Build a comprehensive Organizations Veteran Hiring Plan (4-5 hours)
5. Submit their cover letter (addressed to the Governor) with their commitment to the program and hiring veterans (1 hour)

This process took approximately *10-12 working hours* to complete.

The new, streamlined certification process in place since January 1, 2018 is as follows:

1. Register/Enroll Online
2. Take the Core Curriculum course which includes presenting the various topics from the 5 webinars in a more efficient manner (3 hours)
3. Submit their cover letter (addressed to the Governor) (1 hour)

The process now takes *3-4 hours* to complete for the employer.

Since implementation of this new process, V3 has seen a dramatic increase in the number of participating organizations. V3 continues to closely monitor the new process and make tweaks to continually improve the program.

Additionally, there was a change in the length of time that a member remains certified. Prior to July 1, 2017, certifications were only active for two years. As of July 1, 2017, the certification now remains active for five years, further reducing the amount of time needed for certification activities.

### **Cost Savings to the Commonwealth of Virginia:**

V3 has evolved over six years, growing from an idea to a nationally-recognized and copied veteran workforce program. An example of a program that mirrored what V3 is doing here in Virginia would be the US Department of Labor's HIRE Vets Medallion Program (indeed, DVS is providing DoL technical assistance for DoL's program). The V3 Program has continuously worked to deliver a value-added product to our V3 partners, while simultaneously being efficient with the Commonwealth resources allocated to the Program. Indeed, over the lifespan of the Program, DVS has seen the provision of Program services previously contracted out at higher cost transitioned to internal administration /or being provided free of charge through Program-verified avenues.

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Over the past three years, V3 has dramatically reduced expenditures to outside contractors, year over year without sacrificing quality, as shown here:

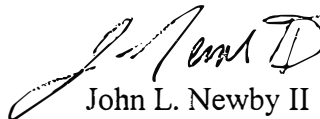
**V3 contract prices by year for the last three fiscal years (2017 – 2019)**

- (a). FY2017 - \$384,000
- (b). FY2018 - \$244,800
- (c). FY2019 - \$114,500

DVS was able to determine that redistribution of certain vendor-provided services to current DVS personnel did not create any unmanageable burden on staff and, most importantly, had no adverse effects on organizations seeking certification. This redistribution also gave V3 the flexibility to purchase a much needed and long overdue electronic customer relationship management database. The new database streamlines the team's customer management activities and creates added efficiencies that otherwise were unobtainable.

Thank you for allowing our Agency to be of service, and thank you for your support of Virginia's veterans. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



John L. Newby II