

# ARIZONA VETERANS' SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION

## OPERATING GUIDELINES

April 14, 2022

The attached guidelines on operation of the Arizona Veteran's Service Advisory Commission have been prepared to provide general information and guidelines for conducting business of the Commission. The Commission will operate fully within the laws of the State of Arizona, including the Open Meeting Law. Nothing herein is intended to change that requirement. The Commission Chairperson will ensure that these guidelines are reviewed and updated as required.

This update was approved by the Commission on April 14, 2022.



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Joan B. McDermott, Chairperson

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### **Document Review**

The date of next review of this document shall not exceed 36 months from the date of approval or date last amended.

## SECTION I

### ARIZONA REVISED STATUTE

41-602. Arizona veterans' service advisory commission; terms; qualifications; compensation

- A. An Arizona veterans' service advisory commission is established consisting of nine members appointed by the governor. Each member shall serve a term of three years.
- B. Members shall be veterans and shall be appointed from a list of names submitted by each veteran organization in this state holding a charter granted by Congress or recognized by the department as a veterans' organization that is actively involved in supporting veteran affairs programs in this state. Not more than two members shall be appointed from any one veterans' organization. Members shall not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.
- C. At the first meeting held after July 1 of each year the commission shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson.
- D. The commission shall meet on the call of the chairperson but at least once during each three-month period. No actions may be taken without a quorum present.
- E. The commission shall provide policy advice to the governor and the director regarding veterans' issues.
- F. Members are not eligible to receive compensation but are eligible for reimbursement of expenses pursuant to title 38, chapter 4, Article 2.

## SECTION II

### STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

**Mission Statement:** To promote public awareness and enhance the well-being of Arizona veterans and their families.

Purpose: In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute 41-602, the Commission shall provide policy advice to the governor and the director regarding veterans' issues.

**GOAL: To provide effective communications to the Governor of Arizona and the Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS).**

#### Objectives

1. Communicate as required, but at least yearly, with the Governor of Arizona and schedule meetings regularly, but at least quarterly, with the Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS), with the intent of providing focus on priority veterans' issues and policies.
2. Work with other Arizona commissions, boards, agencies and organizations as appropriate.
3. Participate in legislative and administrative processes in support of the Arizona's veteran community and their families.
  - a. Recommend new legislative and administrative initiatives where needed.
  - b. Assess, prioritize, and make recommendations on existing or proposed legislation as required, but at least annually, early in the legislative session.
  - c. Testify before the legislature when required.
4. Through the ADVS be aware of, assess, prioritize and make recommendations as required on veterans' services provided by other states.

**GOAL: To have an active outreach program throughout the state for veterans and their families.**

#### Objectives

1. Partner with the ADVS Veteran Benefits Counselors (VBCs) and the Be Connected Community Networks (BCCN) on a regional basis.
2. Geographically divide the state into regions.
3. Assign commissioners to specific regions that correspond to the geographic areas of responsibility of the three Veterans Affairs Health Care Systems within the State of Arizona and the three BCCNs.

- a. Establish liaison between the commission and regions in coordination with VBCs and BCCNs.
  - b. Develop points of contact within each region.
  - c. Outreach activities shall be held throughout the state. Time and place shall be determined by the commissioners. These outreach activities may include forming partnerships with other scheduled veteran events, by holding “stand alone” town hall meetings or in other formats as determined by the Commission.
4. Establish committees when necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth by the Commission.
  5. Through ADVS, maintain the Arizona Veterans’ Benefits Guide.
  6. Through the Be Connected network, provide resources to include community and social services points of contact available to the veteran community and their families.

**GOAL: To promote public awareness and support for the veteran community and their families while identifying issues affecting them within the state of Arizona.**

**Objectives**

1. Through the outreach program above:
  - a. Identify issues and needs of the veterans’ community and their families.
  - b. Conduct a statewide communication effort to inform Arizona veterans and their families.
2. Working with ADVS executive staff, maintain a promotional information publication for the Commission. A flyer that explains the Advisory Commission history and purpose.
3. Represent the Office of the Governor and/or the ADVS at ceremonies, presentations, or other events as appropriate.
4. Stay abreast of issues of veteran minority groups and their families, e.g., homeless veterans, women veterans, rural veterans, and disabled veterans.

## SECTION III

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. **NAME:** The name of the Commission is the Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission herein referred to as the Commission.
2. **MISSION:** To promote public awareness and enhance the well-being of Arizona veterans and their families.
3. **PURPOSE:** To fulfill the responsibilities as assigned under Arizona Revised Statute 41-602 and as implemented through the approved Commission Operating Guidelines and Strategic Policy Objectives. Specifically, to provide policy advice to the Governor and the Director regarding veterans' issues.
4. **STATUS:** The Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission is a statutory commission established within the State of Arizona and complies with all statutory and obligatory conditions and requirements of Arizona commissions. The Commission is required to meet once every three months. At least two of the four annual meetings will be held within the Maricopa County area, the balance may be held in other outlying areas of the state. Commissioners may attend meetings virtually when necessary. Each Commissioner shall attend outreach activities in their assigned area, and, when needed, meet with the respective Veterans Benefits Regional Manager in their assigned areas to coordinate outreach activities. The Commissioners will provide a report on their activities at the next scheduled meeting
5. **MAILING ADDRESS:** The mailing address for the Commission is Arizona Veterans Services Advisory Commission 3839 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 209, Phoenix, AZ 85012.
6. **MEMBERSHIP:** The members of the Commission are appointed by the governor and recommendations submitted by state veterans' service organizations. If a person is appointed to fill the unexpired term of a departing Commissioner, the remainder of the unexpired term counts as the first term for the new appointee. Normally three of the nine Commissioners will be replaced each year, except that Commissioners are afforded the opportunity of re-applying to the Commission for one additional three-year term. The Commission and the department may actively solicit recommendations from veterans' organizations to fill forecast or existing vacancies.

The chairperson shall arrange to meet with newly appointed Commissioners for an introduction/orientation to the Commission and its governance documents, and services/activities of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services. A meeting with the AZDVS Director can also be scheduled with new Commissioners.

7. **VOTING:** Each Commissioner has one vote, and all questions coming before the Commission will be decided by a majority vote provided that a quorum of the Commission is present. In order to fulfill terms of the Arizona Open Meeting Law, voting by secret ballot is not authorized in open session.

8. **MEETINGS:** All meetings and actions of the Commission shall be in accordance with Arizona Revised Statute 38-431, commonly known as the “Open Meeting Law”.
- a. The Chairperson will propose and gain consensus on a yearly Commission meeting schedule as soon as possible after elections are held. The schedule will include at least once each three month period. The schedule may be revised at any time during the year by Commission consensus.
  - b. Regular meetings will normally be held at the offices of the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services, 3839 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Phoenix, AZ 85012, on the second Thursday of the first month of each quarter from 10:00 am until 12:00 pm. A hybrid option will be available for Commissioners, as well.
  - c. Outreach efforts will be determined by the Commission.
  - d. The Chairperson may call additional meetings when he/she feels a new issue is too important to wait until the next scheduled meeting.
  - e. Pursuant to the Arizona Open Meeting Law, public notices of Commission meetings and agendas thereof will be available to the public through ADVS and the [Arizona Public Meetings Site](#) at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting. The Chairperson is responsible for compiling the meeting agendas and producing and distributing them through the ADVS. Commissioners may request agenda items through the Chairperson.
  - f. The Chairperson will conduct the meetings in accordance with *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*.
  - g. Minutes will be taken and posted pursuant to the Arizona Open Meeting Law. The draft minutes must be available to the general public within three working days of the meeting unless a recording of the meeting can be provided in response to a request. This action will normally be taken by a member of ADVS. The minutes will be formally approved by the Commission at its next scheduled meeting.
  - h. The Chairperson will ensure that a log of action items is maintained to ensure the action items are properly closed and that a record of action item issues is maintained for potential analysis and historical purposes.
  - i. The order of business at regular Commission meetings will normally be as follows:
    - Call to order, pledge of allegiance and introduction of guests
    - Elections (when required)
    - Review and approval of minutes of the previous meeting
    - Presentations by invited guests
    - Communications and correspondence

- Agency updates and announcements
  - Unfinished business
  - New business
  - Public comments (public must complete a comment card and turn into the Chairperson prior to the start of the meeting)
  - For the good of the order
  - Adjournment
- j. The order of business will be at the discretion of the Chairperson.

**9. OFFICERS:**

- a. The officers of the Commission shall be the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson who shall be elected after 1 July of each Commission year. The officers will serve one-year terms.
- b. Any Commissioner is eligible to hold these offices.
- c. At the meeting, candidates will be nominated from the floor, and may include self-nominations.
- d. In the event that the elected Chairperson has to resign during the course of the year, the Vice-Chairperson will become the new Chairperson and an election will be held to determine a new Vice-Chairperson. In that there are only two elected officers among the nine Commissioners, the terms of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson will be limited to one one-year term in order to provide more Commissioners the opportunity to fulfill these positions and in order to get more diversity in Commission leadership. However, in the event that no new candidates for the office come forward, the incumbent Chairperson and/or Vice-Chairperson may be elected for one additional one-year term.
- e. The Chairperson will preside at all meetings of the Commission and will be an ex officio member of all Commission committees. The Chairperson shall be responsible for ensuring all outgoing Commission communication is completed in an accurate and timely manner and shall be responsible for ensuring all relevant information is promptly brought to the attention of the Commission. Further, the Chairperson will perform such other duties as are necessary to the office of the Chairperson.
- f. The Vice-Chairperson will fill a vacancy in the office of the Chairperson automatically.
- g. The Chairperson is responsible for the conduct of the meeting in a manner which will lead to the attainment of the goals of the Commission. The presiding officer will relinquish the chair, after a motion has been made and seconded, in order to enter into discussion, in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order newly revised.



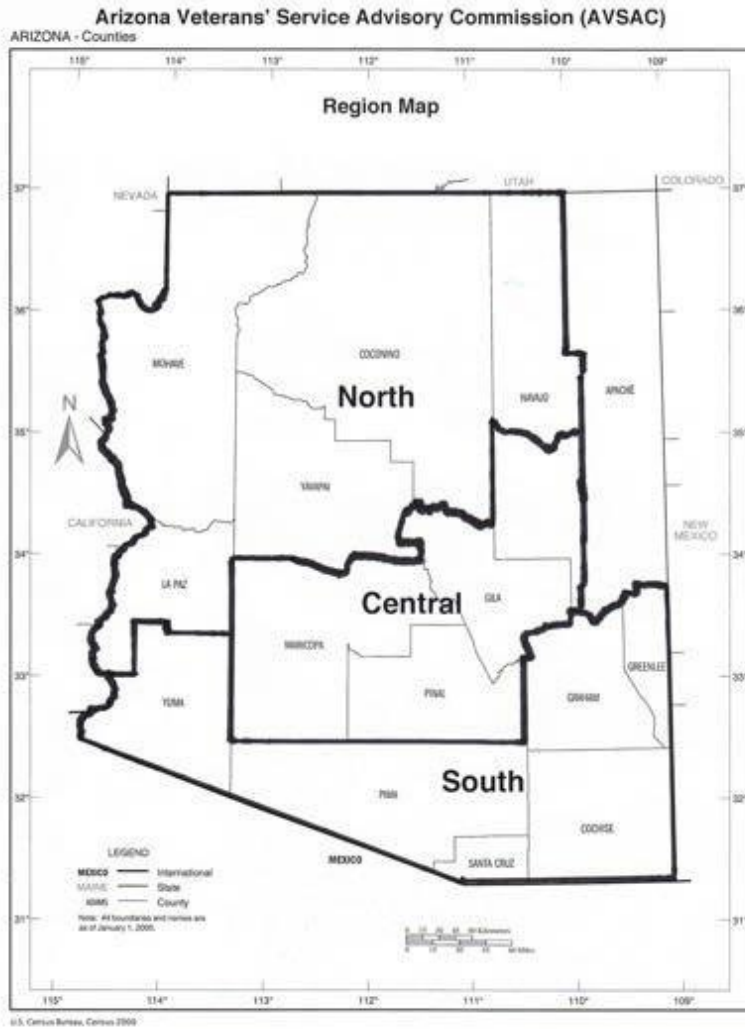
- h. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will preside. In the absence of both, the Commissioners will elect a Chairperson pro term from the floor to ensure orderly continuation of the meeting.
- 10. OTHER ACTIONS:** The Commission will take other actions as deemed appropriate to meet the intent of the Commission Operating Guidelines and Strategic Policy Objectives.
- a. Through its series of meetings, the Commission will proactively seek out, discuss in open forum and make written policy recommendations to the Governor and/or the Director on issues and actions affecting the Arizona veterans' community and their families.
  - b. In addition to items discovered during its regularly scheduled meetings, whenever significant events develop that entail the need to provide policy advice within the expertise of the Commission regarding veterans' issues, the Commission will discuss the issue in open forum and provide written recommendations to the Director, ADVS, and to the Governor as appropriate.
  - c. As a minimum, written policy recommendations will be made to the Governor prior to the legislative session and, as needed, during the annual legislative session with regard to an assessment of how proposed likely legislative initiatives may or may not meet the recommendations and intent of the Commission Strategic Policy Objectives.
  - d. Through the ADVS and its own resources, the Commission will monitor the work of other Arizona commissions, boards, agencies and organizations as they may relate to the veteran community to include such organizations as the veteran service organizations, Veteran non-profits, the Veteran Affairs etc...
  - e. Through the ADVS and its own resources, the Commission will attempt to monitor significant veterans' initiatives made by other states and provide policy recommendations as to how they may or may not be appropriate for Arizona.
  - f. The Commission will work closely with the ADVS to ensure synergy is achieved between Commission activities and other activities to include outreach of the department, particularly with Veteran Benefits Counselors (VBCs).
  - g. The Commission will be particularly attuned to issues that may affect minority veterans (e.g., homeless, women, rural and disabled).

## SECTION IV

### REGION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Chairperson will appoint Commissioners to regional responsibilities. The state will be divided into three regions with three commissioners assigned to each region. (See Map of Regions at page 12 and Regional Assignments at Addendum A)
2. The three Regions are: Central, North, and South. Each Region corresponds to the geographic area of responsibility of the three VA Health Care Systems within the State of Arizona (Phoenix VA Health Care System, Northern Arizona VA Health Care System, and Southern Arizona VA Health Care System) and the three BCCNs.
3. The commissioners will coordinate their activity within the region with the ADVS, Region Managers and Veteran Benefit Counselors (VBCs) assigned within that geographic region.
4. The commissioners may conduct an outreach program within their respective regions to meet the intent of the Commission Strategic Guidelines.
5. When scheduling outreach activities, ensure that:
  - Regional mayors and town managers, county supervisors and veterans service organizations within each county are formally invited and encouraged to attend.
  - Representatives of the VA Regional Benefits Office and VA Medical Centers are formally invited and encouraged to attend.
  - Minority veterans are formally invited and encouraged to attend. If sufficient interest is exhibited a stand-alone activity with a minority veterans' constituency is encouraged.

# COMMISSION REGIONS



## SECTION V

### ABSENTEE POLICY FOR ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETINGS

- 1.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: ARS §41-602 established a nine-member Arizona veterans' service advisory commission appointed by the governor to provide policy advice to the governor and the director regarding veterans' issues. In order to maintain continuity and effectiveness, the commission adopts the following policy:
- 2.0 POLICY: It is the policy of the Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission to maintain consistency in attendance at the scheduled Advisory Commission meetings. Advisory Commissioners should notify the **chairperson** of the Advisory Commission prior to being absent from a meeting. Advisory Commissioners should not be absent for two or more meetings between 1 July and 30 June unless they have unusual personal circumstances which are out of their control.
- 3.0 AUTHORITY: Duties and Responsibilities of the Advisory Commission.
- 4.0 RESPONSIBILITY: It is the responsibility of individual commissioners to understand and comply with this policy. All Advisory Commission members will receive a copy of this policy. The policy has been reviewed and authorized by the Advisory Commission members.
- 5.0 PROCEDURES:
  - 5.1 Commissioners shall:
    - 5.1.1 Attend all scheduled Advisory Commission meetings, if possible. If unable to attend in person, commissioners may call in and participate via telephone.
    - 5.1.2 Notify the Chairperson if they should be unable to attend a scheduled Advisory Commission meeting. If the Chairperson is not available, the Vice Chairperson should be notified.
    - 5.1.3 If a Commissioner is absent for two or more scheduled meetings and has not notified the Chairperson for the reasons of the absences, the Chairperson will contact the absent commissioner to determine the reason for the absences.
    - 5.1.4 At a scheduled meeting, the Commission members may recommend the resignation of the non-attending Commissioner.
- 6.0 IMPLEMENTATION: Implementation of this policy shall occur on the effective date and shall continue until changes require a revision.